

THE FREE CLINIC TIMES

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1 FEBRUARY 2005

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT....

Greetings,

With the New Year two months underway, I would like to renew the OAFC's pledge to provide its member clinics with the most comprehensive, genial service possible. We are continually searching for ways to better serve your needs, and welcome any questions or suggestions you may have regarding this effort. The values set forth in the Strategic Plan highlight our passion for quality improvement of care, increasing access to services, volunteerism, and addressing the unique needs of each of our member clinics.

Along these lines, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to complete the 2004 Free Clinic Survey. By providing the OAFC with your clinic's survey information, you will be empowering our association to make informed advocacy, policy, and financial decisions that will benefit all of our member clinics. During this time of tightening budgets and constricting resources, the OAFC will make every effort to serve the inter-

ests of our clinics as well as Ohio's medically under-served population.

Correspondingly, we have been planning our annual Executive Director's Meeting designed to facilitate exchange of new ideas and promote best practices. The upcoming retreat will be held from **10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. on April 7th, 2005** at the Columbus Medical Association, and include discussion on free clinic pharmacy regulations, data collection, and state budget advocacy issues.

Author Evan Esar said, "Success is the good fortune that comes from aspiration, desperation, perspiration and inspiration". I believe this statement can be applied to the free clinic movement as its foundation is built upon years of hard work and the spirit of volunteerism. We hope you feel that the OAFC is an authentic representation of the free clinics' success. We will work diligently to enrich your experience in the future!

Lee Elmore, Board President

DIABETES CARE P.A.P. OFFERS GLUCOSE TESTING SUPPLIES

One of the largest needs experienced by free clinics and their patients is for diabetic test strips for glucometers. The Abbot Diabetes Care Patient Assistance Program is designed to provide these blood glucose testing supplies at no cost to eligible consumers who do not have insurance coverage. Eligibility for this program is based on current Federal Poverty Guidelines adjusted for household size, and applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If your clinic has patients in need of blood glucose testing supplies, you may contact the Abbot Diabetes Care Patient Assistance Program at (866) 224-8887.



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(North Coast Health Ministry)*

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*Dr. Sherri Morgan
(Ohio Academy of Family Physi-
cians Foundation)*

STATE BUDGET PRESENTS CHALLENGES

On February 10th, Governor Taft unveiled his proposal for our state's budget and the news was not good for poor and vulnerable Ohioans. The new state budget (House Bill 66) includes several cuts to the health care safety net, including reduction in eligibility for the Healthy Start/Healthy Families Medicaid coverage. Parents of children on the program will need to have incomes below 90% of the federal poverty level, instead of the current 100% of the FPL, a cut estimated to impact over 25,000 Ohioans. Also, adults with Medicaid coverage will no longer receive dental or vision care, and hospitals will be held to State Fiscal Year 2005 Medicaid reimbursement levels.

In addition, Disability Medical Assistance, a program that provides primary care and prescription drug coverage to people with medication dependent disabilities and incomes of no more than \$115/month, is slated to be cut. The elimination of DMA will impact over 16,000 Ohioans.

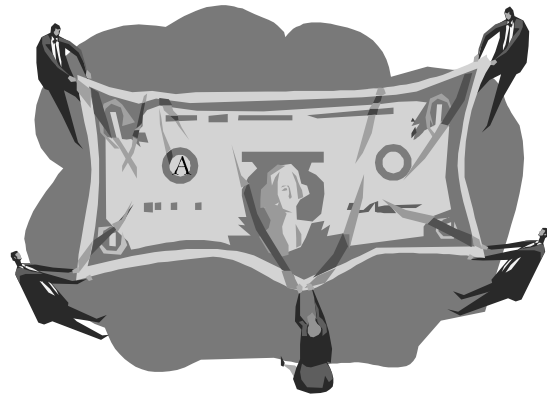
How does all of this relate to free clinics? If free clinics exist to mobilize volunteers and other community resources in order to complement the rest of the health care infrastructure, we will undoubtedly be faced with an increased demand for our services. Meeting this demand in a time when both human and financial resources are scarce will be challenging. For these reasons, the OAFc is working with many other organizations to preserve these government-funded programs, while at the same time supporting free clinics.

