



# VITAL SIGNS

The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland ~ Spring 2015

*Health care is a right, not a privilege*

## Health Center Opens Doors to Ames Family Foundation Pediatric Clinic

The Free Clinic is pleased to welcome Niyati Mahajan, MD, our first full-time staff pediatrician. Dr. Mahajan is joined by Mary Clough, MD, previously a volunteer pediatrician here who recently joined the health center staff on a part-time basis.

For many years, The Free Clinic's mission was to provide care to individuals with no health insurance. Most children in Ohio were covered by their parents' private insurance, or by the government-sponsored Children's Health Insurance Program, which provides health insurance to uninsured children and teens who are not eligible for or enrolled in Medicaid. Now, as a community health center, we welcome patients of all ages, with or without insurance.

"One of the advantages of becoming a community health center is that we can now see patients across the whole spectrum

of life, from infancy through the senior years," said Executive Director Danny Williams. "We are happy to be able to provide medical, dental and behavioral health care services to the whole family, regardless of their ability to pay or their insurance status."



*Our first pediatric patient, Breyden Doan, and proud parents!*

Dr. Mahajan received her medical degree in India and then attended the University of Kentucky where she earned a Master of Public Health degree and completed her pediatrics residency. She moved to Cleveland in 2012 and worked at a community health center in Fremont, Ohio before joining The Free Clinic team. "I love to interact with kids. I like all stages of childhood," said Dr. Mahajan, herself the mother of a one-year-old boy. She views obesity to be the most critical health issue affecting children today. "It can be so easily preventable," she said.

Dr. Clough has been practicing pediatrics since 1970, most of those years in practice with Kaiser Permanente. After retiring from

see "Pediatrics" on page 3

### Thank you to the funders of the Ames Family Foundation Pediatric Clinic:

- Ames Family Foundation
- The Hershey Foundation
- The Louise H. & David S. Ingalls Foundation

## The Free Clinic Celebrates 45 Years!

On Saturday, September 19, 2015, at the InterContinental Hotel, The Free Clinic will celebrate 45 years of providing high quality health care to individuals and families, regardless of their ability to pay. While we have evolved from a free clinic to a community health center, our core guiding principle remains the same: "Health care is a right, not a privilege."

To recognize this important milestone, we will hold a 45th Anniversary Benefit Gala, "Sapphires and Stars: Celebrating the Luminaries Who Made Us Shine!" The benefit promises to be meaningful for the numerous people and institutions involved. Proceeds from the Gala will enable us to continue to provide uncompensated health care to the thousands of Northeast Ohioans who still lack insurance despite the enactment of the Affordable Care Act. Join us!

**Honorary Benefit Chair:** Celia S. Weatherhead

**Benefit Chair:** Jean B. Sarlson

#### Individual Honorees:

- Charles F. Clarke, Esq.\* • Dr. Pete Cubberley\* • Gordon S. Friedman, Esq.
- vic & joan gelb • Stephen & Sondra Hardis • Donald Messinger, Esq.
- The Roth Family \* awarded posthumously

#### Community Partner Honorees:

- Case Western Reserve University • Cleveland Clinic
- University Hospitals

#### Corporate Honorees:

- Forest City Enterprises • KeyBank
- Lubrizol

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# Free Clinic Redux



Danny R. Williams, JD, MNO  
Executive Director

Dictionary.com defines “redux”: “brought back; resurgent; presented in a new way.” This issue of Vital Signs marks the return of our newsletter, after a hiatus prompted by the number of important organizational changes. The new look of the newsletter symbolizes the restored and revisited community health center that has emerged following our transition.

Our scope has expanded, as evidenced by the cover story regarding the launch of our pediatric practice. Our clinical structure has been enhanced by the naming of Farah Munir, DO, FAPA, as our Chief Wellness Officer, responsible for overseeing and integrating our medical, dental

and behavioral health practices. The capacity to better track our patients and monitor our outcomes has been improved by the implementation of a first-rate electronic health record system. And, the strength of our overall operations has been validated by the accreditation of our Behavioral Health Department and the highly successful completion of our most recent HRSA site visit.

However, one more change is in the offing. In the coming months, our name will change. This will be hard for some because many wonderful things have happened at The Free Clinic. But, as a community health center, we will continue to improve lives in new ways.

