

ECONOMIC BARRIERS
Program Year 2012

GOAL: “To reduce economic barriers to accessing health and health care for the people of New Hampshire”

Good health is a product of where and how we live and work, our access to care, our individual and collective behavior, and our family and community history. In this mix, economic status has a far greater impact on health than our egalitarian society would like to admit. Economic barriers to health include lack of access to care, safe housing, healthy food, and physical activity. Even those with access to the healthcare system can find it complex and confusing: quality and outcomes vary and the payment system is confusing. The Affordable Care Act will bring much needed change to an expensive health care system that has left many out and hasn't always promoted health, prevented disease, or provided high-quality care. The Endowment's work to reduce economic barriers to health will continue to focus on developing access for all residents to a high quality, cost-effective health system for all, with special attention to the safety net system and our most vulnerable and underserved populations.



Investment to date: \$7,535,034

Number of grants to date: 146

Theme Outcomes

- A comprehensive and sustainable body of science- and evidence-based knowledge about economic barriers in New Hampshire, New England, and in the United States
- A cost-effective health system in New Hampshire in which health care and coverage are available, affordable, and of high quality
- Strengthened state and local policies that reduce the impact of economic barriers on health and access to health care in New Hampshire

Theme Strategies

- Supporting the development and dissemination of data/information/best practices about economic barriers in New Hampshire and in the United States
- Supporting communication, education, and advocacy efforts to increase awareness of and action on issues of economic access
- Developing and implementing new models to reduce the impact of economic barriers on health and access to health care
- Supporting local efforts to address economic barriers
- Supporting the effectiveness and sustainability of safety-net providers
- Supporting efforts to identify, test, and implement public policy options that increase the number of situations where public or private health coverage is available and affordable, while taking steps to contain costs and improve quality

Progress:

Over the past year, Endowment investments have accomplished the following:

Public policy and public conversation

- Continued collaborative work on health system and payment reform and the integration of population health with the clinical care system through support for the Citizens Health Initiative.
- Hosted 2010 summit on implementing federal health reform that brought in a national speaker and 100 participants to learn about the opportunities and challenges of health law implementation in NH. Launched *NH Pilot*, an online tool with information about the new federal health law and its impact on individuals, families and small businesses.
- Continued to support NH Voices for Health, the state's first statewide health advocacy coalition, which continues to monitor, educate and advocate on issues related to health care access and equity, children's health insurance, and health reform implementation.

Testing new models, ideas, and approaches to assuring access to health and health care

- Supported pilot of a medical home project in nine NH practices that serve nearly 40,000 patients. All sites have achieved the highest national certification for medical home practice, including the first nurse-practitioner-owned site in the country. Preliminary results show that practices have increased patient satisfaction and better outcomes and lowered costs for emergency rooms visits. The Center for Medical Home Improvement has received two major federal grants to expand this work nationally.
- Supporting an Accountable Care Organization (ACO) pilot project with health system stakeholders in five regions to implement payment reform and quality strategies that will work to improve quality and contain health care costs.

Assuring access for those who directly experience economic barriers to health

- Improved sustainability of community mental health centers by supporting joint implementation of an electronic health record in five centers.

Current Funding Interests:

Economic barriers to health and health care are among the most critical issues facing New Hampshire and the nation today, with an increased urgency in public conversation and action as we look at national and state implementation of the health law. The Endowment is committed to moving toward systems-level change in the state, primarily by addressing the issues at a policy level. Grantmaking will focus largely on public policy initiatives, advocacy, applied research, and informed public conversation to assure access to a quality, cost-effective health system for all New Hampshire residents.

The Endowment will particularly welcome:

- Proposals that address policy-level projects focusing on systems change in linking cost, coverage, and quality in health care, especially those that help move the state forward in responding to national health reform implementation, including policy or communications work to assure that vulnerable and underserved populations have access to and a voice in developing implementation of the health system reforms.
- Targeted project proposals that address gaps in research and those that address critical areas of concern related to economic access to health for our most vulnerable residents and tracking the results of implementation of the Affordable Care Act.
- Efforts that leverage federal or other national funds to improve the transparency of the health system, reduce costs, and improve quality.
- The financial sustainability of the safety net will continue to be a focus for both responsive and strategic grant making.

The acting Program Director for the Economic Barriers theme is Mary Vallier-Kaplan at mvkaplan@endowmentforhealth.org or (603) 228-2448, Endowment for Health, 14 South St., Concord, NH 03301. A listing of Endowment Economic Barriers grants is available at www.endowmentforhealth.org