

The Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO) Applauds the Start-Up of the First-Ever County-Wide Health Access Partnership

The AMCNO is pleased to be one of the founding organizations of the Cuyahoga Health Access Partnership (CHAP), a countywide health access partnership created to provide a coordinated system of access to care across all providers for the region's low income insured adults. This public-private partnership will focus on providing a network of resources to lower-income uninsured residents throughout Cuyahoga County.

The Cuyahoga Health Access Partnership, or CHAP, is a stand alone 501(c)(3) non profit incorporated in September as a joint public-private partnership focused on access to care in Cuyahoga County and founded on the principle of shared responsibility. CHAP is managed by a Board of Directors, represented by all initial stakeholders including major healthcare providers, physicians, health care organizations, safety net providers,

government entities, health plans and foundations. Demonstrating the organization's commitment to this vital work, each founding member has signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

Founding organizations include: The Academy of Medicine of Cleveland and Northern Ohio, Care Alliance Health

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Members of the Cuyahoga Health Access Partnership (CHAP) Board and other representatives pose with County Commissioner Tim Hagan at the Board of County Commissioners meeting in December.

AMCNO REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Center, CareSource, City of Cleveland, Cleveland Clinic, Cuyahoga County Board of County Commissioners, Kaiser Permanente, the MetroHealth System, Neighborhood Family Practice, Northeast Ohio Neighborhood Health Services, North Coast Health Ministry, Saint Luke's Foundation, Sisters of Charity Health System, The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland and University Hospitals.

Anthony E. Bacevice, Jr., M.D., president of the AMCNO was on hand at the County Commissioners meeting on December 17th to launch the project. During his presentation to the county commissioners Dr. Bacevice noted "The creation of CHAP provides an important source of care to those lower-income uninsured residents of Cuyahoga County who might otherwise go without important preventative services and intervention where needed."

Sister Judith Ann Karam, representing the area hospital systems noted that "CHAP enhances the safety net and works across health care delivery systems."

The first major initiative of CHAP will be to establish an access plan. The access plan seeks to connect participants to affordable care and to enhance coordination, cooperation and referral patterns among care-providing institutions. The access plan is differentiated from other efforts by the extent of institutional commitment to caring for low-income uninsured residents in a coordinated manner, with the ultimate goal of attaching uninsured adults to a medical home or regular primary care practitioner.

Initially, the access plan will strive to offer a primary care home to all uninsured adults at or below 200 percent of poverty to improve overall quality of care. Program

enrollment is limited to Cuyahoga County residents between the ages of 18 and 64 who do not qualify for public healthcare programs (e.g. Medicare, Medicaid and Veterans' health coverage/VA) or who are without an employer-sponsored insurance option.

The CHAP access plan is slated to start enrollment in the spring of 2010. Interested lower-income uninsured adults will join the access plan through his or her current health care-provider participating in CHAP or 2-1-1/First Call for Help. The local collaboration requires prudent planning and execution, the CHAP Board of Directors is carrying out a deliberate, but phased in implementation of the access program.

CHAP leadership will offer additional program updates prior to the opening of the enrollment process. ■