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Volunteers in Medicine clinic's executive director resigns

By Dann Denny 331-4350 | ddenny@heraldt.com Jan 14, 2012



Elizabeth Thompson

Elizabeth Thompson, Volunteers in Medicine's executive director since February of 2007, two months before the VIM clinic opened, has resigned, effective Feb. 3, to take a new position as administrator of the women's health and surgery divisions at IU Health Southern Indiana Physicians.

"I wasn't looking for a new position," said the 45-year-old Thompson, who will start her new job Feb. 13. "But I was presented with an opportunity that will enable me to grow in my career and be challenged in different ways."

Thompson will be replaced by Nancy Richman, currently working as the senior consultant in Indiana University Health Bloomington Hospital's organization effectiveness department. Richman will direct the VIM clinic, which provides free health care to low-income Monroe and Owen County residents who have no health insurance.

She will manage the clinic's operations, overseeing a small staff of paid employees and hundreds of medical and lay volunteers who provide care for thousands of patients each year.

"I am enthusiastic about this opportunity," said Richman in a prepared statement. "I look forward to building on the solid foundation that Elizabeth and the board have laid in the past five years."

Richman said the stagnant economy has led to growing numbers of homeless and unemployed individuals, and that even many people with jobs are having a hard time paying for health care due to insurance premium increases.

"In the midst of these challenges, it is impressive that the community continues its commitment to accessible, high-quality prevention and primary care services through VIM," she said.

Richman earned her Ph.D. in clinical psychology at Boston University, and got her master's in public affairs, with a concentration in nonprofit management, at Indiana University. She has served on the board of directors at Middle Way House.

Dr. Rajih Haddawi, the driving force behind the creation of VIM and now a VIM board member and volunteer physician as a retired orthopedic hand surgeon, said it will be hard to fill Thompson's shoes.

"She has been with us from the ground up, and we are grateful she sacrificed her time and abilities to serve the clinic so well," he said. "But Nancy has an outstanding resume, and will bring a new vision to the clinic."

The community-operated, community-owned and community-financed VIM clinic is modeled after a national program. For more information or to volunteer at the 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 353-5002.

In the past five years, Thompson has overseen the VIM clinic's opening and move to its current home at 811 W. Second St.

"At this point in my life, I feel it's a good time to make a change," she said. "I think it's good to give someone new an opportunity to move VIM in a new direction and hopefully make it even better."

Thompson said she will "miss the wonderful interactions that I see among VIM's volunteers, staff and patients. I see true caring on a daily basis — human beings taking care of people's basic needs while also developing relationships with them."

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