



# **Vermont's Free & Referral Clinics**

## **Connecting You With Health Care**

### **Strengthening Vermont's Healthcare Safety Net:**

#### **FY27 Budget Request of \$925,000**

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**Testimony to the House Health Care Committee on February 10, 2026**

## EIGHT CLINICS STATEWIDE



**Our Mission:**  
**VFRC advocates for**  
**a more inclusive,**  
**equitable, and**  
**accessible**  
**healthcare system.**



**Free = no insurance billed, no payment plans, no sliding fee scales**





# People's Health & Wellness Clinic Barre, VT

Central Vermont safety-net provider

Small staff supporting 40 volunteer providers

Services: medical care, dental, mental health

Focus on food insecurity, housing, transportation, insurance and other social service program navigation

In FY25:

- 668 unique patients
- 740 medical visits and 457 dental visits
- 46% of patients are uninsured





## Open Door Clinic, Middlebury, VT

### Last year we served:

- 1,305 unique patients
- 395 new patients
- 572 migrant workers
- 92 H2A workers (agriculture)
- 28 H2B workers (hospitality)
- 13 asylum-seekers
- 333 patients seeking help w/ health insurance





## Addressing health disparities: an innovative model

ODC's exam van brings healthcare to workers in the field, expanding capacity and tackling barriers to care:

- Meets workers where they are, reducing how much time they must take off from work
- Removes transportation barrier
- Provides a comfortable and confidential space to be seen by our health care provider
- Addresses language access
- Supports local employers by providing care at their worksites





## Rapidly changing healthcare landscape requires more support for free clinics

As we confront widening gaps, more chronic care and complex patient needs, additional funding would allow us to:

- Hire full-time bilingual CHW
- Add part-time medical assistant
- Add dental staffing to support expanded dental program/hours through collaboration with UVM dental resident
- Bring ED to full time to support fundraising demands and increased workload

*ODC's legislative appropriation covers only 29% of our budget leaving a \$600,000 gap that must be filled through fundraising*

**FY27 Request:**  
**Please raise our grant by**  
**\$925,000**



**\$462,500 from**  
**CMS**



**\$462,500 from**  
**Vermont's**  
**General Fund**





**Cost if increase is  
granted:  
\$272.74 per patient  
*per year\****

**System Savings:  
\$1.50 invested = \$5  
savings in avoided ER  
costs**

*\*Using FY25 patient numbers*

# Why Now?

## HR.1 (ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL)

- Additional Medicaid redeterminations = more churn and procedural issues
- Changes to immigrant eligibility
- Destabilizing effects on broader healthcare system

## LOSS OF ENHANCED SUBSIDIES

- More Vermonters disenrolling = more uninsured in need of care
- More Vermonters moving to 'less rich' Bronze plans = more underinsured seeking affordable alternatives

**The breadth and depth of need is increasing – patients are coming through our doors with more complex and more severe clinical and SDOH-related needs.**



**Vermont's free clinic network is integral to the solution.**