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Grace, Dedication, Perseverance

On the surface it doesn't seem like there is much to be thankful for the past couple of years. The COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented death and suffering as well as division and discord. COVID-19 reshaped all our lives and it definitely changed how we deliver health care.

I am thankful, very thankful, for the amazing group of people that believe in the mission of the Rockbridge Area Health Center and make the decision to work here, serving our community. The employees of RAHC are a truly dedicated group that have demonstrated grace and perseverance as they worked through a pandemic in which we had limited experience, where changing guidance required quick adaptations, and each day could be overwhelming and emotionally draining. The pandemic necessitated that employees pick up new and emerging pandemic duties while simultaneously carrying out their regular duties in order to continue to safely serve our patients and ensure the health and safety of our staff members.

To date, we have administered over 4399 COVID-19 vaccination doses and 6228 COVID-19 tests to patients and community members. COVID-19 has disproportionately affected the communities we serve—in terms of health, children's education, incomes, access to food, shelter, stable work, and much more. Participating in COVID-19 awareness and vaccine delivery is essential to protecting ourselves, our loved ones and our community from further illness, hospitalization and death.

Times like these can bring out the best in people. Despite the challenges brought on by COVID, RAHC employees still succeeded in delivering nationally recognized quality health care services. Looking forward, I have every confidence in the dedication and perseverance of RAHC employees to continue their work with the same level of grace and professionalism.

2020

6,463 patients
received a service

4,612 people
served had incomes
below the poverty level

1,936 visits by children
for medical, dental, or
behavioral health care

3,200+ Telehealth appointments
for medical and behavioral health care

38 patients
were homeless and received
necessary health care services

45 women
received prenatal services

232 veterans
were served

The mission of the Rockbridge Area Health Center is to promote and provide access to comprehensive, high-quality and affordable health care to improve the health and well-being of the greater community.

Suzanne Sheridan

Suzanne Sheridan
CEO - Rockbridge Area Health Center



Vaccinations are for EVERYONE!

RAHC promotes and offers all childhood and adult immunizations, as well as the Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines. The flu vaccines for everyone over the ages of 6 months has been particularly important during the pandemic, since COVID-19, like influenza, is a respiratory virus and it's especially critical to minimize the possibility of having two simultaneous respiratory illnesses, as well as a 'twindemic' outbreak in the community.



An Emphasis Also Placed on Childhood Vaccinations

The CDC's data has provided confirmation of the dangerously low vaccination rates among children during the pandemic. As a result, many infants could be left vulnerable to diseases including hepatitis, polio, whooping cough, and measles, and older children are not receiving their routine booster shots to continue preventing diseases.

Parents have been cautious about bringing their children to a health care facility during the pandemic.



But it remains essential for infants and children to continue to be administered to and immunized and the RAHC staff has placed special emphasis on assuring families that patient safety is always a priority.

Noting the decrease in immunizations at RAHC, the health center's pediatric providers and staff have worked throughout the pandemic to identify pediatric patients in need of the recommended vaccinations and those families are contacted to schedule appointments. This is especially important for children less than 24 months old which is the time when many childhood vaccines are recommended. Additionally, certain immunizations require a booster to continue preventing diseases and those pediatric patients who are overdue are also contacted to schedule

Serving the Needs of Our Community

The RAHC staff and providers have witnessed the pandemic in real time and put their lives at risk to keep our community healthy by serving the needs of patients. In addition to continuing to safely provide medical, dental, and behavioral health services and support, RAHC assembled a team dedicated to assisting the community by providing screening and testing for COVID-19 and administering the vaccine. To date, RAHC has provided the following:



- COVID-19 testing and administering the Moderna vaccine to anyone eligible in the community
- Over 6,228 free COVID-19 tests.
Over 4,399 free COVID-19 vaccinations (Dose 1, Dose 2, Dose 3, and Boosters) both at RAHC and out in the community
- Easy registration on RAHC website for COVID-19 testing and for receiving the vaccination
- COVID-19 Youth Vaccination Clinics for children ages 5-11 years to administer the Pfizer vaccine to any child in the community.

To increase access to the COVID-19 vaccine, the Rockbridge Area Health Center's Mobile Vaccination Team launched clinics at various locations throughout the community, offering free Moderna vaccines and boosters to anyone over the age of 18.

- In partnership with Valley Program for Aging at the Maury River Senior Center in Buena Vista
- At the First Baptist Church in Lexington
- At the Rockbridge Baths Fire House
- At the Rockbridge Area Relief Association (RARA) in Lexington

RAHC Dental Services Turns 20!

In November 2001, the first dental patient walked through our doors, filling a giant gap in the availability of dental care for low-income, uninsured Rockbridge area residents. Since that time, RAHC's dental services have expanded significantly to meet the ever-growing oral health needs in our community and provides comprehensive and affordable services to anyone, regardless of income or insurance status.

Since becoming a community health center in 2014, dental patient visits have increased

629%!



