



# LOOKING BACK OVER 40 YEARS

## The Amazing Growth of Charitable Health Care in the New River Valley



### Letter from Michelle Brauns, CEO

We are all happy to be entering what appears to be a less grim and disruptive phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are finally able to take a breath and settle into the new reality of health care service delivery that was imposed by this global catastrophe.

In 2021, we had planned to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of our organization. Celebrations were put on hold, however, as last year was not an appropriate time to gather people together to cheer our past and our many milestones. So, this issue of our semi-annual newsletter is an overview of where we've come from, our major achievements, and our current challenges.

The timeline shows our progression from a tiny free clinic that used loaned space and one closet for storage, to a large, robust Community Health Center serving nearly 6,000 individuals this past year at four sites in the New River Valley. It has been an incredible journey, and I am honored to have been a part of it since 2006. Of course, we could not have accomplished all that we have without our loyal local base of support. The people of the New River Valley care deeply for one another, and we get to experience that affection every day when we receive well wishes, contributions, and positive reviews from patients.

Please look inside for more information on our past, present, and future plans. We would love to hear from you. I can be reached at any time at [mbrauns@chcnrv.org](mailto:mbrauns@chcnrv.org).

In good health always,  
Michelle Brauns

## Our Milestones

**1981** Free Clinic incorporated by volunteers

**2002** Moved to current building on Roanoke Street in Christiansburg

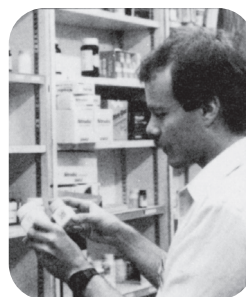
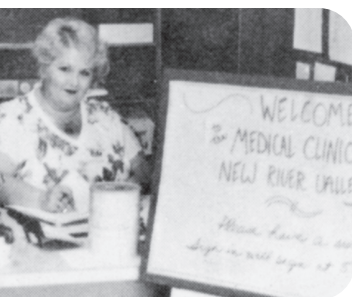
**2005** Began period of tremendous growth due to grants and contributions

**2007** Giles Free Clinic opens

**2014** Transitioned from Free Clinic to Community Health Center

**2017** Dublin site opens

**2021** Opened Giles High School site



# A VISION REALIZED



**In 1979, a small group of local citizens had a vision. They were all quite concerned about their lower-income neighbors who were unable to afford critical health care.**

They spoke with local physicians who were also alarmed that people were unnecessarily sick and untreated. So began the Medical Clinic of New River Valley. They began hosting “free medical clinic nights” once or twice a month using donated space in downtown Christiansburg. They relied upon philanthropic physicians to show up and work until the last patient was seen. They had no paid staff, but a growing group of volunteers who kept things organized. The group gained non-profit status the following year.

The organization quickly became the Free Clinic of the New River Valley, as word of its services spread across the region. Patients queued up in the late afternoon and volunteers often worked until midnight serving those with injuries, acute illness, and chronic disease. Donations started coming in, and a part-time Director and Office Manager were hired. Over the next 15 years, the numbers of both patients and volunteers increased steadily. Over time, clinic nights were held weekly in Christiansburg, and monthly in Pearisburg, Floyd and Radford, all still in borrowed spaces.

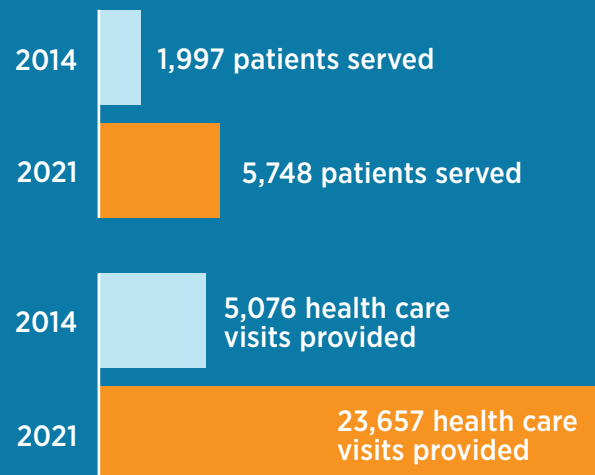
In 2002, the Free Clinic took occupancy of its current Christiansburg facility—the historic Roberts Motel on Roanoke Street, which was leased for no cost by Montgomery County. A Community Development Block Grant and private donations funded renovations. Other grants allowed for the hiring of a nurse practitioner and a part-time dentist. Over the years,

the Christiansburg and Pearisburg sites grew exponentially in workforce and sophistication and began serving patients every day of the week.

The Free Clinic was now well-established and enjoyed strong support of the local community and numerous private and public funders. The next logical step was to apply to the US Health Resources and

Services Administration to become a Community Health Center (a federally-supported entity that accepts patients without regard for ability to pay). This is a very rigorous and fiercely competitive process, but we succeeded on our first attempt in 2013 and opened our doors as the Community Health Center of the New River Valley in January 2014.

