

Traverse Health Clinic, 3155 Logan Valley Road, Traverse City, MI., 49684 (231)935.0799 www.traversehealthclinic.org

Newsletter 6, Fall 2011

Second Chances: "They Are So Good To Me Here"



To everybody around her, Lindsay was living the dream. A figure skater since age 4, she joined the Olympic Team at 13 and went to Worlds at 15—despite spending infancy in a full body brace and being diagnosed with insulin dependent diabetes at age 9. Lindsay's dream ended when, at age 16, she tore a ligament in her knee, found herself without a stable family situation at home and a high school dropout. Everything important to her was crumbling and she no longer could rely upon her family for financial support.

Heartbroken, Lindsay picked herself up, finished school and received student aid to complete an associates degree, but found herself in low paying jobs which didn't provide any health insurance. *She neglected her disease because she could not afford medical care—didn't maintain her insulin pump, didn't test her sugar levels because of the cost of test strips, and couldn't see doctors for any health issues.*

Lindsay tells of her eye damage, numbness in feet, kidney damage and delayed digestion which she says **"makes me look like I am pregnant all the time, all as a result of neglecting my disease. I'm 28 and feel like a 45 year old."**

For the past year Lindsay has been receiving help at Traverse Health Clinic and praises, **"I don't know where I'd be without (these people at) the Clinic. They're doing everything they can to help me. Now with the help of Traverse Health Clinic, I've seen a specialist and a nutritionist, I get the insulin and testing strips I need, I received glasses which I needed, blood work when necessary and I've been to the dentist. They are so good to me here,"** she states with tears in her eyes.

Now Lindsey is doing everything she can to help herself...and others. She has a new dream. **"I want to give back to people who've taught me to live with the disease. I am working full time and am in nursing school at NMC. I want to help newly diagnosed diabetics so that they don't end up in my situation,"** states a very strong young lady who, with the help of caring providers, you and the Clinic, is getting a new start on life.

All of our patients have unique stories and dreams.

Many have been forced to put off obtaining necessary health care for many years before finding the Clinic.

Your support of Traverse Health Clinic makes our community a healthier place for all, and is allowing people like Lindsay to continue pursuing their dreams.

Thank you for your continued volunteerism, gifts and advocacy. In this issue we offer a glimpse at some of the tremendous impact you are making.

Wonderful Community Support

Bodies Human Exhibit Grand Opening Benefit

Traverse Health Clinic and The Dennon Museum teamed up to raise funds to keep spreading health and the arts in our region this past April and brought revenues of \$13,170 to help our community.



Clinic CHAP volunteer partners Dr. Kim Augenstein (shown 2nd right), Dr. Robert Barnes, Dr. Debra Graetz, Dr. Leslie Heimburger, Dr. David Heimburger, Dr. David McIntosh (shown far right), Dr. Lorah Wright, Dr. David Swan (shown far left) and Dr. Lynn Swan (shown 2nd from left) jumped in to be "Doctors as Docents" for a lovely celebratory party.

Thank you all who helped and attended and made this an event to remember!

Blue Jean Blues

Imagine paying \$5 to wear jeans to work on Friday! That's just what employees of TC State Bank did last May to raise a whopping \$426 to help patients at the Clinic. Thank you! Employees at Schmuckal Oil Company recently did the same and donated gas cards for patients!



Arlene Brennan, Executive Director, receives check for \$426 from T.C. State Bank Representatives.



Red Hot Red Best Bash 2011

MyNorth Media | Traverse, Northern Michigan's Magazine graciously donated \$2,193 to the Clinic, proceeds from their reveal party last May. Thank you for celebrating the best of northern Michigan while benefitting those among us with the greatest challenges.

Diana and Giacomo are Red Hot!

Wine Women and Wheels



Ladies Night Out

Tim Brick Presents Clinic \$6,287

Brick Wheels rode in last May with \$6,287 raised from "Wine Women and Wheels" to help fund uninsured women's health services at the Clinic. Thank you for your generosity, Tim Brick and the team at Brick Wheels, plus all who donated private support and auction items to the event.

Grand Traverse Ophthalmology Clinic trunk show

GTOC hosted a spring trunk show last May, donating \$1,800 of proceeds to the Clinic's CHAP program and two other area agencies. "We are delighted to be able to give back to the community by supporting these wonderful organizations that help care for those in need in our area," stated GTOC's Dr. Matthew Madion. Thanks to all the partners at GTOC!



Clinic's development director Sherri Fenton receives a nice big check for \$1,800 from GTOC's Dr. Petra VonKulajta.

Wonderful Community Support

Spread the Health Campaign status= \$89,305.

Goal = \$150,000 by Year End!

One Like = One Buck
Help us grow by clicking the  "Like"



With this Social Media Campaign,
You gave us 2,935 Facebook
"Likes." Now Team Elmers will
donate \$2,935 to the Clinic!



Hope x 2

This August, your generosity
helped us make our goal of
\$25,500, enabling us to receive
a matching \$25,000 gift !

We are grateful to Rotary Charities for a marketing grant that enabled us to have a marketing campaign created!

