

# The Free Clinic Times

## Inside This Issue:

### Page 1

- President's Letter
- State Budget Amendment

### Page 2

- OAFIC Director Appointed to DMA Council
- Free to Be Healthy Funding

### Page 3

- National Study Participation
- OAFIC Conference Reminder
- Friends of the OAFIC

### Page 4

- Smoke Free Ohio
- Anti-TABOR Initiative

### Page 5

- Is Medicaid Really a Monster?

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## A Letter from the President...

Greetings. Our sixth Annual Ohio Free Clinic Conference "Called to Service – Elevating Health, Enriching Lives" promises to be an enlightening and heartening experience. I look forward to seeing everyone there.

I recently saw this quote from Will Rogers—“Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.” Our conference provides the opportunities to affirm that we are “on the right track” and enrichment to keep us from getting “run over.”

Thank you to the Education Committee who worked very hard to provide opportunities for dialogue on the issues, education to help enhance the work of our clinics and re-invigoration for meeting the challenges in accomplishing

our mission. I look forward to seeing everyone at our signature event of the year and celebrating our successes coupled with planning for our future.

Free clinics continually seek ways to perfect their service and quality of services. I am enriched every day by the people I meet as a result of our clinic. I look forward to working with each of you as we try to solve the challenges ahead of us. We continue to be persistent in our work to improve access to care for the uninsured and underserved.

“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.



Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination are omnipotent. The slogan “press on” has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race. No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.”

—(John) Calvin Coolidge  
(1872-1933, 30th US President)

Thank you for your hard work and dedication. See you at our conference beginning October 9<sup>th</sup>.

*Lee Elmore*  
President

## Ohio's Free Clinics Benefit from State Budget Amendment

At the end of June the Ohio General Assembly completed work on the two year state budget bill, House Bill 66. While this budget included several cuts that will impact the people we serve negatively, an amendment added while the budget was in the Ohio Senate will benefit free clinics.

Senator Ron Amstutz (R-

Wooster) and Rep. Larry Flowers (R-Canal Winchester) sponsored the amendment that created a free clinic medical liability insurance reimbursement program in the state budget. According to this amendment, \$275,000 in State Fiscal Year 2006 and \$325,000 in State Fiscal Year 2007 can be used to reimburse free clinics for medical liability insurance premiums.

The coverage provided under the program is limited to claims that arise out of the diagnosis, treatment and care of patients of free clinics. Free clinics are defined by the following:

- Free clinics are nonprofit organizations (501 (c)(3)) that provide health care services for free or for a minimal

*Budget continued on page 2*

administrative fee to individuals with limited resources.

- A free clinic facilitates the delivery of health care services through the use of volunteer health care professionals and voluntary care networks.
- Free clinics that request a minimal administrative fee do not deny services based on ability to pay the fee. Free clinics do not bill patients for services rendered.
- Free clinics do not perform operations.
- A clinic is not a free clinic if third party payers are billed and 25% or more of the clinic's revenue comes from third party payments.

Free clinics must provide several pieces of documentation to the Ohio Department of Health by January 31. ODH will then reimburse the clinic for 80% of its medical liability insurance premiums with a cap of \$20,000 per clinic. The clinic, its staff and volunteer health care professionals and health care workers may all be covered by the medical liability insurance policy.

Thanks are due to Senator Amstutz and Representative Flowers for their willingness to sponsor our amendment, as well as to the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) for willingness to administer the program. The Ohio Academy of Family Physicians also supported the Ohio Association of Free Clinics by taking a formal position in

favor of our proposed amendment.

The OAFc will work with ODH over the next couple of months to implement this program. Thanks to all of you who wrote letters and talked to your legislators about this amendment. Thanks, in particular, to Katie Clark for her leadership of the OAFc Legislative Committee!

With the increasing number of uninsured, exacerbated by the cuts to Medicaid and Disability Medical Assistance made in this budget, we know that the funds "freed up" by this program will assist free clinics in providing medical care to the poorest Ohioans.



### *OAFc Director Appointed to Disability Medical Assistance Council*

While the original, "as introduced", version of the state budget bill, House Bill 66, completely eliminated Disability Medical Assistance, advocates were successful in maintaining \$60 million over the biennium for safety net services for Ohio's poorest individuals.

