



## **Connecting People to Healthcare Today**

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With all of the uncertainty and “less-than-positive” news about healthcare, Project Access NOW has a story to tell that is uplifting and hopeful. Since March of 2008, more than 6,000 people have been connected to primary and specialty care through a network of healthcare providers convened by Project Access NOW in the Portland Metropolitan Area. Nearly 3,000 providers compose this volunteer network that helps low-income, uninsured people get needed care in a way that is dignified and convenient for both the patient and the provider.

The Portland Metropolitan Area is fortunate to have several safety net clinics that serve low-income, uninsured patients. The need for care is greater than the clinics can meet alone and Project Access NOW supports the safety net by connecting to broader resources in a way that is equitable and easy to do. Volunteer healthcare providers agree to accept a specific number of referrals per year into their practice and then are supported by Project Access NOW Care Coordinators. Care Coordinators make sure patients keep their appointments (we have a 95% show rate), arrange and pay for interpretation and help patients overcome any other obstacles they face in getting their healthcare needs met. Patients are pre-approved for medically necessary hospital-based care (including labs and imaging) and have a pharmacy benefit.

Project Access NOW makes a difference in people’s lives, as one patient, Mark S., can attest. Mark had basal cell carcinoma spreading on his nose and face for more than two years.

“First impressions count,” Mark said. “I was told with a face like this, people wouldn’t hire me.”

Without insurance, there was little he could do other than suffer through his affliction. After Mark lost his job with a security company, he found the Essential Health Clinic (a free urgent care clinic where many Physician Assistants volunteer) and Project Access Washington County. He was referred to the Dermatology Clinic at OHSU, and two weeks after his initial visit, Mark was scheduled for a series of surgeries. Twenty hours of surgery later, his entire left face was reconstructed, and a few months later, he was ready to apply for employment. Visit <http://www.projectaccessnow.org/marks.html> for Mark’s full story.

If you already provide services for Project Access NOW patients, we thank you! We'd love to keep you informed of our activities and we encourage you to sign up for our e-newsletter on our website <http://www.projectaccessnow.org/e-newsletter.html>. If your practice does not participate with Project Access NOW, please consider joining our network in the Portland Metro Area <http://www.projectaccessnow.org/volunteer.html>.

We invite all supporters (and potential supporters) of Project Access NOW to join us for our **Second Annual Bridges to Healthcare Event on April 7, 2011**, where we celebrate the generosity of our volunteers. More information about the event will be available in the next few weeks on our webpage and will also be shared through our e-newsletter.