

Access

The newsletter of the Primary Care & Hope Clinic

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Letter from the Board Chair

Life is full of excitement, and alas, reality. My family recently celebrated our first daughter's marriage and with all of the joyful celebration comes the realities of clean-up, bills and the strong emotions of change and new beginnings.

I have reflected upon how difficult change can be to cope with and manage. Change can be both exhilarating and frightening, and the Primary Care & Hope Clinic is now facing just such a time.

We are trying to get a handle upon the largest disenrollment of TennCare patients in Tennessee's history, the changing revenue picture and the demands of the newly uninsured, while celebrating the unprecedented generosity of this community that will enable us to provide healthcare to our vulnerable residents.

Our clinic, staff and board members are facing many decisions, but the pervading thought during each discussion is how our patients and community can best be served. We must continually consider what the financial, professional, ethical and spiritual effect will be when we plan for the new building, re-location and institution or cessation of certain services.

I'm not sure that we have ever needed the community's prayers more than at this time, which is so critical to our future as a community ministry and professional entity.

So, while we celebrate the bounty-
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Clinic provides links for online donations

Persons who want to make donations to the Primary Care & Hope Clinic now may do so directly online with their credit cards, clinic officials announced last month.

"This has been something that people have wanted to do," said Leslie Akins, chair of the clinic's board of directors.

Under a working arrangement with MakeaDonation.com, a New Jersey-based company, the donor's credit-card

information that goes online is secure, clinic officials said.

Access to the secure donations site is available from the clinic's home page, <http://www.hopeclinc.org>, and the Donations section of the clinic's Web site: <http://www.hopeclinc.org/donations.html>. A direct link to the secure site is available at <http://www.hopeclinc.org/webdonation.html>.

Shane Culver, chief financial officer
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TennCare changes affect uninsured-patient count

Changes in the state's TennCare program that limit eligibility for benefits have helped to increase the number of uninsured seeking medical services from the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, clinic officials said last month.

Since TennCare disenrollment began in August, the clinic has 300 fewer TennCare assigned enrollees seeking services, clinic officials said. Since the same period last year, the number of TennCare assigned enrollees has declined by 585.

"The disenrolled adults are still sick and need the same health care services that they needed when they had TennCare," said Shane Culver, chief financial officer for the clinic. "The only difference is that they do not have any coverage to help pay for their services."

Culver said many TennCare recipients had been seeing other health providers, but now that they've lost those benefits their providers "will not discount services and the patients can-

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Community Volunteer

[http://www.hopeclinc.org/
webdonation.html](http://www.hopeclinc.org/webdonation.html)

Donations

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for the clinic, said, "I am very excited about the ability to accept online donations. Many individuals make regular donations to the clinic, and this is an easy and convenient way to do that."

Donors will have three options in making contributions. They can make general contributions, memorial contributions and tribute contributions.

"I think it's another way to help people who have wanted to make a donation in honor of someone," Akins said.

Akins said she also hopes that donors will take advantage of the new capability for online donations during

the holiday season and as the deadline for income-tax deductions at the end of the year nears.

Online donors will receive thank-you notes and acknowledgement letters for tax purposes.

The Primary Care & Hope Clinic is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Clinic officials are organizing a fund-raising campaign, Gateway to Hope, to help furnish and equip the new facility planned for construction in the city's Gateway Center.

They also plan to allow donors to designate credit-card donations for that purpose.

"That is my hope," Akins said.

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

Staff profile:

Smotherman gives to community

Beth Smotherman not only sees herself as having a job at the Primary Care & Hope Clinic but also as providing a community service.

"I like helping the clinic and making sure everything runs like it should," said Smotherman, who is the director of clinical operations for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic.

An employee of the clinic for five years, Smotherman is in charge of training and managing the clinical staff, ordering supplies, quality assurance and scheduling the Mobile Health Unit.

Smotherman, a licensed practical nurse, received the promotion to director of clinical operations last year.

Shane Culver, chief financial officer for the clinic, said Smotherman does an excellent job. "She is well liked by both patients and co-workers."

Culver said Smotherman "helps keep the clinic running smoothly."

