

## HealthCorps Members Make a Difference

Eleven HealthCorps members joined PCHC for 1700 hours of service from September 2005 through August 2006. Each member is chosen based on their demonstrated experience in health, education, non-profit organizations, and/or with volunteerism. The main role of the member is to provide patient education, increase access to care and improve utilization in one of three areas: asthma, diabetes, and prenatal care.

Most PCHC HealthCorps students are bilingual in English, Spanish and/or Portuguese. Key interpretation services that students provide on a daily basis include:

- Provider to patient interpretation services for all five PCHC sites
- URI Mental Health Sessions at Allen Berry Health Center
- Diabetes Chronic Care Model at Allen Berry
- Labor and delivery
- Diabetes and Asthma workshops
- Home-based health education for asthma and prenatal education
- Nutrition Workshops

These vital interpretation services create a more caring and comfortable environment for PCHC patients, allowing us to reach a broader audience with much-needed health information.

Jennifer Pereira, a HealthCorps member, works at the Fox Point Health Center. She is a bilingual Portuguese-speaking prenatal educator in OB/GYN. Recently she assisted a birth at Women and Infants Hospital, where PCHC patients deliver their infants. Jennifer recounts:

"As a doula lay birth attendant, I assist my patients who are admitted into Women and Infants Hospital in preparation for labor and delivery. I received a page on 1/23/06 from a patient who speaks only Portuguese. I was able to assist her through the delivery and bridge the communication gap between the attending midwife, OB nurse and the doctor. Not only was the patient grateful to have an interpreter, but the doctor and RN commented that 'everyone should have a doula, especially one that can speak the language and be an interpreter.'

"Later that week, I completed a post-partum visit with the patient to check on her well-being and discuss the labor experience. I was greeted by the patient's son who gave me a hug and said 'Thanks for helping my Mommy.'"

## It Was a Night to Remember!



Stephen Therrien, industrial salesman, Cynthia Warren, from Cameron and Mittleman, Kerrie Jones Clark, RIHCA, and Laura Adams, President/CEO of RI Quality Institute share conversation at the Gala 2005.



Senator Lincoln D. Chafee receives the Providence Community Health Centers Chairman's Leadership Award from Merrill Thomas, CEO of PCHC.

Our 2005 Gala Fundraising Event was a sellout! With over 300 participants, we want to thank all who participated and express gratitude to our generous donors. The event rose over \$107,000, with over \$20,000 contributed from the silent auction. Proceeds from this year's event will be used in support of children's services at the new Health Center being built on Warren Avenue. Special congratulations to Hugh Lena who placed the highest bid for a trip to Paris, France.

Mark your calendars for this year's Gala, once again held at the beautiful Biltmore on November 3, 2006.



Bob Diaz and Karen Kelleher have a good time on the dance floor.

## First Lady Sue Carcieri Shares the Joy of Reading at PCHC

First Lady Suzanne Carcieri, a Reading Ambassador for Scholastic's 7th Annual Read for 2006 Day global reading initiative, read to a group of Providence kindergarten students at a kick-off celebration of reading at the Providence Health Center at Capitol Hill on Friday, December 2.

"Read for 2006 Day connects children around their world, their schools, and their families with a common activity. While reading is an important part of the learning process in schools and homes every day, it is wonderful to have a day to celebrate it as an enjoyable activity that has a positive impact on a child's future," said Mrs. Carcieri, one of 43 First Spouses serving as Reading Ambassadors. "It is great to have this observance toward the end of the year, as it provides an excellent opportunity to renew our commitment to reading in the New Year."



A kindergarten class from the Harry Kizirian Elementary School listened to the First Lady read in the waiting room at Capitol Hill Health Center, one of 29 Reach Out and Read/RI sites throughout the state. Reach Out and Read/RI promotes literacy as a standard part of pediatric primary health care, to help parents understand the importance of literacy and to engender a love of reading in young children. Reach Out and Read programs are offered at all PCHC facilities.

Participating doctors and nurses are trained to talk to parents during their children's routine medical exams about the importance of reading aloud. Parents receive age-appropriate tips for reading with their children. Youngsters aged 6 months to 5 years are given new books targeted to their stages of development, and older children are able to choose "gently used" books. Volunteers in clinic waiting rooms read aloud to children, showing parents and children techniques to enhance the shared experience of reading.

