

This section of a grant application written by Eileen Anderson is published with permission of the applicant with changes to protect its privacy. The agency name has been changed to "EFG Health" and the state in which it is located has been changed to "Wheeler."

The grant was approved and funded.

EFG Health Breast Health Navigation Project

Statement of Need

EFG Health's target population is low-income medically underserved women in the state of Wheeler. Many of these women are undereducated and medically illiterate. Many are ineligible for the state-sponsored breast cancer control program. Virtually all of them have incomes close to the poverty level. Almost all are uninsured or under-insured. Many live in rural areas.

In Wheeler in 2012, the percentage of women from all income levels age 40 and over who had a mammogram within the past two years was 67%. This is below the nationwide 74%. Also it is 2% less than the Wheeler percentage for 2010. Our target population has extra barriers to medical care, so will have an even lower rate without intervention.

Some of the factors that pertain to Wheeler's low mammogram rate are as follows. Seventy-eight percent of Wheeler's counties are medically underserved according to the definition of the U.S. Health Resource and Services Administration. Wheeler falls in the bottom five states in the percentage of people with high school diplomas, bachelor's degrees, and advanced degrees. Women with lower levels of education are statistically less likely to get regular mammograms. Wheeler is a rural state. For rural women, medical services are distant from their homes. Often they have inadequate personal transportation because of poverty. Some of Wheeler's counties don't have permanent mammogram facilities.

Lack of access to medical care is a factor that makes low-income women more at risk of dying with breast cancer.

Among low-income populations, minority populations are especially at risk of inadequate medical attention. The overall mortality rates for African-American and white women in Wheeler were 33 and 23 per 100,000 respectively in the period from 2006-2010. Hispanic women have special barriers to health care. About 80% of those in our target population do not speak English well. Most of them have been here less than five years and are uninsured. If they have no Social Security number, they are not entitled to programs that give free services funded by federal money.

Our clients' average income is about 125% of the Federal Poverty Level. This is only \$505 per month per person for a household of four. The incomes of the larger families are proportionately even lower. 31% of EFG Health's clients are African-American, which is double the Wheeler population statistic for this group. About 30% have extraordinary

barriers due to physical handicaps, chronic health problems, old age, low literacy skills, homelessness, ethnicity, etc. Over 40% live in extremely rural areas. Almost 50% live in counties without major medical centers.

EFG Health's targeted women encounter the same well-documented barriers to health care generally, and to breast health care specifically, that most underserved populations face: lack of money and transportation, educational deficits, cultural obstacles, multi-problem personal situations, and more.

Project Design

The goal of the Project is to help medically underserved, low-income women in the counties of the grantor enter, stay in, and progress through the breast health continuum of care. The objectives comprise the following service methods:

- individual breast health needs assessment including guiding women to form a plan of action for breast healthcare;
- referral to reduced cost and free medical providers including other grantee programs;
- referral to sources that are not medical but which give money for costs of breast medical services or transportation to the services;
- exam reminders with offers of access assistance; individualized education about breast cancer and risk; and
- followalong with breast cancer survivors to assess needs and refer to transportation, survivor palliative items, and financial help as needed.

The requested funding will increase the percentage of women who enter, stay in, or progress through the continuum of care by 1) increasing the number of at-risk women who access breast medical providers for needed attention; 2) increasing the number of at-risk women who get repeat early cancer detection breast exams; 3) educating women about breast cancer and early detection; and 4) increasing the number of low-income women diagnosed with breast cancer who can access treatment and subsequent exams.

EFG Health's work with clients and providers is done by telephone and mail. Follow-along support is emphasized, including exam reminders. Special attention is given to the needs of low-income women in treatment for breast cancer, and to the needs of survivors for their exams. EFG Health's navigation assistance directly assists women in entering the continuum of care, and its follow-along helps them stay in and progress. We have long experience in identifying the special problems of impoverished women, including also those from ethnic minority cultures and other special populations, and we provide the extra help necessary for services to be successful. We tailor our services and communications to the special needs of the individual woman, whatever her cultural circumstances may be. We are especially sensitive to special needs centering on low literacy, language barriers, lack of transportation, past history of disappointment with medical services, and inadequate telephone service.