The Ohio Association of Free Clinics is a member of a number of coalitions that are working to protect Ohio's most vulnerable residents:

Campaign to Protect Ohio's Future—A coalition of over 300 health, human services and education advocates working to save vital services in the state budget and to urge Ohio's leaders to adopt a fair, progressive, diversified system of taxation that eliminates Ohio's structural deficit and provides stable revenues sufficient to fund services and invest in Ohio's future. For more information go to www.protectohio.org.

Family Coverage Coalition—A coalition of advocates focused on preserving the government-funded, health care safety net, such as Medicaid and Disability Medical Assistance.

Ohio Partnership for Prevention—This campaign combines forces of health access advocates, health organizations and tobacco control advocates into one common agenda. The goal of the Partnership is to increase tobacco taxes (by 75 cents/pack of cigarettes) in order to decrease tobacco use and improve health care access. Revenues from the tax increase would be used to fund health care access programs, such as free clinics.



What can you do? Here are 5 ideas:

- Provide the OAFc with stories—stories of free clinic patients (illustrating what we could do with additional funding), stories illustrating how state and federal cuts will impact your community, and stories demonstrating how tobacco-related illnesses impact your patients.
- Write letters to your legislators—The OAFc will assist you with this if you'd like!
- Invite legislators to your clinic so that they can see first hand the work that you're doing.
- Attend the Campaign to Protect Ohio's Future's Rally on April 12th at the Statehouse

Endorse the three coalitions listed above. Contact Amy at arohling@ohiofreeclinics.org for endorsement forms.

ABC EVENTS FACILITATE ACCESS TO PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The Access to Benefits Coalition (ABC) recently held a statewide conference to help individuals navigate the increasingly complex variety of programs offering financial assistance in obtaining prescription drugs. The Coalition also produced a white paper, entitled “**Unlocking the Medicine Chest**”, which is **available on the Ohio Association of Free Clinics Website** (www.ohiofreeclinics.org). Amy Rohling, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics, chaired the conference planning committee and co-wrote the white paper.

Several free clinic staff attended the statewide conference, which was directed towards various health and human services professionals. The plenary sessions and roundtable discussions examined the purpose, eligibility requirements, and scope of available benefits from the array of state, federal and private Rx assistance programs in Ohio, including the Medicare Discount Card's Temporary Assistance Program. Participants learned how to identify the most appropriate Rx assistance programs for their clients or pa-

tients, and how to effectively link them to the Rx drugs they need. They also learned key strategies for developing funding proposals for and designing a successful Rx assistance program in your own community.

The ABC Coalition works to educate older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons with low income in Ohio on how to make informed choices about prescription drug savings programs; and to facilitate their actual enrollment in new and existing prescription savings programs. The Ohio Chapter of the ABC Coalition was convened in April 2003 by the Ohio United Way. The Coalition is comprised of representatives of foundations, pharmaceutical companies, and health and advocacy organizations who work to educate the public and policymakers on ways to increase access to affordable prescription drugs.



SAVE THE DATE! ANNUAL CONFERENCE IS APPROACHING

The Sixth Annual Ohio Free Clinic Conference will take place **October 9-11, 2005** at the Conference Center at Northpointe (north of Columbus)! The Education Committee is already working on the program for the conference. The Call for Presentations will be released soon. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this informative conference!

