

## Free Clinic Moving to New Site

**BY MATTHEW MORIARTY: STAFF WRITER**

In an effort to meet ever-increasing demand, the [Moore Free Care Clinic](#) is moving to a larger facility.

Work began this week to renovate the old Proctor-Silex building in Southern Pines. Dr. H. David Bruton, founder of the clinic, said he hopes to complete the move and be in operation there by Christmas.

In just four short years of existence, the clinic has become an indispensable part of Moore County's medical community. It is the only place in the county that offers free care, including testing and medication.

"We're in the business of trying to see more people who are in need of free health care," Bruton said.

The clinic serves low-income residents who have no health insurance -- an increasingly large portion of the community.

"We've made such a mess of paying for medical help," Bruton said. "Seventy percent of the people who come to the clinic are working people with regular jobs who can't afford health insurance. There are so many people like that, we have trouble meeting the need."

The clinic started out operating on a part-time basis, with only one paid employee who worked out of the Moore County Health Department after hours. To meet the demand, the clinic expanded to five employees and added a number of volunteer nurses and clerical staff. It had to open full time during the day and is now sharing the space with the Health Department.

"We simply are not as productive as we need to be in the Health Department," Bruton said. "There's just not room."

Before the clinic could move into the Proctor-Silex building, the town had to change its zoning code to allow medical offices in industrial zoning. The town initiated the zoning change, so the nonprofit clinic would not have to file an application and pay a fee.

"I appreciated how efficiently and effectively the town officials managed things," Bruton said.

John O'Malley, the new owner of the Proctor Silex building -- a massive 400,000-square-foot industrial plant that he plans to convert for several uses, including storage -- is renting 4,000 square feet to the Free Clinic for \$1 a year.

Southern Pines Attorney Doug Gill drew up the lease free of charge. Local architect Lynn Anderson designed the plans for free. The general contractor, Franklin Bundy, is also working for free.

"I like to say they're working for my rate," Bruton said.

But there will be some costs associated with the move. The clinic is constructing a reception and waiting room. Bruton said the clinic will do some fundraising between now and the end of the move.

"This is such an extraordinarily generous community," he said. "You just say what you need and they give it to you. It's a marvelous place to do mission work."

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