Thank you to the following businesses who generously donated their services to help us reach out to the community:

- Bill Marsh Auto Group
- Glens Market 8th Street
- Huntington Bank
- Lamar Outdoor
- Northwestern Bank
- Team Elmers
- Tom's Food Markets
- TV 7&4
- TV 9&10
- UpNorth Media
- WTCM Radio
- WCCW Radio
- Z93
- Real Rock 105.1FM & 95.5FM
- Classic Rock The Bear 98.1FM & 107.1FM

The following organizations contributed generous grants in 2011:

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan "Strengthening the Safety Net", \$15,000 for clinic operations.

Federal HRSA, \$80,000 for planning grant.

Old Mission Women's Club, \$2,000 for women's mental health and women's dental services.

Rotary Charities, \$40,000 for marketing development.

The Seabury Foundation, \$20,000 for Benzie dental services.

The Art and Mary Schmuckal Family Foundation, \$15,000 for community matching challenge.

United Way of NWMI, \$9,000 for mental health.

Zonta Club of Traverse City, \$1,500 for women's mental health.

That Was Then...

A Look Back— Reflections of a Long-Time Volunteer Physician

By Dr. Lynn Swan, Medical Director, Traverse Health Clinic

"We have changed remarkably over the years," stated a reflective Dr. Swan.

"I remember giving a patient with hypertension sample medications. Because of limited supplies, he/she would often get two weeks of one medication, 15 more days of another medication and a revisit in a month to get more samples which usually were another different medication."

It was difficult for patients to remain on medication at all much less stabilize them on one medication that treated their hypertension to appropriate levels.

It was difficult to give them instructions for the frequent medication changes and to watch for side effects.

We had little ability to obtain blood work to monitor diseases, even for hypertension or diabetes.

We had almost no ability to refer to specialists such as cardiology.

If a patient went to the Emergency Room, he/she incurred an overwhelming debt which often led the patient to decide not to go... and then present later with a life-threatening or an advanced disease state.

Munson Medical Center has always been very generous in helping patients with costs, but safety net systems for our area had not yet matured.

We had an *all volunteer staff* including office workers, nurses, nurse practitioners, and physicians. These dedicated professionals donated countless hours to provide care.

It was difficult as a doctor to provide optimal care because of these constraints which often led to less than desirable outcomes."

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In a Patient's Words, What a Difference Our Care Makes!

"Being able to check my blood sugars has helped bring down my A1C (lab test which measures average blood sugar over a 3 month period) from 13 down to 7. I am now motivated to do better and take care of myself because I see a difference and feel a difference."

I never knew what my blood sugars were and I had to guess how much insulin I needed to take."

By lowering her A1C to a normal level, she is also lowering her chances of long term health complications which will lower the cost of her health care over the long run.

“We’ve changed remarkably over the years”

This is Now... Dr. Swan continues

“Although the Clinic still faces significant challenges, we are now able to deliver more comprehensive care, improved outcomes and increased access.

We now have *volunteer and employed professionals* at our on-site clinic and strive to have continuity for the patient with the same practitioner.

We have a *medication access program* that obtains free medications for patients. I can now manage a patient with hypertension with the same medication on an on-going basis, creating a higher likelihood of better blood pressure control.

Through the *generosity of Munson Medical Center*, we can order laboratory and radiology tests for qualifying patients.

Through the *generosity of local primary care physicians, specialists and other practitioners*, patients can often go for care in their own county for free or reduced services.

We offer on-site *mental health evaluations and counseling* from staff and volunteer professionals as part of our efforts to integrate mental health with primary care.

We also offer a *diabetic clinic, a vision program, a dental program and various specialty services on site*.

We continue to develop collaborations with other groups who serve those in need.

Many members of this staff have volunteered for two to three decades!

We strive to treat all of our patients with kindness, respect, and compassion. Navigation and countless hours of case management now help persons through the maze of medical and social services.

We, at Traverse Health Clinic, are very grateful for the outstanding community support which allows us to serve our neighbors in need. Thank you for your continued partnerships.”

Lynn Swan MD



Gratitude Mail. We love to share it.

Dear CHAP (staff, volunteers, members),

A friend gave me these toothbrushes and I'd like to donate them to the CHAP community dental program.

If it weren't for CHAP being here for me through this rough time in my life, my thyroid condition might never have been diagnosed!

Thank you, staff, doctors, volunteers, for all you are doing for the community!

I hope to one day be able to give more!!

Nicole

Jenny's Struggle



"I was worried about a lot more than my cold symptoms," said Jenny. "I sat in the waiting room and couldn't focus on what I needed to do for the rest of the day. By the time I saw the nurse practitioner, I had to tell her about the whole situation. I wasn't sure what would happen next."

Jenny's life was chaotic and challenges with family, employment, and finances caused her day-to-day distress. She began having had one minor illness after another.

"I feel disinterested in my favorite foods, even ice cream. I stopped exercising since it seemed like work rather than fun. I couldn't shake the sadness and anxieties that dominated my thoughts. I felt a darkness that I couldn't explain."

