



West Michigan clinics prepare to get busy with health care reform changes

By [Julia Bauer | The Grand Rapids Press](#)

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GRAND RAPIDS — Some people dread it. Others don't care. And some, like Chris Shea, are borderline giddy at the changes coming for the nation's health care system.

With Medicaid coverage expanding to far more people, and a growing focus on community health clinics, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act means a lot for Shea, executive director of Cherry Street Health Services.

"We figured if (Cherry Street) gets a fair share of the funding, we would be able to serve 40,000 more people per year within five years," Shea said.

The poorest people without insurance — those within 133 percent of the poverty line — would eventually get full coverage through Medicaid.

The new standard would cover those younger than 65, earning up to \$14,404 for individuals and \$29,326 for a family of four, based on today's poverty line.

"Ninety percent of our people on a sliding fee now would get 100 percent coverage," Shea said.

"Health care reform probably affects no organization as much as federally qualified health centers," he said.

Organizers of the clinic at 540 Cherry St. SE are facing a good problem: how to prepare for growth in services ahead of the grants that will help pay for them.

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