

# The St. Louis Regional Health Commission: Improving Health Care for All

## Special to the American

**S**t. Louis – March 2003 is fast becoming health care awareness month in St. Louis. On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, a new report came out from St. Louis University and the Episcopal/Presbyterian Charitable Health and Medical Trust. “A Crisis of Care: the community’s perspective on health care in St. Louis City” documented the many difficulties St. Louisans face in gaining access to quality health care. March 10-16 was “Cover the Uninsured Week.” Multiple programs throughout the region brought attention to the barriers facing those without health insurance.

Later this month, another major report will come out from the Regional Health

Commission (RHC). The RHC is the group charged with improving health care in the region. The commission includes a local network of individuals with the responsibility and commitment to increase access to health care, reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes for all St. Louisans. The RHC is a regional authority that includes government representatives and health care providers who work in close collaboration to achieve the common goal of improving health care in St. Louis.

“St. Louis has excellent health care facilities and institutions, but when you look at the overall health status of our region, many of the region’s health outcomes are particularly poor as compared to other regions,” says Peter Sortino, Chairman of the RHC.

“What we’re finding is that there are significant barriers for people to receive health care in St. Louis,” says Robert Fruend, CEO of the RHC. “Our current system is fragmented and not designed to meet the challenges we currently face.”

The RHC was formed to address these problems and find lasting solutions and change the way health care is delivered in St. Louis City and St. Louis County.

Currently the RHC is developing a comprehensive snapshot of the health care system in St. Louis. This “situation analysis” report will be released in late March 2003 and will be an in depth report on the region’s primary and specialty care delivery systems. Recommendations for system-wide improvements will be based on this report. By the end of 2003 the RHC will create a strategic plan for

improving delivery of health care services, especially to those most in need.

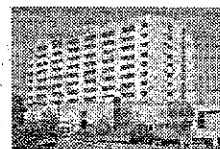
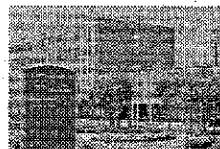
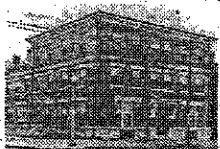
“Improving our health care delivery system is an issue that impacts everyone in St. Louis,” says Fruend. “We’re fortunate to have a strong network of concerned citizens who are committed to improving the way health care is delivered in St. Louis. These individuals are working closely with others in the community to create and nurture a truly inclusive health planning process that will result in improved access, reduced disparities and better health outcomes.”

The RHC needs your input and support. If you would like more information about the St. Louis Regional Health Commission or would like to get involved visit [www.stlrhc.org](http://www.stlrhc.org) on the web or call (314) 534-9270.

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One hundred years ago there was no insulin for diabetes or cure for polio, penicillin had not yet been developed and open-heart surgery was only a dream.

Since that time, there have been many medical breakthroughs — yet one constant

has remained — Christian Hospital’s commitment to help people enjoy life by improving their health.

Today, Christian Hospital is noted for excellence in heart services and lifesaving cardiothoracic surgery, emergency medicine, neurosurgery, cancer treatment, urology, pulmonology and radiation oncology. Christian Hospital has more than 600 physicians on staff and a diverse workforce of more than 2,500 health-care professionals who have a relentless focus on

A Proud History