HB 66 also created the Disability Medical Assistance Council, representing various health and human services perspectives, to assist the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services in developing a replacement program for DMA. Amy Rohling, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics, was named to this Council, which is required to submit a report no later than September 1, 2005 to the Governor, the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives

and the President of the Senate. While the funding allocated is "better than nothing," the task of crafting a program with such limited funds is daunting, especially since the \$140 million provided in the last biennium did not even approach meeting the needs of all very low income people with disabilities.

The Council has met several times and is considering options such as restricting the drug formulary, putting time limits in place, providing incentives to counties to expedite the Medicaid eligibility process, and providing grants to organizations to test innovative models for managing the cost of providing service to very low income people with medication dependent disabilities. For more information, please contact Amy Rohling at the OAFc.

### *Free Clinics to Receive "Free to be Healthy" Funding*

The Ohio Association of Free Clinics (OAFc), through generous financial support from the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation, will award grants to four member free clinics to implement "Free to be Healthy" projects. "Free to be Healthy" projects must focus on the treatment of overweight and obesity in the free clinic's service area.

The total amount awarded for project grants is \$68,000. The OAFc received six proposals with requested amounts totaling \$104,000. The clinics that will receive grants are:

- Wheeling Health Right (Belmont County)
- Total Living Center Free Clinic (Stark and Wayne Counties)
- OPEN M's Summit County Free Clinic
- Health Partners of Miami County

A Grant Review Committee, comprised of three representatives from free clinics and three representatives not affiliated directly with a free clinic, met on August 18, 2005 to review grant proposals and recommend awards and amounts. The Board approved these recommendations on August 19<sup>th</sup>. The projects will begin in October 2005 and will conclude in October 2006.

## Ohio's Free Clinics to Participate in National Study

A nationwide survey of free clinics is currently underway. Julie Darnell, a Ph.D. student in Social Service Administration at The University of Chicago, is undertaking the study for her doctoral thesis. Designed as a mail survey to be administered throughout the late summer/early fall of 2005, it is the first of its kind in 35 years to document comprehensively and systematically what free clinics do.

The goal of the project is to conduct a census of all known free clinics across the nation in order to establish a foundation of knowledge about free clinics. The Project Director, Ms.

## Have You Made Your Plans to Attend the Ohio Free Clinic Conference?

Remember that the early bird Registration deadline for the Sixth Annual Ohio Free Clinic Conference is September 12<sup>th</sup>! You can download registration materials from: [www.ohiofreeclinics.org](http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org)

Reservations for rooms at The Conference Center at NorthPointe must be made by September 16<sup>th</sup>. Please call 1-866-233-9393 or 614-880-4300 to make a reservation.

Please note that additional panelists have been added to "Hospitals and the Health Care Safety Net." Brigid Gargan of the Ohio Hospital Association and Scott Shook of Mercy Health Partners will join Cathy Levine and Elaine Ewald on the panel.

The Conference has been approved by the American Academy of Family Physicians for 11.5 Prescribed CME. CNE and Social Worker/Counselor CEU applications are pending.

**Please remember to bring an item or items to for the silent auction!**

Darnell, desires to draw attention to and dispel myths about free clinics, which are often little known and poorly understood members of the health care safety net. The study will describe free clinics' unique contribution to caring for the uninsured and underserved and their use of volunteers and paid staff to deliver a range of healthcare services. With a background in health policy and social work, Ms. Darnell has a long-standing interest in health care for poor and vulnerable populations. Her focus on free clinics evolved from volunteer work at Zacchaeus Free Medical Clinic in Washington, D.C. where she lived before moving to Chicago.

Data from the mail survey will be combined with data from other secondary sources to generate an empirical model that will examine community factors that foster or inhibit growth of free clinics, such as the percentage of the population that is poor and/or uninsured, availability of other ambulatory safety net providers, supply of physicians, variety of religious congregations, wealth of a community, and the legal environment. Results

from the empirical model will provide insights about the underlying dynamics that lead to free clinic formation and survival. This information may suggest concrete actions that policymakers could take to promote the creation of additional free clinics.

