



The BRIDGE

east bay community action program

THE BRIDGE to SELF-RELIANCE

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EMR Off and Running at Health Centers

by Maggie Laurianno

East Bay Community Action Program's (EBCAP) Health Centers in East Providence and Newport are making a major transition to Electronic Medical Records (EMR), replacing the often bulky and complicated paper record system.

Recognizing that responsive information systems are the foundation of most aspects of good management and care, and that operating efficient, cost effective, high quality health centers depends on having reliable, detailed and current information in a timely manner, a decision was made to upgrade information technology software—an essential component toward improving care outcomes, maximizing revenues and increasing provider productivity.

East Bay Community Action Program, together with Blackstone Valley Community Health Center, Comprehensive Community Action Program, and Tri-Town Community Action, Inc. applied for and secured Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Health Information Technology funding. This award was granted to only five applicants in the United States during that round of funding, with EBCAP's partnership being the only awardee in the state of Rhode Island. Employing a best practices model, the partners were able to implement the new health record on a highly accelerated timeline.

In September of 2007, EBCAP's health centers established multi-disciplinary implementation teams that are still meeting weekly. A "train the trainer" program was instituted, with selected staff members traveling to Pennsylvania for training on the NextGen software, then returning to train the entire

staff. A nurse was hired to convert the paper records to the electronic file, which involves some manual data entry and some scanning. By October of 2008, EBCAP's health centers "went live" with the new electronic records system. By June of 2009, Stephanie McCaffrey, Health Administrator, expects to have the health centers "completely paperless."



Checking records: Dr. Sarah Fessler, Medical Director at East Bay Community Action Program, checks patient's records that have been converted to a computer file, prior to an appointment. (Photo by Susan Schenck)

Both McCaffrey and Dr. Sarah Fessler, Medical Director, expressed deep appreciation and praise for the medical staff, citing their hard work and dedication to making the conversion possible. "They willingly took on extra work and had to multi-task in order to bring this to fruition," said McCaffrey.

The number one benefit cited by both McCaffrey and Dr. Fessler is enhanced patient care. The NextGen electronic medical record, a Windows-based system that creates and maintains complete medical

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CEO Corner

by Dennis Roy, Chief Executive Officer

Almost every day, our local and national newspapers and television news broadcasts are filled with dire economic forecasts, news of business failings, record unemployment, increased taxes and higher food prices.

Here at East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP) we have seen the impact of the nationwide recession on our ability to provide health and human services, with higher costs for everything from medical and dental supplies to materials for our Head Start classrooms, as just two examples.

We have seen an increase in the number of people seeking services from our three food pantries and our heating and energy program in the past year, and we expect those numbers to grow even more in 2009.

EBCAP is prepared for these and other challenges, implementing various strategies to lower our administrative costs in an organization serving over 22,000 citizens a year. One such way has been to greatly reduce the number of printed copies of this newsletter each quarter, placing it on our website.

Our dedicated staff has again taken part in our annual Total Quality Management (TQM) Day in January, problem-solving a specific area of concern in each program and establishing goals and outcomes to improve our services and make them even more cost effective.

As we move further into 2009 I feel EBCAP is well-positioned to continue to meet the needs of our consumers. We will continue to seek grants to assist us in our mission and we appreciate the assistance of our many friends and their contributions to our Annual Appeal, food pantries and other fundraising efforts.



DENNIS ROY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Jim Vincent Puts EBCAP Service at Top of Long and Varied Resume

By David Howard

Jim Vincent really needs some extra pages on his resume to include the many boards of directors and organizations he serves on—though he holds his position as President of East Bay Community Action Program's Board of Directors very close to his heart.

"I became part of Self Help, Inc. in 1991," Jim recalls, "a year after I was named Housing Coordinator for the City of East Providence. Dennis Roy, who was then the Executive Director of Self Help, which served East Providence, Barrington, Warren and Bristol, asked me to be part of the board of directors and the newly formed East Bay Coalition for the Homeless (EBCH). We found that we both shared a concern for the poor and disenfranchised."

At the same time Jim joined the Self Help Board, so did Onna Moniz-John, who at that time was Director of Affirmative Action for East Providence.

When Self Help and New Visions for Newport County, Inc. merged in 2004, Jim was named President of the Board for the new organization. The merger of Self Help and New Visions was made much easier, he felt, because the two organizations had developed a partnership where they shared a senior management staff for some time before the actual merger took place. It was a very smooth transition, with Dennis and Susan Schenck as the key people in bringing the organizations together.