Thanks to the members of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics for your dedication in serving the poor and uninsured in our state:

Ashland Christian Health Center

Asian Health Initiative

CareNet of Lucas County

Clinic at Faith Mission

Columbus Free Clinic

Community Health Clinic (Newark)

Free Clinic of Clinton County

Free Clinic of Greater Cleveland

Good Neighbor House

Health Partners of Miami County

Lake County Free Clinic

Lorain County Free Clinic

Madison County Health Partners

Mercy Health Partnership

Medina Health Ministry

North Coast Health Ministry

OPEN M's Summit County Free Clinic

Parma Health Ministry

Physicians Free Clinic

Reach Out of Montgomery County

Short North Health & Wellness

TLC Free Clinic

Townhall II Medical Clinic

Vineyard Free Medical Clinic

Viola Startzman Free Clinic

Western Stark Medical Clinic

Wheeling Health Right

(Bold indicates New Member Clinic)

OHIO'S BEST RX PROVIDES DISCOUNTS ON PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

Prescription drug costs may have just become a little easier on the pockets of some Ohioans. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) recently launched the Ohio's Best Rx Program, which provides a **discount drug card that will lower the cost of prescriptions for Ohioans who:**

- Do not have prescription drug insurance coverage; and
- Are either age 60 and older; or
- Have a total family income of less than 250 percent of the federal poverty guideline (\$23,280 per year for a single person, \$31,236 per year for a couple).

Ohio's Best Rx participants will pay a discounted price for prescription medications at all participating pharmacies. The estimated average savings per prescription is expected to range between 20-30 percent, with individual savings determined by the drug prescribed and pharmacy utilized. Participants will also have the option of filling prescriptions by

mail order. Several independent pharmacies and more than 70 percent of pharmacy chain locations are participating in the program.

The Ohio's Best Rx program is the result of legislation passed by the Ohio General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Taft in December 2003. The framework for the program was conceived by a coalition of groups representing drug manufacturers, the Ohio AFL-CIO, the Ohio United Way, Ohio Council of Churches and AARP.

"The Ohio AFL-CIO formed the Coalition for Affordable Prescription Drugs which included labor unions and two dozen community service and non-profit organizations representing the uninsured and seniors who need help with paying for medicine," Bill Burga, president of the Ohio AFL-CIO, said. "Our goal was to secure a meaningful discount for the greatest number of people who need it, and Ohio's Best Rx achieves that." However, the impact of Ohio's Best Rx on free clinic patients remains to be seen as even the reduced cost of some medications may remain unaffordable for very low income persons, especially those who lack health insurance.

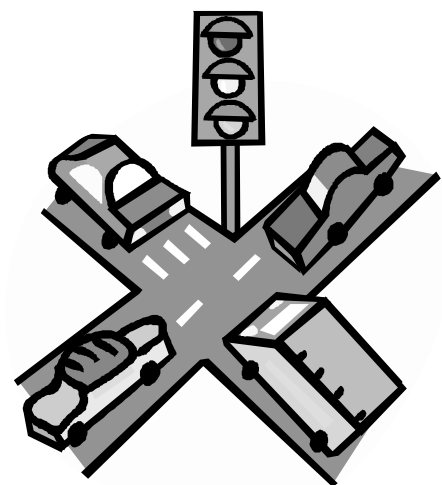
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SOMETHING TO CONSIDER...

Leah Curtin, RN, ScD(h), FAAN

Some years ago, a friend, who happens to be a religious sister, was driving me to the airport when another driver sped up alongside us and cut us off so closely that he almost took the paint off the car's fender! Sister stuck her head out of the window and shouted something that sounded like four-letter words to me. Shocked, I commented, "Sister, I am surprised to hear a holy sister use such words." "Really?" Sister Joanne responded. "I hear them all the time. As you know, I am a Franciscan Sister, a follower of St. Francis of Assisi. Whenever St. Francis greeted or said farewell to any person - friend or foe alike - he said, '*Pace e bene!*' However it sounded to you, what I wished that jerk who almost killed us was 'Peace and good.' What you send out to this world comes back to you." "Like what goes around comes around?" I asked. "Precisely," she said.

(Excerpt from: Ethics And Politics Are Not Oxymorons!)



OHIO'S BEST RX*(Continued from page 4)*

ODJFS is responsible for the overall operation of the program. Applications are available at many locations including participating pharmacies, county agencies, hospitals and health centers. They may also be requested by calling a toll-free number, 866-923-7879, or may be printed from the Ohio's Best Rx website (ohiobestrx.org). There are no application or enrollment fees.

