

THE FREE CLINIC TIMES

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3 NOVEMBER 2004

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT....

Greetings,

I want to begin by saying congratulations to Amy on her selection to *Business First's* "Forty under 40" in Columbus. There were over 200 applications. This is an honor for Amy but also the OAFC and we are fortunate to have her working on behalf of clinics and those we serve. Amy also recently received a distinguished alumni award from The Ohio State University. Congratulations! Thank you for your hard work on our



Board President Lee Elmore presents a Corporate Partnership Award to Chip Palazzo of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

half.

Thank you to the Education Committee for the outstanding Fifth Annual Ohio Association of Free Clinics Conference October 10 – 12, 2004 at the Holiday Inn Worthington (Columbus). What a great conference! We had so many wonderful opportunities to learn from the workshop presenters and each other. I was inspired and challenged by the

speakers and honorees. The conference also reminded me that we have much work to do to improve the access to care of those we serve in all our clinics.

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 "opportunities disguised as problems". Our association is working diligently to help our member clinics meet the challenges ahead.

In the coming months we need to hear from you. We look forward to the salary survey results. Will our clinics be looking at executive turnover in the next few years? How do we help prepare for that? Do we need leadership workshops? Where do you need help? Please let us know what you need to do your job more effectively.

I urge you to complete the application for coverage for our volunteer practitioners as outlined in the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA). Please see the additional articles on this in the newsletter.

Norman Vincent Peale said "Positive thinkers get positive results because they are not afraid of problems". I believe our Association is a group of positive thinkers and working together will bring results beyond our imagination.

I hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving and a "peaceful" Holiday season.

Lee Elmore, Board President



OAFC BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Foundation)

(**Bold** indicates New Board
Member)

FIFTH ANNUAL FREE CLINICS CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

The Fifth Annual Ohio Free Clinics Conference, held October 10-12, 2004, was deemed a success by participants and presenters alike. Those who evaluated the conference unanimously declared that attending “**Free Clinics: Serving Today. Advocating for Tomorrow**” was definitely worth their time and expense. As one participant affirmed, “the creativity and resourcefulness of free clinic folks came alive at the conference and helped to energize me at a difficult time”.

Several panel discussions, including “Public Policy Responses to the Uninsured” received especially high praise. One attendee commented of the panel discussion, “this was a very impressive panel, with good information and excellent discussion!” Others felt that the conference overall was “empowering”, and that it “allowed an excellent opportunity to network, share experiences, and re-energize”.

The Ohio Association of Free Clinics (O AFC) presented three awards at this year’s conference. The 2004 Champion of Free Clinics Award went to Dr. **Edward Bope** for his exceptional achievements and dedication related to the work of free clinics, in particular the Columbus Medical Association’s Physicians Free Clinic. The Corporate Partnership Award was presented to **Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield** for significant financial support given to free clinics and the O AFC. **Senator Ron**

Amstutz was the recipient of the Legislative Partnership Award for his outstanding legislative work with free clinics.

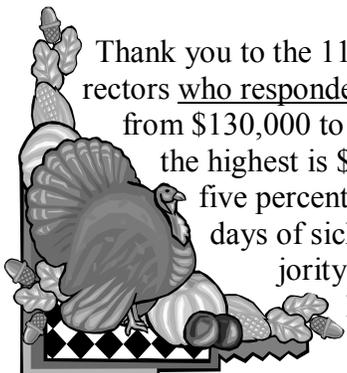
The O AFC would like to thank the sponsors of the Fifth Annual Ohio Free Clinic Conference: Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, PhRMA, Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland, Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton, the Columbus Medical Association Foundation, the Nord Family Foundation, the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians Foundation, National City Bank, and the OHIC Insurance Company.

We look forward to seeing you next year!



Conference attendees enjoy a network opportunity.

SALARY SURVEY RESULTS ARE IN!



