



Implications of Health Reform for the FCNRV and Our Patients

Dear Friend of the Free Clinic,

In March, 2010, President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act into law. One of the goals of this health reform law is to expand coverage to millions of people who currently have no health insurance. This will be accomplished several ways including an ambitious expansion of the Medicaid program and creation of subsidies for those who do not qualify for Medicaid.

As you can imagine, everyone at the Free Clinic is thrilled that many of our local residents are slated to gain access to health insurance. Every day we witness first-hand the suffering that is the result of not being able to afford necessary health care. We've seen many people who have become desperately ill because they have put off going to the doctor to avoid strapping their families with unmanageable health care debt.

Unless enacted by individual states, there is NO coverage for adult dental care in national health reform. As a provider of adult dental services, the Free Clinic will be looking closely at how we can expand this coverage for our patients.

What does all this mean for our organization? I'd love to believe that the planned reforms will constitute a universal "fix" for our patients. Yet, as we've all been warned, the major provisions of the legislation do not take effect until 2014. At that point, if individuals do not secure the mandated coverage, they will be penalized. The unfortunate reality is that the vast majority of our patients are not financially stable enough to purchase insurance OR pay the penalty that will result if they do not.

In addition, having access to insurance does not guarantee having access to care. We are all aware of the serious primary care physician shortage in our country. It may take years for the New River Valley to catch-up with the demand for new practitioners.

From our vantage point, nothing is certain yet and things may remain uncertain for years to come. We would love to close up tomorrow if we were no longer needed in this community. It's a challenge to keep doing what we do. This is exhausting work. Especially during the current economic recession, resources are hard to find, difficult to obtain and running low. We constantly have to piece things together to keep the doors open.

So it is with mixed emotion that we – the Board, staff and volunteers – realize that there most certainly will be a role for our Free Clinic in the future. We have already begun evaluating our processes and service delivery model to make sure we can continue delivering quality, compassionate care in a changing environment. We may find that we will need to modify our services to encompass any "new" disenfranchised groups. Or, we may need to establish partnerships with other health care organizations that we have not worked with in the past.

We will remain flexible during the turbulent years to come. We will do what is necessary to meet the challenges ahead because the changes on the horizon do not alter the Free Clinic of the New River Valley's commitment to take care of those in need, or our reliance on volunteers, funders and the community-at-large.



Sincerely,

Michelle Brauns

Michelle Brauns, MS, APR
Executive Director

Every Gift Makes A Difference! Summer 2010

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____
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- Enclosed is my contribution to ensure vital health services to people who need it the most:
 - \$1000 \$500 \$100 \$50 Other: \$ _____
- I am requesting **VA State Tax Credits** for my donation of \$500 (individual) or \$889 (business) or greater.
- A **Matching Gift Form** from my company is enclosed.
- * I wish to make a gift: In **Honor** of _____ In **Memory** of _____

Please notify those listed below of this donation:
 Name(s): _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Thank You!

Hope Starts Here Tour Events

In response to national health care reform changes, the Board of Directors and Executive Leadership have created a program of one-hour community tours of the Free Clinic entitled: Hope Starts Here. The focus is to discuss the plight of the uninsured in our community, showcase Clinic programs and discuss organizational challenges as different parts of the health care law take effect. Although individual tours can be scheduled, group tours are currently set for the first Wednesday of each month from 8 – 9 a.m. and 3rd Thursday from 4 – 5 p.m. The general public is invited to arrange group or individual tours by contacting Roz Nelson at 381-0820 or roznelson@nrvfreeclinic.org.



A Dental Patient's Sentiments in a Letter to Staff

"When I was a little kid, I was always scared to go to the dentist so as I got older my teeth started to go bad. Now I have a couple of teeth I have to get pulled and a couple that need to be fixed.

The only stress I have in my life now are my teeth. When I wake up in the morning the first thing I think about are my teeth. I go to bed at night and the last thing I think about are my teeth.



I work in fast food so I really don't make enough to go to a dentist other than ya'll. I see people who have good teeth and it makes me feel bad about myself and lowers my self esteem. I'm only in my 20's and I want to save my teeth now.

I have a very beautiful little baby girl so I want to be a good role model for her. I want to be able to smile really big for her and not hide rotten teeth.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

P.S: This will change my life completely around and I'll be able to give my daughter the smile she deserves to see."

Volunteers Celebrated with Honors

The Free Clinic of the New River Valley honored volunteers during an annual appreciation reception and awarded special "Volunteer of the Year" awards to six individuals for long-term commitment and leadership.

Scott Kincaid, MD, a family practice physician in Radford, is a volunteer both at the Christiansburg Clinic and Radford satellite clinic and has been volunteering since 1997. He was recognized with the "Satellite Volunteer of the Year" award for his dedication and loyalty.

Kenneth Jones, MD, received "Medical Volunteer of the Year" award. Jones, a Christiansburg family practice physician, has been a volunteer both at the Clinic and in his private practice treating Free Clinic patients in his office.

Richard Boyle, DDS, received the "Dental Volunteer of the Year" award for providing dental care to Free Clinic patients at the Free Clinic's Christiansburg facility and at his own practice since 1998. Dr. Boyle, an oral surgeon from Blacksburg, sees patients each month at the Clinic providing care such as tooth extractions and root canals.

Rebecca Saunders received the "Pharmacy Volunteer of the Year" award. Saunders, a certified pharmacy technician and Virginia Tech student, began volunteering in 2008 in the Pharmacy Program assisting the pharmacist in dispensing of medications.

Susan Carroll, a Christiansburg resident, was honored with the "Administrative Volunteer of the Year" award. Carroll volunteers between eight and sixteen hours each week screening patients for eligibility so that they can begin receiving Clinic services.

Joan Hirt, Professor in the School of Education at Virginia Tech, is the outgoing Free Clinic Board Chairman and was presented with the "Board Member of the Year" award. Hirt was recognized for her dedicated work since 2007.



left to right – Joan Hirt, Board Chairman; Scott Kincaid, MD; Richard Boyle, DDS; Susan Carroll; Rebecca Saunders



Proud To Be a United Way Partner Agency

Our Mission: The Free Clinic is committed to providing high quality health care and dental services to people who lack insurance and cannot afford healthcare

I would like:

- A tour of the Clinic
- To receive more information about your services
- To receive more information about volunteer opportunities at the Clinic