



KEY FINDINGS

From 2007 Access to Care Data Report

The RHC's 2007 analysis of the safety net health care system in the St. Louis region reveals the following key findings and changes since the 2003 assessment:

Unprecedented collaboration among health care providers, major organizational changes and innovative initiatives have strengthened the health care safety net since 2002

- Formation of the St. Louis Integrated Health Network (IHN) in 2003 created a standing forum for the CEOs of the major safety net institutions to more effectively coordinate their efforts and implement the RHC's Access To Care recommendations for strengthening care for low-income uninsured and underinsured populations in the City and County
- Transfer of 4 primary care health centers previously operated by St. Louis ConnectCare to two Federally Qualified Health Centers in 2005, thereby permitting access to incremental Federal support and resources
- Preservation of \$23 million annually in DSH payments to support the primary/specialty safety net care
- Primary care/emergency department integration through a "Primary Care Home Initiative" started in 2007
- Integration of behavioral health providers through the "Eastern Region Behavioral Health Initiative" started in 2006



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Access to primary medical care has improved since 2002

- Primary care encounters in regional safety net institutions have increased by 33,669 (6%) in to 563,759 encounters in 2006:
 - The Medicaid and uninsured population had 41,418 more encounters
 - The Medicare and privately-insured populations had 7,749 fewer encounters
- 4 hospital-based primary care clinics have closed since 2003 – these 4 sites accounted for 40,000 patient encounters in 2003
- The remaining 24 primary care safety net sites have seen a 14% increase (75,000 visits) in their patient volumes
- More primary care sites are now offering evening hours; fewer sites are offering Saturday hours due to the closure of some clinics and the consolidation of others
- Dental visits at safety net institutions have increased nearly 40% (19,558 visits) since 2002

Access to specialty and urgent medical care has significantly improved since 2002

- Between 2001 and 2006, total specialty care encounters for uninsured and Medicaid patients increased by 21,967 visits (9.5%)
- Access to specialty care at St. Louis ConnectCare has improved significantly since 2001 with appointments currently available within three weeks of patient request for most subspecialties
- The scope of subspecialty services at St. Louis ConnectCare has expanded (ex: new GI endoscopy services, rheumatology, nephrology, endocrinology)
- Urgent Care visits at ConnectCare's Smiley Urgent Care center, the only urgent care center located in St. Louis' areas of highest need, have increased by approximately 6% since 2004 from 11,560 encounters to 12,240 encounters



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Emergency Department (ED) volumes have remained constant across the region since 2002

- Although volumes at some hospitals have increased significantly, the total number of ED visits in St. Louis City and County remained constant at approximately 600,000 visits between 2001 and 2006
- Hospital EDs remained overcrowded in 2006 with nearly 24,000 patients leaving without being seen because of long wait times
- Total non-emergent visits to area EDs increased slightly between 2001 and 2006

Health outcomes have modestly improved in the St. Louis region since 2002 but remain unfavorable when compared to national benchmarks

- With the exception of sexually transmitted diseases, most health outcome indicators have shown modest improvement between 2002 and 2005
- Significant disparities in health outcomes remain with worse outcomes noted in St. Louis City and north St. Louis County

Size of uninsured & Medicaid population has increased

- The total number of uninsured and Medicaid individuals in St. Louis City and County increased by at least 13,000 individuals between 2002 and 2006, from approximately 307,000 to 320,000 individuals. This increase is likely due to the reduction in employer-sponsored health insurance in the St. Louis region over these years.
- Within this population, a significant shift has occurred since 2002 as approximately 18,000 individuals (net) lost Medicaid coverage and became uninsured in St. Louis City and County.
- Due to the combination of the reduction of employer-sponsored health insurance and the reduction in Medicaid coverage, the total number of uninsured individuals in St. Louis City and County rose by at least 31,000 individuals (24%) between 2002 and 2006.



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St. Louis safety net providers have faced major external challenges over the past four years

- Closure of 4 hospital-based safety net clinics in St. Louis City and County accounting for nearly 40,000 encounters per year
- A significant and growing shortage of primary care providers
- 17,981 St. Louis City and County residents lost Medicaid coverage in 2005
- Continued reduction in employer-sponsored coverage in Missouri at twice the national average – decline of over 5% from 2001 to 2005
- Substantial increase in the number of uninsured in the state of Missouri – over 3 times the national rate of increase

Many of the 2002 Access to Care and Call to Action recommendations have been implemented

- In 2002, a community-wide “Call to Action” session led to a series of recommendations to the RHC for improving access to care and eliminating health outcome disparities. The RHC endorsed these recommendations and built upon them to create a total of 95 specific recommendations for improving access to care and reducing health disparities in our community.
- Substantial progress has been made in implementing these recommendations with over \$10 million of local funding invested to date – several other large-scale initiatives are currently in the process of being implemented