

# The Medical Record of the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic

25 Northridge Lane, Lexington, Virginia 24450

Winter 2005

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## Free Clinic Reaches \$1.1 Capital Campaign Goal

The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic reached its \$1.1 million dollar "Hope for a Healthy Tomorrow" capital campaign goal. Much like the success of the Free Clinic in providing free health care services to many of this community's uninsured residents, the clinic's ability to achieve this ambitious fundraising goal is due to the dedication and hard work of dozens of people in this community.

"The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic is here today and thriving because of the investments made by hundreds of volunteers and donors every year. For example, more than 75 volunteers and 320 donors supported the Hope for a Healthy Tomorrow capital campaign," said executive director, Suzanne Sheridan.

This one of a kind campaign for the Free Clinic, a private, non-profit organization, was initiated to provide the clinic with the funds it would need to pay for the acquisition, renovation and furnishing of a permanent facility at 25 Northridge Lane. Dr. David Ellington, the clinic's founding Medical Director, explained that "as the number of paid and volunteer staff grew and new programs were initiated and expanded to serve an ever increasing number of patients, the clinic's former facility no longer met the clinic's needs." Dr. Ellington went on to say that eventually it became clear to Board and staff that steps would have to be taken to acquire a larger and properly equipped facility. So, he said, "in short we wanted the quality of our facility to match the quality of our care."

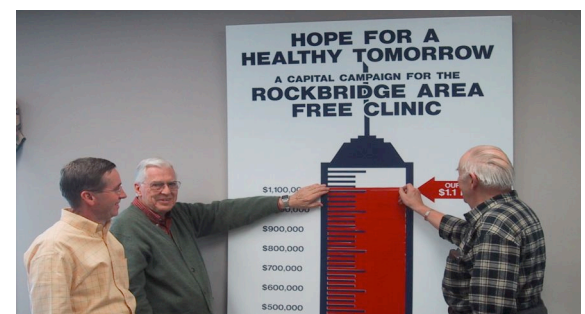
The clinic is able to provide a number of services at the Northridge facility, where it relocated in 2003. It offers an appropriate and comfortable atmosphere that allows for patient privacy, a fully equipped pharmacy, ample indoor waiting area and space for classes and educational activities. Primary health care services offered by appointment at the clinic Monday-Thursday during the day and on Thursday evenings include: general medical treatment, chronic disease management, health education, medically necessary diagnostic testing and referrals to medical specialists.

Additional services include free prescription medications for clinic patients as well as qualifying Medicare recipients, women's health services and a dental clinic held every Tuesday evening in a dental suite located at the Lexington Health Department.

The clinic's President, Dr. Clay Devening, noted that the "Clinic's investment in a properly equipped facility with space to outfit a dental suite in the future, has already had a significant impact on the number of patients and services the clinic is able to provide." Since 2000, the number of people seeking health care through the clinic has increased an average of 11% annually. While the clinic served almost 1350 people in 2000, last year more than 1550 people were served. Likewise the number of patient visits has increased from approximately 2600 in 2000 to more than 3500 in 2004. And last, but certainly not least, the number of prescriptions filled for clinic patients as well as 600 senior citizens, jumped from 30,000 in 2000 to approximately 38,000 in 2004!

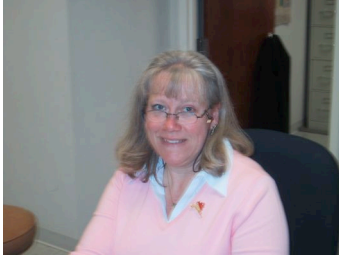
Matt Paxton, Jr., Chairman of the Hope for a Healthy Tomorrow capital campaign, attributed the success of the campaign to two things: the sense of community that exists in Rockbridge County and the compelling nature of the clinic's mission and vision. He said, "the clinic's vision of making health care available to all people regardless of their financial capability and in a dignified and appropriately equipped setting is shared by many in this community." He went to add that "while no one would deny that the fundraising success was not reached without tremendous effort, the process also had its rewards. The opportunity to work at a grassroots level with so many fine people is an inspiration in itself."

*Hope for a Healthy Tomorrow campaign committee chairs (left to right) David Dugan, Matt Paxton and Chuck Phillips put the finishing touches on the Campaign syringe. Over \$1.1*



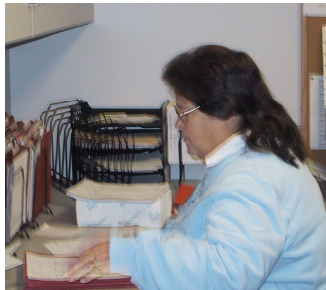
## Volunteers make it happen...

