

OUR OPINION: Clinic is a good idea

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While presidential candidates propose health-care plans, Valdosta-Lowndes County is doing something about it.

As reported earlier this week in The Valdosta Daily Times, Partnership Health Center is providing free medical assistance to the working uninsured in Lowndes County. The clinic is specifically open on Tuesday evenings for patients. The Woodrow Wilson Drive office is open regular business hours to register potential patients, who are asked to call first.

There are patients who go to emergency rooms who don't have what would be considered an emergency by ER triage classifications of life-threatening injuries or symptoms. Essentially, these patients are sick or have a chronic condition that is not immediately life-threatening. Their emergency comes in that they are uninsured, cannot afford to pay a doctor out of pocket, and that the ER must see and treat them. The clinic is designed to help folks finding themselves in this situation as well as helping with other medical care.

Sponsored by the Lowndes County Partnership for Health, volunteers make the clinic work. Area physicians and other medical personnel are volunteering their time and talents to the center. A regular rotation of volunteer physicians will make the clinic a success.

As more physicians hopefully volunteer, the center wants to increase its availability in terms of clinic hours, patient eligibility, and other services.

Partnership Health Center is the type of idea that makes Valdosta-Lowndes County such a great place to live. It is the type of thinking that could solve problems not just here but across the nation.

Partnership Health Center requires initiative, patience, and the drive to recruit volunteer physicians, but it is the type of facility that could well be the start of solving the nation's health-care concerns — one community at a time.

Perhaps, national leaders should propose that more communities seek ways of treating their uninsured. Wouldn't incentives for physicians to volunteer some of their time be more appealing than dragging them and the nation into a potentially unworkable form of nationalized health care?

Perhaps, Valdosta-Lowndes County's Partnership Health Center will become an example across the nation of what a community can do.

Partnership Health Center is the type of program that can save taxpayers money while saving the lives of the uninsured. The Partnership Health Center is an example of Valdosta-Lowndes County's efforts to save our friends and neighbors.

Its success depends on us and we should do all within our power to support it and encourage

similar programs in other communities. We should do all we can for our local center before Washington, D.C., ruins it with a national health-care initiative.

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