

NEWS & NOTES

Staff Visit Role Model for Free Clinics

Clinic staff and members of its board of directors visited the Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) Clinic in Hilton Head, South Carolina. The Duke Endowment encouraged staff to visit the clinic and to use it as a model for Moore Free Clinic's implementation of Electronic Medical Records and for other research.

The VIM Clinic has been in operation for 11 years and was started by Jack McConnell, M.D., a retired physician who created a successful model for other free clinics.

Moore Free Care Clinic Executive Director, Laura Tremper-Jones, was accompanied by board members, Bobbi Erdman and Stuart Tuffnell, who facilitated the meeting.

"The meeting with Dr. McConnell was very productive and inspiring," says Tremper-Jones. "We hope that we can continue our dialogue with the VIM Clinic to learn more about their successes and how we might implement their programs at our clinic."

Clinic Selected for TAP-IN Program

The Moore Free Care Clinic is one of three free clinics in North Carolina selected to participate in the American Health Initiative's TAP-IN program. TAP-IN will be introduced in Virginia and North Carolina this year in partnership with the Free Clinic Associations of the respective states. The program assists free clinics in recruiting volunteers to help serve the more than 45 million Americans under age 65 who are currently without health insurance.

TAP-IN hopes to boost free clinic volunteerism among six groups of retired health care professionals: physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, psychologists, and social workers. If you are a retired health care professional seeking the reward of volunteerism, please contact the clinic at 910-947-6550 or via moorefrecare@earthlink.net.

Chili Cook-Off Yields Donation

The nursing staff at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital organized a recent Chili Cook-Off with proceeds going to the clinic.

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Duke Endowment Provides Tools for More Efficient Patient Care

By **Claudia Watson**

The Duke Endowment awarded Moore Free Care Clinic, in partnership with FirstHealth of the Carolinas, a \$141,840 grant to help it increase its efficiency so it can serve more patients.

The funds support the clinic's chronic disease management program through the acquisition of electronic medical records (EMR) technology and permit it to hire a part-time administrative assistant to coordinate the pharmaceutical Patient Assistance Program (PAP).

EMR technology provides the mechanism for data collection and evaluation and it also serves as an important tool for managing the care of the clinic's patients since most do not see the same provider due to the volunteer nature of the free clinic.

"This grant significantly alters the clinical quality at Moore Free Care Clinic," says Laura Tremper-Jones, the clinic's executive director. "EMR is the largest single driver of medical quality. This capability enables us to exchange information electronically, increase clinic efficiency, evaluate case management and improve the quality of our external communications," she says.

After an evaluation period, the clinic plans to begin implementation of the EMR when baseline patient data is entered into the system. By December 2007, a comprehensive evaluation of cost-savings achieved through evidence-based, protocol-driven, chronic disease management will be conducted and results compiled.

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Community Support Needed

By **James A. Tart, M.D.**
Chair, Development Committee

This issue pays special tribute to FirstHealth of the Carolinas. Thanks to their generous support, the operation of Moore Free Care Clinic is possible. FirstHealth provided the clinic with a grant of \$50,000 each year, as well as basic laboratory, X-rays, and ultrasound services valued at \$218,289.

The second Annual Fund Campaign for the clinic got off to a rousing start in October, 2005 with a highly successful Dining in the Pines event. An energetic group from Pinewild Country Club led the planning and execution of this fund-raising event and raised \$35,000.

With this financial base, we initiated the second Annual Fund Campaign in

November. Current contributions and pledges total \$248,004.25. The clinic does not receive monetary support from any government agency and we realize that support from foundation grants is not permanent. We continually strive to increase support from our community to be sure that we can sustain Moore Free Care Clinic into the future.

So our work is cut out for us if we are to meet our operating budget goal of \$277,000! The main cost centers of the clinic are medications, patient care materials, staff, and supplies. This again illustrates the fact that free medical care is only free to those who receive it.

