



Mission Statement

The primary mission of the Volunteers in Medicine Clinic is to understand and serve the health and wellness needs of the medically underserved population and their households, living and/or working on Hilton Head and Daufuskie Islands.



Vision

May we have the eyes to see those who are rendered invisible and excluded
Open arms and hearts to reach out and include them
Healing hands to touch their lives with love
And in the process heal ourselves.

Physician Orientation Manual

A Guide to Practicing Medicine at Volunteers in Medicine

Message from the Executive Director

“May we have eyes to see those rendered invisible and excluded, open arms and hearts to reach and include them, healing hands to touch their lives with love, and in the process, heal ourselves”

Welcome to the Volunteers in Medicine HHI family! Thank you for joining a team which, for twenty five years, has been dedicated to our mission to understand and serve the health and wellness needs of the medically underserved and their households who live or work on Hilton Head and Daufuskie Islands. We are very proud of the fact that our physicians, staff and volunteers have remained true to this mission and vision by caring for our patients with dignity, competence, care and compassion. Our physician volunteers are at the core of the services provided by the clinic and have an ongoing leadership role in maintaining high quality, compassionate care. VIM is the largest and oldest free and charitable clinic in South Carolina. We are the model upon which 88 other VIM clinics across the country are built.

We have identified five Corporate Priorities that will ensure the success and sustainability of Volunteers in Medicine well into the future. Clearly, we must maintain and build upon our mission, vision and values as these so succinctly describe our role in this community. As a free and charitable clinic that does not seek or accept government funding for operations, we are completely dependent on our ability to generate a robust donor base and to secure grants. We will continue to build a strong, highly active Development Department that, with energetic Board support, will ensure our ability to cover our operating and capital needs.

It is very important that we develop, integrate and fully use an electronic medical record. This will help to improve documentation and to reduce medical errors, leading to improved patient outcomes. As importantly, we must prove to our community that Volunteers in Medicine adds value by providing efficient and effective care that improves our patients' lives and productivity. The electronic medical record will allow us to gather individual and population-based data that will validate our care models and improve our ability to compete for grant funds. An EMR may assist with creating a more proactive, well defined quality improvement program that will help us identify ways we can provide safe, timely, effective, efficient, equitable and patient-centered

care. It will also help to define scope of practice within each specialty to ensure that we are practicing safe care.

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization, and distinguish us from other healthcare models in a positive way. We must constantly seek new professional and lay volunteers who can add their talents to VIM. It is especially important to seek volunteer primary care physicians and physicians who are still in active practice. This will help to more closely align our entire medical community. The healthcare environment will remain uncertain for the next several years. It is important that our work at Volunteers in Medicine be woven into the larger healthcare fabric of the community. This will ensure the viability of VIM by leveraging our resources to improve the health of the medically underserved, as well as the health of the entire community.

The strong commitment by physicians, nurses and staff has created a collaborative culture, which is enviable. It is one of the reasons that many students seek our site for clinical training. We are careful to manage the number of students we have at any given time. We typically have medical students from AT Still (BJ Comp Health), PA students from MUSC, FNP students from MUSC and South University and often students from other schools and programs. We appreciate your commitment to teaching and ask that you supervise these students in a collegial manner. After their first week of orientation, they may be assigned their own room to initiate the visit with your patient. They are required to identify themselves to the patient and request permission to participate in their care.

I am always available to discuss any concerns you may have and welcome any suggestions for improving care to our patients. We are also constantly looking for ways to deliver more cost-effective care. Please feel free to come by my office or ask Nena for an appointment. I can always be reached by cell at 301-646-5558. I look forward to working with you.

Clinic Overview:

Who We Are...

For twenty five years, Volunteers in Medicine has been providing free health care on Hilton Head Island. The relentless efforts of founder Dr. Jack McConnell have ensured that everyone in our community has access to free, compassionate, quality-driven health care. Today, more than 600 volunteer physicians, nurses, dentists, social workers and lay volunteers provide more than 30,000 patient visits each year. And, VIM Hilton Head Island serves as the flagship model for 96 free medical clinics across the country.

VIM's protocols treat the symptoms, educate the patient in self-care and monitor the patient to maintain wellness. VIM offers family practice, internal medicine, as well as lab, x-ray and ultrasound services, pharmacy, mental health and dental care in a total of 23 specialties and five disease management clinics.

