

THE FREE CLINIC TIMES

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3 OCTOBER 2003

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT....

It hardly seems possible that fall is here! I hope that everyone found some time for rest and relaxation during the summer to prepare for the challenges ahead in providing services for the uninsured and underserved in our communities.

Thank you to the Education Committee for the hard work planning our Fourth Annual Ohio Association of Free Clinics Conference October 19 – 21, 2003 at the Holiday Inn Worthington (Columbus). I look forward to seeing everyone at “Healthy Free Clinics Creating Healthy Communities”. It promises to be a rewarding time for all of us.

Some experts tell us that the economy is beginning to show small signs of recovery. However so many Ohio communities are still struggling with increased loss of jobs and growing numbers of uninsured. As free clinics we have challenges ahead in providing services to increasing numbers while our resources are challenged. However, I believe free clinics are able to meet those challenges and provide quality services very cost effectively. Our Association is working diligently to help our member clinics meet the challenges ahead.

Theodore Roosevelt said

“Whenever you are asked if you can do a job, tel'em ‘Certainly, I can!’ Then get busy and find out how to do it”. Free clinics have been doing the job for awhile and we will continue to learn from each other as we strive to improve services to meet the needs of the people we serve. I look forward to the coming months and the opportunities ahead.

Lee Elmore, President



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IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO REGISTER!!!

You still have a few days to register for the Fourth Annual Ohio Free Clinics Conference, “Healthy Free Clinics Creating Healthy Communities”, October 19-21, 2003 at the Holiday Inn Worthington. This is an excellent opportunity to network, learn, and fulfill continuing education requirements!

Partial scholarships are still available!

A special thanks is in order for the members of the OAFCC Education Committee who have helped to plan the Conference and to our sponsors:

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield (primary sponsor), Cardinal Health, Ohio

Academy of Family Physicians Foundation, Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland, The Nord Family Foundation, National City Bank, US Bank, GlaxoSmithKline, AstraZeneca and Pfizer.

Registration forms are available at:
www.ohiofreeclinics.org

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NEW PROGRAMS MAY LEAD TO LOWER RX PRICES

September was a month for significant progress on two statewide programs designed to address access to prescription drugs.

On September 16, 2003, a program that is being called "Ohio's Best Rx" was announced as a result of negotiations between the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs (with members such as the Ohio United Way, the Ohio Council of Churches and the Ohio AFL-CIO) and the Pharmaceutical Research

and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA). The proposed program will allow all uninsured, low-income individuals (up to 250% of the federal poverty line), as well as all Ohioans aged 60 and older, to receive discounted or free prescriptions. Discounts of up to 40 percent have been proposed for those who would qualify for the program. The program will be administered by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and will be funded by manufacturer re-

bates. Legislation that will implement this proposal is currently being drafted and may be introduced in the next few months.

In September Governor Taft also announced the implementation of the long awaited Golden Buckeye Prescription Drug Savings program which allows all Ohio seniors (over age 60) and disabled individuals to receive discounts of up

(continued on page 5)

for increased savings for

"SERVICE IS THE
RENT WE PAY
TO BE LIVING.
IT IS THE VERY
PURPOSE OF LIFE
AND NOT SOME-
THING YOU DO
IN YOUR SPARE
TIME."

MARIAN
WRIGHT
EDELMAN

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

As previously reported in "The Free of October 6th. The bill may go to Clinic Times", the Ohio Association the House floor in late October or of Free Clinics has been working early November. SB 86/HB 182, with Senator Amstutz (R-Wooster) which is supported by the Ohio Association of Free Clinics, will extend immunity to health care professionals who provide free care to people below 200% of the federal poverty line regardless of where they provide the care, including hospitals, clinics, physician practices and other locations. The bill also provides immunity to nonprofit health care referral organizations.

At the beginning of September, Senator Amstutz introduced **Senate Bill 124**. SB 124 will change the definition of surgery so that minor procedures will be covered under the Good Samaritan Law. Procedures that require general anesthesia and the support of a surgical facility will not be covered under the proposed changes. Also, the operation must be a procedure that is typically performed in an office and must be within the scope of the practice of the physician. In addition, "purposeful termination of a human pregnancy" will not be covered under the new law.

Senate Bill 86, sponsored by Senator Stivers (R-Columbus) was passed out of the Ohio Senate in July. Its companion legislation (HB 182) has received hearings in the House Civil and Commercial Law Committee. The chair of the committee has decided to hear SB 86 during the week

of October 6th. The bill may go to the House floor in late October or early November. SB 86/HB 182, which is supported by the Ohio Association of Free Clinics, will extend immunity to health care professionals who provide free care to people below 200% of the federal poverty line regardless of where they provide the care, including hospitals, clinics, physician practices and other locations. The bill also provides immunity to nonprofit health care referral organizations.

At least one organization, the Universal Health Care Action Network, has criticized this legislation stating that it is overly broad and furthers the disparity between those with and without financial resources. Those seeking the legislation state that the bill is necessary to provide protection to physicians who voluntarily see uninsured patients in their offices as a part of a referral network.

