

Here for you



A MESSAGE FROM
Jean S. Fraser,
CEO

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."
THEODORE HOOP

Access Enhancement Fund Outcomes Exceed Expectations!

In 2004 our Governing Board approved \$800,000 to fund projects that would increase access to care. This Access Enhancement Fund was a competitive grant process that attracted 42 proposals from our provider network.

SFHP's Access Enhancement Fund ultimately supported ten diverse projects that improved access to care for our member, as well as other patients.
See chart below for details.

This was the first time SFHP had created any significant grants, so we hoped to learn from the experience. Recently, we completed an evaluation of the program. The lessons we learned include:

All efforts to improve access to specialty care are not equal. Improving access to specialty care on or near primary care sites appears to work better than increasing specialty services in other locations.

The success of nurse advice lines depends on the patients' cultural preferences. For instance, a clinic with a predominantly Latino

patient population was, with education, able to implement a very successful nurse advice line. Whereas another clinic with a predominantly elderly Chinese population experienced great resistance to phone interactions.

Giving grants takes more effort than one might think. We have new admiration for foundations, since soliciting, selecting, contracting, and monitoring the proposals.

You may not always find what you're looking for. We were disappointed to not receive a single proposal to improve physical access for people with disabilities. Nor did we receive any proposals for "open" or "advanced" access projects for providers to move to a same or next day appointment scheduling system. These are both areas where we believe our network needs improvement. We learned that if we want to fix a particular problem, we may have to find providers specifically interested in working on those improvements.

If you are interested in learning more about the Access Enhancement Fund, please contact Ellen Kaiser, Director of Planning and Evaluation Services, at ekaiser@sfhp.org.

I asked myself one difficult day recently: **"Why in the world did I pick public health care as a career?"** The answer came easily: because it's never boring.

2006 was hardly a boring year for SFHP. We tried a lot, accomplished much, and failed at a few things. Some highlights were that we:

- **Improved** all but one of our HEDIS (quality of medical care) scores.
- **Successfully** helped our Medi-Cal members through the Medicare Part D roll-out.
- **Started** our collaboration with the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund and piloted a first-ever survey of providers to see how they provide services to patients with disabilities.
- **Completed** and presented our ideas on how insurance could be provided to City taxi drivers, but failed to obtain consensus on moving forward.
- **Advocated** successfully for a competitive bid process for the allocation of \$180 million in State Coverage Initiative dollars.
- **Scored** above 90% in all categories of HKYA member satisfaction.
- **Met** all ten of our Member Advisory Committee goals for 2006.
- **Worked** tirelessly to assist the Department of Public Health to complete the design of the Health Access Program.

In 2007, we are sure of a few things – that we will try a lot, accomplish much, and fail occasionally. It would be much easier for SFHP as an organization, and each of us as individuals, to scale back our efforts to "safe" ones. But as the cookie fortune I have taped to my computer says, "Risk may cause failure, but success cannot come without it."

Cheers, *Jan*

The Highlights of AEF Grant Recipient Project Successes

ACCESS ENHANCEMENT FUND GRANT RECIPIENT	PROJECT	OUTCOME
Valencia Health Services	Telephone Advice Nurse	Improved scheduling, quality of care, and patient satisfaction
SFGH Children's Health Center	Staffing for After Hours Clinic	10% increase in primary care visits
Los Portales	Bilingual Physician's Assistant	Increase of 20-25 primary care visits per day for Spanish-speaking patients
SFGH Ophthalmology Clinic	Mobile Eye Van Equipment	Increase of 2,200 diabetic/glaucoma screenings and 1,186 routine eye exams over two years
Sunset Health Services	Bilingual Specialty Services	Reduced wait times for non-urgent specialty appointments to under one month; improved patient-physician communication
SF Hearing and Speech Center	Bilingual Speech Pathologists	Increase of 290 additional child assessments/therapy sessions for Spanish- and Chinese-speaking children over two years
Ocean Park Health Center	Chronic Care Model	45% increase in diabetic foot exams and eye exams
SFGH Urgent Care Clinic	Medical Equipment	150% increase in daily patient visits
Northeast Medical Services	Telecommunications/Advice Nurse	58% increase in calls handled daily

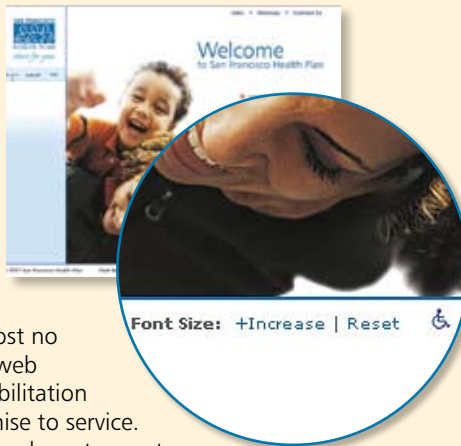
To view the complete Access Enhancement Fund Evaluation Report, visit San Francisco Health Plan online at www.sfhp.org/providers/quality_improvement.

