



Clinic Chronicle

A Publication of Stanford's Free Clinics
Health Care for the Underserved



February 2005

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The Challenges of Chronic Care at PFC

By Lyen Huang

Last year, the PFC steering committee made the difficult decision to add chronic care treatment to our list of our services. It was clear from outset that many of our patients suffer from uncontrolled hypertension, diabetes, and high cholesterol. Meeting the needs of our community meant tackling chronic conditions head-on.

Chronic care patients represent a very different set of challenges from sub-acute care patients, the staple of most free and sliding-scale clinics, raising serious ethical and moral concerns. What are our obligations to patients if we hold out the promise of medication and subsequently cannot provide them? How do we prevent the clinic from becoming a "pharmacy," reduced to dispensing drugs? Taking on chronic care patients also limits the total number of people we serve in the community.

Providing chronic care services requires a comprehensive and sustainable vision. There are two components to sustainability: financial and human resources. A quick glance at Drugstore.com shows that Lipitor (a cholesterol-lowering drug) costs about \$65 per month, metformin HCL (for type 2 diabetes) costs \$55 per month, and lisinopril HCTZ (for high blood pressure) runs around \$20 per month. Many of our patients suffer from all three diseases. Last year, Pacific Free Clinic budgeted approximately \$21,000 for medications. At a cost of \$140 per month or \$1680 a year, we clearly must find a better solution.

In order to treat more than a handful of patients, we've turned to cheaper sources of medication: donations and patient assistance programs. The latter are pharmaceutical company programs that provide free medications to low-

income patients. Unfortunately, completing the application and its relevant income and tax papers is time-consuming, and sometimes requires re-application every 3 months.

So why provide chronic care medications? Consider the cost of non-treatment of, for example, a patient with uncontrolled high blood pressure presenting to the emergency room with a heart attack or ischemic stroke. The total cost to the health system can easily run into the tens of thousands of dollars. Not

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Arbor manager Adia George shows a medical student how to use a glucometer.

Editors' Note: We are pleased to publish the third edition of the Clinic Chronicle, a joint Arbor and Pacific Free Clinic newsletter. Both clinics share a common mission of providing quality free medical care to low-income and uninsured people and a hands-on learning environment for Stanford students.

- Percy Link & Annie Chao,
Newsletter Editors

Improvements for Arbor Pharmacy

By Tiffany Castillo and Percy Link

Before Tiffany Castillo began working with Arbor Free Clinic in 2003, the clinic's pharmacy was disorganized and outdated. Because there was no one in charge of organizing and monitoring in-house medications, it was difficult to find a needed drug in the jumble of medications, many of which were expired. Ms. Castillo, a Stanford undergraduate student in her senior year, created the new leadership position of Pharmacy Chair and undertook to categorize medications, put them in their appropriate boxes, and create a central database containing essential information about all drugs in the pharmacy.

Castillo sees the database as one of the most important contributions of her work. It includes information on the drug name, quantity, lot number, and expiration date. "Maintaining this list is a lot of work, but it has been really helpful for physicians, and I feel like it will be the most effective way to smoothly translate all of the info and this system to the next chair," said Castillo. She hopes to put the database of the formulary online so that it can be updated easily in electronic

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Clinic Location and Hours

Pacific Free Clinic at
 Overfelt High School Health Clinic
 1835 Cunningham Avenue
 San Jose, CA 95122
 Appointment line: (408) 705-0119
 Open Saturday 10 am - 2 pm

Arbor Free Clinic at
 Menlo Park VA Facility
 795 Willow Road
 Menlo Park, CA 94025
 Clinic phone: (650) 493-5000 x22844
 Open Sunday 11 am - 2 pm

Fall 2004 Screen Team Update

By Weifei Xie and Prasanna Ananth

It has been a productive quarter for Arbor and Pacific free clinics' Screen Team. Over the summer, Arbor and PFC merged their health screening resources in order to more efficiently coordinate events and to provide outreaches for a greater number of underserved communities. Since the beginning of September, the Screen Team has participated in three community events and has offered free blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol readings, in addition to health education, to over 600 people.