EFG Health reaches its target population through long-standing relationships with providers throughout the grantor's service area and through targeted Internet advertising. EFG Health regularly develops new partnerships to fulfill its objectives and serve its member women, and as new resources become available.

The interventions and barrier reduction strategies employed by EFG Health are evidence based. Please see the attached document with references.

Organization Capacity

EFG Health has a history of success in goals related to the fight against breast cancer. It has resources suited to the goals in this application. The staff members are culturally competent, have graduate degrees, and have a combined 50 years' history of working with Wheeler women from different cultures including Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian. A sixth "culture" is impoverished, and this group has cross-cultural needs that require special alertness on the part of service providers; EFG Health staff members are adept at this.

The infrastructure includes office space, equipment, furniture, and a networked computer system. All of this is dedicated solely to breast cancer work. The members of the volunteer Board of Directors have leadership experience in community breast cancer work or directing nonprofit programming for special populations. Also EFG Health enjoys longterm relationships with other agencies in Wheeler that have goals and concerns in breast cancer work. The program is well known as the "hub" of breast health service navigation in the state. The agencies that we collaborate with have a good opinion of us based on their past experiences regarding our services to mutual target population women, and we get ongoing positive feedback from women in our target population who are our clients and have received our services.

EFG Health provides a unique service mix. The services are needed by low-income women who are at-risk in the fight against breast cancer. The program serves as a clearinghouse for collecting and coordinating information about the free and reduced-cost breast medical services that exist throughout Wheeler. Then it refers women to those services as appropriate. EFG Health does not simply refer a caller to names on a list. Instead, the program delivers skilled case assessment and navigation services, and communicates with service providers on a daily basis. After the clients' presenting needs are met the program stays in periodic contact with them to sustain their access to education and care related to breast cancer screenings, diagnosis, and treatment. This follow-along is built into the work plan and is made possible by computer databased client information and provider information. Monthly workloads are generated for contacting clients. In the course of follow-along contacts, the updated client-centered information is captured and added to the databases.

Based on the self-reporting of most of the 15,000 women who received EFG Health's navigation help during its 19-year history, a high percentage of them received the breast medical services they needed. For example, in 2010 at least 80% of the new women who contacted the program for help reported that they did get the help from the sources the program referred them to.

EFG Health has the fiscal capability to perform the work of the Project. This grant request is to help fund a continuation of work delivered through an existing infrastructure and managed by fiscal processes and internal controls that have been in place for several years. EFG Health has received grant awards for navigation projects since 1996, and has always fulfilled the goals and objectives, as it has for all of its projects from all funding sources. The agency is audited each year by an independent accounting firm.

Continued funding will be the key factor to sustain the work and the program. EFG Health is continually proactive in the effort to identify additional funding partners, and there is a past record of success in that regard, with about \$3.9 million obtained and put to work for Wheeler women in the history of the agency. The existing staff members have been in place for more than 10 years and are dedicated to the continuance of the agency on behalf of Wheeler women. The existing infrastructure is strong and stable.

EFG Health is a freestanding entity dedicated solely to the fight against breast cancer and has the full support and involvement in its programming from its Board of Directors.

The impact of EFG Health is already long term and will continue to be so. In its 19 year history, more than 241 women have been diagnosed with breast cancer with help from EFG Health, getting access to life-saving treatment much earlier than they would have otherwise and benefitting from EFG Health's Navigation and Financial Assistance Projects. Because of EFG Health, medical providers have a resource to offer their indigent clients, and women in need have a way to find the medical providers. EFG Health's role as a hub of breast medical services is unique in the community and has longterm impact.

Statistics cited are from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cancer statistics, American Cancer Society's Cancer Facts and Figures 2016, the U.S. Census' most recent reports, U.S. Health Resources and Services publications, and the Rural Assistance Center State Data.