

Portland Community Free Clinic
7 Years of Service
The 2000 Annual Update

The Portland Community Free Clinic (PCFC) is a unique partnership of community volunteers, Mercy Hospital, and the Public Health Division, Health and Human Services Department, City of Portland. The Clinic first opened its doors in October of 1993. The Clinic offers quality primary care in a safe and welcoming environment. Physicians, nurses, counselors, and receptionists volunteer their services at the Clinic. To accommodate working clients, the Clinic is open Monday through Thursday evenings from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., and some Thursday afternoons. Staff are available during the day to accept appointments, make referrals to specialists in the community, follow up on test and lab results, obtain medication and supplies, perform case management, and to promote continuity of care.

Our mission: Staffed primarily by volunteers, the Portland Community Free Clinic provides free, comprehensive health care to low-income, uninsured adults in the Greater Portland area.

Highlights of 2000

- **Space:** Last year our major challenge was acquiring a new space for the Clinic that would allow for expanded patient services. This challenge has been met and on June 6, 2000, we moved into new quarters at 103 India Street. The Clinic now has the use of six exam rooms, two counseling rooms, and a group room.
- **Primary Care Patient visits:** In 2000, there were **1,934 on-site clinic visits**. The number of visits for preventive services remained stable from previous years. There were a total of one hundred and nine (109) referrals for mammograms and pap smears with thirty-six women enrolled in the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program. One hundred and eighty-five (185) physical examinations were performed at the Clinic. This is an increase of 25% over the previous year.
- **Community Specialty Care visits:** Portland Community Free Clinic specialists volunteering from their own offices in the community provided **86** initial visits for consults and/or specialized care, with many specialists also providing on-going care. Specialties represented include: Allergy/Immunology, Cardiology, Dermatology, Podiatry, Dental and Oral Surgery, Endocrinology, Ear/Nose/Throat, Gastroenterology, Gynecology, Lipidimiology, Psychology, Neurology, Ophthalmology, Optometry, Orthopedics, Psychiatry, Rheumatology, General Surgery, Plastic Surgery, and Urology.

On-site Specialty Services: In addition to individual primary care visits, the Portland Community Free Clinic continues to offer specialty clinics in dermatology, allergy and asthma evaluation podiatry, orthopedics, gastroenterology, endocrine, psychiatry, mental health counseling, and healing touch therapy. These on-site specialists provided **517** patient visits which is a 200% increase over the previous year.

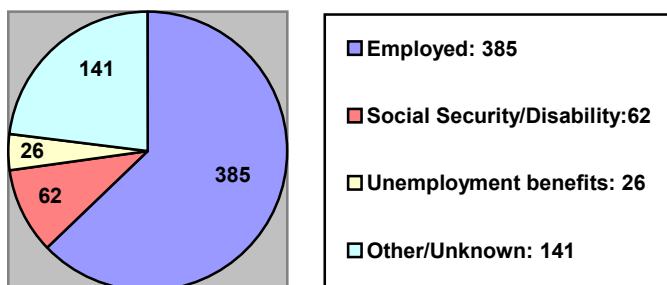
- **Ancillary Services:** Portland Community Free Clinic patients also receive needed ancillary care free of charge. Most lab tests and complex procedures are performed at Mercy Hospital. The value of ancillaries contributed by Mercy was **\$109,594**.
- **Service Referrals:** One in five persons requesting initial services from the Portland Community Free Clinic was referred to another service provider for ongoing care. Reasons for referrals ranged from being over income guidelines, being homeless, living outside the geographic service area, and having medical insurance coverage.
- **Medication:** One major cost of health care is medication. Portland Community Free Clinic patients are assured that their medication needs are met through a variety of methods, including patient payment or partial payment when possible. The primary resources for patient medications are: samples from drug representatives, vouchers from the Salvation Army, Portland's Social Services Division and/or emergency vouchers from a specific PCFC fund, as well as Patient Assistance Programs from the major pharmaceutical companies.
- **Funding and donations:** Mercy Hospital provides substantial support to the Portland Community Free Clinic in a variety of ways. During the past year, Mercy provided consultation, support and hard labor in the renovation of the new PCFC facility at 103 India Street. Mercy made a cash donation of **\$130,000** to support the direct service salaries at the Clinic, and raised **\$11,028** last year from fund drives to support the medication fund. (Additionally, Mercy provides ancillary hospital services free of charge to PCFC patients.) The Public Health Division administers the program and contributes financially to its operations. Private donations this year totaled **\$26,934**. Contributors included: the United Way, Portland Provident Association, Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, the Sisters of Mercy, The Nurse's Alumni Association of Maine Eye and Ear Infirmary, and Intermed Park Ave.
- **Volunteers:** As our mission states the Portland Community Free Clinic depends upon volunteers to provide services to our patients. This past year **117** dedicated volunteers were committed to staffing the Clinic four nights each week. These volunteers generously gave **2,736** hours of their time to keep the Clinic staffed. The community specialist list continues to expand with new physicians signing up on a regular basis, with the current total reaching **123**. Many of the PCFC volunteers have been with the Clinic since it opened over seven years ago.

