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Georgia Free Clinic Network Receives Infusion of Capital *Healthcare foundations grant \$250,000 for operating expenses, pilot program*

Atlanta, September 25, 2006 – Three of Georgia’s noted healthcare foundations are stepping up in support of the Georgia Free Clinic Network. GFCN announced today that Georgia Health Foundation, Healthcare Georgia Foundation and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia provided grants in the amounts of \$35,000, \$200,000 and \$15,000 respectively. .

The grant funds will be used to support GFCN’s core operating expenses as well as to launch an innovative pilot program focused on disease management. The program is designed to assess statewide outbreaks and the prevalence of specific illnesses such as diabetes. This data collection program will help GFCN better define and secure necessary resources for clinics and physicians.

“Thanks to the generous support of these foundations we are better able to support the dedicated physicians who are caring for those Georgians who lack health insurance, “ said Russ Lipari, Executive Director, Georgia Free Clinic Network. “We are operating at a critical time as a growing number of individuals from varied socio-economic backgrounds are seeking medical attention but cannot afford it.”

GFCN serves as a collaborative support system fostering growth and development of the state’s 30 free clinics while improving access to quality healthcare for the medically underserved. Specifically, the organization assists administrators with securing medical equipment and medication, identifying funding sources and recruiting volunteer healthcare professionals. Volunteer physicians staffing free clinics focus on primary care, attempting to offset the number of uninsured individuals currently seeking critical care through costly hospital emergency room visits.

“We at Healthcare Georgia Foundation, along with our foundation colleagues, are pleased to contribute our resources to help establish this important component of Georgia’s health care safety net,” said Dr. Gary Nelson, President, and Healthcare Georgia Foundation. “The Georgia Free Clinic Network and its member organizations provide critical health care services to the underserved, and call attention to one of the most overlooked, charitable dimensions of health care.”

Recently released census figures indicate that nationwide uninsured individuals comprise nearly 16 percent of the population, equating to more than 46 million people. Georgia’s uninsured population grew by 1.2 percent in 2005, one of the biggest increases among states. Georgia’s state auditor estimates that 10 to 20 percent of all uninsured care throughout the state occurs within free clinics. This means roughly 90,000 Georgians are visiting clinics and receiving 200 to 400 million dollars in free care annually.

Additional sponsors of GFCN programs have included: Kaiser Permanente, Pfizer, McKesson, WellCare, Home Diagnostics, United Healthcare, Logisticare, MAG Insurance, Avanti HealthCare, Cigna, DataNet Solutions, Quest Pharmaceuticals, Medical Association of Georgia, National Association of Free Clinics, Georgia Pharmacy Association, Georgia Healthcare Foundation, Georgia Partnership for Caring, Center for Health Transformation, and Georgia Association of Health Plans.

Georgia Free Clinic Network establishes a link between individuals, businesses and organizations that are assisting the growing population of individuals unable to afford healthcare. GFCN provides a central organization for sharing resources and knowledge to advance the movement of free medical services in the state of Georgia. To learn more visit our website at www.gfcn.org.

Healthcare Georgia Foundation is a statewide, private independent foundation located in Atlanta, Georgia. Established in 1999, the Foundation's mission is to advance the health of all Georgians and to expand access to affordable, quality healthcare for underserved individuals and communities. www.healthcaregeorgia.org

The Georgia Health Foundation is a private foundation established in 1985. It is dedicated to improving the health of Georgians. The Foundation makes grants within a broad scope of health-related areas to tax-exempt organizations operating exclusively for charitable, scientific, and/or educational purposes. www.gahealthfdn.org

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and is an operating subsidiary of Wellpoint Inc., the largest publicly traded commercial health benefits company in terms of membership in the United States. www.bcbsga.com