It is anticipated that results from the study will be disseminated widely, as numerous agencies and organizations have funded the overall study, including the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Kaiser Family Foundation's Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, The California Endowment, the Society for Social Work and Research, the National Association of Social Workers Foundation, and the Chicago Center for Health Promotion Economics at The University of Chicago. For questions about the study, please contact Julie Darnell at 773-263-0533 or [j-darnell@uchicago.edu](mailto:j-darnell@uchicago.edu).



## Thanks to the following people and organizations who have become 2005 "Friends of the OAFC":

- Dr. Keith Holten
- Mr. and Mrs. Pat and Val Lay
- Mr. and Mrs. Jon and Holly Brower (in honor of the wedding of Wyndy Corbin and Mike Reuschling)
- Ms. Dorothy Marsh
- Dr. William Inglis
- Ms. Cecilia von Holck
- Ohio Academy of Family Physicians Foundation
- Stark County Prescription Assistance Network
- Dr. Linda Stone

"Friends of the OAFC" are those people or organizations that are not eligible to become full members of the OAFC, but would like to demonstrate their support of free clinics and stay connected to the work of the OAFC by providing a financial contribution. If you would like to become a "Friend of the OAFC," please contact Amy Rohling at the OAFC.

# Smoke Free Ohio

The Board of Trustees of the OAFc recently voted to endorse the SmokeFreeOhio campaign, which is advocating for a 100 percent, clean indoor air standard for the state of Ohio. SmokeFreeOhio will pursue an initiated statute for statewide clean indoor air. The initiated statute process brings with it very specific requirements pertaining to the number of signatures that need to be collected and the method for collecting them.



The campaign will be required to submit nearly 100,000 valid signatures of Ohio voters to the Secretary of State's office in early December 2005. The Secretary of State will deliver the signatures and our proposal for comprehensive clean indoor air to the Ohio General Assembly in January of 2006. The legislature will then have four months to act upon the proposal. Should they change the proposal in any way, or choose not to act, the campaign will then collect an additional 100,000 valid signatures

by July 2006 to put this issue on the November 2006 general election ballot.

The proposal will include all workplaces in the state, including bars, restaurants, bingo halls, and bowling alleys. SmokeFreeOhio will not support a statewide law that would weaken any

clean indoor air ordinances that have been adopted at the local level in Ohio communities. The American Cancer Society, Ohio

Division, is the lead organization for the SmokeFreeOhio campaign. Their long-standing partners in tobacco control have joined them: the American Lung Association, the American Heart Association, and the National Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. In addition, the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners, the Ohio State Medical Association, and the Ohio Hospital Association are also founding partners for the effort. For more information visit [www.smokefreeohio.org](http://www.smokefreeohio.org) or call 1-888-ACS-OHIO.

## OAFc Endorses Anti-TABOR Initiative

The Board of Trustees of the OAFc also voted to endorse the Coalition for Ohio's Future, a diverse, bi-partisan campaign dedicated to defeating a proposed TABOR-style constitutional amendment for Ohio.

The OAFc Board decided to join the effort against TABOR because of its potential negative impact on essential state and local public services. The Citizens for Tax Repeal originally planned to put a TABOR tax and expenditure limitation on the November 2005 statewide ballot, but recently decided to seek a November 2006 vote instead.

According to the Coalition for Ohio's Future, TABOR is a gimmick that does nothing to address real fiscal problems like closing tax loopholes and eliminating wasteful spending. Instead, TABOR sets up a faulty fiscal system that:

- Encourages frivolous lawsuits;
- Requires expensive "special" elections; and
- Takes away funding for the essential public services most Ohioans count on such as education, public safety, healthcare, child protection and infrastructure needs such as highways, roads and bridges.

TABOR has had a devastating effect in Colorado. Under TABOR in Colorado personal income growth went from first to 50<sup>th</sup> and the percentage of uninsured increased by 4.4%. In fact, many of the elected officials who originally supported it—including the Governor—are now asking voters to repeal it. For more information about TABOR or to endorse the Coalition for Ohio's Future, go to [www.ohiosfuture.org](http://www.ohiosfuture.org).



