

Prince William Area Free Clinic

What is Health Equity and How Do We Contribute?

The American Public Health Association defines health equity as the equal opportunity for all individuals to reach a high level of health. Equal opportunity in health equity is the assurance that the social, economic, demographics, and geographical factors are operating to the benefit of all members of in the community. The Prince William County Health District (PWCHD) recognizes that the determinants associated with declined health equity are gaps in healthcare coverage, transportation, and adequate food access.

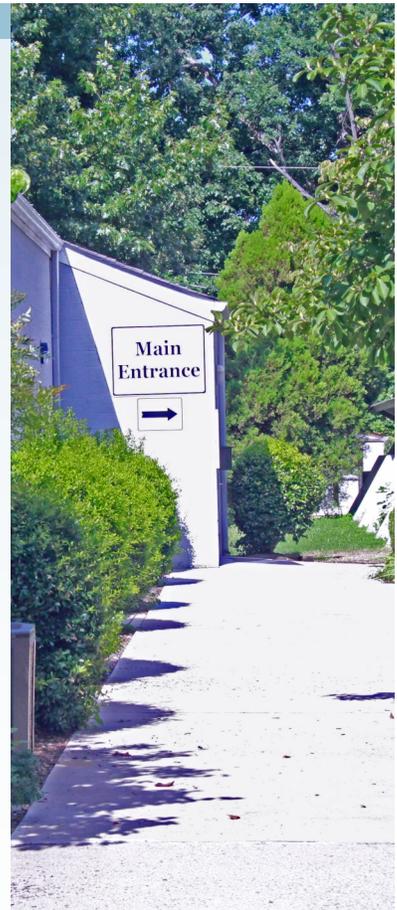
The Greater Prince William Area (GPWA) includes Prince William County, Manassas City, and Manassas Park City. The population estimate is around 500,000 people, of which 17% are uninsured. Patients at the clinic are individuals who do not qualify for Medicaid and we consider the patients to fall within the healthcare gap. The PWCHD reports that 15% of households within these areas do not have access to a vehicle. This places an immense burden on individuals needing medical care to rely on public transportation. Transportation not only affects the access to health care but also significantly affects the access to food, potentially creating food insecurities. The USDA defines a food insecurity as the lack of access to food as well as having enough food to sustain health. Data from 2014 reports from the U.S Hunger Relief Organization shows that approximately 34,000 people within the GPWA live with food insecurity.

The Prince William Area Free Clinic (PWAFC) is actively working to address the determinants regarding health equity and to

ensure that all individuals can obtain the highest level of health. In 2015, 2,600 individuals received medical care at the clinic. These individuals and families that the clinic serves are disfranchised by the healthcare gap that we assist by offering free health services and treatment. Without the work of the clinic in providing primary care, diagnosis studies, specialty referrals, medication access, and preventative care, these individuals would go without free, accessible, medical care. The clinic promotes the use of the PRTC; patients have the ability to call and schedule a pick up and drop off directly to the clinic. Due to the work of the Potomac Health Foundation, Kaiser Permanente of the Mid Atlantic States, and the Giving Circle of Heritage Hunt, if a patient is referred to a specialist or further testing, the clinic provides transportation access for those who would be unable to make it otherwise. Improving access to food is made available through monthly assisted SNAP counseling registration for patients through our partnership with Northern Virginia Family Service’s SERVE . The clinic is also proud to partner with the Masters Gardeners program of the Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Dale City Farmer's Market in distributing fresh fruits and vegetables to the facility once a week during the summer for our patients.

The Prince William Area Free Clinic is dedicated in achieving health equity for all individuals within the GPWA by improving transportation, access to healthy foods, and continuing to educate on Medicaid eligibility and health services. With continued partnership and support, we can continue to grow services that meet the health needs of the community and create health equity for everyone.

Article by volunteer Kristen Suazo.



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- You can now find our newsletter online!



Patient Spotlight: Mary's Story

Mary considered herself a healthy individual. As her elderly mother's main caregiver, she could not afford to be sick. When her mother passed away in 2014, she began getting ill. She remembers how "it all started to kick in", she progressively felt worse and finally went to the emergency room in November 2014. Mary was admitted for three weeks and diagnosed with end stage liver disease among other illnesses: pancreatitis, colitis, and ascites. The liver specialist told her she would be dead in two years without a liver transplant. From never getting a cold to hearing about her imminent death, overwhelmed was an understatement for what Mary was feeling.

Mary was directed to the PWAFC because she did not have any health insurance. At this point she was barely able to walk or take care of herself. The edema prevented her from being able to wear shoes or socks. She was weak standing for more than a couple minutes. Mary recalls how she was addressed with sheer concern and compassion during her first encounter with providers. Never having been to a free clinic, she was impressed by the care she had received. She remembers how providers "took her very seriously" and followed up in a matter of days. She quotes, "between [the provider's] care and oversight with [the medical director, Dr. Sinclair], she "received a lot of love and care".