*“In times of profound change, the learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.”*

ERIC HOFFER

## Medical Marijuana: Truth and Consequences

On Thursday, June 4, 2015 at the InterContinental Hotel, The Free Clinic will be hosting our third community health forum, this year on the subject of medical marijuana - an issue that will likely be on the November ballot in Ohio. If it is endorsed by Ohio voters, this could have broad impact on our region’s workforce, health care delivery options, safety considerations, research and commercial prospects, taxing options, among other issues. The Forum will open with a keynote address on the state of the science behind medical marijuana by Kari Franson, PharmD, PhD, BCPP, Associate Dean for Professional Education at the University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy. Dr. Franson has both published and advised Colorado public officials on this topic.

We also plan to review lessons learned from other states that have legalized medical marijuana and to consider the potential economic impact of such a move. The event will conclude with a spirited debate between representatives from Drug-Free Action Alliance and ResponsibleOhio, a key proponent for legalizing marijuana use in Ohio. *The Free Clinic has not taken a formal position on this issue, and the forum is not intended to advocate for or against passage of any proposed initiative.* Rather, it is designed to provide a rational, fact-based dialogue regarding the relevant issues that such a dramatic legal and policy shift in Ohio would entail. Please go to our website to register and learn more – [thefreeclinic.org](http://thefreeclinic.org).

## Now a Community Health Center, the Clinic Contemplates Its Name



For almost 45 years The Free Clinic has been called just that because no one was charged for any service, or necessary medications. But the times, the business model, and the name, as Bob Dylan famously sang, are a-changin’. In fact, in many ways, the clinic has already changed.

In June of 2012, The Free Clinic received notification from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that its application to become a Community Health Center, aka Federally Qualified Health Center, had been approved. That meant, among other things, that the clinic could bill for its services, a move viewed as necessary to sustain and strengthen the financial well-being of the agency.

Today, the health center is not only billing for services, mostly through Medicaid and Medicare, but also actively working to enroll individuals and families in affordable health insurance plans for which they qualify. We now see infants and children, patient records are now documented and tracked in a state-of-the-art Electronic Health Records system, and policies and procedures have been put into place to ensure that quality measures are met and improvements are continuous. What’s next? **Our name.**

In the coming months, The Free Clinic will undergo a rebranding process that will better communicate who we are and what we do today. We will be seeking input from many of you about what matters most in choosing a new name. But no matter what the moniker on our letterhead, we will continue to be guided by our long-held belief that *health care is a right, not a privilege.*

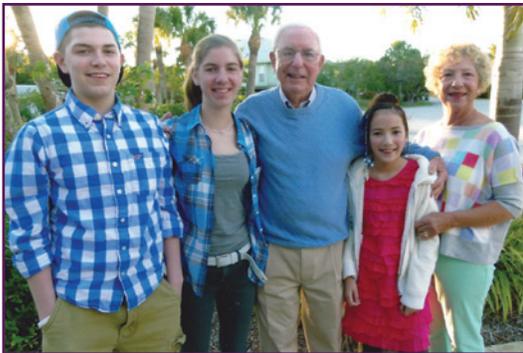
her practice, she joined the health center's medical team in 2011 as a volunteer pediatrician. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity College in Washington, DC, and her medical degree from George Washington University School of Medicine. She did a medical residency at The Cleveland Clinic, and a pediatric residency at Children's Hospital National Medical Center in Washington, DC. The mother of three grown children, Dr. Clough is the proud grandmother of eight and the blissful babysitter of several of them.

Pediatric appointments are available Monday through Friday days and some evenings. Please call (216) 721-4010 for more information.

## Peter & Sue Danford – Free Clinic Donor Spotlight

Peter and Sue Danford have been loyal contributors to The Free Clinic for over 25 years. Their reason for their philanthropic support is simple—they want to help people who are less fortunate. They both feel very lucky and blessed that their hard work led to financial success, which enables them to give back to their community.

Both Peter and Sue believe strongly that *all people* deserve high quality, affordable health care. As experienced, successful business owners,



*Peter & Sue Danford and family members*

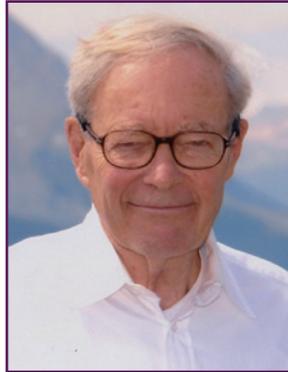
they understand that community health centers like The Free Clinic reduce health care costs. Equally important, they recognize that continuity of care is critical to the health of a person's mind, body and spirit.

