

FernCare Free Clinic, Inc



Serving Michigan's Uninsured

2019 Clinic Review

751 E Nine Mile Road, Suite 2

Ferndale, MI 48220

248 – 677 – 2273 – Appointments and Information

frontdesk@ferncare.org

www.ferncare.org

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Dear All,

I am pleased to present the 2019 Clinic Review, a compilation of our services and patient demographics for the 2019 program year, January through December.

FernCare's mission is to enhance lives and champion thriving communities by providing no-cost health services and advocacy for medical uninsured people.

We continue to schedule new patients four weeks out because of the demand. We run two clinic sessions monthly, just for new patients. Our four clinics for our established patients are usually between 18 – 25 people. We have seen no diminishment in calls to the clinic or in the number of appointments requested.

It would be impossible to do what we do without volunteers. Our volunteers are dedicated and compassionate andso good at what they do. Our patients are receiving great care. Patients continually make very positive comments about their care and the very welcoming atmosphere they find at the clinic.

Just as impossible to do what we do without volunteers, it is also that it would be impossible without our donors and supporters. As I say at every Annual Dinner, we would not be able to do what we do without you.....you continue to be our strength.

We celebrate 10 years as a working clinic on August 7 this year. Please smile, please be proud whenever you think of FernCare.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ann Heler", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ann Heler
Executive Director
2010 - 2019

Purpose of the Review

This is our 10th Clinic Review. We use this data to:

- better serve our patients
- assist in-house improvements at the clinic
- achieve greater efficiency
- document progress on grant objectives and outcomes

Data is compiled through information provided by clinic volunteers and team leaders, patient satisfaction surveys, patient charts, incoming calls to the appointment/information line, requests for a variety of resource information including clinic information, and reviewing budget documents indicating service specific expenditures.

A yearly review of the clinic and services offered represents one of the criteria required by Best Practice criteria. This report, along with open board meetings and the information on our website, is a part of our commitment to be ethical and transparent caretakers of the donations and grants we receive to operate our clinic. This has also earned us the GuideStar Exchange Platinum Star participant status for organization transparency.

The Clinic Review is included in our Annual Report which is approved and issued at the Annual Meeting in July. The last Annual Report and Clinic Review are available on our website www.ferncare.org,

About FernCare (Clinic Overview)

FernCare is a free primary care medical clinic for uninsured individuals 19-64 years of age.

It is one of the 49 free medical clinics in Michigan, one of two free clinics in south Oakland County and the only free clinic close to south Macomb County and north of McNichols (Six Mile Road) in Detroit. FernCare is a member of the National Association of Free Clinics (NAFC) and Free Clinics of Michigan (FCOM). Ann Heler, past Executive Director, currently serves as FCOM's Board President.

FernCare as a Medical Clinic

FernCare is open 17 hours each month as an operating **medical clinic**; 2nd and 4th Mondays, 9 to noon for initial appointment patients only, 2nd and 4th Thursday evenings 6 – 8:30 pm and 1st and 3rd Saturday mornings 9 to noon for established patients. On weekdays, the office is open 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. for inquiries, appointment scheduling and as a well-regarded source for low cost if not free healthcare resources in the area (Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties).

All services are **by appointment only**. Returning patients can obtain an appointment within two weeks of their call. New patients must wait a month for an appointment, simply because of high demand and limited hours. All calls to the clinic are returned within 24 hours week days.

All direct care (medical) volunteers are licensed or certified as required by the state of Michigan. The clinic's pharmacy and lab are both state-licensed.

In addition to offering primary medical care

We **dispense generic and over-the-counter medications, glucometers and test strips** as prescribed by our volunteer practitioners free to our patients.

We have a **Prescription Assistance Program** providing financial assistance for those who require a non-generic medication. In addition, we also maintain a list of locations for both free and low-cost medications.

We do all **lab testing** required. Hemoglobin A1C (diabetic indicator) and urinalysis testing are completed in-house and the rest are done by Lab Corp at a generous discount.

Wellness/life-style coaching, nutrition counseling, smoking cessation and acupuncture are available at no cost and provided either at the clinic or at the respective offices as the patient prefers.

We have a **health insurance enrollment assistance** volunteer at each clinic. We offer this service to all members of the community as well as patients.