"I applaud Reach Out and Read's efforts to teach parents about the importance of reading," said the First Lady. "Parents who regularly read to their children understand the educational benefits of early literacy. They also understand that reading promotes a special closeness between parent and child, and provides parents with opportunities to discuss important issues and concepts."

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### PCHC Mission Statement

"Provide neighborhood-based, high quality and accessible primary medical care to improve the health status of the residents of Providence and surrounding communities, regardless of their ability to pay."



# Highlight on Special Services

## PCHC Whitmarsh Clinic

Last year, PCHC's Whitmarsh Clinic cared for over 5,000 patients in quiet confidentiality. The only free STD clinic in the state, PCHC's clinic follows HIPPA laws of confidentiality. Because the services are free, patients are not billed hence not even insurance companies can know that a patient has been treated.

The clinic tests for and treats a range of STDs, including Chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV. While the majority of patients are 20-34 years old, the clinic also works with the very young and elders.

In addition, the clinic gives free Hepatitis B vaccines, which are a series of three shots that normally would cost \$110 per shot. Bernadette Mansfield, R.N.P. and clinic coordinator, notes that children receive free vaccinations through the Health department; and that all adults should be vaccinated.

The clinic provides education on a one-to-one basis, discussing safe sexual practices and providing condoms. Staff is also available to answer questions via telephone.

The clinic is open Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Appointments can be made by calling 401-444-0483.

## Fast Facts

2005 was a busy year for PCHC, and 2006 doesn't seem to be letting up! The following is a review of the programs undertaken in 2005, and what lies ahead.

### PCHC 2005 in Review

- Opened new dental clinic
- Opened new school-based clinic at The MET
- Added new clinical services: Endocrinology Buprenorphine, expansion of asthma services, and expansion of diabetes services
- Saved patients over \$150,000 through the 340 B pharmacy program
- Obtained final City approval and broke ground for our new facility at One Warren Way
- Implemented new hours of operation with all facilities working on the same time schedule for the convenience of our patients
- Successfully started new Open Access Pilot at the Capitol Hill Health Center
- Launched our new Web site
- Began renovations at our new Central Facility
- Continued our customer service trainings
- Had successful JCAHO accreditation visit for re-accreditation process
- Provided 139,000 encounters serving over 36,000 patients
- Created a new personnel handbook
- Once again renewed our Health and Human Services 330 Grant
- Held 2nd Annual Gala, raising over \$107,000

### PCHC 2006 Projections

- Grand opening of our new Warren Way facility
- New collaborations with Providence Center and the piloting of a state project
- Expansion of dental services
- Addition of ultrasound services
- Expansion of Open Access to other facilities
- Increase in urgent care opportunities for patients
- New collaborations with other organizations in the city
- Increased services to the elderly

## PCHC Clinics Take the Sting Out of Medicaid Cuts

As Medicaid cuts become a reality – hitting hardest those who can afford it the least – PCHC has renewed dedication to serve the children, families, disabled, and elderly who need care in Providence, regardless of their ability to pay for services. This doesn't come, however, without an increased financial burden to PCHC.

As more patients turn to PCHC for much-needed care that is no longer covered by Medicaid or Rite Care, PCHC is committed to serving patients and helping local hospitals cope with the cuts.

"Cuts in Medicaid, including reduced benefits, new restrictions on eligibility, and new or increased costs, unduly burdens those who can least afford it," comments Merrill Thomas, CEO of PCHC. "The increased accessibility of our clinics, the new Open Access program and our urgent care services give the Providence community a low-cost or no-cost option to much-needed care that may be lost to Medicaid costs."

To continue to provide our high levels of service, PCHC asks for your support, through donations and your vote against Medicaid cuts. For more information, contact Loretta Tharp, Director of Income Development, at 401-444-0400 x3175.

## Capitol Hill Open Access Pilot Program a Success

One of the hallmarks of PCHC has been its flexibility and willingness to stretch the boundaries of traditional healthcare organizations in order to bring the best services to its patients. When the organization decided to pilot an Open Access program at the Capitol Hill facility in 2005, PCHC took its flexibility to the edge.

The program ensures that every patient who needs or wants a same-day appointment is taken care of. To meet the anticipated needs of the program, staff had to extend their hours, change their normal-operating procedures, and redefine their call-in center. The result? According to Dr. Jorge Gonzales, Internal Medicine at the Capitol Hill facility, the program is providing faster services to patients-in-need, the number of 'no-show' appointments has been dramatically reduced, and the pilot has created a source of innovation and dedication to continuous improvement.