Total value of donated services in 2000
(Including medication & ancillary services)
\$548,302

The Patients of the Portland Community Free Clinic

Patients served at the Portland Community Free Clinic (PCFC) primarily come from the Greater Portland area. Demographic information is detailed on the graph below. In looking back, the distribution of Clinic patients has remained constant over the past five years.

The Clinic serves adults who are low-income (below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines), have no health insurance and have no primary health care provider. The majority of patients are employed and are evenly divided among the self-employed, part-time/seasonal employment, and service industry jobs.



The Clinic offers services to all ethnic groups in Portland. In fact, the Clinic serves a higher proportion of minority individuals (12%) than are found in the overall Portland population (4%). Non-English speaking patients are provided with interpreter services. The ATT Language Line is available to assist staff in determining the specific language assistance required.

An analysis of patient records suggests that people visit the Portland Community Free Clinic for a wide range of health care issues, as would be expected in the office of a primary care physician. A typical PCFC patient is probably:

- female (52%)
- between 20 and 50 years of age (76%)
- renting her living space (59%)
- employed (64%)
- unpartnered (86%)
- a high school graduate (77%)
- a current or past tobacco user (43% current use and 44% past use) and
- without children in the home (84%)¹

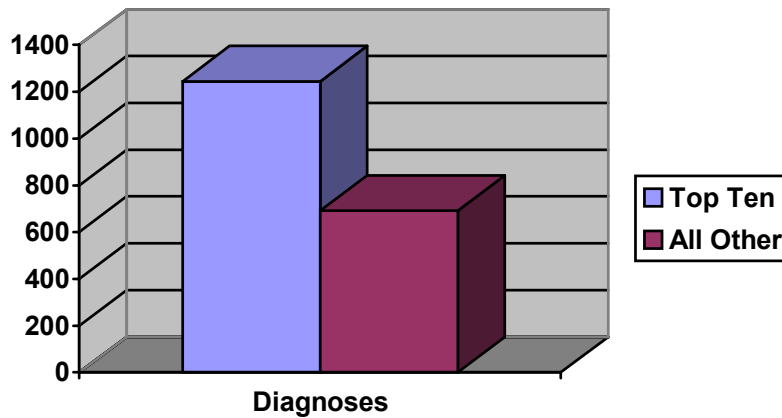
Patients at the Portland Community Free Clinic present with a variety of diagnoses that are common in a primary care setting. There are ten major diagnoses that make up the majority of complaints presented by the Clinic's patients.

¹The Portland Community Free Clinic does not see children or youth under 18 years of age as care for this population is available elsewhere.

Medical Problems addressed at the Portland Community Free Clinic.