For patients that we find require more than what an episodic safety net clinic can work with, we have some **professional referrals** that can address particular issues.

Any time we update services or offer new services, we post that information on our website; www.ferncare.org.

FernCare as a Community Resource

We stock a **Little Free Library** out at the bus stop. We love watching people stop, look at books, take a book and leave a book. We really encourage reading. This is 2020 and literacy is everything.

We are a “No-longer-used” **medical equipment and medications drop off site**. We can **only** accept such donations from individuals and the community at large. We send medical equipment and medications within date to World Medical Relief (WMR). We made **48 drop-offs to WMR** in 2019. Out-of-date medications are delivered to the Ferndale Police medication receptacle. In 2019, total pills collected was an astonishing **67 lbs.**, 87 lbs. less than collected in 2018. We think the reason is because people are becoming more comfortable with simply dropping off their no longer used medications at their local police stations. Pill containers are recycled responsibly.

Since 2013, through collaboration with the SE Oakland Coalition, a group that works with families on substance abuse awareness, we have served as a collection site for the nationwide **DEA Drug Take Back Days**. The “poundage” count we collect on those days is included in the pill count above.

The Clinic collected and donated **68 pairs of glasses, 15 packs of hearing aid batteries and 4 hearing aids** to Dr. Howard Crane, a Ferndale optometrist. He, in turn, gave the glasses to the Lions Club member so the lens could be reused and the hearing aids and batteries to the Wayne State University Department of Speech and Hearing. They harvest the parts of the hearing aids that can be re-used to build hearing aids for their uninsured patients.

Adult diapers, adult pull ups and feminine products often go to **The Metropolitan Detroit Diaper Bank** who in turn distribute the items to parents with children under two years of age and seniors over 80 who have difficulty leaving their homes to shop. MDDDB made **14 pickups** at the Clinic. New this year, we now also give them to people who call asking if we have had any such donations and to patients who ask.

Donated disposable bed pads are delivered to the **Animal Welfare Society** for surgery use and to line the cages.

Health Care and Non-Medical Needs Resource racks are located in the hall outside the Clinic. Anyone can come in and take any literature they find helpful. We have resource sheets for everything from dental care to halting foreclosures.

Each year, we participate in a number of regional **health fairs and events**. We set up our health information table with copies of our resources and signup sheets for volunteers. These are opportunities to tell our story, answer questions about the clinic and services, hand out the health care resource literature if wanted and an excellent opportunity to talk about the benefits of volunteering with us.

The **Resources pages** on our newly re-designed website continue to be our most visited website pages. As noted above, health-related resources are also available as hard copy handouts on the resource racks located outside the Clinic. The information is reviewed and updated as needed, at a minimum every six to eight months.

How is the Clinic Financially Supported?

Clinic services are supported by individual donations, local fund raising events, grants and in 2019 by a yearly award from Michigan Department of Health and Human Services of \$6450.00. In 2019, in addition to individuals, Metro Health Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield Safety Net Program, The Jewish Fund, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Alana's Foundation, Ferndale Community Foundation, DMC/Community Foundation of SE Michigan, Gannet and Hitachi Foundation funded clinic operations. **30** fund raising events were held in 2019. We are honored and humbled to say that we only created **13** of these. The rest were done by others as their way of showing support for what we do.

The photo is at one of our Annual Dinners. Part of the dinner are the eagerly awaited "Silent Auction tables".



Clinic Management Team

Name(s)	Position
G. Christopher Popp, MD	Medical Director
Pamalar Burnette, RN	Clinic Manager
Ann Heler*	Interim Executive Director
Carolyn Barr	Office Manager
Christine Rainey, PharmD, DSCI	Pharmacy Manager
Susan Lux	Laboratory Manager
Faith Perronello, LMSW	Community Health Worker
Donna Reeves, RN	Prescription Cost Assistance
Mary Ellen Rollins	Appointment Desk
Geoff Blumenthal	IT
Ryan Meray	
Michael Kruger	Statisticians
Alyssa Ahmad	
Open	Health Insurance Assistance
Open	Counseling Manager

FernCare Free Clinic Board of Directors 2019

Rudolph A. Serra	Board President
Barbara Winter	Board Vice- President
Brian Wahl	Secretary
Matt Nowaczok	Treasurer
Randall Caballero	Board Member
Irenita Goedert	Board Member
Kristie Lee	Board member
Carolyn Barr	Office Manager, Healthcare Resources
Edie Herrold	Bookkeeper

- Note that in February, 2020 Dan Martin was hired into the Executive Director position.

