

Association of Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU)

Summary of Vision Service Program Grantees

The provision of on-site, comprehensive eye and vision care speaks directly to the mission of health centers to provide primary, preventive health care services. As such ACU provides small grants to health centers to support the costs of vision equipment and supplies. Since 2018, ACU has assisted nineteen health centers in establishing and expanding permanent eye health and vision care programs.

Completed Grants

Hyndman Health

Hyndman Health provides primary care to approximately 5,000 people living in rural Pennsylvania. Their grant helped them to purchase vision lane equipment and launch a vision care program at their Bedford clinic in October 2019. By March 2020, the program was so successful that the organization had plans to contract with a vendor to provide their own glasses to patients.

Albany Area Primary Health Care (AAPHC)

AAPHC is the primary source of health care for over 45,000 people living in southeastern Georgia. Eighty percent of their patients belong to racial and ethnic minorities (primarily Black/African American) and 77% have incomes at or below 100% of the federal poverty guideline. Their grant helped them purchase vision lane equipment and launch a vision care program at a school-based health center in February 2020. Unfortunately, the school shut down on March 13, 2020, reopened slowly in September 2020, and then shut down again with the most recent COVID-19 surge. During school closures, an AAPHC patient navigator worked to connect students to eye care available at their S. Trussell Medical Center and AAPHC collaborated with the Crisp County School System to transport students to a vision clinic at the School Based Health Center located inside of Dooly County Elementary and Middle School. With schools closed, optometric technicians are reporting that many parents lack transportation and aren't picking up glasses which are normally given to the kids at school. AAPHC is exploring opportunities to deliver glasses to the homes of students.

Success Story: Our school-based health center helps to keep kids healthy and is a tremendous resource for working parents and those who lack transportation. With the support of ACU and the Centene Foundation for Quality Health Care, we were able to add a vision center at the school so that their academic performance isn't compromised due to poor vision. I recall one instance when one of our 3rd grade students put on her glasses after they came back from the lab. She started crying and said she didn't know the blocks on the school walls had lines in them. That was truly a remarkable moment.

Oneworld Community Health Centers

Oneworld Community Health Centers is the largest provider of primary health care services in South Omaha, and the only primary care clinic in the area with a majority bilingual and bicultural staff. In 2019, they provided primary care to 44,408 people, over half of whom have no health insurance. With their grant, OneWorld was able to purchase two Retinal Cameras for \$4,995 each, with the remainder of \$1,810 applied to a third camera purchased with additional funding from OneWorld patient revenue. Two of the new cameras are stationed at their primary clinic in South Omaha, and one at a satellite clinic in Northwest Omaha. Staff at both clinics have gone through training and are eager to use the cameras

to provide timely prevention and treatment for diseases of the eye and intervene early for complications of diabetes. Shortly after the scanners' arrival at the clinics, however, they were faced with shutdowns and changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are just now getting back into regular care patterns.

Heartland Health Center

Heartland Health Center provides primary care for over 4,300 people in Grand Island, Nebraska. Nearly 70% of their patient population belongs to a racial or ethnic minority group (primarily Hispanic/Latino). Half of their patient population is uninsured. With their grant, Heartland Health Center was able to purchase a vision spot screener to provide reliable, objective assessments and instantly detect the indication of six major issues:

- Hyperopia: farsightedness
- Myopia: nearsightedness
- Astigmatism: blurred vision
- Anisometropia: unequal refractive power
- Gaze: eye alignment measurement
- Anisocoria: unequal pupil size

Additionally, screenings are now offered as part of their well child package so that eye and vision issues are detected early. The health center is continuing to grow their eye and vision care program in hopes of increasing access to more comprehensive eye health and vision care for their patient population.

Ongoing Grants

HealthLinc

HealthLinc provides care to underserved individuals and families living in St. Joseph County where Indiana's Medicaid Plan, Managed Health Services, has one of the highest concentration of members in the state. HealthLinc found significant barriers to affordable and accessible optometry services in the eastern part of the County. Notably, many optometrists in the area do not accept Medicaid and/or uninsured patients. With the support of their grant, HealthLinc will be able to provide optometry services at their Mishawaka location where 60% of patients served are Medicaid beneficiaries and 9% are uninsured/self-pay. The space is ready for optometry and the grant funding will be used to purchase the equipment needed to begin service delivery including an auto refractor/auto keratometer, tonometer, perimeter, camera, OCT, visual acuity system, lenometer, etc. HealthLinc plans to provide vision exams and prescription glasses through Zenni Optical allowing them to provide the most cost-effective and affordable optical services.

