



Caring Neighbors

Volunteers in Medicine

Summer News 2020

Closing Gaps in Care

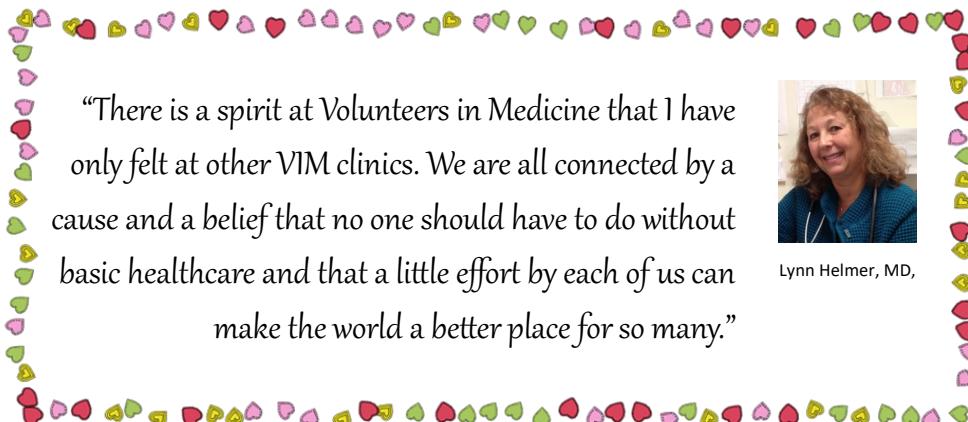
2020 began with great news that we were awarded a grant from **NAFC - CVS Health Foundation** to implement a program we called Closing Gaps. We know that good health depends on so much more than access to primary care. Our patients struggle to buy food, pay rent and utility bills. They have transportation and child care issues. Many work sporadically or seasonally. **Closing Gaps had a simple goal: to reduce stress around food insecurity, heating, cooling, transportation, etc., so our patients could become better partners in their health; so they would have more energy to devote to management of their chronic conditions.**

Little did we know that just three months later we would be in the midst of a pandemic of epic proportion. Suddenly, our patients' issues

were amplified. Many lost their jobs. A good number had at least one family member working an essential job, such as cashier or janitorial, which caused exposure fears for the entire family.



Although implementing a new social services program in the midst of a pandemic has been a challenge, the fact that we had a program with funding has made all the difference



"There is a spirit at Volunteers in Medicine that I have only felt at other VIM clinics. We are all connected by a cause and a belief that no one should have to do without basic healthcare and that a little effort by each of us can make the world a better place for so many."



Lynn Helmer, MD



in the world. Thanks to the focus of **NAFC and CVS** on coordinated care for improved health outcomes, VIM continues to look beyond health care and truly make a difference for our patients.

To support our patients in the early days of the pandemic, we quickly implemented a telephone outreach program. Our fabulous team of volunteers called all our patients to check-in. These calls are very personal, with intent to simply let our patients know we care. We address health and safety concerns with Covid-19, and advise on when to call VIM and when to go to the ER. We are providing information about food banks and benefit programs. We are supplying gift cards for groceries and prescription assistance. We have provided guidance on how to make and wear masks; how to properly clean and sanitize surfaces; what are acceptable sources of information versus what are urban myths.

We are making a difference. Our clinics rely on the good graces of the community for support. Our patients rely on VIM for much needed assistance and care.

Together, we heal.

Assurance for the Uninsured

Circle of Caring

2020 has been a time of crisis and uncertainty. Through it all, Volunteers in Medicine has continued to offer hope and help to our neighbors in need. Due to the ongoing presence of COVID-19, we have made the difficult decision to cancel our Annual Celebration for the health and well-being of everyone. Although we will miss gathering together in celebration with our volunteers and supporters, we look forward to seeing you next year.

Volunteers in Medicine faces a challenging financial future. Loss of revenue from our two Thrift Stores during the shelter-in-place, the cancellation of our sole annual fundraising event, as well as an increased demand at our clinics from increased unemployment and the number of uninsured, **makes your generous financial support more important than ever.**

Our clinics depend on the good graces of our community for volunteers and financial support. **Please join our Circle of Caring with a tax-deductible donation now.**

Visit www.vimsj.org or return the enclosed envelope. Your support ensures access to care for our neighbors in need. **Together, we heal.**

Proceeds gratefully support Volunteers in Medicine of **Atlantic** and **Cape May** counties.



