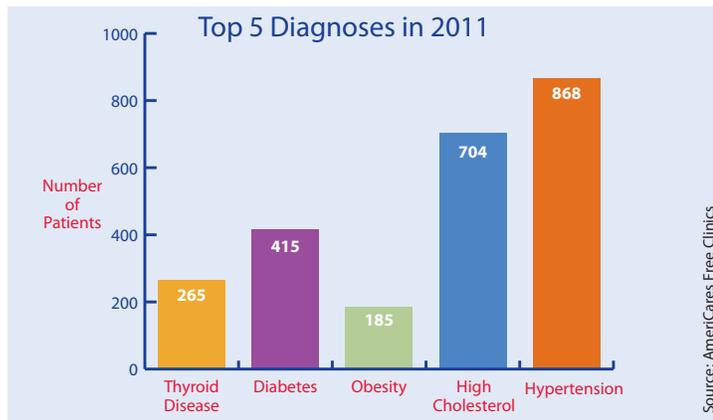




Helping Patients Take Control of Chronic Illness

Patients diagnosed with hypertension, diabetes and other chronic health problems often know they can improve their health with a better diet and exercise. But getting them to make those changes part of their daily routine can sometimes seem like an insurmountable obstacle. Now, for the first time, our patients will benefit from a national program designed to motivate participants to make those life-changing decisions.

Starting this summer, patients of the Boehringer Ingelheim AmeriCares Free Clinic of Danbury will participate in the six-week Live Well program based on Stanford University's



Chronic Disease Self-Management Program. About 16 patients will spend 2.5 hours a week learning techniques for coping with the pain, frustration, fatigue and often isolation that comes with a chronic diagnosis. Participants will also learn about exercise, nutrition and other ways to manage their conditions. The program has demonstrated significant health improvements including fewer hospitalizations and outpatient visits.

“We’ve counseled patients on diet and exercise habits on an



Nurse practitioner Jen Ober treats a patient for hypertension and hypothyroidism.

individual basis, but bringing patients together to motivate one another is so much more powerful,” said AmeriCares Free Clinics Executive Director Karen Gottlieb. “More than two-thirds of all patient visits are for the management of chronic disease. This new approach will allow us to attack the problem from another angle – one that could make all the difference.”

Nationwide, 91 percent of older adults have at least one chronic illness and 73 percent of Americans have at least two chronic diseases, according to the National Council on Aging. Other approaches to increase wellness are in the works, including individual wellness coaching and nutrition classes. Over the next year we expect these programs to be offered at all clinic sites.



20,000 patients treated, \$40 million in care received

We recently reached an important milestone: treating more than 20,000 patients since opening our first clinic in 1994. To date, our patients have received care valued at more than \$40 million. We couldn't have done it without our loyal donors and 220 volunteers – the doctors, nurses, screeners and interpreters who collectively donated more than 25,000 hours of their time last year to help our neighbors in need.

Volunteer nurse Mary Ellen Loncto checks a patient's vital signs.



From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As part of our strategic planning we evaluate our strengths and weaknesses. Clearly our most significant strength is the support we receive from our volunteers and the donor community – without which we would not have free clinics in Norwalk, Danbury or Bridgeport.

Our number one goal is to increase our capacity to see the growing numbers of uninsured residents. This goal depends not only on volunteerism but also on the funding required to hire staff to do the case management that is so essential to our model. It comes as no surprise that in almost 20 years of service we have never had a malpractice claim – all due to the expert care and follow up our patients receive.

Another goal, but certainly no less important, is our desire to better help our patients manage chronic disease. Chronic disease is on the rise, especially in our vulnerable population, and pills and testing can only do so much. It is an internal decision to make the lifestyle changes necessary to combat obesity and lack of exercise – both of which are critically important. As you read in our lead story, we are employing new strategies to equip our patients not only with the education, but the motivation to take charge of their health. As we plan for the future, we will examine our programs through an evidence-based lens, evaluate their effectiveness and continue to strive for excellence.

With thanks for all you do,

Karen Gottlieb, RN, MBA

Boehringer Executive Honored

Danbury clinic volunteers, staff and Boehringer Ingelheim employees gathered on Dec. 20 to thank outgoing Boehringer Ingelheim USA President and CEO J. Martin Carroll for his long-standing commitment to the clinic. Carroll (pictured below on left) took the opportunity to introduce new Boehringer Ingelheim USA President and CEO Paul Fonteyne (on right) to our program. The clinic has been supported by charitable contributions from the Boehringer Ingelheim Cares Foundation for a decade and the company’s employees have volunteered over 300 hours since 2007.



Photo by Chris Rowan/AmeriCares

Volunteer News

“As Muhammad Ali said, ‘Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.’ I feel that all of us have had people in our lives who reached out a hand and helped us along the way to get to where we are. I certainly have. Now it is time to pay it forward, with joy!”