Because of her mental health symptoms, Jenny's nurse practitioner at the Traverse Health Clinic brought a counseling professional into the clinic room. After introductions, the clinical social worker assessed Jenny's emotional and behavioral status as a partner in her treatment planning. Using an action-oriented and solution-focused model, Jenny developed a person-centered plan for coping with and reducing her stresses.

"We worked as a team and I felt in charge of my life for the first time in awhile. The counselor understood and guided me through the process. I learned new methods for stress management. It was very helpful."

Jenny's counselor addressed the thinking patterns that interfered with effective problem solving, and assisted her in choosing behavior patterns that were more functional and productive. By self-monitoring her progress, Jenny increased her awareness of stressors impacting her life and the effect of her new plan for dealing with them.

"It has taken a little time, but I'm back to my usual ups and downs. Things are regular and normal. It all feels better now."

(To protect confidentiality, sufficient changes have been made regarding this individual's name, circumstances, and symptoms)

Increasing Clinic Mental Health Services and Outreach to the Homeless

Many people who come to the Clinic are struggling with severe health problems, financial uncertainty and any number of family, housing or other challenging issues. Patients have indicated that stressors of their life circumstances are overwhelming.

We are pleased to have been recently awarded a grant from the United Way which will allow us to more fully integrate mental health with physical health services and increase our availability of mental health contacts. This new funding allows us to welcome a former intern from Grand Valley State University into a part-time position at the Clinic.

Now with enhanced services, the Clinic will be better able to help cushion the impact of these stressors through immediate counseling. "Patient empowerment by being a part of the health care team is vital to both mental and physical health," says Dr. Rick Sanok, the Clinic's Director of Mental Health. He adds, "Person-centered treatment allows the person to take immediate control in improving their emotional and behavioral health."

Another grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan will allow us to enhance access to mental health care for the homeless population, another area of great need. In addition to meeting patient mental health needs, the program will have cost benefits for the community. Research shows that people utilizing mental health services alongside physical health services tend to use the expensive health care services less, such as emergency rooms. Our efforts to decrease overall costs and improve the efficiency of community health services is a win for everybody.



Lending Help for Oral Health Care

At Traverse Health Clinic, we're faced with the great challenge of trying to meet our area's growing need for dental care. The demand for dental services has doubled at the Clinic and we are now averaging 70 requests for care in a single month. Despite our wonderful collaboration with area dentists who donate large amounts of care, we've often needed to purchase additional reduced cost services. Most often, a patient's condition requires a lengthy treatment plan to restore his or her oral health. This quickly depletes our dental budget.

Clearly, we needed to expand our resources. And expand we did. And ask for a lot of help. And talk with many organizations, private dentists, oral surgeons and possible funders.

Our focus this year has been upon two different outreach efforts, one in Benzie County and one with the University of Michigan School of Dentistry, and on oral hygiene. These three initiatives have allowed the Traverse Health Clinic to provide more comprehensive, cost-effective care.

Increasing Access to Dental Care in Benzie County

Our first effort to reach a county in need was to take outreach clinics directly into Benzie County, as transportation to Traverse City remains a great barrier. Through collaborative efforts with local dentists and a generous grant, we helped 45 Benzie CHAP enrollees last year.

Another year of Benzie outreach has begun thanks to the help of another generous grant, and we will help 45 or more Benzie residents receive dental care.



Rene Louchart, Dental Health Director, screening in Benzie.

Preventive Care



Jen Van Wingen, RDH, offers oral health education during a hygiene visit

We have also added two days of dental hygiene services per week. They are provided at a private dentist office since we have no dental facilities at our clinic. This allows us to provide *preventive* appointments including cleanings, x-rays and education.

These are services often considered a luxury by patients who have had to forgo them before.

One-of-a-Kind Collaboration

Another way we are tackling the growing need for dental care is through a unique collaborative program that includes local private dentists and oral surgeon volunteers, University of Michigan dental students and Northwestern Michigan College dental assistant students. They work together with our clinic out of private dental office space to offer three-day-a-month dental health clinics, providing additional access to care for our patients in great need.

We currently have served 147 people in 6 collaborative outreach clinics!



Part of the collaborative team assembled at the May outreach clinic



Traverse Health Clinic
Health Care for People in Need

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Traverse Health Clinic: The Voice of the Uninsured

"Your clinic helped my loved one at a time he was giving up hope. With the support and treatment he received he was able to continue his recovery. I can only imagine what may have happened without your help. I know there are many more in our area in the same situation, you are so important! "

-Julie

"Thanks for helping me get the needed health care I could never get otherwise..."

-Linda

"I am enrolled in CHAP and am a patient at Traverse Health Clinic. I am grateful for your services, as otherwise I would be without health care due to my economic situation. Your compassionate team has helped me tremendously since 2010, and furthermore has referred me to specialists after detecting that I have some chronic medical conditions."

-Valerie

"The Clinic is heaven-sent for so many people! And the volunteers are true angels!"

-Jennifer

Your support of Traverse Health Clinic is making a tremendous impact upon members of our community! Thank you for being an important part of our mission.
To learn more about how you can help, please call our development office at 231-935-0412.