Enhancing our website for disabled users was easier than we thought!

As part of our on-going effort to improve services to individuals with disabilities, we've updated our website to make it more accessible. We were a little nervous about meeting the high accessibility standards we had selected. It turned out to be far easier than anticipated.

We were able to make our website accessible with almost no impact on its appearance. In fact, we discovered most web technologies can meet Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act accessibility rules with out interruption or compromise to service. Though Section 508 only applies to federal agencies, we chose to meet those standards. Given our experience, we encourage all website owners to make their sites accessible to the disabled.

We are very grateful for the assistance of Mary Lou Breslin and the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Inc. (DREDF) in helping us complete this project. If you would like more information on how we optimized our website for Section 508 compliance, email Bob Menezes, SFHP Director of Marketing & Communications, at bmenezes@sfhp.org.



Needs Assessment Points Us to Areas of Improvement

Access to specialty care, African Americans' lacking use of preventive health services, and inappropriate utilization of emergency rooms were the top three issues we face as identified by our recent Group Needs Assessment (GNA). This assessment helps us define the specific needs of our members by collecting data from member and provider surveys and from our utilization data.

We've known for a while that untimely access to specialty care is a problem in our network. To that end, we've created the Access Enhancement Fund

(see separate article in this issue) and funded the spread of the innovative eReferral system to more specialty services at San Francisco General Hospital. We are continuing to look for new ways to improve specialty access, so please let us know if you have any ideas.

A problem that surprised us is limited use of preventive services

by African Americans in our network. We are working on a program to encourage preventive service use by our members, with a focus on understanding cultural and other barriers.

Finally, we have identified two issues with emergency room use that need attention. First, a small but significant number of SFHP members use the emergency room as their sole source of medical care. Secondly, a surprisingly large number of our members go to emergency rooms for non-urgent symptoms, such as a cough or fever. These practices are bad for our members' health (no preventive or ongoing care). They cause great inconvenience for them (long waiting times), and use limited health care resources (emergency room personnel) inefficiently. We will be working in 2007 to understand and address these issues.

To request a complete copy of the report or for more information, contact Rowena Tarantino, SFHP Manager of Health Education and Cultural & Linguistics Services, at rtarantino@sfhp.org.

We're Extending Coverage to City As-Needed Workers

As a result of negotiations between the City and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), San Francisco Health Plan will be extending health care coverage to approximately 650 of the City's as-needed ("on-call") workers in July 2007.

In December 2006, a City/SEIU As-Needed Health Benefits Committee reviewed coverage options and chose to insure these workers through our Healthy Workers program, with the same benefits, co-pays, and provider network available to existing Healthy Workers members.

These additional members will increase our Healthy Workers membership by 8%, and our overall membership by 1%.

We are very pleased to be assisting the City in yet another of its efforts to cover everyone in San Francisco.

Keep Here For You here for you!

In keeping with San Francisco Health Plan's commitment to a healthy environment, the *Here for You* newsletter is becoming 100% electronic beginning with the Spring 2007 issue. We will cease production of hardcopies and produce this publication only as an e-newsletter or as a downloadable pdf from our website at this location:

www.sfhp.org/about_us/our_publications.

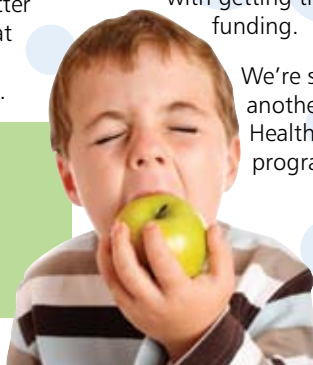
We want to continue sharing news and information about SFHP with you, so if you are a current hardcopy subscriber of *Here for You*, send your email address to info@sfhp.org to be placed on the electronic subscription list.

San Francisco is first in the state to get federal funding for Healthy Kids program

Working in partnership with the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH), SFHP's Healthy Kids & Young Adults program became one of the first California programs to receive federal funding. To date we have obtained \$386,000 and we expect to get an additional \$1.04 million for claims from 2004-2006. Going forward, the total federal funding is estimated at \$540,000 a year.

This new funding is the result of AB 495, legislation that SFHP and our sister local health plans championed in 2001, which allows counties to draw down a 2-to-1 federal match on premiums for documented Healthy Kids members with family incomes between 250-300% FPL. It took until 2006 for MRMIB, the State agency assigned to manage AB 495, to complete the work necessary to get the program launched. We are grateful to MRMIB for their assistance with getting this much-needed funding.

We're so pleased to add another "first" to our Healthy Kids & Young Adults program!



SFHP at a glance

Percentages of our Medi-Cal members surveyed in SFHP Group Needs Assessment reporting satisfaction with the following health services:

Healthcare	88.3%
Health Information/Advice	90.0%
Respect/Courteous Service	92.0%
SFHP Services	89.7%