

COUNTY OF DUKES COUNTY
VINEYARD HEALTH CARE ACCESS PROGRAM
ANNUAL REPORT, FY 2022: July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

Client Services: The Access Program’s core service is connecting Island residents with Massachusetts’ affordable health insurance programs and helping them to retain this coverage. We provide health care program and insurance application, enrollment, and retention services; information, referral and advocacy; referrals to medical providers; make doctor’s appointments and help clients address medical debt; and we facilitate access to services like dental care, vision care and prescription medication assistance. The Senior Assistance Program provides application assistance, benefits counseling and program navigation for Island seniors and their families.

In FY2022 we moved to a hybrid model of service delivery due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We see clients in person when needed and provide services by telephone or videoconference. We also saw an increase in the number of people we assisted, due to the population increase of the Island.

In FY2022, the Access Program provided application and enrollment assistance for 3,737 individuals of all ages for MassHealth and Health Connector affordable insurance programs; 483 seniors were assisted with Medicare, Medicare Part D and Prescription Advantage; MassHealth Long Term Care and Frail Elder Waiver programs; and Disability. We provided health insurance, medical, dental, prescription and related referral assistance 7,461 times.

The Access Program is a grantee of the Massachusetts Health Connector’s **Navigator Program**. The Navigator program is an outreach, education and enrollment program for health insurance required by the Affordable Care Act. The Access Program’s enrollment staff participates in extensive training and passes an annual exam to maintain certified Navigator status.

The **David Kurth Memorial Fund** provides emergency financial assistance to Islanders with medical-related expenses that they cannot afford, primarily prescription medication and medical supplies. *In FY2022, we assisted 64 uninsured or underinsured Islanders to get prescription medications and related assistance by providing \$4,305 in financial assistance. In conjunction with Dukes County Social Services, we distributed over \$10,000 in emergency financial assistance for basic needs in the form of grocery store gift cards, annual bus passes and other emergency assistance.* Contributions to the fund came from the Martha’s Vineyard Community Foundation; the Elizabeth and Peter Tower Foundation; the United Methodist Church; individual donors, and local businesses.

The **Vineyard Smiles** school-based mobile dental services for children in grades K-12 provided comprehensive dental care to children in grades 5-12 in the public schools. Thanks to a collaboration with the Polished Teeth Dental Hygiene program and many local supporters, including the Boards of Health and the Martha’s Vineyard Community Foundation, we were able to provide dental hygiene visits to **over 201 low-income adult patients** in April 2022. This included services for 30 seniors at Island Elderly Housing. Some of these adult patients had not seen a dental professional in over 10 years.

Local and Regional Initiatives: Access Program employees have been involved in a number of additional health care initiatives including:

- The Dukes County Health Council
- Regional Advisory Board for the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
- The DCHC's Oral Health Work Group
- Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard
- Elder Care Providers Work Group

Funding: The County maintains a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each of the six Island Towns for the ongoing funding of the Access Program. This MOU describes the Access Program's governance structure; the County's role and services provided; Town obligations; Municipal Membership Assessments; and Indemnification and Insurance. Our total FY22 budget was \$557,171.

By having agreements in place with each town, the Access Program's funding is secured and not subject to service cuts if grant funding is reduced. When the program succeeds in obtaining grants, these will offset the Town funding in the following year. Town funding for FY22 was \$390,921.

Other FY22 funding sources totaling \$164,776 included Island Health Care via the US Health Services Resources Administration, the Massachusetts Health Connector Authority and Martha's Vineyard Hospital. Local funders including the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, the Martha's Vineyard Community Foundation and local businesses and individual donors added over \$30,000 in support.

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