

Access

The newsletter of the Primary Care & Hope Clinic

Vol. 1, No. 4

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

October 3, 2005

*From
the
Administrator's
Desk*

Dear friends,

The arrival of summer brought much uncertainty to the Primary Care & Hope Clinic. Many patients were anxious about impending changes to TennCare and were looking to us for help and answers.

We were fearful of being overwhelmed with new patients and being forced to turn some away, so we were looking to the state for help and answers. This help did arrive in late September with the notification the clinic will be awarded an endowment grant of \$180,000. It is a Healthcare Safety Net Primary Care Expansion of Services Grant; this project is funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee. The funds are to be utilized to provide healthcare to the uninsured residents of our community.

The clinic has also spent the last month caring for several evacuees from the recent hurricanes. Many of these individuals have been referred from local emergency rooms and shelters.

The needs of these individuals have also been addressed by some unexpected funding. The Stones River Regional IPA, a group that represents 246 Rutherford County physicians, presented the Primary Care & Hope Clinic with a check for \$25,000. The funds have been earmarked for the victims of the hurricanes and others that are uninsured.

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State awards \$180,000 grant to aid safety net

Donation of \$25,000 also to help evacuees

A state safety-net grant of \$180,000 will help the Primary Care & Hope Clinic to provide services to the uninsured, including those who no longer are receiving TennCare benefits, state officials announced last month.

This project is funded under an agreement with the state of Tennessee.

The clinic last month also received a \$25,000 donation from the Stones River Regional Independent Physician Association to provide medical services to evacuees from hurricanes Katrina and Rita and those who have lost TennCare coverage.

Lisa Pewitt, clinic administrator, said the grant and donation "will have a huge effect" as the clinic works to provide medical care to uninsured.

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MTSU students to assist clinic as volunteer initiative continues

Orientation sessions for 12 MTSU student volunteers are in the planning stages, Primary Care & Hope Clinic officials said.

Courtney Corlew, marketing director, and Cameron Miller, an administration assistant, recently represented the clinic at the university's Volunteer Fair. Both Corlew and Miller also are MTSU students.

"The Volunteer Fair proved to be very beneficial for PC & HC," Corlew

said. "The clinic is trying to branch out and attend as many of these functions as we can."

Corlew said the new student volunteers have majors in the health field.

Angie Murray, office operations manager, said she and Lisa Pewitt, clinic administrator, will conduct the orientation sessions for the students, probably in mid-October.

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Community Volunteer

Grant

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Pewitt said the Stones River Regional IPA donation is the first to a nonprofit organization of which she is aware.

The physicians association coordinates managed-care services for its members with insurance companies, hospitals, employees and patient groups, representatives said.

State officials Sept. 30 announced \$5.7 million in safety-net grants to 60 primary-care facilities across the state. The Eagleville Clinic in Rutherford County received a \$50,000 grant.

Gov. Phil Bredesen, in a release, said, "Ultimately our state's solution to the needs of the uninsured has to be a community solution that includes programs offered by community clinics, faith-based organizations and advocacy groups as well as the state Department of Health and other government agencies."

The one-time grants of up to \$180,000 went to community primary-care facilities to provide medical services to uninsured adults.

Pewitt said the state safety-net grant requires the Primary Care & Hope Clinic to provide medical services to 1,500 uninsured adults during the

current fiscal year, which began July 1.

She said the clinic is using a tracking system that requires each uninsured patient to meet with a clinic representative before becoming eligible for services.

Former recipients of TennCare also will benefit from the donation from the physicians association.

Association officials, in a release, said the group "understands and applauds the work done by the Primary Care & Hope Clinic in responding to the medical needs of the victims of hurricanes Katrina and Rita as well as those patients who are on TennCare or completely uninsured.

Pewitt, said, so far, the clinic has provided services to at least 10 evacuees.

"We had a couple referred from the hospital," she said. "We haven't had a lot."

Clinic officials said, however, that they expect the Mobile Health Unit to provide medical services to some of the evacuees who now are enrolled in area schools.

More than 100 evacuees have enrolled in Murfreesboro and Rutherford County schools, officials of the systems said.

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Administrator: Lisa Pewitt, MSN, APRN, BC

Marketing Director: Courtney Corlew

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*The Primary Care & Home Clinic
is an agency of United Way of Rutherford County.*

Staff profile:

Murray fills many roles at clinic

Angie Murray has a difficult time describing her typical day at the Primary Care & Hope Clinic.

