

Access

The newsletter of the Primary Care & Hope Clinic

Vol. 1, No. 6

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

December 6, 2005

Happy Holidays



from
the board,
administration,
and staff
of the
Primary Care
& Hope Clinic

2005 proves eventful for clinic operations

With planning under way for a new building for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic in Murfreesboro's Gateway Center and continuing effects of the disenrollment of TennCare recipients, 2005 has been a significant year in the clinic's history, officials said last month.

"2005 will have a major impact on our future," said Lisa Terry, clinic administrator.

Terry said 2005 will have to compete with 1996, the year that the clinic became financially and administratively independent from the Mid-Cumberland Community Health Agency, as the most significant year in the clinic's history.

Without that action, she said, "We would not be in the clinic today."

Leslie Akins, chair of the clinic's board of directors, said 2005 may have the edge:

"2005 has to rank as the single most eventful year in our clinic's history for a myriad of reasons."

Those reasons include the clinic's building plans, the effects of TennCare disenrollment on the clinic and the level

of community support for the clinic's provision of services to the uninsured and medically underserved in the community, Akins said.

Akins and Terry noted that TennCare disenrollment has changed the ratio of insured and uninsured patients at the clinic.

"We're serving more uninsured patients that we ever have," Evans said.

Akins said: "For those individuals who found themselves suddenly uninsured (because of TennCare disenrollment), our clinic system was their only available option, and we were flooded with patient requests."

"Many of our sickest residents went from monthly medical care, multiple vital medications to a sudden loss of these – with no options available except our clinic," Akins said. "To say that this was a stressful time would be an understatement."

Terry said TennCare disenrollment has been a challenge for the clinic. "It has caused more chaos than typical."

But Terry noted that the clinic has
(Continued on Page 6)

On the Inside

State extends safety-net drug program:	Page 2
Gilbert helps to bridge cultural gaps:	Page 4
Clinic serves non-English speakers:	Page 5
Building program still on track:	Page 6
MTE Customers Care gives \$5,000:	Page 7
United Way drive nears halfway mark:	Page 8

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Tennessee officials urge TennCare safety-net use

Former TennCare recipients will receive extended prescription assistance as state officials urged those former recipients to take greater advantage of safety-net programs in place to assist them.

Gov. Phil Bredesen announced last month that the Rx Outreach program that provides 55 generic drugs as well as five addition medications will be available for six more months.

"Because of careful management and an outpouring of support from health care providers and community leaders across Tennessee, we believe we'll be able to extend many of the safety net's services for those coming off TennCare to further ease the transition to alternative health care sources," Bredesen said in a release.

Officials said those disenrolled who are eligible for Medicare will have access to the pharmacy assistance through February 2006.

The new Medicare drug benefit is scheduled to go into effect in January 2006.

All other disenrollees will receive pharmacy assistance through June 2006, the end of the state fiscal year.



More information about the assistance program is available through the Health Options Hotline at 1-888-486-9355.

State officials also said last month that more information about the state's safety-net program needs to go those who have lost TennCare benefits.

The Primary Care & Hope Clinic was one of 66 clinics across the state to receive grants to provide safety-net medical services to those losing TennCare benefits. The Primary Care & Hope Clinic received the maximum \$180,000 grant to provide services to 1,500 new adult patients.

The state Legislature appropriated \$104 million for the safety-net program.

Other components of the safety-net program include:

- Drug discount cards
- Funding to 20-mental health centers statewide
- Incentive payments to doctors who see a disproportionate share of TennCare enrollees.

Primary Care & Hope Clinic

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

'Tis the Season

...to remember family, friends,
and those in need of a helping hand
in the community

and a Reason...

...to share your time, talents, and skills

[http://www.hopeclnc.org/
volunteer.html](http://www.hopeclnc.org/volunteer.html)

...and whatever financial assistance
you can provide

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

with the
Primary Care
& Hope Clinic.

Happy Holidays

Staff profile:

Gilbert provides cultural bridge

Elsa Gilbert sees herself as something of a mentor.

Those she counsels are from a different culture, and Gilbert helps to provide a bridge between cultures.

The first passage she helps to provide is through language barriers as a certified medical interpreter for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, but Gilbert said the barriers extend beyond language.

“Patients (who have come from other countries) have to do deal with anxiety, loneliness and a change in culture,” she said. They also have to deal with basic essentials such as transportation. “Not everybody knows how to drive.”

Most who come to the clinic with a language barrier are Hispanic, and Gilbert, who came to the United States from Lima, Peru, and is a naturalized citizen, provides full-time translation services at the clinic for Hispanics.

