

# THE FREE CLINIC TIMES

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT....

Spring is just around the corner! The OAFc has been busy over the past few months with various activities including:

-Preparing for the OAFc Strategic Planning Session (March 18-19, 2004)

-Continuing to explore options for professional liability insurance

-Planning the Fifth Annual Free Clinic Conference

-Recruiting new members

-Advocating and promoting legislation concerning immunity in free clinic settings

In the next few weeks, the tobacco settlement budget will be reviewed by the Ohio legislature. With talk of cuts being made in the state budget, tobacco settle-

ment funds, including the Ohio Public Health Priorities Trust Fund, are at risk. These funds have been of great help to many of our member clinics and have enabled us to provide over 7,000 services to 3,600 uninsured pregnant women and children during State Fiscal Year 2003. These patients may not have had access to health care and medical services if these funds had not been available.

Our Executive Director, Amy Rohling, has been meeting with legislators in order to discuss the tobacco settlement budget and make sure that they know the value that free clinics provide. Your role is to continue to provide information to your state legislators

regarding the services your clinic provides to uninsured patients (and their constituents!).

As always, I continue to look forward to working with all of you in the coming months as we advocate for free clinics and the people we serve!

Lee Elmore, President



## OAFc BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Physicians Foundation)*

## THE RESULTS ARE IN.....

Thanks to all of you who worked so hard on the 2003 data collection project! We appreciate the time and effort put into collecting the information requested. This data will assist us in providing accurate information to legislators and other potential funders and partners regarding the value of services that you provide to uninsured Ohioans.

In 2003, members of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics:

-Served over **34,000 unduplicated** patients

-Provided a total of **80,357 visits** including **55,168** medical care visits, **7,129** dental visits, **7,079** specialty visits, and **10,981** mental health visits

**(Continued on page 4)**

## FREE CLINICS IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE

### Legislation to Cover Minor Procedures Moves through the Ohio Senate

Working with the Ohio Association of Free Clinics, Senator Ron Amstutz (R-Wooster) recently introduced legislation (Senate Bill 124) that would change the definition of surgery in order for minor procedures such as the removal of a splinter or the treatment of blisters to be performed and covered under Ohio's Charitable Immunity Laws. Senate Bill 124 (SB 124) has received three committee hearings to date and will soon proceed (hopefully) to a vote in the Senate. The bill will then go to the Ohio House of Representatives where the process will be repeated.

Please contact your state senator to voice your support of SB 124! If you have any questions regarding SB 124 or contacting your senator, please contact Amy Rohling at 614-221-6494 or [arohling@ohiofreeclinics.org](mailto:arohling@ohiofreeclinics.org).

## DRUG DONATION PROGRAM READY TO GO

### Facilitating Prescription Drug Donations

#### History

In the 124<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2001-2002), Representative Schuring (R-Canton) introduced House Bill 221 in response to a constituent who wanted to donate his wife's prescription medications after her death. The husband was not able to make such a donation under current law.

House Bill 221, which was signed into law on January 6, 2003 and will become effective on April 7, 2004, created a prescription drug donation program for medications that are donated in their "original sealed and tamper-evident unit dose packaging". The Ohio Board of Pharmacy was charged with establishing rules that describe how these drugs may be donated as well as to whom they may be dispensed. Because of concerns about safe storage and tampering, the rules created for House Bill 221 only allows drugs that "have been in the possession of a licensed health-care professional and not in the possession of the ultimate user" to be donated. Therefore, the program will most likely rely on local relationships among nursing homes, hospitals, nonprofit clinics and pharmacies in order to be successful.

#### Eligibility and Other Details

The rules for the program state that "a pharmacy, hospital or nonprofit clinic that elects to participate in the drug repository program must determine if a person is eligible to receive drugs."

A person must meet the following requirements to become eligible: 1.) Is a resident of Ohio, and 2.) Has no active third party prescription drug reimbursement coverage; or, 3.) Is a patient of a nonprofit clinic.

#### Projected Costs

There are no federal or state funds allocated to this program. According to the rules, "a pharmacy, hospital or a nonprofit clinic may charge the recipient of a donated drug a maximum of 200% of the Medicaid professional dispensing fee to cover restocking and dispensing costs".

#### Status

House Bill 221 will become effective on 4/7/04. The program will be implemented at the local level by entities interested in organizing the coordination. No funding is available for administration of the program. If your free clinic is interested in facilitating a prescription drug donation program, please contact Amy Rohling at the Ohio Association of Free Clinics.

