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CENTERVILLE CLINICS EARNS SECOND PITTSBURGH SMART 50 AWARD

Uniontown, PA – Centerville Clinics, Inc., has been a well-known health care center in Fayette, Greene and Washington counties for decades. But in the last couple of years, Centerville - and Executive Director Barry Niccolai - has gained a reputation outside its service area.

Centerville Clinics recently earned its second Pittsburgh Smart 50 Award which recognizes the top executives at the 50 smartest companies in the Greater Pittsburgh area for their effective leadership.

Niccolai and the other awardees were honored at a virtual banquet in November.

Niccolai said he is proud to have been selected not just once, but for two consecutive years.

“Certainly, being nominated two years in a row says something as much as the award does,” he said. “Of all the business entities in the Pittsburgh region, for Centerville to be recognized two years in a row, that says more than just a single one, in my mind.”

Centerville Clinics, primarily the brainchild of the late Joseph A. Yablonski, was founded in 1955 as a way to bring medical care to the region’s coal miners and their families.

Niccolai said he isn’t sure how Centerville Clinics came to the attention of the Smart 50 program. But he has known about the health care facility all of his life.

“I grew up in this area, and my grandfather was a patient at Centerville Clinics as a miner,” he said.

Niccolai said he had always seen it as a busy medical center with numerous doctors and nurses, but “not until coming on board did I realize the depth and breadth of what Centerville Clinics does.”

Niccolai said the 13 offices scattered throughout the area take care of about 40,000 patients.

“Approximately, the combined population of Fayette, Greene and Washington counties is 400,000 people,” he said. “That means we touch one in 10 people in Fayette, Washington and Greene counties.”

Centerville Clinics has programs in schools, Niccolai noted, and when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, as many other health care facilities did, Centerville reached out to coordinate with hospitals and emergency management agencies.

“They saw the impact we had in operating our three respiratory clinics - one in Washington, one in Uniontown, and one here in Fredericktown - in which our patients or any member of the general public who exhibited COVID-like symptoms could come in and be tested,” Niccolai said. “We’ve now administered over 20,000 vaccines as well.”

Niccolai said Centerville Clinics received a state grant to provide off-site pop-up testing sites and hold two of those each month throughout the service area. The facility even purchased and repurposed an ambulance in an effort to be more mobile.

Additionally, Niccolai said, “We were also fortunate enough to be approached by the (American Heart Association) initially because during the pandemic, food insecurity was a problem in our area.”

Niccolai noted that food insecurity always is a bit of a problem in poorer areas and the pandemic exacerbated those issues. He said Centerville first partnered with the AHA, and after that grant money was used, joined with the Pennsylvania Medical Society and the Highmark Foundation to deliver boxes of staple foods to families in need. Niccolai said Centerville helped provide about 8,000 boxes of food to hungry families in its service area.

Other aspects of Centerville Clinics that may have caught the eye of the Smart 50 program, Niccolai said, are its innovation in staffing and the way in which it has addressed the area’s substance abuse issue.

“All medical providers are experiencing difficulty in attracting and maintaining staff during this trying time,” he said.

Niccolai said Centerville has partnered with the National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement, and now offers employees and the general public tuition-free, paid internships. Online training by NIMAA combines with hands-on training in Centerville offices during the 29-week program.

“We do ask them to stay with us for an additional three years once they graduate,” Niccolai said.

He said substance abuse has increased by 47% since the start of the pandemic, and in response, Centerville “aggressively secured a grant to train three nurse practitioners as psychiatric nurse practitioners.”

Centerville partnered with the Washington County Drug and Alcohol Commission to provide medically assisted treatment for substance abuse, and Niccolai said the facility is committed to treating not just the substance abuse but also the person as a whole.

He said Centerville Clinics is proud to have partnered with so many health organizations throughout Fayette County and the region and is also happy to have worked with the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce to help residents get tested and vaccinated for COVID-19.

“We’re glad to be partnered with everyone in Fayette County, meeting the testing needs and now the vaccine needs of all the residents in the county,” he said.

To learn more about Centerville Clinics, visit www.centervilleclinics.com.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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