A native of Cannon County, Smotherman, 26, completed her LPN training at the Tennessee Technology Center in McMinnville.

She has spent her entire nursing career at the Primary Care & Hope Clinic.

Why did she become a nurse? "That's always what I wanted to do. I like helping people."

As a religious person, Smotherman said, "I wanted to be involved in something that was giving."

Although she now spends most of her time in management, Smotherman said she remains involved in patient care. Culver said Smotherman is in-

involved in patient assessment, and Smotherman said she fills in for staff members who are absent.

Part of Smotherman's duties is to approve "work-ins," patients who seeking medical services without an appointment.

She said she also is in phone contact with many of the clinic's patients.

Smotherman said the clinic is a necessity for many of these patients.

"I think people need the Hope Clinic," she said. "They have no insurance, and they have nowhere else to go."

Smotherman noted a lot of people have no medical care and no health insurance. Even if the company where they work provides health insurance, "they may not be able to afford it."

With the planned construction of a new building in the city's Gateway Center, the clinic will be able to serve more patients, Smotherman said. "We really don't have enough patient rooms."

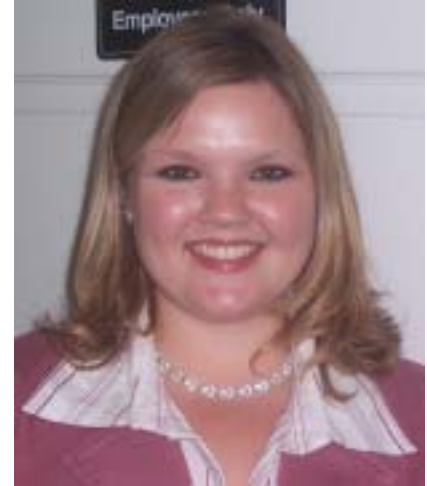
The new building also will mean new equipment and allow for a more efficient operation, she said.

Smotherman said she hopes the expansion also will mean more volunteers and support for the clinic.

"We get a lot of donations from the community," she said. "We are appreciative for that."

Away from work, most of Smotherman's free time is spent with her daughters, Tori, 6; and Katie, 3.

She said Tori already is involved



Beth Smotherman

in cheerleading and gymnastics.

"We go to a lot of ball games," Smotherman said, and do a lot of shopping.

She said her daughters do not yet have an interest in health care – as least for humans. "Tori says she is going to be a model; Katie wants to doctor dogs."

Among her personal goals, Smotherman said is to become a registered nurse.

Work on that may begin as early as January.

Smotherman said, with the additional training and education, she plans to continue to work in management more than patient care.

And she continues to like the role she can play at the Primary Care & Hope Clinic.

"I like the mission," she said. "I like helping those in need."

Letter

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ful gifts that have been bestowed upon us, we recognize the serious responsibilities that these gifts hold. The Primary Care & Hope Clinic has never taken our community's good will for granted, and we continually strive

to be good stewards of our resources.

Please pray for our entire staff, board members and patients as we navigate through these uncertain and exciting times. We are carefully embracing our "new beginnings" while trying to hold on to the

beliefs that have sustained us, established credibility and earned our community's faith.

With regards,
Leslie Akins,
board chair

Clinic's CPA brings unique view

Dave Guenther has a unique perspective on the Primary Care & Hope Clinic. He hasn't been there from Day One, but almost.

Guenther, a certified public accountant, has been auditing the clinic's books since 45 days after the clinic opened.

"I'm still here," he said recently.

Guenther, whose CPA business is based in Goodlettsville, was at the clinic preparing the annual financial statement for the clinic's board of directors meeting Oct. 28.

He recalls when the Rutherford County Primary Care Clinic was a one-woman operation at an office on East College Street. "She did it all."

Guenther began work for the clinic when it still was under the auspices of the Mid-Cumberland Community Health Agency.

An acquaintance was doing accounting work for that agency and made Guenther aware of the creation of the community health care facility in Murfreesboro.

The clinic then moved to Dow Street and to its current facility on South Church Street. Planning is under way for a new facility in the city's Gateway Center.

