

# Access

The newsletter of the Primary Care & Hope Clinic

Vol. 1, No. 3

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

September 6, 2005

## *Letter from the Board Chair*

The summer of 2005 will always be remembered in our clinic's history as a time of miraculous blessings, seemingly insurmountable challenges and our greatest opportunity to walk by faith.

The Primary Care & Hope Clinic has always been a visible example of God's provision for His people through their willingness to serve Him and each other. This summer has certainly been a lesson in trust and faith for us all.

Our clinic was borne out of the desire to serve our community's neediest residents and each day has been a living example of 1 Peter 4:10:

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to **serve** others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

Never before has this scripture been more meaningful to us than this summer, when leaders from our local government joined with the health care, business, and philanthropic communities and awarded our clinic land within the Gateway Center to build a new facility.

The Christy-Houston Foundation recognized the impending health care needs of our residents and used their resources to provide the funding for a new building. Neighbors, friends, and businesses gave of their resources, time, and yes — sweat, to hold a fund-raiser, which will provide much needed funds for our operating future. It has been a time of great blessings,

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## Clinic launches drive to help fund building

"Gateway to Hope" will be the theme for a campaign to raise funds and solicit donations of services for the building of a new Primary Care & Hope Clinic, clinic officials said.

"We will be gearing efforts toward building, furnishing and supplying the new building," said Leslie Akins, chair of the clinic's board of directors.

A new building in Murfreesboro's Gateway Center will house the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, the Dispensary of Hope and Community Helpers. The city has donated 2.5 acres for construction of the building, and the Christy-Houston Foundation is providing \$3 million for construction costs.

"We'll be fund-raising for specific needs," Akins said.

Akins and Lisa Pewitt, clinic administrator, said the campaign will include the opportunity for donors to



provide naming gifts for patient rooms and other areas of the building, including a conference room.

Pewitt said monetary amounts for such naming gifts still are being developed. "That's pretty much in the future," she said.

Pewitt and Akins noted, however, that the clinic is seeking donations of in-kind services as well as financial contributions for the project.

The Wiser Co. of Murfreesboro, for example, has donated civil engineer-

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## Volunteer search goes interactive

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

"It's time for us to have a large number of volunteers," said Leslie Akins, chair of the clinic's board of directors.

Akins and Lisa Pewitt, clinic ad-

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Community Volunteer

Recent TennCare changes have plunged many of our patients into panic, as they have faced the loss of the only insurance many were ever able to obtain.

— Leslie Akins, board chair

## Board...

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as God's people used their gifts to serve their community.

While all of these developments are nothing short of miraculous, they also come at a time of great challenge for our patients and our health care system. Recent TennCare changes have plunged many of our patients into panic, as they have faced the loss of the only insurance many were ever able to obtain.

Our health care landscape was quickly changed by these TennCare changes, and the uninsurable, multiple disease-affected individual now joins the ranks of those without health care benefits. And make no mistake; many children are part of the growing

uninsured of Rutherford County.

The combined efforts of our entire community to reach out and take a proactive stance in this situation is a perfect picture of God's people caring for each other through faith and service to Him. When people ask me, "What can I do to help out community during this time?" I first say, "Pray for us." I say that sincerely, with emphasis on the most important gift that anyone can give to our work. By using our unique gifts in service to each other, we show the willingness to serve Him. Pray without ceasing!

**Leslie Akins,**  
**Board Chair**

## Primary Care & Hope Clinic

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**Administrator:** Lisa Pewitt, MSN, APRN, BC

**Marketing Director:** Courtney Corlew

**Financial Officer:** Shane Culver

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

*Staff profile:*

# CFO Culver keeps low profile

Although she flinches a little when she hears the description, “unsung hero,” Shane Culver, chief financial officer of the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, acknowledges that her role in providing medical services to the underserved is somewhat in the background.

Culver said she doesn’t mind “sitting in the back room, working on things. I prefer to stay in the background.”