VIM's patients are our neighbors - those who live and / or work on Hilton Head and Daufuskie Islands and meet simple requirements – from all walks of life and in all stages of employment. Over three-quarters of our patients are employed in local businesses that support our tourism industry.

We rely on donations from individuals, businesses and foundations. VIM neither seeks nor accepts government funding. Each year, we are challenged to meet an operating budget that exceeds \$2.2 million. VIM faces the harsh realities of soaring health care costs, growing unemployment, a challenging economy and escalating numbers of people who need our services. We are grateful to our donors and volunteers who support the VIM Hilton Head Island Clinic.

Organizational Structure *See Attachment for Org Chart, Staff Responsibilities and Contact Information*

Clinic Hours *See Attachment which includes Services and Specialties Provided*

Patient Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for Care at VIM, you must meet the following requirements:

1. You or a member of your immediate family (parent, spouse, adult child) living in the same household must reside or work on Hilton Head or Daufuskie Islands

2. You must be a resident (or have worked) for a minimum of 1 month in order to be eligible for services
3. VIM does not provide care for individuals whose injuries/conditions are covered by Worker's Compensation.
4. Your family income must be less than 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (for example: Single adult's gross monthly income cannot exceed \$2,023).
5. You must have no usable medical insurance.

Documents Required for Eligibility Screening:

1. All family members in the household who earn wages must provide income verification in order to determine the eligibility of each member of the household. Verification should be the most recent month of paystubs and last year's income tax return, or notarized letters from employers on company letterhead if paid in cash.
2. Each individual applying for services must provide proof of 3 months' residency. Examples include a rent slip, utility bill, school registration. If you are unable to provide this, you may be eligible 3 months after your initial visit to VIM.
3. Each individual must provide some form of photo identification.
4. New patients are registered on Monday and Wednesday afternoons only, between 12:30-3:00 pm. Patients who are currently registered may be rescreened during regular clinic hours.

Vim Screening Policy:

1. Individuals and families must be approved prior to scheduling an appointment or being seen as a walk-in patient.
2. All patients are re-screened yearly, some more often.
3. Medical and dental services will not be provided to individuals and families until VIM's eligibility and documentation requirements have been met.

Professional Licensing and Malpractice Coverage:

Credentialing

South Carolina Voluntary License (SVL) is good for one year. Renewal specifics vary slightly from year to year. The SVL allows a physician to practice medicine in SC at a designated free (or charitable) clinic as long as you do not charge for the care provided. Credentialing will provide guidance on SVL renewal. If you are a physician with an active SC license, you are responsible for your CME requirements and renewal. In both cases, Credentialing maintains a copy of your license to ensure VIM is in compliance with the AMA process.

The Credentialing group also works with our Volunteer Director to maintain OSHA compliance. These rules include an annual PPD or chest x-ray. VIM will provide these. In addition, you have the right to accept or reject Hepatitis vaccination and, again, VIM will provide this.

Malpractice Coverage

You are covered three ways:

1. South Carolina is a Good Samaritan State that limits personal liability to \$250,000.
2. VIM carries a Medical Malpractice Liability Insurance Policy with the SC Joint Underwriting Association. This covers VIM physicians in the clinic at any setting.
3. JUA mandates an excess policy - The SC Patient Compensation Fund – as a further extension of the base policy.

It is worth noting that VIM / VIM Physicians have never been sued.

Clinical Orientation (Getting Started):

Shadowing

Prior to assuming your own patient schedule, you will have an opportunity to “shadow” another physician in your individual specialty. This experience will help you to develop an understanding of VIM’s culture, patient demographics, clinic process and procedure. You will determine your own readiness to “solo”. The Physician Coordinator will arrange for your shadow session(s).

Name tag

All volunteers must wear an ID badge at all times while at the clinic.

Name tags are color coded. Physicians, nurses, lab techs = white; interpreters = red; staff = yellow.

Dress Code

We are professionals and, while we are expected to look like professionals, we do so in a more casual manner at the clinic. Shirts and slacks or skirts are typical. Ties are a rarity. Some physicians wear a white coat but most do not. (If you decide to wear a white coat, VIM routinely will have it laundered and will cover the cost.) Shorts are not considered appropriate when seeing patients. For your own safety, please do not wear open-toe shoes, flip flops or sandals. Please do not wear jeans or very short skirts.

