



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ohio's Free Clinics Honored in First Award Ceremony

Ohio Department of Health & Ohio Association of Free Clinics Recognize Three Outstanding Volunteers

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Ohio Association of Free Clinics (O AFC) recently joined together to recognize the accomplishments of Ohio's free clinics. In 2014, the 55 Free Clinics in Ohio provided more than \$200 million worth of healthcare to more than 38,000 people through more than 72,000 patient visits.

"Affordable, accessible health care is essential and Ohio's free clinics play an important role in providing both for Ohioans," said ODH Director Rick Hodges. "The Ohio Department of Health is proud to honor the exceptional work of Ohio's free clinics and their outstanding volunteers that help protect and improve the life of all Ohioans."

Earlier this year, the Ohio legislature passed House Bill 320, which strengthens the operations of free clinics and allows Medicaid patients to have greater access to healthcare options. It also allows physicians and dentists at eligible free clinics anywhere in Ohio to participate in ODH's loan repayment programs. Previously, providers could only receive these loan repayments if they worked in free clinics in designated health professional or health resource shortage areas.

December is Free Clinic Appreciation Month. At Wednesday's kick-off event, ODH and O AFC presented awards to one free clinic and three individuals for their contributions to healthcare in Ohio. O AFC exists to educate and equip free clinics in planning and delivering quality healthcare for the underserved.

"The Ohio Association of Free Clinics is extremely thankful to be able to work with the Legislature and ODH to recognize the hard work of Ohio's Free Clinics and the volunteers who serve there," said O AFC Executive Director Deborah Miller. "The work being done through the free clinic systems is meeting the needs of the most at-risk individuals in Ohio; those who remain without coverage or without access to care."

The award categories and 2015 recipients are:

Free Clinic of the Year: Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine Community Health Programs (CHP). The mobile clinic traveled 8,829 miles into Southeastern Ohio counties last year to provide services to the most vulnerable populations in 16 counties.

Free Clinic Physician Volunteer of the Year: Robert Cooper, MD of the Columbus Free Clinic. Dr. Cooper has served on the supervising physician board and as an instructor for the Columbus Free Clinic for five years and is described as an innovator, teacher and philanthropist.

Free Clinic Nurse Volunteer of the Year (awarded posthumously): Mary Ann Stone, RN of the Open Arms Health Clinic (OAHC) of Bellbrook. Stone started and chaired the Community Wellness Coalition (CWC), which established the all-volunteer OAHC in 2014. She served as Executive Director of OAHC and Chair of the Board of the CWC.

Free Clinic Dentist Volunteer of the Year: James Hegyi, DDS of the Viola Startzman Clinic in Wooster. Hegyi has served as a volunteer dentist in the clinic since 2011. He drives 45 minutes from his home one to two days per week to serve patients in Wayne County. He is an integral part of the dental team, seeing patients in acute dental pain as well as those needing general treatment and education.

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Free Clinics in Ohio

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| Ashland Christian Health Center - Ashland | Free Clinic of Fulton County |
| Heritage Community Clinic - Athens | Living Well Clinic - Greene |
| Oxford College Corner Clinic - Butler | Bellbrook Open Arms Free Clinic |
| Free Clinic of Clinton County, Inc. - Clinton | Good Samaritan Free Clinic - Hamilton |
| North Coast Health - Cuyahoga | Univ. Family Phys. Race Track Clinic - Hamilton |
| Parma Health Ministry - Cuyahoga | Jefferson County 4th Street Health Center |
| AAPIO Clinic - Delaware | Lake County Free Medical Clinic |
| Grace Clinic of Delaware County | Licking County Community Health Clinic |
| By the Way Free Clinic - Fairfield | Lorain County Free Clinic |
| Asian Health Initiative/Asian Free Clinic - Franklin | Toledo/Lucas County Care Net |
| The Breathing Assoc. Lung Health Clinic - Franklin | CommunityCare Free Medical Clinic - Lucas |
| The Bridge Free Health Clinic - Franklin | That Neighborhood Free Clinic - Lucas |
| Clinic at Faith Mission - Franklin | Madison County Health Partners |
| Columbus Free Clinic - Franklin | Midlothian Free Clinic - Mahoning |
| Grace in the City – Hardin Clinic - Franklin | Medina Health Ministry |
| Helping Hands Health & Wellness Center - Franklin | Health Partners Free Clinic - Miami |
| KidSmiles Pediatric Dental Clinic - Franklin | Good Neighbor House - Montgomery |
| Linworth Free Clinic - Franklin | Reach Out of Montgomery County |
| Noor Community Clinic/Muslim Clinic - Franklin | Compassionate Care of Shelby County |
| Physicians CareConnection - Franklin | Hartville Migrant Ministry - Stark |
| Victory Ministries Free Medical Clinic – Franklin | Pregnancy Support Center of Stark County |
| Vineyard Free Health Clinics - Franklin | Faithful Servants Care Center - Summit |
| Vineyard Free Medical and Preg. Center - Franklin | Open M Free Clinic - Summit |
| Xenos Fourth Street Clinic - Franklin | Tuscarawas Clinic for the Working Uninsured |
| Xenos/Vineyard Dental Clinic - Franklin | Viola Startzman Free Clinic - Wayne |
| Xenos/ Youth for Christ Free Clinic - Franklin | Washington County Free Clinic |
| | Compassion Medical Clinic of Williams County |