Murray, office operations manager for the clinic, is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operation of all aspects of the clinic that do not involve direct patient care.

Murray may have a difficult time describing a typical day because Lisa Pewitt, clinic administrator, said, "She's that employee that seems to be taking care of all different types of situations and issues."

"She is the voice on the answering machine, procures the supplies needed and does every job in between," Pewitt said.

When you have a small number of employees, Pewitt said, "it is always good to have people that are eager and willing to do all kinds of 'odd jobs.'"

Murray said during her 10 years at the clinic she has done every job at the clinic, but see patients as a nurse practitioner.

But that is not out of the realm of possibility for the future. Murray is only one semester away from being a registered nurse.

Even when she completes her R.N. training, she said, "I'd like to stay at the clinic."

Murray, 31, a native of Murfreesboro and graduate of Riverdale High School, always has worked in health-related jobs: "It's just an interest I've had."

Murray and Shane Culver, the clinic's chief financial officer, had been working together at a private health care firm when Culver came to the clinic to work as office manager.

Culver called her about a job opening at the clinic, and Murray took the job. At the time, she and Culver were among only five employees at the clinic. Now the clinic has more than 20 employees.

Murray began work at the clinic as a receptionist. Pewitt said Murray then became referral coordinator and provided direct patient care before she succeeded Culver as office manager.

Pewitt said Murray's long tenure is an asset to the clinic. "She seems to know everything about the daily operations of the clinic."

But Pewitt said Murray's contri-



Angie Murray

seeking medical services from the Primary Care & Hope Clinic.

She said she has been devoting four hours each day to those interviews to help Woods reduce the backlog of requests.

Pewitt said Murray also has been helping with the clinic's volunteer program and helping patients to complete applications for prescription assistance from drug companies.

"Angie is very mission-minded and focused on the mission of the clinic," Pewitt said.

Murray said she likes to work at the clinic because "I enjoy the people. I enjoy what we do – helping those who are less fortunate."

Murray said the Primary Care & Hope Clinic provides a great number of services to the community, particularly to the medically underserved and the uninsured.

"I don't know what some people would do" without these services.

Murray is looking forward to the expanded services that will be available when the clinic moves to its planned new building in the city's Gateway Center.

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"She's that employee that seems to be taking care of all different types of situations and issues."

**— Lisa Pewitt,
clinic administrator**

Murray put her nursing training at Motlow State Community College "on hold" because of the birth of her first child, Kaylee, 19 months ago, and she is to deliver her second child, another daughter, in November.

"I would like to finish my R.N.," she said.

Murray said hopes to re-enroll in nursing training as soon as possible, perhaps even as early as in the spring semester.

Contributions are even greater: "She has an excellent relationship with the patients and remembers almost every patient's name on sight."

Murray is willing to do anything that needs to be done to provide patient care, Pewitt said.

Recently with the cutting of TennCare benefits for past enrollees, Murray has been helping the clinic's social worker, Charmaine Woods, with interviews of uninsured persons who are

Program profile:

TennCare cuts swell ranks of uninsured

TennCare benefits have ended for thousands in Rutherford County, swelling the ranks of the uninsured seeking medical services at the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, clinic officials said last month.

At one time, the clinic had an 80-20 ratio in regard to insured and uninsured patients with the insured patients being in the majority, said Angie Murray, the clinic's office operations manager.

"Now it's closer to being equal," Murray said.

Murray recently has been helping Charmaine Woods, the clinic's social worker, in processing applications from the uninsured for clinic services.

Murray is devoting four hours each day to that task, but Woods said she expects the backlog of applications to continue through November.

The goal of the clinic is to reduce the wait to no more than two weeks, Woods said.

Processing of each application takes around an hour, Murray and Woods said.

Uninsured patients have to provide proof of identity, proof of residence in Rutherford County and proof of household income for all household members to qualify for services from the clinic. Each patient's file is reviewed every year to determine any changes in income or assets, Woods said.

Woods said that information is necessary to determine where on the sliding scale of payments for services the applicant would be.

Woods said the meeting with the applicant also is an opportunity to assess other patient needs and to help the application apply for free or reduced-price prescriptions.

"We are trying to steer people in the right direction," Woods said.

Murray said the medication-assistance programs are also becoming more difficult to administer with the participating drug companies.

"So many more people are applying for free drugs," Murray said.