Thank you to the 11 members who completed the recent salary survey! Of the full-time clinic directors who responded, the average salary is \$51,000, with annual clinic operating expenses ranging from \$130,000 to \$954,000. The lowest annual salary for a full-time director is \$42,000 while the highest is \$67,000. Sixty percent of the respondents have less than five employees. Forty-five percent receive more than 20 days of paid vacation. The majority receive less than five days of sick leave, although 46 percent receive 10-14 days of sick leave. While the majority have some type of employer-sponsored health insurance, 45 percent do not have health insurance through the free clinic. Thirty-six percent have some type of retirement plan provided through the free clinic.

FTCA VOLUNTEER LIABILITY RELIEF

Marty Hiller, Consultant, Triton Group

The health care crisis continues to grow. The most recent census survey data revealed over 45 million Americans had been without health insurance at some point during the past year. Even more disheartening, according to Families USA, if one examined the past two years, that number increased to 85.5 million – nearly one in three Americans. Healthcare is again on the national radar screen, coming into focus through the election of 2004, with presidential candidates who have different approaches to addressing this crisis. By the time you read this newsletter, we will have a better focus upon the specific reforms intended to relieve the crisis.

Yet, this is no surprise to those in the free clinic world. Across the state – and across the country – free clinics are emerging as a recognized important element in safety net services. Demand far exceeds capacity. As costs increase, free clinics struggle with growing operational budgets. Access to pharmaceutical

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DECEMBER 1 CONFERENCE “UNLOCKS THE MEDICINE CHEST”

The Access to Benefits Coalition (ABC), invites you, your colleagues and staff members to a conference designed to help you assist persons with lower incomes as well as older and disabled persons to navigate the increasingly numerous and complex private and government programs offering financial assistance in obtaining needed prescription drugs.

"UNLOCKING THE MEDICINE CHEST: CONNECTING THE PEOPLE WE SERVE TO THE RX THEY NEED" will be held on December 1st in Columbus, Ohio. The conference will examine the purpose, eligibility requirements, and scope of available benefits of the array of state, federal and private Rx assistance programs in Ohio, including the Medicare Discount Card's Temporary Assistance Program. You will learn how to identify the most appropriate Rx assistance programs for your clients or patients, and how to effectively link them to the Rx drugs they

need. In addition, you will learn key strategies for developing funding proposals and designing a successful Rx assistance program in your own community.

Applications for nursing, social work, counselor and legal continuing education contact hours/units/credits have been submitted to the Ohio Nurses Association, The State of Ohio Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist Board, and the Supreme Court of Ohio.

A registration form is available at: www.ohiofreeclinics.org.



Thanks to the members of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics for your dedication in serving the poor and uninsured in our state:

Ashland Christian Health Center

Asian Health Initiative

Center Street Community Clinic

Clinic at Faith Mission

Columbus Free Clinic

Free Clinic of Greater Cleveland

Good Neighbor House

Health Partners of Miami County

Lake County Free Clinic

Lorain County Free Clinic

Medina Health Ministry

North Coast Health Ministry

OPEN M's Summit County Free Clinic

Physicians Free Clinic

Reach Out of Montgomery County

Short North Health & Wellness

TLC Free Clinic

Townhall II Medical Clinic

Vineyard Free Medical Clinic

Viola Startzman Free Clinic

Western Stark Medical Clinic

Wheeling Health Right

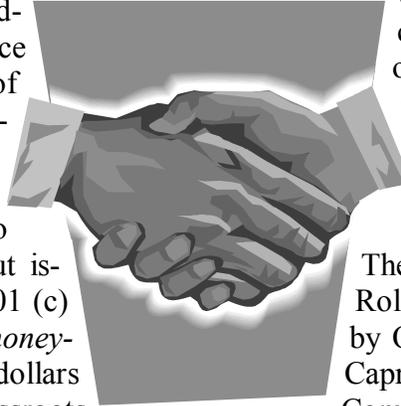
(Bold indicates New Member Clinic)

PROMISING PARTNERSHIPS FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Promising Partnerships Community Outreach Conference was held in Columbus on October 27th. Over 700 participants from faith based and community organizations attended the full day of enthusiastic key note addresses and plenary sessions.

