

A quarterly publication to inform current and prospective friends of the InterFaith Health Clinic. Providing affordable medical, dental and mental health care to the working uninsured and other under-served people.

Dr. McLemore Named Medical Director

After serving four months as interim director, Dr. Laurie McLemore has been named permanent medical director of the InterFaith Health Clinic effective January, 2006. A full-blooded Native American (one-half Cherokee and one-half Choctaw), Dr. McLemore came to Knoxville after working at Cherokee Health Services in Newport, Tennessee. Prior to the Newport position, she served seven years with Indian Health Services.



Dr. McLemore says she decided on a medical career when she was 16 years old, but she did not attend medical school until she was 30. The intervening years were spent rearing three children, earning an undergraduate degree in biology and a masters degree in human reproductive physiology (both from the University of Kansas), and teaching at Haskell Indian Junior College, an institution that serves over 100 tribes from 32 states.

Haskell College, now a four-year institution, has been a family-affair for the McLemores. Not only did Laurie teach at the school; all three of her children also attended. Her younger daughter is currently a student at Evergreen College in Washington; her son received a degree in psychology from the University of Kansas, and her older daughter is a full-time mother.

Continued on Page 3

Executive Director Message2
How Can I Help?.....2
10 Myths of the Uninsured.....5
Gifts In Kind 4
The Gift Goes On.....7

M*A*S*H Bash 2006
is in the works....
Page 4

MISSION

To provide accessible, affordable, and quality health care to the low income, working uninsured, primarily through the support of the religious, health care, and business communities.

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A Message from our Executive Director

Spring is here. I know this newsletter covers all the things that happened during the winter months, but I hope you will bear with me as I look forward as well as back. It is often the circumstances or experiences of the past that give us the best perspective for the future.



As expected, a big impact of TennCare disenrollment occurred this winter. Former TennCare patients who delayed finding other health care options, presented themselves at InterFaith. Those that didn't come here often found themselves in the emergency departments. Our number one referral source is still the emergency room departments, so many of those patients left the emergency departments with referrals to us. The bad part of this is the number of people displaced from their health care provider. The good news is that we have been able to take care of over 1,000 new patients during the last few months.

The entire community is responding. The Knoxville Academy of Medicine has joined forces with hospitals and other health care organizations like InterFaith to expand the resources available through a program called

Knoxville Area Project Access. The Knox County Health Department has started the Dispensary of Hope to provide additional pharmaceutical assistance.

We survived the winter. Spring is here. We have and are weathering the storm. So we should tackle the challenges of the next few months with renewed energy and optimism. You should take pride in the new efforts being made by our health care community. But you also need to take pride in the efforts you have made possible at InterFaith for the past fifteen years. Because of you, InterFaith provided over 18,000 comprehensive visits last year including medical, dental, and counseling. These visits do not include the over 1,500 specialty visits made possible. The countless services and treatments provided by area hospitals for InterFaith patients.

When I stop and look at what a blow the health care system took and how our community reacted, I realize what an difference can be made when we all work together. Thank you for partnering with us all these years. You have made a difference.

Melissa Knight
Executive Director

How Can I Help InterFaith?

One of the most important things you can do to support InterFaith is to provide financial support.

The average cost of one patient visit to the clinic is \$55. Patients pay an average of \$15, making the cost to the clinic \$40. Every \$40 you donate will

provide our health care services to someone in need.

Gifts-in-kind are also welcome. Please remember that the clinic cannot accept donations of expired medications. You may also choose to give to InterFaith by including the clinic in your will.

When her youngest child was five years old, Dr. McLemore entered the University of Missouri Medical School followed by a three-year family practice residency in Kansas City. After her residency, Dr. McLemore says she realized that she had spent most of her time working on her mind. She needed more personal development; so she enrolled in vocational technical courses in woodworking and outboard motor repair. Welding has become a favorite activity since, as she says, it is far more “forgiving” than wood-working. Her welding has produced functional art and furniture (e.g., computer stations).

Her other hobbies and interests include leather work, quilting, hunting and fishing. She has learned to play the Native American flute and now makes flute “quivers.” She enjoys taking gourmet cooking classes and recumbent (reclining) bike riding with the Knoxville Rocketriders (Recumbents of Knoxville and East Tennessee). She is also a member of the Chota kayaking group. (When asked how she finds time for such a variety of activities, her answer is simple: “I don’t watch television.”)

Most of Dr. McLemore’s practice has been in rural settings. She was initially hesitant about pursuing the permanent position at InterFaith because she wasn’t sure how such a clinic would work in an urban setting. She quickly changed her mind when she recognized the commitment of InterFaith doctors to their patients, and the speed and efficiency with which they served the working uninsured in the area. She is most impressed with Knoxville’s willingness to donate time, money, and service.

Dr. McLemore’s goals for the Clinic include restoration of pediatric services for children less than two years old, addition of evening and Saturday morning services for working patients, and establishment of a Well-Woman Clinic. For consistency in reporting, she has already developed a “first visit” form to be used by all physicians who see new patients as well as a diabetes flow sheet.

The Clinic welcomes this accomplished doctor as its new medical director.

