

Family Medical Center clinics provide health services to residents in need

By Ed Larkins

More than 34 years ago a group of community leaders in Temperance recognized that there was a need to provide medical services to local residents who were without insurance.

After many meetings and hard work the Family Medical Center of Michigan was incorporated as a not-for-profit, federally qualified community health center to meet the medical needs of the underserved. From those early beginnings in 1976 Family Medical Center has grown into a network of clinics in Monroe and Lenawee counties.

Family Medical Center of Michigan is the safety-net provider for the underinsured and uninsured of Lenawee and Monroe counties, providing sliding-fee discounts based on income. FMC is one of the few providers in the community to provide services for the Medicaid population; 45 percent of all FMC patients are on Medicaid. FMC also provides medical services for the community migrant population.

In the last year, Family Medical Center provided medical services to 17,113 patients resulting in 57,430 encounters.

Family Medical Center is fairly new to Lenawee County having opened up a



small medical clinic, with the aid of Bixby Medical Center, in 2008. In 2009, the Family Medical Center board of directors decided to bring under its corporate umbrella the Lenawee Dental Clinic, which had a similar mission as Family Medical Center.

As a federally qualified community health center, all of the medical and dental clinics of Family Medical Center of Michigan must meet given federal guidelines. Although it is not part of the federal or state governments, Family Medical Center must adhere to regulations concerning the provision of financial discounts to patients who cannot afford to pay for services, as well as adhering to a variety of quality of care guidelines. Many of Family Medical Center's board of directors must be users of the services provided at the medical and dental clinics.

Both the medical and the dental clinics operate from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Housed in separate locations about two miles apart, each of the clinics is staffed by dedicated professionals. In the medical clinic, located at 225 Riverside Ave. in Adrian,

there is a full-time nurse practitioner, a full-time physician assistant, a part-time family practice physician and various support staff. Last year about 5,800 patients were served, however, this year with added support from the United Way, it is anticipated that more than 7,000 patients will be treated for a variety of medical problems, ranging from hypertension to complex medical conditions.

The dental clinic, located at 128 S. Broad St. in Adrian, provides dental services to residents who have problems finding service elsewhere in the Lenawee County community, many times due to their inability to pay fully for dental care. While dental services are not free, patients who meet given income criteria can have their cost of care reduced. In the past year, the dental clinic has been able to expand its hours of operations and will be able to serve even more patients than in 2009.

Family Medical Center of Michigan's Lenawee County locations fill a great need in Lenawee County, where many Medicaid

patients and the underinsured have problems finding medical and dental care. Because of the current economic recession, many residents of the county who once had insurance now find themselves without coverage. The medical clinic and the dental clinic are there to help those in need.

Family Medical Center is looking at how to expand its service base and add services like behavioral health. Through partnerships with such organizations as the Lenawee County Health Department, the Lenawee County Mental Health Authority and the Community Action Agency we will be able to grow the services that are needed.

The Family Medical Center in Adrian can be reached at 263-1800 and the Lenawee Dental Clinic can be reached at 266-0651. Visit us online at www.familymedicalmi.org.

The Adrian Medical Clinic and the Lenawee Dental Clinic are funded programs of Lenawee United Way.

Ed Larkins is the executive director for the Family Medical Center of Michigan.

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