Gilbert began work at the clinic as a volunteer, but Lisa Terry, clinic administrator, said that work soon grew to be a full-time job.

“I was immediately impressed with the compassion and care she always showed for the patients,” Terry said. “She was also very dedicated to the clinic and our mission to care for those in need.”

Terry said Gilbert “has helped teach all the staff more about the Hispanic culture and assisted us all in learning to care for the many Hispanic families seeking health care from the clinic.”



Elsa Gilbert

Gilbert, 52, first came to the United States to study at UCLA, but she eventually transferred to Loyola University in Chicago, where she studied business administration.

She also met her late husband, Paul, there, and they came to visit Murfreesboro more than 30 years ago during a vacation. They came to visit Paul Gilbert’s brother who lived in Murfreesboro, and “we decided to stay.”

The couple bought a trailer and set up housekeeping with their two children. They eventually added two more children to the household.

enjoys sewing and crocheting. “I like to stay busy.”

Gilbert also is raising her granddaughter, Mercedes. Her mother, Elizabeth, died when she was 19. Her other three children are Sara, 32; Zoila, 28; and Paul, 26. She has five more grandchildren.

After her husband died nine years ago and her children grew up and left home, Gilbert became more active in the community.

She worked as a translator with the Rutherford County Health Department and in the legal system in the county and became involved in the Rutherford County Wellness Council, where she met Terry and Leslie Akins, now chair of the clinic’s board.

Gilbert also participated in 2000 in a class at MTSU for medical interpreters, which the Primary Care & Hope Clinic sponsored for two semesters through a Wellness Council grant. Terry and Akins taught the class.

(Continued on Page 5)

“I find fulfillment in helping people.
I like that.”

— **Elsa Gilbert**

Gilbert said she enjoys her role at the clinic: “I find fulfillment in helping people. I like that.”

Gilbert currently lives outside Murfreesboro on a farm with eight horses, chickens and ducks. She said she

Clinic offers medical care to non-English speakers

Gilbert

Several years ago a man came to the Primary Care & Hope Clinic with a sick child. An examination of the child showed that the child had strep throat and needed treatment. The practitioner, however, could not tell the father his son's diagnosis or the treatment for the condition. She could speak only English, and he could speak only Spanish.

"I decided that day many years ago the clinic must make changes to help meet the needs of the many people moving to our community who did not speak English," Lisa Terry, the practitioner who examined the child and now the administrator of the clinic.

Since that episode several years ago, the clinic has taken several steps to provide better health services for those who do not speak English. They include:

- Employment of a full-time medical interpreter for Spanish-speaking patients.

- Printing of all clinic information and patient forms in Spanish and English.

- Providing classes in Spanish on diabetes because of the prevalence of the condition among Hispanics.

- Coordinating training for medical interpreters through classes at MTSU.

Terry she and other clinic staff members also have taken Spanish lessons, and at least one volunteer registered nurse, Jamie Adams, is bilingual in English and Spanish.

Hispanics constitute the largest

segment of the clinic's patients who do not speak English.

"We have greatly improved the services we provide to the Hispanic population of our community," Terry said.

Laotians are the second largest group of county resident who do not speak English. Translators are on call for assistance with Laotians' care, Terry said.

Terry said just the day before a Laotian patient had come to the clinic. "We had to call and get an interpreter for him. The interpreter came to the clinic, and we were able to meet the patient's needs."

Elsa Gilbert, the certified medical interpreter for Spanish at the clinic, said approximately 75 percent of the clinic's Hispanic patients are from Mexico.

Although the U.S. Census Bureau reports that 2.2 percent of the county's population is Hispanic, Gilbert said the number of Hispanics in the county actually is larger.

Gilbert said the county's economic boom is continuing to attract Hispanics to the area.

Terry said, "I feel many of these people are working hard each day to help build new homes and businesses in our community and working in some other capacity to help improve our community."

"They have brought their families and children to live, work and play in our community," she said, "and I am happy to provide a medical home for

(Continued on Page 8)

(Continued from Page 4)

"That was the beginning of a great friendship," Terry said, "and a great relationship between Elsa and the Primary Care & Hope Clinic."

Gilbert said, "I feel very privileged to be a part of the Primary Care & Hope Clinic."

Gilbert said her work at the clinic, which has been full-time for two years, involves translations for the patients and practitioners and that work also includes helping the practitioner understand the patient's emotional condition.

She said she must provide "100 percent communication between patients and practitioners."

Gilbert also communicates with the patients about appointments, tests results and other clinic information.

Although the U.S. Census Bureau reports that 2.8 percent of Rutherford County's population is Hispanic, Gilbert said, "The census numbers are nowhere close to being right."

