



news

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St. Charles invests up to \$480K in community benefit dollars in VIM over next two years

BEND, Ore. – St. Charles Health System is partnering with Volunteers in Medicine Clinic of the Cascades (VIM) to match up to \$480,000 dollars in funds the clinic raises over the next two years, nearly doubling the health system's overall community benefit investment.

VIM, which started in 1999 as a one-room clinic housed at Deschutes County Health Services, moved into its current location on the St. Charles Bend campus in 2004. The clinic leases its property from the health system for \$1 a year.

VIM uses the collaborative power of hundreds of in-clinic volunteers and local health care partners to provide uninsured adults with necessary medical care. All patients are over 19 years of age, from low-income working families and are not eligible for Affordable Care Act (ACA) programs. The majority have more than one chronic condition. Through VIM, patients have access to primary and specialty medical care, prescription medications, and targeted patient education on a donation basis.

"Thousands of people remain uninsured in Central Oregon and struggle to find access to affordable health care," said Kat Mastrangelo, VIM's executive director. "Volunteers in Medicine is a local solution to a local health care problem. Through our network of providers, we are able to leverage every \$1 raised into \$6.73 in medical services and community benefits for the uninsured."

Over the past four years, VIM has experienced an increase in requests for medical services and medications, but its funding has not kept pace with the demand, Mastrangelo said.

"To stabilize our funding base so that we can meet our patient's needs, we are seeking support from Central Oregon's health care community to match St. Charles' generous investment," she said. "Any donation from a licensed health care individual, provider or group practice, medical foundation or organization will help us meet our goal."

St. Charles has committed to matching VIM funds dollar for dollar up to \$240,000 a year, for two years, which is a conservative estimate of how much money St. Charles saves as a result of the services provided by the clinic.

"What makes VIM special is its value proposition," said Dr. Jeff Absalon, St. Charles' chief physician executive. "It convenes a pro bono network of specialists to coordinate case management, which helps

ensure patients receive the right care at the right time. If VIM were to go away, the result would be more costly and fragmented care.”

Starting the VIM clinic was one of Sister Catherine Hellman’s final projects after serving as St. Charles’ chief executive officer for 20 years and president emeritus for 10 additional years. The health system’s support of the clinic honors Hellman’s contributions and a century of providing care to the community.

“This year we’re celebrating our 100-year anniversary and our legacy of ‘Care for all,’” said Jennifer Welander, St. Charles’ chief financial officer. “St. Charles is proud to invest its community benefit dollars in an organization that provides health care to underserved members of our community, which philosophically aligns with our mission as an organization.”

To learn more about VIM’s fundraising campaign, contact Stacey Durden, VIM’s development director and communications manager, at (541) 585-9007 or stacey.durden@vim-cascades.org.

About St. Charles Health System

St. Charles Health System, Inc., headquartered in Bend, Ore., owns and operates St. Charles Bend, Madras, Prineville and Redmond. It also owns family care clinics in Bend, Madras, Prineville, Redmond and Sisters. St. Charles is a private, not-for-profit Oregon corporation and is the largest employer in Central Oregon with more than 4,200 caregivers. In addition, there are more than 350 active medical staff members and nearly 200 visiting medical staff members who partner with the health system to provide a wide range of care and service to our communities.

About VIM

Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) was established as a 501(c)3 nonprofit in 2001. The clinic provides free medical, mental health, vision, and prescription drug care for adults over age 19, who live or work in Deschutes, Crook or Jefferson County, earn less than 250% of federal poverty level and are uninsured. Last year, VIM provided care to 1,009 eligible patients across 5,145 in-clinic visits. VIM is funded through individual and corporate donations, grants, and patient donations. For more information visit www.vim-cascades.org