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### Volunteers in Medicine to increase refill hours

Legal requirements for medicine room differ from pharmacy rules

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If you want a new prescription filled at the Volunteers in Medicine clinic, you will have to go between 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. or between 1 and 4 p.m. — Monday through Friday.

“Those are the same hours we had for filling prescriptions at the CHAP clinic,” said Sam Kelley, one of the clinic’s pharmacists. “If it’s urgent, people can ask clinic personnel to come to the back door and I will fill it.”

Kelley said by mid-summer the VIM clinic hopes to be able to fill prescriptions anytime the clinic is open — 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays; 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays.

“That won’t happen until we first establish a medication room, which can legally dispense medications without needing to have a pharmacist on duty,” he said.

Kelley said the VIM clinic is using the former CHAP clinic’s pharmacy to dispense medications.

“Once we get things cleared with the State Board of Health and put up a wall to separate the pharmacy into two different entities, we will be able to set up a medication room for filling prescriptions,” he said. “A medication room has more legal flexibility than a pharmacy.”

#### Low-cost medicine

Kelley said the VIM clinic receives most of its medications free from pharmaceutical companies, through their patient assistance programs.

The clinic charges patients \$3 for one prescription, \$6 for two prescriptions and \$9 for three or more prescriptions.

“Some patients we see have 9 or 10 prescriptions, but they only have to pay a total of \$9 for all of them,” he said. “And if a patient has no money at all, we give them the prescriptions at no charge.”

Kelley said the clinic charges small prescription fees to help cover the cost of having a pharmacist and technician counsel the patient, as well as administrative costs.

## **Refills**

For refills, VIM clinic patients are asked to call the clinic pharmacy (353-3155) with the refill request.

“They should wait four days and then come to the clinic and pick up the prescription,” Kelley said.

“They can just walk up to the pharmacy window and we’ll process it right away.”

Kelley said in the future the clinic might designate one day a week when people can pick up their refills.

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