Small Staff and Lots of Volunteers

The only paid positions are clinic manager, office manager, bookkeeper (contract position) and health insurance coordinator. Our volunteers (medical and non-medical) gave us over **6300** hours of their time. The IRS 2019 base volunteer rate is 24.69/hour. This translates into **\$155,547.00** as an in-kind donation to FernCare. The volunteer count includes the Board of Directors, volunteers that help with fundraising activities and “chores around the clinic,” purchasing agent, statistician, medical director and executive director.

All direct care (medical) volunteers are licensed or certified as required by the state of Michigan. Additionally, the clinic’s pharmacy and lab are state-licensed.

Between 11 and 15 volunteers staff each clinic. This includes practitioners, nurses, medical assistants and certified nurse assistants, insurance counselor, lab staff, pharmacist and pharmacy techs, appointment desk and cleaning staff. We have more than 110 volunteers that provide services in various capacities on a regular basis.

We have not had to close the Clinic for any session because we did not have adequate volunteer coverage. We are very fortunate and recognize that without our volunteers, there would be no clinic.

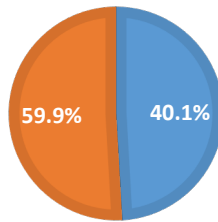
We also host students from the local community colleges and universities. We have been a teaching clinic almost since we opened. Primary Care is the basis for comprehensive patient care as patients navigate the medical system for what they need. We are proud to have volunteers who are more than willing to allow job shadowing and “on the job” training and experiences. We currently have working relationships with Michigan State University Schools of Human Medicine and Osteopathic Medicine, Dr. Valerie Overholt and Dr. Amy Sheppard, DO coordinating and Wayne State University School of Pharmacy, Joe Fava, PharmD coordinating. In addition, our Lab Manager, Sue Lux, a Medical Technologist supervises newly graduated phlebotomists to increase their skill at blood draws.



2019 Patient Demographics

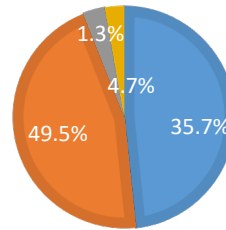
GENDER

Male Female



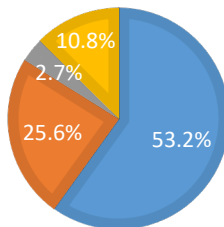
ETHNICITY

Caucasian African American
Hispanic Asian



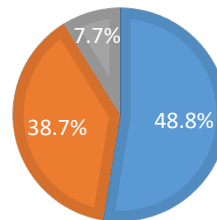
MARITAL STATUS

Single Married
Partnered Divorced



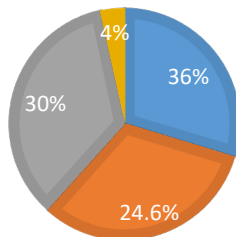
INCOME CATEGORY

Under \$16,000 \$16,000 - \$32,000
Over \$32,000



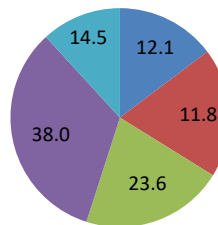
EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Part Time Full Time
Unemployed Retired



AGE

19-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-65



Top 6 Cities, Top 6 Zip Codes and Counties of Patient Residence

Zip Code	Cumulative Percentage
48220 (Ferndale)	9.8%
48030 (Hazel Park)	5.1%
48237 (Oak Park)	4.7%
48235 (Detroit)	4.4%
48071, 48075 (Madison Hgts, Southfield) each	3.4%

Cities	Cumulative Percentage
Detroit	24%
Ferndale	9.4%
Southfield	9.1%
Warren, Oak Park each	6.4%
Hazel Park	5.1%

County	Cumulative Percentage
Oakland	45.1%
Wayne	35.4%
Macomb	17.2%
Other	2.4%

Clinic Statistics

We served 387 unique patients in 2019. This is an increase of 1.63% from last year.