The Healthy Living Fair, organized by the California Transplant Donor Network, was the first event of the quarter. Screen team volunteers traveled to Emmanuel Baptist Church in San Jose to screen nearly 100 local African-American and Hispanic adults for cardiovascular disease risk factors. Screen Team volunteers also assisted at the American Heart Association's annual 5K Heart Walk in San Mateo, where participants were screened and educated on maintaining healthy lifestyles. Celebra la Vida con Salud was the third event of the quarter.

Organized by the Department of Health and Human Services, Celebra la Vida is one component of the "Close the Health Gap" campaign. The event travels to a dozen cities throughout the country to promote health awareness among Hispanic communities. Screen Team volunteers participated in the widely publicized San Jose campaign and screened over 500 men, women, and children.

The Arbor and PFC Screen Team is comprised of Stanford undergraduates, medical students, and community volunteers. The coordinators are currently planning many more events for subsequent quarters. Interested volunteers may contact Wenfei Xie (wxie@stanford.edu) or Prasanna Ananth (pra@stanford.edu).



Arbor and PFC volunteers at "Celebra La Vida Con Salud," sponsored by the Dept. of Health & Human Services on Sunday, Oct. 10th, 2004

Pacific Free Clinic Offers Prescription Assistance for Long-Term Patients

By Rita Nguyen

Three of the six leading causes of death in the United States are due to diseases related to hypertension, high cholesterol, and diabetes. With Pacific Free Clinic's (PFC) shift to chronic care, approximately half of our patients every week come in to be treated for these ailments. Many require medication for two and sometimes all three of these chronic problems. As a result, medications for each chronic care patient average to about \$150 per month. The clinic's budget was predicted to nearly triple to meet the cost of supplying these medications. To meet patients' needs and remain financially sustainable, PFC began introducing patients to the patient assistance programs offered by many pharmaceutical companies. Depending on the company, these programs provide low-income, uninsured patients free medications for three-months, six-months, or a year.

When patients come in with a chronic ailment that requires medication, we prescribe the drug and monitor them over subsequent months. After the drug proves effective and the patient is ensured to be stable for a few months, we check whether the drug's company offers a patient assistance program for the drug. If it does, we begin the application process for the patient. Usually, patients find out whether they qualify to receive free medication from the drug company after two months. If the drug company does not offer a patient assistant program for the drug, other programs, such as Rx Outreach, can supply patients with their drugs by charging the patient's clinic at a heavily discounted price.

volunteers are unfamiliar with the paperwork and unfortunately, most companies will reject applications if they are filled out improperly. On the administrative end, making sure tax forms are received, signatures are obtained, tracking applications, and notifying patients when their medications have arrived proves to be very time consuming. Some companies send the drugs directly to the patient, making it more difficult for our staff members to keep track of when applications are successful. In addition, some companies require that an application be submitted every three months.

Nevertheless, with 54 applications submitted for 26 patients since July 2004 and 11 patients that have already received their drugs, the whole process seems worthwhile. PFC's role in introducing and guiding patients through the application process for free medication represents our continual efforts to bridge the gap between resources availability and patients' needs.

PFC Managers Receive Lyon Award

2003-2004 PFC managers David Wang, Brent Kobashi, and Nina Chinosornvatana were all nominated and received the James W. Lyon Award for Service this past May. The James W. Lyons Award for Service was established to recognize and honor students of the Stanford community for service contributions made through a variety of departments, teams, clubs, residences, and community projects. The Dean of Students Office presented the award to recipients at an awards reception. Congratulations to David, Brent, and Nina!

Congratulations to the New Managers for 2005-2006!