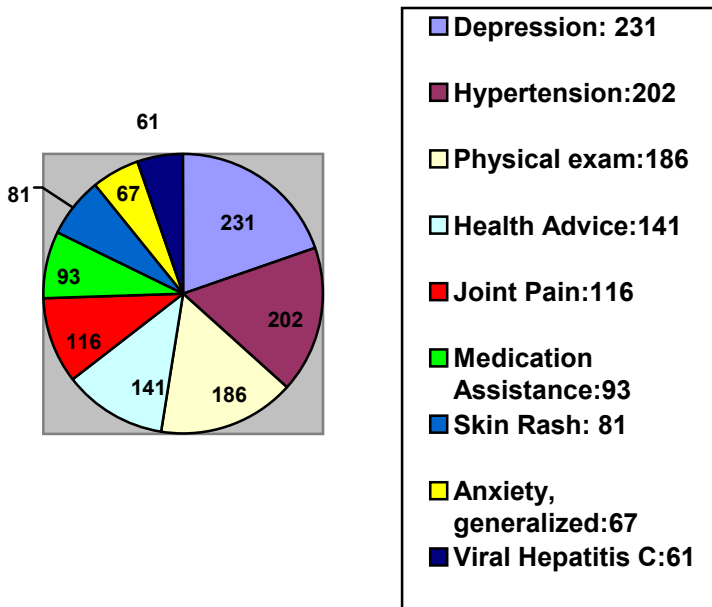
All Presenting Diagnoses and service needs

In over 1900 Clinic visits, patients presented a wide variety of complaints and concerns to the medical staff at the Free Clinic. As can be seen in the chart below, the ten most common complaints made up the majority of the patients' concerns.



Most Frequently Presenting Diagnoses and/or Service Needs

For the second year in a row, mental health concerns represented two of the top ten complaints presented to the Portland Community Free Clinic. These complaints are treated both with medication, which constitutes a significant portion of the medication provided by the Clinic, as well as in the Patient Assistance Programs.



Note that medication assistance also falls within the top ten activities of the Free Clinic. Compared with the previous year, the Free Clinic was able to increase enrollment of Clinic clients in Pharmacy Assistance Programs by 60%

Primary Health Care & Specialty Clinics

The Free Clinic is open Monday through Thursday evenings by appointment. Physicians with a wide range of practice backgrounds staff the Clinic each evening. Each month specialty clinics are held in Dermatology, Podiatry and Orthopedics.

Total Clinic Patients		Total Specialty Visits to the Clinic	
New patients in 2000	312 (54%)	Dermatology Clinic patient visits	66
Established patients	<u>264 (46%)</u>	Podiatry Clinic patient visits	58
Total Patients	576	Orthopedic Clinic patient visits	48
		Mental Health visits	<u>164</u>
Time of Visits		Total Visits	336
Afternoon Clinic patient visits	106		
Evenings Clinic patient visits	<u>1,492</u>		
	1,598		

Health Promotion

Health promotion and prevention are a part of each Clinic visit. Patient teaching materials on healthy lifestyle choices are routinely distributed and discussed with patients. The Breast and Cervical Health Program (BCHP) provided 36 patients with complete physical examinations, pap smears and mammograms. The State of Maine, Department of Human Services contracts with the Portland Community Free Clinic and Mercy to extend these services to PCFC patients.

The new Clinic space offers great opportunities for patient education and possible support groups to assist patients with such needs as tobacco cessation, diabetes education, nutrition, and the like. The Clinic looks forward to the development of these activities.

Dental Services

PCFC offers dental services to established patients, primarily on an urgent basis. Currently, we have two dentists and one oral surgeon who help care for our patients in their offices. Some patients may be referred to the Center for Community Dental Health.

Mental Health Services

The Portland Community Free Clinic is able to offer mental health services to patients on a very limited basis. During the past year, two licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs), a psychiatric nurse specialist, and a psychiatrist have been part of the Free Clinic volunteer staff. The psychiatrist has provided 39 client visits, and 164 counseling visits have been provided as well. A healing touch practitioner also provided 36 therapeutic services to patients.