Last year 108 volunteers donated over 3612 hours of their time



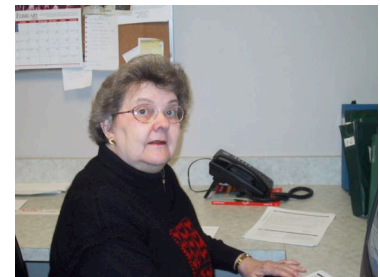
Selena King is one of the clinic's newest volunteers. In a very short period of time she has helped enroll 60 patients into a diabetes management program. She supports the staff nurse with patient case management and administrative duties.

Clyde and Jeri Keen have volunteered at the clinic for almost ten years. They have helped with a variety of activities – serving as a board member, volunteering at the clinic on Thursday evenings, fundraising events (they were Co-Chairs of the Special Gifts Committee for the Capital Campaign), recruiting new volunteers and assisting with special projects.



Patsy Clark has become a jack-of-all-trades. She volunteers several days a week in different areas – answering phones, preparing records for the next day, calling reminders, and anything else that is asked of her!

Alice Furgerson is another long-time volunteer. She volunteers with the critical Medication Assistance Program. Through this program the Free Clinic is able to provide patients with medication at little or no cost. Since 1997 over \$8 million in medication has been ordered through this program.



## Are you interested in volunteering?

Non-medical volunteers are needed during the day to help with patient interviews, data entry, and patient reception. The next volunteer orientation is scheduled for **Friday, March 18 at 9:00 a.m.**

Professional volunteers are always needed. If you are a nurse, EMT, pharmacist, pharmacy technician, physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, dentist, or dental hygienist licensed in Virginia, active or retired, and are interested in finding out more please call 464-8700.

## Save the date

The Southern Inn and the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic are joining forces to bring you a unique dining experience. Mark your calendars to attend the April 12, 2005 Chef George Tasting Menu. The experience will include 9 courses with a special wine selection served with each course. A representative from Old Bridge Cellars, an Australian wine importer, will be on hand to discuss the wines and wineries. The cost for this event will be \$100 per person with proceeds benefiting the Free Clinic. More detailed information later. If you have questions please call Suzanne at 464-8700 x 111.

## Rotary Club Auction

The Lexington Rotary Club is sponsoring an auction for the Free Clinic. The club continues to accept quality donations and needs your help. Items such as furniture, collectibles, jewelry, vehicles, and artwork are still needed. (No clothing please) Please call 463-2106 to arrange for pick-up or drop items at the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic Monday – Friday from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm.

## Clinic receives grant

The Free Clinic recently received a \$20,000 grant from Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield to support the clinic's diabetes management program. With this grant the clinic will be able to develop a disease management program that will promote diet, exercise and medication compliance. Since the award in November, the clinic has enrolled over 60 patients into the program.

## Pro-Am Golf Tournament

On May 9, 2005, the Lexington Golf and Country Club is hosting a Pro-Am Golf Tournament for Mid-Atlantic PGA Golf Professionals. Eligible players must be Mid-Atlantic PGA Section Members and apprentices with playing privileges. Each professional must bring three male or female amateur players. The entry fee is \$75.00 for professional or amateur. The LGCC anticipates a total of 100 players. Proceeds will benefit the Free Clinic.

Laurie Adams, PGA Head Golf Professional at LGCC is looking for sponsors for the event. Sponsorships are available at four levels. The \$1500 Platinum Sponsor will receive one complimentary group in the event, sign at hole with company name, your logo or name featured at the registration table and handout material, your company or name featured in newspaper coverage, and special recognition at the awards ceremony. The \$500 Gold Sponsor will receive one complimentary entry fee, sign at hole with company name, your logo or name featured at the registration table and handout material, your company or name featured in newspaper coverage, and special recognition at the awards ceremony. The \$150 Hole Sponsor will receive sign at hole with company name, your logo or name featured at handout material, and special recognition at the awards ceremony. Other sponsorship levels are available.

This is another "first" for the area and the Free Clinic is thankful to be selected as a beneficiary. If you or your company would be interested in sponsoring this event please call Laurie at 463-3542.

