

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic

Patient Handbook

Our Joint Mission with You, the Patient

Welcome to the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic. We are glad you are here. The mission of the Free Clinic is to partner with uninsured residents for improved health and life style changes using the following guiding practices: Quality outpatient health services, extensive referral network, treatment with dignity and respect and services provided by qualified volunteers and staff.

We promise to do our best to provide the most appropriate level and standard of care for you that is available to the Free Clinic.

The Free Clinic expects that anyone who gets help at the clinic will use that help, to the best of their ability, to become a healthier person. This may include taking medicines, counseling services, rehab, or classes, and following dietary or exercise recommendations. Being a healthier person might mean having a blood pressure that is regularly below 140/90 or blood sugars that are within the normal range (as defined by the American Diabetes Association).

If you have any questions regarding your health care plan or the development of that plan, please discuss this with your nurse or your provider during your visit. We are here to help you.

Clinic Phone Number and Hours

Phone- 540-433-5431

Fax- 540-574-0207

Office Hours

Monday thru Friday 9:00AM- 2:00 PM

Medical Clinic

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 9:00AM- 1:00PM

Wednesday evening 5:30PM- 7:00PM

Dental and GYN Clinic

First and third Tuesday of each month 5:30PM-7:00PM

To schedule an appointment, please call Monday through Friday from 9 – 2, or Tuesday or Wednesday evenings from 5:30 – 7:00.

In case of inclement weather please call the Free Clinic for an updated voicemail or listen to WSVA 550 AM, WMRA 90.7 FM, or WBOP 106.6 FM.

More comprehensive dental services are available through a separate Dental Clinic on a reduced fee basis. This Dental Clinic also serves people with Medicaid insurance. To make an appointment with the clinic please call 437-2900.

Services We Offer

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic serves patients who meet eligibility guidelines and have an ongoing medical problem. Specific services include

- ❖ Medical appointments
- ❖ Medications (Our pharmacy does not carry any narcotics.)
- ❖ Referrals to specialists for patients seen in our clinic
- ❖ Lab work and X-ray services
- ❖ Women's GYN care, including mammograms and PAP smears
- ❖ Dental extraction services
- ❖ Nutrition counseling
- ❖ Patient education
- ❖ Patient case management
- ❖ Limited mental health care for established patients
- ❖ Flu shots

Patients who choose the Free Clinic as their Primary Care Office should not seek routine care or prescriptions from other offices or the Harrisonburg Community Health Center, unless they wish to transfer to that office.

Services Not Provided by the Free Clinic

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic does **not** provide

- ❖ Treatment for moderate to severe mental illness, including moderate to severe mental depression and anxiety
- ❖ Treatment for patients actively using illicit drugs

- ❖ Birth control, pregnancy tests, testing for sexually transmitted disease including HIV, TB tests. Please contact the Health Department for these services.
- ❖ Most immunizations
- ❖ Disability or school physicals
- ❖ Worker's compensation services or care for related injuries
- ❖ Treatment for conditions/illnesses which are outside of the scope of care we are able to provide

Pharmacy Services

There are several options for requesting refills for medications:

1. Drop off your refill form at the Clinic Monday thru Friday 9:00AM-2:00PM
(Green refill forms are available at the front counter)
2. Call the refill line 437-2345 Thursdays between 10:00AM and 2:00PM.
3. Drop off your refill form Tuesday or Wednesday evenings from 5:30PM-7:00PM.
4. Drop off your refill form in the outside refill box located to the left of the Free Clinic front door.

Pick-up times for prescriptions vary depending on the time requests are received. Prescription requests submitted after Wednesday evening will not be available until the following Tuesday.

The Free Clinic asks for a voluntary donation of \$3.00 for each prescription.

You may not receive medications if your eligibility card is expired.

Dental Services

The Free Clinic currently has an "extraction only" clinic staffed by volunteer dentists. It is held twice a month on Tuesday evenings. You must be a Free Clinic patient to see these dentists.

More comprehensive dental services are available through a separate Dental Clinic on a reduced fee basis. This Dental Clinic also serves people with

Medicaid insurance. To make an appointment with this clinic please call 437-2900.

What You May Have To Pay For

You will never receive a bill from the Free Clinic. Our services are free. However we do ask for a \$ 3.00 donation per prescription. Occasionally you may be referred for specialized testing or care that may result in a bill from that office.

Confidentiality

Your privacy and records are very important to us. We will never release your records without written permission or unless subpoenaed to do so. It is possible that your records may be reviewed during an audit by the drug companies that provide your medications.

Release of Records

There may be several reasons we may have to send your records to another doctor. If you have been referred to other doctors, they will need to see your records. If you are applying for disability, the Department of Rehabilitative Services or the Social Security office may need your medical record. The Free Clinic is allowed to send only those records from your visits with us. You will need to contact any other doctors yourself to request their records.