## COLORECTAL CANCER: PREVENTABLE, TREATABLE, BEATABLE



In an effort to increase the public's awareness of the second leading cause of cancer death among men and women, the US Senate passed a resolution in 1999 making March National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Just as the red ribbon has come to symbolize AIDS and pink represents breast cancer, the blue star symbol, introduced this year, will now signify the fight against colon cancer. The symbol is a star, representing the eternal memory of those people whose lives have already been lost to the disease and the shining hope for a future free of colon cancer. The star is merged with the more common ribbon for awareness theme and assumes a human shape. This symbol is a sign of common commitment to prevention, treatment and finding a cure.

Colorectal cancer is the nation's second-leading cause of cancer-related deaths for men and women, taking more than 56,000 lives each year. More than 150,000 people are diagnosed with the disease each year. Having regular screening prevents colorectal cancer by finding precancerous polyps. Removing those polyps prevents the development of colorectal cancer.

Approximately 146,940 new cases of colorectal cancer (73,620 men and 73,320 women) will be diagnosed in 2004, and a projected 56,730 people (28,320 men and 28,410 women) will die from the disease. Early detection is the key factor in beating this cancer. By knowing the signs and symptoms of this disease, as well as specific risk factors, this disease can be up to 90% curable.

Blue Star Lapel Pins can be ordered through the American Cancer Society (ACS) at 1-866-227-7914.

Information provided by the Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation ([www.preventcancer.org/colorectal/](http://www.preventcancer.org/colorectal/)) and the Colon Cancer Alliance ([www.ccalliance.org](http://www.ccalliance.org)).

### CLINICS PATCH SAFETY NET

The Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved recently published an article entitled "Free Clinics Helping to Patch the Safety Net". A number of Ohio free clinics participated in the survey that was used to write the article. The following is an excerpt from the article's abstract:

"For the uninsured and underinsured with few funds, there are a limited number of health care options. To assist in filling this hole in the safety net, hundreds of free or volunteer-based clinics have been established across the country. Although these clinics have existed for years, little data on them exist...Findings from this survey show that, in a single year, these 106 clinics provided...services to over 200,000 patients, suggesting that free clinics nationwide are caring for a substantial number of our nation's uninsured....Given the lack of options for the uninsured and underinsured, free clinics deserve continued recognition, support, and assistance from policy makers, health care providers, and the philanthropic community."

### UNDERSTANDING DRUG MAZE

The Ohio Association of Free Clinics, as a part of the Prescription Drugs Work Group convened by the Ohio United Way, recently co-wrote a white paper entitled "Increasing Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs". This document provides a description and status report on current and proposed federal and state programs that provide access to more affordable prescription drugs.

The programs are an interesting mix of private and public options to provide prescription drugs free or at discounts to the elderly, disabled, and poor who either do not have insurance coverage, or who do not have enough coverage to allow them to obtain needed medicine.

The Prescription Drugs Work Group is a comprised of foundations, pharmaceutical companies and health and advocacy organizations working to educate the public and policymakers on ways to increase access to affordable prescription drugs. To obtain a copy of the white paper, please go to [www.ohiofreeclinics.org](http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org) or contact Amy Rohling at (614) 221-6494.

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

- 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



## OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FREE CLINICS

65 Jefferson Avenue  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

### Dates to Remember:

**May 10-16, 2004**

Cover the Uninsured Week

**May 15, 2004**

Starting a Free Clinic Workshop

**October 10-12, 2004**

Fifth Annual Ohio Free Clinic Conference

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AMY ROHLING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

[www.ohiofreeclinics.org](http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org)

### The Results Are in....(continued from page 1)

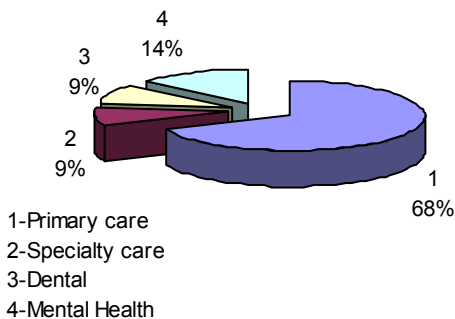
-Dispensed **97,930** prescriptions

-Utilized over **3,200** volunteers and **124** paid staff

The total value of medical care provided in 2003 by O AFC clinics was over **\$22 million!** This means that, on average, every dollar invested in free clinics brought in **\$3.50** worth of care to uninsured patients.

These statistics really help us to "tell the story" of free clinics and support our claims that O AFC members provide essential, cost-effective services to the poor and uninsured.

**Services Provided by O AFC Clinics**



**Free Clinic Funding Sources**

30%	Local Foundations
22%	Federal Government
14%	Individual Donors
11%	State Government
6%	United Way
6%	Special Events
4%	Others
3%	Local Government
3%	Corporate Donors
1%	Clinic Fees