



# Caring Neighbors

Volunteers in Medicine

Summer News 2021

## If everyone saw a primary care provider, the US would save an estimated \$67 Billion every year!

The primary care sector is an essential, yet often overlooked, piece of our healthcare system. Primary care physicians are frequently the first ones to detect early signs of greater health conditions, and critical for directing patients to the specialists they need.

It is much cheaper to treat a condition early on, than to wait until it requires costly acute care through an emergency department.

When an uninsured patient goes to the ED because he does not have a PCP and is then unable to follow through by filling a prescription or undergoing tests due to cost, the initial investment in the medical consultation is squandered, and the patient continues to decline.

Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) is doing our part to increase access to primary care in South Jersey by providing FREE primary and preventative services to the working poor and medically uninsured.



**We save local taxpayers millions each year, and keep the most vulnerable in our community healthy.**

There are approximately 100 VIM clinics in the US. VIM of Cape May County was the 13th clinic, opening for patient care on March 12, 2002. VIM of Atlantic County opened in March of 2017. Today more than 600 people consider the VIM SJ clinics their primary care provider and medical home.

VIM receives no state or federal funds, but is able to provide care thanks to the generosity of the professionals who volunteer to provide care, and the private donors and funders who provide much needed financial support.

Patients that register with VIM receive:

- Annual Wellness Exams
- Regular medical visits
- Chronic Disease Management
- Prescription medicine assistance
- Annual flu shot and other important vaccinations.
- Assistance with accessing social service programs such as heating assistance, food banks.
- Referrals as indicated

More importantly, VIM becomes their advocate to ensure continuity of care. **Please join us in helping the uninsured and underserved receive the primary care they need, saving lives and money.**

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## VIM Vision Statement

~ Dr. Jack McConnell, Founder of Volunteers in Medicine, SC

*May we have eyes to see those who are rendered invisible and excluded, open arms and hearts to reach out and include them, healing hands to touch their lives with love, and in the process, heal ourselves.*



*Dear Neighbor,*

Many of us have been blessed with talents and skills, and also, opportunities and means. There are others who struggle to realize their full potential. For every step forward, it seems, there are forces at play that knock them back. For the working poor, the high cost of health care is one of those forces.

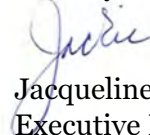
Sixty percent of Americans have at least one chronic disease, such as heart disease or diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Chronic diseases are even more common among low-income adults and minorities. Chronic diseases require frequent doctors visits, medications, and bloodwork; which is a problem if you are uninsured. Unmanaged, these diseases result in lost wages and productivity.

Patients that register with VIM receive free, quality primary care, specialists care when available, and prescription medicine assistance. Perhaps more importantly, VIM becomes their advocate to ensure continuity of care. This is only possible thanks to our very generous volunteers and supporters.

The friends highlighted in this edition of our newsletter are just a few of the shining stars that make a difference everyday for our neighbors in need. **Please consider a tax-deductible donation today.** 100% of your support remains right here in South Jersey and more than 91% goes directly to patient care.

Please join us as together we heal!

Thank you,



Jacqueline Meiluta  
Executive Director

VIM's team of almost 100 volunteers not only address the health and well-being of patients, they stabilize chronic conditions, help contain infectious disease, and reduce public healthcare costs by reducing reliance on emergency rooms. **Our community is healthier thanks to VIM.**

**Primary Care Providers**

- Harry Chaikin, MD
- Octavio De Los Reyes, DO
- Tom Dierkes, MD (Pediatrics)
- Mary Ann Haffin, MD
- D. Lynn Helmer, MD
- William Hooper, MD
- Gina Kremer, APN
- Theresa Rodino, APN
- Eugene Siegel, DO
- Nancy Sudol, APN
- Kathleen Ulrich, 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)
- Gary Feinberg, MD (General Surgery)
- John Gottlieb, MD (Orthopedics)
- Eliot Kaplan, MD (Psychiatry)
- Steven Kornberg, MD (Cardiology)
- Arthur 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)
- Dean Shissias, OD (Optometry)
- Birendra Tandan, MD (Urology)

**Community Partners**

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

**Covid-19 Vaccines  
are SAFE, FREE,  
and AVAILABLE**



**Your health is important to us. We're here to help you get vaccinated against Covid-19.**

If you need help finding a location or making an appointment, call Anne Marie or Lori at **609-778-2707. Do it today!**

Working in conjunction with the Southern NJ Perinatal Cooperative.  
ELC funding made available to the Southern NJ Perinatal Cooperative from the New Jersey Department of Health -Division of Family Health.

# We ♥ our Volunteers

These are some of the extraordinary volunteers who help our neighbors in need!



cal research; Carol, from in-home care as a field nurse and intake supervisor; Ingrid, dental nursing. Every nurse has special talents and our patients certainly benefit from this! Our nursing team is FANTASTIC and we are blessed to have them.

Our Volunteer Coordinator, Anne Marie Jackson, expresses: “It never ceases to amaze me that our **volunteers** are so generous with their time and compassion.



easy! We are grateful to have our **Infectious Disease Consultant, Dr. Middleton**, who helped us to make decisions this past year that allowed us to safely take care of our patients during challenging times. These clinicians, joined by medical, nursing, and administrative colleagues, have proved that VIM is here when patients need them, and always will be!”



“Our **provider team** is the most dedicated group of professionals that I have ever had the pleasure to work with, says Medical Director, Lynn Helmer, MD. We are fortunate to have many specialists providing necessary specialty care for our patients. Together, we have all learned to adapt to new ways of patient care over the last year so that our patients received what they needed—and it wasn’t

Clinical Director, Barbara Harvey, RN, is fascinated by the varying and seemingly endless talents that her **nursing team** brings! Our nurses come from many different backgrounds: Nancy comes to us from the OR; Sue came from oncology nursing; Pat L. from clini-



VIM is proud to have achieved the GOLD standard from the National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics

## Thank you to our Volunteer Gardeners!

This wonderful family has cleaned up and transformed a yard full of weeds into a beautiful backyard plot, blossoming with fruits and vegetables that VIM can offer to our patients — nutritious produce that will help with their grocery budget, too.

