

PRIMARY CARE PRIORITY AREA

Primary Care is the provision of integrated, accessible health care services by clinicians who address a majority of health needs, develop a sustained partnership with patients and practice in a family and community setting. The unique skill set of the primary care team enables them to provide the full spectrum of care, from prevention to treatment. The field of primary care is moving toward a coordinated, whole-person approach known as medical homes, whereby the primary care practice is strengthened to increase access to care and facilitate improved health outcomes.

Priority Points

- Access to a medical home is associated with improved health outcomes, reduced health costs, increased patient trust, effective patient-provider communications and increased likelihood that patients receive appropriate care
- About 31% of adults, close to 1.3million individuals, age 18-65 in Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe Counties lack health insurance coverage, a significant barrier to accessing needed care
- Primary care physicians account for only one-third of the total physician workforce but the majority of patient visits: 52% of ambulatory care visits, 80% of patient visits for hypertension and 69% of visits for both chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and diabetes
- Patients without a regular source of care typically visit hospital emergency rooms. If those patients seeking non-urgent care went to a community health center, between \$1.6 and \$8 billion in annual health care costs could be saved nationally
- Community Health Centers (CHCs), pivotal players in the diverse health care safety net, are unique among primary care providers, as they are located in underserved, high needs areas and offer an array of necessary services to individuals and families

Strategic Approach

By partnering with community-based health centers, we help to increase their capacity and efficiency. This allows low-income, uninsured and high-risk individuals better access to comprehensive



primary care services. The aim is to have community-based health centers serve as the client's medical home, where preventive and treatment activities are provided, improving both clinical health outcomes and the patient's ability to manage their disease care.

Areas of Focus

Health Foundation aims to support primary care projects in the following areas:

- **Chronic Care Management:** Health care professionals help patients with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and asthma, learn to understand, manage and live successfully with their condition
- **Care Integration and Coordination:** Supporting efforts to reorganize the delivery of care to integrate various levels and types of care as well as referrals and sharing of test results
- **Self-Care for Diabetic Patients:** Supporting programs that educate patients on diabetes and diabetes self-management
- **Information Management:** Promoting the planning and implementation of electronic Health Information Technologies (HIT), specifically the Electronic Health Record (EHR). \$1 million was awarded for the adoption of an electronic medical record system among community based health care providers
- **Adherence to Clinical Standards:** Encouraging practitioners to adhere to evidence-based practices and clinical practice guidelines
- **Clinic Efficiency:** Promoting adherence to strategies that improve clinic operations

Investments in Primary Care Services

Since 2008, 16 organizations have received funding from the Foundation for Primary Care and a total of \$1,682,413 has been awarded. For example, \$300,000 was awarded to support the opening of a health care clinic in Monroe County and \$1 million was invested to establish electronic health records in community-based clinics in Miami-Dade County.

Chronic Conditions

Nearly half of all Americans have a chronic condition. Heart disease, asthma and diabetes account for 70% of all deaths in the United States. Here is how we fare in Florida:

Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life.

- The sixth leading cause of death in Florida (2009). It is generally underreported as the cause of death since people die from complications rather than to the disease itself
- 10.4% of adults are estimated as diabetic in Florida (2010)
- The American Diabetes Association estimates the total cost from diabetes to Florida at \$12.2 billion, including \$8.7 billion in medical costs and \$3.5 billion in lost productivity
- The risk of stroke is 2-4 times higher in a person with diabetes

Cardiovascular Diseases

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) refers to a wide variety of heart and blood vessel diseases including heart disease, coronary heart disease and stroke. American Heart Association reports that the total costs of CVD and stroke in 2007 was about \$286 billion.

- In Florida, heart disease is the first leading cause of death, accounting for 24.3% of all deaths, while stroke is the fifth leading cause of death
- High blood pressure is the most important risk factor for a stroke. About 75% of CVD can be attributed to hypertension, high blood cholesterol, low fruit and vegetable intake, inactive lifestyle and tobacco
- In Florida, all of the above risk factors except tobacco are higher among racial and ethnic minorities

Asthma

Asthma, a chronic illness of the lungs that causes severe breathing problems, can limit the quality of life. Is it the most common chronic condition among children and very common among adults. Poorly managed asthma results unnecessary hospital visits, however asthma can largely be managed through proper self care.

- As of 2010, 18% of children under 18 have been diagnosed with asthma at some point during their lives. About 25.5% of children with asthma have missed one or more days of school due to their condition
- In 2009, total charges for youth asthma related emergency department visits were \$64.3 million
- Florida has one of the lowest rates for adult asthma in the nation: around 6.2%. However, areas of higher prevalence include adult women, lower household incomes and lower educational attainment

Here is a snapshot of county-level chronic disease prevalence:

Indicator	Miami-Dade	Broward	Monroe	State
Adults who rate their health status as "Fair" or "Poor" (2007)	19.7%	16.2%	17.9%	16.6%
Adults with diagnosed diabetes (2010)	9.3%	6.8%	7.4%	10.4%
Adults with diagnosed hypertension (2010)	34.1%	31.1%	33.1%	34.4%
Adults with diagnosed high blood cholesterol (2010)	35.5%	37%	36.5%	38.6%
Adults who have not had their cholesterol checked in the past five years (2007)	32.5%	25%	26.6%	26.7%
Adults who currently have asthma (2010)	6.3%	7.9%	5.7%	8.3%
Adults who had a heart attack, angina or coronary heart disease (2010)	7.0%	9.4%	10.6%	10.2%

Call to Action

The most dramatic and sustainable improvements invariably involve collaboration. Health Foundation of South Florida actively seeks community partners to leverage resources and maximize the impact of health services and programs. If you are part of a community, regional or statewide effort to improve health for residents in Broward, Miami-Dade or Monroe Counties, we want to hear from you. Please contact us to see how we can work together to improve the health of South Floridians.



As of 10/21/11. Source information: Florida Department of Health, American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, Florida Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.