There were 1138 patient appointments scheduled in 2019, including clinic, counseling and acupuncture. There were 883 actual appointments. Two reasons for the low number of actual appointments:

(A) Our medical clinic **no show rate** is significant, about 16%. We are trying different strategies to reduce that rate. Currently our patients receive an EMR generated call and a personal call from the Office Manager two and three days before their visit. We have just put in place (1) a requirement that new patients must come to the clinic to pick up their paperwork and then an appointment is made (2) the Community Health Worker calls every person who did not make their appointment to discuss what happened and how we can help to have that not happen again

(B) In May, we **migrated from paper charts to the Athenagives electronic medical record system** and deliberately cut the number of patients to give the volunteers time to acclimate to Athena.

Most patients were seen from 1-3 times, with a very small number (3) registering 4- 11 visits.

We saw an average of 12 - 14 patients per clinic session. By the end of the year, we were slowing increasing the number of patient appointments per clinic.

Since opening in 2010, we have served over unique 3000 patients.

Patient Exam Room Time

In 2019, the average exam room time was 28 minutes. This is almost exactly as same as 2018.

Patient Age

71.2 % of our patients are under between the ages of 40 - 59 years old, with 46 % of those between 50 – 59 years of age.

Most Common Initial Diagnoses

Diagnoses	Percentage of Patients
Hypertension	49.2% - increase of 9% since 2018
Pain, including back pain	15.6% - decrease of 42% since 2018*
Diabetes	14.6% - decrease of 8.4% since 2018
High Cholesterol	10.5% - decrease of 4 .1 % since 2018
Asthma - Respiratory	9.2% did not track in 2018
Digestive	8.1% - decrease of .9% since 2018
Intestinal/Infection	6.8% - decrease of .7% since 2018
Obesity	6.4% - decrease of .7% since 2018

*with Athena diagnosis are much more specific

92% of the patients have more than one diagnosis, with 2 – 4 being very common.

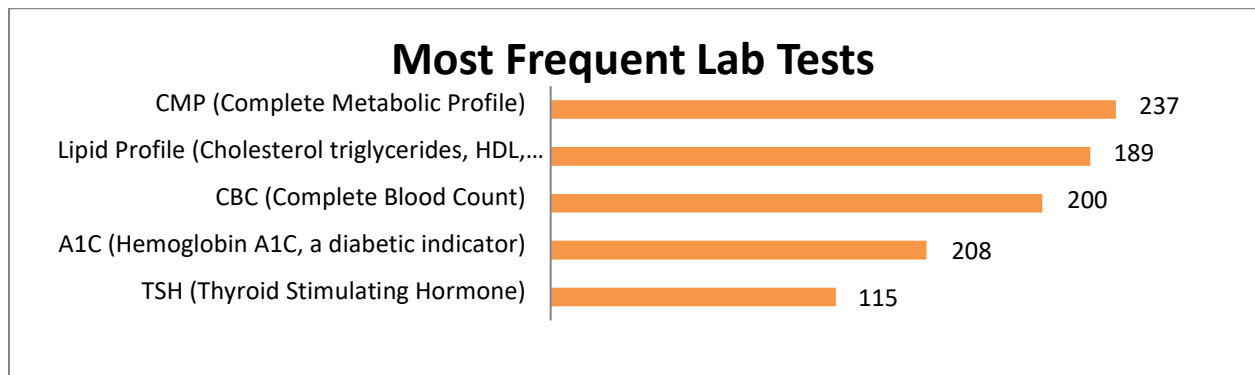
Weight

Mean average weight:

- Female patients 198.89 lbs. (U.S. mean weight (CDC) - 2019: 170.5 lbs.)
- Male patients 214.52 lbs. (U.S. mean weight (CDC) - 2019: 197.8 lbs.)
-

Clinic Statistics

Laboratory



We requested 991 tests from Detroit Bio-Medical Lab or Lab Corp and completed 208 A1C and 123 urinalysis tests (331 total) in our lab for a total of **1322 tests in 2019**. This is a 13.2% increase over the number of tests done in 2018. We have an average of 2.4 tests per patient per visit.