Eligibility Requirements

The Free Clinic serves people who meet all of the following criteria:

- Resident of Harrisonburg City or Rockingham County
- Without any type of medical insurance, including Medicaid and Medicare
- Gross family income (before taxes) less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. This means that if you live alone, your income before taxes cannot be more than \$20,800 a year to receive services. For a family of four, your income cannot be over \$42,000.
- Working at least 16 hours per week, on disability, or deemed unable to work by Free Clinic clinical staff. People who are caring for young children, the elderly and persons with disabilities can be considered working.

All Free Clinic patients must provide their Social Security Number or documentation of legal residency in this country in order to receive services.

The Free Clinic will provide services to all who meet the criteria outlined in this policy without regard to race, ethnic origin, religion, language capability, gender, age, or disability.

Eligibility Appointments

The first time you come to the Free Clinic, you will have an eligibility appointment. If you are approved, you will receive an eligibility card that is usually good for six months. You must bring this card with you to every appointment. Without an active eligibility card, you cannot be seen at the Clinic. **It is your responsibility to call the Clinic at 433-5431 about two weeks before your card expires to schedule your next eligibility appointment.**

What to bring to your eligibility appointment:

1. Proof of all household income for one month

Examples of household income are

- Pay stubs for one month
- Food stamp award letter
- Proof of income letter (with a money amount on it) from whoever is providing you food and shelter
- Social Security statement with the amount you receive or copies of your SSA check
- Unemployment checks
- Current bank statement if you have direct deposit
- Copies of checks from clients for one month if you are self-employed

Note: The following are considered members of your household-- Yourself, your spouse, your minor children, disabled children over the age of 18, and grandchildren for whom you have custody.

2. Current 1040 Federal Income Tax form (if one was filed). After April 15 of each year, it is your responsibility to bring your new 1040 Income Tax form to the Clinic.

3. Proof of residency in Harrisonburg or Rockingham County

This can be your driver's license, lease, food stamp letter, utility or medical bill or any mail you have received that has your name and your current address.

4. Your Social Security number.

5. Proof of your disability status, if you have applied for disability

This can be a letter from Social Security saying you have applied for disability or have appealed their decision, or a letter from your lawyer telling us the status of your disability application.

Clinic Appointments

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic provides care for:

- ❖ Chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and asthma
- ❖ Physical illness or injury for established patients
- ❖ Health education
- ❖ Patient case management

The Free Clinic cannot provide treatment for serious mental illness or serve patients who use illicit drugs. To schedule appointments, please call Monday through Friday from 9-2, or Tuesday or Wednesday evenings from 5:30-7:00.

Cancelled or Missed Appointments

We understand that sometimes you have to cancel or reschedule an appointment. Please call the clinic to let us know before the appointment time. Please understand that appointment slots may be limited and it is very important that you try to keep your appointment.

By canceling your appointment if you cannot come, it allows the Free Clinic to schedule other patients who may be waiting to be seen.

If you miss an appointment with the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic or with a referral source and do not call to cancel ahead of time, you may lose access to services for three months.

A second no-show for an appointment without cancelling may result in another three month suspension. A third missed appointment without cancelling will result in termination from Free Clinic services for 2 years.

Referrals to Other Local Doctors

Sometimes, we may refer you to a doctor outside the Free Clinic. Whenever possible, we will refer you to a specialist within the community.

Please do not make the appointment yourself!

The Free Clinic will call and make the appointment for you. If the Free Clinic makes the appointment, your first visit will be free. **(If you make the appointment, you will most likely have to pay for it.)**

A letter will be mailed to you including the name of the specialist, as well as the date, time, and location of the appointment. Please take these papers with you to your appointment. You will also need to take your Free Clinic eligibility card and a photo ID with you to your appointment.

The Free Clinic must approve of any tests ordered by another doctor or specialist **before** they are done. **If tests are done without Free Clinic approval you will most likely have to pay for it.** If the doctor gives you forms, please bring them back to the clinic so that we can process them.

When an appointment has been scheduled for you at one of our specialist's office it is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you keep the appointment. If you cannot keep the appointment, you must call the specialist's office 24 hours before your appointment to cancel and reschedule. You must also notify the Free Clinic of this. **If you do not cancel your appointment with the specialist's office your Free Clinic privileges will be suspended for three months.**

Referrals to the University of Virginia Medical Center

If there are no local resources available to treat your condition, we will make a referral to the UVA Medical Center in Charlottesville. You will be given a UVA Medical Center financial assistance application to complete before your appointment can be scheduled.

Once you have completed the application and returned it to the Free Clinic, it will be faxed to the UVA Medical Center's Financial Assistance Department.

