

The Role of Crescent Community Clinic In the Era of Health Reform

Florida has seven counties and over 100 free clinics. ***Crescent Community Clinic*** is a member of the ***Florida Association of Free Clinics (FAFC)*** which serves as an organizing body for the free clinics and advocates for issues and needs facing free clinics. The member clinics are staffed by paid and volunteer staff.

People who are currently uninsured have the opportunity to obtain coverage through the new health insurance exchanges for low-income Americans, through expanded Medicaid programs. However, Florida has not accepted Federal money so low-income Floridians must rely on free clinics for their healthcare. Florida has over 100 free clinics for the uninsured.

Many Americans are required to obtain health insurance through health insurance exchanges (***Affordable Care Act***). People who are currently uninsured have the opportunity to obtain coverage through the new health insurance exchanges for low-income Americans, through expanded Medicaid programs. However, Florida has not accepted Federal money so low-income Floridians must rely on free clinics for their healthcare.

WellFlorida Council at the University of South Florida has an agreement with the clinic to operate as Navigators to enroll individuals who may qualify for healthcare under ***Affordable Care Act***. The period to enroll is November 2014 to March 2015.

Crescent Community Clinic, a volunteer staffed clinic, is a critical part of the health care safety net system in Hernando County. The clinic provides access for the uninsured and indigent non-elderly residents of our county and provides healthcare for individuals with chronic health issues, palliative dental care and behavioral health services for individuals diagnosed with a mental illness.

The clinic is staffed by volunteer physicians, psychiatrists, dentists and mental health therapists offering health care by appointments. Since January 1 of this year to July 30 there were 2900 face-to-face patient services.

Crescent Community Clinic does not receive any federal, state, county or ***United Way*** funding. Donations from civic and social organizations, businesses, individuals and patients provide partial funding for our operating budget. Grants for specific programs such as glucometers and testing strips, limited types of medication, specific tests such as x-rays, MRI, Cat scans and mammograms are submitted when foundations are accepting grant proposals.

Low-income people with chronic health conditions, dental pain or mental health episodes are at particular risk. Many rely on hospital emergency rooms for non-emergent care which drives costs up for everyone. Our goal is to stabilize individuals so they do not rely on hospital emergency rooms for non-emergent care. Reliance on emergency rooms costs everyone - hospital charity care, insurance companies and taxpayers.

The ***Crescent Community Clinic's*** chronic health services provides patients diagnosed with asthma, cancer, diabetes, COPD, epilepsy, heart disease, hypertension, digestive issues, pulmonary, and obesity with access to specialists by appointments.

Our palliative dental services provide patients with appointments to relieve pain, oral infections by extractions and fillings. Oral hygiene appointments are provided following dentist requests.

Patients diagnosed with a mental illness and who have been prescribed medication receive treatment by a psychiatrist. Behavioral health patients are assessed and seen by a therapist before an appointment to see a psychiatrist, therapist or counselor.

Patients who cannot afford their medication are enrolled in the ***Pharmaceutical Prescription Assistance*** program and receive a year's supply of free medication. They must provide proof of citizenship and income. If they have not filled a recent tax return they must complete IRS Form 4605T before sending in the application to the pharmaceutical company.

Patients diagnosed with diabetes can purchase a meter, strips, testing solution, lancets and device for \$12 which is considerably less than what pharmacies charge for these supplies. A grant covers a partial amount of the cost of these supplies and patients donate the difference. If unable to donate, the patient will receive the diabetes kit.

The value of ***Crescent Community Clinic*** services since January 1 to date was \$506,106. Our budget, less than \$70,000, is comparatively low because of the volunteers who staff the clinic and the licensed providers who provide donated services. Donations are gratefully appreciated and will ensure that our uninsured and indigent non-elderly residents of Hernando County continue to have access to healthcare.

Crescent Community Clinic partners with ***Oak Hill Hospital, Hernando Community Health Partnership Plan, Hernando Diabetes Alliance, NAMI, Bayfront Brooksville Hospital, Hernando Medical Alliance, Hernando Medical Society, St Petersburg College, Keiser University, Argosy University, BayCare Health Center, Galen University, South University, Saint Leo University, American Health Institute, ATA Career Academy, Career Source, University of South Florida and Area Health Education Center.*** ***Oak Hill Hospital*** residents volunteer at the ***Crescent Community Clinic*** which has greatly reduced our patient wait list for appointments. The clinic receives between 60 to 80 applications for services each month.

Access Florida provides a ***SNAP*** (food stamp) counselor so anyone in the community requesting help completing applications for food stamps may come to the clinic on Tuesdays.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring our message to you. I invite you to visit our website www.crescentclinc.org or our Facebook page. If you wish to have a tour of the clinic call administration office at ***352-610-9916*** and we will be happy to show you our 7 exam rooms, 3 dental operatories, lab, 2 counseling rooms, 2 offices, 2 reception offices and education room and a waiting room full of patients on any clinic day.