Quality Assurance

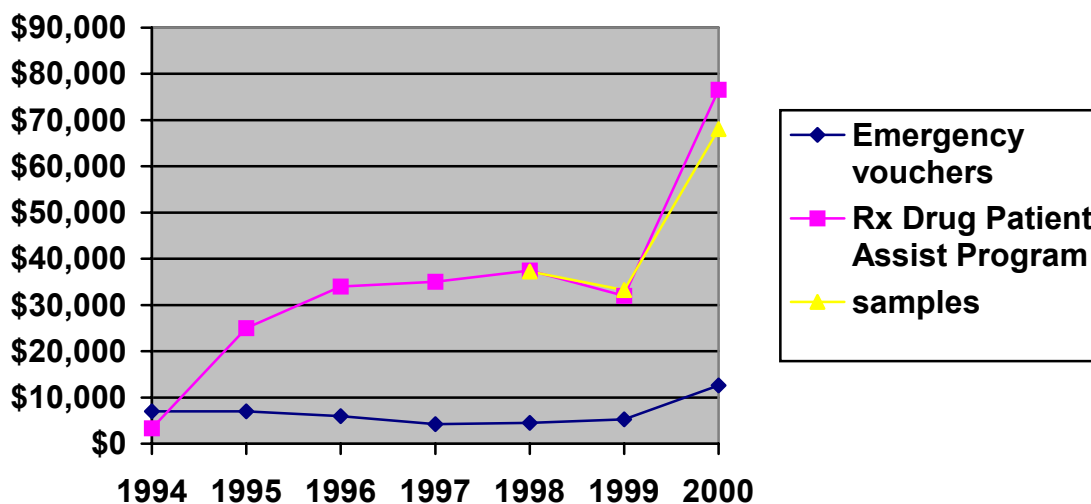
The provision of quality services to the patients of the Portland Community Free Clinic is an ongoing concern of the PCFC Staff. Emphasis is placed on customer satisfaction, accomplishment of the Clinic's goals, and adherence to the mission.

Medication Assistance

Obtaining medication for people without medical insurance and with limited financial resources continues to be a major challenge for the Portland Community Free Clinic staff. The need to access affordable medication is listed as one of the top four reasons patients come to the Clinic. Several resources are utilized to ensure that medication is provided to all patients unable to afford their prescriptions.

- We have increased our enrollment *from 75 to 89 patients* per year in the Prescription Drug Patient Assistance Program. An impressive **\$76,600** worth of medications were furnished this year at no cost by numerous pharmaceutical companies. Despite recent changes in some of the programs, making them more difficult to access, we still ensure that patients are receiving their prescribed medication.
- Patients in financial crisis were supplied with 120 emergency vouchers for medication and supplies totaling **\$12,605** for the year. Mercy Hospital and donations from the community make this fund possible.

Medication Assistance 1994-2000



- Medication samples generously supplied by pharmaceutical representatives are our second greatest resource for assisting patients with their medication. This year **\$68,040** worth of medication samples were given to patients.
- In 2000, the Portland Community Free Clinic was able to assist patients to secure needed medications valued at **\$157,245**. Almost half of this amount, **\$76,600**, came by way of the Drug Company Patient Assistance Programs, while the remainder came from donated samples of medication, **\$68,040**, and from emergency vouchers, **\$12,000**.

Volunteerism

The **220** Portland Community Free Clinic volunteers are vital. By giving their time, sharing their knowledge, and caring for others, these volunteers ensure that people continue to receive high quality and comprehensive health care. Attempts are made to recognize their efforts in various ways throughout the year with appreciation on a daily basis.

- During National Volunteer Month, all PCFC volunteers were presented with houseplants from the Cerebral Palsy Foundation's Greenhouse. This annual event is both anticipated and appreciated.
- A mid-winter holiday card, designed by one of the multi-talented PCFC volunteers, was sent to each PCFC volunteer "thanking them for the difference they made in the lives of our clients".
- PCFC began awarding plaques to PCFC volunteers with five years of PCFC service when they left the organization. This year plaques were presented to :

Joseph DeGrinney, M.D.

Mark Fourre, M.D.

- An impressive plaque has been posted at the Clinic that honors the current and past volunteers who have served the Clinic and its patients for at least a five-year period.

Jill Arnold, Newell Augur, MD, Paul Balzer, MD, Sr. Claudia Barbre, Christopher Bartlett, MD, Donald Blodgett, Nancy Ann Blodgett, RN, Louis Ciampi, MD, Patrick Connolly, MD, Chip Crothers, MD, Elizabeth Davy, RN, Joseph DeGrinney, MD, John Devlin, MD, Mark Earnshaw, MD, Dan Feltovic, RN, Mark Fourre, MD, Robert Fried, MD, Sr. Margaret Greaney, Donald Hankinson, D.O., Deborah Hall, RN, James Haller, MD, Steve Hayes, MD, Deborah Jackson, RN, Burton Knapp, MD, Nancy Knapp, MD, Sue LaSalla, RN, Ann Lemire, MD, Joyce Magge, Gail Marchigiano, RN, Gail Meyer, RN, Viola Palmacci, RN, Jack Perry, DPM, Denise Picard, Dan Pierce MD, Beverly Pleau, RN, Ann Reed, Robert Rovner, MD, John Saucier, MD, Margaret Shepp, MD, Gayle Smith, RN, Stephen Sokol, MD, Michael Taylor, MD, James Wasserman, MD, Nancy Watts, RN and Curtis Winchenbach, MD.

