



SMC GALA April 19, 2020!

April, 2020

From the Executive Director, Anne Faul



COVID-19 has brought many things to a screeching halt, including our biggest fundraiser of the year, but it hasn't halted the medical needs of our low-income, uninsured patients. Conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma and COPD require ongoing care to avoid further health complications.

To address these needs while protecting patients, staff and volunteers, the clinic has been operating in pandemic mode since March 24th. Our providers have been answering patient calls and requests and delivering healthcare via telephone in many cases. Medicines and medical supplies are mailed to patients. A nurse triage line is answered by a Registered Nurse Monday through Friday. We are making outgoing calls to patients to see how they are doing and to determine if they need anything. Patients with urgent needs are seen in the clinic under carefully controlled, safe conditions.

With every passing day, we are seeing the harsh economic impacts of the pandemic. Most SMC patients have low-paying hourly-wage jobs. If they don't show up for work, they don't get paid. Low-income jobs in fields like retail, hospitality and childcare cannot be performed remotely. Most patients have no savings and even stocking up on food can represent an impossible financial hurdle. We've seen an increase in requests for assistance with medicine, food, transportation and housing.

We are also anticipating an increase in new patients as a result of COVID-19. Layoffs, cutbacks and closings result in more people losing their insurance. The longer people are out of work, the more likely it is that they will lose their insurance and the more likely it is that they will need financial assistance in addition to medical assistance.

Despite the postponement of the Gala, we are fortunate to have wonderful community support.

- Just as I sat down to write this, a lady came to the side door of the clinic. "I want to make a donation," she said as she handed me an envelope. "There's not much I can do to help, but I want to support your work." She was gone before I could even ask her name. I opened the envelope to find a \$100 bill and a gift card to Publix.
- Last week, one of our employees posted in social media that we might be facing a shortage of masks. The amazing members of Club 142 sprang into action and delivered 100 handsewn masks within a week.
- A donor brought a huge bag of individual essential oils "stress-buster" gifts for us to distribute to patients.

To address this expected increase in patient demand and the delay in our gala, SMC is focusing fundraising efforts on Palmetto Giving Day to be held May 5th. Palmetto Giving Day matching funds allow donors to double their impact. This year, we are thrilled that we will have up to \$30,000 in matching funds available. More than ever, SMC needs community support to help meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents.

Please remember to donate ONLINE on Palmetto Giving Day!

Uber / LYFT Program

Give a Ride—Save a Foot

How can a LYFT ride help prevent an amputation? Seems like a crazy connection, but the reality is that many Smith Medical Clinic patients find it impossible to keep their medical appointments because they don't have a way to get to either clinic location. In fact, a lack of transportation is, by far, the leading cause of cancelled/missed clinic appointments.

This was demonstrated quite vividly recently for our patient, Keteri Melvin. Since Keteri has been a SMC patient, she, like many of our patients, has struggled to keep her medical appointments. Living in a remote area of Georgetown County without a car, it takes over an hour and ten minutes to get to the clinic. Keteri could not always find a ride and sometimes her ride would cancel at the last minute, leaving her without a way to her appointments.

A few months ago, while attempting to fix her parent's television antenna, the big, bulky TV fell on Keteri's foot, crushing her toe. "My toe was completely smashed, with broken bones and I had to have stitches, too," says Keteri. "Since I have diabetes, I knew my toe might not heal and I could lose it"

The emergency room advised Keteri to follow up with Smith Clinic a few times a week for a wound check and dressing change. Thankfully, in 2019, SMC began piloting transportation assistance through Uber and LYFT. Coordinated by Dina Wells, Operations Director and supported by a grant from the Mustard Seed Foundation, the clinic started arranging safe, reliable rides to the clinic for patients. "Even though my sugars were pretty good, I didn't know what to watch out for and I was afraid I was going to lose my toe," says Keteri. "Thanks to SMC, I was able to keep my appointments and follow up with the orthopedist to make sure things were healing right. I was even homeless for a few weeks during this time, but they were still able to help me get to the clinic and the specialist."



Patient and LYFT driver

The LYFT/Uber pilot has been instrumental in helping people keep medical appointments so that routine concerns do not become medical emergencies. This saves money for our healthcare system, but more importantly, it reduces pain and suffering for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Please support SMC on Palmetto Giving Day!
Online Donations will be matched
up to \$30,000!

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TAZ

Scenes around the clinic during COVID-19 Crisis



Dina Wells, Operations Director, prepares prescriptions for mailing.