Although the TennCare rush could end in December, Woods said, it may last longer since the state's medical-



Charmaine Woods

insurance program also is planning to change its prescription policy at the end of the year.

Murray and Woods noted that those who are insured include persons who have jobs, but who do not have access to health coverage.

Either the employer doesn't offer health insurance, Murray said, or the person "just can't afford the health insurance that they're offered."

Despite the need for increased services for the uninsured, Murray said no plans are under way at the clinic to limit those services.

"We haven't reached that point yet," she said.

Murray

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"We're so excited," she said. "We just want to get over there."

Murray said she knows that the clinic will face a lot of challenges at it prepares to make the move, but she said the growth of the clinic since she began work there still amazes her.

Ten years ago, she said she would not have believed "the clinic is where we are now."

One of Murray's goals for moving into the new building is to establish a system for electronic medical records for the clinic.

"That will save time and money."

Her personal goals include finishing her nursing training, but she acknowledges that with her work and her family she does not have much time for outside interests.

"It's mommy time after work," she said.

Her husband Larry, but better known as "Cubby," is an electrician.

Murray said she hopes that at some point in the future her daughters will be volunteers at the clinic, but she noted that Kaylee still is a little young to even visit the clinic.

"She hasn't reached the point where she can come and be calm."

Pewitt said Murray has something of a calming influence on the clinic. "When the clinic gets a little crazy, she seems to always know what is going on."

Pewitt said Murray goes about her daily tasks with a smile and a laugh.

"Angie has a great big laugh, and you will often hear that laugh if you are in the clinic," Pewitt said.

"I hope I never have a time when I am working at the clinic and do not hear that laugh."

Volunteer profile:

Nunnery serves as staff mentor

Sometimes Lisa Pewitt, administrator of the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, has a sense of déjà vu when one of the clinic's volunteer physicians is working down the hall from her office.

"I see Dr. (James) Nunnery and time seems to have stood still, his demeanor and appearance are the same, and it takes me back 20 years," Pewitt said.

When Pewitt began her nursing career in the surgical unit at Middle Tennessee Medical Center nearly 20 years ago, Nunnery was a practicing general surgeon in the unit.

Pewitt said Nunnery impressed her both with his skills as a surgeon and his willingness to teach.

"As a newly graduated nurse, I had a great deal to learn and a short time to learn in the fast moving daily operations of the unit," she said. "I remember he was always willing to share his wealth of knowledge and never made me feel insignificant."

Pewitt said the Primary Care & Hope Clinic is fortunate now to have Nunnery, who retired two years ago, as a volunteer to work with the clinic's nurse practitioners and nurses.

"The opportunity to work with and learn from doctors with his knowledge and expertise is a tremendous opportunity," she said.

Nunnery is quick to return the compliment.

He said Pewitt and the other nurse practitioners at the clinic "do the hard work. They take care of the patients."

Volunteers help to make their jobs a little easier, Nunnery said.

"These (nurse practitioners) are the people that make that clinic go," he said. "They seldom get patted on the back."

Nunnery provides consulting services for the clinic and also performs minor surgical procedures.

Pewitt said these services are a real boon to the clinic and its uninsured patients



Dr. James Nunnery

"If the patients were required to pay the normal rate for minor office procedures by a general surgeon the cost would be much greater," she said. "Because Dr. Nunnery volunteers his time, the clinic is able to offer minor office procedures at a much reduced cost for the patient."

Pewitt said this is a tremendous savings for patients who have limited funds.

Nunnery said a lot of misconceptions exist in regard to the uninsured patients who use the clinic's services.

his first work with the clinic was through referrals to his office.

He said such referrals can be beneficial because the physician is working in a familiar setting. "It's a lot more efficient."

Part of Nunnery's consulting work now with the clinic is helping patients to get such referrals to other practitioners.

He said the local medical community is supportive of the clinic's work, providing both direct financial contributions and the opportunities for referrals to their offices.

The volunteer physicians are not just "folks who show up at the clinic," Nunnery said. Referrals to physicians' offices are important to the clinic's mission.

Nunnery noted, however, that the planned new building for the clinic in the Gateway Center will allow the provision of even greater services.

More space is important, he said, as is the design of the space.

"The current offices were not specifically designed for a medical clinic," Nunnery said. The clinic needs

"I have some skills that are useful. I want to use those skills to help other folks."