Marketing, outreach, and additional educational materials are also available at no cost for free clinics interested in educating their patients on the benefits of Ohio's Best Rx. If your clinic would like to receive these materials or services, which include presentations by Best Rx field staff; a short looped video that can be played waiting rooms; and printed brochures in English and Spanish, please contact Jenny Camper at (614) 224-0658 or via

e-mail at jcamper@lesiccamper.com.

**We make a living by
what we get, we make a
life by what we give.**

Sir Winston Churchill

LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS FOR THE O AFC

After more than two years of work, Senate Bill 124 was enacted into law when it was amended into Senate Bill 80, a larger piece of tort reform legislation, during the final days of deliberation of the 125th General Assembly. The Governor signed SB 80 on January 6, 2005; it will go into effect on April 6, 2005.

As you may recall, Senator Amstutz sponsored SB 124 after discussions with the Viola Startzman Free Clinic in Wooster and the Ohio Association of Free Clinics.

Under prior law, the "performance of an operation" or the "delivery of a baby" was not given the immunity provided to volunteer health care professionals, nonprofit health care referral organizations and health care facilities (such as free clinics, as long as they are registered with the Ohio Department of Health) under ORC 2305.234. SB 80 modifies these exceptions.

First, SB 80 provides that, under the "performance of an operation" exception, the immunity is not available only if, at the time of an alleged injury, death, or loss to person or property, the health care professionals or workers involved are performing an operation to which any one of the following applies:

- The operation requires the administration of "deep sedation" or "general anesthesia."
- The operation is a procedure that is not typically performed in an office.
- The individual involved is a health care professional, and the operation is beyond the scope of practice or the education, training, and competence, as applicable, of the health care professional.

In other words, instead of all operations not being subject to immunity, now only operations falling under the three above definitions will not have immunity given to volunteer providers.

Second, the bill extends the exception from the immunity provisions from the "delivery of a baby" to also cover "any other purposeful termination of a human pregnancy." As such, immunity is not provided under Ohio law for the delivery of a baby or any other purposeful termination of a human pregnancy (ORC 2305.234(F)(1)(c)).

SB 80 also changed the law regarding the issuance of a certificate to allow retired dentists to provide dental services to "indigent and uninsured persons". Previously, the law permitted the state dental board to issue such a certificate. Now the law requires the state dental board to issue the certificate within thirty days of receiving an application. Within

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LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS FOR THE O AFC CONTINUED...

(Continued from page 5)

ninety days of the effective date of this law, the state dental board “shall make available through the board’s website the application form for a volunteer’s certificate... a description of the application process and a list of all items that are required”. The volunteer retired dentist is then covered under Ohio’s Charitable Immunity law. The State Dental Board is writing rules to implement this new law.

Thanks to Senator Amstutz, Representative Seitz (chair of the House Civil and Commercial Law Committee) and the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians for their support of this legislation. For a more detailed description of Ohio’s Charitable Immunity Law, please contact Amy Rohling at (614) 221-6494 or arohling@ohiofreeclinics.org.

FREE CLINIC CHECKLIST FOR HANDLING DRUG SAMPLES

In order to address the complex issue of sample drug handling procedures, the O AFC has compiled a checklist to help free clinics comply with current Federal and State regulations. A more complete outline of sample drug regulations as they affect Ohio’s free clinics is forthcoming, and will soon be made available in PDF format on the O AFC website, www.ohiofreeclinics.org.