**Do you have some low cost basis stocks in your portfolio? Consider donating them to the Free Clinic!**

The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic is happy to receive donations of stock. If your portfolio includes stock with a low cost basis that you have inherited, received as a gift or purchased, donating them to the Free Clinic will help you avoid paying capital gains tax on them.

The value of a stock gift made to a charity is the average price of the stock on the day that the stock was transferred to the charities account at the brokerage firm; not the stock's price on the day it was purchased, inherited or received as a gift.

All you need to do is call and let us know that you are transferring stock to our brokerage firm. We will give you our account and DTC numbers to give to your broker.

*"Of all forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhuman."*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

# Dental Program Update

The Free Clinic Dental Program, which began in November 2001, is expanding its focus. Under the leadership of Mary Jo Doig, Coordinator of Special Programs; Carol Tyree, Dental Assistant; and Sharon Sexton, volunteer dental educator the Dental Program is focusing on oral health education. Up until now the clinic focused primarily on pain relief and some restorative care. However, with the loss of four volunteer dentists in the last year and the addition of a dental hygienist the clinic was forced to look at ways to maximize the work of the volunteer dental professionals and provide quality patient care.

All dental patients must participate in the program. The program goals are to reduce the fear of patients through education and empowerment and to set the expectation that the Free Clinic Dental Program is a partnership with the patient for dental care. Classes are held once a month at the Free Clinic. During the class patients complete a health history form, watch a video on dental hygiene, are introduced to standard dental equipment and procedures, receives dental education and a dental care kit. Each patient takes a pre-test and post-test to gauge the effectiveness of the course. Finally, the dental assistant scrapes a small amount of plaque from each patient's teeth, explains how brushing can take care of much of this, and annotates their chart so that the dentist can evaluate the effectiveness of their home care between visits.



Sharon Sexton provides dental education to a group of dental patients and their families.



Carol Tyree, examines a patient and provides a general assessment.

## Uninsured Myths and Facts

1. MYTH: People without health insurance coverage don't work.  
FACT: Eight out of ten people who are uninsured are in working families.
2. MYTH: Most uninsured people in the U.S. are minorities.  
FACT: Non-Hispanic whites make up three-fourths of the uninsured.
3. MYTH: Most people without health insurance are poor.  
FACT: Almost 29 million of the uninsured in 2002 had household incomes of \$25,000 or more, compared with 14.8 million in households earning less. (The federal poverty guideline for a family of four in 2004 is \$18,850.)
4. MYTH: It doesn't really matter whether a person has health insurance.  
FACT: About 18,000 Americans die each year of treatable diseases because they don't have health coverage, according to the respected Institute of Medicine.
5. MYTH: Virtually everyone who works for a larger employer has health coverage.  
FACT: More than one out of four of the nations' uninsured in 2001 (nearly 10 million people) either worked for a firm with 500 or more employees or were dependents of someone who worked for a large firm.

## Why Do We Have Free Clinics?

Reports on health policy from the Kaiser Family Foundation tell us that the number of uninsured has risen from about 31 million Americans in 1987 to 45 million in 2003 (12.9 percent in 1987 to 15 percent of the total population in 2003). Given the rising cost of health insurance, the number of uninsured is likely to continue to grow. Changes in the economy and rising health care costs have led to declines in employer-sponsored coverage in recent years and these declines are likely to continue, especially if health care costs continue to rise at their current double digit pace. In 2004, annual premiums averaged \$9,950 for family coverage and \$3,695 for single coverage. The employee share of premiums has been on the rise and now averages \$47 per month for single coverage and \$222 for family coverage. Since 2000, premiums for family coverage have risen nearly 60 percent.

Health insurance makes a difference in whether and when people get necessary medical care, where they get their care, and ultimately, how healthy people are. Compared with the insured, the uninsured live sicker and die sooner. If they can't afford to pay for a doctor, they often postpone seeking care. They do not receive preventive care or screenings for cancer or other life-

altering diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. Often the uninsured cannot afford necessary medication. All of this means that by the time they seek treatment, they are frequently already seriously ill.

Lack of health insurance not only compromises the health and financial well-being of individuals and families, but also takes a toll on society. Medical bills can mount quickly for an uninsured person. In 2000, about 50 percent of the one million Americans who filed for bankruptcy did so because of medical bills and other problems arising from serious illness or injury. Nearly half of the uninsured report that they are unable to pay their medical bills, and more than a third say that they had been contacted by a collection agency about unpaid medical bills. Fear of unpaid bills is a major reason why many of the uninsured do not get the care they need. Having a significant portion of the population without health insurance has societal costs as well. When an uninsured person receives care but cannot pay the medical bill, the cost must be borne by others and puts a particular burden on public health and medical resources.