In "The Role of Intermediaries", Stanley Carlson-Theis, Director of Social Policy Studies for The Center for Public Justice outlined several different types of intermediaries that can act as liaisons between grassroots organizations and government. Intermediary organizations can be "trainers" who teach grassroots organizations about issues such as outcomes measures, 501 (c) (3) procedures, and regulations; "money-bridges" that channel government dollars into grants in sums that small grassroots agencies can manage; and "mobilizers", non-financial partners who are willing to oversee volunteer recruitment and training for grassroots organizations.

Another relevant portion of the Community Outreach Conference was a keynote speech by Robert



Woodson, President of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise. This address appealed to faith based and other charitable organizations to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to community development. Woodson felt that these organizations should not provide benefits and services without expecting positive results from their consumers. In addition, faith-based organizations must recognize that it is also important to produce secular outcomes for those who seek their services and in order to secure continued funding streams.

The third plenary session, entitled "The Role of Volunteers" included addresses by Ohio First Lady Hope Taft and Dave Caprara, Director of Faith Based and Community Initiatives with the Corporation for National and Community Service. Mr. Caprara outlined President Bush's call on all Americans to give at least two years of their lives - the equivalent of 4,000 hours - to service to their neighborhoods, communities and Nation. He also

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PANEL DISCUSSION SPARKS DEBATE OVER HEALTH CARE REFORM

Straight talk about health care reform during this election year has been less than common. However, during "Public Policy Responses to the Uninsured: A Panel Discussion" at the Fifth Annual Ohio Free Clinics Conference, candor and openness on the subject was the standard. The panel included moderator Marcia Egbert of the George Gund Foundation who posed questions on topics ranging from drug re-importation to government-administered single payer health care.

The panelists, who included Ron Pollack of Families USA, Senator Robert Hagan of the Single Payer Action Network of Ohio, Dr. Edward Bope of the Columbus Medical Association Physician's Free Clinic, Holly Saelens of the Ohio Department of Insurance, John Jesser of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and William Fitzgibbon of the Ohio Small Business Council panelists represented diverse professional backgrounds, opinions, and knowledge about the realities of the present health care system.

Attendees were given time at the end of the panel discussion to present their own questions to the panelists. Many of the participants appreciated the diversity of the panel as well as the frankness regarding issues discussed. One stated that it "stimulated one to think, and was good to hear all sides" of the issue rather than the all-too-familiar rhetoric. Others called "Public Policy Responses to the Uninsured: A Panel Discussion" "excellent" and "refreshing".

PROMISING PARTNERSHIPS CONT.*(Continued from page 4)*

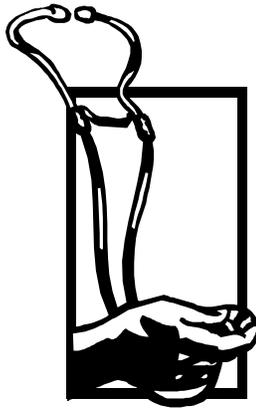
described several ways that individuals can fulfill this commitment, including participation in Americorps and VISTA programs.

First Lady Taft implored the audience to “promote and encourage the spirit of volunteerism” and spoke about Ohio residents’ own commitment to volunteering in 2004’s “Make a Difference Day”. Organized by the Ohio Community Service Council, Ohio volunteers have led the nation in service projects on this day for the past 5 years. Over 100,000 volunteers participated this year alone.

Also included in the session was a discussion of the Presidential Service Award Program for volunteerism. The President’s Volunteer Service Award was created to recognize the tens of millions of Americans who have made a sustained commitment to volunteer service. The Award is given to individuals, families and groups that have demonstrated outstanding volunteer service and civic participation over the course of a 12-month period.

To learn more about the guidelines for earning a Presidential Volunteer Service Award or recognizing your organization’s volunteers by becoming a “Certifying Organization” of the Presidential Service Award Program, please visit www.presidentialserviceawards.gov.