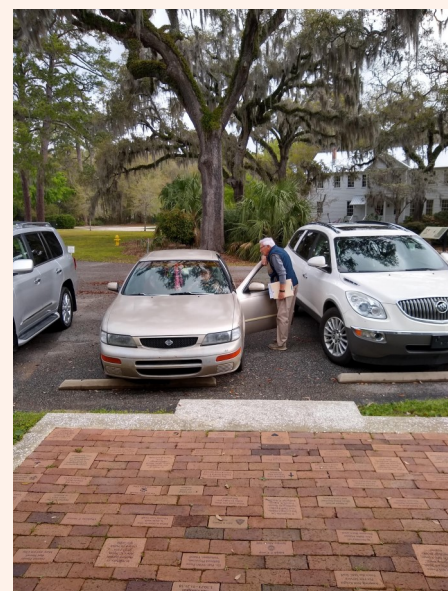
Nurse Practitioner, Suzanne Edkins, counsels a diabetic patient.



Clinic Director Pat Ames, FNP, discusses treatment options with patient



Marketing Director, Anne Salley, arranges items for online auction bidding



Dr. John Konsek, volunteer physician counsels a patient's daughter in the clinic parking lot.



Nurse Coordinator, Lissa Byrd, RN , with personal protective equipment donated by Direct Relief

COVID-19 Relief Provides New Tax Deduction Opportunity



If you take the standard deduction on your 2020 tax return (the one that you'll file in 2021), you can claim a brand new "above-the-line" deduction of up to \$300 for donations to charity you make this year. Normally, you have to itemize on Schedule A to get a tax break for charitable donations. In this case, though, it's the other way around—if you itemize, you can't take this new deduction.

Not sure if you'll claim the standard deduction? Here are the amounts for your 2020 tax return:

2020 Standard Deduction Amounts

Filing Status	Standard Deduction
Single; Married Filing Separately	\$12,400
Married Filing Jointly	\$24,800
Head of Household	\$18,650

Taxpayers who are at least 65 years old or blind can claim an additional standard deduction of \$1,300 (\$1,650 if using the single or head of household filing status). For anyone who is both 65 and blind, the additional deduction amount is doubled.

[Annual Gala Postponed](#)

We are disappointed that the Gala has been postponed due to COVID-19. If you already purchased tickets, they will be honored when the gala is rescheduled. If you haven't bought tickets yet, you may purchase them online and they will be honored whenever the event is rescheduled.

[Visit our website to purchase your Gala tickets](#)

smithfreeclinic.org

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Phyllis Wigglesworth
Owen and Dawn Wright
Walker Family

Doing Whatever It Takes...

Smith Clinic is providing patient care during the COVID-19 crisis.

- We've set up a physician hotline for patients to use if they are sick or need medical advice.
- Our nurse practitioners are seeing patients in the clinic as necessary.
- Staff and volunteers are contacting patients from home to be sure they are well, and to see if they need prescription refills or other medical advice. Over 500 calls have been made already.
- Our pharmacists are filling and mailing patient prescriptions every week.
- We are responding to all patient calls within 24 hours.
- We are also mailing eyeglasses, meds, and diabetes supplies as needed so that patients do not need to leave their homes.

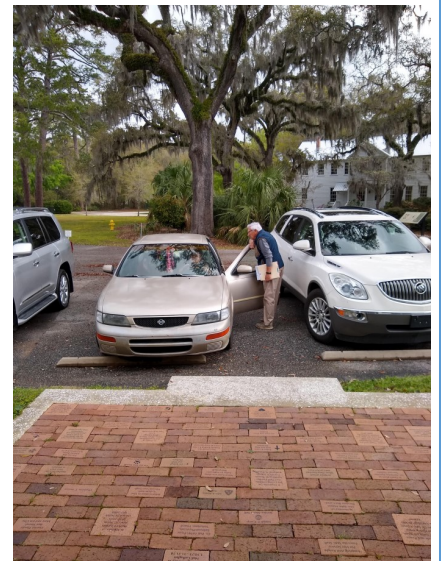
Mental health counselors are calling patients at home to provide counseling and/or reassurance. Understandably, we are seeing an increase in depression and anxiety.

We are grateful to staff and volunteers for continuing to provide patient care during these difficult times.

