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New walk-in clinic

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Beloit Area Community Health Center (BACHC), 74 Eclipse Center, is opening a walk-in clinic at 11 a.m., Oct. 19, according to Sharon Rand, COO/CFO of the health center.

The walk-in clinic will offer convenient care style services. A physician and two nurse practitioners have been hired to work at the new operation.

To make more room, space used as a meeting room was transformed into a seven-room clinic. Corporate Contractors Inc. began construction at the beginning of September and finished in a little over a month.

The walk-in clinic will be paid for with stimulus funds. The sites in Janesville and Racine received a total of \$656,000. The walk-in clinic project in Beloit, including new furniture and the phone and computer systems, cost \$206,500.

In the past BACHC has run a typical clinic with people making appointments. Although Rand said BACHC tries to fit people in during the day if possible, it hasn't offered walk-in services on this magnitude before. The new walk-in clinic, she said, will help alleviate the many people flocking to the hospital emergency room for inappropriate reasons.

Rand added there has been a surge in people coming to BACHC in light of the economy. In April BACHC dropped its fees to help accommodate patients. Oftentimes patients have to wait four to five weeks for an appointment to get in.

"With the walk-in clinic, we are hoping to provide some longer hours and more convenient hours, rather than having to make appointments," Rand said.

Although people who typically use BACHC have to fill out financial applications and pay a percentage based on their income, there will be a flat fee of \$25 for every visit to the walk-in clinic. Those who use the regular BACHC will continue to pay whatever percentage is required by the four tier sliding fee scale based on their income.

"Filling out financial applications in the main clinic is time consuming. In order to make this run smoother, we'll just have a flat fee," Rand said.

The walk-in clinic will handle minor services such as colds, sore throats, flu, cuts, bumps and bruises, pregnancy testing and other minor tests. Pregnancy and strep throat tests will be included in the \$25 flat fee.

Once the walk-in clinic is running, starting Oct. 19, hours will be from 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

The BACHC, a non-profit 501c3 organization, is income based health care. It accepts Medicare, Medicaid and traditional insurance, although most of the patients who come are without insurance. BACHC had a total of 8,500 clients in Beloit in the past year.



Jill Najdowski, operations manager at the Beloit Area Community Health Center, holds the door of the new walk-in clinic. It will open Oct. 19.
Staff photo by Hillary Gavan

BACHC offers the following services: primary health care, dental care, health education, pregnancy testing, family planning, teen health, well child exams, school and sport exams, STD/HIV testing, treatment for chronic illness, geriatric counseling and treatment, mental health counseling and comprehensive care for HIV positive persons through UW-Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics.

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