Pacific Free Clinic Managers for 2005-2006:

Lily Kao
Joe Ferng
Gigi Liu

Arbor Free Clinic Managers for 2005-2006:

Eunice Rivas
Karen Li
Marie Wang

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format and will be accessible to student and physician volunteers as well as other clinics that might want to share or coordinate resources.

Arbor Free Clinic buys some common medications, such as aspirin and cough medicine, from local drug stores, but for other medications it relies on physicians to donate their extra samples. Castillo credits Dr. Susan Sorensen as a particularly generous contributor over the past few months. Castillo said that Dr. Sorensen has been “really instrumental in getting our pharmacy well stocked.” Some of the most important medications she has donated have been inhalers, antihistamines, oral corticosteroids, H⁺ inhibitors, and Augmentin (an antibiotic), all of which the clinic greatly needed.



Arbor's pharmacy cabinet is now well organized.

Arbor's Musculoskeletal Specialty Clinic Relieves Patients' Pain

by Sarah Langley and Percy Link

As part of Arbor Free Clinic's ongoing efforts to expand its services in order to best serve its patients, the clinic recently initiated a musculoskeletal specialty clinic. Arbor has several other specialty clinics as well, including optometry and dermatology, but the clinic's leaders saw musculoskeletal issues as an area of patient need.

Arbor volunteers, including Stanford Medical student Sarah Langley, have worked with Stanford's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation residents and one attending physician to set up the specialty clinic. The specialty clinic started in June and takes place on the last Sunday of every month. The specialty clinic serves patients with problems ranging from low back pain to a torn ACL. Patients who come to Arbor with such problems go through a general doctor's visit, after which they are referred to an appointment at the specialty clinic. The patients receive four follow-up visits because of the ongoing nature of many musculoskeletal problems.

The musculoskeletal specialty clinic owes much of its success to the initiatives of Dr. Elaine Date, Chairman of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Stanford Medical School, and Dr. Michael Fredericson, Director of PM&R Sports Medicine. Drs Jason Atienza and David Doward, both PM&R residents, also worked hard to expand musculoskeletal services at Arbor.

Opportunity to give back!

If you have medications that you would be willing to donate, please contact Arbor's Pharmacy Chair Tiffany Castillo at tiffanyc@stanford.edu.

Dr. Monica Bhargava: Dedicated to Teaching and Service

By Percy Link

Dr. Monica Bhargava, one of Arbor's many dedicated physician volunteers, has brought her enthusiasm for teaching and her commitment to high quality health care to the clinic.

Originally from Rochester, NY, Dr. Bhargava completed her undergraduate degree at Stanford and attended Harvard Medical School. She says she entered medicine because it complemented her personal experiences and interests. After watching her father cope with diabetes and its complications during her childhood, she became interested in his illness, and she always enjoyed interviewing people and talking to them about what was bothering them. Being a doctor "is a good way to meet people and use some science at the same time," said Dr. Bhargava.

Dr. Bhargava is in the second year of her residency in internal medicine, after switching from radiology in order to have more opportunities to work with patients. She began volunteering at Arbor in the fall of 2004, after receiving an email sent to all residents. She was excited about the chance to teach students and pass on some of what she knows.

Dr. Bhargava added, "I am impressed by the dedication of everyone who works here [at Arbor]. It is a great service you provide." Arbor's great service could not continue without the support and hard work of physician volunteers like Dr. Bhargava.



Dr. Monica Bhargava gives a teaching talk to medical students and undergraduates at Arbor.

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cost to the health system can easily run into the tens of thousands of dollars. Not all patients will end up in the ER or inpatient in the hospital, but the costs of delayed treatment are clearly quite high, even before accounting for the loss of productivity by the patients.

Education and prevention can alleviate the burden of disease, especially for so-called "lifestyle" diseases like high cholesterol, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Patient education, screening, and early detection are all effective strategies at the clinic level, but we must reach out beyond our clinics if we are truly effective. To do this, we're looking to collaborate with other organizations in implementing community health worker (CHW) care models. The model is based on the recruitment of community health workers from the targeted community. By providing needed personal follow-up with patients, CHWs supplement and expand the health care network. Weekly monitoring and personal follow-up would allow us to spread out follow-up appointments and reduce the number of times patients would have to return to the clinic. There is ample evidence that CHW-driven models, both here and abroad, can significantly improve the health of a community.