## Why Do We Have a Free Clinic in the Rockbridge Area?

At the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic we know first-hand about the growing number of uninsured. In the last fiscal year the Free Clinic treated 201 more patients, provided 388 more visits and dispensed 4932 more prescriptions than in the previous year. All indicators for the first five months of the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2004 show a continued increase in the demand for service. We treated 1580 people with over 3500 visits. In addition we also referred more than 237 to area specialists. Equally significant were the number of people referred to Stonewall Jackson Hospital and Rockbridge Medical Labs for medically necessary diagnostic tests – 818 patients.

The majority of the Free Clinic patients are between 40 and 64 years of age, they are predominantly female and more likely to be white. More than 65% are employed or come from working families. 20% live in Buena Vista, 13% live in Lexington and 67% live in Rockbridge County. Most of our patients learn about the clinic through word of mouth. They came to the clinic because they had a medical necessity and did not have health insurance and could not afford a doctor and their medications. A majority of our patients tell us that if the Free Clinic didn't exist, they would not have sought treatment.

The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic's most frequent diagnoses in FY 2004 were:

1. Hypertension
2. Diabetes
3. Depression
4. Chronic pain
5. Sinusitis
6. Gastro-intestinal disorders
7. Gynecological
8. Hyperlipidemia
9. Acute dental problems
10. Acute renal disorders

## How is the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic Helping Those in Need?

At the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic we advocate for access to quality health care for all people. We focus on the delivery of care locally by providing the following programs and services

### Primary health care

- General medical treatment
- Chronic disease management
- Medically necessary diagnostic testing
- Referrals to medical specialists
- Health education

### Dental care

- Pain relief
- Extractions
- Restoratives
- Cleanings
- Education

### Pharmacy

- Prescription medication for Free Clinic patients and qualifying Medicare recipients.

### Women's Health

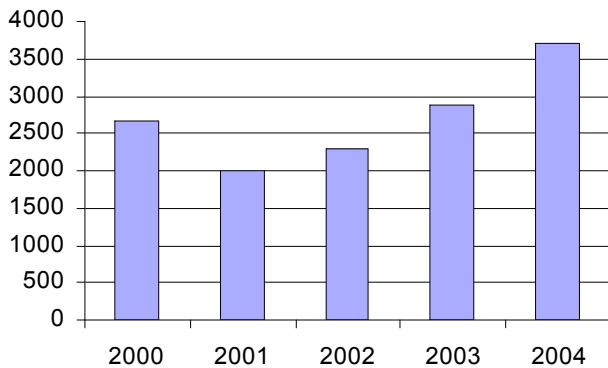
- Routine annual exams
- Cancer screenings
- Mammograms

These services are provided four days a week and two evenings a week.

The Free Clinic targets low-income working people and the elderly on a fixed income. If you are an employer in the area with minimum wage workers and/or part-time workers your employees are probably eligible for our services.

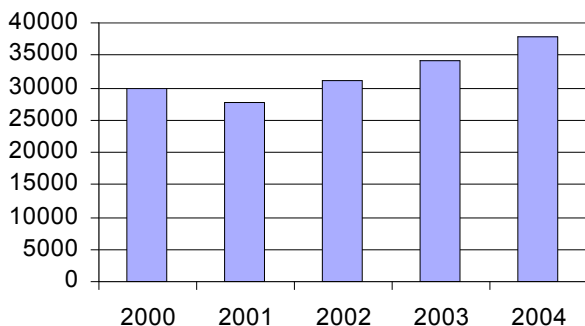
## Free Clinic At A Glance

Patient Visits



The number of patient visits the Free Clinic can provide is dependent upon the number of health care providers available. Dentists provide approximately 3 hours of service per week. A combination of volunteer primary care providers and a staff nurse practitioner provide an average 18 hours per week in care. Nurses provide 32 hours of care per week. The availability of primary care providers has the greatest impact on the number of visits we can provide. Case management, by the nursing staff, increases proportionally with the number of primary care visits provided.

Prescriptions Filled



The demand for pharmaceuticals continues to be the largest program we operate. Many of the people we seeking Free Clinic services have some form of chronic disease: diabetes, hypertension, and/or asthma to name a few. Medication is essential to maintaining their health and keeping them out of crisis. Approximately 5200 Rockbridge area residents are over the age of 65. The Free Clinic provides medication assistance to over 600 of them.