As our dedicated staff and volunteers focus on providing high quality health care for people who are struggling to

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FirstHealth Provides Vital Support

By Rose Young

FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital has been a major contributor and supporter of Moore Free Care Clinic since its inception less than two years ago. FirstHealth provided the matching seed money needed to help the clinic begin operations in April 2004. Additionally, FirstHealth has contributed over \$200,000 of outpatient hospital services to the clinic's patients.

Since the clinic first opened its doors, FirstHealth's laboratory and radiology resources have been available at no charge to clinic patients. Many diagnostic services, such as X-rays, ultrasounds, CT scans, blood tests and urinalysis, are not offered by Moore Free Care Clinic.

"We wouldn't be able to provide comprehensive primary care if we could not refer patients to FirstHealth for these vital diagnostic services," says Executive Director Laura Tremper-Jones.

"For example, the clinic sees many patients with chronic diseases, especially diabetes. If a new patient with diabetes comes in, we cannot plan effective treatment until we have blood work done at the FirstHealth lab to determine what interventions are needed. Access to diagnostic testing is essential to good care, so we are very fortunate to have a great partner in FirstHealth."

FirstHealth also encourages its employees to volunteer at the clinic as part of FirstHealth's community benefit program. Many clinical and non-clinical FirstHealth employees donate



Charles T. Frock, CEO of FirstHealth, presents a grant for \$50,000 to David Bruton, chairman of the Moore Free Care Clinic and Laura Tremper-Jones, the clinic's executive director.

their personal time and talents in reception, bookkeeping, eligibility, nursing and laboratory tech areas. Thirty-five FirstHealth employees currently volunteer for at the clinic.

"The volunteer efforts of FirstHealth employees at Moore Free Care Clinic shows that our mission *to care for people* is a guiding principle that our employees demonstrate every day," says Charles T. Frock, CEO of FirstHealth. "By working together with the local physicians and others in Moore County who donate their time and resources to the free clinic, we can make a real difference in our community."

Patient Assistance Program – Providing Prescription Medications to Uninsured

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

Many of us have been in the position of having to pay for a medication that was not covered by medical insurance and we cringed when we saw how much that medication actually cost.

Did you know, for example, that a common cholesterol medication, Lipitor 20 mg, costs an average of \$100 per month? Imagine then, if you did not have a medical insurance or the means to pay for your prescription, how difficult it would be if you had many prescriptions to fill. Many clinic patients face the difficult decision of either buying their medications or paying the bills and putting food on the table.

From the period of April 29, 2005 to January 26, 2006, the clinic purchased \$42,311 in medications and provided \$35,812 in medication samples. Our ultimate goal is to enroll patients in the Patient Assistance Programs (PAP) sponsored by the pharmaceutical companies.

These programs are great assets, especially since many programs provide 90 days of free medications to eligible patients, but the paperwork required to access these programs is difficult to maneuver.

One of the first problems is that each company has its own PAP. Each company also has its own application standards, patient eligibility rules based on income, and timetable for medication dosing. If a patient takes four different medications we may have to apply to four different pharmaceutical companies.

Up to this point, Moore Free Care Clinic had been using a website called <http://www.needymeds.com> to access this information and the forms necessary to apply to the various pharmaceutical companies. I invite you to go to that website just to see how complicated this process can be.

However, recent changes will make it easier for us to cut a huge swath through this paperwork. We now have access to the

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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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Helping the Uninsured

H. David Bruton, M.D., Chairman, Board of Directors, Moore Free Care Clinic

The health insurance problem in America continues to worsen. North Carolina residents continue to lose manufacturing jobs and their employer-sponsored health care benefits, giving this state one of the highest uninsured rates in the nation.

Studies state that from 43- to 48-million U.S. residents are uninsured, and somewhere between 0.9 and 1.5 million are North Carolinians. Slightly less than 19 percent of our state's population is uninsured.

Researchers disagree about the absolute number of uninsured. Clearly, the number is increasing. Insurance pays a smaller percent of total health care cost. Employers and individuals are increasing their out-of-pocket deductibles and co-pays.

