

## Bi-Lines

February 2012

Bi-State Primary Care Association Newsletter



Tess Stack  
Kuenning

Dear Stakeholders:

Bi-State's 25th anniversary in 2011 was an opportune time to reflect on the growth of our membership, from two members in 1986 to 35 in 2011. Over the past 25 years, Bi-State and its members have helped to implement a significant expansion of primary and preventive health care and low-cost pharmacy services through our Community Health Centers. Collectively, we've expanded access to primary medical, dental, and behavioral health care services to well over 300,000 people in medically underserved areas of Vermont and New Hampshire.

The American system of health care delivery is currently being examined and debated. While the future of the financing and delivery of health care is uncertain, what is crystal clear is the value Community Health Center's comprehensive model of care brings to health care, with proven results in cost, quality, and access.

Bi-State has earned a seat at the table in federal and state policy discussions where we will continue to advocate for affordable access to primary health care services for all people. We are heartened to know that you, your family, friends, and neighbors all have greater access to affordable, high quality primary care through our Community Health Centers. We acknowledge and appreciate the bipartisan support of our elected officials and the collaboration of agency directors, funders, and supporters.

We wish you good health and wellness in the years to come. Thank you for supporting access to primary care for the past 25 years!

*Tess*

Tess Stack Kuenning, CNS, MS, RN  
Executive Director, Bi-State Primary Care Association

[Click here to Find a Health Center in VT or NH](#)

### VT Legislators Reception Bi-State Members Testify, Meet with Key Committees and Host Reception



Speaker of the House, Shap Smith, meets with Bi-State staff and members representing Federally Qualified Health Centers in VT

**Montpelier, VT** -- On Feb. 9, the Nonprofit Day at the VT State House, Bi-State Primary Care Association was the first to testify in front of the House Health Care Committee chaired by Rep. Michael Fisher. The importance of the State Loan Repayment Program as an incentive when trying to recruit primary care physicians to practice in Vermont was explained by Joshua Plavin, MD, Medical Director of Gifford Health Center. The Committee also heard an update from a Bristol community group, the Five Town Alliance, seeking to establish a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) "Look-Alike" to serve five surrounding towns.

Susan Barrett, Director of VT Public Policy for Bi-State, led the testimony in front of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare. She described the unique model of care employed by [.read more.](#)

[View Presentation for Legislators.](#)

[View/download VT Primary Care Sourcebook.](#)

### NH Legislative and Business Breakfast The Premiere of "CHC Morning News"



"CHC Morning News" video premiered at Legislative and Business Breakfast

**Concord, NH** -- More than 200 legislators, business leaders, commissioners, and corporate sponsors attended Bi-State's Legislative and Business Breakfast at the Holiday Inn in Concord on Feb.1. Hosted by Bi-State Primary Care Association and NH Community Health Centers, the annual breakfast provides a platform to demonstrate the high quality, affordable model of care provided by Community Health Centers.

Why the business community actively supports Community Health Centers was demonstrated by an impressive cast of unscripted "real-life" business leaders, representatives, and agency directors who participated in Bi-State's latest video project entitled "CHC Morning News." Anchor woman "Dyann Stoyer" was played by Vanessa Santarelli, Director of NH Public Policy at Bi-State and a familiar face at the State House. Video production was supported by sponsors and a grant from the NH Charitable Foundation.

Executive Director, Tess Stack. [.read more...](#)

[Watch "CHC Morning News" video.](#)

**New Expertise on Staff at Bi-State  
Data Systems and Technology**

**Federal Committee Appointment  
Targeting Resources to Areas of Need**



Heather E. Skeels

Heather E. Skeels, VT Program Coordinator, recently completed a certificate program at Champlain College in "**Data Systems and Technology.**" The program was created in 2010 in response to the growing need for Health Information Technology

(HIT) professionals that can assist primary care practices, hospitals, and other medical professionals with the transition to electronic health records and help them realize new opportunities to improve care through the health information exchange.

Ms. Skeels was the first graduate of the new program at Champlain College and completed her coursework in August 2011 with a 4.0 GPA. She gained expertise in the application of current laws and health information initiatives to ensure compliance and to protect data integrity; the support of database architecture to meet organizational needs; the coordination of data for health care decision-making, quality management, and quality improvement; and the development and implementation of strategic and operational plans for HIT best practices.

Ms. Skeels coordinates Bi-State's VT Rural Health Alliance (VRHA) HIT Project, a statewide collaboration with VT's Federally Qualified Health Centers, VT Information Technology Leaders, the Department of VT Health Access, and other partners to facilitate data integrity...[read more.](#)



Tess Kuenning and Secretary Sebelius in Washington, DC

Tess Stack Kuenning, Executive Director of Bi-State, recently completed her service on the **Negotiated Rulemaking Committee**, a federal appointment made by Secretary Sebelius, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2010. Ms. Kuenning was among only 23 nationwide selected to review and update criteria used to define "medically underserved areas" and "health professional shortage areas" in the United States. The defining criteria, affecting numerous federal and state programs and billions of public dollars, are used to target resources to areas of need. Ms. Kuenning served as the national representative for the Community Health Centers and Primary Care Associations.

The Committee made recommendations for a new process, criteria, and methodologies for determining designations and submitted their report as guidance to the Secretary and to the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration in developing a new rule.

-- SAVE THE DATE --

**2012 Primary Care Conference**

***Improving Quality, Managing Costs, and Increasing Access through Primary Care***  
Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, Vermont 05602

***Online registration opens mid-March 2012***

**Leadership Development Program 2012**

Bi-State's biennial **Leadership Development Program (LDP2012)** has only two classes left: **March 7: [Budgeting for Success at Health Centers](#)**, and, **April 4: [Strategic Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities for Emerging Leaders](#)**.

Former LDP graduates are eligible to attend at a single-class rate. Please email: [Stephanie Pagliuca](mailto:Stephanie.Pagliuca) or call 603-228-2830 x 111 for information.

**Bi-State Primary Care Association** is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization formed in 1986 to promote access to effective and affordable primary care and preventive services for all, with special emphasis on underserved populations in VT and NH. Bi-State works with federal, state, and regional health policy organizations and policymakers, foundations, and payers to develop strategies, policies, and programs that promote and sustain community-based, primary health care services.

With offices in Bow, NH, and Montpelier, VT, Bi-State provides strategic advocacy, technical assistance, education and training, networking opportunities, and resource and information services.

Contact the Editor: [Susan Noon](mailto:Susan.Noon), MBA, APR - Director of Marketing and Development

**Bi-State Staff Directory**

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