

# Cuyahoga Health Access Partnership (CHAP) Provides Progress Report at Inaugural Annual Meeting

In July the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO) physician leadership and staff were pleased to attend the inaugural annual meeting of the Cuyahoga Health Access Partnership (CHAP) program.

Other attendees included representatives from all of the CHAP partners. *(A complete list of the partners is included at the end of this article.)* Representing the CHAP board during the annual meeting presentation were Ms. Kate Nagel, Chair, CHAP Board of Directors, Senior Director, Public Health & Research, Cleveland Clinic, and Ms. Robin J. Bachman, Vice Chair & Interim Chair, CHAP Board of Directors, Assistant Vice President, Government Affairs & Public Policy, Sisters of Charity Health System.

During the meeting, the attendees were provided with detailed information on the status of CHAP. CHAP is a collaboration of public and private organizations that have formed a countywide partnership to provide a coordinated system of healthcare access for Cuyahoga County's low-income, uninsured adults. The stand-alone organization was incorporated in 2009 and was founded on the principle that all stakeholders have a shared responsibility to address the uninsured crisis in Cuyahoga County. CHAP's vision is to provide a system of access for uninsured adults in Cuyahoga County. All participating stakeholders acknowledge the importance of working together to improve the health of our region. Each of the member organizations are committed to serving our community by caring for the uninsured and working toward the common goal of increasing healthcare access.

CHAP's first major initiative has been to establish an access plan that connects participants to a primary care site or "medical home." This will help patients manage their health more effectively, and in turn,

improve health outcomes. The access plan will improve efficiency across the healthcare system by promoting care coordination, reducing episodic care, duplicative care and unnecessary evaluations. Initially the access plan will be open to all uninsured adults at or below 200 percent of poverty. Program enrollment will be limited to Cuyahoga County residents between the ages of 19 and 64 who do not qualify for public healthcare programs and are without an employer-sponsored insurance option.

Under the access plan, CHAP members will be enrolled where they receive primary care and complete one eligibility screening to become a CHAP member. Income eligibility redetermination will occur every 90 to 180 days depending on HCAP requirements for hospitals and primary care providers will refer CHAP members to specialty care as needed. There will be common protocol for financial eligibility with web-based software storing financial documentation which can be accessed from all sites, eliminating multiple determinations at different provider organizations. Provider organizations will accept the same proofs of residency and income and will maintain their individual sliding-fee systems. A specialty network will be available through a CHAP service directory – a web-based searchable tool that will be utilized by staff at provider organizations to facilitate referrals to participating specialists.

Presenters noted that according to the 2008 Ohio Family Health Survey, roughly 142,000 people in Cuyahoga County, or 1 in 6 working adults (18-64), were without health coverage. The uninsured



*Dr. Michael Anderson (left) and Dr. Lawrence Kent spend a moment prior to the start of the CHAP annual meeting.*

population includes many people with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and hypertension that will worsen without regular medical care and could lead to more costly care and hospitalizations. As a result, an individual may be unable to work or function in his or her family and community.

A highlight of the annual meeting was the introduction of Ms. Sarah Hackenbracht, the new CHAP Executive Director. Sarah comes to CHAP from the Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association where she was Vice President of Public Policy. She is responsible for CHAP's strategic operations related to program development, communications, finance, and fund development. In cooperation with the CHAP Board of Directors, Ms. Hackenbracht will focus on CHAP's mission to provide access to primary and specialty health care services for the area's low-income, uninsured population. She also plans to work to expand CHAP's primary care capacity and identify gaps in specialty care based on CHAP utilization data, recruit physicians to participate in CHAP, and partner with other organizations to improve community health within the CHAP population.

**Editor's note:** *The AMCNO is proud to be a participating organization in CHAP with representation on both the CHAP Executive Committee and Board of Directors. AMCNO members interested in obtaining additional information about CHAP may contact the AMCNO at (216) 520-1000. ■*