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Four Years of Making a Difference!

It's almost 6 pm and there's a buzz of purposeful activity. Volunteer providers, nurses and other medical professionals have arrived to begin another Free Clinic session. Some volunteers have been at the Free Clinic since 5 pm because patients begin to line up by 4:30 pm.

With providers ready, patients begin to be directed to back office patient rooms. One of the volunteers sees the 'Happy Birthday' party decorations, the cake and nice spread of food and asks, "Whose birthday are we celebrating?"

It's the fourth birthday or anniversary of the Free Clinic and we have something to celebrate! The success of the Free Clinic is founded on the hard work of community partners and the dedicated and enthusiastic



Susan Wendel, community health advocate, along with AmeriCorps volunteers Nick Long and Shirley McCracken – ready to lend a helping hand during a recent clinic.

volunteer staff. During its four years of operations, the Free Clinic has become a vital community resource as the numbers of patients served continue to grow and the relationships with primary and specialty health care providers continue to expand.

"I think one of the greatest successes we've had at the Free Clinic is that we have been able to get patients to a specialist to be treated," says Linda Taylor, Free Clinic manager. "It is truly

gratifying that many physicians and providers in our community are willing to see patients we refer to them for either no cost or at a reduced cost. It makes my day when patients report back to us that they are able to go back to work or can now get a job because the medical problem they had has been resolved."

Did You Know?

4,199 – The number of patient visits the Free Clinic has experienced in four years.

\$357,962 – The dollar amount value of volunteer support over the past four years.



Message from Ken Terhaar,

CHP Board Chair

I am amazed when I think that the Free Clinic has operated in our community for four years! Actually, we've been at it much longer if we count the more than three years of planning spent before we opened clinic doors that first Wednesday evening in November 2005.

I've been fortunate to be a part of this endeavor since planning began and I continue to be humbled by the outpouring of both in-kind and monetary support from our community partners. The Free Clinic could not open its doors without the ongoing volunteer support we have experienced from local medical professionals and community members nor could we assist our patients to seek treatment without continuing support from primary and specialty health care partners.

At a time when our services are so desperately needed in our community, CHP is in the process of assessing Free Clinic expansion and what this may look like. I'd like to specifically acknowledge the Health Care Foundation for their generous grant to support this effort.

Sincerely,

Ken Terhaar

What's Inside...

Dr. Stoneking Accepts Co-Medical Director Position! See page 3.



A Patient's Story Meet Bruce Shipley

“Every community should have a Free Clinic, especially now because of the economy.”



Bruce first heard about the Free Clinic from a family member and visited a few years ago when he did not have a job or medical insurance. He thought, “Why not. How else am I going to get my prescription?”

At the Free Clinic, he was seen for his asthmatic condition and needed more asthma medication. Without insurance his prescription was more than \$100 per month.

Susan Wendel, community health advocate, was very helpful and found Bruce a less costly way of getting his prescriptions filled and also helped him get medical insurance.

Recently, circumstances beyond his control caused Bruce to lose his medical insurance. Even though he now had a job, a pre-existing medical condition prevented him from finding a permanent medical home or new insurance. He has had to rely on Susan to assist him again with his asthma medication prescription and he recently visited the Free Clinic to get his seasonal flu shot provided by the Health Department.

Bruce’s asthma condition began at the age of 30 years. He is fairly healthy and now drives a truck for a living. He only needs asthma medicine from the Free Clinic because he hasn’t been able to find medical insurance. “It’s a wonderful service for the community and it should not be abused by individuals because it’s not a primary care place,” says Bruce. “I would absolutely recommend the Free Clinic to others. It is very well organized. The doctors and nurses are very kind and attentive. They are concerned about your condition and they’ll do anything they can to send you in the right direction for medical help.”

Bruce thinks the Free Clinic is needed because so many working people don’t have medical insurance. “When you don’t have medical insurance and you become sick, it can be very unsettling,” he replies. “Every community should have a Free Clinic, especially now because of the economy.”

Thanks for Your Support!

The following donations and grants were received for Cowlitz Free Medical Clinic operations during the period from May 1, 2009 through October 31, 2009. The list is arranged in alphabetical order. We have worked to ensure the accuracy of this list. We apologize if we have inadvertently misspelled or omitted any name. Please call us at 360-423-8704 if we are in error so that we can make the appropriate adjustments.

