

FROM THE HEART

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We seek to reclaim the Biblical and historical commitment of the people of faith to care for the poor who are sick. The Clinic provides quality, affordable healthcare and health education to the growing number of low income, uninsured working people of Nashville who do not have access to primary medical care.

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Primary Healthcare For Those In Need

From the desk of Dr. Tom Henderson



These continue to be very uncertain times, particularly from an economic perspective. According to an article in the July 28 issue of *The Tennessean*, the National Bureau of Economic Research declared July 17 that the recession ended November 2001, because gross domestic product began rising then. Of course, that's debatable (and I'm still searching for a good one-armed economist). The national unemployment rate recently hit a nine-year high of 6.4%. (Two men we know at church just this past week lost their jobs because of corporate downsizing). This same *Tennessean* article cited a study conducted by Rodgers that revealed that barely one fourth of those surveyed said their employer extended their health benefits after they were laid off. One such individual in that article said after numerous futile efforts to find a new job, "I'm starting to go crazy — there are days when I feel I'm worthless." Faith Family Medical Clinic's primary mission is to try to meet the medical needs of the working uninsured of the greater Nashville area — we sincerely believe that God has put us here for that reason. But we also believe He brings us to doors of opportunity — and thus we have concluded that we also exist to try to address the needs of those who have fallen on "hard times" — folks who have lost their jobs and are without medical coverage and are presently "between" jobs. What an opportunity!

But let me tell you about a lady we just met yesterday when she presented to Faith Family Medical Clinic for her first visit. She had taken the bus from her South Nashville apartment and disembarked on Charlotte at the Red Cross where they directed her to walk the 3 blocks to Lentz who in turn directed her to walk the 2 blocks to our clinic. She was noticeably pale, but chipper, when we ushered her back to an exam room. She lives alone and has no family and works full time at Wendy's and part time for a special event food service company. She has no medical insurance. Four months earlier she had presented to her local hospital ER because of profound weakness and was found to have a hemoglobin level of only 2.5 (Normal 12-16). That certainly spurred the ER staff to action — she was admitted and transfused with 4-6 units of blood but released the next day after a very limited evaluation because she had no insurance. Further history reveals that she's been experiencing dysfunctional uterine bleeding for months but she just assumed that was "normal for a woman of her age." A repeat hemoglobin done here was 4.6 — still dangerously low but she seemed to be handling it quite well and after seeing us she was intending to walk back up to Church Street to catch the bus and ride downtown and then transfer to ride another bus back home to South Nashville. Well, obviously we couldn't let her do that. In the ideal world (with medical insurance) she would have been transported by ambulance to the closest hospital. But we elected to observe her here in the clinic for about 5-6 hours and determined that she was not at the brink of a disaster and must have a very stout heart to handle a hemoglobin that low. She had lunch with us (compliments of Harold Mitchell). Therapy was initiated to hopefully bring her bleeding to a halt and appropriate supplements were started as well. She was then transported back home by one of our staff. She'll require close daily follow up. Well, I tell you this story to make my point — a lot of folks out there are living "on the edge" and are just a blink away from a medical catastrophe and except for the grace of God there go we. Thanks to you all for supporting us and to God for making this clinic possible.

In Him,
Dr. Tom

Our Visit with Senator Bill Frist, M.D.

It will soon be a year that I have been volunteering at Faith Family Medical Clinic. It has been one of the most satisfying experiences I have realized in over forty years of nursing.

I found myself surrounded by a talented and caring staff. The opportunity to be of help and service was omnipresent.

As time passed, though and I interacted with patients, I heard with frequency how difficult it can be to access health care without insurance. Indeed, the quality of health could be and was often compromised.

As I listened, I pondered that someone with power and authority should bear what I was hearing. I shared my concerns with Dr. Tom Henderson and said I would like to write to Sen. Bill Frist and invite him to the clinic. He could then have the opportunity to interact with patients regarding health care and its attendant problems.

His office called to acknowledge receipt of my letter and say the invitation had been accepted.

When time passed and he became Senate majority leader, I despaired he would have time to visit. Therefore, I was pleased when the clinic was notified he was indeed coming.



Left to right : Dr. David Gar, Sen. Bill Frist, Joe Flatts

Saturday 6-28-03 we welcomed him for this long anticipated visit. He toured the clinic, met and greeted the staff and was impressed.

We gathered in the lobby for an interesting meeting. He spoke with emphasis regarding his devotion and concern for quality health care. He also spoke with pride about the prescription drug bill that he helped author and was instrumental in its success.

He listened as many of the staff dialogued regarding how the clinic provides quality primary health care absent the constraints of insurance companies and the government. Sen. Frist listened and dialogued with much interest. The reason for the invitation was realized as he heard first hand from patients their struggle to negotiate the health care system without insurance. Their histories were graphic and well stated. I was so pleased for this opportunity. The mission of my letter had been realized.

When the visit ended, he was generous in his praise of the clinic, its staff and all the people who provided ancillary support i.e. its Board and benefactors. He admitted he had learned a lot.

We were pleased to read the subsequent letter he wrote to The Tennessean regarding the visit and how impressed he had been.

I was pleased that my concern had been satisfied i.e. that someone with power and authority did hear and heed the message regarding health care without insurance. "It's not easy..."



Irene McCarthy, RN and Senator Bill Frist

Irene McCarthy, RN

Volunteer

Reprinted from The Tennessean, Letters to the Editor, July 11, 2003

It is estimated that 40 million Americans and as many as 50,000 residents of Nashville do not have health insurance. Many of these people represent the working poor who contribute to our community but are unable to afford quality care.

The Faith Family Medical Clinic in Nashville has filled this void by providing vital health-care services to low-income Tennesseans. About a week ago, I had the opportunity to visit the clinic and spent some time with patients and staff. I was struck by the dedication of the men and women who serve at the Faith Family Medical Clinic. Their service and commitment is not only exceptional but critical to ensuring that quality medical care is available to everyone - regardless of income.

As Senate majority leader, I'm committed to taking the necessary steps to close the health-care gap that exists today and improve health-care quality and access for all Americans. Groups like the Faith Family Medical Clinic are on the front lines, providing health care to those who desperately need it. Because of their work, thousands of families have access to health care.

I ask the Nashville community to show its support for this organization as it is a cornerstone of our community. Spread the word of the vital services being provided by the Faith Family Medical Clinic - there are many Tennesseans who might benefit from its Samaritan ways.

Bill Frist, M.D.

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FROM THE HEART



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Patient Profile

Miguel Marin, age seven, came to Faith Family Medical following a bicycle accident. After examination at the clinic, it was determined that he had a fractured femur and he was referred to Dr. John Lamb, who is an orthopedic surgeon. Dr. Lamb confirmed the fracture in Miguel's leg and placed a cast from his hip to his ankle. As a result of the excellent care he received, Miguel's leg healed quickly and he is now riding his bicycle again.

Miguel came to Nashville with his family six years ago. He attends Shwab Elementary School and says his favorite thing at school is recess.

Miguel and his family are among the 30-35 patients who are seen at the clinic each day. Patients are charged on a sliding fee scale (\$10 to \$30 per visit), depending on income, and patient fees account for 10% to 15% of the Clinic's operational costs. Other funds are provided by generous donors who share our belief in the need for primary healthcare for all Middle Tennesseans.



Dr. John Lamb and Miguel Marin



Miguel Marin and his Mother