The lab was supported by Blue Cross/ Blue Shield Safety Net program and MetroHealth Foundation grants in 2019 as well as through our general operating budget.

Both Detroit Bio-Medical Lab and Lab Corp process our tests at greatly reduced rates.

The lab is CLIA licensed and meets State of Michigan Medical Waste Producing Facility standards.

Sue Lux, MT is the Lab Manager. She has volunteered with us since the September, 2010.

Pharmacy

269 of 387 patients received medications here at the clinic

Total Prescription Count

TOTAL 2019 -- 3508 **Increase:** 228 prescriptions **% Increase:** 7.0%

Total meds dispensed 2019: 112,122

Total meds dispensed 2018: 105,379 **% change:** 6.4% Increase

Most prescribed were:

Diagnosis	Number of Pills	Percentage of Total
Hypertension	68,876	61.4 %
Antidepressants	7,554	6.7%
Gastrointestinal	6,696	6.0%
Thyroid	4,441	4.0%
Cardiac	4,354	3.9%

FernCare does not purchase syringes, lancets, alcohol swabs, inhalers, or nebulizer solutions as these are all donated items.

We order medications from Anda Pharmaceuticals at a discounted cost due to our membership with National Association of Free Clinics, Free Clinics of Michigan, and having non-profit status.

We receive nine shipments of free medications from AmeriCares (a non-profit organization that provide access to medications and medical assists) as well as over-the-counter products and health assists for our patients. In addition to the 14 shipments from Direct Relief a very similar organization to AmeriCares. The value of the medications and the over-the-counter goods received from both AmeriCares and Direct Relief in 2019 was \$38,642. This nearly quadruples the amount we received in 2018.

The Pharmacy was supported in 2019 through BCBSM Safety Net grant, Hitachi Automotive and MetroHealth Foundation grants as well as through our general operating budget.

The pharmacy is state licensed. This year the pharmacy was funded through

Christine Rainey, PharmD. DSci., Pharmacy Team Director, also supervises students from Wayne State University School of Pharmacy. This experience is invaluable. A community organized, self-funded, volunteer led clinic and its dispensary is a completely different experience than a hospital, retail chain drug store or an independent pharmacy. This is our 7th year working with the WSU School of Pharmacy. Christine has volunteered with us since before we held our first clinic in August 2010.

Patient Assistance Program

We enrolled nine new patients in the Patient Assistance Program (PAP) coordinated by Needy Meds (an online medication distribution non-profit organization). PAP provides medications free of charge to patients who qualify. The Affordable Care Act Insurance Exchange and Healthy Michigan/Medicaid have caused this program as a whole to be reduced because PAP does not fund medications for people who are eligible for either health insurance program. There is a very small cost to the clinic for providing this service.

Donna Reeves, RN has been coordinating this program since its inception and now coordinates this work with our new Community Health Worker, Faith Perronello, LMSW.

Patient and Community Local Health Resources

We received just over 4000 calls, more than 1300 “walk-ins,” and over 302 email inquiries. It should be noted that walk-ins also include people who are dropping off no longer used medications or medical equipment.

The Resources rack at the clinic door and web pages are used by the medical team when talking to patients, handed out to our walk-in inquirers, mailed or e-mailed when people phone and handed out at health fairs and fund raisers.

This year we have added an additional rack to handle resources that are life related. In the medical world, these are called Social Determinants of Health. Slowly medicine is realizing that issues that impact life, both positive and negative, ALL have an impact on health. The best part is many clinics, like ours, are incorporating these issues into their patient’s care plans.

Topics are chosen based upon most requested.

Medical Topic	Life Needs Topic
Free, FQHC, Urgent Care Clinics	Utility Cost Assistance
Dental Services	Health Insurance Enrollment Assistance
Prescription Resources	Food Pantries
Counseling/Mental Health Services	Accounting Aid Society
Women’s Health	Legal Aid
Sexually Transmitted Infections	Domestic Violence
Tobacco Cessation Resources	Housing/Foreclosures
Weight Control/Nutrition	Employment
Vision and Hearing	
Medical/Medicare	
Alzheimer Caregiver Resources	
Substance Abuse	
Transgender Resources	

Information most requested in 2019: dental care, prescription, counseling, utility cost assistance.