Lisa Pewitt, clinic administrator, said, however, that Culver’s role could



**Shane Culver works as chief financial officer for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic.**

not be more important: “She is the person behind the scenes who many people never see, but is diligently working each day to make the clinic operate smoothly and efficiently.”

Culver acknowledged that in the 10 years that she has worked at the clinic, its annual budget has grown from \$300,000 to more than \$1 million.

More importantly, she said, the clinic tries to make the best use of grant funds and donations that it can.

“We’re good stewards of the mon-

**“We’re good stewards of the money. We try to be responsible with our financial resources.”**

**— Shane Culver, clinic CFO**

ey,” she said. “We try to be responsible with our financial resources.”

Culver joined the clinic 10 years ago as office manager. At the time, the clinic was operating under the auspices of the Mid-Cumberland Community Health Agency and was paying the agency \$7,000 each month for management services.

Pewitt said the clinic was in the midst of financial uncertainty at that time.

“Times for the clinic was much more touch and go, even more than they are today,” Pewitt said. “We literally did not know if we would be able to pay the staff each payroll period.”

Culver said, “We decided that we needed to go independent. It was a little scary at first.”

Pewitt had joined the clinic in 1996, and she and Culver worked together to bring financial stability.

“This was nine years ago, and I look at where we are now and realize we have truly come a long way,” Pewitt said.

Culver said the clinic now has a reserve fund and has been able to weather financial uncertainties such as has plagued the state’s TennCare program and its payments to providers such as the clinic.

Pewitt said Culver has exhibited a tireless dedication to the clinic’s mission and vision.

“I would not want to be the administrator without Shane as the CFO,” Pewitt said. “I think we are good partners and our strengths and weaknesses complement each other.”

Culver, a Smyrna resident, came to the Primary Care & Health Clinic after working in the for-profit health care

industry. “A lot of times it is not about the patient” in that segment of the health care industry, she said.

Culver, 33, who holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Middle Tennessee State University, said she interviewed for several jobs before going to work at the clinic.

“The mission of the clinic is what drew me,” she said.

As chief financial officer, Culver is responsible for paying the clinic’s bills, balancing the clinic’s accounts, preparing financial reports for the clinic’s board, managing investments and working with Pewitt to win grants for the clinic.

Culver said she still gets involved occasionally with the day-to-day operations of the clinic when the copier doesn’t work or someone has a computer problem. She usually has only limited contact with patients, and that is when a patient may have some financial problem.

When she is not at work, Culver’s life is centered around her family – her husband, Jason, and her two daughters, Brooke, 7; and Kaylee, 2.

Her daughters’ interests include horseback riding and cheerleading. Culver said she even has done a little coaching for her oldest daughter’s cheerleading efforts.

Culver noted that even with her effort now to stay in the background, she at one time was at the center of attention – as a junior high cheerleader and as captain of the cheerleading squad at Smyrna High School.

She said her personal goal “is to raise two kind-hearted, caring Christian women.”

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## Volunteer profile:

# Akins works to fulfill mission

In some ways, she is idealistic: "God puts you where you are supposed to be."

In some ways, she is pragmatic: "You can't save the world tomorrow, but you have to do something every day."

And she knows she has a calling: "I can't stand to see people need something and know I can do something about it."

And for more than five years, Leslie Akins has been working to bring medical care to the uninsured in Rutherford County.

Akins has made the effort as a volunteer nurse practitioner for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic and for the past two years, she has served as the chairman of the clinic's board of directors.

Lisa Pewitt, clinic administrator, describes Akins as a visionary.

"She is very effective at thinking about meeting the needs of those less fortunate in innovative ways," Pewitt said.

Akins said she always wanted to be a nurse. She recalled a photo of herself as a child in full nurse regalia. "I have never wanted to do anything else."

Akins, 49, earned a bachelor of science in nursing from the Memphis campus of Union University and a master of science in nursing from the University of Tennessee.

However, work at the Regional Medical Center and the Church Health Center, both in Memphis, showed Akins what kind of nurse she would be.

