

## Smithville Community Clinic Offers HMO to Small Business

The Smithville Community Clinic (SCC) is working to make high quality primary healthcare accessible to all local residents especially those without healthcare insurance. On Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, meetings were held in the First National Bank community room to help local businesses to both understand the financial development of SCC as well as the benefits of their low-cost, non-insurance HMO partnership. K-Lee Starland, Ph.D. mentioned that in Texas 1 in 4 people do not have health insurance as compared to 1 in 6 nationwide. She also stated that, as determined by SCC surveys, 1 person in 3 in the Smithville area are without healthcare insurance and thus proper continuous healthcare service.

Jim Bailey, chairman of the Board, mentioned that our local businesses could benefit greatly from a local HMO plan for their employees. He also suggested that local businesses could donate various sums for support and recognition. It is his hope that the small businesses will support the SCC and help provide the funds it needs to operate. Starland mentioned this is an affordable and viable alternative to costly small business health insurance. Preliminary suggested donation levels opened for discussion were:

1. Leaves of Gold - One time donation of \$2500.00
  - . Your name will be proudly added to our distinguished list of Founding members upon a stunning brass plaque proudly displayed in the entryway.
2. Heart Healthy - Monthly donation of \$100 or more.
  - . The business name would be added to the monthly members plaque proudly displaying in the entryway.
3. A monthly donation (much less than health insurance) for each employee could be made by the local businesses for
  - . Primary health care
  - . Primary health care and primary dentistry only
  - . Primary health care, dentistry and additional services such as mental health

. Employee family package

The SCC is an attempt to get health care for those who do not have insurance or cannot afford healthcare. Bailey who is the Chair for the Board of Directors addressed the group and outlined how the SCC is supporting this endeavor through various state grants, private grants as well as through corporate and private donations. Bailey mentioned that since SCC is a Non-Profit 501(c)3 Corporation with developing FQHC federal status, this makes the organization eligible for many government grants, Medicaid and Medicare payment enhancements and tax write-off's. Bailey indicated that they have already applied for and received an initial \$10,000 from Texas DSHS to assist with the pre-opening paperwork. Further state support will help make it possible to afford the actual start-up operating expenses. Bailey indicated the following steps would be taken to enhance SCC financial stability.

1. Through the Texas Primary Care Office, physicians who have recently completed all medical training would be assigned a 3-year position to SCC in exchange for school loan re-payment.
2. Money from government grants and support from local people through donations and fundraisers.
3. A discounted 340b prescription plan through Smithville Pharmacy.
4. Bailey indicated that with approved FQHC status, SCC will be able to receive enhanced Medicare and Medicaid payments.
5. The First United Methodist Church of Smithville is currently in negotiations with SCC and attorneys to develop the lease for the future SCC clinic site at 403 Olive Street.
6. Smithville Community Clinic is NOT a free clinic. A low minimum payment and a sliding scale fee will be required.
7. Bailey discussed the clinic's vast education program that will be offered as an option for medical cost re-payment, chronic disease home maintenance, disease prevention all with a focus on reducing healthcare

recidivism.

Smithville Community Clinic will open its doors in 2007 with these initial services:

- . Primary health care
- . Primary mental/behavioral health counseling
- . Primary dental services
- . Pediatrics
- . Education classes
- . Discount pharmaceutical program