VIM Continues to Make a Difference

People without health insurance go to the emergency room with strokes, heart attacks, out-of-control diabetes and high blood pressure. They are stabilized and advised to "follow up with their primary care doctor" - only they don't have one. Later, after disease has ravaged their system and their finances, they will finally qualify for Medicaid or Medicare. We know preventive care ultimately saves money, so how can this make sense - medically, financially, or morally?

Here in Atlantic County and Cape May County, we have a way to provide hope. Our residents are blessed to have access to Volunteers in Medicine. Our clinics are perfect examples of all that is good about America. They are a grassroots movement of neighbors taking care of neighbors. **We receive no State or Federal funding.** We operate on a shoestring budget and are wholly dependent on the good graces of kind people like you and members of our very generous community.

VIM has one patient who is *lucky*



"Thank you so much for all the hard work that you put in each one of your patients. I just want you to know how much I appreciate you and thank you."



VIM patients earn too much for Medicaid, are not old enough for Medicare, and do not earn enough to afford the high cost of deductibles, co-pays, and premiums associated with private insurance.

enough to work for a public works department but as a *permanent temp*, so he has no health benefits. He suffers from colitis, a painful condition requiring frequent doctors' visits and expensive medications. We have a waitress who needs shoulder surgery; a landscaper with heart problems; a single mother with uncontrolled diabetes who eats too many carbs be-

cause pasta is cheaper than meat and vegetables. All of VIM's patients say, "Without you, I do not know what I would do."

**"Without
you, I do not
know what
I would
do."**

A few months ago, we received a call from the hospital. They had an uninsured patient who was the victim of a hit and run. He was ready for discharge and would require significant follow-up. He had several broken bones, cuts and scrapes. His wounds were not healing well because he also had unmanaged diabetes. **VIM welcomed this patient and with the support of the community, he is doing so much better.**

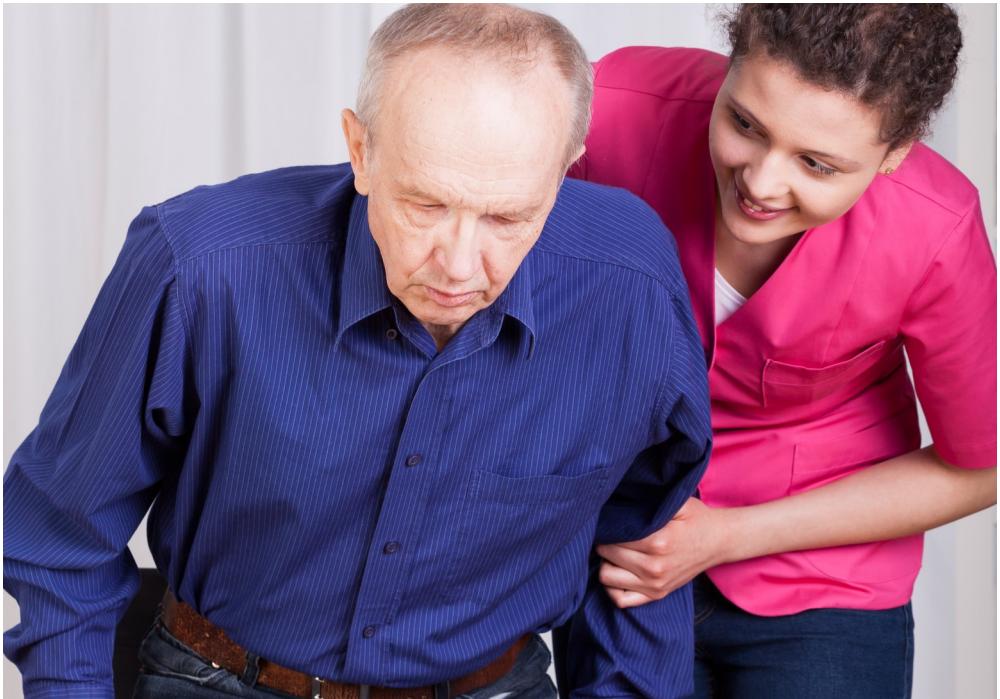
... Thanks to You!



