



Founded in 1993 as the nation's first free clinic association, the Virginia Association of Free & Charitable Clinics (VAFCC) is an effective advocate for the issues and concerns of free and charitable clinics, their volunteer workforce of doctors, dentists, nurses, therapists, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, technicians and other health care professionals, and the patients served by free and charitable clinics in communities throughout the commonwealth. VAFCC's mission is to advocate and support member clinics so that Virginia's underserved have access to quality care. We seek a Virginia where all people have access to comprehensive, quality healthcare.

We work to improve healthcare access by supporting, strengthening, and promoting a robust, high-quality free and charitable clinic system and supporting clinic operations so that hardworking individuals and families that lack health care options get the care they deserve.

What Are Free & Charitable Clinics?

Our free clinic members are safety-net health care organizations that utilize a volunteer/staff model to provide a range of medical, dental, pharmacy, vision and/or behavioral health services to economically disadvantaged individuals. Such clinics are 501(c)3 tax-exempt organizations or operate as a program component or affiliate of a 501(c)3 organization. Entities that otherwise meet the above definition, but charge a nominal/sliding fee to patients, are still considered to be free or charitable clinics, as essential services are delivered regardless of the patient's ability to pay.

Free and charitable clinics treat the whole patient by providing a combination of care that addresses not only healthcare needs but also social needs including primary care, chronic care, specialty care, dental care, pharmaceutical care, vision care, women's health, mental health, health education, case management, care coordination, and various supportive services. In the last year, our free clinics served 60,000 vulnerable patients throughout the state.

A solid investment of resources for greater healthcare impact, our member clinics leveraged a collective operating budget of \$42 million in the past year into \$143 million worth of care – made possible through collaborative partnerships, in-kind support and the generosity of volunteers. Indeed, volunteers are the life blood of our member clinics which would not be able to provide the high-quality care to the underserved without the incredible support of volunteers. Health care professional volunteers are always needed, but clinics also need help with a variety of administrative and clerical tasks.

What Does A Free & Charitable Clinic Patient Look Like?

Most of our clinic patients are chronically ill, living with multiple comorbidities such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and COPD, and need regular access to healthcare. Additionally, most clinic patients have jobs but cannot afford insurance. In fact, four out of five uninsured Virginians come from working families. These are individuals who are fully employed or underemployed yet do not earn enough to afford all their basic necessities, such as healthcare.

You most likely know someone who doesn't have health insurance. These people include those with part-time and hourly jobs in food service, retail, construction, and the hospitality industry as well as self-employed and contract employees. The majority of uninsured Virginians are families living with incomes at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level.

When working families struggle to make ends meet, co-pays, deductibles, and medical bills become unaffordable and diminishes access to preventative care. These same families may also avoid addressing chronic conditions that may ultimately result in costly ER visits or hospitalizations. That's why Virginia's free clinics are so important. Clinics serve as an important safeguard resource for working families who can't afford healthcare or health insurance.

What Does ALICE Stand For?

ALICE an acronym that stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed. These are individuals who do not earn enough to support their own families. They are part of a growing number of households in Virginia that do not earn enough to afford even the most basic necessities. These households are forced to make tough choices, such as deciding between quality childcare or paying the rent. And when money is tight, often the first thing to go is health insurance. In Virginia, 10% of households are living below the federal poverty line, while 29% (almost three times as many) are ALICE households with incomes ranging from 200% to as high as 400% of the federal poverty line. Learn more at <https://www.unitedforalice.org/virginia>.