

PRESS RELEASE

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**United Way
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PROJECT ACCESS PREPARES TO HELP AREA NEEDY

Medical Society helps uninsured Jackson County residents get vital medical care

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, November 14, 2006 – Physicians from the Jackson County Medical Society are turning a new page in providing care for needy Jackson County residents with the announcement of “Project Access”, a new community program lead by the Medical Society along with several community organizations including Foote Health System, the Jackson County Community Foundation, LifeWays, and the United Way of Jackson County. The community-wide project will match qualifying Jackson County residents in need of medical care with local physicians who will provide medical services at no cost to the patient.

“Most of our physicians and hospitals treat patients who are not able to pay”, said Brian Adamczyk, M.D., President of the Jackson County Medical Society. “Unfortunately, this care is often fragmented. The patients usually lack full access to medications, diagnostic services and specialty care. Project Access organizes this fragmented care into an equitable, cost-effective system to make sure we are reaching as many of our neighbors in need as possible.”

Project Access is a nationally recognized best practice model for providing health care to the uninsured. It creates a system that provides health care to low-income individuals who do not have coverage and do not qualify for public assistance. Project Access patients see physicians, both primary care doctors and specialists. They also receive all other health care services they need, including hospital inpatient and outpatient services, lab work, x-rays, and rehabilitation at no cost. Qualifying patients typically are between the ages of 18 and 64, have no medical coverage of any type, do not qualify for Medicaid or Medicare, and have low incomes.

The Jackson County Community Foundation is a supporter of Project Access, and is providing critical funding for the project. “The Foundation recognizes the need for access to quality health care for Jackson’s over 20,000 uninsured and underinsured citizens,” said Jan Maino, Vice President of Programs for the Jackson County Community Foundation. “Partnering with the Medical Society’s Project Access just makes good sense. This is a major step toward creating a healthy and vibrant community.”

“We have such a huge need for medical care here in Jackson County”, said Nancy Miller, Chief Executive Officer of LifeWays. “This is very positive step toward making sure everyone in Jackson County has a way to get affordable, quality medical care. We welcome Project Access and the continued efforts by all of Jackson County’s medical community to reach out and find ways to serve our residents.”

“The health care needs of our community are a major factor in our quality of life”, said Mike Shore, Board President of the United Way of Jackson County and Vice-President at Consumers Energy. “It’s the kind of issue that requires everyone in the community to step forward and help find solutions. We are just glad that United Way can play a role in helping Jackson County move toward better health care.”

The Medical Society plans to launch the Project Access system in January of 2007. Further information on how Jackson County residents can enroll will be available at a later date.