

charlottesville
FREE CLINIC

Expansion Project

providing an open door to health care for our neighbors in need

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Since the Charlottesville Free Clinic was founded 16 years ago, the number of working uninsured in the Charlottesville/Albemarle area has doubled. The Free Clinic's patient volume has, in turn, increased steadily every year. And although it has seen dramatic growth in patient services and needs since 1992, the size of the Free Clinic's facility has remained virtually the same since its founding.

Acknowledging that its existing space within the Charlottesville/Albemarle Health Department building was no longer adequate to meet the community's needs, in January 2007, the Charlottesville Free Clinic Board of Directors began what would become a rigorous 18-month search for a solution.

It was an exploration that would lead from a prospective construction site in the Health Department parking lot to retrofit-ready commercial real estate Downtown, from the offices of community leaders to the kitchen tables of our supporters ... and ultimately, right back to our home on Rose Hill Drive, and an extraordinary opportunity.

When additional space unexpectedly became available within the Health Department building early this year, the Free Clinic recognized the opportunity to meet its expansion objectives for one-tenth of the cost of a comparable new facility, and in one-quarter of the time. Indeed, after a rigorous due-diligence process examining numerous expansion options and their financial implications, the Board of Directors was in advanced stages of planning for a 2-year \$5 million-capital campaign for the purchase and renovation of a new facility.

In light of this new option, the Board unanimously approved the only fiscally responsible option that there was for going forward. It stopped. Within four months the Free Clinic had a new plan, a new budget and a new vision for how it would bring critically needed health services to people in need: it would stay right where it was, in the place that local residents have come to know and recognize as the Free Clinic. Staying where we are will also allow us to continue our established, successful relationship with the Health Department.

The Charlottesville Free Clinic's expansion project represents a creative, pragmatic and highly cost-effective solution to our organization's need to grow – and our neighbors' needs for critical health care. We invite you to join with us by supporting the Charlottesville Free Clinic Expansion Project.

Why Our Community Needs the Free Clinic

It is estimated that as many as 25,000 Charlottesville/Albemarle residents don't have health insurance – and yet most of our area's uninsured do have jobs. They are substitute teachers, mechanics, childcare providers, clerks, waiters, landscapers, freelancers – and they hold hundreds of other types of jobs that make up the fabric of our community. They work hard to provide for themselves and their families. They pay their bills and they pay taxes.

People who don't have health insurance

- are less likely to seek medical attention when they need it
- are in poorer health
- are more likely to die prematurely

Health care options for a low-income working adult

- Medicaid:** not eligible because not below the Federal Poverty Level
- Employer group health plan:** either not offered or employee contribution is too expensive
- Individual health insurance:** too expensive
- Medicare:** not eligible because not age 65 or older
- Direct payment to primary care provider when care is needed:** too expensive
- Charlottesville Free Clinic**

But when it comes to health insurance they come up short.

In the struggle to keep up with life's basic expenses like rent, food, and clothes for their children, their own basic medical insurance – and the access it means to health care – becomes a luxury. So they do without and cross their fingers that they won't get sick.

While lawmakers continue to debate how to fix these health care issues on the national level, the fact remains that solutions are a long way off. People in our own community are in critical need *now* – and for over fifteen years, the Charlottesville Free Clinic has served that need.

Leveraging the resources of hundreds of volunteers and in-kind medical donations, the Charlottesville

Free Clinic has provided a pragmatic, highly cost-effective solution to the health care needs of the working uninsured since 1992.

Since our founding, we have become a virtual lifeline to thousands of men and women who, without us, would have nowhere else to go.

Working in partnership with our local hospitals, medical professionals, city and county government, and caring contributors, we are providing free quality health care for the working uninsured. It's a win-win partnership that saves the health – and even lives – of our neighbors, saves taxpayer dollars, and reflects the values that make our community special.

"I would not be alive today if it were not for the Charlottesville Free Clinic."

– Rakesh Cheetri, Free Clinic Patient

Why the Free Clinic Needs to Expand

As our region continues to grow and more and more people look to the Charlottesville Free Clinic for care, our facility – located in the Charlottesville/Albemarle Health Department building on Rose Hill Drive – has grown increasingly crowded:

- The number of patients we treat continues to increase each year, as have the number of patient visits due to chronic medical conditions like hypertension and diabetes.
- Our patients' need for dental services – currently offered on a limited basis only by the Free Clinic – is urgent and growing. Due to space constraints and volunteer shortages, the waiting list for dental services has grown to 1,000.
- The increase in chronic conditions among our patients has translated to a greater need for medications, increasing demands on our pharmacy. The number of prescriptions we dispense has increased nearly 700% since 1994, from 3,281 in our first year to 25,861 last year.

When the Charlottesville Free Clinic was established in 1992, there were an estimated 12,600 working uninsured people in Charlottesville/Albemarle. Today, that number is closer to 25,000.

The Charlottesville Free Clinic is the sole agency provider of dental services for low-income uninsured adults in our community.

