What is Access to Care?  

- Access to affordable and quality health care is important to physical, social and mental health.
- It is the ability to obtain needed, affordable, convenient, acceptable, and effective health services in a timely manner.

Components of Access to Care

- Availability of services (location, hours of operation, correct array of services and appropriate capacity)
- Affordability of services (insurance, payment, coverage, charity care)
- Appropriate, effective, and fair services (socially, culturally, and language; evidence-based-informed; performed to consumer satisfaction)
- Timeliness of services (health homes, prevention, and supportive services)
Why is it Important?  

- Having access to care allows individuals to enter the health care system, find care easily and locally, pay for care and get their health needs met.

- Health insurance does help individuals and families access needed primary care, specialists, and emergency care, but does not ensure access on its own. It is also necessary for doctors to offer affordable care, be available to treat patients, and be in relatively closer locations to patients.
  
  - Insured children are more likely to have fewer unmet health needs.

- Neighborhoods with low health insurance rates often have fewer doctors, hospital beds and emergency resources than areas with higher rates.
EDUCATION

- Studies show that U.S. adults age 25 and older that do not have a high school diploma are more likely to die 9 years sooner than college graduates. 10
- Education provides a foundation which leads to access, income, and better health.

Reports show that less than one third of the nation’s 4 year olds are enrolled in a high-quality preschool. Each child deserves an education that opens opportunities. Many children lack access to the support and education that will give them the opportunity to become a part of the middle class. Children who have rich learning experiences are better prepared to succeed. 11

Approximately 9 out of 10 adults may lack the needed skills to prevent disease and manage their health. Health Literacy is the degree that individuals gain, process and understand basic health information and services that are needed to make appropriate health decisions. 14% of adults have below basic health literacy. Populations with the lowest health literacy include: racial and ethnic minorities, older adults and people with less than a high school degree or GED certificate, people with low income levels, non-native speakers of English and people with compromised health status. 12

GED & Workforce Development: GED and Workforce Development Programs provide job seekers with the resources to increase the likelihood of gaining stable employment. These programs also collaborate with business leaders for the recruitment and development of their labor needs. Some services these programs may offer include: GED preparation and assistance, job interview skills training, computer skills development and connections to jobs. Also, most of these programs provide access to work support like child care services, transportation assistance, professional clothes and access to computers. 13