Jeff, (not his real name), worked year-round as a short order cook. Prior to his accident he had not seen a doctor in years. He wasn't rich but he got by – paid his rent and kept food on the table; didn't rely on charity. After his accident, he was hospitalized for almost three weeks. With his extensive fractures, he was unable to return to work for the foreseeable future. **People like Jeff do not have any savings for a rainy day, and it was suddenly pouring.**

Dr. Carey, our volunteer podiatrist managed diabetes related issues with Jeff's feet. VIM's **Barbara Harvey, RN** did regular wound checks. Volunteer, **Dr. Hooper**, helped to get his diabetes under control and addressed several other health issues. Trustee **Mary Tighe, RN** bought him a Rollator Walker. **Friends** at the restaurant, where he used to work, made sure he had a roof over his head and food in his belly. His story is a perfect example of our motto: **Neighbors Caring for Neighbors.**

Jeff was the victim of a hit and run, but for many of our neighbors, Covid-19 was just as insidious. The pandemic has caused a devastating blow to our regional economy. Suddenly all those neighbors who had been getting by, were no longer.



"Don't worry, they will take good care of you. Everyone here is so nice. They really care about us."

Many do not qualify for State and Federal assistance; few have savings to weather the storm. **For the more than 600 families who rely on VIM for healthcare, this has been a devastating**

VIM welcomed this patient, and with the support of the community, he is doing so much better.

few months, with no real end in sight.

With generous support from the community, VIM has been able to provide gift cards for groceries, and prescription medicine assistance. We connect patients with utility assistance programs, and area food banks. We provide a \$15 voucher redeemable for fresh produce at Wild Bill's Farm Market to all CMC patients. We continue to make a difference, **thanks to you!**

Together, we heal.

Primary Care Providers

Harry Chaikin, MD
Octavio De Los Reyes, DO
Tom Dierkes, MD (*Pediatrics*)
Mary Ann Haflin, MD
D. Lynn Helmer, MD
William Hooper, MD
Gina Kremer, APN
Theresa Rodino, APN
Eugene Siegel, DO
Nancy Sudol, APN
Demetra Zalman, APN

Specialty Care Providers

Martin Carey, DPM (*Podiatry*)
Wilfredo Carreno, MD (*Cardiology*)
Eugene Carroccia, MD
(*Plastic Surgery*)
Jong Choi, MD (*Acupuncture*)
Bhargavi Degapudi, MD
(*Nephrology*)
Sallustio Del Re, MD (*Pulmonology*)
Joanne Drane, PhD (*Counseling*)
Gary Feinberg, MD
(*General Surgery*)

John Gottlieb, MD (*Orthopedics*)

Julia Hankerson, LCSW
Eliot Kaplan, MD (*Psychiatry*)
Steven Kornberg, MD (*Cardiology*)
Anthony Lombardo, PhD
(*Psychology*)
Divo Messori, MD
(*Gastroenterology*)
John Middleton, MD
(*Infectious Disease*)
Lawrence J. Naame, MD
(*Orthopedics*)

Melind Pandya, DO (*Nephrology*)
David Roeltgen, MD (*Neurology*)
Joseph Salvatore, MD (*Orthopedics*)
Birenda Tandan, MD (*Urology*)

Community Partners

Cape Regional Medical Center
CMC Department of Health
NJ Commission for the Blind
Rainbow Pediatrics
Reef Family Pharmacy

THANK YOU!



