

Access to Health Care Services

Goal

Improve access to primary care, emergency services, dental services, and preventive services, while maintaining cost effectiveness.

Objectives

1. By 2010, increase the percentage of persons with health insurance from 86% to 95%. [Relates to Healthy People 2010 objective 1-1]
2. (Developmental) By 2010, significantly increase availability of transportation to health services.
3. (Developmental) By 2010, increase the percentage of Delawareans with health insurance coverage for recommended clinical preventive services to 95%. [Relates to Healthy People objective 1-2]
4. (Developmental) By 2010, increase the proportion of Delawareans, including Medicaid clients, who use the oral health care system to 100%. [Relates to Healthy People objectives 21-10 and 21-12]
5. By 2010, increase the percentage of African Americans and Hispanics in health professions (primary care physicians, nurses, and dentists) to 17.3% and 4% respectively. [Relates to Healthy People objective 1-8]
6. By 2010, increase the number of primary care physicians per person from 1 per 1,267 in Sussex County and 1 per 1,708 in Kent County to 1 per 1,250.
7. By 2010, decrease wait times for non-emergency appointments from 8.2 days for an established patient and 13.9 days for a new patient to 6.7 days.

Notes:

The numeral assignment of each objective does not indicate priority, simply enumeration.

“Developmental” objectives are those that currently do not have state baseline data and, therefore, have no operational definitions. The purpose of developmental objectives is to identify areas of emerging importance and to drive the development of data systems to measure them.

Important roles for each sector*

Business

- Provide insurance coverage for employees and dependents, with special strategies to help small businesses, and sponsor health services where people work and live.

Community

- Participate in efforts to strengthen and promote the health care and transportation systems and hold health services accountable for accessible and culturally competent care.

Health Care

- Offer and promote affordable health insurance coverage, assure accessible and culturally competent systems of care, and mentor minority students to enter health careers.

Education

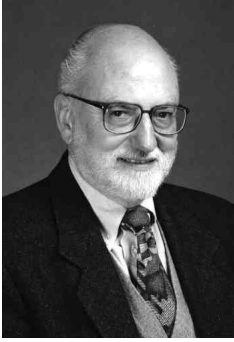
- Develop programs to prepare and mentor minority students for health careers, educate providers to meet consumer needs, and promote appropriate uses of health care.

Government

- Help businesses offer affordable insurance, monitor health care needs, lead efforts to increase dental and transportation services, and assure culturally competent government programs.



Healthy Delaware Hero



Gonzolo Martinez

Gonzolo Martinez is a lawyer by training, but an institution builder by nature. When he sees a need, he fills it...and fill it he does! He has started a cultural organization, a community center, and a day care facility. In the process, he has helped to bring hope to thousands in Sussex County.

La Red, one of the organizations he has helped shape, is a bilingual community health care center that has a mission to respond to the health care needs of Sussex County residents, regardless of a person's ability to pay. La Red gives the under-insured and the uninsured access to quality oriented, comprehensive, preventative, and primary health care services.

La Red is a collaborative effort between La Esperanza, Nanticoke Health Services, the Delaware Division of Public Health, and a network of rural, private practice specialty, bilingual physicians.

Resources (General)

- Delaware Health Care Commission, (302) 739-6906, fax (302) 739-6927, www.state.de.us/dhcc - reports, data, information on uninsured population, coordination of the Health Care Access Improvement Coalition
- Division of Public Health, (302) 739-3809, fax (302) 739-6653, www.state.de.us/dhss/irm/dph/chca.htm - community health care access
- Health Resources and Services Administration, (888) ASK-HRSA, www.hrsa.gov - funding, programs, and information to increase access and train a diverse health workforce

The mentioning of specific programs does not connote endorsement and was not meant to be exclusionary. We apologize for any unintentional omissions; please bring these to our attention.

Closing the Gap

Disparities exist among population groups in Delaware with regard to their likelihood of being insured. For example:

- Blacks are more likely to be uninsured than whites
- Hispanics are more likely to be uninsured than non-Hispanics
- Most uninsured have incomes at or below 250% of the poverty level
- Employees of small firms are more likely to be uninsured than employees of large firms
- Young adults are more likely to be uninsured than other age groups.

But insurance alone does not always guarantee access. In some cases, disparities in access occur – even for the card-carrying insured – because a conveniently located provider base does not exist. Overall, Delaware probably has an adequate number of primary care providers and dentists, for example, but there are pockets within the state that have deficiencies of certain types of providers, including, but not limited to dentists, pediatricians, obstetrician/gynecology, general and pediatric psychiatrists, and medical oncologists.

According to the Delawareans Without Health Insurance report produced in 1997, there are more than 100,000 people in the state without insurance. As a result of the report, a recommendation was made to increase access to health insurance and to health care by providing no-cost or low-cost services in culturally sensitive, language appropriate environments. Numerous efforts are underway to ensure adequate access to health care for all Delawareans.