- Regrettably, many of the illnesses that we treat could be prevented, signaling the need for expanded patient education and wellness initiatives.
- Our own numbers have grown too, as we have increased the number of staff and volunteers at the Free Clinic to keep pace with the rising demand.

The increasing needs of the community, combined with the limited size of the facility, have translated to crowded conditions, longer wait times for patient appointments and delayed expansion of important dental initiatives and wellness programs. The Free Clinic's ability to respond to the evolving and growing needs of the working uninsured with new programs and expanded services is limited by a lack of space for patients, volunteers and staff.

The Charlottesville Free Clinic Expansion Project will allow us to enlarge and update our current facility to serve the growing patient population. The updated facility will allow us to expand critically needed services, including dental care. And while we must build the capacity to aid more people who are sick, the expansion of patient education and wellness programs to keep more people from getting sick is also a key priority.

Goals of the Charlottesville Free Clinic Expansion Project

- **To increase patient capacity**
- **To expand and augment dental and other critically needed services**
- **To expand patient education and wellness initiatives**

Expanding within the Free Clinic's current home is the most efficient and cost-effective solution to increase capacity and expand services; the budget for the Expansion Project is a fraction of the cost required to create a comparable new facility.

How the Free Clinic Benefits Our Community

The working uninsured of our community rely on our staff and volunteers to treat bronchitis, provide mammograms, help manage diabetes, prescribe medicine, care for depression and diagnose and treat scores of other medical needs. And our community, in turn, relies on the Free Clinic to help keep thousands of uninsured workers who are vital to our economy healthy and productive.

It's a community partnership that has a far-reaching effect. When a person suffers from poor health – as the working uninsured do – it means more missed work, which means lost wages. And lost wages mean financial instability, diminished quality of life, and less opportunity to be self-sufficient.

But it's not just the working uninsured that are affected:

- When an uninsured person becomes ill, there is a cost to our economy. It is estimated that sick workers cost \$180 billion a year in lost productivity in our nation – an average of \$255 per employee per year. →
- Having a healthy workforce is vital to the health of our community's businesses, particularly the hundreds of small employers in the city and county. →
- Healthy businesses are vital to our community's economy. →
- Our thriving economy is a big part of what makes Charlottesville/Albemarle a desirable place to live, visit, and do business.

“The City of Charlottesville and surrounding counties have benefited enormously from the Free Clinic. The Free Clinic is providing a vital service both to our working uninsured adults, but also to the community at large. Organizations like the Free Clinic enhance the quality of life for all of us, and are a big part of what makes Charlottesville/Albemarle such a special place to live.”

– Dave Norris, Mayor of Charlottesville

In 2008, the services that the Free Clinic provided were estimated to have saved our local hospital systems more than \$4.9 million in costs.

The Free Clinic also contributes to the quality of life in our community in other vital ways as well:

- By relieving the burden of unnecessary emergency room visits on local hospitals, which cost taxpayer dollars when a patient can't pay, we save money for all taxpayers in our community.
- We provide valuable training to doctors and nurses who volunteer at the Free Clinic, while instilling values of service and volunteerism that they enact in their professional lives long after their stay with us is over.
- We have opened our lifestyle change classes to the public and are considering opening other internal education classes in the future.

Our multi-faceted impact on the community underscores the critical importance of the Free Clinic now, as well the importance of continuing to adapt and expand our services as our population's needs continue to change and grow.

Why the Free Clinic Makes Good Financial Sense

Health care is expensive. But it costs even more when we allow people who can't afford it to go without.

The majority of hospital ER visits by uninsured patients are for conditions that could be treated much more cost effectively by a primary health care provider.

When an uninsured person resorts to obtaining medical attention at the one place required by law to treat him regardless of his ability to pay – a hospital emergency room – we *all* pay for it in the form of higher taxes, health insurance premiums and hospital costs when he can't afford to pay the hospital bill.

The Charlottesville Free Clinic provides a uniquely cost-effective answer to the health care quandary of the working uninsured in our community. Leveraging substantial volunteer and in-kind support, we provide quality health care to patients in need at a fraction of the cost to other primary care providers.

COST OF TREATMENT FOR THE FLU AT A LOCAL HOSPITAL

OUTPATIENT

Price of treatment	→	\$1,083
Loss to hospital, taxpayers and community if patient can't afford treatment	→	\$509

INPATIENT

Price of treatment	→	\$7,996
Loss to hospital, taxpayers and community if patient can't afford treatment	→	\$2,992

COST OF FLU PREVENTION AT THE FREE CLINIC

Cost of a donated vaccine	→	\$0
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Cost of volunteer services to administer vaccine	→	\$0
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Cost of flu prevention to patient	→	\$0
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Loss to hospital, taxpayers and community if patient can't afford treatment	→	\$0
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With an annual budget of just \$800,000, the Free Clinic provides health care services valued at approximately \$3,500,000 to our community each year. We also bring millions more in value to our community by helping keep our workforce healthy and our economy strong. And because we are supported solely by private donations, none of our costs are passed on to the patients or taxpayers.

Alternatively, if the Free Clinic did not exist to meet the needs of the working uninsured, the cost to our community would run in the tens of millions of dollars. And it's a cost that would continue to grow as our population of working uninsured grows.

