

Noble Goal Reachable

Having practiced cardiology in Pinehurst from 1972 to 2005, I witnessed the dedication that FirstHealth of the Carolinas and its medical and surgical staffs have had in caring for all patients who come to them regardless of ability to pay.

Often, the care they received, however, was in response to a health-care crisis, entering the system via the emergency department and at higher costs both in human suffering and in economic drain on the community at large.

Yet there remained thousands of people in Moore County who have not had access to any medical care because they are living at the poverty level. In 2004, a large group of Moore County citizens joined with the medical community in creating Moore Free Care Clinic, and, since then, just over 1,300 patients at or below the federal poverty level have received comprehensive health care.

This clinic has most certainly helped to prevent many health-care crises such as fewer strokes, heart attacks, diabetic complications, or high blood pressure emergencies.

This is no time to "sit on our laurels." As the entire community celebrates the successes of Moore Free Care Clinic, the challenge now is to sustain this effort until society figures out how to provide health care for all citizens in an economically feasible manner.

The goal of making Moore County one of the healthier communities in our nation is within sight.

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