

# The Medical Record of the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic

25 Northridge Lane, Lexington, Virginia 24450

Winter/Spring 2010

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*Are you involved  
with a group that  
would like to  
learn more about  
the RAFC?*

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Consider hosting  
a **VIP tour!**  
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Contact Katy  
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464-8700, ext. 118  
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## **A Message from the Executive Director...Suzanne Sheridan**

Free Clinics play an important role in health care delivery

In 1992 when the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic was founded no one on the board would have predicted that 18 years later it would still exist and would be serving almost 6% of the local population. Indeed, the greatest hope of that founding board, and for every board member that followed, was that the Free Clinic would no longer be relevant because health care would be available to all. The mission of the clinic is to provide quality health care for the uninsured and underinsured people. To meet this mission objective, the Free Clinic fills the gaps in our health care safety net to assist those that fall through the cracks of our state and federally funded health care systems.

The latest efforts regarding health care reform have focused national attention on the issue of health care and health care access. It is a complicated, sometimes emotional and always political issue. There are some that believe this proposed legislation would resolve the issue of the uninsured and cure all that ails the health care industry. At the beginning of the health care reform push many people asked me what was going to happen to the Free Clinic when health care reform was passed. There are many problems within the U.S. health care system that are not addressed in this legislation. Even if passed, the key components of the package won't take effect until after 2013. One estimate has as many as 28 million people in the US still uninsured by 2019. Of the approximate 46 million people currently uninsured in the United States, 5 million receive their health care from one of the 1200 free clinics nationally. Even Massachusetts, with its state sponsored health insurance program, has approximately 6% of its population uninsured and provides health care through Free Clinics (called Health Safety Net).

A key element in health care reform is the expansion of Medicaid. In my conversations with the general population I have come to realize that many people do not understand the Medicaid and Medicare programs, as they exist today. Simply, Medicare is a single payer, government program providing health insurance coverage to people who are aged 65 and over, or who meet other special criteria, such as a permanent disability. Medicaid is program for eligible individuals and families with low incomes and resources. It is a “means tested” program that is jointly funded by the states and federal government, and is managed by the states. Virginia currently ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> in qualifying poor working adults for Medicaid and ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in qualifying jobless adults for Medicaid. It is difficult to imagine the Virginia state budget implications if and when Medicaid programs are expanded to reach a greater number in the low-income population.

At one time I believed if you were poor, you received Medicaid to cover health care costs. This simply is not true. Medicaid is an important resource for the uninsured, however we should not forget 350,000+ low-income Virginians that do not qualify for Medicaid and do not have health insurance. Some low-income people receive Medicaid; but consider these facts:

1. The single mother of two who makes \$34 a day (or \$12,117 per year) makes too much money to qualify for Medicaid in Virginia;
2. A newly unemployed person, who cannot afford COBRA and whose spouse works part-time and the employer does not offer health insurance, finds that the combined unemployment benefits and part-time income exceed the limit for Medicaid;
3. The homeless individual with no income does not qualify for Medicaid in Virginia.

Continued on next page

## Message from the Executive Director, continued from page 1

These people, like many of the hard-working poor, are left living on the precipice of financial ruin caused by a single illness or accident. The protection for these Virginians is a network of "safety net" providers that includes free clinics like the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic. Free clinics offer high-quality, cost-effective health care and do not charge for their services. These clinics do not receive federal funds and services are possible through the many selfless volunteers and generous donors.

In 2009 the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic provided 6100 visits and 24,500 prescriptions to approximately 2000 people. From 2008 to 2009 there was a 38% increase in the number of new people seeking services for the first time. The patients that utilize the clinic have nowhere else to go to receive affordable, on-going health care and prescription medication at a price they can afford. Many new patients in 2009 were newly unemployed, some for the first time in their adult lives. And, although they had little to give in return, they did give back in thanks. Patient contributions made up 7% of Rockbridge Area Free Clinic income in 2009. In addition to their financial contribution they also gave back by volunteering time and services.

We are well aware of what happens when people do not have access to the health care they need. It is heartbreaking. We are thrilled that people are examining the issue of health care and health care reform. However, it will take years to sort out the issues. Some of the problems in the current health care system cannot be solved by legislation. While the debate continues, Free Clinics will be stretching to provide the health care safety net in their communities for decades to come.

