

# 2004 Forum Focus

Serving seven counties and providing medical, dental, mental health and pharmaceutical referrals, CeMO CARES had to find a “creative alternative” when the doctor set to run its new Versailles clinic passed away.



“How do we have a clinic when we don’t have a doctor or when our doctors get sick?” asked Ginger

Richardson. “[We use] a nurse practitioner so we can at least do medication management.”



Getting creative is necessary for many central Missourians who cannot afford health care or – in the case of health care professionals – cannot afford to provide care. Richardson’s solution is just one of many that are being implemented in central Missouri. Eighteen citizens and the Miller and Camden county health departments attended the Missouri Foundation for Health’s Osage Beach forum on June 15, sharing both solutions and continuing health care issues in the area.



According to Laura Gajda, Lake Regional Health System, the Lake of the Ozarks region faces some unique health care challenges. With approximately 5 million visitors per



year, the lake hosts activities that can cause a variety of recreational injuries – boating, etc. – resulting in a very busy emergency room. The tourism focus also leads to a range of residents – retirees, Latino families, young people working in service industries, and the families who have lived there for generations. These diverse populations all have specific health care needs.

MFH is part of the solution for several organizations. For example, Sam Brayfield, a family practice physician in Camdenton, thanks the Foundation for his ability to give time to Kids’ Harbor Child Advocacy Center. “I don’t know how many of you really know or understand the economics of the position of family

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**“It is a real unfortunate thing that the community has to have a Children’s Advocacy Center. ... I think we are up to 15 or 16 throughout the state of Missouri.”**

Sam Brayfield,  
Kids’ Harbor Child Advocacy Center, Camdenton

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practice. The money we make is mostly taken up by malpractice [coverage] and just other expenses. There is no way I [could] be out of my office for one whole day a week without the support I am getting from the Missouri Foundation for Health.”

Brayfield is glad to have the opportunity to work at the child advocacy center but is disturbed by its necessity. Children’s health and wellbeing is of concern across the board. Fran Tourdot, Dallas County Health Department, focuses on children’s dental health; working with Bright Smiles, she and other

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# Osage Beach, Missouri

volunteers go into schools to teach children oral hygiene and help them brush their teeth. Tourdot estimated that 30-40 percent of children in Dallas County don't even know what a toothbrush is. She further emphasized the importance of fluoride in the water, which greatly reduces cavity occurrences.

Richardson also spoke about dental issues, particularly in connection with methamphetamine use. A number of young people come to CeMO CARES with "Meth Mouth," in which the drug has eaten the enamel on their teeth. "These are 20 and 30-year-old kids who have dentures," she stated.

One solution mentioned by two speakers was the COOL (Communities

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**"Does the man get his arm sewn up and get the stitches that he needs, or ... pay the car payment, eat or pay the rent? ... So it's obvious they buy food."**

Bryant Burton,  
Camden County Health Department,  
Camdenton

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Offering Opportunities for Life) Group, which tries to build positive assets in children. Teaching honesty, integrity, respect and self-restraint, COOL's goal is to stop many social behaviors that can become health issues.

Working with people at the other end of life and also in mid-life, the Alzheimer's Association is trying to

educate people about dementia diseases and provide respite care for families. "If the caregiver isn't healthy, if the caregiver does not feel good physically and emotionally, he or she cannot possibly give good care to someone who is dealing with dementia," said Joetta Coen. When asked about her biggest need, Coen expressed the need to create more awareness in rural communities.

Attendees also mentioned some other populations that have special considerations. CeMO CARES works with people in the Menonite community, who will not accept free care. As a result, they work for their health services. The Latino community also was cited as a growing population that has specific health needs.

Other issues raised included teen pregnancy, STDs and mental health. The forum ended with dialogue between MFH board members and the audience regarding the grant process. Deborah Cooper, MFH vice president and chief program officer, also told attendees about a new initiative in which the Foundation will fund health assessments in communities to help them determine focus areas. Working together, central Missouri will continue to find creative and sustainable solutions.



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