



primary care coalition

PROJECT ACCESS

SPECIALIST'S MANUAL

making health happen

PCCProjectAccess.org

PROJECT ACCESS SPECIALIST'S MANUAL

Project Access aims to provide timely, high-quality, specialty care to low-income, uninsured patients. This manual will help you understand the Project Access referral process, and the critical role of primary and specialty care providers in our network.

Project Access is a specialty care referral network administered by the Primary Care Coalition (PCC). It is composed of a dedicated group of health care specialists, local hospitals, and diagnostic facilities participating in a coordinated effort to provide specialty care to low-income, uninsured members of our community. Project Access helps these individuals gain timely access to specialty care, and assists providers with care coordination and administrative support. By treating a manageable number of Project Access patients in your own office, you can improve the health and lives of community members experiencing vulnerability, and help improve the health of our community as a whole.

Patients referred to Project Access must be eligible for programs coordinated by the Primary Care Coalition (e.g. Montgomery Cares and Nexus Montgomery). Patients receive health care through these programs because they are uninsured and ineligible for federal safety-net programs, such as Medicaid.

Clinics that participate in Montgomery Cares provide primary care. When a primary care provider determines a patient's need for specialty care, the clinic refers the patient to Project Access, which coordinates the appointment with a specialist in our network.

Specialists like you, who have agreed to provide services to Project Access patients, are contacted by Project Access to determine availability for appointments. Project Access schedules the initial appointment, confirms the appointment with the patient, and makes sure the specialist has current diagnostic information at the time of the initial visit.



Project Access Referral Process

Primary care provider (PCP) refers patient for specialty care and:

- Confirms the patient's eligibility for Project Access
- Ensures the patient is able to attend the specialty appointment and pay applicable fees/co-pay
- Ensures the patient has all required referral materials

PCC's Project Access team reviews the referral for completeness and supporting documents and requests additional documentation from the PCP as needed

PCC's Project Access Nurse triages for urgency and specialist availability

If a specialist is not available, Project Access returns the referral

If a specialist is available, Project Access schedules a specialty appointment and emails the primary care clinic. Project Access faxes information and referral to the specialist

The primary care clinic and Project Access staff confirm the appointment with the patient

If the primary care clinic and Project Access are unable to confirm the appointment at least three business days in advance, Project Access cancels the appointment

Patient attends appointment and notifies the primary care clinic of any future follow up appointments, lab orders, imaging, or other procedures

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ABOUT PROJECT ACCESS

WHAT IS PROJECT ACCESS?

Project Access is a specialty care referral network administered by the Primary Care Coalition (PCC). It is composed of a dedicated group of health care specialists, local hospitals, and diagnostic facilities working together to provide specialty care to low-income, uninsured residents of our community. By treating a manageable number of Project Access patients in your own office, you can improve the health and lives of community members experiencing vulnerability, and help improve the health of our community as a whole.

HOW DOES PROJECT ACCESS WORK?

Specialists who join Project Access can focus on what they do best—treating patients—without worrying about arranging for diagnostic testing, securing access to medications, or other challenges associated with treating uninsured patients. Participating doctors and practices determine the number and type of Project Access patients they see and Project Access administrative staff help coordinate care.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF JOINING PROJECT ACCESS?

100% of surveyed specialists would recommend participating in Project Access to other clinicians.

The main reason providers work with Project Access is because they are personally motivated to care for underserved populations. Participation in Project Access is professionally rewarding and personally fulfilling.

“I participate in Project Access because everyone deserves good health care.”
— Dr. James M. Salander, Project Access vascular surgeon.



“Honestly, we love to work with Project Access. The Project Access staff are awesome. They’re on top of things and make everything easier.”

—Michelle, Office Manager

“Project Access really works for the underprivileged and those who can’t afford health care. There aren’t many organizations that do this work.”

—Ruby, Specialty Care Support Staff



PROJECT ACCESS PATIENTS

Thousands of adults in our region are uninsured and lack access to health care. The Montgomery Cares program, administered by the PCC, provides primary care for approximately 25,000 low-income, uninsured patients every year, many of whom require one or more specialty care visits. Without dedicated specialists like you, specialty health care for this low-income population is simply out of reach.

Our patient population is ethnically and culturally diverse. Most are not native English speakers, and approximately 40% cannot read or write in any language. Our patients tend to have low levels of health literacy, which may affect their ability to:

- ◆ Navigate the health care system, including filling out complex forms and locating providers and services
- ◆ Share personal information, such as health history, with providers
- ◆ Engage in self-care and chronic-disease management
- ◆ Understand mathematical concepts such as probability and risk

<https://health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/factsbasic.htm>

Our patients' religions, cultures, and customs can influence how they understand health concepts, maintain and manage their health, and make health-related decisions.