Volunteer nurse Nancy and a patient with her daughter.

"... No resources, no health insurance, no way to get the necessary procedures and tests...had it not been for the free clinic I would not be alive"

Our Mission Statement

The Mission of the Prince William Area Free Clinic is to provide adult and pediatric medical care and acute dental care to qualified, low income residents of the Prince William Area without duplicating services provided by other non-profit healthcare organizations.

Holiday Closures and Snow Policy

The PWAFC will be closed on:

- Monday, December 26th
- Monday, January 2nd

The PWAFC follows the federal government's inclement weather policies regarding closures for severe weather. You can find the federal government's operating status at www.opm.gov.

Due to the lack of a liver specialist locally, PWAFC referred Mary to the University Of Virginia Hospital for indigent care. After submitting paperwork for financial aid assistance through the university, she was notified that she did not qualify for financial assistance due to a \$20,000 inheritance left by her mother. She found herself caught in the middle, she barely had enough to pay for her daily expenses but could not receive financial assistance.

After determining that Mary would need to find care through other means she says, "they went high gear at the [free] clinic and made sure I got everything I needed". Through PWAFC, she was able to receive routine paracentesis between January 2015 and late April 2015 at a local hospital. The procedure helped drain fluids from her stomach cavity relieving pressure and pain. In addition to the hospital encounters for paracentesis, she received exhaustive blood work free of cost from Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center. The medications required for her condition would have cost \$700 but through the PWAFC and NOVA ScriptsCentral she was able to obtain those medications for \$5. Mary states that with "no resources, no health insurance, no way to get the necessary procedures and tests...had it not been for the clinic I would not be alive".

Today, Mary's condition is "phenomenal" compared to before. This past November marks her two years from original diagnosis. Aside from occasional tiredness, her various exam results are normal. She is currently living with her sister and has a part time job working 32 hours a week. She recalls:

"I was treated with dignity and respect...To walk in and people recognizing you, to get hugs and be remembered—[it] was absolutely more than just a medical facility, kinda like a little family. [PWAFC was] devoted to my care and my well-being. Amid the vast number of people they see every single day and every single week [I was] not just some name on a file or a number waiting to be seen. All the different times, [I] watched all the other people waiting, so many different degrees of illness, all types of people and ethnic backgrounds...just seemed like everyone cared. [I have] been to regular doctor's office where it [was] less personal than the [free] clinic. [I was] never treated like a falling down drunk, never treated as if I was less than. [I was] treated like an equal...with respect, love, compassion, [and] care."

--Mary G.



Volunteer provider Dr. Rayman and a patient.

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

Thank you for all of your support of the PWAFC and our community! As the year winds down I'd like to take this time to express my thanks for all the exciting initiatives you have made possible this year, and the improvements you have helped make to support our patient's health.

According to organizations such as The Kaiser Family Foundation, when it comes to a person's health and well-being 40% comes down to individual behavior, 30% is based on genetics, 20% is tied to social and environmental factors, and only **10% is attributed to services received in a clinic or at an appointment**. While we cannot affect our patient's genetics, we can help improve their social and environmental factors to provide them the opportunity to create healthy changes in their daily lives in addition to their appointments with us.

These healthy changes would not be possible without the private entities that round out our services and help us provide our patients with exceptional care. Private practices open up their office spaces to ensure our patients have a local connection to necessary healthcare. Hospitals work with us allowing the communities we serve access to services they would not have otherwise. The wrap-around organizations we partner with give our patients an avenue to healthy food, classes on nutrition, access to safe housing, behavioral health counseling and health education.

Our services would also not be possible without the generosity and passion of our funders and donors. Your commitment to the well-being of our patients remains truly inspiring, and continues to improve the lives of so many. Our supporters help us invest in the communities we work with, giving our patients the ability to take back ownership of their health.

I truly believe that knowledge is power. The more our patients are educated on their illnesses the better they can take care of themselves. The more that they know about available resources the more likely they are to take those steps to positively impact their health and this is vital to us to successfully fulfill our mission. I am excited to continue to work with our many partners who have supported the PWAFC over the years, and greatly look forward to continue our journey to improve the lives of our patients, both at the clinic, in their homes, and in our communities.

Best Regards,


Caitlin R. Denney

Donating Throughout the Year

During the holidays, we all tend to think more about giving to others and those gifts are greatly appreciated; but, there is an ongoing need. There are so many ways to help PWAFC patients throughout the year. Maybe one of the following will be a good fit for you:

- "In Memory of" ...What better way to honor a special someone than a gift, however big or small, to those in need.
- "In Honor of" Sometimes we have people close to us who would appreciate an "honor of" donation as an acknowledgement of their importance in our life.
- Monthly donations....Perhaps a monthly donation would be a way to consistently make a difference in a life of others less fortunate.
- Fund raiser...Include your children as a part of your giving by organizing a family fund raiser with profits going to the clinic.
- With the cold weather approaching, the clinic is collecting gently used coats and jackets to distribute to our clients. As you clean out your closets, donate their coats which are no longer used.
- When grocery shopping, pick up some canned goods for the food pantry.