Scheduling your time at VIM

When you are ready to begin volunteering, you will schedule your time with Physician Coordinator, Patty Diggs. Please contact her on the clinic line 843-681-6612, ext. 242 or on her cell 843-301-7314 or by e-mail pdiggs@vimclinic.org. We will make every effort to accommodate your commitments. If you must cancel, let us know as early as possible so we can either find a substitute or reschedule your patients.

We will design a schedule (number of patients and their appointment times) to meet your needs and requests.

Break “Lounge”

The break area is located in the McConnell Bldg. Fresh coffee, water and soda are always available. In addition, please help yourself to whatever “goodies” are on the serving table!

Emergency Phone #

Since there is no VIM telephone operator, your family may call on 422-6306 for urgent matters. This number is monitored during all clinic sessions.

Electronic Medical Documents / Records

The clinic is transitioning from paper charts to electronic medical documentation. We use a system known as EMD. We appreciate that many of our physicians are not familiar with electronic systems as this was not part of their experience while in active practice. We encourage our new physician volunteers (retired or still in practice) to schedule one-on-one tutorials with our IT staff prior to coming on board. The learning curve can be a challenge, but help is always available during clinic hours.

Templates can be customized to meet your needs.

Confidentiality

The clinic is a very busy place, and it is easy to breach confidentiality in our hallways or other public areas. Please pay attention to patient discussions and keep them private. This may be especially true in the break area (McConnell Bldg). Patients are seen in that building and may be just around the corner. Be careful with paper charts or lists that could be read by another patient or volunteer. In public places call patients by their first name for privacy.

Communication

We have many volunteers that need to be on the same page so communication is very important. We communicate in several different ways:

There is a weekly online newsletter that is sent to all volunteers. There are several different editions of this to health care providers, lay volunteers, dental volunteers. It includes recent changes to policy, reminders, get wells, recent grant updates etc.

There are morning huddle meetings for last minute updates that start with the lay volunteers at 8:20. It is followed by the medical huddle at the nursing station that begins around 8:30. It includes how many appointments, recent changes to the schedule—an extra doctor available, a doctor unable to come, flu shot information/availability, students for the day, and reminders as well.

There are mailboxes in the hallway in approximate alphabetical order for your abnormal lab results, notices of upcoming events, reports on patients that you referred to outside agencies or doctors. It is a good idea to check it weekly when you come in.

Interoffice e-mail is a routine mode of communication for our staff.

Continuing Education

VIM Journal for Physicians, Dentists and Health Care Providers

The VIM Journal for Physicians, Dentists and Health Care Providers is now available. It is 451 pages long (as of Oct 2018) and will continue to get longer as new Newsletters are published. At the front of the document is an Index with page number of medical topic desired. A VIM healthcare provider can access it in three ways.

1. On computer in each examining room. It is available by clicking on the desktop Icon labeled “VIM Physicians’ Resource” then “VIM Journal for Physicians, Dentists and Health Care Providers.”
2. As a hard copy in the VIM Medical Library located near the Nursing Office (McConnell Bldg).
3. By downloading it anytime from this URL (copy URL and paste it in a browser):

bit.ly/VIM-Journal4

Periodically you will be advised of upcoming seminars and workshops, some of which will qualify for CME’s. Notices will also appear on the bulletin board opposite the mailboxes and in the break area. VIM has recently established a partnership with LCAHEC (Lowcountry Area Health Education Center). This arrangement will provide access to a number of on-line courses.

Each clinic computer can access the software program UP TO DATE as a medical resource for the most current clinical information. It can also be accessed at home. You can also get CEU's on line with this program. To access--

Go to a computer in the clinic at VIM and bring up Internet Explorer

>Click on the Star (Favorites) at top right and after a few seconds a

>new window will pop up In this window click on UpToDate and then

>Register Now Fill out the requested info and create a User Name and Password.

Then on your smartphone, download the UpToDate app at the Apple or Google App store. Sign into UpToDate on phone, then you are good to go. In future you will not have to sign in on smartphone.

