

https://www.swoknews.com/styles/hearts-that-care-clinic-growing-with-united-way/article_bb83306d-91a4-59d9-8dfc-641b5c8bfceb.html

Hearts that Care Clinic growing with United Way

When you enter the Hearts that Care Volunteer Health Clinic on Southwest A Avenue on the first or third Thursday of every month, you might see a long line of patients waiting to be seen by a doctor. With \$48,000 coming in from the United Way of Lawton-Fort Sill next year on top of \$25,000 this year, founder Dr. Wendy Bartanen hopes that the clinic can grow to help treat patients lacking money to seek help in the emergency room.

SARA COLLINS

Dec 6, 2011

"I would love to be able to open every week and be able to provide other services, like mental health care and dental health care," Bartanen says. "The community has really come out for us."

All Hearts that Care asks for is a picture ID, proof of income, a copy of last year's tax return, all medication bottles, and \$5, if the patient has it.

The clinic has been open since October 2002 and has been housed in the current location for four years. All doctors, nurses, physician assistants and phlebotomists are volunteers. Southwestern Medical Center does the lab work for free. The current building - a converted automotive garage - was donated to the organization, and the renovations that took place to turn it into a doctor's office were also done for free by Habitat for Humanity. Most medicine is also donated by major corporations, nursing homes or doctor's offices.

All these donations mean that patients are not required to p a y f o r

treatment. Citizens who whose income is 200 percent of the poverty level or below can receive health care. At the current poverty level, this means that a family of four must make less than \$44,700 a year to qualify.

Patients register between 9:30 a.m. and noon on the day of the clinic, and are given a time to return that evening. Most patients have chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, and cannot afford the medications for these diseases. The pharmacy at Hearts that Care fills about 100 prescriptions per month. Patients can call the refill hotline to receive more medicine in between visits. While the pharmacy stocks many different types of medication, no controlled substances, painkillers such as Lortab, are given out.

On an average night, four doctors are on hand along with four to six nurses and two phlebotomists to draw blood. Hearts that Care is looking for volunteers, especially pharmacists, doctors, nurse practitioners or physician assistants. Nonmedical staff is always needed to take names and help out with various tasks. Donations are also always welcome and can be given online at heartsthatcarelawton.org. For more information, call 354-9007.