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Medication Access Program Helps Uninsured Residents

FAYETTEVILLE – The Cumberland County Department of Public Health and Cape Fear Valley Health System are helping more than 2,500 uninsured patients every month obtain lifesaving medication through the Cumberland County Medication Access Program (CCMAP). Residents of Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke and Sampson counties who are on medication for chronic diseases and do not have access to insurance coverage for prescription drugs may be eligible for the program.

"Our hope is to provide medication to help people manage their chronic diseases so that they can try and either get back into the work force or stay in the work force and hopefully reach a place where they can get insurance," said Kaye Dunham, pharmacy manager of the program.

The project provides medications from samples, purchased medicines and drug manufacturers' patient assistance programs at little or no charge to individuals.

Applicants cannot have insurance coverage for prescriptions or qualify for a government or third-party program such as Medicaid or Medicare Part D. The program is for patients who take medication to manage chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, asthma, allergies or depression. Decisions concerning which individuals are accepted into the program are made using the total household income.

Applications may be picked up at the Health Department at 1235 Ramsey St. The form is also available by clicking on the "Medication Access" tab on the Health Department's website, http://www.co.cumberland.nc.us/health.aspx. All applicants must appear in person for an interview prior to enrollment and provide proof of income and residency in one of the four eligible counties. CCMAP is located on the first floor of the Health Department in the Pharmacy.

The medication assistance initiative started in 2002, when Cape Fear Valley's Board of Trustees approved the program. Since then, more than 209,000 prescriptions have been filled through CCMAP. The program's success can be attributed to the collaborative effort between the Health Department, Cape Fear Valley Health System, the Department of Social Services, Better Health of Cumberland County, the CARE Clinic, Cumberland County Health Care Council and local physicians.

For more information, call 433-3602.

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