

The Benefits of Free Tax Preparation Services in the Medical Home

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What is the StreetCred program? It is a program that provides free tax preparation services for the underserved low-income population who used these neighborhood clinics for their children's health care.

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Every once in a while, we publish a pilot study of an innovation that we think could change how we practice—and this month we provide an interesting innovation courtesy of Marcil et al. ([10.1542/peds.2017-3608](#)), who started the “StreetCred” program in four Boston pediatric clinics. What is the StreetCred program? It is a program that provides free tax

preparation services for the underserved low-income population who used these neighborhood clinics for their children's health care. The authors report on their work serving 753 clients and yielding \$1.6 million in tax refunds, including to families who did not realize they could apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit. The authors surveyed patients and clinic staff regarding satisfaction and describe the types of tax refunds through tax assistance while a child was receiving care. Reading this study is anything but taxing and may lead to your considering a similar program for your offices—once you know how to set one up, which the authors nicely describe. We suspect the authors will still be inundated with how-to calls once the word spreads about the outcomes achieved in this pilot program providing free tax services in the pediatric office setting. After reading this, you may make a deduction that this type of program could work as well in your office—but read the study first, and please let us know if you do initiate a similar program as a result of what is described in this “out-of-the-box” innovative office-based program.

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