"A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort." *Herm Albright*

FTCA VOLUNTEER LIABILITY RELIEF CONT.*(Continued from page 3)*

resources is evermore expensive and complicated. The recruitment of volunteers has become more challenging with concerns about liability and proper insurance coverage. Amid these many challenges faced by free clinics, the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) may offer some relief for the rising cost of liability insurance for the corps of volunteers that work at free clinics in Ohio and across the country.

Congress enacted FTCA medical malpractice protection for volunteer free clinic health professionals through Section 194 of HIPPA by amending Section 224 of the Public Health Service Act. Upon meeting requirements of the Act, a related free clinic can sponsor him/her to be a “deemed” federal employee for the purpose of FTCA medical malpractice coverage. This will cover the individual’s professional performance of medical, surgical, dental or related functions within the scope of his/her work at the free clinic. Thereafter claimants alleging acts of medical malpractice by deemed volunteers must file their claims against the United States according to FTCA requirements.

The Program Information Notice (PIN) for this program defines both free clinics and volunteer professionals for the purposes of this Act as well as the services covered. Careful consideration should first be made to these definitions to assure the eligibility of individuals or even free clinics. These definitions, as well as the program application, can be accessed from the web at <http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov/freeclinicsftca/application.htm>

At first glance the program application may appear overwhelming to free clinic administrators. In fact, it requires very specific credentialing and privileging requirements that most free clinics conduct only informally. Nevertheless, credentialing (the process of assessing and confirming the qualifications of a licensed or certified health care practitioner) and privileging (the process of authorizing the specific scope and content of patient care services of a licensed practitioner) are important elements of assuring the delivery of quality care and offer protections for free clinics should claims of malpractice be made against a volunteer. The challenge will be to formalize these processes in a manner

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FTCA VOLUNTEER LIABILITY RELIEF CONT.

(Continued from page 5)

that will be acceptable to the Bureau of Primary Health Care in the application and deeming process. Fortunately, assistance in meeting these requirements is available directly from BPHC or from the Triton Group, a private consulting group that has been retained to facilitate free clinic enrollment and to process any claims made under this Act.

The FTCA program represents an opportunity for free clinics to increase the pool of volunteer health professionals without the barrier of liability insurance premiums. While the program has advantages and challenges, it presents a first step in a new chapter of resource that may assist free clinics in successfully carrying out their mission.

For more information contact Marty Hiller 216/382-4150 (mhiller826@hotmail.com). Marty Hiller served twenty years as the Executive Director of the Cleveland Free Clinic and was a founding Board member of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER

The Ohio Association of Free Clinics is delighted to welcome **Kathie Brown** as the newest member of its Board of Trustees. She will begin her term in January 2005, it will expire at the end of 2007.

Ms. Brown has served as the Executive Director of Wheeling Health Right, Inc. since 1992. Previously, she was employed first as a Nursing Coordinator and then as Assistant Director of the Florence Crittendon Home of West Virginia at Wheeling, Inc.

Ms. Brown holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Alderson-Broaddus College and a Master of Science Degree in Child Care Administration from Nova University. She holds current certifications from the state of West Virginia as a Registered Nurse and Social Worker I.

Among other achievements in the field of Nursing Administration, Ms. Brown recently received the Alderson-Broaddus Nurse Writing Award. She is involved in numerous civic and community affairs, and is often called upon to lecture on health issues including teen pregnancy, home health care, indigent health care and drug programs.

TWO CLINICS JOIN THE O AFC FAMILY

The Ohio Association of Free Clinics (O AFC) is pleased to announce that the Medina Health Ministry and the Vineyard Free Medical Clinic in Columbus have joined O AFC's statewide association, bringing total membership to twenty-two.

The **Medina Health Ministry** is a volunteer organization that was incorporated in February of 2000 and began clinic operations in January of 2004. According to its mission statement, the clinic was founded on humanitarian values, and exists to strengthen the quality of community life through provision of health care services to eligible individuals in Medina County. Services provided at the Medina Health Ministry include diagnosis, treatment and referral for those in need. The organization is directed by Dr. Kim Bowen.

