



Products for managing pharmaceutical access programs

► **Case Studies: Starting Pharmaceutical Access Programs**

There are several ways that communities or organizations can go about implementing pharmaceutical access programs for uninsured or underserved populations. Thousands of such programs operate across the country, and in doing so have confronted and overcome a variety of impediments. This practical experience is invaluable to other groups looking to start or expand their own programs and “lessons learned” can help avoid the most common pitfalls.

Volunteers in Health Care contracted with five organizations to write case studies of their experiences. These case studies, representing organizations in Indiana, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, discuss issues such as getting started, medication budgets, medication sources and use of staff or volunteers.

► **Guidance to Management of Physician Samples for Free Clinics**

Maintaining a system for drug samples can be challenging for free clinics due to limited resources and the complexity of sample regulations. This document provides guidance regarding federal regulations of samples, although information on state regulations is included as well.

The *Guidance to Management of Physician Samples for Free Clinics* was written by Kathy Richardson, PharmD., after discussions with pharmacists and administrators of free clinics and other programs providing pharmaceutical access to the uninsured or underserved. The guidance includes suggestions for how to comply with federal regulations, a sample drug log, frequently asked questions, contact information for state boards of pharmacies and descriptions of experiences of free clinics coming into compliance.

► **Pharmaceutical Primer**

Improving health care access for the uninsured must include access to medication as part of the treatment process. Yet, creating prescription access is, without doubt, one of the most vexing issues confronting practitioners and organizations serving the uninsured. Charitable, community trust or government funds—where they exist—established locally to pay for prescriptions for those in need are quickly expended or offer one-time access only. And so, alternatives must be developed.

The *Pharmaceutical Primer* describes models communities have used to develop medication access programs, questions to consider when designing a program and key elements for putting a program in place. The manual includes sample formularies, web sites of interest, sample fee schedules and descriptions of fifteen programs across the country.

► **RxAssist**

Many medication access programs incorporate use of pharmaceutical patient assistance programs (PAPs) for their clients. These programs, although providing free or reduced fee medication for low-income individuals, change frequently, require separate applications for individual companies and can be difficult to navigate. Many programs dedicate paid staff or volunteers for the sole function of managing applications to these programs.

RxAssist is a searchable database developed by Volunteers in Health Care. Through RxAssist physicians and other health care providers can view information on drugs available through PAPs application procedures and eligibility criteria, as well as many application forms. Information is presented in an easy-to-read format and is updated regularly. To access this program directly, go to (www.rxassist.org).

► **RxAssist Plus**

Health care organizations that serve the uninsured often have software needs that outstrip their resources. This imbalance may be even greater for volunteer-supported programs. Maintaining medical records, tracking patient visits and managing PAP applications for individual patients can be a daunting task.

RxAssist Plus is patient and PAP tracking software developed by Volunteers in Health Care. The software links to the RxAssist database, fills out forms available through RxAssist and keeps track of medications and applications from individual PAP programs. *RxAssist Plus* is free to non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, and individual clinicians caring for the uninsured. The software is available on CD and is compatible with Microsoft operating systems. For more information on *RxAssist Plus* or to register for the software, please visit www.volunteersinhealthcare.org.

► **PAP Tracking Products & Services List**

RxAssist and RxAssist Plus are but two of the products that exist to help organizations manage their PAP applications. Volunteers in Health Care recognizes that organizations may want to review other products or services available in order to find the best fit for their needs. The *PAP Tracking Products & Services List* describes these products and provides contact information for each.

► **Pharmacy Inventory Software List**

There are several software products available to help organizations manage their medication inventory. The *Pharmacy Inventory Software List* describes these products and provides contact, pricing, and other useful information on each to assist organizations in selecting the product that will best meet its needs.

Visit the Volunteers in Health Care website at www.volunteersinhealthcare.org to learn more about volunteer supported programs across the country. To request these documents or to receive more information about VIH, please call 877-844-8442.

A program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation