



Low-cost clinic looks to expand in Lenawee County

By Doug Goodnough
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ADRIAN, Mich. — In 2010, the Family Medical Center of Michigan moved to a larger facility in Adrian to try to keep up with the ever-burgeoning patient demand. In 2011, it is planning to expand its hours and staffing — and maybe open a second Lenawee County location.

The low-cost health clinic at 225 Riverside Ave. moved to its current location last May to serve more patients and decrease wait times.

“However, we are running out of space again, just given the demand for services,” said FMC CEO/Executive Director Ed Larkins. “What has happened, because of the economy in general, is there’s just more patients who are without insurance and need medical care. The waiting times still are fairly reasonable. A new patient takes two to three weeks to get an appointment. But if an acute patient needs to be seen in the next day or two, we’ll fit you in.”

The Adrian location opened in 2008 near Bixby Medical Center thanks to both federal and private funding. FMC’s mission is to provide health care services to those uninsured and underinsured people. Uninsured patients are charged on a sliding scale based on family size and income.

“When we first went out to Lenawee County, we wanted to work with the hospital in particular to see if we could help them with patients who may be inappropriately utilizing the emergency room,” Larkins said. “Our mission as a community health center revolves around that population.”

In the short term, to help ease patient wait times, Larkins said the FMC will expand its hours and increase staffing. By March the Adrian facility will be open from

8 a.m. to 7:30 or 8 p.m. three days a week, and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. the other two weekdays. Also, an additional nurse practitioner will be hired, he said.

“That gives us more efficient use of space,” Larkins said. “Long term, we do believe we need to move to a larger site in the Adrian area, but we’re not quite sure when that’s going to occur.”

FMC also operates a dental office at a separate downtown Adrian location, and that facility doubled the number of patients it saw in the last year. He said the dream is to house both the primary care and dental offices in one building.

“Our goal long term is to put everything under one roof in the Adrian community,” Larkins said.

Another 2011 addition is a new partnership between the FMC and the Lenawee Mental Health Authority. Larkins said the LMHA will share staffing with the FMC to help provide mental and behavioral health services.

“They will come over three days a week to work with physicians and nurse practitioners on things such as anxiety and depression,” he said.

Also, Larkins said his office recently submitted a federal grant proposal that would open a primary care site in Tecumseh. He said they should receive word in March, and if the grant is approved, a second FMC facility in Lenawee County could open in the late summer.

“We have patients coming from all over Lenawee County, and that means long travel times for some of our patients,” Larkins said of having a Tecumseh location.

He said the health reform bill passed last year provides federal funding to expand community health centers like the FMC. And local organizations like the Lenawee United Way also help.

“If you look throughout Michigan and the U.S. in general, there are still about 35 million people without insurance,” Larkins said. “That certainly won’t decrease over time. Those individuals who are uninsured still need accessibility to a variety of services that we provide. Sometimes they have difficulty finding practitioners who are able to serve them. We have a commitment to that population. And we like to work with partners in the community.”

The Family Medical Center is open Monday through Friday. It also operates facilities in Carleton, Temperance and Monroe.

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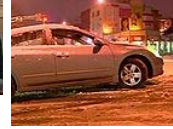
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Great article and a great effort by this group to provide sorely needed health care to low income folks in Lenawee county. Alternatives to an emergency room visit save us all money one way or another...

I just saw a new poll that says that over 50,000,000 Americans now have no health insurance - that's one in six.... It's also another 7,000,000 added to the ranks of the uninsured... I have been saying for a couple of years now here that you may have insurance through your employer now but this may change at some point... How secure is YOUR job?

For those who find Obamacare problematic because our health care system will have to greatly expand to serve the millions of new folks with coverage clinics like this one, which is expanding too to a second location, are just one of the many answers.

But if clinics like this one did not exist I don't think that sick people would just stay home and die... but instead they head to the emergency room and everyone else ends up not only paying for it but paying for it at full price - rates even higher than group insurance rates... The smart play still is to provide services but for the least cost - this clinic certainly seems to do exactly that.

Sandcreekbeaver fear not my friend this clinic plans on adding both mental health services and minor office surgery too. In no time at all they should be able to help you get your head out of your butt... Be sure to wash - but you knew that....

hrymil

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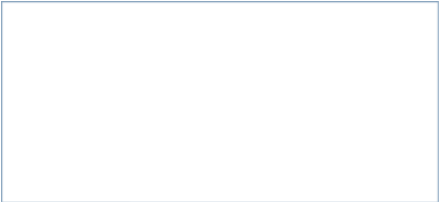
They DO NOT do mental health and their staff is very unprofessional!

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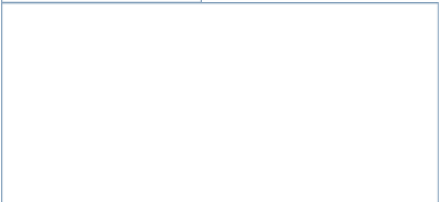
Guitarman, are your attacks are simply a result of a lack of intelligence or education?

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Sandcreekbeaver - Was your original post just your inability to use proper English or are you telling the world that you are a racist and attempting to sound like what an idiot like you thinks that an African American sounds like?

Based on your last post... and the English that you used... YOU are asking me if I lack intelligence and/or education...

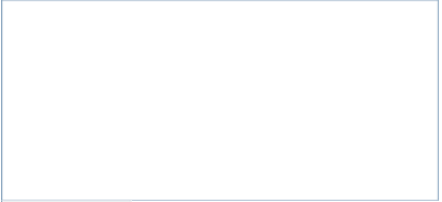
Fear not though if they ever do a remake of the film (you know moving pictures....) Deliverance... I think that you would be perfect for at least one part that I can think of... You do eat pork don't you...

sandcreekbeaver

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I'm telling the world that you aren't bright, Guitarman.

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