To review any of these bills, please go to www.legislature.state.oh.us.

HOUSE BANS HOSPITALS

In September the Ohio House of Representatives passed House Bill 71 after much debate and a compromise between private, physician-owned hospitals and community hospitals.

HB 71 establishes a 2-year moratorium on private, for-profit hospitals in order for more research to be done to determine the impact privatization has on community health care. A 13-member panel will be appointed to examine this issue during the 2-year period. Existing private hospitals have been "grandfathered" in and are excluded from this ban. Also the compromise language states that community/ nonprofit hospitals can not withhold hospital privileges from physicians who have a financial stake in a private hospital.

Opponents of private, physician-owned specialty hospitals believe that these hospitals will take much of the "profitable" services away from nonprofit hospitals and will not serve individuals who are on Medicaid or are uninsured. Nonprofit health care facilities will continue to provide expensive services for indigent patients and experience a drop in patients who are insured or able to pay. Community hospitals argue that this dynamic could bankrupt nonprofit health care institutions and leave a void in community health care for the poor and uninsured. HB 71 now goes to the Senate.

KIDNEY EARLY EVALUATION PROGRAM (KEEP)

Twenty million Americans have kidney disease and most are not aware, another 20 million are at risk. Diabetes and hypertension are the two leading causes.

The Kidney Early Evaluation Program (KEEP) is a free health screening provided by the National Kidney Foundation of Ohio (NKF of Ohio) to identify and educate “at risk” individuals. Those “at risk” have either diabetes and/or hypertension or have a first-degree relative with diabetes, hypertension, or kidney disease. KEEP is a targeted screening which allows more individuals to be identified with early kidney disease in a more cost-effective manner.

This comprehensive program includes a screening questionnaire and a blood pressure, height and weight measurement. For those individuals who require further testing, medical professionals will collect blood and urine samples. A physician will be on site to review the results with the participants and will provide physician referrals if necessary. All KEEP participants receive educational material about preventing and treat-

ing kidney disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

KEEP exemplifies the NKF of Ohio’s commitment to prevent kidney disease and improve the health and well being of individuals and families affected by kidney disease. If we start early with education, detection, and when necessary, medical intervention we can delay, and in some cases prevent, the progression of kidney disease.

For more information about the KEEP program please contact Jennifer Tipple, RN at 614-481-4030 ext. 231 or jtipple@nkfohio.org. I look forward to meeting many of you at the “Healthy Free Clinics Creating Healthy Communities” conference.



OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

October has been designated “Breast Cancer Awareness Month” in order to increase knowledge about the disease and encourage people who may be at risk to be screened. Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women in Ohio. Despite the benefits of early screening and detection, over one-third of Ohio women over the age of 50 have not received a mammogram or clinical breast exam in the past two years.

Women who lack health insurance may not receive screenings or mammograms because they are unable to pay for these services. However, there are options for uninsured women to obtain mammograms as well as cervical cancer screenings. The National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, run by the Ohio Department of Health and funded by the Centers for Disease Control, provides these services free of charge for women over the age of 50, regardless of ability to pay. If a woman were found to need treatment for breast or cervi-

cal cancer, she would then be eligible for Medicaid coverage and benefits. These benefits would be in place for the duration of her treatment if she is under age 65, not otherwise eligible for Medicaid and uninsured. The screenings are through eleven regional projects. For more information either contact your local health department or go to the Ohio Department of Health website:

(http://www.odh.state.oh.us/ODHPrograms/BC_CANC/bcanc1.htm)

In addition, National Mammography Day will be celebrated on October 17. On this day, accredited facilities of the American College of Radiology will provide discounted and/or free mammograms. To get a list of facilities in your area that will be participating in National Mammography Day, call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345.



O AFC ANNUAL MEETING: OCTOBER 20, 2003

The Annual Meeting of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics will take place on **Monday, October 20 beginning at 8:00 a.m.**

The following is the agenda for the meeting:

- I. Welcome (Lee Elmore, President)
- II. Roll Call (Apollo Harrold, Vice President)
- III. Approval of Minutes of 10/23/02 Annual Meeting: VOTE

- IV. President's Report (Lee Elmore, President)
- V. Bylaw Changes: VOTE
- VI. Treasurer's Report (Sharon Sherlock, Treasurer)
 - a. Management Fee: VOTE
 - b. Friends of O AFC
- VII. Nominating Committee (Paul Baumgartner, Trustee)
- VIII. Election of Board of Trustees: VOTE
- IX. Legislative Committee Report (Katie Clark, Trustee)

- X. Discussion—What is a Free Clinic? (Lee Elmore, President)
- XI. Primary Issues Survey (Amy Rohling, Executive Director)
- XII. Old Business
- XIII. New Business
- IXX. Adjournment

O AFC Members:

- Asian Health Initiative
- Clinic at Faith Mission
- Columbus Free Clinic
- Free Clinic of Greater Cleveland
- Free Medical Clinic of Marion
- Good Neighbor House
- Health Partners of Miami County
- Lake County Free Clinic
- Lorain County Free Clinic
- Physicians Free Clinic
- Reach Out of Montgomery County
- North Coast Health Ministry
- OPEN M's Summit County Free Clinic
- Short North Health & Wellness
- Townhall II Medical Clinic
- Viola Startzman Free Clinic
- Wheeling Health Right
- Western Stark Medical Clinic

PROPOSED MANAGEMENT FEE POLICY

In April 2003, the Board of Trustees of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics approved a management fee policy for the Association, pending approval by the membership at the O AFC Annual Meeting in October.

