



Catholic Charities Free Health Care Center (CCFHCC)

The region's largest Volunteer in Medicine safety net provider of free health care to the uninsured!

FAST FACTS

- Established as a separate 501(c)3 through the vision of Catholic Charities, which recognized the need for a safety net model for the uninsured.
- Opened in November, 2007 to provide **free** medical and dental care to individuals who do not have employer sponsored health coverage, cannot afford private insurance, or who do not qualify for Medicaid or other types of assistance, and whose income is at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Currently, it's estimated that even with Medicaid expansion in Southwestern Pennsylvania, more than 200,000 individuals remain uninsured or under-insured.
- Established as a Volunteers in Medicine facility, the clinical and non-clinical professionals who volunteer their time and talent are the cornerstone of our mission. To date, 170 volunteers have provided over 54,000 medical and dental visits, generating \$1.5 million in donated service hours annually!
- Medical Services, encompassed under a "continuum of care" model includes primary care, chronic disease management, medication therapy management, and specialty services. Specialty care offered includes cardiology, dermatology, ear, nose and throat, endocrinology, gastroenterology, gynecology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, psychiatry and mental health counseling, physical therapy, podiatry, rheumatology and urology.
- Dental services include exams and x-rays, cleanings, fillings, extractions, periodontal treatment, root canals and selected restorative care.
- Facilities were renovated in 2014 to meet the ever-increasing demand for care and include two reception areas, 6 medical examination rooms, 6 dental examination rooms, dental lab, physical therapy treatment suite, ophthalmology suite, patient education and pharmacy consultation room, and volunteer provider office.
- CCFHCC helps manage medical and dental patient information via a sophisticated electronic health record system.

VITAL STATISTICS...to sustain the Free Health Care Center

While quality medical and dental care is provided at no cost by our volunteer healthcare professionals, financial support is still needed to keep the Center open. Following are samples of what it costs to cover some of our services:

\$4,000 for dental supplies for one month	\$1,000 for fillings for 30 patients
\$4,000 for dental prostheses for one month	\$500 for dental cleanings for 15 patients
\$2,000 for medications for one month	\$500 for a complete eye examination for 15 patients
\$2,000 for medical lab tests and analyses for one month	

Patients' Stories

See other side.

As a vital part of Western Pennsylvania's health care safety net, and rooted in the Gospel and social teachings of the Catholic Church, we provide free, comprehensive care to uninsured and underinsured individuals, welcoming all with dignity, regardless of religion affiliation.

Clemmie's Story

Clemmie knew she wasn't feeling very well. Tired all of the time and sensing that things just weren't right, she headed over from her home in Avalon to a local health fair where free screenings were being offered. "197 over 137" was the blood pressure reading that confirmed her suspicions. "I was a time bomb ready to explode," said Clemmie.

The 63-year old widow once had health insurance through her husband, but after he died several years ago, she could no longer afford the monthly premiums. She lost her coverage, her health care and her blood pressure medication. Eventually, she lost the family home. Pride was the one thing she still had. When friends would encourage her to go to Catholic Charities Free Health Care Center, Clemmie said her pride wouldn't let her do it for the longest time. "I thought people would judge me, so I stayed away." However, with her blood pressure so high, she knew she had to do something soon. Last June, she had her first appointment with Dr. Tom Antos at the Center. "I couldn't think of a better match. He really listens. He hears even what I don't say. He is very thorough."

Dr. Antos and the team of volunteer practitioners would also discover that in addition to hypertension, they would treat Clemmie for diabetes and asthma. With the help of residents from the Duquesne University Mylan School of Pharmacy, she was able to receive medications to treat her conditions at little or no cost, and she also learned about the benefits and side effects of each prescription. She has also seen the Center's volunteer gynecologist and ophthalmologist. "This team of people works hand in hand together so well. I can't believe they're all volunteers," she said. "They work better than people who get paid!"

Clemmie credits Catholic Charities Free Health Care Center for saving her life. "I was blessed to crawl in in pieces when I did. Now when I leave, I'm whole."

Augustus' Story

Unemployed and without health insurance, Augustus first came to the Catholic Charities Free Health Care Center for help to control his high blood pressure.

During the exam, our volunteer physician also noticed a severe infection in Augustus' mouth and felt that it was potentially life-threatening. With no time to lose, Augustus was seen that same day by one of our volunteer dentists who confirmed the physician's suspicions, and also recommended that Augustus return to have ALL of his teeth extracted because the infection was so severe. Volunteer oral surgery residents from Allegheny General Hospital removed Augustus' teeth successfully eliminating the infection. Once his gums healed, Augustus received a brand new smile—full-mouth dentures—through a collaboration with the Pitt School of Dental Medicine.

With the improvement in his health and with the help of Catholic Charities' Team HOPE staff, Augustus got a new job and health insurance.

Alverna's Story

Alverna came to CCFHCC in October, 2009. She had lost her voice and had to have her sister speak on her behalf. She had been working at a local supermarket at the time, making only minimum wage. Although health benefits were offered, she could not afford to have the cost deducted from her pay.

Our volunteer throat specialist who saw Alverna at CCFHCC noted that, in addition to Alverna's inability to speak, she had a large mass on her larynx. Very concerned, the physician called another specialist at UPMC Montefiore who agreed to see Alverna at no cost. The specialist at UPMC detected the large growth on Alverna's voice box and diagnosed her with stage – 4 throat cancer. A biopsy was ordered, but couldn't be done because the tumor was too large. Alverna's only hope was radiation and chemotherapy. But before she could undergo treatment, she needed to have dental work done. She returned to CCFHCC where she received the necessary dental care at no cost.

Paul's Story

A routine dental exam turned out to be anything but routine. Paul came to the Catholic Charities Free Health Care Center feeling fine. He just wanted his teeth cleaned and checked, because without dental insurance, he hadn't been seen in a while.

The volunteer dentist who examined him—a 40-year veteran—discovered a suspicious growth under Paul's tongue. He told Paul to return to the Center the next day to be seen by one of the volunteer oral surgery residents from Allegheny General Hospital. Paul returned, and the resident confirmed that it was a cancerous growth. Since Paul had medical insurance, he was referred to a surgeon who removed it and repaired the hole in Paul's mouth.

Paul continues to express his gratitude to the dentist who diagnosed the tumor saying, "This was better than winning the lottery. He saved my life."