See Attachment for LCAHEC access instructions

On Duty:

Medical Emergency

Life threatening medical emergencies are sent to Hilton Head Hospital ER via 911 ambulance service. We have a crash cart and AED. If in doubt, call 911.

“Chain of Command”

Expect to have many questions. Your resource will vary depending on the issue and circumstance, but in every case you will find everyone to be very willing to help. Our volunteer nurses are an experienced and motivated group of professionals. However, sometimes questions arise or resources are needed that require the help of our Staff Nurses or Dr. Cox. Do not hesitate to seek their guidance.

THE MEDICAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (MEC)

- The MEC is composed of department chairs for many of the medical specialties represented in the clinic.
- A physician member of the Board of Directors chairs the MEC.
- The MEC meets quarterly, usually 1-2 weeks prior to the meeting of the Board of Directors.
- The MEC reacts to the results of the VIM Continuous Quality Management Plan (CQM) and makes suggestions for the medical and nursing staff and recommendations to the Executive Medical Director, the Director of Patient Care Services and the Board of Directors.
- The MEC also acts as a method of communication between departments especially at the quarterly MEC meetings and to the clinical providers via the Minutes of those meetings.
- MEC department chairs can act as focal points for suggestions or problems of Clinical providers.

MEDICAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS (October 2018)

Chair: Steven P. Siegelbaum, MD

Dental: Rob Lindsey, DDS

Diabetes/Endocrinology: Rick Sunderlin, MD

Gynecology: Richard Chalson, MD

Infection Control/Epidemiology: Bob Brown, MD

Internal Medicine: Doris Beatty, MD

Mental Health: Doug Wolter, MA

Neurology: Gerald Schroeter, MD

Cardiology: Stephen Keil, MD

Pediatrics: Tip Putnam, MD

Surgery: Larry Gunn, MD

Urology: Lito Palma, MD

Exam Room and Clinic Reception Forms

Appointment requests, laboratory requests, x-ray, ultrasound, instructions for ultrasound, home blood sugar monitoring, referral for outside tests*, certification of patient visit for work or school (red and imprinted), medical release and others are in compartments in clinic rooms or at the clinic reception desk.

*Referrals Outside the Clinic (See Attachment for referral form)

MRI, Surgery, CAT Scan, Cardiac Stress, and any procedure we don't do in the clinic. See a staff Nurse for any needed clarification.

1. Fill out a referral form with patient's name, DOB, working phone number and requested test. Make sure you mark how urgently this is needed.
2. Take the referral form, chart and patient to Nena so she can tell the patient if they will have to pay any monies and what the next step will be.

Medication Procurement

Medications that are available through our in house VIM formulary are listed in a notebook in each examination room. Medication bottles are signed out in the Pharmacy and labels with instructions need to be affixed before giving bottle to the patient. If non formulary meds are chosen off the shelf it must be kept in mind that these are samples or donations and therefore may not be available the next time the patient needs it. Meds that are not available at VIM and are not listed in the \$4 formulary at outside pharmacies can possibly be obtained through Dr. Bella Perez through a Patient Assistance Program. This requires that the patient fill out paperwork with Bella and the Dr. write a prescription for the med and sign as dispense as written.

Other expensive short term meds can possibly be obtained through Bella through our Hilton Head Hospital Auxiliary Caring Touch Program. This enables a one time Rx to be obtained through Burke's Pharmacy. Bella has the paperwork on this program.

Meds can be ordered by MDs, DOs, NPs, PAs and Dentists. If using the generic Rx pad, please print provider's name and license number and DEA. As we are classified as a non-dispensing Pharmacy, the Pharmacy staff is not supposed to label the patient's name and medication instructions. This should be done by the ordering provider and the label should be pasted to the bottle before being dispensed to the patient.

Stat Tests

We cannot do stat CBC's or any stat bloodwork through the hospital. If stat tests seem indicated perhaps referral to the Emergency Department should be considered.

X-Rays & Ultrasounds

Digital x-rays can usually be done the same day (just fill out the request form and tell nursing what you need). If the test is specialized, it is best to speak to the lab tech directly. Other tests such as ultrasound (Dr. John Mikita) can be arranged to be done at VIM but not usually stat. Mammogram appointments are arranged by VIM's Mammo Coordinator. Other tests are sent out and the results reviewed by Staff nurses when returned. If abnormal, the results are placed in your mailbox. If critical, the patient will be called to come to VIM ASAP to see whoever is available. HIV testing (and counseling) is done twice monthly during regular clinic hours. Patients are scheduled just like any other appointment under the title "testing access". Breast and thyroid biopsies are performed here at the clinic by two of our radiologists, Drs. Kathy Harris and John Mootz.