"You can make nursing anything you want it to be," Akins said. She decided she wanted to help those who do not have easy access to medical care.

Work at the public hospital and the charity health center in Memphis opened her eyes to the needs of those who did not have the affluent childhood that she had in West Tennessee.

She saw women with advanced breast cancer and people who were sick

in ways that she had not known.

"It was humbling," she said.

Akins, who had worked in an in-



Leslie Akins

intensive care unit for 10 years, saw an entirely different aspect of need. She said she had not realized that all businesses did not provide health insurance to their employees. She developed a much better understanding of the term, "the working poor."

After Akins, her husband, Mark, a general surgeon, and their children moved to Murfreesboro, she tried to bring the lessons that she had learned in Memphis to her new hometown.

She first tried to develop a clinic for the uninsured in conjunction with the Salvation Army's Hope Center in Murfreesboro, but for a variety of reasons that effort to create a Hope Clinic failed.

"She implemented the use of volunteers to provide care to our uninsured patients," Pewitt said, "and has coordinated volunteer services."

In 2000 the clinic's board agreed to change the working name of the medical facility to the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, although it remains incorporated as the Rutherford County Primary Care Clinic.

"We've never looked back," Akins said.

Akins said awareness of the work of the clinic increased in 2002 when real estate executive Bob Parks and his wife, Marie, were hosts for the clinic's first major fund-raiser.

The event raised \$100,000, she said, and "people really took notice."

Akins said this increased attention came in the general community: "Everybody in health care knew what we were talking about."

The clinic recently has received more community support with the city of Murfreesboro's donation of 2.5 acres in the Gateway Center and the Christy-Houston Foundation's donation of \$3

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**"I can't stand to see people need something and know I can do something about it."**

**— Leslie Akins, board chair**

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"I didn't really have a place to go," Akins said, until someone suggested that she contact the Rutherford County Primary Care Clinic. Akins said she doesn't even remember who made the suggestion.

The Rutherford County Primary Care Clinic was providing medical services to the medically underserved. Akins began volunteering as a nurse practitioner on Thursdays to provide services to the uninsured.

Pewitt said Akins was the first volunteer nurse practitioner to provide services at the clinic.

million for construction of a new building for the medical facility.

Akins said the generosity of the city's officials is "really a testimony. They have a true heart for service. They perfectly express the personality of the community."

Despite Murfreesboro's growth, she said, it still has the cohesion of a smaller town.

"I've been amazed at how people in Rutherford County really do want to help," Akins said.

Akins said she could not fully ex-  
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## Mission...

**(Continued from Page 4)**  
explain her own desire to help, although it partly involves her faith.

“Being Christian involves more than a bunch of words,” she said. “It’s faith in action.”

Pewitt said, “Leslie has a compassion for others you will rarely see and truly cares about the health and welfare of those in need. She has dedicated numerous hours of her time and talents.”

Akins eventually increased her volunteer work at the clinic to two days a week, but since she has been serving as board chairman she has not provided direct patient care at the clinic.

With an almost full appointment book in front of her, Akins noted that she also is a member of the board of directors of the Dispensary of Hope and serves on the Rutherford County Wellness Council.

She also occasionally helps out at The Cardiac Center and her husband’s office, she said, and this is work that helps her to keep her nursing skills up-to-date.

Pewitt said Akins is a “very busy women, but she always manages to find time to give to others and does so with warmth and love.”

Many of those appointments in her book also involve her family, particularly her four children.

Akins was a divorced mother of two when she met and married Mark Akins in Memphis.

She said he made a rather sudden transformation from being a bachelor to being a suburban dad with a house, children and all that goes with that. The family soon grew by two.

Akins now keeps track of Christy Nelson, 23, soon to be married; Steven Nelson, 20, an MTSU student; Eliza-

beth Akins, 10; and Maggie Akins, 9.

They all have grown up at the clinic, Akins said, and have shared in her experiences in trying to help others.

She said the children have learned that people are different, and “that’s okay.”