Pat with daughter, Emily.



Russ with grandson, Caden, and son-in-law, Gage.



#weloveourvolunteers 

Their thoughtful and giving natures are what allowed us and our patients to survive a pandemic. It is an extraordinary thing to come out the other side of that experience with the same strong people on your team. We are thankful every day for them.”

VIM’s Thrift Stores Manager, Patty Marts, says, “Our busy stores rely on our wonderful **thrift store volunteers** to help keep our operations running smoothly. We appreciate their time and efforts!”



### Municipal Friends

## Avalon Challenges County’s Mayors

*(Excerpt from Press of Atlantic City article, June 2005)*

In April of 2002, Avalon Mayor, Martin Pagliughi, proposed that all Cape May County mayors appropriate funding in their municipal budgets to assist VIM. Each Cape May County mayor received a letter from Mayor Pagliughi outlining the legal details and how the appropriation could be structured in their municipal budgets.

Avalon’s mayor said, “I respectfully challenge my fellow mayors, my neighbors, to take a proactive role in this just venture. Your local residents AND your current neighbors need VIM in their backyard.”

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Several municipalities give when they can, but two: **The Township of Lower and Borough of Avalon** have generously provided annual support every year. As VIM enters its 20th year of caring for our neighbors, we again call on all mayors and leaders to consider support of this critical service for a population in need while promoting the public health and economic well-being of the broader community.



*Avalon Mayor, Martin Pagliughi*

“...VIM’s motto, ‘neighbors caring for neighbors’ should remind us that we have responsibilities that exist outside our own backyards.”

### Commissioner Gerald Thornton

was a supporter of VIM from the very beginning. He opened many doors for VIM, recruited providers, and referred patients. Thanks to his leadership, the clinic receives a grant of **\$70,000 a year** for the care of CMC residents.



*Commissioner, Gerald Thornton, speaking at VIM Annual Celebration*



### Board of Trustees

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# Grant News

## Southern NJ Perinatal Cooperative

In March, VIM was awarded a mini-grant from the Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative (SNJPC) and the New Jersey Department of Health – Family Health Services to encourage vaccination against Covid-19 **and** promote new patient registration at VIM, thus ensuring continuity of care.

**Thanks to the SNJPC, VIM now has a Community Health Worker (CHW) completing an apprenticeship at the Colette Lamothe-Galette Community Healthworker Institute.** CHWs act as intermediaries between the community and health care and social service systems in order to ensure that community members are able to access services that meet their needs. CHW's have an intimate understanding of the culture, languages and challenges of their neighborhoods and, therefore, are trusted by the people living there. CHWs have emerged as one of the most vital actors in health care delivery today.

Thanks to the SNJPC, VIM volunteers have participated in Covid Community Corps training and Rutgers Project ECHO training. As we continue to battle Covid-19 and the effects of the pandemic, VIM is a first line of defense for the hardworking, low-income Atlantic and Cape May County residents who want to protect themselves and our community against Covid-19.



Lori Yoka (on left) is our new CHW, standing with Dr. Lawrence J. Naame (Orthopaedic) and Nancy Jeulis, RN.



Lori promoting Covid-19 vaccinations at the Community Food Bank event in EHT.



Lori and Barbara Harvey, RN, Clinical Director.

Help us share facts and information. Help us help your neighbors. **If you are planning a community event and have room for a small table for VIM, we would be happy to attend and provide information. Our volunteers can assist with vaccination efforts and register patients for on-going care at VIM.**

Together We Heal!

ELC funding made available to the Southern NJ Perinatal Cooperative from the New Jersey Department of Health -Division of Family Health.

## VIM Thrift Stores Are Open!

**Our stores are fully stocked with summer merchandise**



Proceeds from our Thrift Stores supply almost one-third of all clinic operating costs.

Success of our stores ensures clinical care to our neighbors in need.

### Atlantic County Thrift Store

6825 Tilton Rd  
(near Produce Junction)  
Egg Harbor Twp  
609-277-7075

### Cape May County Thrift Store

20 S Main St  
Cape May Court House  
609-465-3680

**Donate! Shop!  
Volunteer!**



**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](http://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!*

## Looking Ahead...

### Join Us!

VIM Public Annual Meeting  
and

## Open House

*Clinic tours and brief overview  
of clinic accomplishments*

Wednesday

**October 13, 2021**  
**5 to 6 PM**

**3073 English Creek Ave**  
**Egg Harbor Twp**

## VIM's upcoming 20th Anniversary!

*Next year* we will celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VIM's Cape May County clinic. 20 years of quality care provided at no charge, thanks to loving volunteers who graciously provide their time and talents for their neighbors in need.



**20 years of a rent-free building provided by Cape Regional Medical Center.** 20 years of financial support from the County of Cape May, Borough

of Avalon, Township of Lower, and the good people of Cape May County. 20 years of healing; 20 years of caring.

Our clinics are a testament to our wonderful neighbors who graciously share their time and munificence. Please open the letter to meet a few of them.

If you would like to know more about VIM, what we do and how we do it, please visit our website or, better yet, call **609-778-2710** or email **[development@vimsj.org](mailto:development@vimsj.org)**. We are always happy to share the good news and would love the opportunity to speak at your club or event.



Visit **[www.vimsj.org](http://www.vimsj.org)** for updates on upcoming events and VIM information