Annual Health Fair

On Saturday July 23, 2016 the PWAFC hosted it's health fair. The health fair is an annual event at the clinic that is centered around providing hearing and vision tests. These tests are donated and conducted by the Woodbridge Lions Club. In addition to the exams we provide CPR training for any attendees that would like to participate, courtesy of Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center.

This year we also had representatives from Anthem Medicaid to teach people about Medicaid eligibility , and Young Invincibles, a non-profit that educates on Medicaid , the Affordable Care Act, and health insurance. Dr. Corbin Eissler along with Kaiser Permanente hosted a nutrition table and the PWAFC

Manassas Clinic Coordinator, Irene Sullivan, RN, hosted a "What's in your drink" workshop. Lastly , Image Church, made and distributed over 125 bagged lunches to everyone who attended the health fair, brought breakfast to those that attended in the morning and loaned us the use of their bag-toss boards for a fun exercise activity while families waited.

Without the help of our many volunteers and staff the health fair would not have been nearly as successful as it was. We look forward to having next year's health fair a little early in the year and hope to incorporate more activities and educational opportunities while opening up the booths to the community.

Volunteers from Image Church during the annual Health Fair, giving out over 125 bagged lunches.

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted" —Aesop



Volunteer Spotlight: The "Lindas"

What do teachers do after they retire? Many of them look for meaningful volunteer opportunities as a way to continue to give back to the community. Linda Hunt and Linda Pelletier, both long-time Prince William County educators, found such a place at the Prince William Area Free Clinic.

"The Lindas", as they are often called, enjoy interacting with clients and assisting the staff at the clinic. Whether it is screening patients, helping out at the Health Fair, or working on the newsletter there is always something to be done.

Working with appreciative clients and a dedicated, highly qualified staff makes each day a rewarding experience. As former teachers, "The Lindas" are especially inspired by the professionalism and caring attitudes of the young people working at the clinic.

While both volunteers thoroughly enjoy their retirement, they felt a void leaving a career that impacted the lives of others. Serving at PWAFC helps to fill that void.

Something else the "Lindas" dedicate their time to while volunteering at the free clinic is this newsletter. During the past year the clinic has been able to bring you a well curated newsletter through their efforts. Between them taking patient and volunteer interviews, helping with layout, and developing articles we have been fortunate to have their aide and attention to detail.

Both "Lindas" agree that they have definitely found the clinic to be "a place of encouragement, dignity, and care".

The "Lindas", volunteer eligibility screeners and newsletter writers.

Support the PWAFC While You Shop for the Holiday Season

Through organizations like Amazon and We-Care.com the PWAFC is fortunate to be able to receive donations from major retailers while you shop, and it's free too you!



*Prince William Area Free Clinic
a place of encouragement, dignity, & care*

If you find yourself shopping online this holiday season visit <http://pwafc.we-care.com/start> and you will receive access to thousands of exclusive coupons to hundreds of major retailers. Once you are enrolled shop online at sites you would normally visit and We-care.com will contribute a percentage of each purchase to the clinic at no extra cost.

If you shop at Amazon visit Amazon Smile's program and choose the Prince William Area Free Clinic. Amazon, at no extra cost to you will donate .05% of every purchase to the clinic.

Don't forget to invite your friends and family to use these great services! For every gift you give

Good Samaritan Gifts: Genuine Gifts from the Heart

Help us make this a Happy Holiday for someone in need! You can give a PWAFC patient a six month supply of life-giving medication for just \$25. A certificate will be give for each "gift" purchased. The PWAFC will provide a receipt for tax purposes.

To purchase a "Good Samaritan Gift" for this holiday season, please complete this form and mail it along with a check made payable to the Prince William Area Free Clinic. Please use the included envelope and send it to:

Prince William Area Free Clinic
13900 Church Hill Drive
Woodbridge, VA 22191

How many \$25 "Good Samaritan Gifts" would you like to purchase?: _____

Amount Enclosed?: _____

Good Samaritan Gift 2016

 Purchaser Name

 Address

 Email

 Phone

In Memoriam

Over the past several months we lost several long time supporters and/or volunteers of the PWAFC. We wanted to recognize their efforts and remember their dedication to improving the health of their community.

- James Brook, III
- Ruth Hellwig
- Ralph Neeper

Services Provided

- Primary Care
- Specialty Care
- Medications
- Behavioral Health
- Mammograms and Cancer Screenings
- Diabetic, Asthma, and Nutrition Classes
- SNAP and WIC Application Assistance
- Flu Shots
- Case Management
- Coat Closet
- Food Pantry
- Transportation Assistance

Does any of this work interest you? Come volunteer at the Prince William Area Free Clinic, we have both medical and administrative opportunities available. You can now apply online at www.pwafc.org/our-team.

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PLACE
STAMP
HERE



Prince William Area Free Clinic
a place of encouragement, dignity, & care



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