She said the county is in the midst of a Hispanic boom, and she expects that boom to continue with the county's economic and population growth.

Gilbert said Hispanics generally receive a good reception in the community. "They get a lot of respect," and she attributes that generally to Southern hospitality and friendliness.

Churches particularly have welcomed Hispanics to the community with Spanish-language worship and other services.

"They offer help."

She does not expect any reduction in the Hispanic population in the future. "They already have their kids here. They are not going anywhere."

Gilbert does not rule out the possibility of future health care study.

She said she definitely plans to continue to provide assistance and mentoring to those in the Hispanic community, if someone needs a helping hand or guidance.

"You can always give a helping hand," Gilbert said.

"I feel many of these people are working hard each day to help build new homes and businesses in our community and working in some other capacity to help improve our community."

— Lisa Terry, clinic administrator

Clinic

(Continued from Page 1)

faced challenges because of TennCare before, including the collapse of a TennCare managed-care organization from which the clinic was unable to collect fees for services provided.

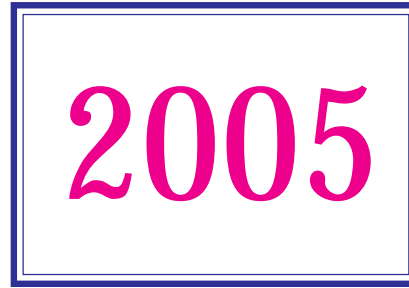
That MCO collapse was “just as challenging,” she said.

The clinic has received a \$180,000 “safety-net” grant from the state to help provide medical services for those who no longer receive TennCare benefits.

Akin noted the clinic 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.

The clinic’s annual fund-raiser this year collected more than \$123,000 for provision of medical services to the uninsured, and the clinic last month also received \$5,000 from Middle Tennessee Electric Customers Care Inc. to aid with services for the uninsured.

The largest donations to the clinic this year, however, included 2.5 acres of land in the city’s Gateway Center and \$3 million from the Christy-Houston Foundation for construction of a new facility for the clinic, the Dispensary of Hope and Community Helpers.



Akins said the new facility will provide the opportunity for a partnership of non-profits “that transcends organizational interests in favor of efficiency and quality for the patients.”

“It is probably the single greatest undertaking we have ever embarked upon, which will affect our community’s health care safety-net for decades to come and impact countless numbers of individual lives,” she said.

Terry said the city’s gift of land and the grant from Christy-Houston have provided more visibility for the clinic in the community.

“We were well-known as a provider of services to the uninsured,” she said. “We’re doing the same thing that we’ve been doing.”

Terry noted, however, that greater visibility also means a greater demand for the center’s services, and “we have to have the money to provide the services.”

That is among the challenges for the clinic that will continue in 2006.

“It’s a balancing act,” Terry said.

Major events for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic in 2005 included:

—The city of Murfreesboro’s donation of 2.5 acres of land in the city’s Gateway Center for construction of a new building for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic.

—Donation of \$3 million from the Christy-Houston Foundation for a building to house the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, the Dispensary of Hope and Community Helpers.

—Collection of more than \$123,000 at the clinic’s annual fund-raiser.

—Disenrollment of more than 190,000 patients from the state’s TennCare medical insurance program.

—Receipt of a \$180,000 “safety-net” grant from the state to provide medical services for state residents who no longer are eligible to receive TennCare benefits.

—Expansion of the schedule of the Mobile Health Unit with the addition of Mitchell-Neilson Primary School.

—Extension of the hours of the Children of Hope program (a program offering forensic exams for Rutherford County children suspected of being victims of sexual abuse).

—Creation of a Web site, <http://www.hopeclnc.org>, and of a monthly newsletter, Access, for the clinic.

Planning continues for new building

Plans are on track for ground-breaking for a new building for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic in the city’s Gateway Center in March or April of 2006, clinic administrator Lisa Terry said last month.

“We have completed the schematic phase,” Terry said. “We are now in the design-development phase.”

Terry said clinic officials this month will conduct interviews with prospective contractors for the project, which is expected to take nine months to complete.

Site preparation is continuing at the 2.5-acre tract that will be the site for the new building that also will house

the Dispensary of Hope and Community Helpers.

Terry and Murfreesboro Mayor Tommy Bragg signed the final agreement for acquisition of the land after the City Council gave final approval to the donation Sept. 15.

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.

Terry said the new 18,500 square foot-facility will provide 20 patient rooms, with space to expand to 30 rooms, for the clinic. The clinic’s current site on South Church has 5,000 square feet and nine patient rooms.

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.

