

Statement of Sadler Health Center Corporation

to the Majority Policy Committee

Presented by
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Health care in the United States has suffered from a prolonged crisis. Carlisle has not been immune to challenges of health care provision. Rising health care costs, rising unemployment, and available practices willing to accept patients without insurance have left a growing number of people without adequate health care. The Sadler Health Center **FQHC** was created to be able to be the helping hand needed for residents who fall into these categories.

Health care resources often are rationed based on ability to pay rather than need. Finding access to quality health care services is difficult for many. Finding specialty care for the uninsured is sometimes impossible. The growing number of elderly adds another stress on health care resources. The stress on individuals and families because of society's inability to fashion an adequate health care system is evident to Sadler Health Center Corporation's providers as they try to meet the demands of those who come to us for service.


These past few years have been interesting and challenging for the delivery of health care services to our community. Sadler Health Center's seeds were planted in 1986 by our local community hospital and local physicians donating their time and expertise to serve the neediest of our community. It has developed into a health care safety net for the residents in our community who are uninsured, underinsured, or members of government-sponsored health care programs like Medicaid, Medicare, and CHIP and those who have nowhere else to turn for quality health care. Sadler has a rich history of caring for those in need of medical and dental care and providing life-sustaining prescriptions for those who need it most. When the community hospital was purchased, the new owners gave notice that, while they were willing to help, they could no longer assume the full financial burden associated with care of our most vulnerable community members. A task force was formed, and the Sadler Health Center Corporation was created as a not for profit community health center with a consumer majority Board of Trustees to set the policy and manage the financial support for this identified population. For the past 6 years we have grown from providing 10,570 patient visits in 2004/05 to anticipating the provision of 43,206 visits this fiscal year for residents in our service area who qualify for our help. We are proud of our early beginnings, and the goal of our Board is to ensure that the legacy will be operational and successful well into the future.

Sadler is one of the 44 Health Center programs in Pennsylvania that operate 250+ health centers across the Commonwealth. As the only Federally Qualified Health Center in Cumberland County, our mission states that we accept patients, regardless of their ability to pay.

While medical and dental care is at the forefront, there are other services that add to the quality of all our lives.

- Our tobacco cessation program has helped many in our community quit smoking – for good. We run 20-25 classes per year in Carlisle and the surrounding area through a grant from the American Lung Association and Carlisle Area Health and Wellness Foundation (CAHWF).
- Last year we provided services to over 400 individuals in both group and one-on-one classes. Our success rate is above the national average for programs, and has been for several years. We are really good at it!
- Our Healthy Rx program assists those who financially qualify to get their prescriptions at reduced costs through partnerships with pharmaceutical companies. This is for anyone living in our service area, not just Sadler Health Center Corporation consumers. This program is funded by CAHWF and has been in existence for five years. Since its inception we have secured retail value of over \$16 million in life-sustaining pharmaceuticals for those who financially qualify for this program. (That's right; I did say – million.) And this figure grows each month about \$235,000 in the retail value of medications needed by individuals in our community. Truly, this is a wonderful community service.
- The Nurse Family Partnership is an evidence-based, community health program with over 30 years of history helping transform the lives of low income first-time mothers. Specially trained nurses work with mothers beginning early in their pregnancy, improving prenatal care and quality of parenting. It has been shown through independent research that every dollar invested in the Nurse Family Partnership can yield as much as five dollars in return to the community. Funded in part by the Department of Health and our local foundation, CAHWF, we have made a difference in the lives of 66 income eligible first time mothers in our service area.
- PSC, or Physician Specialty Care, is a collaborative health care service. Medical professionals offer their specialty services to eligible patients in an agreed upon manner, helping bridge the gap between primary care and the much needed specialty care from specialists at a discounted fee. This program is in collaboration between Sadler, Carlisle Regional Medical Center, and CAHWF.

We serve the area that was the old Carlisle Hospital's service area, so in addition to the Carlisle area, we have parts of Perry County as well as a small portion of Adams and Franklin Counties. Financially, we receive funding from the federal and state governments and a grant amounting to 25% of our annual budget from CAHWF. The foundation is a conversion foundation created as a result of the sale of the assets of the community hospital. We have grown from a staff of 27 individuals five years ago to a current staff of 86. Last year we saw 31,783 medical and dental patient visits, as well as over 400 individuals in smoking cessation programs. Our Healthy Rx program helped fill 7,200 reduced-fee applications for prescription assistance. We supported 60+ first-time mothers by providing care management through registered nurses in an evidence-based program called Nurse Family Partnership. Our audit last year reported that 85 cents of every dollar received goes directly to patient care. We are proud to be good stewards of our financial resources.

The perception has been that Community Health Centers  are mainly for those on medical assistance and those unable or unwilling to work. That is not accurate. In Carlisle we are the medical home for over 14,000 of our neighbors, many of whom we see and interact with every

day. They cut our hair, paint our houses, service our cars, provide day care for our children, and wait on us at the local restaurants. They are visible and involved members of our community, volunteering as soccer coaches and other youth league sports programs, being community volunteers at school events, and serving on local social service boards. Many have lost their jobs, had their hours reduced, and lost their benefits, but they have not lost their hypertension, asthma, arthritis, diabetes, or the occasional cold. Sadler has seen a great influx of those in our community in need of a medical home where they can receive care that they can afford. For the past two years we have added over 100 medical and 100 dental patients each month. Many are on medical assistance (Medicaid) or Medicare, but the greatest area of growth in our Center is those whose earnings are below 200% of poverty, working and uninsured, or have co-pays that are unaffordable to them. This group now has grown from 20% to almost 30% of our patient population in five years. At Sadler, their co-pay is on a sliding fee scale based on their income. Our CAHWF grant makes it possible for them to receive health care.

Although we have many challenges, we have much to celebrate. We will have seven new providers joining our center by the end of November. They are anxious to come here, to make a difference in our community, and we are anxious to have them join our team. We have also added a physician assistant and two nurse practitioners, one who will focus her time on ensuring that we are meeting quality standards and best practices in all we do. We will determine how best to use all our providers to care for our blossoming number of clients.

All these things we do every day. We work hard at improving the health of our community. We see things that break our hearts and bolster our resolve. We are now the stewards entrusted to make our community a healthier place for our friends, our families and our neighbors. We are proud of our accomplishments, excited about our services, and looking forward to many more years of support to our wonderful area.

Thank you for allowing me to share our story with you this morning and thank you for your consideration on how to better support the Community Health Centers of PA in delivering care to the most vulnerable of PA residents.