Private Donations and Grants

- Bernard and Marcia Altman •Altrusa Club of Longview-Kelso •Community Foundation for Southwest Washington
- Bob and Margaret Elliot •The Health Care Foundation •I Do Foundation •James Meskew •Sister Rose Nigro
- Chuck Polacek •Kathryn Robbins •George and Marjorie Schwartz •Sandra Solbakken

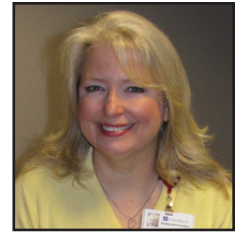
When our volunteers show up to work at the Free Clinic, they typically have come directly from a long work day. Refreshments are provided to keep them going another three or four hours. We want to thank the following establishments for providing great tasting food at no charge during Free Clinic sessions:

- Applebee’s Azteca Bruno’s Fred Meyers Monticello Hotel
- Pie@trios Pizza Hut Red Lobster The Works

Spotlight on Marie Job

“We all know what’s going on healthcare-wise in the nation. We may not fix the nation but we can fix what’s wrong in our community by doing what we are doing with the Free Clinic.”

Marie has lived in our community all her life and has worked for St. John Medical Center (St. John) for six years. She is currently the administrative assistant for four directors at St John. Marie always wanted to be involved in the community and when her children grew up, the Free Clinic offered a perfect opportunity.



Marie credits her mother, who was always an example to her, with why she feels strongly about volunteering. “My mother was always ready to help people who needed help,” says Marie. “She led by example and I try to emulate what she taught me.” She adds, “I’m part of a community effort to help those in need who don’t have access to medical care. It is very edifying and I am richly rewarded by my associations with other volunteers at the Free Clinic.”

Each week the clinic must have two providers scheduled from a pool of ARNPs, MDs or PAs, or the clinic can’t open. It’s been Marie’s job to plan the schedule out at least a month ahead of time. The volunteer pool is sizable enough so that the providers typically need only to volunteer once a quarter. Marie is impressed with how effortlessly the providers have been willing to give from their personal family time. “There is no clinic if there are no providers,” says Marie. “The providers have been so kind with their generosity of time and they communicate so positively about volunteering.”

Asked why the Free Clinic is important to our community, Marie replies, “We all know what’s going on healthcare-wise in the nation. We may not fix the nation but we can fix what’s wrong in our community by doing what we are doing with the Free Clinic.”

Dr. Kim Stoneking Accepts Free Clinic's Co-Medical Director Position

"We are pleased to welcome Dr. Kim Stoneking to a leadership role with the Cowlitz Free Medical Clinic. He brings an open, approachable demeanor, an excellent fund of knowledge, and a strong focus on quality to his Co-Medical Director position." Ken Terhaar

When Dr. Cordon Bittner recently stepped down from the Free Clinic's co-medical director position, Sister Anne asked Dr. Stoneking to consider the opportunity. He graciously accepted and added additional responsibilities as well as volunteer hours to his already routine support for the Free Clinic. "I've volunteered throughout my life and I think everyone should give back to the community they live in," says Dr. Stoneking. "I happen to have a skill as a provider and so it makes sense for me to volunteer my time where I can make an impact with the skill set I bring."

As co-medical directors, Dr. Stoneking and Dr. Tom Hickey, a Kaiser physician, meet once a month with the rest of the Free Clinic staff to discuss operations and future plans. He and Dr. Hickey also follow up with patients to ensure that the care the other volunteer providers have prescribed at the Free Clinic has been received and they are getting the care they need.

"After becoming one of the co-medical directors, I have come to realize that Kaiser plays a large role in the continuing development and maintenance of the Free Clinic," says Dr. Stoneking. "I've learned more about the CHP board of directors which contains members from Kaiser, Peace Health, St. John, Regence, Cowlitz County Health Department and three community members who are retired from the County,

Kaiser and St. John. The roles of each partner in the Free Clinic are balanced nicely through the efforts of the CHP and strong community collaboration."

Dr. Stoneking appreciates the other doctors, nurses, medical professionals and community members who volunteer. There always seems to be enough volunteers at the Free Clinic sessions and Dr. Stoneking credits this to the hard work by Free Clinic staff Linda, Teresa and Susan. In addition he adds that the Free Clinic is extremely grateful to have help from specialty providers who are willing to see Free Clinic patients once they have been treated at the Free Clinic and need tests or treatment. He thinks the Free Clinic is important to the community because many of the patients seen would not go elsewhere and so many times they have helped solve chronic diseases such as cancers or diabetes. "A lot of people don't go to a primary care physician if they don't have health insurance. The quality of health care at the Free Clinic is the same they would receive at a primary care provider," says Dr. Stoneking.



Look Who's Volunteering!

New volunteers since our last publication date, May 2009:

Monique Bauman	Sister Amalia Camacho	Mary Carpenter	Jeanette Cole	Lindsey Coomes	Susan Elbert
Amy Hicks	Stacy Jensen	Kristie Kandoll	Lisa Maciel	Michelle McKinley	Julie Miralles
Monica Monteon	Marykay Morelli	Jaime Plemmons	Julie Rather	Amber Rosewood	Tim Sparks
Alicia Thompson	Tanya Wisner	Katherine Wright			

What to Do if the Flu Comes Calling

Linda Taylor, Free Clinic Manager



For months now the media has been filled with news of seasonal flu and H1N1 viruses, and our community has not been spared these diseases. Symptoms for both viruses are similar, including fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some folks also report diarrhea and vomiting. What can you do if you, or a family member, come down with these symptoms?

