

Retreat Targets Facility, Pharmacy and Physician Recruitment

By Claudia Watson

Moore Free Care Clinic is on the receiving end of many patient referrals as the local hospital emergency room and physician's offices are beset with more low-income patients without health care coverage.

The increasing demands on the free clinic's resources were the focus of a strategic planning retreat in January. A work group comprised of clinic staff, board members, advisors and community activists targeted the current facility, its pharmacy operations and physician recruitment as the most pressing issues facing the clinic.

The clinic's 600-square foot office, which is housed in the rear of the health department in Carthage, was meant to allow three or four people to work comfortably. It's now "operations central" for at least six employees and volunteers during clinic hours.

The space, which serves as the clinic's administrative office, also holds patient records, medical supplies and equipment and is the main receiving area for patients. Patient exams are performed in one of the health department's exam rooms.

"We're bursting at the seams and have simply outgrown this space," says Laura Tremper-Jones, executive director of the clinic. "We're feeling the growing pains of our success as a free clinic. It's a very difficult environment for us and for our patients who require privacy."

During the clinic's strategic planning retreat, the cramped facility was voted the major issue to be tackled. The clinic rents the office space from the county for one dollar annually, but the lack of space is restricting its patient capacity and efficiency.

"We have a very benevolent landlord," says H. David Bruton, M.D., the clinic's immediate past president, referring to the health department's director,

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Growing Pains Require Action and Funds

By Claudia Watson

For many in Moore County the day begins with a question, "Is it more important to pay the rent, buy food for the family or life-saving medications?"

Most of the patients who use Moore Free Care Clinic are employed. Patients are often people who work one or more part-time jobs and do not qualify for health care coverage. Sometimes they work full-time jobs that do not provide adequate health care or pay enough for these people to afford the health care that they need.

In this issue of *Healing & Caring* we provide Moore Free Care Clinic's second annual report to the community. We hope that you will take a few minutes to review the clinic's achievements and to understand its future needs.

Since April 2004 the clinic's grown from being open two nights a week to a full-time operation. In 2006 the clinic provided \$986,343.62 in services to the low-income and uninsured residents of Moore County – leveraging every dollar it receives to nearly five times its value.

For fiscal year ending 2006, the clinic established five specialty clinics and handled nearly 2,000 patient visits. While there is a paid staff of five full-time employees, its medical, nursing and clerical volunteers gave over 1,933 hours of effort, a value of \$91,842.52.

Referrals to specialists, dentists and physical therapists are provided free of charge through a network of specialists who have contributed \$38,366 worth of volunteer services in 2006. Through other partnerships in the community the clinic provides health education and specialized classes for its patients.

Moore Free Clinic is the only clinic in the county that provides free primary, preventive and specialty care, including diagnostic testing and medications, to the county's low-income, uninsured residents. FirstHealth of the Carolinas provided \$376,704 worth of imaging services, laboratory testing, and many cardiac procedures to clinic patients in 2006.

Medication continues to be one of the largest budget items for the clinic. In 2006 the clinic purchased \$79,366 in medications for its patients. In addition, it acquired \$124,351 worth of medications through the Patient Assistance Programs sponsored by the pharmaceutical companies and \$15,926 in free samples.

Moore Free Care Clinic does not receive any federal, state or county funding; therefore its sustainability is a community-wide effort. As the demand increases so do the types of services required. It continues to expand its services to the uninsured of Moore County but expansion requires more avenues of funding and brings with it the need for more space and staffing – both volunteer, and paid.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

By *Laura Tremper-Jones, R.N.C., M.S.N.*
Executive Director



Laura Tremper-Jones

In this edition of our newsletter we try to quantify what we have done at the clinic over the past year, but when you see all of these statistics, please try to remember the stories that are behind them.

The statistics all represent the stories of our patients, many of whom have had little hope of

being able to afford their medications, pay for a doctor's visit or taking care of a painful toothache.

They are also the stories of our volunteers, many of whom are medical and nursing providers who come to the clinic after working a full day in their office or at the hospital. And, there are those retirees who serve as "career" volunteers – working with us and other non-profit organizations. There are also stories of our board members and staff who have dedicated themselves to the mission of the clinic.

This year we've been fortunate to add three full-time staff members, which have allowed us to serve the increasing needs of our vulnerable population.