ACTION	WHO PERFORMS ACTION	WHAT TO CHECK
<p>A. RECEIPT OF SAMPLES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Receipt ONLY from Manufacturer or Manufacturer’s Rep. to person with prescribing authority who then brings the samples to the free clinic. 	<p>Determine whether the sample:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is delivered in sealed carton; <input type="checkbox"/> Is received in original, unopened packaging; <input type="checkbox"/> Is received only by licensed practitioner; <input type="checkbox"/> Transaction is properly documented; <input type="checkbox"/> Receipt is recorded (see Section E).
<p>B. STORAGE OF SAMPLES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ All samples may be stored in a single locked facility with LIMITED access. 	<p>Determine whether the facility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is locked with limited access to keys; <input type="checkbox"/> Conditions maintain samples’ stability and effectiveness; <input type="checkbox"/> Conditions prevent contamination and deterioration; <input type="checkbox"/> Notify the Board of Pharmacy immediately by telephone of loss or theft of samples; <input type="checkbox"/> Notify FDA within 5 days of loss or theft of samples.

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FREE CLINIC CHECKLIST FOR HANDLING DRUG SAMPLES CONT...

ACTION	WHO PERFORMS ACTION	WHAT TO CHECK
<p>C. INSPECTION OF SAMPLES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Physician, Registered Pharmacist, or person authorized by one of the above who is associated with the free clinic. 	<p>Determine whether the sample:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Expired; <input type="checkbox"/> Labeling has been damaged, obscured or detached from the packaging; <input type="checkbox"/> Shows evidence of being stored or shipped under conditions that might negatively affect its stability and effectiveness; <input type="checkbox"/> Is for a drug that has been recalled or is no longer marketed; <input type="checkbox"/> Is otherwise contaminated or deteriorated.
<p>D. DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Distribution may ONLY occur between a physician and a patient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Written directions for use of the sample drug are provided to the patient if the physician's directions are different from those on the packaging or if the package contains no directions. <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution/Administration record completed (See Section E).
<p>E. RECORDKEEPING OF SAMPLES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Physicians are responsible for maintaining transaction, distribution, administration and disposal records for all sample drugs they handle. All drug records shall be maintained for a minimum of three years. 	<p>Transaction, Distribution and Administration records include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For non-controlled substances: Records of receipt, distribution, administration, and disposal must be maintained. Invoices can be kept to document receipt. Patient distribution and administration may be documented in the patient chart with the prescriber's signature. <input type="checkbox"/> For controlled substances: A log shall be maintained documenting the drug name, lot number, quantity, and date of receipt, distribution, administration or disposal. Patient name and the signature or initials of the prescriber are required to document patient distribution and administration. <p>Disposal records include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The drug name, quantity, date of disposal and signature of supervising physician.
<p>F. DISPOSAL OF SAMPLES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Physician or another person delegated by the physician and affiliated with the clinic (as long as that person has a witness and the physician signs off on the disposal record). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Disposal records must be completed (see Section E). <input type="checkbox"/> For non-controlled substances: flush down toilet or send to waste company licensed by Ohio Board of Pharmacy. <input type="checkbox"/> For controlled substances: must get written permission from Ohio Board of Pharmacy to destroy.



**OHIO ASSOCIATION OF
FREE CLINICS**

61 Jefferson Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215

**ACTING AS AN ADVOCATE FOR FREE
CLINICS AND THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE.**

AMY ROHLING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

arohling@ohiofreeclinics.org

Phone: 614.221.6494

Dates to Remember:

- April 7, 2005
Executive Director's Meeting
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
- April 12, 2005
Rally at the Statehouse
11:30 a.m.
- October 9-11, 2005
6th Annual Ohio Free Clinic
Conference

www.ohiofreeclinics.org

Rally at the Statehouse!

The Campaign to Protect Ohio's Future is organizing a rally at the Ohio Statehouse *on April 12th at 11:30 a.m. and needs you to Speak Up for Ohio's most Vulnerable Citizens— Children, Seniors, Persons with Disabilities and Working Poor Families & Individuals*

Join us in Columbus on the Ohio Statehouse West Plaza on April 12th to let legislators hear *your concerns about proposed cuts & inadequate funding for:*

- Health Care (Including Medicaid and DMA)
- PASSPORT & Senior Block Grants
- Education Funding
- Local Government



For more information about attending the rally or to find out how you can get involved as a volunteer, please contact the Ohio Association of Free Clinics, or:

**The Campaign to Protect Ohio's Future
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