



Free Clinic

OF SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

Compassionate Care ~ Always

The Examiner

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1990-2020: CELEBRATING COMMUNITY & COMPASSION

The Free Clinic of Southwest Washington (Free Clinic) will soon achieve a remarkable milestone. Next year, we will mark our 30th anniversary as a leader in providing free health care for the uninsured in Clark County.



In 1989, Dr. Sam Beall and Father Ed Rankin attended a Vancouver Rotary meeting, during which the concept of free clinics was a topic of conversation. Father Rankin asked Dr. Beall if Clark County had a free clinic and Dr. Beall replied "no". At that time there were



approximately 14,000 people in the community that had neither health insurance nor money to pay for it.

In 1990, the Community Health Clinic (now known as the Free Clinic of Southwest Washington) opened one evening a week for urgent medical care. One employee and 10 volunteers cared for patients. In 2005, thanks to a generous community donor, a mobile dental clinic was estab-



lished to serve children and adults needing oral health care. Along with the clinic's 30th anniversary, in 2020 the Free Clinic's dental program will celebrate its 15th anniversary.

Based on the needs of the community, Free Clinic services continued to expand to include vision care, prescriptions, diabetes care and social service assistance. As patient visits increased at the Free Clinic,



there was a growing need to provide specialty care for the uninsured. In 2009, Free Clinic physician volunteers reached out to specialists in the community. As a result, today the Free Clinic Project Access program has over 270 specialists and three health systems that support the clinic when specialty services are needed.

Today, the Free Clinic is the largest walk-in, urgent care free clinic in the state of Washington.

Over 500 volunteers provide virtually all services for nearly 7,000 patients each

year. We evolve continually in our efforts to ensure that every member of our community has access to health care. Yet our vision remains the same: Compassionate Care – Always.



As our 30th anniversary year quickly approaches, we will officially kick it off at the upcoming Holiday Ball on December 7 at the Heathman Lodge. Along with the kick-off, other fun events will be held throughout the anniversary year highlighting the Free Clinic's many programs. Be sure to watch for future events as they will be advertised in upcoming newsletters, e-blasts, and posts on social media. We hope you will join us as we celebrate our legacy of offering 30 years of free health care in our local community.

