

People's Health & Wellness Clinic

Moretown Town Meeting Day 2017 Report

The People's Health & Wellness Clinic has been providing primary health care and wellness education to uninsured and underinsured central Vermont residents who could not otherwise afford these services since 1994.

Our services have always included primary medical care, mental health, body work and other complementary health, diet and nutrition, and vision care. The addition of oral health care to our services has been extremely well received, but the demand still far outweighs our current capacity. We have been offering on site dental hygiene for over a year. Currently, we have one full day a week and part of a second day. The rest of that day, our oral health case manager works on referrals to a growing number of central Vermont dentists who generously donate their services for more serious oral health needs, including extractions, restorative work, and occasionally dentures. However, as with on site hygiene services, there is far more demand than current capacity, and we must triage these services. Through two generous grants we were able to purchase a portable x-ray unit for on-site use by our hygienist, which is a huge assist when we make referrals out.

2016 was our sixth year of providing special women's services through the Ladies First program. All female patients receive a complete breast cancer risk factor assessment, and have access to physicals, free mammograms, other diagnostic tests, and coverage for gaps in their insurance. Even if you have commercial insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare, these programs may still offer benefits. One example is addressing cardio-vascular health by paying for membership in fitness programs for eligible women (anyone whose income under 250% of the Federal Poverty Level). Call us and ask about Ladies First.

In 2016, we also continued our participation in the evidence-based prevention screening program known as SBIRT. This stands for Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment. It's designed to identify people at low to medium risk for alcohol and/or drug abuse and depression and head off riskier behavior by an early intervention. All our patients receive this screening routinely. In August, we added an SBIRT component for Tobacco Cessation, and one of our staff became a Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist.

Finally, we continue to offer navigation services for people needing to sign up for health insurance through Vermont Health Connect. We have certified staff that is experienced in helping people understand their options and choose a plan that fits their specific needs and budgets. We have worked with the program since its inception in 2013, and are well-versed in dealing with system and the technical challenges that have presented over time. The public should know that five out of six applications go through just fine, and we can help with the ones that are problematic. We don't know what the future will bring regarding the Affordable Care Act or Vermont Health Connect, our state exchange, but we will continue to assist people in navigating the system as long as we can.

In Calendar Year 2016, the People's Health & Wellness Clinic served 543 unduplicated individuals, requiring 2289 patient interactions. 271 of these patients were new to the Clinic. All of these numbers are significant increases over 2015. We had 826 patient visits, 862 medical consults, 691 diagnostic tests, 93 dental hygiene visits and 51 referrals to dentists for treatment. We provided 210 pharmaceutical samples, immunizations, and vouchers, and wrote hundreds more prescriptions. Our services include screening all patients for eligibility in a variety of health insurance and assistance

programs. We also helped many of the 543 patients navigate the application process for a variety of programs including Medicaid, Ladies First, Medicare, Healthy Vermonters, Affordable Meds, and Central Vermont Medical Center – UVM Health Network and other hospitals' patient financial assistance programs. Through all these efforts, we were able to successfully enroll them 251 times, many in more than one program.

4 separate Moretown residents sought our services in 2016, 2 of whom were new to the Clinic. They required 13 separate patient interactions. They came for 7 full medical visits and 1 mental health visit. We provided 2 case management interactions, 1 medical consult, and performed or arranged for 6 diagnostic tests (labs, x-rays, etc.). Our navigation services helped 2 individuals successfully enroll into health insurance and assistance programs 4 times.

Volunteer practitioners are the heart of our service model. In 2016, over 75 volunteers gave over \$77,700 worth of their time serving our patients. Over \$78,400 worth of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies and other services were donated for our patients. We paid \$5,357 for diagnostic testing, and got another \$6,300.21 of tests donated.

We define our primary service area as all of Washington County, plus the Orange County towns of Orange, Washington, and Williamstown, but we do not restrict geographic access, and ended up serving people from 45 Vermont towns. To have been eligible for our services in 2016, one must not have health insurance (including Medicaid or Medicare), or have a health insurance deductible that is greater than 7.5% of household income, or need services offered by PHWC that are not covered by insurance, and have a household income of less than 400% of the Federal Poverty Level. 86% of our patients had incomes of 185% of the FPL or less.

We are a free clinic, and depend on grants and donations, including from our patients. For more information on our services, to make a donation, or to volunteer, please visit our website at phwcv.org. Patients are seen by appointment only – call 802-479-1229, Monday through Thursday.

We are grateful to the voters of Moretown for many years of support for the Clinic, and are very pleased to be able to provide these services to the community. Thank you.

Peter Youngbaer, Executive Director