



Free Clinic News

January 2009

414 N. FANT STREET, PO BOX 728, ANDERSON, SC 29622 ♦ 864.226.1294 ♦ WWW.ANDERSONFREECLINIC.ORG

Basic Healthcare Still a Challenge

For over half a million South Carolina residents, basic healthcare is an unaffordable luxury. Often, their own health has to be neglected in order to provide their families with essentials, such as food, clothing, and shelter.

Fortunately, there are 32 clinics which form the South Carolina Free Clinic Association. Last year, the free clinics provided 110,000 medical visits for more than 34,000 patients in South Carolina.

- IN THIS ISSUE -

CLINIC NEWS

- Basic Healthcare Still A Challenge . . . 1
- New Honea Path Site Manager. . . . 1
- Thank You to Our 2008 Grantors . . . 3

CLINIC EVENTS

- National Patient Recognition Week . . . 1
- Walk with the Docs 2009. 4

VOLUNTEER NEWS

- Volunteer Spotlight 2
- Bobbie Oglesby Wins Legend Award . 2

LETTERS

- Katie Tillman, Past-President 3
- Dr. Bess Boyer, Medical Director . . . 3
- A Patient's Thank You 3

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Free Clinic Seeks Help Preparing for National Patient Recognition Week

National Patient Recognition Week (NPRW) will be February 1-7, 2009. According to the NPRW web site (www.nprw.com), this week is a time "when those working in health-care pause to reconfirm, and display, a renewed commitment to patient care, the patient's well being and satisfaction."

In partnership with AnMed Health Lung & Sleep Center and Carolina Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine Consultants, the Anderson Free Clinic will observe NPRW by focusing on the well-being of Free Clinic patients diagnosed with sleep apnea.

People with sleep apnea experience broken sleep and are often groggy and fatigued during the daytime. Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machines allow

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued on page 2)

With the current economic troubles, demand for free clinic services is growing. In 2007, South Carolina's free clinics added over 8,900 new patients.

At the Anderson Free Clinic, demand for services has outpaced available resources. The Free Clinic has had to temporarily put a hold on accepting new medical patients. This hold only applies to medical visits—the pharmacy and dental programs are still open to all who qualify.

It is important to note this hold is not due to decreasing support from

New Honea Path Site Manager Hired

The Honea Path branch of the Anderson Free Clinic has a new site director. Margaret Gibbs, RN, has taken over for Karen Johnson, who elected not to return after going on maternity leave. "I've been so impressed with the dedication of the Honea Path volunteers," Margaret said. "We really have a wonderful group." Margaret also noted that the Honea Path satellite clinic is in particular need of volunteer dentists.

The Honea Path satellite clinic was started several years ago to make it easier for patients who have transportation problems and found it difficult to travel to the main clinic in Anderson. Volunteer doctors are there two Mondays a month, and the clinic is also open two Thursdays a month so patients can pick up medications. Prescriptions are filled at the Anderson Free Clinic Pharmacy. Last year, the Honea Path clinic provided 305 office visits and 1220 prescriptions.



Margaret Gibbs, RN

Volunteer Spotlight: Elwood Haskell

If you ever have a day when you just need to be inspired, drop in to the Anderson Free Clinic Pharmacy on a Tuesday afternoon and meet Elwood.

Elwood has been a volunteer at the Anderson Free Clinic for 6 years. He fills prescriptions in the pharmacy with two other regular volunteers: Paula Carson and Donna Wallace.

Elwood and the other volunteers keep up a lively conversation even as they fill almost one hundred prescriptions each Tuesday. If you listen in, you'll discover that not only was Elwood a Boy Scout leader for over 40 years, but he also volunteered at the Veteran's Hospital one day a week for more than 20 years. You'll learn that he's been a church elder and that he is active in the seniors' group at his church. You'll also hear some fascinating World War II stories from his time in the service.

These are just snippets of the community service activities in which Elwood has participated. He says that he gets a "sense of well-being" from volunteering, and it's something he's done his whole life. Of course, when he turned 90 this past June, Elwood decided that he would start taking it "easy." He now limits his volunteer work to a few hours a week.

Community members volunteer at the clinic in many capacities. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Kathryn Fedele at 864-226-1294, ext. 221 or Kathryn.Fedele@anmedhealth.org.



Elwood in the Pharmacy

Basic Healthcare Still A Challenge (Continued from page 1)

the medical community. The Anderson Free Clinic's volunteer doctors have always been faithful supporters. The number of people in need of services has simply grown too fast.

This growth has not been limited to the free clinics. Hospital emergency rooms have seen a dramatic increase in the number of patients lately. Unable to afford healthcare, many patients turn to emergency rooms for minor problems and treatment for chronic diseases.

Free Clinics benefit more than just the poor. The South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics in Columbia compiled statewide statistics showing an 80% decrease in Emergency Room visits by patients once they became a patient at one of the state's free clinics.

With fewer ER visits by uninsured patients, hospitals have fewer expenses to recover. Usually, when uninsured patients go to the ER, the hospital passes on the cost for their care to insured and paying patients. This practice, in turn, passes on the costs to employers, health insurance companies, and members of the community. When uninsured patients have a Free Clinic where they can get medical care, their ER use drops and the cost to the community is decreased. It is evident, therefore, that the plight of the uninsured is a community issue and that the community has a vested interest in keeping free clinics open.

At the Anderson Free Clinic, volunteers and donors make a difference in the Anderson community every day. Last year, volunteers donated over 7,000 hours to help run the clinic and the pharmacy. Monetary donations from the community form the base of the Free Clinic's operating budget each year.

