

For Immediate Release

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Health centers unveil new report

New Access Across Vermont plan preserves, strengthens and expands the community health system in Vermont.

MONTPELIER, VT — In conjunction with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) across the state, Bi-State Primary Care Association has announced a new plan to preserve, strengthen and expand the community health system in Vermont.

Launched as part of the National Health Center Week celebration, and in support of the National Association of Community Health Centers' (NACHC) *ACCESS for All America* plan, the Vermont plan, **Access Across Vermont**, is a blueprint for advancing the medical home model in the state. *Access Across Vermont* seeks to bridge the widening gap between the demand for primary health care services and available supply.

Nationally, the *ACCESS for All America* plan aims to double the Community Health Centers' current annual capacity to 30 million patients by 2015. The Vermont plan aims to reach 50 thousand new patients in just two years.

"Bi-State fully endorses NACHC's *ACCESS for All America* plan, and has worked with Vermont health centers to develop initiatives and a plan for geographic and service expansion in support of these goals," states Tess Stack Kuenning, Bi-State's executive director.

"With additional resources and support, we could begin to expand FQHCs across Vermont to offer financially accessible and conveniently located comprehensive primary care — including a full range of medical, dental, mental health, substance abuse, and pharmacy services — to every uninsured person in Vermont who currently lacks a medical home," Kuenning asserts.

Vermont's six federally-funded FQHCs provide care to over 64,000 Vermonters (one in ten) with 28 sites in eight of Vermont's fourteen counties; however there are many more medically disenfranchised Vermonters living in counties without FQHC access.

Download *Access Across Vermont* from Bi-State's website at www.bistatepca.org.

FQHCs are nonprofit health care practices that have a mission to provide primary care regardless of their patients' ability to pay or insurance status. FQHCs provide care to people of all ages with services including comprehensive primary and preventive care, 24-hour coverage, obstetrical and gynecological care, dental care, mental health and substance abuse services, pharmacy, laboratory and other ancillary services, and enabling services such as case management, translation services, and transportation.

National Health Center Week is dedicated to recognizing the service and contributions of America's Community Health Centers in providing affordable, high quality, cost-effective health care to the medically underserved.

Bi-State Primary Care Association is a private, nonprofit membership organization whose mission is to foster the delivery of primary and preventive health services to the people of Vermont and New Hampshire with special emphasis on the medically underserved. For more information concerning Vermont's Community Health Centers or Bi-State, visit www.bistatepca.org.

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