He noted that the merger of the two community action programs is now seen as a model for similar organizations. "I know Tony Maione (CEO of the United Way) has cited EBCAP as an excellent example of the benefits of merging organizations."

Jim said, "It's been a great experience for me being associated with one of the major and, I think, the best Community Action Program in the state of Rhode Island." He has maintained his interest

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Cruise Ship Theme for Sixth Annual Seaside Gala on June 11

All aboard for the Sixth Annual Seaside Gala, as the USS EBCAP will "sail away" at a new venue, on Thursday, June 11 at the Castle Hill Inn and Resort on Ocean Drive in Newport.

The Gala is EBCAP's major fund raising event of the year and will feature a cruise ship theme with a cocktail hour, dinner, music, dancing and live and silent auctions. The presentation of the 2009 Vision Awards and Public Service Award will be a special highlight.



New Venue: This year's Seaside Gala will be held at Castle Hill Inn and Resort on Ocean Drive in Newport.

Tickets to the Seaside Gala are \$100 per person and may be reserved on line at www.ebcap.org or by calling Maggie Laurianno at 847-7821, ext. 339.

This will be a Gala you won't want to miss, with a special dinner at the Captain's Table, music and entertainment befitting a luxury cruise and great "duty free" shopping through silent and live auctions.

The new location's panoramic ocean views and beautiful grounds will continue the Gala's tradition of providing a special night of dining and entertainment.

Also new this year will be an online feature to the live and silent auctions, where you can bid prior to the event and watch the bidding on your favorite items. To take part in the on-line auction, register your email address at www.ebcap.org.

Green Light Joins in Helping Residents Save on Their Utility Bills

By David Howard

It took 67 people about five hours to change light bulbs recently (over 1200 bulbs), as well as taking a big step towards helping east bay area residents and the environment at the same time.

Green Light RI, a new program of East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP) and Project 20/20 of Brown University joined to replace incandescent light bulbs free with energy saving CFL bulbs, at over 50 homes on a rainy Saturday.

A generation-spanning group of Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, high school and college students, with a sprinkling of adults of all ages, formed teams and selected lists of homeowners who had requested the new bulbs.

Program directors at EBCAP had provided names of clients who were interested in the free bulb exchange.

Brown students from Project 20/20, who have been active in many area communities changing regular for CFL bulbs for the past few months, accompanied each team to train the light bulb rookies in the group.

Fueled on coffee and donuts at an orientation held at the Bristol Community Center, the teams formed their own individual light brigades to charge into neighborhoods in Bristol, Warren and East Providence.

They picked up cartons and plastic wrapped packs of the energy saving light bulbs and began their calls to homeowners to set up appointments. The bulbs were available as a result of a grant to Project 20/20 from Walmart.

Team captains kept accurate records of the number of bulbs exchanged at each address, with the incandescent bulbs removed for recycling.

Each homeowner was left with an extra CFL bulb, as well as instructions for proper disposal of the energy-efficient bulbs, which are expected to last from five to seven years.

Homeowners can, on average, save about \$100 a year on their electric bill with CFL bulbs.

Teams returned to the Bristol Community Center for a box lunch and to pick up new supplies of bulbs for afternoon calls. The light rain falling most of the day did little to discourage everyone's enthusiasm.

One team which included EBCAP Director of Human Resources Sal Lombardi and two Brown students spent the morning in East Providence visiting four homes to change light bulbs. The reaction of the homeowners was universal, "This is great!"

In the afternoon, the team traveled throughout Bristol, visiting four more homes to replace the incandescent bulbs with CFLs. One stop was at a house a couple was renovating, and the team ducked around ladders and paint cans to change every bulb in the home.

Similar teams visited homes in Bristol and Warren carrying out appointments that had been scheduled with homeowners.

EBCAP Chief Executive Officer Dennis Roy, who initiated the Green Light RI program at EBCAP in the fall of 2007, praised the teams of Scouts, students and staff members for their efforts, stating, "this group effort was a smashing success. I'm really excited about the work we accomplished as a team and look forward to future cooperation between Green Light RI and Project 20/20."

Roy cited the efforts of Roger Williams University students and Bay View Academy students along with the Pack 6 Cub Scouts and Troop 6 Boy Scouts in Bristol for their taking part in the light bulb exchange.

EMR Off and Running at Health Centers

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records, allows providers to better track patients by key health indicators. It also assists providers with access to the most current clinical decision making standards.