Expanding the Charlottesville Free Clinic will enable us to keep pace with the rising demand for our services and ensure that our community continues to benefit from the cost efficiency of our model of care.

“When we first moved to Charlottesville, we opened a coffee cart on the downtown mall, in the hopes of someday having our own coffee house. Struggling to make ends meet, we weren't able to afford health insurance – and our health suffered. But the CFC was there for us. It's a vital resource for working insured, and that's why we hope our story can encourage the community to provide CFC with the financial support they need.

– Lynelle and John Lawrence, owners of Mudhouse and Smartroom

Plans for Expansion

Working with the local architectural firm of Daggett & Grigg, the Charlottesville Free Clinic has developed a comprehensive plan to expand its space within its current facility in the Charlottesville/Albemarle Health Department on Rose Hill Drive. Our enlarged, reconfigured space will have full-time dedicated working areas in which we can augment current services, provide additional dental services and create new programs on prevention, wellness and health education. Daggett & Grigg have worked with us to ensure that we will maximize the efficiency of our expanded facility and the operations that take place there.

Key elements of the expanded space are:

Dental Clinic One of the most pressing needs of our patients – and our community – is adult dental care. Due to a lack of space, the Charlottesville Free Clinic is currently able to offer only very limited dental services. In addition, patients have historically faced extremely long wait times, often two to three years. The expansion will address this by adding 1,315 square feet of dedicated space for dental services. In addition to having more dental volunteers, we will also have the space to hire a full-time dentist, and two full-time dental care assistants. When complete, the dental clinic will allow us to offer free services to more than 1,500 people in critical need of dental care and hold over 3,000 appointments – a 10-fold increase over the number of visits the Free Clinic is currently able to provide.

The Commission on Children and Families has labeled access to affordable dental care for adults as one of the top unmet needs in Charlottesville / Albemarle.

Pharmacy In the past several years, the Free Clinic has seen a rapid rise in the demand for our free prescription services. Despite this drastic increase in the number of prescriptions we provide, our pharmacy space has not increased at all. The expansion will allow us to nearly double the size of our current pharmacy, providing the space we need to work more effectively and allowing us to continue the high standards of quality control required when dispensing critically needed prescription medications.

Medical Space Currently, we have just two examination rooms available during the daytime. In order to continue to meet the needs of our community, it is critical that we have access to more daytime exam space. Reconfiguring our current space will allow for expansion of daytime and evening clinic hours, and provide more space for primary medical and specialized services, mental health counseling and physical therapy.

Administrative Offices and Volunteer Space The Free Clinic's current administrative space is half the size it should be for an office with our patient volume. Currently, patient prescreening occurs in corridors, hallways, or any other free space our volunteers and staff can find. The expansion will increase our current administrative space from 1,408 square feet to 2,580 square feet, enabling volunteers and staff to do their jobs more efficiently and increase both the quality and privacy of patient care and the number of patients we can serve. The expansion will also provide better workspace for our volunteers and staff, as well as space for community meetings and educational programs.

Construction is expected to begin in January. Upon successful completion of the expansion and reconfiguration, the Charlottesville Free Clinic will have the potential to double its capacity, promoting greater patient access, comfort and safety.

How You Can Help

Based on current estimates, the Expansion Project budget is \$941,000. At only one-tenth of the cost of a new facility, the expansion within our current space will allow the Free Clinic to achieve all of our objectives, including increasing patient capacity and increasing critically needed dental programs and patient wellness education programs.

While the expansion project will ultimately translate to an increase in our operating budget, it is an increase for which the Charlottesville Free Clinic has planned very carefully. Our annual fund is strong and we continue to build on the strength of our philanthropic community. More importantly, the rewards of this expansion will be unquestionable:

- It makes good sense for our patients. Prompt access to medical and dental care, including wellness education services, will allow patients to enjoy a better quality of life, opportunity and enhanced self-sufficiency.
- It makes good sense for businesses. By keeping the people who are vital to our economy healthy and productive, we will continue to play a crucial role in keeping our economy itself productive.
- It makes good sense for community members. Our model of care is highly cost-efficient. By enabling us to expand our services to meet the increasing needs of the working uninsured, the Free Clinic will help save millions of dollars in health care costs that would otherwise be passed on to taxpayers.
- And it's the right thing to do. Providing an open door to health care to those who can't afford it reflects our values as a community and makes Charlottesville/Albemarle the special place that it is.

The expansion of the Charlottesville Free Clinic will require the philanthropy of caring contributors and reaffirmation of our shared commitment to the dignity and well being our most vulnerable neighbors. More than that, it will strengthen the very fabric of our community, by providing better health and better opportunities for the men and women in need.

In the same way that the Charlottesville Free Clinic emerged sixteen years ago out of the collective compassion and generosity of many, the Charlottesville Free Clinic Expansion Project can only be possible through the continued caring of our community of contributors. We invite you to join with us in bringing the dignity and promise of health care to those in need through your support of the Charlottesville Free Clinic Expansion Project.

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