MTE Customers Care donates \$5,000

Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corp.'s Customers Care has donated \$5,000 of its Operation Round Up funds to the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, foundation officials have announced.

"This money came at an opportune time," said Lisa Terry, clinic administrator. "Many victims of recent hurricanes have been seeking health care from the clinics — victims from Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama with the majority being uninsured. This grant will help these new additions to our community."

Operation Round Up began in November 2003 and since that time has distributed more than \$1 million dollars to the communities Middle Tennessee Electric serves, foundation officials said. MTEMC, headquartered in Murfreesboro, serves customers in Cannon, Rutherford, Williamson and Wilson counties.

The Operation Round Up initiative "rounds up" members' bills to the next highest dollar, with that extra change set aside for worthy causes.

Foundation officials said it is the responsibility of the Customers Care Board, which is composed of seven MTEMC members, to evaluate grant



William Strang, a board member for Middle Tennessee Electric Customers Care, presents a donation of \$5,000 to Lisa Terry, left, administrator of the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, and Shane Culver, the clinic's chief financial officer.

requests and send the money back to qualifying organizations.

Incoming contributions are tracked by county so that the Customers Care Board can do its best to ensure money contributed by members in a certain county goes to that county, officials said. Any balances are carried

over each month.

Customers Care Board members include William Strang and Ida Thomas from Rutherford County.

More information about MTE Customers Care and Operation Round Up is available at <http://www.mtemc.com> or by calling 890-9762.

Web site allows seasonal giving online

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

Leslie Akins, chair of the clinic's board, said she 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.

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

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

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 also 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.

United Way campaign nears halfway mark

United Way of Rutherford and Cannon counties has collected \$1,020,685 or 43 percent of its \$2.4 million goal, campaign officials said last month.

The Primary Care & Hope Clinic is one of 43 agencies and organizations in Rutherford and Cannon counties that receive funding from the annual United Way campaign.

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

Nearly 30 restaurants in Murfreesboro, Smyrna, La Vergne and Woodbury participated Nov. 15 in the annual Menu of Caring with a percentage of the restaurants' proceeds going to the United Way, but campaign officials said late last month that a full tally of proceeds was not yet available from that event.

Rachel Holder, communications director for United Way, noted incentives for donations are available as the end of the calendar year approaches



and a real-estate open house is benefiting the campaign.

The Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act, allows a donor to contribute up to 100 percent of adjusted gross income to a charity, even if it does not assist Katrina victims.

The goal is to prevent a downturn in giving as a result of donations for Katrina assistance, officials said.

KETRA also allows persons who are at least 59 ½ to donate from an IRA without facing a 10 percent penalty for withdrawal, Holder said.

Holder noted that General Mill/Pillsbury in Murfreesboro will match donations of at least \$5,000.

She said donors should consult their accountants or financial advisers about the tax advantages of the KETRA-related donations.

Holder said United Way also will be the beneficiary in December of an open house for a "healthy home" in the Cambridge subdivision, which is located on Osborne Lane, off of Memorial Boulevard. Cambridge is a development of the J.T. Davis Co.

Visitors to the open house will make voluntary donations for admission, and a silent auction also is scheduled, officials said.

The open-house schedule is:

—Monday-Friday, Dec. 5-9, 5-7 p.m.

—Saturday, Dec. 10, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

—Sunday, Dec. 11, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The United Way campaign began Sept. 13.

United Way of Rutherford and Cannon counties collected \$2,315,479 in its 2004-5 campaign, 4 percent short of its \$2.4 million goal.

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

<http://www.uwrutherford.org>

Speakers

(Continued from Page 5)
them to receive health care as needed."

Although persons who do not speak English at one time were among the clinic's uninsured parents, Hispanic children and some Hispanic parents who receive medical services at the clinic now are insured, and having a full-time interpreter benefits the clinic, Terry said.

"I think that is an advantage that we provide," she said. "We can immediately interpret for them."

"Most of the private offices do not

have a medical interpreter," Gilbert said.

Through a grant coordinated through the Rutherford County Wellness Council, Terry and Leslie Akins, now chair of the clinic's board, taught two-six week classes for medical interpreters at MTSU in 2000. Gilbert was a participant in the class prior to her employment at the clinic.

Some who completed the classes are working with the Rutherford County Health Department, Terry said.

She said any future classes for med-

ical interpreters will depend on available grant funds.

Gilbert said word of mouth is helping to inform those in the Hispanic community about the translation services available at the clinic, but many in the county's Hispanic community continue to be among those medically underserved.

"The need is there," she said

Providing medical services to those who do not speak English is "continuing to be a challenge," Terry said.