Peter and Sue Danford's unassuming, dignified approach to philanthropy is truly heartwarming and inspiring. We honor this couple, and the thousands of individuals that believe in our mission, through our daily efforts to provide high quality, financially barrier-free care to our patients.

Peter describes their company, Peter Danford, Inc. as the "ultimate mom and pop business." Known for its exquisite jewelry and unique bridal registry, Peter Danford, Inc. was established in 1973, and has been in the same location in Shaker Heights for over 25 years.

## Planned Giving Legacy Society Named for Charlie Clarke

*"A giant in his profession...a wonderful human being...perennially curious about the world...a friend to everyone...scholar...and patriot."* This is just a small sampling of the words used to describe Charlie Clarke.



*Charlie Clarke*

January, 2015 marked the one year anniversary of the passing of Charlie Clarke, a highly respected legal and civic leader in Cleveland. Charlie helped to establish The Free Clinic and served as our first, and longest serving, Board President. He touched many lives through his unparalleled dedication to helping the less fortunate.

In recent months, The Free Clinic organized a team of volunteer professionals and staff to help us formalize a process to garner legacy gifts. One of the first tasks of this team was to create a giving society that would honor our past and help ensure the future. We are pleased to announce that the health center's Board of Trustees unanimously determined to name our first-ever Legacy Society in honor of Charlie Clarke.

We will be forever grateful for Charlie's passion and advocacy on behalf of our patients, and for the lasting impression he made on the hearts and the minds of the staff and volunteers who were privileged to know him. The Free Clinic's Board and staff will continue Charlie's legacy of service through our daily efforts to provide high quality and affordable health care to all.

- Individual Mental Health Counseling
- Alcohol and Drug Assessment, Treatment and Referral Services
- ADHD Diagnosis and Management
- Anger Management Group
- Anxiety Management Group
- Couples Counseling
- Psychiatry and Medication Services for adults only

**The Behavioral Health Department serves adults, adolescents and children and offers the following services:**

Appointments can be scheduled and information obtained about our services by calling 216.707.3500 ext. 1626.



### *Mission*

To address vital community health needs by providing high quality health care and related services to individuals and families, regardless of their ability to pay, and by advocating for policy changes that promote greater access for the underserved and improved community-wide health and wellness outcomes.

### *Vision*

To be a health home of choice by providing exemplary health services and to be a respected voice for positive change through effective advocacy.

### *Values*

- Health care is the right of every individual
- Health services will be initiated and continued in response to prioritized unmet community needs
- Resources will be leveraged to provide the maximum level of care
- Services will be provided in such a way as to preserve patient and client dignity and confidentiality
- Patients and clients are encouraged to take appropriate responsibility for their own health and well-being
- Advocacy in support of the organization's mission is essential
- Securing sufficient resources to ensure stable operation until the organization's mission is fulfilled is an essential function

## Health Center Passes HRSA Inspection with an "A" Report Card

Now that The Free Clinic is a Federally Qualified Health Center, it operates under the oversight of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. HRSA is the primary federal agency for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated or medically vulnerable.

As a newly designated FQHC, The Free Clinic must undergo periodic site visits during which reviewers contracted by HRSA inspect our policies and operations to ensure they meet HRSA's high clinical, financial and governance performance standards. A team including our assigned HRSA Program Officer and three experienced reviewers visited The Free Clinic September 23 - 25, 2014. They interviewed staff and board members and examined files, reports, documentation, policies, procedures, medical charts, and more to determine whether the health center is meeting 19 required performance measures that make up the site visit report card. Preparations for this visit were thorough and intense and required a great deal of collaboration among staff members and between staff and board members.

At the conclusion of the site visit, then Board President Carol Metz wrote, "One of my most fulfilling acts as board chair is to report the results of the HRSA site visit. It goes without saying that we all recognize the amount of hard work and tireless dedication everyone at the clinic has given over the past year. Danny (Williams, executive director) has done a remarkable job assembling a top-notch team and working alongside this team to do the impossible. This week, the HRSA team saw it as well. The HRSA team reported today that we passed all 19 program requirements! To echo our project officer and the rest of the HRSA site visit team, The Free Clinic is an amazing organization and truly on its way to be 'Best in Class.'"