Perhaps one of the most appreciated benefits seen immediately by patients is the electronic prescription. Dr. Fessler said she has had many patients comment positively on how quickly and efficiently their prescriptions are filled. While there are no guarantees that this will be the case, Dr. Fessler said patients report that their prescriptions, which are sent electronically to the pharmacy of their choice, are ready for pick up in the time that it takes them to drive from the health center to the pharmacy.

The providers have seen many benefits to the work flow as a result of the new system. Dr. Fessler said there is less writing—notes are typed in the patients' electronic record—making the providers' notes more legible. Notations made to the patient's record by

the provider during a visit provide the source for the system to automatically code a visit for billing purposes—a process that once had to be done manually.

Charts that once occupied valuable office/exam room space and took excessive amounts of time to pull, update and re-file, are kept securely off-site (still accessible if needed for reference) and are replaced by the electronic records that are immediately accessible to the providers. So, when a patient calls with a question, the time it takes for the provider to view their record and respond is decreased considerably.

Furthermore, providers now have access to patient records from remote locations. When providers are on call, they are able to make well-informed decisions based on complete clinical information.

Dr. Fessler also values the security of the electronic medical records. She said that

the computer program utilizes multiple security layers to ensure the records are kept confidential, and because the records are backed up to secure servers, the record is permanent. The electronic record is safer because it isn't vulnerable, as are paper records, to fire, water damage, natural disasters, etc.

McCaffrey commented on the implications of this conversion, saying, "This is the wave of the future. Health Insurance plans now provide incentives to health centers that utilize electronic medical records and it will soon be a requirement. Our use of the electronic medical record helps to ensure our position as a premier health center."

Since the initial funding from HRSA, EBCAP has also received a \$10,000 grant for the electronic medical records conversion from the Herbert E. and Daisy A. Stride Memorial Foundation with assistance from Rhode Island Quality Institute.



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www.ebcap.org

Current Resident or:

Jim Vincent Puts EBCAP Service at Top of Long and Varied Resume

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in helping the homeless by remaining on the EBCH board.

Among his many leadership positions are: president of the Rhode Island Affirmative Action Professionals (RIAAP), second vice president of the NAACP Providence Branch, vice president of the Rhode Island Hispanic American Chamber of Commerce, board member of the United Way of Rhode Island, trustee of the Providence Public Library, outreach coordinator of the African Alliance of Rhode Island (AARI), executive committee of the Center for Hispanic Policy (CHisPA) and former president of the Urban League of Rhode Island, just to name a few.

Jim also produces and hosts a popular weekly public affairs television show on the CW28 outlet in Providence and statewide cable channels where he interviews guests from the not-for-profit, political, civic and arts worlds.

A native of Boston, Jim received a Bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College and a Master's degree in Planning from the University of Pennsylvania. He is Manager of Constituent Advocacy for Rhode Island Housing, a quasi public state agency that serves thousands of residents.

In viewing his career, Jim cited the importance of Affirmative Action. "If the City of East Providence hadn't had an effective Affirmative Action or Outreach Program," he explained, "I probably would have never come to Rhode Island and subsequently never become involved with EBCAP." He recalled seeing an advertisement seeking a Housing Coordinator for the City of East Providence in a Boston neighborhood newspaper and applied. "I was impressed that the city was advertising beyond its borders for the job, which shows it was following the principles and guidelines of an effective Affirmative Action program. I applied and was



JIM VINCENT

hired and not only enjoyed working for the city, but the job also opened the door for me to Self-Help and eventually EBCAP. If it hadn't been for the City of East Providence's Affirmative Action program, I likely wouldn't be where I am today," he noted.

Jim takes his role at EBCAP seriously. "I try to attend as many events and activities as I can. I feel EBCAP's future is bright. We have a great staff, and the new administration in Washington strongly supports Community Action Programs." He noted while state funding may be reduced in some areas, the overall funding picture is brighter on

the federal grant level. "CAP agencies do this type of work better than anyone else," he said. "We take care of those left out and left behind."

"My association with EBCAP means so much to me," he said. "I believe in the work being done there, from Head Start to helping the homeless. EBCAP truly makes a difference in the lives of many of our neighbors." He recalled that when he first became active in Self Help he was the only male and non-parent on the Head Start Policy Council. "Even back then the organization was showing its diversity," he said.

Jim said he often thinks about how fortunate he is to be where he is today. "I thank God and I always remember a photograph taken of a group of Cub Scouts from Boston's South End, an inner city neighborhood." That photo included him when he was about ten years old.

"There are only two of us left from that photo," he said, pausing a few seconds and then adding, "the others are all dead, some of them at a young age and under difficult circumstances. I feel very fortunate to be where I am today."