**— Dr. James Nunnery,
clinic volunteer**

"A lot of these people are working people with no health insurance," Nunnery said. "They are not indigent. They are hard-working members of our community who cannot afford health insurance."

The Primary Care & Hope Clinic provides a valuable service to the community, Nunnery said. "A lot of people have poor access to health care."

Nunnery, a native of West Tennessee, practiced general surgery in Murfreesboro for 25 years, and he said

better access for patients and more visibility for patients.

Often patients only learn about the clinic through word of mouth, he said.

Why does Nunnery volunteer at the clinic?

"I think all of us who have benefited from our society, our community, need to give back to the community," he said

"I have some skills that are useful. I want to use those skills to help other folks."



Cameron Miller, left, and Courtney Corlew stand with the booth they staffed at MTSU's Volunteer Fair.

Students

(Continued from Page 1)

"We are now trying to assess the students' skills and qualifications in order to find them a position here at the clinic," Murray said. "We want to ensure a beneficial and enjoyable volunteer experience for each student."

Murray said the orientation sessions will provide an overview of clinic operations and what tasks the student volunteers will be undertaking.

Corlew said events such as the Volunteer Fair help the Primary Care & Hope Clinic to get its name out to as many areas of the community as possible.

Participation in such events also is part of the clinic's efforts to recruit more volunteers for the clinic.

Persons who want to volunteer their time and services to the Primary Care & Hope Clinic also can now do so directly through an interactive volunteer form available on the clinic's Web site.

The new interactive form at <http://www.hopeclinc.org/Volunteer.html> allows health care providers to sign up for specific shifts of duty at the clinic and also provides lists of other clinic staffing and volunteer needs for those interested.

The interactive form also allows interested persons to state their interests and skills, so they can be matched with clinic needs.

Officials noted that aside from health care providers, federal privacy regulations for medical information do limit who can work at the clinic itself.

But Leslie Akins, chairman of the clinic's board of directors, said she hopes schools, businesses, churches and other groups will "adopt" the clinic on a month-by-month basis to help it serve its mission to provide services to the uninsured and medically underserved in the community.

<http://www.hopeclinc.org/volunteer.html>

Desk

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These blessings along with our recent gift from the city of 2.5 acres in the Gateway and the Christy – Houston Foundation Grant is allowing the clinic to continue in our mission and will help us to meet

the health care needs of many people who live and work in Rutherford County.

We appreciate your support and all the support we receive in Murfreesboro and Rutherford County. Thank you for your

friendship and dedication to those in our community who are less fortunate.

With Gratitude,
Lisa Pewitt, MSN, FNP, BC
Administrator

Only closing remains for land donation

Planning continues for Gateway facility

All that remains for transfer of 2.5 acres of land in the Gateway Center to the Primary Care & Hope Clinic is the closing, Lisa Pewitt, system administrator, said last month.

"That's the last phase," Pewitt said.

The Primary Care & Hope Clinic will hold title to the land that will be the site of a new building to house the clinic, the Dispensary of Hope and Community Helpers.

Pewitt and Murfreesboro Mayor Tommy Bragg signed the final agreement after the City Council gave final approval to the donation Sept. 15.

The agreement did include some shifting of the configuration of the land to allow for a road connection to the Old Nashville Highway, Pewitt said.

The city's land donation in the

northwest corner of the Gateway Center still is 2.5 acres, she said. "It's just shaped a little differently."

Pewitt said the new building actually will front on a new street in the Gateway Center.

The agreement with the city includes a requirement that groundbreaking for the new building has to come within three years, but "that's no problem," Pewitt said.

Groundbreaking now is scheduled in the spring of 2006.

Pewitt said the clinic board also is considering formation of a team to help with the internal planning for the new facility.

The council unanimously endorsed the land donation, the first in the Gateway Center, for the new facility July 14.

The Gateway Center, west of downtown Murfreesboro and east of the new Manson Pike interchange on I-24,

will be the site of the new Middle Tennessee Medical Center and the new Murfreesboro Medical Clinic.

Officials of the Christy-Houston Foundation announced July 20 a \$3 million grant for construction of the new facility. The Christy-Houston Foundation was created in 1986 with proceeds from the sale of Rutherford Hospital, now Middle Tennessee Medical Center.

Pewitt said the 18,500 square foot facility will provide 20 patient rooms for the clinic. The clinic's current site on South Church Street has 5,000 square feet and nine patient rooms.

Construction is projected to take nine months.

