

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION NO. 98-34

Addressing the Provision of Primary Health Care Services to Under-Served, Uninsured, and Under-insured County Residents

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a) Multnomah County has a long history of responding to the community health needs of its citizens, and has provided primary health care services for decades to its poor and vulnerable children and adults who have not traditionally had access to private health care systems.
- b) During the 1996-97 fiscal year, the County provided 94,530 primary care visits to 23,750 County residents. Nearly half of these residents (9,900) were at or below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and utilized 37,080 visits. The County provided 8,600 visits for 2,000 homeless individuals and 20,644 visits for 6,904 Hispanic clients who could not prove legal residency. Over 50 languages are spoken by County primary care clients, with 50.6% of these visits requiring language interpretation.
- c) The County is committed to serving diverse populations for primary care services, and provides multi-lingual staff and interpreters, social service availability and staff expertise in dealing with clients who have multiple, complex, medical and social needs that often require multiple interventions, persistent preventive and treatment oriented education, and acknowledgement of different cultural approaches to healing.
- d) The community is increasingly impacted by non-financial barriers to health care access and service delivery that include: immigration (42,000 refugees from 26 different countries have joined Oregon's population over the past 15 years); a large number of undocumented individuals have also joined the State's population; the de-institutionalization of the chronically and persistently mentally ill; homeless, including women and their children; multigenerational poverty and drug abuse.

- e) The County recognizes that trends in health care have included an expanding, evolving role for Federal and State government funding that has reduced the number of uninsured Oregonians. However, even with the expansion of the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) and the implementation of the Family Health Insurance Assistance Program (FHIAP), the projected rate of Uninsured County residents is 9%, or 58,656 individuals, not including the undocumented.
- f) The County cannot operate a primary care system only for vulnerable and/or non-paying people, and cannot be the sole funder of primary care services for the uninsured, under-insured, and for those persons who have other barriers to being served in the private sector.
- g) The County recognizes that the private health sector cannot be responsive to all people. It is the responsibility of the County to assist the private sector in serving vulnerable populations.
- h) As the County continues its primary care strategic planning and systems redesign, it is also a partner in the collaborative development of a regional Tri-county partnership, under the sponsorship of Oregon Health Systems in Collaboration (OHSIC).
- i) Multnomah County recognizes that it has a role in shaping the arrangements necessary to create a public-private delivery system for its residents, ensuring progress towards universal health care access through incremental improvements in the existing primary care safety net system.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:

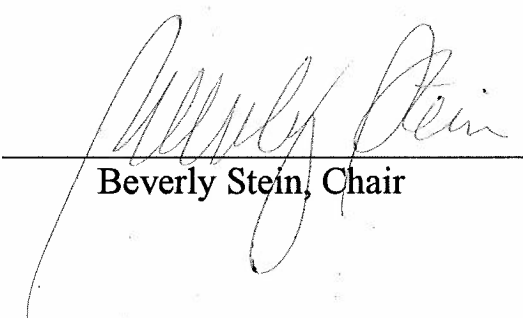
- 1) That Multnomah County will continue to advocate for and fund efforts to achieve dignified access to needed health care for all residents of the County, especially those who are underserved, under-insured, and uninsured.
- 2) That the Health Department and Board of County Commissioners actively pursue the development of a public-private partnership on a tri-county regional basis. The goal of this partnership, and our participation in it, will be:

- i) To achieve the goal of universal access to dignified health care services for Tri-county residents through the public-private partnership.
 - ii) To ensure that incremental progress is made in the existing safety net system as the partnership evolves.
 - iii) To explore arrangements necessary to create a public-private health care delivery system.
- 3) That the County will be advocating for continuing State support as a partner in the safety net services delivery effort. The County will continue to lead in the development of overall health policy, advocating for, and ensuring that low-income residents are served respectively and adequately.
- 4) That the Health Department should continue as the County's major safety net primary care provider until more collaborative, accountable delivery models are in place.

APPROVED this 23rd day of April, 1998.




BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON


Beverly Stein, Chair

REVIEWED:

THOMAS SPONSLER, COUNTY COUNSEL
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By


Katie Gaetjens, Assistant County Counsel

4/23/98