The **Vineyard Free Medical Clinic** was started in 1994 by two doctors from the Vineyard Church of Columbus. The clinic is staffed with about 100 volunteers who hold in common the purpose of sharing the love of Jesus while providing medical, vision, and dental care to anyone unable to pay. The current clinic coordinators are Del and Kay Wilhelm, who are also pastoral assistants for the Vineyard Church.

We appreciate the work you do for the medically underserved in Ohio and we welcome you on behalf of our board of trustees and members to the Ohio Association of Free Clinics!

EDITORIAL COMMENT REGARDING FTCA COVERAGE

Amy Rohling, Executive Director, O AFC

For the past couple of years, I have heard from many of you about how increasing professional liability insurance costs have impacted your clinic. In the most extreme case, one Ohio free clinic was forced to close for several months due to an inability to meet the expense of liability coverage. The O AFC has taken several steps to advocate for relief in this area, including forming an ad hoc committee to study the issue thoroughly, writing a paper that describes the challenges faced by free clinics in this area and testifying twice before the Ohio Medical Malpractice Commission.

Meanwhile, as Marty Hiller described in the article on page 3, the federal government has taken a key step to provide liability coverage for free clinic volunteers. The result of this step finds opportunity both short and long term for free clinics in Ohio, indeed, across the country.

The advent of the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) Free Clinic Volunteer Health Care Coverage provides another option for professional liability coverage. Through this program, free clinics have an opportunity to offset some costs of liability insurance premiums through becoming "deemed" by the Bureau of Primary Health Care.

It must be noted that the program, as currently defined, has several downsides. First, the application process is complex and will likely require free clinics to implement formalized processes for credentialing and privileging. The results of both activities may strengthen free clinics, but resources will have to be allotted to the administrative infrastructure necessary to accomplish these ends. Second, there is no assurance that this program will result in any savings in insurance premiums—insurance companies might not reduce premiums simply because the clinic's volunteers are covered through another means. In addition, free clinics will need to purchase tail coverage, a cost that must be factored in to the decision to apply for coverage under the FTCA. Finally, the involvement of federal bu-

reaucacy is antithetical to typical free clinic operations and must be considered as well.

Nevertheless, the long term potential of this program cannot be understated. The Bureau of Primary Health Care has now acknowledged free clinics as an important element in our nation's health care system. Congress has acknowledged the importance of free clinics through the initial allocation of \$5 million for program implementation. The door has been opened for free clinics to advocate for meaningful support through the FTCA program by expansion of coverage to free clinic staff as well as institutions. Precedent for such coverage is in place as the HRSA-supported health centers have enjoyed such federal protection since the early 1990's. Free clinics have a strong advocacy position in that the level of risk for services provided by our member institutions is low in comparison to community health centers.

As you consider applying for coverage through this program please provide us with feedback. Is the process too cumbersome? If so, why? What would make it less so? In your cost benefit analysis, what are the pros and cons of applying? Has your insurance provider stated that your premium will be reduced if your volunteers are covered through another means?

Any and all comments are welcomed as we work to improve this program and to create other programs that will aid free clinics in their efforts to care for the uninsured. The O AFC and the National Association of Free Clinics will work with its members to provide relief in the area of professional liability insurance so that more resources can be devoted to patient care.





OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FREE CLINICS

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Columbus, Ohio 43215

www.ohiofreeclinics.org

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

AMY ROHLING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Dates to Remember:

December 1st, 2004:

- "Unlocking the Medicine Chest:
Connecting the People We Serve
To the Rx They Need"

Time: 8:15 a.m. to 3:50 p.m.

Location: YWCA, Huntington Hall
65 S. Fourth Street,
Columbus, Ohio, 43215

This conference is brought to you by the Access to Benefits Coalition (ABC). It is designed to help you assist persons with lower incomes as well as older or disabled persons to navigate the increasingly numerous and complex private and government programs offering financial assistance in obtaining needed prescription drugs. Go to www.ohiofreeclinics.org for a brochure.



The Medina Health Ministry, a new member clinic of the O AFC sent Tonya Martin and Lynn Meyers to the Fifth Annual Ohio Free Clinics Conference.