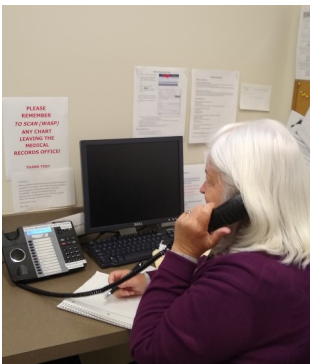
We are also grateful to our donors for their unwavering support. We are fortunate to be part of such a caring community!

Delivering Patient Care ...In the Parking Lot???

Last week, our fabulous volunteer Dr. Konsek saw a very sick patient in the clinic. He wanted to be sure the patient's daughter knew how to care for him but she had 2 sick children with her. Dr. Konsek spent 30 minutes in the parking lot, counseling and reassuring her so she wouldn't have to bring her ailing kiddos into the clinic.

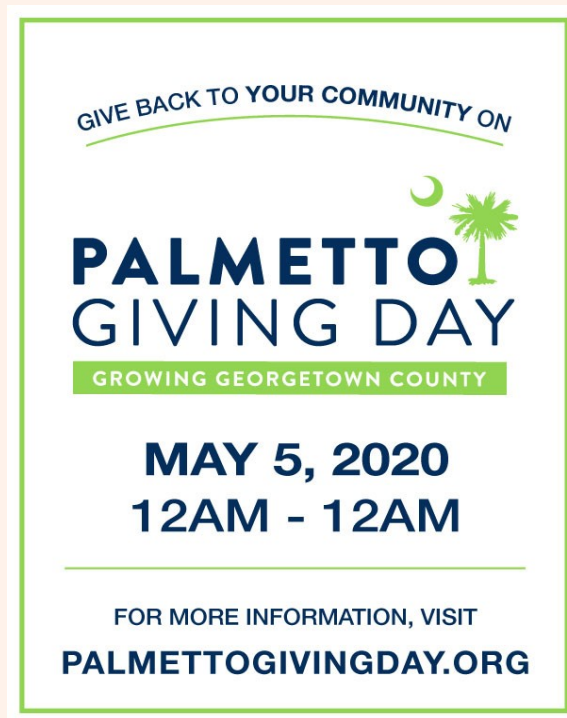


Wellness Checks and Outreach



Staff and volunteers are contacting patients to ensure that they have everything they need to stay healthy at home. Prescription refills are the #1 need but patients have other questions and concerns about their health. Feedback from patients is overwhelmingly positive. "It is wonderful to know that somebody care," said one isolated patient. "I feel like the phone is my lifeline right now."

Please remember to donate ONLINE on Palmetto Giving Day!



Smith Medical Clinic exists to help low-income, uninsured people – all the time

“Please help me. I don’t want to go back to the hospital with pneumonia!”

This was the message left on our nurse triage line from a young man without insurance that had just been discharged from the hospital for a severe respiratory illness. He had gone to the pharmacy to get the prescriptions filled that the hospital doctor had written and was dismayed to learn they would cost over \$200. Not having been able to work since a car accident 6 months ago and having just moved to this area, he didn’t have money to pay and could only borrow a few dollars from friends and family. “I’m living in a camper without electricity right now,” he explained. “I’m doing my best to get back on my feet but there’s no way I can afford these medicines.”



SMC staff found online coupons that reduced his prescription cost to less than \$100 and met him at CVS with the coupons and cash to pay for his medicines – plus a little extra for food. When we called to check on him a few days later, he reported that he was almost fully recovered.

“Y’all didn’t know me at all and you helped me without a question,” he said tearfully. “When I get back to work, the first thing I’m going to do is pay the clinic back so you can help the next person that ends up in a situation like me.”

Smith Medical Clinic, Inc.

99 Baskervill Drive

Pawleys Island, SC 29585

Dr. Cathcart Smith

Smith Medical Clinic was established in 1985 by Dr. Cathcart Smith and his wife Nancy in an 8-foot wide trailer with office and medical equipment from Dr. Smith's former medical office. Initially, Dr. Smith recruited five retired doctors and a dozen nurses to volunteer at the Clinic. This volunteer model has become a Smith Clinic tradition. Today, over 200 volunteers, aided by a small, part-time staff and financial support from our community, provide complete medical care for over 2,000 low-income, uninsured, Georgetown County residents a year for less than \$250 per patient per year.

“ For years, I had suggested to many retirees who had come under my care that they should consider retiring to something rather than from something.”

Contact Us

Call for information about our services and volunteer opportunities.

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Pawleys Island, SC 29585

1101 Highmarket Street
Georgetown, SC 29440

(843) 237- 2672
www.smithfreeclinic.org