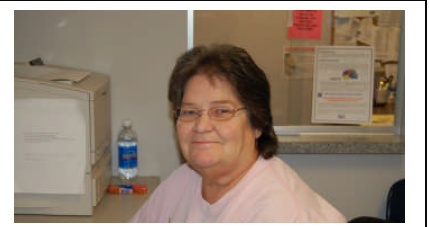
### **A Volunteer Prospective: Patsy's Profile**

The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic is proud to be a United Way member and encourages your donations to those agencies during their annual campaigns.

My name is Patsy Clark and I have been a volunteer for the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic for five years.

I volunteer for several reasons. One is that the Free Clinic is a great cause and there is a large demand for a free health clinic in this area. I love doing for other people and the Clinic needs volunteers as well as donations to succeed.

Also, I am a patient at the Free Clinic and volunteering is my way of giving back to the Clinic. If the Clinic were not here, I could not get the health care I need. (By Patsy Clark)



### **RAFC will offer mental health services...**

This spring the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic's program will expand to offer some mental health services. The Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF) recently awarded a grant to increase access to mental health services to the Rockbridge Area Community Services, the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic, the Alleghany Highlands Community Services and the Alleghany Highlands Free Clinic. These four organizations will collaborate on providing mental health services to Free Clinic patients.

The VHCF grant allows the Rockbridge Area Community Services staff to hire a part time mental health counselor. The counselor's time will be divided with the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic and the Alleghany Highlands Free Clinic. Some of the services that the Free Clinics will be able to offer include individual and group therapy counseling sessions. The mental health counselor will be available in each Free Clinic once a week. A psychiatrist will also be available for medication management visits.

Hopefully these mental health professionals will begin seeing Free Clinic patients this spring. The collaboration will allow Free Clinic patients more access to mental health services. The program will also allow the RAFC to continue to make referrals to the Rockbridge Area Community Services.

## UPCOMING EVENTS!

Lexington Lions Club announces:

Scots Irish Festival!  
**Saturday, April 10, 2010**  
**Maury River Middle School**  
**Time 10:00 am – 5:00 pm**

Benefits the Vision Care Center at the  
*Rockbridge Area Free Clinic.*



Lexington Rotary Club announces:

Benefit Basketball Game!  
**Sunday, March 14, 2010**  
**RCHS Gym, 7-9 pm**

World-class basketball entertainment  
 when the Harlem Ambassadors  
 face the Rockbridge Dribblers!

Benefits *RARA* and the  
*Rockbridge Area Free Clinic.*

\*\*Bring your pennies  
 for the Million Penny Campaign\*\*

### RAFC HOSTS A BUSINESS AFTER HOURS!

Curious about the Free Clinic  
 and interested in a networking opportunity?  
 Come to our Business After Hours...

***Tuesday, March 23***  
***5:30-7:30 p.m.***  
 25 Northridge Lane



The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic needs your help!

More than 75% of the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic's annual operating funds come from gifts made by individuals, foundations, churches, businesses, patients, and civic organizations. Please help us ensure that we can continue to provide medical services, prescription medication and dental care for working uninsured families. Send us your gift today!

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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My gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed. *(Please make check payable to the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic)*

Please charge my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my credit card: *(circle one)* Visa Mastercard

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like this gift to be in memory/honor *(circle one)* of: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Would you like to receive this newsletter by email?**

**Please provide your email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

***RAFC is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) health and human service organization. All gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please mail your donation to: Rockbridge Area Free Clinic, PO Box 1573, Lexington, VA 24450***

# 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BULL & OYSTER FEST!

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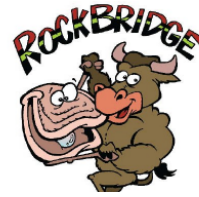
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A BENEFIT FOR THE  
ROCKBRIDGE AREA FREE CLINIC  
**Saturday, April 3, 2010 ~ 1 – 5 p.m.**

Come join the fun...  
oysters, barbeque, music & prizes!

\$35 per person in advance and \$40 at the door  
Includes food, live entertainment and beverage tickets



SAVE TIME, GIVE ONLINE!  
[WWW.ROCKBRIDGEFREECLINIC.ORG](http://WWW.ROCKBRIDGEFREECLINIC.ORG)

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

Phone: 540.464.8700  
Fax 540.464.1362

**Mission** – The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic is a community-based nonprofit organization providing quality health care for uninsured and underinsured residents.

**Vision** – Serve as a vital and caring Rockbridge area resource promoting and providing access to quality health care to build a healthier community.

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