

# The Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County

## Making health care happen!

### About Us

The Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County (PCC) is making health care happen. Our vision is a community in which all residents have the opportunity to live healthy lives. We work with clinics, hospitals, health care providers, and other community partners to coordinate health services for our most vulnerable neighbors.

The PCC is deeply committed to providing a continuum of care for low-income, uninsured, ethnically diverse residents of Montgomery County.

The most vulnerable members of our community frequently lead medically and socially complex lives.

The PCC works with the clinical and administrative leadership at 12 independent safety-net clinics, 5 hospitals, independent health care providers, and other community partners to foster and coordinate a high quality, efficient, community based health care system that strives for universal access and health equity for low-income, uninsured community members.

### Vision

Our vision is that all community members have the opportunity to live healthy lives, and that Montgomery County will be the healthiest community in the nation and a model for providing access to high quality and efficient care for all.

### Mission

Our mission is to be the catalyst for developing and coordinating a community-based healthcare system that strives for universal access and health equity for underserved community members.

### The Triple Aim

Since 2007, the PCC has participated in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's (IHI) Triple Aim Initiative, a framework for optimizing health system performance by simultaneously pursuing three goals:

- Improving the patient experience of care
- Improving the health of a defined population
- Reducing the per capita cost of health care

### Select Programs

The PCC administers a variety of programs designed to increase access to care and improve the quality of care in the Montgomery County health safety-net.

**Montgomery Cares** provides affordable primary and preventive care to low-income, uninsured adults in Montgomery County. From July 2, 2012 to June 30, 2013 Montgomery Cares served 29,454 patients in more than 80,000 encounters. Montgomery Cares is a public-private partnership administered by the PCC. It is composed of 12 independent safety-net primary care clinics, five hospitals, and the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, as well as volunteer health practitioners and other community-based organizations.

**Care for Kids** provides low-cost and specialty care to the children of low-income families in Montgomery County who are not eligible for other state and federal health insurance programs. From July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 Care for Kids served 2,770 children with services ranging from well child visits to complex specialty care.

**Project Access** is a specialty care referral network administered by the PCC. It is composed of a dedicated group of health care specialists, local hospitals, and diagnostic facilities that participate in a coordinated effort to provide specialty care to low-income uninsured members of our community. Project Access helps these individuals gain timely access to specialty care, potentially avoiding acute hospitalizations and expensive medical bills.

**Cancer Prevention.** Early detection and treatment of cancer saves lives and reduces health care costs. Coordinating preventive care for our vulnerable neighbors is a critical part of the PCC's work. Since 2007, the PCC has worked to build a system-wide collaboration to provide coordinated breast and colorectal cancer prevention services to Montgomery Cares patients.

In 2010 we expanded our efforts to implement process improvement initiatives and reduce breast health disparities at pilot sites throughout the National Capital Area. Funding for the PCC's cancer prevention projects flows from a number of sources including Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the American Breast Cancer Foundation, and the

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.

**Medicine Access.** Poverty and poor-health are intertwined, and often our medically underserved neighbors have complex health conditions that can be treated with necessary lifestyle changes and access to medication. The PCC administers several collaborative programs designed to provide access to medication services and prescription drugs for our low-income, uninsured neighbors.

**Behavioral Health Care** is offered to Montgomery Cares patients at some Montgomery Cares clinics. The Behavioral Health Program was founded in 2005 in response to the high prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders observed among Montgomery Cares patients.

**Quality Assurance.** Ensuring that all underserved community members have equitable access to high-quality, effective, patient-centered primary health care is central to the PCC's work. We conduct regular on-site reviews in each Montgomery Cares clinic to evaluate the quality of care provided and make recommendations for improvement. Since 2007, the PCC has participated in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Triple Aim Initiative, a framework for optimizing health system performance by pursuing three goals:

- Improving the patient experience of care
- Improving the health of populations
- Reducing the per capita cost of health care

**Reducing Avoidable Emergency Department Visits.**

Avoidable emergency department use not only places a financial burden on hospitals and uninsured patients, it also adversely impacts patients' health. In March of 2009 the PCC began the Emergency Department to Primary Care (ED-PC) Connect Project with funding from an Emergency Room Diversion Grant from CMS and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Between July 2009 and December 2011, the ED-PC Connect project referred 12,222 patients from Montgomery County hospital emergency rooms to Montgomery Cares clinics. Most of these patients had never been to a Montgomery Cares clinic before, but once introduced to the network of safety-

net clinics they chose to return for one or more additional visits. Because these patients now had a reliable source of primary care, they did not continue to make unnecessary visits to hospital emergency departments. The result was an estimated \$1.2 million cost savings associated with unnecessary emergency department visits.

**Health Informatics.** The PCC uses innovative health care technologies to support our mission. We provide technical assistance and the technology resources necessary to enable safety-net clinics participating in Montgomery Cares to work as a unified system of care with a common health informatics infrastructure. The PCC is currently supporting eight clinics as they transition to a new Electronic Health Record.

**Medicaid Participation.** Since early 2011 the Primary Care Coalition has provided consulting services and technical assistance to some Montgomery Cares clinics, to help them move toward becoming Medicaid providers. Funded by the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services through a grant from the Kaiser Foundation, this work began with an assessment of the challenges to Medicaid and Primary Adult Care (PAC) participation for Montgomery Cares participating clinics, and the creation and implementation of a plan to help them overcome the identified challenges. In 2012 and 2013 the PCC received additional funding from Amerigroup and the Montgomery County Council to continue to support clinics as they prepare to become Medicaid providers. Six out of twelve clinics are now participating in Medicaid and another two are in the process of credentialing with Amerigroup

## Funding

The PCC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our programs are funded by the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, grants from a variety of local and national foundations, and corporate and individual donations. Our work is improving the health of the community and we seek support from the community to fulfill our mission.