## Bessie Reed A Story to Honor Good Health

By Mary Jo Doig

The Free Clinic would like to honor Bessie Mannon Reed of Glasgow, who is distinguished by the fact that she is the oldest person in Rockbridge Clinic that the Free Clinic serves.

In 2004, I was delighted to be invited to Mrs. Reed's 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday party by her family. Unable to attend, but not wanting to miss an opportunity to talk with Mrs. Reed, we arranged a visit after her birthday. Several months later I called Mrs. Reed to ask if she'd be willing to interview for an article for the Free Clinic newsletter. Always open to a visit and happy about the clinic's assistance with her medicine, she said yes.

Tall, slender, and gracious, Bessie Reed still lives in her own home, with her son and daughter-in-law, Cline ("Seaweed") and Yvonne Reed, who live nearby, providing some supports. She is surrounded by pictures of her spouse, two sons, and her many grandchildren. Her lifelong love of crocheting and quilting is also in evidence everywhere.

Mrs. Reed was born at home on April 13, 1902, the second oldest child of James Flemming Mannon and Polly Ann Hurt. She, along with five sisters and two brothers, grew up on their farm in Floyd County, Virginia. (Elsie Graham, Mrs. Reed's sister, still lives on the home farm.) Along with the farm, Mrs. Reed's father also owned a large canning factory.

She went to school in Alum Ridge, Virginia, then on to Radford College, where she became a teacher. Subsequently Mrs. Reed taught grades 1-8 in a one-room school for two years. During her second year of teaching, she met Enoch Reed, a graduate of Bridgewater College.

"We met at church. I was dating another boy when Enoch and I met. One day after church, I had gotten in the buggy and my boyfriend at the time was getting ready to take me home. While I was sitting in the buggy, Enoch came over to me and said, "It's now or never!" That's the last time I ever saw that other boy. From then on I started seeing Enoch."

They married and in time became proud parents to two sons, James Darwin Reed and Cline Elvin Reed. In 1936 they moved to the present home in Glasgow, where Mrs. Reed became a life-long member of the Baptist Church.

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Recently Mrs. Reed visited a new doctor, whom she greeted by saying, "Hello. I'm Bessie Reed and I'm 102."

The doctor looked shocked, she said, and replied, "Why, I thought you were about 62!"

Mrs. Reed smiled.

"What *is* your secret to good health and a long life?" I asked, acknowledging she has probably heard this question many times.

She nodded.

"Hard work," she replied without hesitation. "I've worked hard all my life. I worked on the farm, in my father's canning factory, and as a teacher. When Enoch and I got married, we moved to Glasgow and then I worked at Lees Carpet Mill for 31 years.

Mrs. Reed related a story that shows another compelling aspect of her character. On a cold wintry day in 2001, she stepped out her back door to check one of her cats. As she turned to go inside, she slipped, fell, and couldn't get up. She called out for help as she lay on the frigid ground, but no one heard her. Knowing her situation was grim, she began to drag herself up the steep wooden steps, then onto the porch, through two closed doors, and worked her way through the kitchen into the phone in the living room to the phone.

"I think I've broken my hip," she calmly said when she called her daughter-in-law.

Her family later asked her how on earth she'd gotten back into the house with a broken hip.

Her reply: "As I laid out there, I thought I can either lay here and freeze to death or I can try to get back into the house."

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These days Mrs. Reed enjoys visitors very much and has a wealth of fascinating stories to share. She is, in fact, a living archive of the twentieth century, for during her lifetime the car was invented, electricity was brought into every home, and airplanes, televisions, and computers were invented. She has lived through two world wars and the Great Depression. She has seen both the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union, as well as a man run a four-minute mile on earth and walk on the moon.

Last year Mrs. Reed gave up her long-term hobby of crocheting button-top hand towels due to her arthritis. Never interested in watching television, Mrs. Reed now spends her leisure time reading.

She also enjoys thinking back a lot. "My life in Floyd County was the best," she reflected. "Living on the farm was such a wholesome way of life."

"It's good to be 102," Mrs. Reed tells me with a smile. "That's a long time."

### Rockbridge Area Free Clinic Mission

To assist in providing quality primary health care to members of the community who do not have the financial or other resources necessary to secure those services for themselves.

Rockbridge Area Free Clinic  
25 Northridge Lane  
PO Box 1573  
Lexington, VA 24450

Phone: 540.464.8700  
Fax 540.464.1362

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