Telehealth

At the onset of the pandemic, RAHC expanded its Telehealth capabilities for patients. Offering the option of a Telehealth visit provides patients a safe and easy way to continue meeting with their providers by using a computer or smart device and has expanded access to care, especially for those with transportation barriers and with time constraints due to employment. It has allowed behavioral health providers to continue administering care to an increased number of patients with depression and anxiety symptoms related to loss of jobs, loss of

family members, social isolation, and increased substance use disorders brought on by the pandemic. And it has been a lifeline for many medical patients who can continue to seek life-saving preventative health services and care for managing chronic diseases.



“My counselor gave me my life back.”



For the fourth consecutive year, RAHC ranked among the top 30% of Health and Human Services Administration (HRSA) supported health centers in the United States for overall clinical performance!

COMMITTED TO THE COMMUNITY

The dedicated RAHC staff has always put great effort into following strict health safety protocols. Consequently, there has been no disruption of daily health care services throughout the pandemic. We are grateful that RAHC can continue administering care to patients to provide life-saving preventative health care and management of chronic diseases.



Welcome!

WELCOME DR. MICHAEL HENRY, MD, PHYSICIAN AND MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Dr. Michael Henry, MD joined the Rockbridge Area Health Center in July as medical director and as a provider of primary medical care to patients of all ages.

He earned a Bachelor of Science from Marquette University, a Doctor of Medicine from Howard University College of Medicine and is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians, the Society of U.S. Army Flight Surgeons, and the Wilderness Medical Society.

For over 30 years, Dr. Henry served in many leadership and training roles as a physician in the U.S. Army and has provided primary medical and trauma care in many locations throughout the world and the U.S.

Growing up, Dr. Henry always wanted to become a physician and finds it very personally fulfilling to provide services that people in a community need. He knew immediately during his first visit to the health center that RAHC was the right fit. He was and remains impressed with the way RAHC embraces the Patient Centered Medical Home philosophy.

After retiring from the military, it was his and his family's wish to settle-down permanently in a community where he could continue his medical career and use his many years of experience. In his short time here so far, Dr. Henry has grown fond of the residents of Rockbridge and their welcoming attitudes.

In his free time, Dr. Henry enjoys spending time with his wife and four children and being outside exploring everything that the area has to offer. He enjoys paddle boarding, following the Washington Nationals and the Chicago Bears, and his dream vacation would be a getaway to the Canadian Rockies with his family.



The Power of a Healthy Diet for a Healthier Life

Kelsey Brown, RDN

Nutrition plays an integral role in preventative healthcare. And especially during the pandemic, a balanced diet can also help the immune system withstand an assault by stress.

RAHC's Registered Dietician Nutritionist, Kelsey Brown, RDN, provides counseling and individualized plans to help patients get and stay healthy.

Offering nutritional assessments and counseling to both pediatric and adult patients, Kelsey also helps with finding healthy food options and with making healthy choices. Per the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Evidence Analysis Library, there is strong evidence that the inclusion of nutrition interventions and counseling, when provided by a registered dietitian as part of a healthcare team, results in significant improvements in weight and body mass index, A1C, blood pressure and serum lipids.

Here is one of Kelsey's quick, easy, and healthy recipes that can help with putting a meal on the table in a half-hour... or less.

ONE SKILLET MEXICAN RICE CASSEROLE

Yield: 5 SERVINGS Prep time: 10 min Cook time: 15 min Total time: 25 min

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 small red onion, diced
- 1 tbsl extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tsps cumin
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 red bell pepper, cored and diced
- 1 (4 oz) can diced green chilies, drained (or 1 jalapeno, diced)
- 1 cup corn kernels, fresh or frozen & defrosted
- 1 (15 oz) can black beans, drained & rinsed
- 12 ozs salsa or enchilada sauce
- 1-1/2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1/2 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese



Serving suggestions: fresh cilantro, diced green onions, avocado

DIRECTIONS:

- Start by warming the oil in a large skillet (mine is 3 quarts) over medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 3 minutes, then add the spices (cumin to oregano) and stir together. Continue to cook for another 2-3 minutes.
- Next add the red pepper and the green chilies and stir together. Cook for another 2-3 minutes then add the drained and rinsed beans, corn, salsa, and rice. Stir everything until well-combined.
- Turn the oven to broil then top the mixture in the skillet with the shredded cheese. Place the skillet in the oven and cook for about 3-4 minutes until the cheese is golden and bubbly on top. Serve warm with diced green onions, cilantro, and/or avocado.



"We are grateful for the hard-working staff

who take the necessary precautions every day to remain healthy and keep patient safety a priority."

— Suzanne Sheridan

Our community has heartwarming offered much encouragement and reached-out in many ways to help. Volunteers at 50 Ways Rockbridge and Make it Sew lovingly made masks for the medical staff. Included with the masks was a note:

"My daughter and I helped to make these for you. They are most certainly not perfect, but they are made with lots of love for you our fellow neighbors. Thank you for your service to our community and for your selfless dedication to our residents. You are absolutely angels among us."



