

ABOUT THE HOPE CLINIC

» Hope Clinic of Coshocton third anniversary open house, 131 S. Sixth St., 5 to 7 p.m. Monday. Tours of clinic and door prizes.

» As of Sept. 6, the 180 volunteers at Hope Clinic have logged 14,820.25 clinic hours and provided \$502,949 in services to the community since the doors opened Sept. 10, 2009.

More than 2,915 patients have been seen, with 913 of them seeking ministry in the prayer room while 1,858 submitted prayer requests.

Hope Clinic is now a United Way of Coshocton County agency.

» Hope Clinic is open to patients on Thursday evenings with registration starting at 5 p.m., and patients are seen by physicians from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The licensed medical staff provides basic medical care to those who would otherwise not have access to it. All services are free to the uninsured.

» Financial contributions can be sent to Hope Clinic, P.O. Box 1088, Coshocton, OH 43812. Find more information at www.HopeClinicCoshocton.org or Hope Clinic of Coshocton on Facebook.

COSHOCTON -- Almost 3,000 people have been seen by the volunteers at Hope Clinic of Coshocton in the three years since it opened.

"There's such a need," said Dr. Kevin Doherty, one of the clinic's founders.

The organization will celebrate its third anniversary with an open house Monday. Visitors will be able to tour the South Sixth Street facility where the clinic relocated just a little more than a year ago.

Hope Clinic offers basic medical care for free to residents with no insurance, but it's there to offer more.

Its mission is to love God, love people and use medicine as an instrument to share the gift of God, said Maureen Karl, president.

"We use medicine as a vehicle to share the hope we have in Jesus Christ," Doherty said. "We treat not only physical needs, but emotional, mental and spiritual needs as well. Studies have shown there's a decrease in complications with patients if they're given encouragement and support in a faith-based network."

The 180 volunteers who've logged more than 14,000 hours with the clinic come from all walks of life and a wide range of Christian denominations, Karl said.

A background in medicine isn't a prerequisite to volunteer. There are clerical needs, child care and the ability to make patients aware that they matter.

Terrie Sherock said she was intimidated by the idea of first attending the clinic after she lost her job and had no health care.

"If it wasn't for this place I wouldn't have my medicine for blood pressure or thyroid," she said.

In 2009 when the clinic was first started Coshocton County's unemployment rate was averaging 13.2 percent, with 2,300 people seeking a job each month. It peaked early in 2010 at 14.9 percent with 2,600 people looking work in January and February. Since then it's dropped into the single digits, at 9.9 percent for July, but that still leaves 1,600 people unemployed.

About 20 people waited outside this week for the doors to open and registration to begin. After registration they go to a triage area, where a nurse gets vital signs such as blood pressure and asks what's going on, Karl said. Patients then are moved into one of five exam rooms to speak privately with a doctor. Usually, two physicians are on hand.

The second and fourth Thursdays of each month patients can be seen by a chiropractor.

Simple lab tests such as a rapid strep test, blood sugar check, mononucleosis test or dipstick urinalysis can be done, Karl said. There's also a volunteer who'll work with patients that need long-term medication, such as Sherock, to find a company that will donate or provide the prescription at little or no charge, she said.

Most of the rooms are labeled by a sponsor, such as a business, organization or church, that helped cover the cost of renovating the former dry cleaning building into a health care facility.

Area churches are major supporters of Hope Clinic, Doherty said.

It's worked well as replication of partnerships he and Karl have seen in action on foreign missions.

What they found was while medicinal needs were being met for a couple of weeks or a month, after the mission workers left health care relapsed.

"The international organization formed partnerships with medical providers and churches in that area who were able to do not only health but spiritual follow-up," he said.

The community will be able to learn more about Hope Clinic and how it functions at a fall conference presented in conjunction with the Navigators, an international, interdenominational Christian ministry established in 1933.

The time and date hasn't been set, Doherty said.