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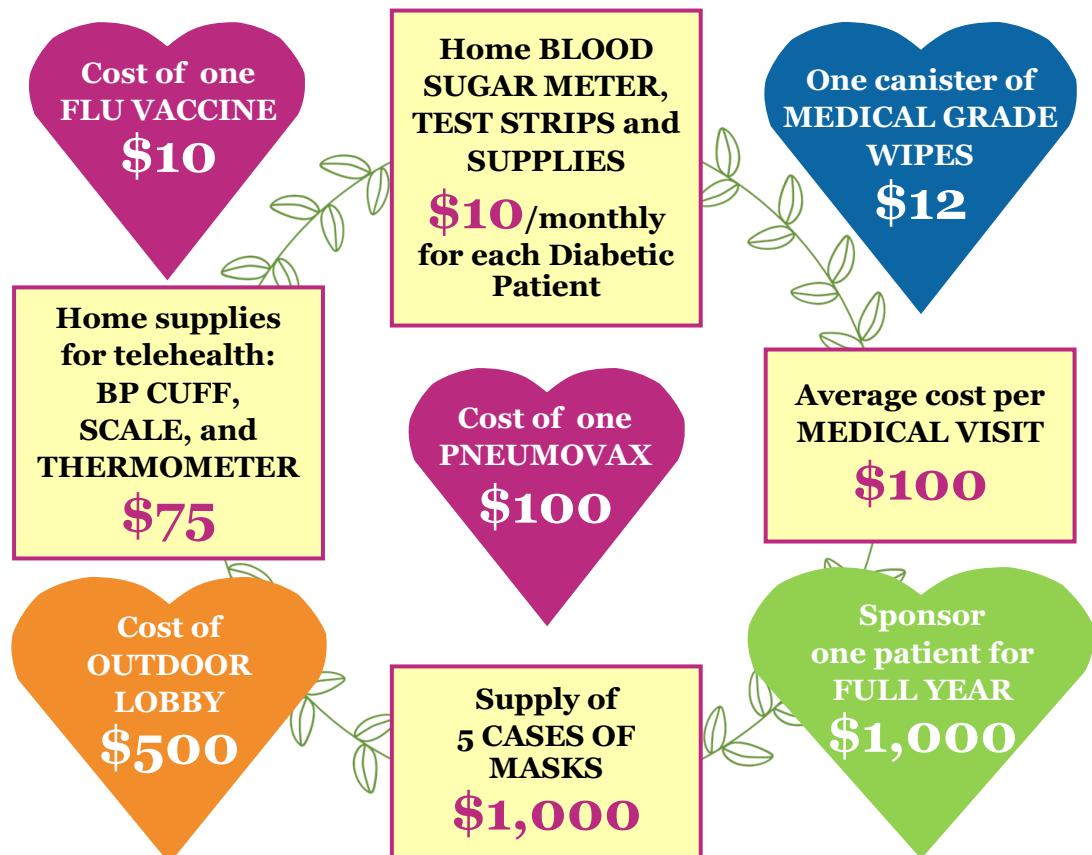
Rev. David Yun
Central United Methodist



Jacqueline Meiluta
Executive Director

Our patient population is particularly vulnerable to the effects of Covid-19...

Most are middle-aged with multiple chronic conditions such as Heart Disease and Diabetes, and Pulmonary conditions, such as Asthma and COPD. Medical Director, Lynn Helmer, MD has prioritized Pneumovax this summer for all of our patients followed, soon after, by flu vaccines in an effort to maximize protection against these viruses and symptoms associated with Covid-19.



Although we are mainly offering telehealth, we are cycling all patients through for clinical examinations and assessments. Covid-19 has obviously increased our need for PPE and cleaning supplies. We have restructured the flow and layout of our clinic to minimize volunteer contact with patients and make each on-site visit as quick and productive as possible. We have created an outdoor lobby or waiting room, complete with patio umbrellas.

To facilitate telehealth calls, we are supplying patients with home-use BP cuffs, glucometer, lancets and test strips, a scale, and a digital thermometer.

Support is needed, now, more than ever, to sustain operations. Please join our Circle of Caring as we fulfill our mission of Neighbors Caring for Neighbors. Thank you!

To donate or sponsor a cost listed above, go to: www.paypal.me/VIMSJ



Volunteers in Medicine
423 N Route 9
CMCH, NJ 08210

If you are interested in volunteering, or know someone who needs care, please contact the clinics directly, or visit:
www.vimsj.org

Atlantic County Clinic

Volunteers in Medicine
3073 English Creek Ave
EHT, NJ 08234
609-867-6384

Cape May County Clinic

Volunteers in Medicine
423 North Route 9
CMCH, NJ 08210
609-463-2846

Neighbors caring for neighbors!

Together We Heal.

Together we provide medical care to the UNINSURED and UNDERSERVED in our community.

Purchases and donations at VIM Thrift stores support clinic operations.



Our stores are brimming with goodies! Merchandise is refreshed daily. **Donate. Shop. Volunteer.**

Atlantic County Thrift Store
6825 Tilton Road
(near Produce Junction)
Egg Harbor Twp, NJ 08234
609-277-7075

Cape May County Thrift Store
20 S Main Street
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
609-465-3680



Your support provides hope and help to our neighbors in need.

Donate. Shop. Volunteer!



Visit us at:
www.vimsj.org
to donate or for more information.

VIM: A Volunteer Powered Solution to the Health Care Crisis