Bobbie Oglesby Named "Legend"

In September 2008, long-time Free Clinic volunteer Bobbie Oglesby was named a "Legend" by LeadershipNEXT, a United Way group dedicated to developing the next generation of leaders in Anderson County.

As a recipient of the Legend Award, Bobbie was recognized as a model for younger leaders. She has volunteered at the Free Clinic since its opening in 1984, sometimes as often as 4 times a week, and she has been an active volunteer in her church as well.

Congratulations, Bobbie! You're a role model for us all.

National Patient Recognition Week (Continued from page 1)

many people with sleep apnea to sleep better and feel more rested.

Unfortunately for individuals on tight budgets, CPAP machines can be expensive, sometimes costing as much as \$850 or more. For most Free Clinic patients, even the cheapest CPAP machines are not affordable.

During National Patient Recognition Week, the Free Clinic will kick off a campaign to provide a CPAP machine to every Free Clinic patient who needs one. In order to meet this goal, the Free Clinic is seeking CPAP machine donations from the community. Doctors and staff from AnMed Health Lung & Sleep Center and Carolina Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine Consultants have volunteered their time to fit the CPAP machines for the patients.

If you have a CPAP machine that is no longer needed, please consider donating it to the Free Clinic. Donations are fully tax-deductible as allowed by law.

For information on how to donate your CPAP machine or on NPRW events at the Free Clinic, please visit our website at www.andersonfreeclinic.org.

Letters

From our medical director...

The Anderson Free Clinic is an island of hope in a sea of lost jobs and no health care. People in our area are having to make hard decisions like what to buy—groceries or medications this month.

The Free Clinic is not just a building on Fant Street in Anderson, SC with a green awning and a long walkway. It is the wonderful staff and volunteers that work at the clinic. It is the hard working board of directors that comes from many different backgrounds to make sure we have money to run the Free Clinic. It is the patient that comes for care and is grateful there is someone there that greets them warmly. It is nurses that take vitals and histories, pharmacy staff that fills their prescriptions, and doctors that take care of their acute and chronic diseases.

I have a request for the physicians and dentists in the area. We all have a unique opportunity to give our talent, which is our profession, to care for the sick. The Free Clinic is our chance to make a difference to many in need. We cannot save the world, but we can make a difference in someone's life! Think about volunteering a few hours each month—it is a great experience!

~Bess Boyer, MD
Free Clinic Medical Director

From a patient...

Due to numerous medical and financial issues I qualified for your help last summer. I so appreciate everything you did for me. I qualified for Medicaid last week and am in the process of finding a new doctor.

The trials and tribulations I've experienced over the last few years have completely changed my life and my life goals. I hope in some way in the future to be able to help those that have helped me.

I want to thank all of you for your help over the last year.

From our past-president...

It has been my pleasure to serve as the President of the Anderson Free Clinic Board for the past two years. During this time, we have experienced unprecedented growth coupled with rising unemployment and economic turmoil.

In this time of uncertainty and change, one thing we can all count on is the increasing number of patients and prescriptions that need filling at the Free Clinic. When it is the hardest to give, the need is the greatest; we need your support the most.

For the first time in 25 years, the clinic had to put off accepting new patients for a period of time, as we are operating at maximum capacity with our existing resources. We need your help now more than ever. Please consider a donation to the Free Clinic. We provide approximately ten dollars worth of services for every dollar you donate. Maximize your giving by donating to the Free Clinic now.

~Katie Tillman
Past-President, Board of Directors
[Katie served as the President of the Free Clinic's Board from 2006-2008]

Thank You to Our 2008 Grantors!



Mike Wilson and Free Clinic
Executive Director Maureen Sartini

The Anderson Free Clinic does not receive any government funding, so donations and grants are crucial for the sustainability of the Clinic's services. The following are some of the foundations and organizations that gave generously to the Free Clinic in 2008:

The Abney Foundation
Blue Cross / Blue Shield of
South Carolina Foundation
The Max and Victoria Dreyfuss
Foundation, Inc.
Duke Endowment
Duke Energy Foundation
Gambrill Foundation

Honea Path Community Chest
Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation
Mary Ramseur Charitable
Foundation
Upstate South Carolina Affiliate
Susan G. Komen for the Cure
Ruth B. Wood Foundation
WPW Foundation

In December 2008, Mike Wilson from the Duke Energy Foundation came to the Free Clinic to present a check for \$1000. Learn more about the Duke Energy Foundation's efforts at improving the quality of life in communities served by Duke Energy at www.duke-energy.com/community/foundation.asp.



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Walk with the Docs 2009

It's time again to walk, talk, and get some winter sun with the Anderson Free Clinic's volunteer docs. On **Saturday, March 21, 2009**, plan to join the *Walk with the Docs* in Anderson at Chris Taylor Park at 9:45 a.m. or in Honea Path at the Honea Path Middle School Football Field at 11:00 a.m. The *Walk* is the Anderson Free Clinic's only major fundraiser and its success is vital to the Clinic's ability to continue to provide medical and pharmacy services to low-income, uninsured residents of Anderson County.

Registration materials will be mailed in February. To register and receive your 2009 *Walk with the Docs* T-shirt early, visit the *Walk* page on the Free Clinic's web site at www.andersonfreeclinic.org/walk.htm. Information about sponsorship opportunities is also available online.

Thank You!

To all of our donors who supported the Anderson Free Clinic during the 2008 holiday season.

We could not do this important work without you!

Haven't had a chance to donate yet? You can make a credit card donation online at www.andersonfreeclinic.org or send a check to P.O. Box 728, Anderson, SC 29622.

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