"It's satisfying to see an organization continue to grow and meet their challenges," Guenther said.

Guenther saw the clinic grow into an independent non-profit organization in 1996 and watches it continue to deal with the challenges of the state's Medicaid program, TennCare.

Guenther recalled the challenges that the clinic faced when the TennCare managed-care organization from which it received fee-for-service reimbursement essentially went into bankruptcy.

He said the clinic suffered financially as a result of Xantus' difficulties.

"They provided a lot of valid services to their patients for which they were unable to collect," Guenther said. "It cost them. It really cost them."



Dave Guenther

Now because of disenrollment, the clinic is having "the loss of some of its reimbursing patient base because of TennCare."

The disenrolled patients have become uninsured and now are dependent on donations to help cover their health care cost, he said.

Although the clinic recently received a \$180,000 safety-net grant from the state to provide services for uninsured adults, Guenther asked, "Is the safety net going to be adequate for what they provide?"

facility will provide more patient rooms. "They will be able to see more patients."

"It's a delicate balancing act for the folks here," Guenther said. "I feel like the people here are on top of it."

Guenther said donations for the new building from the Christy-Houston Foundation, \$3 million, will require additional attention and analysis to ensure that funds are spent for their intended purpose. "It will be a little more work."

Guenther has been at work in Goodlettsville for the past 20 years and as a sole proprietor for the past eight years.

"We do the full range of things," he said. His customers include for-profit companies and "a long list of nonprofits."

Guenther resides in Hendersonville. He and his wife have two children, a son who attends Belmont College in Nashville and a daughter who attends Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green.

Shane Culver, chief financial officer for the clinic said, said Guenther has been supportive of the clinic.

He only prepares the audit once a year, but Culver said he is available throughout the year to provide in-

"It's satisfying to see an organization continue to grow and meet their challenges."

— Dave Guenther, CPA

He noted that the grant, which requires the clinic to serve 1,500 uninsured adults during the state's fiscal year, will provide only \$120 per patient served.

Guenther said the clinic also will have to keep track of the patients served as its expense.

Construction of a new facility, however, is a positive step for the clinic, he said.

The new facility will mean that operating costs will increase, but the

formation to assist the clinic's operation.

"He believes in our mission," she said.

Guenther commended the clinic for working with limited resources to provide care for the county's indigent.

He also commended the community for its support of the clinic. Without that support, "they wouldn't be able to provide the care to the uninsured."

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TennCare

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not afford to pay full price for services.”

The clinic has experienced an overwhelming demand from uninsured persons, including former TennCare recipients, who are trying to qualify for services from the clinic, officials said.

In the most recent quarter of clinic operations, July through September, the clinic had 2,309 persons receiving TennCare benefits. That compares to 2,609 in June 2005 and 2,894 in September 2004.

The number of TennCare patient visits also has declined. In the most recent quarter, the clinic had a total of 2,070 TennCare patient visits. That compares with 2,848 TennCare patient visits during the same period last year.

The percentage of uninsured patients at the clinic also is increasing, officials said.

In the most recent quarter, 69 percent of the clinic’s patients were insured and 31 percent of the patients were uninsured. That compares to a 73-27 insured-uninsured ratio during the previous quarter and 78-22 insured-uninsured ratio during the same period last year.

The clinic recently received a \$180,000 safety-net grant from the state to help provide medical services to the uninsured.

The grant requires the clinic during the state fiscal year to provide medical services an additional 1,500 uninsured adults.

TennCare still provides full benefits to persons 21 and younger, but Culver said she doesn’t expect the balance of

CPA

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Guenther said he looks forward each year to presenting the financial statement to the clinic’s board of directors.

He said board members stay informed about the issues facing the clinic.

“They really care,” he said. “The board is the community.”

Primary Care & Hope Clinic Patient Numbers

	9/05	6/05	9/04
TennCare enrollment	2,309	2,609	2,894
TennCare visits	2,070	n/a	2,848
Percentage insured	69	73	78
Percentage uninsured	31	27	22

adult and younger patients to change because of the TennCare disenrollment.

“We continue to see the same percentage of children and adults,” she said.