First of all, prevent the flu from visiting by getting vaccinated, if the vaccine is available to you. Do all that you can to avoid contracting or passing on any disease, including covering your mouth or nose when you cough or sneeze and washing your hands and using alcohol-based hand cleaners frequently. Also, avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth and keep away from close contact with sick people.

If you've done these things and still get the flu...relax and take good care of yourself. Put on your favorite pajamas and stay home. Don't go to work or school and only travel out for medical care if needed. You should be free of fever for at least 24 hours without taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen before going out in public, even if you are feeling better.

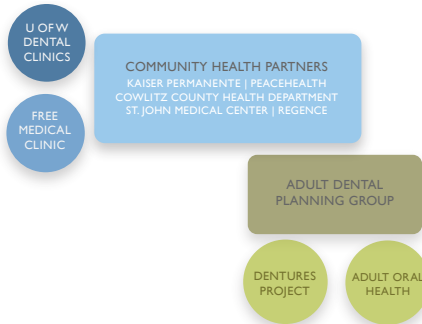
The majority of folks that contract either type of flu will recover relatively quickly without any lasting effects. If a fever continues for 5 or more days, goes up over 101 and doesn't come down with acetaminophen or ibuprofen, vomiting and diarrhea continue over 24 hours, or you have trouble breathing; call your doctor. Otherwise, find a good recipe for chicken soup, drink lots of fluids, curl up with a good book, and get some rest.

Linda Taylor

About Community Health Partners

Community Health Partners (CHP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose primary mission is to understand and serve the health and wellness needs of the medically under-served that live or work in the region. The members of CHP include community volunteers and representatives from key health care and health insurance providers including Cowlitz County Health Department, PeaceHealth, Regence BlueShield, Kaiser Permanente and St. John Medical Center.

In addition to the Cowlitz Free Medical Clinic, CHP projects include adult dental services for low-income uninsured



individuals and Medicaid eligible child and parent dental clinics. The clinics are operated with assistance from the University of Washington Dental School.

Through our Adult Dental Service Program,

we have been pleased to offer denturist services to 43 working-age adults in our community, through grants from the Health Care Foundation, Kaiser Permanente and FISH. As a result of receiving dentures, many of these individuals have been able to secure employment.

Current CHP board of directors:

Ken Terhaar, Community Member
 Karen Carter, Kaiser Permanente
 Lesley Bombardier, Community Member
 Chuck Polacek, Regence
 Rosanne Ponzetti, PeaceHealth
 Kathryn Robbins, Community Member
 Carlos Carreon, Cowlitz County Health Department

Cowlitz Free Medical Clinic Statistics

(for the period May 1, 2009 through October 31, 2009)

Free Clinic Service	Number of Referrals
Basic Health Application Assistance ¹	37
Prescription Assistance	59
Referral to Primary Care Provider	250
Referral to Specialty Care	85
Referral to Imaging	45
Referral to Dental Care	79
Referral to Vision Care	12
Referral to Bridge Assistance	39
Referral to Other Resources ²	161
Total	767



Susan Wendel, community health advocate, is ready to help Free Clinic patients with referrals to primary and specialty care, prescription assistance and medical insurance applications.

1. Since May 2009 all clients applying for basic health insurance have been placed on a waiting list due to state budget cuts.
2. Other Resources include referrals to community organizations for basic services, such as food and clothing as well as referrals to DSHS services, such as DSHSKids medical program, GAU program, food stamps, TANF, and maternity program.

How You Can Help

You can make a difference and allow us to continue our work by making a tax-deductible charitable donation to support the Cowlitz Free Medical Clinic or other programs supported by Community Health Partners. Please contact Paul Youmans, CHP Coordinator, at (360) 423-8704, or simply send your contribution to:

Community Health Partners
 P.O. Box 2853
 Longview, WA 98632

We appreciate your support! Your gift will help provide resources for the future health of Cowlitz County residents.

Want to Volunteer?

The Cowlitz Free Medical Clinic is open every Wednesday from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm and located at 1405 Delaware Street (PeaceHealth Workplace Wellness Clinic) in Longview, Washington.

We need volunteer physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, CNAs, CMAs and medical lab technicians who have current licenses and are actively practicing. We also need people with clerical skills to staff the front desk and help patients with paperwork and have positions for greeters, interpreters, clinic assistants. If you would like to volunteer, please contact our volunteer coordinator, Susan Wendel, at (360) 501-1205.

Visit us at:

<http://www.cowlitzfreeclinic.org>



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