- ◆ **Health beliefs:** In some cultures, people believe that talking about a possible poor health outcome will cause that outcome to occur.
- ◆ **Health customs:** In some cultures, family members play a large role in health care decision-making.
- ◆ **Ethnic customs:** Differing roles of women and men may determine who makes decisions about accepting and following through with medical treatments.
- ◆ **Religious beliefs:** Religious and spiritual beliefs may affect health care-seeking behavior and people's willingness to accept specific treatments or behavior changes.
- ◆ **Dietary customs:** Disease-related dietary advice will be difficult to follow if it does not conform to the foods or cooking methods used by the patient.
- ◆ **Interpersonal customs:** Eye contact or physical touch will be expected in some cultures and inappropriate or offensive in others.

Consider Culture, Customs, and Beliefs: Tool #10. Content last reviewed February 2015. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. <http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/quality-resources/tools/literacy-toolkit/healthlittoolkit2-tool10.html>



THE SPECIALIST'S ROLE IN PROJECT ACCESS

SPECIALTY CARE FOLLOW UP

A Project Access referral expires after six months. Project Access referrals typically authorize several visits, so the specialist can see a patient back in follow-up without additional authorization. After a specialty care appointment with a Project Access patient, the specialist sends consult notes to the patient's referring primary care clinic. This enables the patient's primary care provider to manage the patient's care and maintain complete records at the primary care practice.

The specialist also sends any future orders—including lab orders, imaging orders, and referrals—to the Project Access team, with a copy to the referring primary care provider. If a surgery is scheduled, the specialist sends a copy of all pre-op orders to Project Access immediately. Project Access will coordinate with the patient's primary care provider to complete pre-op testing.

LAB AND IMAGING ORDERS

All requests for diagnostic services, including lab and imaging studies, must be arranged by Project Access. Project Access will only reimburse for diagnostics (lab and imaging) related to the condition for which the patient was referred. Please do not submit your own lab and imaging requests directly to reference labs or imaging providers; Project Access will not reimburse for these services.

PAYMENT AND INVOICING

Project Access specialists invoice the Project Access team for services provided. Invoices are typically paid within six weeks. Invoices must be submitted within 90 days of service or payment may be denied.

PATIENT ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIALTY CARE

Each Project Access referral includes the patient's dates of eligibility. The referral is valid for a total of three appointments or six months from the date of referral, whichever occurs first. If additional appointments are necessary, or if an appointment is required more than six months from the referral date, you must contact Project Access and request another referral.

Project Access only refers patients who have been deemed eligible for the program at the time of referral. In the course of caring for a patient, you may occasionally discover the patient is insured; in that case, please bill the insurer and notify Project Access.

To receive reimbursement for your services, you must have a Project Access referral and the patient must be eligible on the date(s) of service. Project Access cannot pay for services provided without a Project Access referral, or for services after eligibility has expired.

PROJECT ACCESS AND PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

| Specialist | Primary Care Provider | Project Access |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Send consult notes to patient's referring primary care clinic ▶ Send any future orders including lab orders, imaging orders, and referrals, to Project Access team and copy the referring clinic ▶ If a surgery is scheduled, send pre-op information to Project Access immediately ▶ Notify Project Access if patient presents evidence of insurance ▶ Prescribe generic drugs whenever possible, to keep patient costs to a minimum, and work with Project Access to obtain brand medications when required ▶ Charge the patient no more than the co-pay listed on the Project Access referral form | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Confirm patient's Montgomery Cares eligibility prior to submitting a Project Access referral ▶ Ensure patient is able to pay applicable specialty care fees ▶ Ensure patient is willing to attend the specialty appointment and has all documentation needed for the referral ▶ Ensure patient understands his/her responsibilities ▶ Confirm specialty appointment with patient ▶ Receive specialty consult notes and maintain patient's complete primary care records | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Manage specialty care referrals from primary care providers ▶ Make initial attempt to confirm appointment with patient ▶ Remind patient to arrive early and bring an interpreter, if needed ▶ Ensure pre-op services are scheduled and results are provided to the inpatient or ambulatory surgery facility ▶ Facilitate all lab and imaging orders ▶ Facilitate all follow-up referrals and surgeries |

Project Access Is Here to Help

PCC's Project Access team values your service. We strive to provide our specialists with the support they need and we are committed to continuous improvement. We look forward to hearing from you!

- ▶ Are you or a specialist interested in joining Project Access?
Email: ProviderServices@PrimaryCareCoalition.org
- ▶ Do you need support for a Project Access patient in your care?
Email: SpecialtyNurse@PrimaryCareCoalition.org
- ▶ Do you have feedback? We want to hear it!
Submit your feedback to the Project Access team at: PCCProjectAccess.org

PROJECT ACCESS CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding the specialty care referral process please contact Project Access:

Main Phone: 301-628-3430

Fax: 301-608-9047

Main Email: SpecialtyCare@primarycarecoalition.org

Urgent Referrals: SpecialtyNurse@primarycarecoalition.org

Website: PCCProjectAccess.org

Address: Primary Care Coalition
8757 Georgia Ave. 10th floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910



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