Mike Picklesimer of Murfreesboro is the architect for the project. He works with Hart, Freeland and Roberts, a Nashville architectural firm. The Wiser Co. of Murfreesboro has donated civil engineering services for the project.

<http://www.hopeclnc.org/Gateway.html>



Information about making financial contributions or donations of services to the Gateway to Hope campaign is available by contacting Courtney Corlew, clinic marketing director, at (615) 893-9390, ext. 230, or by e-mail at GatewayToHope@hopeclnc.org

Day of Caring begins United Way drive

(Editor's Note: Information furnished by United Way.)

On Tuesday, Sept. 13, more than 200 local volunteers rolled up their sleeves to spend a portion of their workday assisting local health and human service agencies supported by the United Way.

The teams participated in a wide variety of projects from painting and landscaping to delivering meals to senior citizens in the community.

Jan Beard and Cathi Mitchell, the volunteer co-chairs of the event, said the Day of Caring is an effective way to spread the message of United Way into the community.

"The Day of Caring provides community members with hands-on exposure to the needs that exist in Rutherford and Cannon counties, as well as the tremendous work that goes on at the great agencies supported by United Way," Beard said.

Mitchell added, "Each time someone experiences first-hand how effective these agencies are in providing services, that person has a greater understanding of how much good their gifts to United Way accomplish."

United Way continues to care for our community and will continue to be inspired by and grateful to the following organizations for their extraordinary support during the Day of Caring and all year long.

Participants included:

Alexander Automotive Family, AmSouth Bank, Boys & Girls Clubs of Rutherford County, Bridgestone Firestone, Cannon County 4-H Clubs, Cannon Co. Senior Citizens, Cardinal Health, Cavalry Bank, Chromalox, General Mills-Pillsbury, Ingram Book Group.



Kohl's, Kappa Alpha Psi, Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corp., Middle Tennessee Medical Center, MTSU College of Continuing Education & Distance Learning, Mid-South Bank, Publix, Redell Honda, Reeves-Sain Drug Store, Regions Bank, State Farm Insurance and SunTrust Bank.

Sponsors for the 2005 Day of Caring included:

Bank of America, Cavalry Banking, Middle Tennessee Medical Center, MidSouth Bank, SunTrust Bank, Yates Services, Andy Womack – State Farm Insurance, Bill Taylor's Bushido School of Karate, Dow Smith Contracting Company, Inc., General Mills/Pillsbury, Heritage Farms Dairy, Ingram Book Group and Rutherford Bank & Trust, a Greene County Bank.

Pacesetters

During the months of July and August, many local companies were already hard at work conducting employee campaigns for United Way. These companies "set the pace" for the entire fall campaign and we are grateful for their support.

By conducting their campaign before the traditional kick-off on September 13, and by encouraging a 10 percent increase in giving and 75 percent participation among their employees, the following companies became Pacesetters in 2005:

Rutherford County employees, Midsouth Bank, First Bank, AmSouth Bank, SunTrust, First Tennessee, Caval-

ry Bank, Fifth Third Bank, Crye-Leike in Smyrna, Alexander Automotive Dealerships, Wal-Mart, Target, JC Penney, Sam's Club.

Murfreesboro Electric, Cannon Co. School Board, Guaranty Trust, Bank of the South, Rutherford Bank and Trust, Hodge Manufacturing, UPS, Consolidated Utility District, Publix, US Bank.

The following United Way agencies also conducted Pacesetter campaigns among their staff:

Smyrna-LaVergne Food Bank, Child Advocacy Center, Community Helpers, Legal Aid Society, Cannon Co. REACH Program, Special Kids, Domestic Violence Program, Primary Care & Hope Clinic, MCHRA, and United Way.

Special thanks to Chuck Lewis of First Bank for making the Pacesetter campaign such a success by bringing in 11 new companies.

Hurricane response

To aid local victims displaced to Middle Tennessee by Hurricane Katrina, turn to your local United Way.

Your donation to United Way during this tragedy will aid individuals using services provided by the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Rutherford County Food Bank, Smyrna-La Vergne Food Bank, West Main Mission, Primary Care & Hope Clinic, Boys and Girls Clubs of Rutherford County, Primary Care and Hope Clinic, Rutherford County Schools Indigent Children's Fund, Murfreesboro City Schools Indigent Children's Fund and many more.

Thank you for making an investment in what matters – to your fellow citizens.

New Web address:

<http://www.uwrutherford.org>