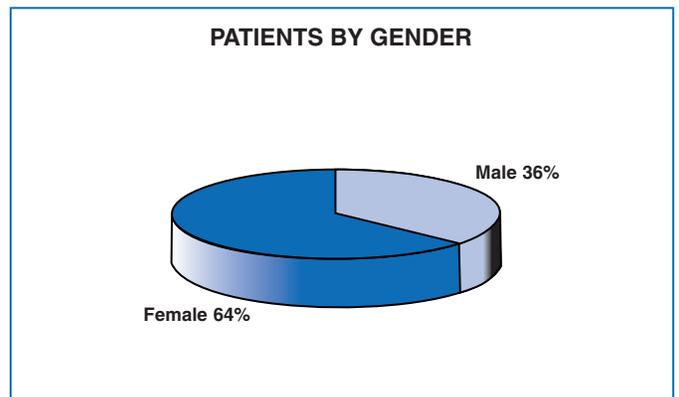
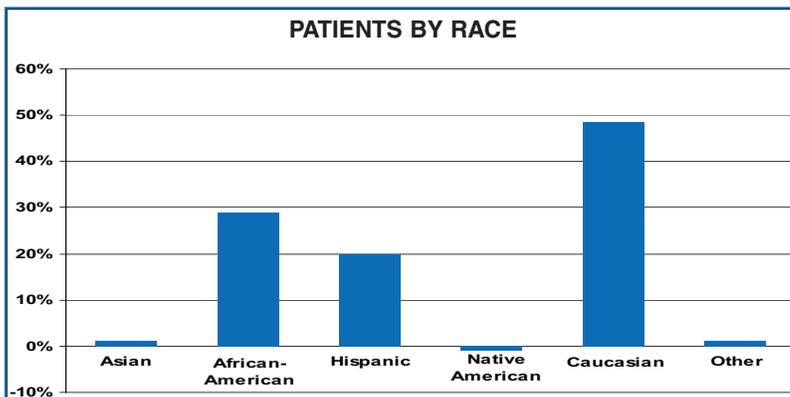
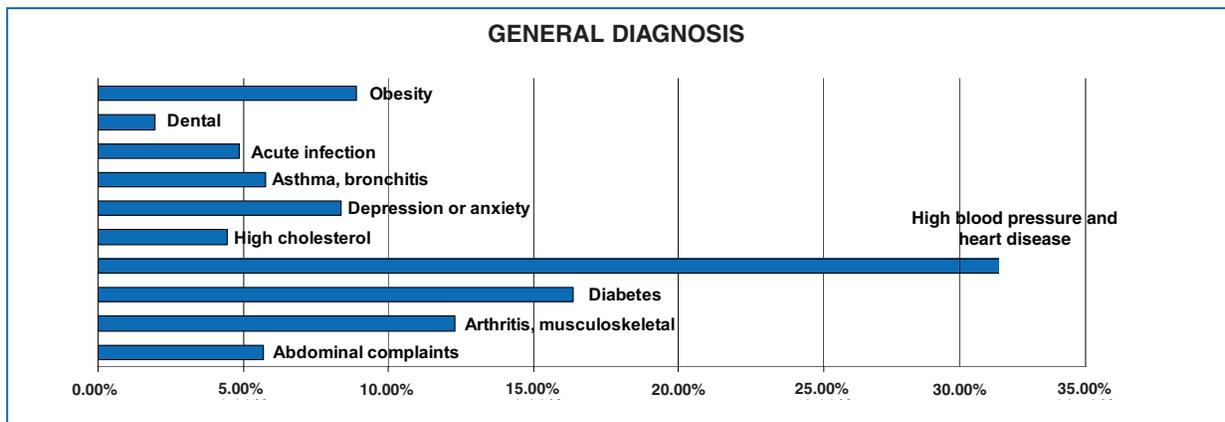
Millie Lopez started out as a student intern and became an employee earlier this year. She is responsible for ordering all of our Patient Assistance Program (PAP) medications. Thanks to her dedication the clinic went from receiving approximately \$20,000 worth of medications in one year to receiving the same amount in one month!

Lisa Ritter, R.N., was a volunteer nurse when the clinic first opened in 2004. She now serves as our full-time nurse in the clinic. This allows us to have better continuity of care and permits us to spend more time on patient education.

Susan Craven, R.N., M.S.N. -B.C., A.N.P., is our nurse practitioner and clinic director. Her assistance helps us to increase our capacity and she provides professional and compassionate care to our patients.

We plan to continue to provide the best care possible to our patients in the coming year and hope that you will continue with your generous support.

A View Inside the Clinic



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Stuart A. Tuffnell

Rev. Mark Wethington, Ph.D.

Our Mission

In the spirit of compassion and concern, the Moore Free Care Clinic provides high-quality primary, preventive and specialty health care to limited-income people in Moore County who are uninsured and can't afford access to health care.

Our Core Values

The Moore Free Care Clinic is committed to the belief that health care is a basic human need. Every individual must have access to basic health care if a community is to be truly healthy.