“That is the way I want them raised,” she said.

Akins also said she is looking forward to working on the development of the new Primary Care & Hope Clinic in the city’s Gateway’s Center, particularly with the addition of the Dispensary of Hope.

“The dispensary will better know the needs of the clinic,” she said, “and the clinic will better know the needs of the dispensary.”

The project is another step in her goal to aid the medically underserved.

“I want to see the building and the mission come to fruition,” she said.

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

## Volunteer...

**(Continued from Page 1)**  
ministrator, said the clinic is expanding its volunteer program and needs help both from health care providers and from persons with a wide range of talents and skills.

“We need everything from someone to help with the gardening to helping assemble blank medical charts,” Akins said.

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

Akins said the interactive form also will allow interested persons to state their interests and skills, so they can be matched with clinic needs.

With planned construction of a new building for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic, volunteer needs only will increase, Pewitt said. “We will have more room.”

Pewitt last month told the Gateway Commission, which recommended the city’s donation of land in the Gateway Center for the new building, that the current clinic on South Church Street is filled to capacity.

“We have physicians who are willing to donate their time, but we have no rooms to put them in,” Pewitt said.

The proximity of new facilities for Middle Tennessee Medical Center and Murfreesboro Medical Clinic in the Gateway Center to the new Primary Care & Hope Clinic building will help to make the building project more feasible, city officials said.

Pewitt said the expansion of clinic facilities also will require more support staff and volunteers are needed to help provide those support roles.

Akins noted that aside from health care providers, federal privacy regulations for medical information do limit who can work at the clinic itself. “It has made it more difficult to have volunteers on site,” she said.

But Akins 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 medically underserved in the community.

Akins said the clinic also is looking for a volunteer to help with identifying and placing other volunteers: “I am seeking someone to help coordinate community volunteers.”

# Site work for new building begins

Site preparation has begun for construction of a new building for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic in the city's Gateway Center, Lisa Pewitt, clinic administrator, said last week.

"There's been some clearing of the property and some excavation," Pewitt said.

She said the Wisner Co. in Murfreesboro has donated civil engineering services for the project.

Pewitt will meet with the city's Gateway Commission Sept. 13 for its final recommendation on the agreement to donate 2.5 acres of land in the north-west corner of the Gateway Center for construction of a building to house the clinic, the Dispensary of Hope and Community Helpers.

The Murfreesboro City Council also will have to give final approval to the agreement, she said. The council unanimously endorsed the land dona-

## Fund...

(Continued from Page 1)

ing services for the project.

Pewitt commended Cy Wisner of the Wisner Co. for the gift: "This was very nice of him and very generous of his company."

Because of the "Gateway to Hope" campaign, Akins said the clinic probably will not have its annual fund-raiser in the summer of 2006.

"We will be in the middle of construction," she said. Construction is to begin in the spring and is projected to continue for nine months.

This year the annual fund-raiser, Luau in the Summer Breeze, raised more than \$110,000 for patient care.

Pewitt said planning is under way for a "wish list" for the building project.

Pewitt and Akins said persons who want more information about making financial contributions or donations of services to the "Gateway to Hope" campaign can contact Courtney Corlew, clinic marketing director, at (615) 893-9390, ext. 230, or by e-mail at: [GatewayToHope@hopeclnc.org](mailto:GatewayToHope@hopeclnc.org).

tion, the first in the Gateway Center, 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 Mur-freesboro Medical Clinic.

Officials of the Christy-Houston Foundation announced July 20 a \$3 million grant for construction of the new facility.

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.

Current plans are for construction to begin in the spring of 2006 with the work projected to take nine months, she said.

"The architects still are working on the design," Pewitt said.

Mike Picklesimer of Murfreesboro is the architect for the project. He works with Hart, Freeland and Roberts, a Nashville architectural firm.

Pickett said the project will go through the competitive bidding process to hire a contractor.

"We want to get the best contract for the building," she said.



Site preparation begins for the Primary Care & Hope Clinic.