Lanai Community Health Center

Lanai Community Health Center (LCHC) is located on the island of Lanai, the smallest of the major Hawaiian Islands with a land area of 140 square miles. Nearly a third of the current population is foreign born and 16% face linguistic isolation due to their limited proficiency in English. LCHC provides routine health services to approximately 60% of the islands 3100 residents. There are no vision providers on the island. The grant will help LCHC cover contract costs with Maui Optix to bring an optometrist to the island one to two times a month.

North Texas Area Health Centers

North Texas Area Health Centers (NTAHC) provided primary care to 12,669 people in 2019, 93% of whom belong to a racial or ethnic minority group (primarily Hispanic/Latino). Over half of their patient

population is uninsured. The grant will be applied to startup costs, which include funding for supplies and equipment. NTAHC requested technical assistance from ACU to support a successful startup. ACU staff and a member of the newly established ACU Vision Services Committee is meeting with key leaders of the organization to walk through strategies and lessons learned to consider when launching their program.

East Georgia Healthcare Center

East Georgia Healthcare Center (EGHC), located in rural Swainsboro, provided health care to 20,828 people in 2019. At EGHC, 67% percent of the patient population belongs to a racial or ethnic minority group (30% Hispanic/Latino and 35% Black/African American) and 70% percent have incomes at or below 100% of the federal poverty guideline. With the support of their grant, EGHC will offer much needed eye health and vision care services one day a week.

Regional Health Care Clinic, dba Katy Trail Community Health

Katy Trail Community Health is located in Pettis County, MO where 16.4% of the population live below the poverty line. This project will target people under 200% of the federal poverty level. The funding will be used to purchase equipment to outfit 2 exam rooms.

Valley Healthcare System, Inc.

Valley Healthcare System provides care to residents of Talbot County, Georgia, a rural area with a population of 6,865 residents and is comprised of 93.9% rural, nonfarm communities and 6.1% farming areas. The population is composed of 61.6% African American, 36% Caucasian and other minorities at less than 2%. Portable optometry equipment will be purchased to run a flexible clinical model which promotes eye health among all age groups within the county. Items include: One (1) Handheld Autorefractor: Quicksee @ \$6,400; One (1) IOP monitoring - iCare + Probes, VA chart, Diagnostic Lens for external/internal evaluation and diagnostic eye drops @ \$3,600

Omni Family Health

Over half of the 18,522 people living in Lindsay, CA, are low-income families who depend on Medicaid or public insurance, and a growing number of the population may have hypertension and or diabetes, which can affect the eyes. Omni Family Health plans to purchase necessary vision equipment and cabinetry for eyewear and optometry supplies.

Spectra Health

Spectra Health has identified a tremendous need for discounted vision services is committed to expanding services to include on-site optometry for low-income individuals in far northeast North Dakota. Funding will support procurement of needed supplies and equipment. Estimated price for supplies and equipment are below:

- Reichert 15140 Xcel 455 Slit Lamp-\$5,300
- Reichert 15260 Stamina Exam Chair-\$4, 578
- Various Small Equipment Items: Lorgnette Pinhole Occluder, Single End Black Occluder, Near Point Reading Card-\$122

Treasure Coast Community Health

Children and adults in the farming/migrant area surrounding Fellsmere, including retinal scans for diabetics, and screening for glasses, cataract removal and glaucoma. Funding will be used to purchase equipment for screening and initial inventory of glasses for children.

Family Health Services of Darke County

Family Health Services of Darke County provides primary care to approximately 5,000 people living in rural Ohio. Their grant was used to extend services for patients by purchasing an Optos California retinal imaging device through Optos, Inc. offsetting the total cost of \$80,995. The imaging has allowed better monitoring of retinal diseases such as glaucoma, macular degeneration, histoplasmosis, diabetic retinopathy and more. The clinic currently has a campaign to increase the compliance of patients with diabetes in getting their annual dilated comprehensive eye exams. Having photo documentation of retinal health at the time of their visit is a valuable piece of their medical record and a critical educational tool to help optimize health and increase compliance in keeping patients coming in from one year to the next.