(They will send you a letter informing you of how much financial assistance you have qualified for.)

The Free Clinic will call and make an appointment for you once you have completed your application. A letter will be mailed to you including the name of the specialist, as well as the date and time of the appointment. Please take these papers and a photo ID with you to your appointment.

The specialist will also send you a letter including the date, time, and location of the appointment. Please take these papers with you to your appointment.

When an appointment has been scheduled for you at one of our specialist's office it is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you keep the appointment. If you cannot keep the appointment, you must call the specialist's office 24 hours before your appointment to cancel and reschedule. You must also notify the Free Clinic of this. **If you do not cancel your appointment with the specialist's office your Free Clinic privileges will be suspended for 3 months.**

Lab Work, X-rays and Other Tests

The health care provider who has seen you at the Clinic will determine the best course of treatment for your condition. The plan may include lab work, x-rays, and/or other tests. The Free Clinic will order these tests for you and will let you know when and where they are scheduled. It is important that you get these tests as scheduled to continue your care. (See **Medical Bills**)

Should I go to the Emergency Room?

The Free Clinic is designed for treating chronic medical conditions and minor ailments, including minor cuts, sprains, earaches, colds, cough, sore throat, skin rashes, insect and minor animal bites, minor cooking burns and other minor injuries.

Illnesses and injuries that must be treated at the emergency room are loss of consciousness, heart attack symptoms, stroke symptoms, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled bleeding, sudden and severe pain, poisoning, head injury, coughing up or vomiting blood, severe or persistent vomiting, and suicidal feelings.

Emergency Room Visits

One of our primary goals is to keep you from using the emergency room when you do not have a medical emergency. However, there are times when that may be the best way to treat your illness. Please identify yourself at the ER as a Free Clinic patient so that we may follow up on your care. **You will be financially responsible for any visit to the emergency room.** You may apply to RMH for financial assistance with your hospital bills. Applications for financial assistance are available from the hospital billing office (564-5900) and the Free Clinic. (See **Medical Bills**)

Medical Bills

When you are referred to an outside doctor for specialty care, there is no charge for your first visit. You will need to talk to the doctor about any charges after the first visit.

You are ultimately responsible for your medical bills. However, if the Free Clinic refers you for special procedures and you receive a bill for the procedures, the Free Clinic will ask doctors and hospitals to consider reducing or writing off your bills. It is always up to the doctors and hospitals to decide if they can adjust your bill. The Free Clinic does not pay any medical bills directly. If you receive medical bills for procedures the Clinic referred you for, please bring those bills to the Clinic. The Social Worker will request financial assistance for you.

If you are referred to UVA, we will give you the UVA financial assistance form. This must be completed before the actual referral can be made. Our nursing staff can help you complete the form, if needed. You should receive a response from UVA, telling you how much of your bill you will need to pay.

The Free Clinic cannot request assistance for any Emergency Room charges. If you have bills from an Emergency Room visit, you must apply directly to the hospital for financial assistance. The Free Clinic has financial assistance applications for Rockingham Memorial Hospital. You also will receive a bill from the Emergency Room doctors. You should contact the Emergency Physicians billing office and tell them you are a Free Clinic patient. When you get a letter

from the hospital telling you that you can get financial assistance, send a copy of that letter along with your bill to the Emergency Physicians billing office.

Our Social Worker is available to talk with you about questions concerning medical bills.

Patient Responsibilities

The Free Clinic is primarily staffed by volunteers from the community. We expect you to treat volunteers, staff, and other patients respectfully.

Visits to the Free Clinic can take between 1 – 3 hours, depending on your needs and our staffing levels. We appreciate your patience as we try to serve as many people as we can.

Cell phones should be silenced in the clinical areas.

The Free Clinic may refuse service to people who have been drinking alcohol or using illegal drugs.

The Free Clinic does not allow loud or abusive behavior.

Food, drinks, and smoking are not allowed in the building.

Cell phones should be silenced in the clinical areas.

The Free Clinic has the right to refuse to see anyone who does not follow the rules.

When You Leave Our Services

If you begin to receive Medicare, Medicaid or private insurance, you will no longer be eligible for services at the Free Clinic. We still want to make sure you will receive the care you need to stay healthy. To do this, we invite you to call the Free Clinic at 433-5431 to schedule an **exit visit** with both nursing and social work.

Nursing staff will discuss selecting a primary care physician and follow-up care.

The social worker will ensure that you have been connected to appropriate community resources, including financial assistance for Medicare, if appropriate.

Concerns and Suggestions

If you have any concerns, please let us know. We are also interested in any suggestions that may help us serve you better. You may speak with any of our staff members. If you would prefer, you can speak with the Executive Director.

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