## Tremendous Growth Since Transition to Community Health Center



## OUR MISSION

The mission of the Community Health Center of the New River Valley is to provide affordable and high quality medical, dental, behavioral, and preventive health care services to people of all ages and circumstances, regardless of ability to pay.

# FOCUS ON QUALITY OF CARE & PATIENT OUTCOMES

We transformed from Free Clinic to Community Health Center with two full-time sites—our long-standing site in Christiansburg the Pearisburg office.

Both sites provided integrated medical, dental, and behavioral health services (all services integrated under one roof with care coordinated between providers). In 2017, CHCNRV opened a third medical and behavioral health site in Dublin to serve Pulaski County and the City of Radford residents. Adjacent space for a dental wing was subsequently rented and a full-time dental unit that opened in 2018. In 2021, our site within Giles High School opened, to improve health care access for underserved youth in Giles County.

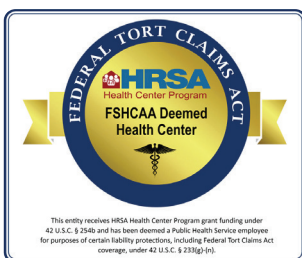
Despite all the growth, some things have remained constant over the past 40 years—the gratitude of our patients and the passion and compassion of our people. We now have a team of 95 extraordinary individuals. Our team includes three physicians, three nurse practitioners, a physician assistant, five dentists, five dental hygienists, and eight behavioral health practitioners. We also have staff who focus on patient engagement and coordinating the health and socioeconomic needs of our patients.

Our health care providers focus on the services that are proven to successfully move patients toward excellent health. Year-after-year, our patient health outcomes show that we are successful. Our patients do not just access health care—they access the best health care. In 2022, we received recognition as a Patient-Centered Medical Home, a Behavioral Health Integration Leader, an Access Enhancer, a Health Center Quality



Leader, a Health Disparities Reducer, and in Advancing Health Information Technology for Quality.

We are constantly searching for ways to best meet the diverse needs of our patient population. For example, COVID-19 temporarily moved many of our medical and behavioral services to a virtual format, and this has remained popular with some rural residents who have transportation difficulties. We have increased our behavioral health staffing as a result of pandemic-fueled increases in depression and substance use. We created a specialized Hypertension Control Program to provide individualized support and care for patients with high blood pressure. We hope to add a certified Diabetes Educator to our staff soon.







# SPACE CHALLENGES LIMIT OUR CAPACITY

The growth in staff size and patient visits has implications for bricks and mortar.

An Infrastructure Study completed over the summer of 2022 revealed serious space constraints at all facilities. This limits the number of new staff we can hire, which in turn limits the number of new patients we can serve.

At the Christiansburg site we have had to rent four additional suites across the office courtyard for clinical care and administrative offices. This approach, although useful, has created physical fragmentation, logistical challenges, and frustration for patients and staff. No site has room for programmatic growth. Demand for services is at an all-time high, but we are currently “landlocked” with nowhere to expand.

In 2023 we hope to announce our plans for facility improvement. Another exciting era in the life of our organization is just around the corner. Stay tuned.

## Please join us in our mission to provide equitable health care to the residents of the New River Valley

We invite you to join us in the next leg of our journey. Just as in 1981, contributions from local residents remain the backbone of our budget and allow us to keep our doors wide open for anyone who is in need of medical, dental, or behavioral health services. A reply card and envelope are included for your convenience, or you may donate on our website at: [chcnrv.org/about/contribute](http://chcnrv.org/about/contribute).

### We provide affordable, high quality services to patients of all ages:

#### Primary Care

- Routine Health Exams
- Adult and Pediatric Well Visits
- Sick Visits
- Gynecological Care
- Joint Injections
- School, Sports, Work Physicals
- Family Planning
- Health Education
- Access to Prescription Medications
- Vaccines

#### Dental Program

- Oral Examinations
- Cleanings and Routine Dental Visits
- Extractions, X-rays, Oral Surgeries, Fillings, and Gum Treatments
- Crowns, Bridges, Partials, and Dentures

#### Behavioral Health Program

- Traditional Counseling Services
- Behavioral Health Consultation
- Group, Individual, and Family Counseling
- Medication Assisted Treatment
- Office-Based Addiction Treatment

#### We accept patients:

- WITH Medicare, Medicaid
- WITH private insurance
- WITHOUT insurance coverage

#### We offer a discount fee program to all who qualify.

### LOCATIONS

#### Montgomery Center

215 Roanoke St  
Christiansburg, VA 24073  
540-381-0820

#### Giles Center

219 South Buchanan St  
Pearisburg, VA 24134  
540-921-3502

#### Radford/Pulaski Center

5826 Ruebush Rd  
Dublin, VA 24084  
540-585-1310

#### School-based Program Giles County High School

1825 Wenonah Ave  
Pearisburg, VA 24134  
540-307-8255



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