

THE PATIENT'S NAVIGATOR

Winter, 2020

Access Now - a program of the Richmond Academy of Medicine



Total number of patients
seen since Access Now
began
15,004



Total current number of
specialty care volunteers
1,067



Total reported value of
donated care since Access
Now began
\$51.4 million

Update: Medicaid Expansion in Virginia



On January 1, 2019, Medicaid became available to eligible adult Virginians who live in households earning **less than 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Level**. In 2020, those levels are \$17,609 annually for an individual or \$29,974 annually for a family of three. [Click here for information.](#)

Medicaid expansion has been a great thing for many patients; a recent [study published](#) in Health Affairs found that Medicaid expansion improved people's health. At the one-year mark for Medicaid expansion in Virginia, the number of newly enrolled adults in Medicaid nearly doubled from 200,100 to 370,000. And survey data from [an online dashboard](#) recently released by the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services indicates that **before gaining health coverage from Medicaid, nearly two-thirds of enrollees went without needed medical care**, primarily due to costs.

While Medicaid coverage is comprehensive – including physician, hospital and emergency services, prescription drugs, behavioral health and substance use services - below-cost reimbursement rates cause a shortage of services in some areas of care. Additionally, there are **some patients who fall through the cracks and can't get the services they so desperately need**. Some may lose coverage throughout the year, whether it's because they get a raise and go over the income limit or because they fail to renew coverage when due. **We continue to learn that access to insurance doesn't always mean access to care.**

Access Now remains a vital lifeline for those whom we serve. **Even with Medicaid expansion in Virginia in 2019, Access Now served more than 2,000 patients in Central Virginia** who needed specialty care. Medicaid expansion has allowed all of our primary care partner clinics to expand outreach to additional uninsured patients. While some left Access Now because they are now insured with Medicaid, we added **1,098** new uninsured patients last year.

The Virginia Health Care Foundation's latest [Profile of the Uninsured](#) offers an in-depth analysis of the state's uninsured population. Key findings include:



- 10.3% of Virginians under age 65 are without medical insurance – equaling 719,000 uninsured Virginians.
- 12.5% of Virginians ages 19 to 64 years of age had no health insurance — 630,000 non-

elderly adult Virginians.

· Most uninsured Virginians are part of working families (3%) — more than nearly two-thirds (65.4%) with at least one full time worker.

In the Know

Representatives from area clinics listen as Access Now Program Manager **Leslie Gibson** explains updates and procedures during a recent meeting.

Access Now staff members work closely with area free clinics and with specialty-care physicians so that patients have a seamless experience.



Thank You, Dr. Smith!



Thanks to **Tovia Smith, MD**, for her years of service on the Access Now Board.

Dr. Smith will continue her work with the Richmond Academy of Medicine, now serving as secretary of the Board of Trustees. She also will continue treating patients in her office as an Access Now medical volunteer.

Welcome to Our Newest Board Member

"I love to be a part of Access Now. There is a segment of population who cannot afford good health insurance despite having full-time jobs. There is another segment who do not qualify for ACA, Medicare or Medicaid. They deserve the care they need. It makes me feel like I am a part of this community, and it feels good to give back to my community and my country."

– **Shreyank Tripathi, MD**, who recently joined the Board of Access Now. Dr. Tripathi, who works at Richmond Nephrology Associates, has been a volunteer since our program began. We're happy to have him expand his role at Access Now!



Support Access Now



Living Life, Pain-Free

Vedisol Diaz, who prides herself on healthy living, had a run of bad luck when she fell and broke her shoulder. "I was resigned to living with the pain," she admits.

But then she fell again and broke the other shoulder – and it was time to seek help. Fortunately, she learned about Access Now and Dr. Julious Smith, who was able to repair her shoulders so she could get on with her life, pain-free. "I feel blessed," she says. "Dr. Smith is incredible. He moved appointments around for me. For me! I am not important; I have nothing. But I am

blessed.

"People with no economic resources or health insurance need help to continue to assist their families and work, and to have faith and hope. When somebody isn't able to access resources like this, it's easy to become depressed. It's not just physical pain but mental and spiritual.

"Access Now is a cause that people should invest in. They'll know that somebody is receiving their blessing. I am so grateful."

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