## TennCare 'safety net'

# State grants to give primary-care aid

One-time grants of up to \$180,000 are available to community primary-care facilities to provide medical services to uninsured adults who no longer are receiving TennCare benefits.

The state Department of Health opened applications for the "safety-net" grants Aug. 23, and applications are due Sept. 15, state officials said.

Dr. Kenneth S. Robinson, state health commissioner, said in a release that the grants, which will run from Oct. 14 through the end of the state's fiscal year, June 30, 2006, "will be proportionately based on the levels and types of service expansion contracted to be provided by the centers."

The state budget includes \$6 million for safety-net grants to faith-based, community-based and rural health centers such as the Primary Care & Hope Clinic. The budget also includes \$6 million for safety-net grants to federally funded health centers.

Kathy Wood-Dobbins, executive director of the Tennessee Primary Care Association, said the allocation for the federally funded centers includes \$4.6

million in recurring funds, but the community grants will not be recurring unless the next session of the Legislature decides to provide additional funding.

"The Legislature did not do this for a recurring appropriation," Wood-Dobbins said.

Grants will range from \$37,500 to \$180,000, based on the level of services and the number of persons being served, she said.

Areas of service include:

- primary care, which is required
- behavioral health
- pharmacy services
- pharmacy assistance

A center that provides primary care to at least 500 additional uninsured adults would be eligible for a \$37,500 grant. A center that provided all four services to at least 1,500 additional uninsured adults would be eligible for a \$180,000 grant.

Wood-Dobbins acknowledged that the non-recurring nature of the grants may limit service options for the centers that receive the grants. "They are going

to have to determine what is the best way to use them."

Lisa Pewitt, Primary Care & Health Clinic administrator, said last week that she is reviewing the grant-application package and the clinic will be preparing an application for safety-net funding.

Wood-Dobbins said the relatively short time for preparing an application is based "on the desire to get the money out as soon as possible."

Community health centers "are going to have to do what they do best," she said.

Gov. Phil Bredesen said recently that higher than anticipated revenue collections for the state may mean more money going into safety-net programs. Revenue collections for the 2004-2005 state fiscal year that ended June 30 were \$261 million more than projected.

Wood-Dobbins noted that the state has launched several safety-net initiatives and whether any increased funding will be going to community primary-care facilities is not yet clear.

"I would certainly hope so," she said.

## Governor announces more 'safety-net' programs

Additional safety-net programs are available for Tennessee residents who no longer are eligible for TennCare benefits, the Bredesen administration has announced.

Gov. Phil Bredesen announced Aug. 24 that Cornerstone, the state's largest provider of mental health services, will provide \$800,000 in free services to former TennCare recipients who are severely mentally ill.

Through Oct. 31, Cornerstone will provide clinically necessary treatments to former TennCare recipients who have severe mental illness, the governor said.

Cornerstone officials said the organization will work with clients and families to determine individual treatment plans.

Bredesen praised Cornerstone for the initiative in a release: "I thank Cor-

nerstone for the strong example they're setting through this program."

State officials also announced in July a \$11.4 million program to provide funding for 20 community-based, nonprofit mental health agencies to continue key mental health services for patients with severe mental illnesses who are no longer on TennCare rolls.

Officials of the state Department of Mental Health encouraged those with severe mental illnesses coming off of the TennCare roll to register with participating agencies to begin immediately receiving key services.

All participating mental health programs in the Murfreesboro area are in Davidson County: Cornerstone, 463-6600; Foundations, 345-3202; LifeCare Family Services; 781-0013; Mental Health Cooperative; 743-1401; Park

Center, 242-3576.

Bredesen also announced Aug. 23 that the state had developed a transitional program for insulin-dependent persons who no longer receive TennCare benefits.

Insulin and diabetic supplies are available through local participating pharmacies.

Officials said the state is providing approximately \$1 million per month for the program that will continue for some four months. Covered supplies include insulin vials and syringes, pre-filled syringes, lancets, lancet devices, test strips and control solutions.

