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Virginia Health Care Foundation Commits \$1 Million for Health Care for the Uninsured

RICHMOND, Virginia – Responding to the record-breaking numbers of uninsured patients seeking medical attention from Virginia’s already burdened free clinics, community health centers, and other health safety net providers, the Virginia Health Care Foundation (*VHCF*) announces immediate relief in the form of grants totaling \$1,025,000 to 14 health safety net organizations across the state. The funds underwrite a broad array of projects that will establish, expand or enhance the delivery of basic medical, dental, and mental health services for uninsured Virginians; increase access to free prescription medicines; and launch a child health insurance outreach and enrollment initiative in rural Southside Virginia, where unemployment rates are among the highest in the state.

“Due to the recession, VHCF has received a record number of funding requests from The Commonwealth’s health safety net providers,” said Debbie Oswalt, Executive Director. “Virginia’s free clinics have been deluged with over 18,000 new patients in just the past six months, and have had to turn 40% of them away due to a lack of resources. Virginia’s community health centers are also experiencing unprecedented demand and struggling to meet it.”

Data provided from Virginia's health safety net organizations indicate that the majority of new patients seeking help are those who have lost health insurance and/or jobs due to the recession.

The grant recipients (*listed by project focus*) are:

Medical Care

- ***Project Care (Newport News)*** – to hire an experienced Executive Director to oversee this new regional initiative, which provides uninsured patients of the Peninsula area with pro-bono primary and specialty health care. *Project Care* was initiated by Sentara, Riverside, and Bon Secours Health Systems.
- ***Tri-Area Community Health (Floyd)*** – to hire an additional physician to expand patient capacity in its Floyd County practice, which is currently experiencing tremendous demand for services after the recent closure of the area's free clinic.

Dental Care

- ***Greater Prince William Area Community Health Center (Woodbridge)*** – awarded a challenge grant to hire a dentist who will provide adult and pediatric dental services at its new dental clinic to area residents.
- ***Shenandoah County Free Clinic (Woodstock)*** – to hire a full-time dentist to provide dental care to area children and uninsured adults.
- ***Southern Dominion Health System, Inc. (Victoria)*** – to hire a dentist for its new dental clinic in Lunenburg County.
- ***Southwest Virginia Community Health Systems, Inc. (Saltville)*** – to hire a dentist for its new regional dental clinic.

- **Harrisonburg-Rockingham Dental Clinic (*Harrisonburg*)** – to hire a part-time dentist to provide care to area children and uninsured adults.
- **CrossOver Health Clinic (*Richmond*)** – to hire a dental hygienist and dental assistant to enable its existing dental clinic to serve more patients.
- **Western Tidewater Free Clinic (*Suffolk*)** – to fund dental equipment and supplies for the clinic’s first offering of dental services to its constituents.

Mental Health

- **Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia (*Virginia Beach*)** – to hire two counselors for its *Access to Therapy* initiative, an innovative mental health program providing resident mental health counseling to low-income, uninsured adults in its Chesapeake, Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Newport News offices.
- **Monroe Health Center (*Craig County*)** – to hire a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who will provide basic mental health services for the first time to the patients of its Craig County Health Center location.

Prescription Medications

- **Gloucester-Mathews Free Clinic (*Hayes*)** – to increase its pharmacist’s working hours substantially, enabling the clinic to fill an additional 24,000 prescriptions annually. This will help the clinic keep up with overwhelming demand for prescription medications.

Child Health Insurance Outreach & Enrollment

- **Pittsylvania County Community Action, Inc (*Chatham*)** - to hire outreach workers in the Danville/Pittsylvania County area to identify, enroll and retain

Health Services for the Homeless

- **Rescue Mission of Roanoke (*Roanoke*)** – to help renovate a building that will house and greatly expand medical, dental, and mental health services for the region's homeless population.

The Virginia Health Care Foundation is a non-profit public/private partnership whose mission is to increase access to primary health care for uninsured and medically underserved Virginians by strengthening and growing Virginia's health care safety net. The Foundation was initiated by the General Assembly and its Joint Commission on Health Care in 1992. Since its inception, it has funded 322 community-based projects across the Commonwealth, and its programs and partnerships have touched the lives of more than 500,000 uninsured Virginians.

For more information about VHCF and its programs, visit www.vhcf.org or call (804) 828-5804.

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