Photo by Leah Hammerman

Mary Waller, interpreter, Norwalk clinic

A warm welcome to our new volunteers

Bridgeport

- V. S. Aleksandrova, RN
- Edward Calderon
- James Coleman
- Emily Del Vaglio, RN
- Katrina Head, RN
- Rachael Hurwitz
- Marchelle Lagueux, LPN
- Lawrence O’Halloran
- Brineth Rivera
- Folake Shogbola, RN

Norwalk

- Caitlin Behrman, RN
- Samantha Bernstein, RN
- Kathy Craig
- Floren Di Raffaele, RN
- Jenifer Drummond, MD
- Thomas McQuaid, APRN
- Maggie Mellinger
- Tami Murray, RN
- Amy Sellery, LPN
- Barbara Smith
- Karl Suerig, MD

Danbury

- Sarah Heald, RN
- Patricia Lopes
- Linda Sandiaes
- Randy Trowbridge, MD

Norwalk Clinic Volunteer Helps More Than 5,000 Patients



Barbara Licker

Watching a “60 Minutes” segment years ago about a free clinic in Tutwiler, Mississippi, Westport resident Barbara Licker began sending the clinic clothing, toys and school supplies. But she never considered volunteering at a free clinic close to home until, only a few weeks into her retirement in 2000, she came across some information about AmeriCares and called the Norwalk clinic to see if she could help.

She was immediately put to work filling out Patient Assistance Program (PAP) applications, a tedious but critical process that gives patients access to free medications from pharmaceutical companies.

Twelve years later, Barbara, a former administrative assistant, has processed more than 5,200 applications and brought in medications worth \$2.3 million.

“When she started volunteering all of our PAP medications fit on a small tray. Today they fill six long shelves,” said Barbara McCabe, director of the Bob Macauley AmeriCares Free Clinic of Norwalk. “She did a tremendous job of growing the PAP program.”

The satisfaction of helping patients, including many recent immigrants struggling to make ends meet, kept Barbara volunteering three days a week.

“When they come to you, you know they just don’t have anything,” she said. “It’s very satisfying to know that with all the trials and tribulations these patients face, they are finally getting some help. You get a good feeling.”

Barbara retired from the clinic when she turned 79 in April to spend more time with her two grandchildren and her newly adopted rescue dog, a Jack Russell terrier mix named Rosie.

“I always looked forward to going to the clinic. Working with Barbara McCabe and Gail Banigan, and all the nurses and interpreters was so great,” she said. “If I were younger I would still be volunteering.”

Giving to the Future

Have you thought about including AmeriCares Free Clinics in your estate or gift plans? To learn more about helping ensure the future of the clinics, go to:

americares.org/giftplanning

or contact Malaine Miller

(203) 658-9634

mmiller@americares.org

Plan a gift. Leave a lasting legacy.



New Donors

We’d like to recognize the following new corporate donors for supporting our efforts to provide free medical care for our neighbors in need:

FactSet Research Systems

Fairfield County Bank

First Niagara Bank Foundation



CHEFA Awards \$68,000 Grant

Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority Grants and Marketing Programs Coordinator Kimberley Fontaine recently presented a \$68,000 check to Executive Director Karen Gottlieb and Development Officer Connie Bertkau. The grant covers the cost of hiring nurse practitioners for four clinic sessions each week. The grant also funds case management services for patients of the Norwalk clinic’s new Tuesday evening session and the Danbury clinic’s new Monday morning session.



Photo by Alex Ostasiewicz/AmeriCares

Danbury Clinic Adds Monday Morning Session

The Boehringer Ingelheim AmeriCares Free Clinic of Danbury recently added Monday morning hours from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to meet the increased demand for care. Over 1,300 patients rely on the clinic as their primary source of medical care, making it our busiest location.



Headquarters
88 Hamilton Avenue
Stamford, CT 06902
203.658.9500
americaresfreeclinics.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
AmeriCares

**Weisman AmeriCares Free Clinic
of Bridgeport**

115 Highland Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604
203.333.9175

**Boehringer Ingelheim AmeriCares
Free Clinic of Danbury**

76 West Street
Danbury, CT 06810
203.748.6188

**Bob Macauley AmeriCares Free Clinic
of Norwalk**

98 South Main Street
Norwalk, CT 06854
203.899.2493

A Patient's Story: Michael

A year after he was laid off, Michael noticed his weight was inching up on the scale and he was experiencing headaches more often. He wanted to see a doctor, but couldn't afford to visit a private practice.

"There were red flags. I needed to have it looked at, but I didn't have any insurance," said the divorced father of two grown children. Searching the internet for low-cost medical care near his home in Stratford, he came across the Weisman AmeriCares Free Clinic of Bridgeport. The volunteer doctor who examined him on his first visit diagnosed him with hypertension and came up with a treatment plan that included diet and exercise changes, along with medication. Within three months Michael's blood pressure was under control and the headaches were gone.

"Without the clinic, who knows what would have happened. I could have had a stroke," said Michael, 49. "I'm so grateful to have volunteer doctors who give their time for people like me who have fallen on hard times."

Impressed by the quality of care he received and the personal interest the volunteers took in his health, Michael made a commitment to do everything in his power to improve his condition. He cut salty foods out of his diet, including all fast food, and began exercising regularly at home with a workout DVD.

"I can't change my age or my family history, but I can change my weight," he said.

One year later, he is 30 pounds lighter and feels younger. His ultimate goal is to get his blood pressure low enough that he can stop taking medication and once again donate blood.

"I had never been without a job or without health insurance before," Michael said. "If it wasn't for the clinic, I probably would have ended up in the emergency room or piled up with doctors' bills."



Photo by Karina Rodriguez/AmeriCares