*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 Medical 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  
CMA 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



# Is Medicaid Really a Monster?

By John R. Corlett

Forty years ago, on July 30, the federal government created the Medicaid program. The goals of the program have expanded over the past four decades, but it remains primarily focused on providing health care to those who can't afford it, low-income citizens, including senior citizens, people with disabilities, children, and pregnant women.

***Medicaid is essential to Ohio's stability. It covers two million low-income Ohioans, including half of all children under five and 70 percent of all nursing home residents.***

Unfortunately, just as we're celebrating this milestone, Congress is about to eliminate a large piece of Medicaid funding.

In this year's Congressional Budget Resolution, the Senate Finance Committee is required to cut \$10 billion in spending, and the House Energy and Commerce Committee is required to cut almost \$15 billion. These cuts are allowed to come from any programs those Committees have jurisdiction over. But the Bush Administration and many in Congress are strongly pushing for Medicaid cuts.

The program is also under attack



in Ohio. Earlier this year, Governor Bob Taft described Medicaid as a monster, saying in his 2005 State of the State address, "We must tame the Medicaid monster." And the recently passed Ohio biennial budget includes Taft's proposal to eliminate Medicaid coverage for 25,000 low-income working parents.

But Medicaid is essential to Ohio's stability. It covers two million low-income Ohioans,

including half of all children under five and 70 percent of all nursing home residents. It also provides a \$13 billion boost to Ohio's economy - creating hundreds of thousands of jobs - and decreases uncompensated health care costs for health care providers who must treat uninsured Ohioans.

Medicaid also protects families who lose private health coverage due to unemployment or their employers dropping coverage, helping to slow the growth of the number of uninsured. Approximately 1.3 million Ohioans are uninsured - 13 percent of Ohio's population; if Medicaid had not covered low-income people who lost private health coverage during the recent recession, that number would be much higher.

Despite Taft's "monster" rhetoric, most Ohioans express strong support for the Medicaid program. In fact, a recent Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati poll found 60 percent of Ohioans would support an increase in the state sales tax to support Medicaid.

But time is running out. Congress will decide on these funding cuts

by mid-September. Luckily, they're in recess in August, so many of our elected representatives will be home here in Ohio. Give them a call, write them a letter, or pay them a visit to share your concerns about the proposed Medicaid cuts, and let them know how important the program is to Ohio. Invite them to visit Medicaid-funded programs and meet the people who depend on these services.



***Time is running out before Congress votes on possible Medicaid funding cuts.***

***Contact your elected officials of Congress to share your concerns about the proposed cuts.***

We all know someone who depends on Medicaid - a grandparent receiving care through PASSPORT or a nursing home, a neighbor with disabilities who is unable to work, or a student in your child's school whose parent lost his or her job. These are the people Congress will hurt if Medicaid cuts are enacted this year. Let's celebrate Medicaid's 40th birthday by calling on Congress to do what's right for our children, seniors, and vulnerable populations.

*John R. Corlett is a senior fellow and director of Public Policy and Advocacy at The Center for Community Solutions in Cleveland.*

## Ohio Association of Free Clinics

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Amy Rohling, Executive Director  
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Phone: 614.221.6494  
[www.ohiofreeclinics.org](http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org)

### Dates to Remember:



- Resource Development Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, September 14, 10am-11am  
(conference call)
- Legislative Committee Meeting  
Friday, September 23, 1:30pm-2:30pm  
(conference call)
- Education Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, September 20, 9am-10am
- Quality Improvement Committee Meeting  
TBD
- October 9-11, 2005  
6th Annual Ohio Free Clinic Conference



### When:

October 9-11, 2005

### Where:

Conference Center at Northpointe  
(north of Columbus)

**Hurry!**  
**Early Registration**  
**Deadline**  
**is September 12th!**

## Join Us for the 6TH ANNUAL OHIO FREE CLINIC CONFERENCE

### Would you like to:

- Increase the money you raise for your clinic?
- Improve the quality of services your offer?
- Learn from others who work and volunteer in free clinics?

For more information, please email  
Amy Rohling at:  
[arohling@ohiofreeclinics.org](mailto:arohling@ohiofreeclinics.org)

Or log onto [www.ohiofreeclinics.org](http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org)  
for more information and a  
registration form.