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New nurse hired at Volunteers in Medicine clinic with Baxter's help

By Dann Denny
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The Volunteers in Medicine clinic has hired Iva Martin as a part-time nurse practitioner to see walk-in patients at the clinic, thanks to a \$70,000 grant from the Baxter International Foundation.

“This contribution by Baxter is just fantastic for the Volunteers in Medicine clinic,” said Jim Gardner, president of the VIM board. “It’s another example of a member of the community stepping up to help support what we’re doing at the clinic.”

“We’re very grateful for this gift because it gives us the opportunity to expand one of the services we feel is very important — our walk-in clinic,” said Elizabeth Sturgeon, the clinic’s executive director.

Sturgeon said Martin began working at the clinic Monday, and her 20-some hours a week will enable the clinic to eventually double the average number of walk-in patients it sees each day — from 10 to 20.

Gardner said Martin’s schedule will be flexible, enabling her to work when volunteer providers are not at the clinic.

Sturgeon said the increase in walk-in patient volume at VIM will help Bloomington Hospital’s emergency department by handling a greater number of the low-acuity cases — sore throats, coughs, toothaches — that often go there.

“It’s important for the community to know how expensive it is for the hospital to see patients in the emergency room,” she said. “This will help the hospital, and the community, by providing less expensive care for these patients than what they would get in the emergency department.”

Sturgeon said walk-in patients at the VIM clinic are first seen by staff nurses, then generally examined by a volunteer doctor or nurse practitioner.

She said at the walk-in clinic Martin can do some procedures, such as suturing and lesion removal, that registered nurses and licensed practical nurses cannot.

Sturgeon said the anticipated increase in the walk-in clinic’s patient volume, due to Martin, may free up VIM’s volunteer providers to handle more appointments.

At 10:30 a.m. Wednesday at Baxter Pharmaceuticals, 927 South Curry Pike, a \$35,000 check will be presented to Sturgeon by Baxter plant manager Camil Chamoun.

The check will cover Martin's salary and malpractice insurance for one year. A year from now Baxter will give VIM a second \$35,000 check to cover Martin's salary and insurance for another year.

Sturgeon said she was certain the clinic would be able to keep funding the position after the first two years.

About the clinic

The community-operated, community-owned and community-financed VIM clinic opened in April 2007.

The clinic, located at 811 W. Second St., provides free medical and mental health care to low-income uninsured people in Monroe and Owen counties.

Before coming to the walk-in clinic, it's best if you call 333-4001, choosing the nursing option. You will be asked to come in during the morning or afternoon, where you will be seen on a first come, first-served basis.

If you can't call beforehand, you can just show up at the clinic, and staff will try to work you in.

More than 600 lay and professional volunteers serve at the clinic. Each week about 150 lay volunteers and 15 to 20 volunteer physicians, dentists and behavioral health specialists work at the facility.

For more information or to volunteer for the Volunteers in Medicine clinic, visit www.vimmonroecounty.org online or send an email to info@VIMMonroeCounty.org.

To make a donation to the clinic, contact the Bloomington Hospital Foundation at 353-9528.

WHEN TO GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM

The following symptoms or conditions are considered emergencies that warrant a visit to the emergency department — chest pain, severe abdominal pain, large cuts, broken bones, mental illness crisis, sudden onset of obstructive pulmonary disorder, asthma attack.

If you go to the emergency department, try to remember to bring identification with you, as well as any medical information you might need, such as the names of medications you are taking.

Source: VIM clinic.



The VIM clinic on West Second Street. Jeremy Hogan | Herald-Times

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