Chronic care also requires rethinking the structure of the clinic on every level. For example, we redesigned our patient charts to better track long-term changes over the long-term. The permanent record now also includes a brief summary of each visit, labs ordered, whether medications were distributed either by prescription, in-house stocks, or by a voucher redeemable at a local pharmacy. We're also focusing on non-medical solutions, including the use of self-management forms that patients complete with their Patient Advocates.

We have made some headway, but there is much to work on. Since the cost of providing long-term medication is unclear, we will continue to examine our general policies regarding how long we can provide medications, patient and community education, and incentives for dietary and exercise compliance. Addressing the needs of our community means addressing the root causes behind the lack of appropriate health care. While there is no easy solution, we believe that we can make a difference, one community at a time.



PACIFIC FREE CLINIC SERVICES

- Basic medical care for adults
- Screenings for diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension and hepatitis B
- Sexual health services including pap smears, STD and pregnancy testing
- On-site interpretation services in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese
- Free medications
- Free lab tests
- Referrals to primary and speciality care clinics and social services
- Health education

If you are interested in joining the Pacific team, e-mail pacific@med.stanford.edu or call (650) 725-0416.



Pacific Free Clinic

Total patient visits: 730
 Total individual patients: 452
 Total on-site screening visits: 240
 Average appointments per day: 27
 San Jose residents: 78 %
 Uninsured patients: 94 %
 Unemployed patients: 30 %
 Patient visits requiring an interpreter: 71 %
 Visits resulting in referral to another medical organization: 40 %

Statistics from 5/03 - 5/04



ARBOR FREE CLINIC SERVICES

- Acute medical care for adults and children
- Physical exams
- Screenings for tuberculosis, diabetes, cholesterol, and hypertension
- Sexual health services including pap smears and STD and pregnancy testing
- On-site interpretation services in Spanish
- Free medications
- Free lab tests
- Dermatology clinic once a month
- Monthly eye exams, vouchers for free glasses
- Referrals to primary and specialty care clinics, social services, and emergency dental care
- On-site county benefits analyst
- Education and counseling
- Literacy program for children

If you are interested in joining the Arbor team, e-mail arbor@stanford.edu or call (650) 724-1332.



Arbor Free Clinic

Total patient visits: 647
 Average appointments per day: 14
 Patients homeless or in transitional housing: 13%
 East Palo Alto residents: 27%
 Menlo Park residents: 13%
 Uninsured patients: 85%
 Unemployed patients: 49%
 Patient visits requiring an interpreter: 29%
 Latino patients: 37%
 Caucasian patients: 17%
 African-American patients: 13%

Statistics from 1/04-12/04

Pacific Free Clinic Acknowledgements

Pacific Free Clinic is a program of Stanford University School of Medicine and School Health Clinics of Santa Clara County. We would like to thank The Health Trust, California HealthCare Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, Blue Shield of California Foundation, Chanwell Medical Group, Nancy Chen, Asian American Recovery Services, and Washington Mutual for their support.

To donate to Pacific, visit pacific.stanford.edu, then click on "Donations."

Arbor Free Clinic Acknowledgements

Arbor Free Clinic is a program of Stanford University School of Medicine. We would like to thank Peninsula Community Foundation, California Wellness Foundation, The Health Trust, the Kimball Foundation, and the Leslie Family Foundation for their support.

To donate to Arbor, visit arbor.stanford.edu, then click on "How Can I Help?"

We would like to thank
**Huong Lan Sandwiches,
Subway & Noah's Bagels**

For their continued and generous donations that
keep the clinics running smoothly.

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and Pacific Free Clinics**

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