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OUR OPINION

VIM clinic gets another boost in providing care

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More low-income, uninsured residents of Monroe and Owen counties will receive better access to medical care because of a generous donation from the Baxter International Foundation. It's yet another example of a business with local ties helping the community.

Baxter's grant of \$70,000 to the Volunteers in Medicine clinic has allowed the clinic to hire a nurse practitioner to see walk-in patients. The funding will cover two years.

The net effect is that about 20 instead of 10 walk-ins a day will be treated.

The clinic, which opened during the summer of 2007, has been a literal life-saver for patients who otherwise would not have been able to afford regular health care. In 2008 alone, 2,352 different patients were seen at the clinic by health care volunteers — physicians, nurses and dentists who provide high quality primary and preventive care and treatment for acute and chronic conditions.

The addition of another nurse practitioner at the clinic should also take some pressure off the emergency room at Bloomington Hospital, which also sees many uninsured patients with non-emergency medical conditions. Care at the clinic will be much less expensive to the community than care provided at the emergency room.

Add Baxter's major gift to previous generous donations by caring donors such as Bloomington Hospital, Cook Medical and others. From corporate donations, government grants, individual financial gifts and thousands of volunteer hours, the clinic is making a positive difference in the community every day.

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