Rolf Lanz gets Gold with Ski Movie

Rolf Lanz Ski Shop sponsored a Ski Movie event to benefit InterFaith Health Clinic on November 4, 2005 at the Knoxville Convention Center. There were two showings of the Warren Miller Ski Movie and with a silent auction to keep folks busy; there was plenty to do. The event raised over \$3,500 for the clinic! InterFaith would like to thank Rolf Lanz Ski Shop, the Knoxville Convention Center and all those who made this event possible!



Shana Wilson, Soft Goods Buyer,
Rolf Lanz Ski Shop



Gifts-in-Kind Lower Costs

The following gifts were received between December 1, 2005 and February 28, 2006

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Draft Notices for M*A*S*H Bash 2006!

M*A*S*H Bash 2006 is scheduled to be held on Saturday, May 20, 2006 from 7 - 11p.m. at the Knoxville Convention Center. Mingle with guests in the SWAMP, have dinner in the MESS HALL, dance in the OFFICER'S CLUB to the CHILL BILLIES.

Dinner provided * Cash bar available * Spring casual or best M*A*S*H Costume

Tickets are \$75.00 per person. Table sponsorships are available call Nina at 546-7330 for details.

Tailgate 2005 Success!

Tailgate 2005 was a huge success raising just over \$20,000 for InterFaith. Presented by the Greater Knoxville Sertoma Club and the Knoxville Association of Health Underwriters to benefit InterFaith, guests enjoyed a morning on Circle Park before the UT vs. Vanderbilt. Chick-Fil-A was on hand to provide entertainment and delicious food for all of our guests. We were sold out of food before the game even started! Big thank yous to the Greater Knoxville Sertoma Club, Chick-Fil-A and everyone who made this event possible!

The Top 10 Common Myths about the Uninsured

Part two of a two part series

InterFaith Health Clinic was created to provide the low-income working uninsured with quality, affordable and accessible health care. InterFaith has been in existence for over 14 years and we are continually looking at our mission statement to guide us through. Serving the uninsured of the East Tennessee area is rewarding and we feel like we are a local solution to a national problem.

There are many preconceived notions about who the low-income working uninsured are. “They can get insurance if they want it,” “The taxpayer pays for what the patient can’t,” and “Free health care is available,” are all common misconceptions about this group of people. In an effort to dispel these common myths and others, we turned to the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured and found this information:

Myth 6: The uninsured can get the care they need when they really need it and are able to avoid serious health problems.

Fact: The uninsured are more likely to postpone and forgo care with serious consequences that increase their chances of preventable health problems, disability, and premature death.

According to the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and Uninsured, over a third of the uninsured report needing care in the previous year but not getting it and nearly half of the uninsured report postponing care – rates at least three times higher than those with insurance. Many of InterFaith’s patients have gone without primary health care, dental care and medications for years before coming to InterFaith.

Myth 7: Buying health insurance coverage on your own is always an option.

Fact: Individually purchased policies vs. job-based group policies with similar benefits are more expensive and coverage can be limited or denied to persons with less than good health.

When job-based health benefits are not offered or affordable, the purchaser of an individual policy faces a wide variety of covered services when healthy enough to qualify. The average annual cost of a family policy purchased in the individual market is about \$3,300 compared to \$2,700 that an employee pays out of pocket. Even with insurance offered, InterFaith’s patients cannot afford to purchase a plan individually or through their workplace.

Myth 8: We don’t really know how large the uninsured problem is and many are only uninsured for brief periods.

Continued on Page 6

Continued from Page 5

Fact: The number of uninsured people varies with time but, measures are useful.

Experts agree that *on any given day of the year* the number of uninsured is now about 45 million. This annual estimate made by the Census Bureau is the most frequently used, in part because it allows health coverage to be tracked year-to-year. Over three-quarters of the uninsured at a specific point in time will have been uninsured for more than 12 months. Many of InterFaith's patients rely on InterFaith for many years for their health care needs.

Myth 9: The health care the uninsured receive, but do not pay for, results in higher insurance premiums.

Fact: The large majority of uncompensated care is subsidized through a mix of federal and state government dollars not cost-shifts to private payers.

There is no hard evidence of cost-shifting to private payers; tightly negotiated managed care contracts have likely ratcheted down the potential for direct cost-shifts to private payers. In 2004, health care spending among the uninsured totaled \$125 billion. Some had insurance for part of the year so insurance paid \$51 billion; the uninsured paid \$33 billion and the remaining \$41 billion was uncompensated. InterFaith is not a free clinic; all patients pay on a sliding fee scale. The average patient visit costs the clinic \$55, the average patient pays \$15; the remaining \$40 is made up by contributions.

Myth 10 provided by InterFaith Health Clinic

Myth 10: Knoxville, Tennessee couldn't have a local answer to a national problem.

Fact: InterFaith Health Clinic leads by example on a daily basis by providing affordable, accessible, and quality health care to the low-income, working uninsured.

For over 14 years, InterFaith has been a model for other areas and the nation to follow. Since its inception, InterFaith has provided over 550,000 patient visits and with the recent cuts in TennCare, that number is on the rise. InterFaith is working hard to help to be a safety net for those disenrolled from TennCare. InterFaith is currently offering Tuesday and Thursday night clinics and we will be expanding to offer nightly clinics in the near future.

InterFaith hopes this information had helped to more clearly define the group of people we serve. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Nina at 546-7330.

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