It is unclear how the new Medicare Part D, drug benefit, will affect these numbers. Part D will clearly add significantly to the Federal deficit and probably increase drug costs for the non-Medicare population. Changes in Medicaid and Medicare will shift some previously Medicaid eligible people to the private sector. Most of these people will join the ranks of the uninsured.

Moore Free Care Clinic, and clinics like ours across America, cannot make a real dent in these unfortunate numbers. We must force our dysfunctional U.S. Congress to face this national emergency. We need to create an affordable system of universal care. For the people with access, they have very good health care in America. How we pay for it is out-of-whack!

Moore Free Care Clinic is like the story of two friends walking on the beach after a violent storm had washed up and stranded thousands of sand dollars. One friend was picking up the soon-to-be-parched sand dollars and tossing them back into the ocean. His friend protested, "There are so many of them. You cannot possibly make a difference."

"Made a difference to that one!" his friend replied as he tossed another sand dollar to safety.

Duke Endowment Grant CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"We plan to determine the cost of uncompensated care before and after a person becomes a patient at the clinic," explains Tremper-Jones. "We hope to show a reduction in uncompensated emergency care and in-patient visits resulting from crisis care by tracking the effectiveness of our case management for the clinic's chronic disease patients."

Clinic staff is reviewing the various

options available, with the hope of finding a system that is compatible with other offices and the hospital, easy to learn and within the grant's budget.

The grant provides funds to hire Millie Lopez, formerly a volunteer, who will coordinate the clinic's pharmaceutical Patient Assistance Program (PAP) and also work as a translator.

Support Needed CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

obtain basic necessities of life, we look to the generous Moore County community to provide sufficient monetary resources to enable those living at the poverty level to obtain necessary basic medical services.

We hope that each household in our community will consider what their

personal benchmark is for charitable giving and strongly consider Moore Free Care Clinic as one of their beneficiaries.

Once more, we thank those who made our first year of operation a success in every way, and we invite your continued support of this worthy cause.

necessary forms through the Medication Access Review Program (MARF) software. This program, created by the state, allows us to keep track of the paperwork. It also provides automatic reminders so we can renew paperwork for medications.

We also hired Millie Lopez as a part-time clinic employee to help with the PAP. We have been fortunate to have many volunteers that stepped forward to help us with this paperwork, but considering how the clinic has grown, we need someone who can dedicate their full attention to the intricacies of the various programs.

Both of these changes were made possible by our good fortune in receiving a grant from The Duke Endowment. We are especially grateful for the help of Lisa Hartsock, Chris Miller and Angela Conner from FirstHealth's Community Health Office, who were instrumental in helping the clinic procure a grant from The Duke Endowment.

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Many Moore Regional Hospital employees from all departments were involved in this event and the clinic received \$458.

Benefit Golf Tournament

Save the Date! Moore Free Clinic is hosting its first Pro-AM golf tournament on Monday, June 19, 2006.

Director's Report - Moore Free Care Clinic

April 29, 2004 to January 26, 2006

Number of Patients Registered (1)	924
Number of Visits Since Opening	2,510
Cumulative Value of Services Since Opening	\$1,846,527.45

Reporting Period: April 29, 2005 to January 26, 2006

Services		
Number of Patient Visits Current Year (as of April 29, 2005)	1,433	
Estimated Worth of Visits & Specialty Referrals		\$156,668.00
Value of Medication Samples (2)		\$42,311.55
Value of PAP (3)		\$25,369.08
Purchased Medications		\$35,812.42
Physician Volunteer Hours (\$125)	185	\$23,125.00
Nursing Volunteer Hours (\$24.51)	273.5	\$6,703.49
Number of Dental Patients	48	
Dental Volunteer Hours (\$17.54)	94	\$1,648.76
Dentist Volunteer Hours (\$125)	54	\$6,750.00
Estimated Value of Dental Care		\$16,604.36
Clerical Volunteer Hours (\$17.54)	324	\$5,682.96
Board of Directors Volunteer Hours (\$17.54)	340	\$5,963.60
Lab Tests and Imaging Services		\$132,860.50
Total Value of Services for this Reporting Period		\$459,499.72

(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 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.

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