Value of Donated Services

To determine the value of donated services, the fair market value of individuals professions' hourly rate of pay was estimated by an informal survey of community providers of comparable forms of health care.

On-Site Services - Primary Care

Service	Hours donated	Value
Receptionist	522	\$4,176
Social Work	330	\$24,750
Registered Nurses	759	\$13,662
Physician	1,125	\$123,750
	2,736 hours	<i>\$166,338</i>

On-Site Specialty Clinics

Asthma/Allergy	\$ 2,250
Dermatology	\$ 2,700
Endocrine	\$ 1,800
Gastroenterology	\$ 4,275
Podiatry	\$ 2,700
Psychiatry	\$ 2,925
Orthopedics	\$ 2,700
	<i>\$19,350</i>

Off-Site Specialists

Breast Center	\$ 130
Cardiology	\$8,699
Dermatology	\$ 100
Dental	\$1,210
ENT	\$ 825
Gastroenterology	\$2,152
Gynecology	\$1,211
Neurology/Neurosurgery	\$1,776
Ophthalmology	\$1,125
Optometry	\$1,417
Orthopedics	\$11,986
Surgery	\$3,800
Plastic Surgery	\$ 76
Urology	\$2,900
Total	<i>\$37,407</i>

Total Donated hours Valued at \$223,095

Portland Community Free Clinic, a Community Investment

The donated services outlined above coupled with the financial contributions of Mercy Hospital and the Portland Public Health Division result in a tremendous investment in and by the Greater Portland community. Low-income persons with no health insurance, often falling between the cracks of the health service system, are provided with comprehensive health care by all the contributing members who make up the Portland Community Free Clinic.

- **Challenges for 2001:** Each passing year the Portland Community Free Clinic encounters and addresses new challenges. Yet, new challenges continue to appear on the horizon. Areas anticipated to be of particular importance for the coming year are:
 - ✓ Mental health services are virtually unavailable to low-income persons with no insurance. Over the coming year, PCFC hopes to develop a method of incorporating counseling services into the Free Clinic model.
 - ✓ Providing medication assistance to Clinic patients is a constant and increasing expense for the Free Clinic. During this past year, the cost of providing medications more than doubled over the previous year.
 - ✓ Increase public awareness of PCFC services now that the Clinic has sufficient space to address the needs of additional clients.
 - ✓ Address staff needs for an efficient and pleasant working environment from which to conduct case management, accept appointments, make referrals to specialists in the community, follow up on test and lab results, obtain medication and supplies and promote continuity of care.
 - ✓ The current financial eligibility cut off (150% of federal poverty level) excludes from PCFC services many persons who truly cannot afford health care. Over the coming year, PCFC hopes to investigate ways to provide Clinic services to persons up to 200% of poverty level.

This report was completed with assistance from Mercy Hospital, the PCFC community sub-specialists, the data department of the Public Health Division, and the staff of the Portland Community Free Clinic. This report has been made possible through the generous donation of time and compassion from all the PCFC volunteers who commit themselves to providing care to Free Clinic patients.

Nancy Knapp, M.D.	Marie Purser,	Evelyn Orman	Deb Hall, RN
Medical Director	Principal Nurse	Office Assistant	Public Health Nurse
Portland Community Free Clinic Staff			

Neva Cram, M.S.	Nathan Nickerson, A.N.P
Program Manager	Division Director
Public Health Division, Health and Human Services Department, City of Portland, Maine	

Marjorie Stone	Sister Ellen Turner
Vice President, Mercy Hospital	Vice President, Missions Effectiveness, Mercy Hospital
Portland Community Free Clinic Steering Committee Members	