Ordering Potentially Expensive Tests

If you desire a test that is anticipated to be expensive, please check with Nursing, the Lab (for cost) or Dr. Cox. Some genetic tests, thrombophilia tests, etc. are prohibitively expensive.

Obtaining Consultation

Fill out an appointment form for the appropriate VIM discipline and send it with the patient to use during check-out. Curbside consults from colleagues during the clinic are also frequently useful and occasionally that person might be able to see the patient that day if appropriate.

Referring Patients to facilities / providers outside of VIM

We cannot do conscious sedation at VIM, therefore many procedures and most surgery must be requested in the community. Nena Balzola arranges a cost sharing plan with individual patients. Some experienced physicians have found the best way to do this is to print out an extra copy of the days clinic note and then walk over to the other building and discuss briefly with Nena. An alternative is to give instructions to the nurse supporting you on that particular day.

Procedures requiring outside referral include : MRI's and CAT scans

Referring to the VIM Mental Health Group

The Mental Health Department at VIM has a number of therapists for both adults and children. In addition to the therapists, we have one volunteer psychiatrist and one NP to assist with medication.

To refer a patient for evaluation, please enter his / her name on the waitlist book in the scheduling office (adjacent to the waiting room in the main clinic). Doug Wolter, the Director of Mental Health, will contact the patient and arrange a time for an initial appointment. Patients must have an initial “intake” evaluation before they are seen by one of our psychiatrists. Exceptions for emergencies are possible on a limited basis.

If a patient is in significant distress and you feel there should be an immediate evaluation, please notify Dr. Cox, Julie Copp or Cherie Hellman. We will endeavor to do a 10 to 15 minute assessment between patients on an emergency basis. If you feel the patient is suicidal or violent, please notify Dr. Cox if you are unable to contact someone in the Mental Health Department.

Patients who present symptoms that are beyond the scope of the Mental Health Department are referred either to the emergency room at the hospital or the psychiatric department at MUSC.

Non-English Speaking Patients

Many of our patients speak Spanish & English but not English sufficient for medical communication. Interpreters are present at each clinic. Some physicians find using family members...especially children...as interpreters as a less than perfect solution. Occasionally, however, it is necessary and better than no interpreter at all.

Immunizations

Free influenza vaccines are offered to patients, volunteers and staff. Shingles Vaccine is offered at a charge of \$165.00 (our cost). Pneumonia Vaccines are not available except as a charge item as they cost \$70.00 per shot.

We conduct a children’s immunization clinic for our patients on Tuesday afternoons.

VIM Dental Clinic

The Dental Department at VIM provides dental care to children and adults and is open Monday-Friday per the “Clinic Hours” attachment to this document. The clinic has eight treatment rooms, a laboratory and a sterilization center. The dental staff includes 26 volunteer dentists, 3 paid dental assistants, 4 paid (PT) dental hygienists and an office manager, as well as 10 volunteer support staff.

The Dental Department provides operative dentistry (fillings), oral surgery (mainly extractions), endodontic treatment (root canals) and limited removable prosthodontic services (partials and dentures). In addition, the dental clinic has preventive dentistry programs for children and adults; the dental hygienists provide prophylaxis (cleanings), fluoride treatment, sealants, diagnostic images, oral hygiene instruction and nutritional counseling. Due to limited volunteer time, laboratory facilities and budget, the clinic is unable to offer orthodontia and fixed prosthodontic services, such as crowns and bridges.

All patient appointments are scheduled by the dental office. If you need to refer a patient for dental treatment, please complete an appointment referral form and send it with the patient to the dental clinic.

In an average year, the dental clinic provides approximately 6,000 patient visits, with about 2,000 of these visits for dental hygiene. Of the 4,000 visits to a dentist, about 1,000 are for walk-in emergency patients. The number of appointments available is often quite limited; the length of waiting time for a dental appointment depends on the specialty care needed.