



CHARITABLE HEALTHCARE NETWORK

Ohio: Stronger. Healthier. Together.

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Clinic Contact]

Name: Janet Raber

Phone: (513)762-2088

Title: Executive Director

at SOAR Student Run Free Clinic at
NEOMED

[State Association Contact]

Name: Sydney Hatch

Phone: 614-869-3413

Title: Director of Engagement and
Communications at Charitable
Healthcare Network

STUDENT RUN CLINIC RECOGNIZED AS 2020 FREE CLINIC OF THE YEAR AT OHIO FREE CLINIC APPRECIATION AWARDS

Columbus, OH -12/9/2020 – SOAR Student Run Free Clinic at NEOMED, along with free clinics across Ohio, is celebrating the Sixth Annual Free Clinic Appreciation Month. With the passage of House Bill 320 in 2014, the Ohio Legislature designated December as Free Clinic Appreciation Month. On Wednesday's virtual celebration, SOAR Student Run Free Clinic was recognized as Ohio's 2020 Free Clinic of the Year.

"Our clinic fills a critical need for access to free health care, particularly for hard-working Ohioans who've struggled to keep their insurance and employment during the pandemic," said Janet Raber. "Free Clinic Appreciation Month gives us a chance to celebrate all that we've accomplished, and how we've turned the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity to expand our services like never before."

In 2019, Ohio's free clinics provided more than 150,000 visits to over 55,000 patients, with volunteer physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals providing nearly 180,000 hours of care to those who have fallen through the cracks of our healthcare system in Ohio. Ohio's free clinics are on track to obtain similar service hours even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, 31 of Charitable Healthcare Network's 52 clinics remained open to provide medical services in a time when their communities needed them most. SOAR was able to expand and adapt their services to continue serving their local community while upholding the safety of their staff and patients.

-more-

“While the ACA and Medicaid Expansion has helped thousands of Ohioans obtain health insurance, gaps still remain,” said Deb Miller, Executive Director of the Charitable Healthcare Network. “The pandemic has made the need for our clinics stronger than ever as unemployment and uninsured rates remain high. We are especially excited for the opportunity in 2020 to recognize the work Ohio’s clinics are doing to address those gaps.”

To learn more about Ohio Free Clinic Appreciation Month, please contact Sydney Hatch (shatch@charitablehealth.org), visit our website www.charitablehealth.org or follow us on Twitter [@CHNetwork](https://twitter.com/CHNetwork), use #ohiofreeclinics and #OhioStrongerHealthierTogether

To share our social media posts about SOAR, follow these links to our Twitter and Facebook.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CHNetwork/status/1336675719313838083?s=20>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CharitableHealthcareNetwork/posts/4191976347503307>

About SOAR Student Run Free Clinic (SRFC).

The Student Run Free Clinic at Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED), formerly known as SOAR-SRFC saw its first patients in 2016. SOAR stands for Student Outreach to Area Residents. The SRFC is on the campus of NEOMED and is in Rootstown, a rural area of Portage County, centrally located from community consortium hospitals and universities in Akron, Canton, Cleveland, and Youngstown. Our clinic draws patients from all these areas but primarily from our local population. We started with Primary Care clinic hours on one Saturday a month to now providing clinic on most Saturdays offering in person and virtual visits and adding Behavioral Health to our Primary Care mission. We faced the challenge of COVID-19 head on with expanding our hours, converting to EMR, integrating Behavioral Health, and Telehealth.



About Charitable Healthcare Network.

Charitable Healthcare Network (CHN), formerly the Ohio Association of Free Clinics, advocates on behalf of Ohio’s free clinics and the people they serve. We do not provide direct health care services on-site, but support those clinics that do. Free clinic services vary, but may include: primary care, prescription assistance, dental, vision, behavioral health and other specialties. With the recent impacts of COVID-19, the number of unemployed and uninsured/under-insured citizens is skyrocketing like never before. Using cost-effective strategies, such as in-kind services, building partnerships with other nonprofit organizations and donations of health care resources and time, we are able to support free clinics so they can provide for the health care needs of their patients. These strategies mean that every dollar invested in free clinics brings nearly \$6.45 in care for patients.

###