PrimaryOne Health

Columbus Neighborhood Health Center, Inc. d/b/a/ PrimaryOne Health (P1H) is a nonprofit organization that provides high-quality vision care, primary medical, dental, behavioral health, and other supportive services to uninsured, underinsured, and other vulnerable populations at 12 health center sites in Ohio's Franklin and Pickaway counties. Grant funds were used to support the purchase of an optical coherence tomography (OCT) machine for P1H's East Main Street location in Columbus, Ohio. This machine is currently being used to diagnose and help treat individuals with glaucoma and retinal diseases like age-related macular degeneration and diabetic eye disease. It has expanded and enhanced their ability to provide comprehensive care for their vulnerable patient population of individuals from communities disproportionately impacted by these issues. Prior to receiving the grant, P1H only had one OCT machine at its other vision care site on Columbus's West Side. When patients at the East Main Street location required the use of an OCT machine, P1H had to refer them to the other site, or to another provider that does not offer reduced fees and generally has longer wait times. This extra step significantly decreased the likelihood that these patients received the follow-up they need due in part to the transportation barriers faced by their patient population as a significant number of adults in this zip code do not own a vehicle (21.7%). By securing this new OCT machine, P1H has ensured that underserved individuals in the service population have access to quality comprehensive vision care and has significantly improved P1H's ability to ensure patients receive the follow-up care they need to live healthy lives.

Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center

Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center (HSNHC) is a federally qualified health center (FQHC) that serves a culturally and socioeconomically diverse population residing in Boston's poorest zip codes in Dorchester, Mattapan, Roxbury, Hyde Park and Jamaica Plain. HSNHC utilized their grant to cover the cost of equipment necessary for the expansion of their newly formed Eyecare & Vision Services clinic. The addition of this new equipment, along with the expansion of the clinic space within the health center, has enabled Dr. Angela Abraham, OD to provide comprehensive eye exams, treatment for eye diseases, contact lens services, urgent care, pediatric vision care, glaucoma treatment and management and cataract surgical consultations. The expansion has increased HSNHC's capacity to meet patient needs, while also offering an onsite eyeglasses dispensary. This grant has been a tremendous help for

low-income underserved patient population served by HSNHC, many of whom consider eyeglasses and eyecare to be financially out of reach.

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

As the largest Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) provider in Colorado, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) provided integrated health care, including Vision Services, to 15,494 people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in 2020. CCH's Stout Street Eye Clinic (SSEC) is located within the Stout Street Health Center in central, downtown Denver. Volunteer providers at the clinic treat medical problems affecting the eyes including diabetes, hypertension, glaucoma, cataracts, retinopathy, macular degeneration, and eye diseases that cause blindness. In 2020, due to COVID-19, eye care services were interrupted and scaled back significantly. The SSEC is a main access point for people experiencing and at-risk of homelessness to receive a wide range of CCH's Integrated Health Services located within the Stout Street Health Center.

SSEC utilized their grant funds to purchase a retinal camera, visual field, and tonometer to expand their comprehensive vision services program. With this equipment, vision staff were able to increase clinic workflow efficiency, reduce patient wait times, and serve more clients. The retinal camera has helped vision staff streamline screening of retinal abnormalities and early detection of diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, macular degeneration, and other diseases. The visual field assisted staff with checking for blind spots and vision loss from diseases like glaucoma. With a second tonometer funded through ACU, SSEC staff can serve more adults in need of vision screening who attend screening events. The purchase of the tonometer has allowed SSEC to provide more screenings through community outreach events which will lead to more follow-up visits at the SSEC and more patients receiving comprehensive vision care.

Coming Soon

Cherokee Health Systems

Since 1960, Cherokee Health Systems (CHS) has been providing comprehensive primary care, behavioral health, and prevention programs and services across east Tennessee. CHS's philosophy is that the best approach to wellness involves treating both the body and mind, and currently has 47 clinical sites in 13 Tennessee counties that provide medical, dental, and behavioral health care. With this grant, CHS aims to expand its services to include vision care and will focus on providing services to uninsured, underinsured, and underserved patients from across the lifespan (children, adolescents, adults, older adults) in CHS' upper east Tennessee service area.

East Harlem Council for Human Services, Inc.

East Harlem Council for Human Services provides services to predominantly Latinx and Black communities that are impoverished, face significant health disparities, have high rates of hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Equipment to be purchased include tonometer, visual acuity monitor and eye glass display. A small percentage of funds have been used to help to market this new service to the community.