



# VERMONT COALITION OF CLINICS FOR THE UNINSURED

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## 2017 Stories from Our Free Clinic Programs

### From the Good Neighbor Health Clinic in White River Junction:

A 28-year-old man, Ray, contacted the Red Logan Dental Clinic (a program of the Good Neighbor Medical Clinic) in the summer of 2016 with dental pain. The supervising dentist and fourth year dental extern from University of New England School of Dentistry determined that his teeth were not restorable and developed a plan to extract his remaining teeth and provide Ray with dentures. Over the next fourteen months, Ray returned monthly for oral surgery and was fitted for upper and lower dentures in October.

The staff at the Clinic were rewarded with many thanks and a beaming smile as Ray left with his new smile. He commented that he felt good about his appearance for the first time in years and would immediately begin to search for a better job.

Ray was very candid about his past and has given us permission to share his story. About the time that he came to Red Logan, he had landed in the Upper Valley without a home and with an addiction problem. While he was receiving care at the Red Logan Clinic, Ray was also engaged in a program of addiction recovery and worked with the local homeless shelter to find permanent housing for himself, his girlfriend and their toddler.

Clinic staff continues to see Ray about town and he's still smiling. His most recent comment was that finally he could eat all foods and that he was grateful for the free dental care provided by the Clinic. Clearly, this is a young who is turning his life around. The Red Logan Clinic is privileged to be able to help.

George came to the Good Neighbor Medical Clinic in early December. He was not sure what services were provided by the Clinic, but he had asthma and was homeless and wanted to feel better. He thought that maybe he could quit smoking and wanted to know if we could help him. George met with our staff Nurse Practitioner and discussed numerous behavioral changes.

Over the course of three Clinic visits in December we accomplished the following:

- Nicotine Replacement Therapy was initiated and George reports that he is no longer smoking
- A gym membership for exercise and showers was provided
- George agreed to stay with his mother during the frigid weather rather than tenting outside
- The Clinic Assister worked with George to complete and submit a Medicaid application
- Vouchers for a local vegetable/fruit vendor were provided

At the last follow-up visit, George expressed his gratitude. He was saving money by not smoking and he felt better. The Clinic expects to see George regularly as we will supply a 90 course of Nicotine Replacement Therapy.



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### From the UVM Health Assistance Program (HAP) in Burlington:

A patient had an ileostomy bag and it was getting clogged and she was having multiple health issues related to nutrition because she couldn't eat since she did not have any teeth. HAP was able to get her new dentures within a week of the referral and she has called to thank us twice because it has changed her life.

A patient's father called because their son's life saving medication for two weeks costs nearly \$5000.00 and a prior authorization from their insurance company was denied. His providers were in the process of appealing for a second time, but in the meantime, his medical complications had increased. HAP Staff collaborated with the UVMMC Outpatient Pharmacy, and a result, we were able to cover the cost of enough medication to prevent this patient from experiencing worsening symptoms that could lead to complications with their multiple health conditions.

### From Valley Health Connections in Springfield:

Patient had an income change he needed to report to Vermont Health Connect as his children were on Dr. Dynasaur. He suffers from complications from diabetes and is unable to work but continues to be covered by employer sponsored insurance. He came in with his wife in the middle of August. His children were on Dr. D, but he was very concerned because his wife had serious health issues and was uninsured. She was not seeking treatment because of her lack of insurance. Our goal was to add the wife to her children's application and qualify her for Medicaid. Initially after our first visit, we followed up with VT Health Connect one week later to find out the status of the wife's enrollment as she needed care. We were told to mail in income verification for the patient. On August 25 we mailed that to Vermont Health Connect with appropriate ID#s on the verification to attach to the application. On September 5 we called again to find out the status of the wife's enrollment as she was still not showing as active in the portal. At that time VT Health Connect told us they had not received the information and asked us to resubmit via mail to them again, which we did. On Sept 8 we followed up and were told there was no income information on file as it had yet to be received. On September 11 we were told that there were 2 income verifications scanned in, one from 8/25 and one from 9/5, but the copies were difficult to read and that Eligibility might not process this change. After one month, this patient's wife still was unable to access care. We asked to be transferred to Eligibility due to an Access to Care issue and our Navigator was able to verify the income information verbally and finally get the wife enrolled in Medicaid. Had this couple not sought the advice and assistance of a Navigator her health situation and enrollment status could have languished for months.