Gonzales comments, "It's a great move for the patients and for the centers. Patients have quicker access to us. Now they don't have to wait months for an appointment. If they have an acute complaint, they can see us the same day. This is proving to be a positive advantage for the community."

Numbers indicate that the Capitol Hill facility is serving more patients, and patients are keeping their appointments. In the past, many patients would forget an appointment that was made 2-3 months into the future, or they would skip an appointment because they no longer had symptoms. Same-day appointments mean lower miss-rates and higher patient satisfaction.

In addition, notes Gonzales, Capitol Hill has seen an increase in new patients who wish to take advantage of the Open Access program.

The program has been of particular benefit to chronic-pain patients who need to be seen when their pain is most acute.

PCHC plans to expand the Open Access program to other centers. Once the backlog of already-booked patients is cleared, facilities will be better able to handle the new program. "This is a big effort not only in time, but in the number of people working," notes Gonzales. "It means longer hours for staff; but once adjustments are made the work is easier and the patients are happier."

PCHC at Capitol Hill is almost fully operating as an Open Access facility. Gonzales notes that there are ongoing meetings to further streamline operations and to make it easier for other centers to get up

to speed quicker. New phone systems, different work-shifts, and a different mix of staff all make Open Access a reality.

Another benefit to patients and to local hospitals is a reduction in emergency room traffic. This reduces the cost of care for patients, and allows ER staff to deal with the most critical-care situations. "Open Access means that we try to see patients on the day they call for an appointment. This reduces the overall burden on the health-care system, and means that patients go to the appropriate facility based on the acuteness of their condition. It decreases the cost to them or to their health insurer by decreasing unnecessary use of the ER and hospitalizations caused by delays in care," notes Gonzales.

Collaborative efforts have made the Open Access a success. This teamwork will serve as a model for other facilities that wish to embark on Open Access to better serve their patients' needs. Gonzales concludes, "We learned a lot through a collaborative effort. Everybody has shared their experiences and made worthwhile recommendations. Dr. Beth Toolan and I are eager to share our experiences with the physicians in other centers."

For more information on Open Access, contact Claudette Charpentier, R.N., M.P.H. at 401-444-0550 x 3568.

## Gives Kids A Smile Day

The PCHC Dental Clinic, the American Dental Association (ADA) and the Rhode Island Dental Association participated in the annual *Give Kids a Smile Day* on February 3, 2006. The program, initiated by the ADA in 2003, helps increase awareness of the importance of access to children's dental care and also provides much-needed services to patients.

PCHC is extremely pleased to have participated in this year's event. The PCHC Dental Clinic, which opened in May 2005 to serve children and high-risk pregnant women, is a major dental provider for children throughout Providence. Participation in this year's event was spearheaded by PCHC Dental Director, Dr. David Blanco and Dental Hygienist, Carleen Dupre working closely with Marie Ghazal and Lynda Greene.



L to R: Dr. Stanley Block, Marie Ghazal, Dr. Michael Barry, Dr. Robert Varone, Dr. Maria Saccoccio, Dr. John Wade, Merrill Thomas.

Volunteer dentists for the day included Dr. Maria Saccoccio and Dr. John Wade from Warwick, Dr. Michael Barry from Johnston and Dr. Robert Varone from Warwick. All took a day off from their private dental practices to volunteer at PCHC. Drs. Saccoccio and Wade began their careers at PCHC Allen Berry's Dental Clinic and have been instrumental in offering their services to the new dental clinic at 557 Broad Street.

Over 29 children and adolescents, many who were new patients to the clinic, received services on GKAS Day. Participants were provided with a dental exam, cleaning, fluoride and sealants, if indicated. Toothbrushes, toothpaste and floss were given to everyone along with education and advice for follow-up. We would like to extend our thanks to Crest® toothpaste and Sullivan & Schein, dental suppliers, for their donated supplies and to the Rhode Island Dental Association for their contributions to this day.

Dr. Blanco, director of the PCHC Dental Clinic summed up the day, "We want to thank everybody who helped make this day a positive one for the volunteers, PCHC staff, and especially for the patients. We look forward to GKAS Day in 2007, and to seeing more children benefit from the critical early dental care services that we can provide."

### Board of Directors

51% of PCHC Board Members are also our patients.

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## PCHC LOCATIONS

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239 Cranston Street  
401-444-0580

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557 Broad Street  
401-444-0430

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550 Wickenden Street  
401-444-0530

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100 Curtis Street  
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