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The Duke Endowment

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By Stuart A. Tuffnell, President, Board of Directors



Stuart A. Tuffnell

In our last newsletter (Winter 2006), Dr. David Bruton, our chairman and leader since inception, wrote what he called his final editorial for this publication. I do not feel for one minute that we have seen the last of David's contributions through this medium. The entire staff and board will continue to rely on his leadership, wisdom and vision for our clinic. Dr. Bruton, we won't let you go away!

The next phase of growth for Moore Free Care Clinic will not be without some "bumps in the road." The remarkable evolution in the scope and scale of our service to the uninsured has created some growing pains.

In slightly less than three years, we have blossomed into a very important unit in the overall provision of health care in Moore County. Many hundreds of people now rely on us for their needs.

Our own strengths and weaknesses along with wonderful opportunities were discussed in detail at a recent strategic planning retreat attended by board members, staff, advisors and friends of the clinic.

We are focused on sustaining the success we have achieved so far and fulfilling our mission of providing quality health care for those who cannot afford it. I am excited to be part of this next phase.

Growing Pains

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The clinic's 2007 budget is \$484,963, an increase of 10 percent over 2006. The 2006-2007 annual fund, which began in October, has raised \$157,223 to date – so there is lots of work to do as a community to ensure those that can't afford access to health care when their health situation becomes critical.

The clinic's staff and board continue to cultivate and grow relationships to broaden its funding base – including proposals for future funding from foundation grants.

It is sincerely thankful for the support of many including: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, North Carolina Association of Free Clinics, Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Foundation, The Duke

Endowment, John W. and Marjorie A. Roffe Foundation, Moore Community Foundation, FirstHealth of the Carolinas, Pinehurst Surgical Clinic, Pinehurst Medical Clinic, FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital Auxiliary, and many local churches, civic organizations, businesses, foundations, as well as numerous private citizens.

The needs of the clinic's patients are the guide in determining expansion of its services. The reality, however, is that funding will be the determining factor. At the end of the day, the kinds and extent of the services the clinic provides are directly attributable to the available funding.

Moore Free Care Clinic asks that you help with this critical mission.

Retreat CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Robert Wittman and the county.

"The health department has been wonderfully generous to the clinic and its staff. They've offer us as much as they can but demands on their resources are growing. We have to be realistic about the clinic's future needs and plan for the next 10 years, not just the next two," he says.

"We need to look at all the possibilities, including a satellite clinic or modular units to take the pressure off the current clinic," says Bruton who will serve on the facility work group.

"We're also going to look for other space that may be available in the community, but we do not want to build a clinic," he says. "You don't want to hold that mortgage."

In addition to the facility issue, the group targeted the growing financial and logistical issues related to providing prescription medications to the 1,239 patients enrolled at the clinic.

During the past year the clinic provided \$219,643 in medications to the low-income and uninsured patients it serves – by far the biggest budget item for 2006.

"There is an overwhelming demand. We must find a balance – a way to continue our compassionate patient care and education and improve our efficiency," says Tremper-Jones, who makes daily runs to local pharmacies to have medications available for patients when they arrive.

She said a work group will look at several possibilities including the prospect of forming a non-profit pharmacy or establishing a medication formulary, as has been done by other free clinics in the state.

The clinic has new software and a full-time employee to verify patient eligibility and to process the prescription applications with the pharmaceutical companies, but the staff wants to improve the efficiency of ordering and distributing the medications.

The retreat group also identified the requirement to recruit more physicians to volunteer at the clinic. These volunteers are needed to assist with increasing patient needs at the clinic and to provide back-up to clinic staff.

"We have a terrific core group of doctors in our community who are very dedicated, but we need more hands to handle these growing demands," says Tremper-Jones.

"We have untapped resources out there," she continues. "Many retirees who move here would like to volunteer but need to obtain North Carolina licenses if they are from out-of-state or keep their North Carolina license current. We need to find a way to reach them and make it possible for them to continue to help, as they can."

According to Stuart Tuffnell, board's new president, small work groups will be formed to study each of these three high-profile issues and recommend action.

Director's Report – Moore Free Care Clinic

Reporting Period: January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006

Patient Visits by Type		Number	Value
New Patient Visits ⁽¹⁾		289	\$57,225.00
Established Patient Visits		1,565	\$202,562.00
Consults ⁽⁴⁾		73	\$18,345.00
Dental Visits		197	\$16,071.00
Physical Therapy		110	\$3,950.53
Total			\$298,153.53
Medications			
Pharmacy			\$79,366.22
Patient Assistance Program ⁽³⁾			\$124,351.16
Samples ⁽²⁾			\$15,926.19
Total			\$219,643.57
Hospital Support			\$376,704.00
Volunteer Hours			
		Hours	
Nurse	\$24.51/hour	560	\$13,725.60
Physician	\$125/hour	334	\$41,750.00
Clerical	\$18.04/hour	629	\$11,347.16
Physical Therapist	\$24.51/hour	176	\$4,313.76
Dentist	\$125/hour	144	\$18,000.00
Dental Assistant	\$18.04/hour	150	\$2,706.00
Total		1,993	\$91,842.52
Total Value of Services ⁽⁵⁾			\$986,343.62

(1) Patients are registered for eligibility before they are treated.