Stay Safe and Enjoy the Holidays!

Evaluate air circulation of the space/venue and consider other contactless ways to gather safely

When gathering indoors, keep windows open. Place a window fan in an open window to vent air out of the room and to circulate fresh air.

AIR VENTILATION "IS KEY" TO MAKING INDOOR GATHERINGS SAFER

COVID-19 is spread by aerosol, and when you have something spread by aerosol, you want more ventilation, which is the reason why the outdoors is always much safer than in doors.

Maintain social distance as much as possible

Unvaccinated people older than two years old should wear a mask, especially indoors

Discuss expectations and behaviors before the event so everyone is on notice before the fun begins

Get vaccinated If you're eligible, get your booster shot

Consider contactless or minimal-contact events like the walk-by or drive-by festivities

For guests, if you are sick or have symptoms, the CDC says, "Stay home"

Based on guidance provided by the Center For Disease Control and Prevention

WORKING WITH FAMILIES DURING TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

At a time when employment uncertainties exist within our area, RAHC has increased its support staff who are certified and trained to provide free, confidential, over-the-phone assistance with understanding what affordable health insurance options and programs are available and assisting with enrollment. Information can also be provided about RAHC's sliding-scale discounts that are available to help reduce the cost of care.

Insurance Open Enrollment Period

Have questions? We can help.

The 2022 Open Enrollment Period for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace begins November 1, 2021 and ends January 15, 2022. Enroll by December 15 for coverage that starts January 1, 2022. Schedule a free appointment with an RAHC Certified Application Counselor. Call (540) 464-8700, Ext 7128.



"By providing patient-centered health care which reaches beyond the exam room, RAHC is helping not only its many patients, but all of us who benefit from living in a healthier community."

— Susan Whitsitt, RAHC Board member

Virtual Fundraising - A New Twist



A Virtual Cooking Journey with Chef George

The Rockbridge Area Health Center and the Southern Inn Restaurant joined together again this year to host the annual virtual fundraising event entitled 'Palate, Plate & Pleasure – A Virtual Cooking Journey with Chef George'.

Participants watched Chef George via Zoom as he prepared a gourmet 4-course meal while they relax and enjoy each course with perfectly paired wines. "Because of the pandemic it was unfortunately necessary to,

once again, postpone our annual, signature fundraiser, the Bull & Oyster Fest," said Janet Beebe, Director of Development. "As a non-profit, fundraising is vital to RAHC's ability to fulfill our mission."

After a two-year hiatus, RAHC will hopefully host its annual, signature fundraiser, the Bull & Oyster Fest, on April 2, 2022. And based on positive feedback, will also host the Palate, Plate and Pleasure event virtually each year, as well. "In addition to hosting the popular B&O Fest annually, the smaller Palate, Plate and Pleasure event has also been a success as a fundraiser and well received by the community."



Please consider donating today. You can make a difference.

Donate Online at rockahc.org/newsletter or complete the form below and mail to:

Rockbridge Area Health Center
25 Northridge Lane
Lexington, VA 24450

Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

My contribution of \$ _____ is enclosed. *(Please make check payable to RAHC)*

Please charge my gift of \$ _____ to my credit card: *(circle one)* Visa Mastercard

Card # _____ Expiration date: ____/____ CCV _____

Signature _____

My donation is for (Please check one)

RAHC's Annual Fund

Unrestricted. Allocated to where most needed.

Donation in memory of

Name

Name and address for acknowledgement

Donation in honor of

Name

Name and address for acknowledgement

More ways to give • Charitable IRA Distributions:

Sec. 408(d)(8) permits "qualifying charitable distributions" from traditional IRA or Roth IRA accounts to be excluded from gross income.

For assistance, please call Janet Beebe at (540) 461-3500 or contact her at jbeebe@rockahc.org or Craig Vincombe at cvincombe@rockahc.org. RAHC is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) health and human service organization. All gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Rockbridge Area Health Center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and a FTCA deemed facility. This Health Center is a Health Center grantee under 42 U.S.C. 254b, and a deemed Public Health Service employee under 42 U.S.C. 233(g)-(n).

Save The **NEW** Date!

**Oysters,
Barbeque,
Music & Fun!**

Sat., April 2, 2022
1-5 p.m.

at the *Virginia
Horse Center*
Lexington, VA

A benefit for the **Rockbridge Area Health Center**

We are following Virginia Department of Health guidelines regarding large gatherings.

ROCKBRIDGE



**BULL & OYSTER
FEST 2022**

amazonsmile

When you shop on Amazon, purchase through AmazonSmile at smile.amazon.com and choose **Rockbridge Area Health Center** as your charitable organization. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to RAHC! Same products, same prices, same service.



Link your Kroger Shopper's Card to their Community Rewards Program and Kroger will donate a percentage of your purchase to the Health Center at no added cost to you. Enroll in the Kroger Community Rewards Program at KrogerCommunityRewards.com

Nonprofit
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U.S. Postage
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