More information about the insulin program and other safety-net programs is available at <http://www.tnhealthoptions.org> or by calling the state's Health Options hotline at 1-888-486-9355.

# United Way to launch 2005 campaign

From painting to gardening to reading to children, volunteers will be working in various United Way agencies Sept. 13 to kick off the annual fundraising campaign.

This will be the third year that the Day of Care has kicked off the United Way campaign, said Rachel Holder, communications director for United Way of Rutherford County.

"Projects will begin at 7 a.m.," Holder said.

Aurelia Holden, director of agency and volunteer relations for the United Way, said 18 businesses and organizations already have agreed to provide volunteers for projects at United Way agencies.

The Primary Care & Hope Clinic is one of 43 agencies and organizations in Rutherford and Cannon counties that receives funding from the annual United Way campaign whose goal this year is \$2.4 million, officials said.

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

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

Holder said the Day of Caring will



include morning shifts and afternoon shifts at the participating agencies, but she said the day will not include a general meeting of volunteers and campaign officials.

"We will honor the volunteers at a later date," she said.

Co-chairs for the Day of Caring are Jan Beard, who retired from Middle Tennessee Medical Center, and Cathy Mitchell of Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corp.

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

Already under way, Holder said, are 25 Pacesetter campaigns. She said those campaigns, scheduled before Sept. 13, involve companies that are encouraging at least 75 percent employee participation and a 10 percent increase over last year's goal.

Holder said United Way also asks that its partner agencies conduct their employee campaigns before Sept. 13.

Holder said any company or individual who would like more inform-

ation on volunteer opportunities can call the United Way office at 893-7303.

Companies and organizations that will be providing volunteers for the Day of Caring include Alexander Automotive, AmSouth Bank, Boys & Girls Clubs, Bridgestone/Firestone, Cannon County 4-H Clubs, Cardinal Health-Specialty Pharmaceutical Distribution, Cavalry Bank, General Mills/Pillsbury.

Ingram Book Group, Kohl's, Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corp., Middle Tennessee Medical Center, MTSU College of Continuing Education and Distance Learning, MidSouth Bank, Reddell Honda, Reeves-Sain, State Farm and SunTrust Bank.

Holden said United Way still is matching volunteers with projects at the Boys & Girls Clubs, Bradley Nursery School, Cannon County 4-H Clubs, Cannon County REACH, Cannon County Senior Center, Community Helpers, Discovery Center at Murfree Spring, the Domestic Violence Program, the Exchange Club Family Center, Holloway Harbor, the Homemaker Program, Meals on Wheels, Project Help, the Smyrna-La Vergne Food Bank, Special Kids and the Wee Care Day Care Center.

## Culver...

(Continued from page 3)

Culver hopes that one day her daughters will volunteer at the clinic, and she said Brooke already "thinks she is part of the clinic."

Brooke recently suggested that she could donate a horse, which she soon will receive as a gift from her grandfather, for pony rides to raise funds for the clinic, she said.

Culver said her goals for the clinic include dealing with TennCare disenrollment, expansion of services and the volunteer program and successful completion of the new building.

She noted that the changes in the

TennCare program are a huge challenge for patients.

"They don't know where to go and where to get help," Culver said.

But she said she thinks the clinic can handle the effects of the TennCare changes. "I'm confident that we can handle whatever comes our way."

Culver said she hopes that the clinic will be able to restore mental health services that once were provided. "We're trying to fill in the gaps for the patients."

She also noted the success of the clinic's social work program that has been in operation for one year.

Development of the new building

in the city's Gateway area is "going to be a lot of work," Culver said, but she noted that she and Pewitt worked on the expansion of the current clinic site on South Church Street.

"We have sort of been through it one time," she said, although on a smaller scale.

The building project probably is not the biggest challenge that the clinic has faced, she said.

"Going independent was a challenge."

Culver said, however, that she is quite optimistic about the future.

"We're living our mission every day - by the lives that we touch."