(2) Medication samples are provided to patients at the time of their treatment. These samples are donated to the clinic by physician's offices and pharmaceutical companies. The samples are provided as a "stop-gap" until the patient's Patient Assistance Program (PAP) is validated.

(3) Many pharmaceutical manufacturers have programs to help those in need obtain their medications at no cost or very low cost. These programs, Patient Assistance Programs (PAPs), are run by the manufacturers. Each program has its own rules, qualifications and medication disbursement method.

(4) Specialty appointments seen in the clinic. The clinic also has other specialists who volunteer to see patients in their own offices but the value of those appointments are not reflected in this number.

(5) The total value of services does not include staff labor costs.

Initiative Seeks

Funds for Mentors

By Rev. Mark Wethington, Ph. D.

The clinic is pursuing funding sources for an initiative to help patients in their efforts to lead healthier lives. The program, developed by the clinic, targets patients in the clinic's chronic disease management program who suffer from diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, high cholesterol, chronic pain, obesity and smoking addiction. Many of the patients have multiple health problems.

The proposal focuses on

strengthening chronic disease management for clinic patients. Most of our patients live in situations that make the management of their illness very difficult. They may work multiple jobs, or are single parents with children. Some may not work, due to illness and/or overwhelming and complicated life-styles.

Beyond the patient's clinic appointments, their prescribed medications and the recommendations of the clinic staff, some patients need or desire for someone to help them lead healthier lives. These individuals will be assigned a mentor.

The mentors will be volunteers

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Mentors

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

from the community who will be trained to prepare them for their role. We hope to match each patient with a mentor who will be managing a similar illness.

The mentor's will assist with the patient's health education and offer encouragement. In some cases, they will arrange transportation to medical appointments. They will also guide the patient with goal-setting and help monitor the patient's health management. We anticipate that the mentoring relationship will last from six months to one year.

We believe that this initiative will strengthen the patient's compliance in the clinic's chronic disease management program. This initiative will include Hispanic patients as well as mentors who speak Spanish.

Volunteers Needed!

Currently, we have need for volunteers for patient reception, (particularly Thursday evenings), patient reminder telephone calls, mailings, newsletter writing assistance and data entry. We also need several people with vehicles who can run clinic errands in Moore County. Please contact our volunteer coordinator, Joann, 692-0780, if you can help.

Mental Health Screening and Services Provided

By *Laura Tremper-Jones*

Executive Director

The Moore Free Care Clinic will be one of the few free clinics in the state that screens and cares for mental health issues. In a recent partnership with the Sandhills Center for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Service, the clinic's health care providers will work in tandem with physicians from the center to provide care for those suffering from debilitating brain disorders, such as depression, anxiety and bi-polar disease.

The chart in this issue of the newsletter lists the more common diagnoses seen at the clinic, and depression and anxiety are common for many of our patients. By combining our efforts in one location we hope to ensure that patients are treated in timely and efficient manner without feeling overwhelmed by having to navigate a system that at times is unwieldy.

We also plan to ensure that patients receive their medications through the Patient Assistance Programs offered by the pharmaceutical companies.

The MFCC board and staff would like to thank the following individuals for their participation in the clinic's first strategic planning session. Retreat participants included:

David Bruton, M.D.

Molly Boggis

Susan Craven, R.N., M.S.N.-B.C., A.N.P.

Caroline Eddy

Bobbi Erdman

Rev. David Goehring

Joann Hanley

David Hipp, M.D.

Laura Tremper-Jones, R.N.C., M.S.N.

Kathy Lannon

Sue Lloyd

Millie Lopez

John McKean

Chris Miller

John Mills

Virginia Minichiello, R.N.

Carol Mulcahy, R.N.

Lisa Ritter, R.N.

Joel Shriberg

James A. Tart, M.D.

Stuart A. Tuffnell

Joe Vaughan

Claudia Watson

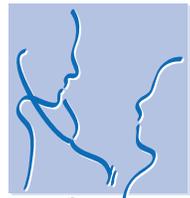
Rev. Mark Wethington

Debbie Whitley

Robert Wittmann

A special thanks to:

- Leslie Deane, director of planning and marketing, FirstHealth, who so graciously helped prepare the board prior to the retreat and then acted as the workshop's facilitator.
- Linda J. Haire, conference services supervisor, FirstHealth, for donating nourishing refreshments and a healthy lunch!
- FirstHealth for providing its board room for the workshop and its continued generosity to the clinic.



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