The proposed management fee policy is: "The members of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics agree to pay a management fee to the O AFC

for all funds that are raised and/or negotiated by the O AFC. For 2004 the management fee shall be 10% of the funds received by the member clinic. The management fee will be collected semiannually through an invoicing process and shall be paid with unrestricted funds."

The implementation of a management fee will enable the O AFC to continue fund-

raising, advocacy and program planning on behalf of its members.

If you have any questions regarding the proposed policy, please contact Amy Rohling at (614) 221-6494 or Paul Baumgartner at (440) 277-7602.

WELCOME TO A NEW MEMBER!

Over the summer, the Good Neighbor House became the newest member of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics. The Good Neighbor House began in 1994 and was incorporated in 1998. It was organized and is operated by eight local Seventh-day Adventist churches in Dayton and emphasizes community service in an urban ministry setting.

The mission of the Good Neighbor house is to "meet the physical, mental and spiritual needs of others." In addition to providing free medical, dental and eye care services, the Good Neighbor House also assists people who

Good Neighbor House also assists people who are in need of food, clothing and household items. In 2002, the clinic had almost thirty volunteers who provided nearly 17,000 hours of service during 1,174 clinic visits.

James Hopkins is the Executive Director of the Good Neighbor House. Be sure to welcome him and other GNH volunteers, employees and board members during this month's annual conference!

"TRUE PEACE IS NOT MERELY THE ABSENCE OF TENSION: IT IS THE PRESENCE OF JUSTICE."

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

RECENT STATISTICS ABOUT THE UNINSURED

According to U.S. Census Bureau data released on 9/30/03 (www.census.gov):

The 3-year average of the percentage of people who were uninsured in Ohio during 2002 rose to 11.4%, or 1.3 million

15.2%, or 43.6 million, people in the U.S. had no health insurance at all during 2002

1.5 million more people were uninsured in the U.S. in 2002 than in 2001

The decrease was attributed to a drop in the percentage of people covered by employment-based health care

According to Families USA (www.familiesusa.org):

2.5 million Ohioans under the age of 65 were without health insurance for more than 6 months during 2001-2

74.7 million Americans were without health insurance for all or part of 2001-2

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation (www.kff.org):

Half of all uninsured adults have no regular source of health care

40% of uninsured adults state that they postpone getting necessary medical treatment

30% of uninsured individuals report that they have not received needed medical treatment in the past year

Children who are uninsured are 70% more likely to not receive medical care for common conditions

The uninsured are more likely to be hospitalized for conditions that could have been controlled by preventative care and are much more likely to be diagnosed with late-stage cancers.

Recent Statistics Regarding Poverty in Ohio (www.census.gov)

Current unemployment rate: 6%

Number of individuals living in poverty: 1.3 million

Percentage of Ohioans living in poverty: 13% of total population

Percentage of Ohioans under the age of 18 living in poverty: 18%

HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION COSTS

A study released in the August 21, 2003 issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine* looked at the amount of money spent by Canada and the United States on health care administration. These costs totaled \$1,059 per capita in the United States, as compared to \$307 per capita in Canada, a difference of \$752 per capita. Health care administration accounted for 31% of all health care costs in the U.S. and approximately 17% of health care costs in Canada.

Many health care coverage advocates have begun to cite these statistics in order to encourage the U.S. to investigate whether a Canadian-style health system would be feasible in this country. If the estimated amount of money that could be saved is accurate, many advocates claim that these savings could be utilized to cover all of the uninsured individuals in the United States.

RX DISCOUNTS (CON'T FROM PAGE 2)

to 30 percent on their medications. The plan also provides for increased savings for 600,000 low-income seniors (below 300% of the federal poverty line). Many pharmaceutical companies have agreed to participate in this program, but Pfizer declined, preferring to focus on their Share Card program which provides discounts to low income seniors.

It is unclear how these two programs will interact. The Ohio Association of Free Clinics continues to participate in Increasing Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs, a committee convened by the Ohio United Way. This group is comprised of PhRMA members as well as advocates and is focused on increasing access to patient assistance programs and other public and private programs through which pharmaceuticals may be accessed.



“ADVERSITY REVEALS GENIUS, PROSPERITY CONCEALS IT.”

HORACE



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ACTING AS AN ADVOCATE FOR FREE
CLINICS AND THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE.

www.ohiofreeclinics.org

**Healthy Free Clinics Creating
Healthy Communities**

**There's Still Time
to Register!!!**

**The Fourth Annual
Ohio Free Clinics Conference
October 19-21, 2003
Holiday Inn Worthington**