We helped a homeless person enroll in Medicaid, food stamps and aided with a much needed pharmacy voucher for life-saving insulin. I also referred them to the Community Health Team (primary care provider/behavioral health), SEVCA and the Family Center for additional assistance (housing, meals, warm clothes). They got a job that didn't offer insurance, so we got them on a QHP. Additionally, as we do with many of our patients, we reach out to them with reminders to complete renewals with the state, and provide them assistance as needed. We help them make all different kinds of health transitions through the different stages of life. Our consistent follow-up is imperative for the ongoing health of many of our patients.

We had a new patient referred to us by the Springfield Health Center for Dec 8. I called her on Dec 7 to do an intake. It turned out that what she needed was a Medicare Part D plan. This patient could have easily fallen through the cracks, but, instead, this diabetic, now has a Part D Pharmacy plan.....Dec 8 would have been a day too late. She would have had to go an entire year without prescription coverage if we did not catch this.



## 2017 Stories from Our Free Clinic Programs

### From the Open Door Clinic in Middlebury:

“Hi, I would like to tell you all my story. When I arrived here, I had already lost two of my molars and my other teeth had been very sensitive and sore; however, some months ago I had an appointment at the Open Door Clinic and one of the nurses asked me if I would like for them to check my teeth. I gladly said yes, and they gave me my first appointment. In that appointment they told me that I had an infection in my gums, among other problems. That appointment was followed by many others. Although it was a slow and arduous process because I had a lot of dental problems, they fixed my molars and from that day forward I didn’t lose another one. They also extracted my canine tooth, which was a very complicated procedure, but changed my smile forever. May God bless those who support and work at the Open Door Clinic.”

Maria is a young Latina woman who had not had any dental treatment in many years. When she came to us, she had moderate to severe chronic periodontal disease with up to 7 mm of bone loss around her teeth and many areas of decay. She needed to have her front teeth extracted and a partial made to replace them. Maria had never been educated about how her oral hygiene habits as well as her diet affected the health of her teeth, both of which contributed to many cavities.

Fortunately, one of our volunteer dental practices committed to her entire case. He and his colleagues placed many fillings and volunteered to make a partial to replace her front teeth. One of her teeth required an extraction through an oral surgeon and our clinic helped Maria cover the cost. Our clinic and dental volunteers donated services valued at \$5,777 to help Maria. Additionally in 2017, we held 31 dental clinics, 6 dental screenings on local farms, and our hygienist and volunteer dentists saw 103 patients over 571 procedures!

### From the Bennington Free Clinic in Bennington:

It took almost 6 months to get a pregnant woman who is undocumented on Medicaid despite the fact that we have gotten pregnant, undocumented women on Medicaid in the past. There appears to be new interpretations of existing Medicaid regulations. So far this woman's pregnancy is progressing well and she is due to give birth at the end of January.

A 64-year-old man who had qualified for MAGI Medicaid several years ago when he lost his job when he was undergoing treatment for melanoma. He was advised this summer that his disability income had put him over income for MAGI Medicaid. We helped him apply for MABD Medicaid for which he qualified with a spend down. Only problem was that the \$25,000 per month cost for his maintenance chemo was out of his reach, far exceeding his income for a year, never mind one month of medication. Fortunately, the pharmaceutical company is able to provide the medication for the coming year. This was an incredibly stressful experience for this man when all he should have had to think about was spending time with his grandkids.

### From People’s Health & Wellness Clinic in Barre:

People's Health & Wellness Clinic recently saw a patient who was complaining about a number of symptoms, quickly recognized as related to diabetes. Turns out, he had lost his Medicaid a couple years ago, after trying unsuccessfully to work out his coverage with Vermont Health Connect and giving up. Two years later, he was suffering and came to us. We were immediately able to order lab tests and diagnose his condition. We gave him a couple glucometers with test strips to monitor blood sugar levels, and drew an A1C which was through the roof. One of our certified navigators got his situation straightened out with Vermont Health Connect and he's now back on Medicaid. He will be getting prescription medications and will shortly be meeting with one of Central Vermont Medical Center's diabetes educators to help him manage his condition. He was headed toward a very serious situation without our interventions.