Carolyn Barr, Office Manager, has made all the difference. She created the assistance as part of the outreach of her job as Office Manager. Her organization and commitment to helping anyone find a resource that can help is invaluable.

Patient Referrals – Medical Team Generated

In 2019, most referrals were for podiatry, gynecology and imaging services (in that order). We are continually building our list of physicians and services that will see our patients either pro bono or at a minimal cost to the patient. If we have no referral name for an issue, the patient is directed to another general resource such as the Oakland County Department of Health Nurse on Call, FINDMYCARE or United Way's 211.

Additional In house Resources

In addition we offer our patients Acupuncture, Wellness/Life Coaching, Smoking Cessation Counseling (1:1) and Nutrition Counseling. These are available of course free of charge, to patients at times and sites that are agreed upon between the patient and the person providing the service.

Affordable Care Act/Healthy Michigan Enrollment Assistance

Enrollment assist began in November 2013 and will continue as long as both programs are available in Michigan. We offer the health insurance enrollment assistance to both our patients and to the community.

In 2019, we enrolled 103 in either an ACA insurance plan or Healthy Michigan with another 77 patients who successfully enrolled independently. Our insurance counselors talked to over 369 people. We helped an additional 45 patients with either initial enrollment assistance or redetermination assistance. We currently have 22 patients who, for one reason or another, are not eligible for any insurance. Because of this, FernCare is the medical home for these patients.

Also, like all agencies who assist with health insurance enrollment, we have a number of patients and people from the community who are eligible for ACA but simply cannot afford either the premiums or the cost of the deductible. At FernCare, the patients remain at FernCare and we try to have them come in yearly for an insurance review just in case circumstances have changed.

When a patient has successfully enrolled, the patient continues with us for 60 days to ensure a smooth transition to a new provider; this greatly lessens the chance of any treatment or medication not being continued in a timely manner.

Clinical Studies

We have had three volunteers complete clinical studies based on FernCare's patients.

Hypertension and hyperlipidemia diagnosis and patient characteristics in a free clinic 2014

FernCare Clinic was part of a study that suggests that the free clinic, from which this patient data was retrieved, is providing valuable services which help to improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Value of Expanded Initial Visits and Focused 2nd and 3^d Visits for New patients 2019

The results indicated four visits were enough to stabilize A1C levels, the same as with established patients. Blood pressure levels over the year period of the grant indicated a statistically significant decrease in 25 out of 35 patients identified as having hypertension as an issue. The decision was to continue operating two of our clinic sessions as sessions for initial visits because the information gathered in the longer than usual first visit and the rapport created was significant and positive to so many providers and patients.

Nutritional Education for People Living with Diabetes 2019

This project started at FernCare Free Clinic as providing education to people living with diabetes and how to better manage it by being more aware of how food affects their body and diabetes. While I was able to provide education on the matter of nutrition, people also expressed an interest in knowing more about diabetes besides nutrition. For example, their medications, the progression of the disease, complications that can arise from diabetes if not managed well, and what the numbers mean when it comes to reading their glucose or glucose meters or when a physician tells them their HbA1c levels. We have talked about creating a support group so patients can ask questions as well as meet other patients in similar situations.

Looking Forward

Like all health care agencies, clinics and hospitals, we are impacted by the changes to the ACA and Healthy Michigan insurance programs, principally the cost, potential changes to Medicaid requirements and businesses making decisions to either reduce or end health care insurance coverage.

The Clinic continues to get positive reviews from patients leaving us and going to “traditional” clinics with their newly acquired insurance. Our friendliness, interest in them both as patients and people, and most of all, the nonjudgmental attitude by all of our volunteers means so much to them.

The Patient Satisfaction Surveys indicate our current patients are very comfortable with us. Our first encounters continually have helpful and complete information indicating that from the start, people feel they can trust us.

Our community outreach projects, the “no longer used” medication/medical equipment collection site project, the specialized low-cost health resource information, information tables at any event when requested and the Little Free Library have been very well received.

We see a role for FernCare in quality of health issues for people in Ferndale and surrounding communities for years to come.