



30 Million New Patients and 11 Months to Go: Who Will Provide Their Primary Care?



Washington, DC--Tess Stack Kuenning represented Community Health Centers nationwide, including those in New Hampshire and Vermont, when she testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging in January of this year.

With a goal for all Americans to have insurance coverage by January 1, 2014, Kuenning testified that "...coverage does not equate to access. It is access that makes coverage real. We need sustainable solutions to increase our primary care capacity, lower and manage our health care costs and assure quality

outcomes..." [Read more.](#)

[Submitted Testimony](#)

[Video of Hearing](#)

[Primary Care Access - A Report from Chairman Senator Bernard Sanders, Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions](#)

Pictured: Tess Stack Kuenning, CNS, MS, RN, Executive Director of Bi-State Primary Care Association, testifies before Senate Subcommittee on Capitol Hill.



www.bistatepca.org

525 Clinton Street, Bow, NH 03304

61 Elm Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

Save the Date!

27th Annual Primary Care Conference

Building Infrastructure and Primary Care Capacity for the Future

Tuesday, May 14, 2013

Lake Morey Resort • Fairlee • Vermont

Keynote Speaker: Tom Van Coverden, President & CEO
National Association of Community Health Centers

Panel: Health Care Payment Reform

Technical Training: ICD-10 Priority Management Group
Enterprise Risk Management and Federal Tort Claims Act
Martin Bree - Of Counsel Feldsman, Tucker, Leifer, Fidell LLP

Additional Training Sessions to be Announced.

Online Registration Opens in March

Bi-State Primary Care Association
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Community Health Centers and Bi-State Testify Before Vermont House Health Committee



Montpelier, VT -- With 12 leaders from the Federally Qualified Health Centers, the Vermont Coalition of Clinics for the Uninsured, Gifford Health Center, and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England; Bi-State's director of VT Public Policy, Susan Barrett, and Executive Director Tess Stack Kuenning, spent the day at the VT State House on Feb. 14 to testify and hold meetings with state officials on the matter of health care access and cost savings.

In the House Health Care Committee meeting, they demonstrated how FQHCS reduce costly emergency room visits by making primary care office visits available to their patients in the evening and on weekends. The committee heard why funding loan repayment programs and workforce initiatives is necessary to recruit primary care doctors and clinicians to Vermont. Legislators took advantage of the opportunity to ask questions about the "primary care infrastructure" and expressed support for greater access to primary care.

In meetings with Senate Pro Tempore John Campbell and Speaker of the House Shap Smith, Bi-State and its members agreed with the legislators that there is a tremendous need for easier access to mental health services. Several of the health centers currently integrate mental and behavioral health services within their practices, along with medical and oral health care. Many suggested that the ease of access through a familiar primary care setting was ideal for patients.

Bi-State members urged collaboration and funding to expand access.



Robin Lunge, Director of Payment Reform for the Administration, presented an update on payment reform to Bi-

State and its members about the state's health benefits exchange (VT Health Connect), cost-sharing assistance proposals for those entering the exchange, and plans for a single-payer system in Vermont.

Bi-State's annual Reception for Vermont Legislators was held from 2:00-4:00 p.m. in the State House Cafeteria.

Pictured Top:

Speaker of the House Shap Smith (center) poses with Community Health Center leaders and board members, Bi-State staff, and John Olson, Chief, State Office of Rural Health & Primary Care. (L-R). John Olson, Grant Whitmer, Elizabeth Becken, Jack Donnelly, Nick Carter, Pam Parson, Marcia Perry, John Edwards, Shap Smith, Tess Stack Kuenning, Renee Kilroy, Martha Hanlon, Stephanie Pagliuca, Susan Barrett, Kevin Kelley, and Wilda Pelton.

Pictured Bottom:

Robin Lunge, facing forward on left, meets with Bi-State staff and members. David Reynolds, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Financial Regulation, joined the discussion.



Senator Jeb Bradley and Speaker of the House Terie Norelli - Guest Speakers at the NH Legislative and Business Breakfast in February

On Expanding Medicaid and Funding NH Community Health Centers:

Senator Bradley:

"It is my hope that if there is revenue, the \$2 million cut [per year of the biennium budget] from primary care will be restored. Investing in New Hampshire's Community Health Centers is a good use of scarce funds."

Speaker Norelli:

"Over the next couple of months, we will be deciding whether to expand Medicaid as part of the Affordable Care Act. We have been reviewing the costs and benefits of expansion, both in terms of our health care system and our economy. Information so far indicates that our public health and the economic well-being of the state will benefit significantly, when everyone has access to health care. Community Health Centers provide our most vulnerable neighbors with comprehensive, cost-effective, high quality care. In fact, they lead the nation in the treatment of chronic diseases - treating asthma, immunizing children in schools, and controlling diabetes."



Tess Stack Kuenning:

"During the last biennium, \$4 million was cut from the State's primary care contracts to Community Health Centers to serve low-income, uninsured people. The loss of funding led to layoffs of physicians, nurse practitioners, medical assistants, social workers, substance abuse counselors, and care coordinators. Home visiting programs, entire WIC programs, and school-based oral health programs were eliminated."

[Read more.](#)

Pictured: (L-R) Lucy Hodder, legal counsel for Governor Hassan; Senate Majority Leader Jeb Bradley; Speaker of the House Terie Norelli; and Bi-State's Tess Stack Kuenning, executive director, and Kristine Stoddard, director of NH Public Policy at the Legislative and Business Breakfast.

[Great Appreciation to all our Sponsors!](#)

About Bi-State: [Bi-State Primary Care Association](#), serving Vermont and New Hampshire, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization that works with federal, state, and regional health policy organizations, foundations, and payers to develop strategies, policies, and programs that provide and support community-based primary health care services in medically underserved areas.

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[Bi-State Staff Directory](#)

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