Prior to the disenrollment that began in August, Rutherford County had a total of 30,372 persons receiving TennCare benefits at a monthly cost of \$16,134,648.

Appeals of disenrollment are continuing, and the total number of persons in Rutherford County who have lost TennCare benefits was not available at press time.

TennCare continues to provide coverage to 1.2 million Tennessee residents.

Gov. Phil Bredesen said last month, however, that TennCare, the state’s Medicaid program, apparently is not the solution to providing medical services to the uninsured in the state.

Bredesen noted a report from the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance that indicated that 83 percent of the 580,000 uninsured persons in the state have full-time jobs.

“The most surprising thing to me, so far, that the uninsured population is largely employed in permanent positions, which has got implications for really whether TennCare to address it in the future or whether you need to do

other kinds of things,” Bredesen said in a release.

State officials also announced last month that TennCare will receive up to an additional \$20 million in federal Medicaid funds because of improvements in risk-management arrangements with managed-care organizations that help to administer the TennCare program.

Under the revised risk-management arrangements, the managed-care organizations will assume some responsibility for paying patient costs, if they exceed the benefit payments that TennCare provides. The state had been assuming all risk for the costs.

TennCare Director J.D. Hickey said, in a release, “We have moved this program back to a level of risk-sharing that meets the federal government’s qualifications for full enhanced funding, and that is a tremendous accomplishment in the state’s efforts to turn this program around.”

Culver, CFO for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, said many issues remain in regard to the administration of TennCare, but the chief focus for the clinic is providing medical services.

“It is our mission to help the patient despite the problems with TennCare,” she said.

United Way to offer Menu of Caring

Several area restaurants will participate Tuesday, Nov. 15, in Menu of Caring, a benefit for the United Way of Rutherford and Cannon Counties.

Jim and Doris Demos are serving as co-chairs of the event.

"Restaurants have always been known for their support of community events," said Jim Demos, in a release. "Now we in Rutherford and Cannon counties have an opportunity to show our community that as a group, restaurants can really make a difference by participating in this year's Menu of Caring."

On Tuesday, Nov. 15, participating restaurants have agreed to donate from 3 to 10 percent of their sales to support the 43 United Way agencies and programs, including the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, in Rutherford and Cannon counties.

United Way also serves as a call center for the "2-1-1" organization for community information and referral.

The United Way fund-raising goal this year is \$2.4 million.

"A family experiences the loss of



their home due to a fire or natural disaster, a child has been physically or sexually abused, a senior needs some assistance to continue living at home; we all know these people," Doris Demos said, in a release.

"They are our family, friends, neighbors and customers, and the funds raised by Menu of Caring stay in Rutherford and Cannon counties to help provide needed services."

Menu of Caring is a great way to "shop Rutherford," "give Rutherford" and support the community, organizers said.

Participating restaurants include Anerson's Catfish & Grille, Bluesboro Rhythm & Blues Co., Cornerstone Cheese Cake & Gifts, Dairy Queen (Old Fort Park Way), Demos' Steak & Spaghetti House, Donut Country (Memorial Boulevard and Middle

Tennessee Boulevard), Fana tics (Double Tree Hotel), Heavenly Ham, Mike's Catfish, Puleo's Grille, Santa Fe Cattle Co.

Sir Pizza (East Main, Barfield Crescent and Memorial), Stones River Grill & Homecooking, The Clay Cup Cafe, Toot's, Wall Street and Zaxby's (Old Fort Parkway and Rutherford Boulevard) in Murfreesboro.

Karin's Kustard & Hamburgers, Legends Steakhouse, Omni Hut, Substation II and Toot's in Smyrna.

Sir Pizza and Tee Gees in La Vergne.

Jeanieo's Pizza and Suprema Pizza in Woodbury.

Any restaurant with questions about Menu of Caring and United Way or that wants more information on participating, may contact United Way at (615) 893-7303.

United Way kicked off the fund-raising campaign with its annual Day of Caring Sept. 13.

Chairman for the 2005-2006 United Way campaign is Kevin Smith of Edward Jones Investments.

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



Information about 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