

A Message from the Chairman of the Board, Bernard Weinstein, MPH

I am pleased to report significant progress in our efforts to open a health center for low-income uninsured residents of Bergen County.



Space at 241 Moore Street, Hackensack has been leased from the Bergen County Community Action Partnership, Inc. Our architect's schematic drawings have received initial approval from the New Jersey Department of Health, and detailed working drawings are being prepared for final state action and subsequent issuance of a building permit by the City of Hackensack.

We estimate that the facility will open by May, 2009. Financial needs to open and operate the facility have been projected through 2011, and a major fundraising campaign is being launched, led by our Founding Chair, Samuel Cassell, MD, along with Janet Finke and Marilyn Schotz, Fundraising Committee Co-Chairs.

We have also begun the process of staffing and equipping the facility. Volunteer physicians and other health care professionals are being recruited, and agreements are being negotiated with local hospitals and other organizations to offer additional services to our patients. An agreement is already in place with Quest Laboratories to provide *pro bono* services. Part-time consultants are working with us to compile equipment lists, draft operating manuals, and pursue grant opportunities.

We are excited to be moving forward on a variety of fronts to make this dream a reality. This great progress would not be possible

The Campaign for BVMI is Launched: the goal is \$5 million to open our doors and to keep them open

Samuel A. Cassell, MD, Founding Chair and Campaign Chair, BVMI

As the Founding Chair of BVMI, I have been involved in every aspect of its growth from an altruistic concept to a robust organization of capable and talented people. BVMI has come a long way since its inception:



- The IRS has granted us tax exempt status as a 501 (c) (3) organization
- We have received generous support from over 300 individual donors (including every one of our board members), and a substantial grant from The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey
- We have signed a lease at a desirable location in Hackensack convenient to public transportation
- Our architect has created a functional office, which has received preliminary state approvals
- We have applied to the state for a license as an ambulatory care facility, which will lead to a building permit from the City of Hackensack
- Volunteer committees are working on other essentials, such as equipment, furnishings, in-kind donations, and policy manuals

without our many volunteers, who serve on committees and on the Board of Trustees. My thanks go out to all of you. It is an honor to serve as your Chair. The next year promises to be a rewarding one for all who support the goals of BVMI.


Bernard Weinstein, MPH

- Over 75 medical and social service professionals have volunteered their services

The "culture of caring" is incorporated into all aspects of BVMI – treating every patient with the respect and consideration so beneficial to the healing process.

Now that we are close to opening our doors, our future success will depend upon the financial support of individual and corporate donors. I have been asked to chair The Campaign for BVMI, and lead the fundraising effort that will sustain our project.

This community-wide effort will serve those in greatest medical need among the 85,000 residents of Bergen County: those within certain income guidelines who have no insurance, nor the means to pay for care. The needs are so great and the benefits will be substantial: a decline in the use of hospital emergency rooms for primary care, thus reducing costs to the hospital and taxpayers; improvement in community health as contagious illnesses are treated on a timely basis; healthier families with access to free care.

The "culture of caring" is incorporated into all aspects of BVMI: treating every patient with the respect and consideration so beneficial to the healing process.

We hope that you will respond generously when we ask you to support this vital humanitarian effort. Given the chance, how can we not do what is right?


Samuel A. Cassell, MD





BERGEN VOLUNTEER MEDICAL INITIATIVE, INC.

health care for the uninsured

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

At the annual meeting in March, seven individuals with an impressive breadth of experience, affiliations and knowledge were elected to the Board of BVMI. They are:

Deborah Aronson – Founding President, *Gilda's Club of Northern New Jersey; past Vice President, John Harms Center for the Arts; Chair, Englewood Housing Authority; Chair, New Jersey Governor's Council on Volunteerism and Community Service; Board member, Volunteer Center of Bergen County*



Michael W. Azzara, MBA – Retired CEO, *Valley Health Systems, Ridgewood; Senior Consultant, Foley, Proctor, Yoskowitz; Director, Hudson City Savings Bank; Member, Dean's Advisory Council, Rutgers University; Member, Planned Giving Committee, Ramapo College of New Jersey*



Yona Donner Hermann, MS (Arch.) – Commercial real estate broker; Board member, United Jewish Appeal of Northern New Jersey; President, Smith College Alumnae Class of 1957



Pargellan A. McCall, PhD – Former Administrator, Fairleigh Dickinson University; Vice President, Student Affairs, Bloomfield College; Associate Professor, New



Jersey City University; Commissioner, Hackensack Housing Authority; Co-founder, HELP For Our Children (literacy program); Member, Hackensack Board of Education; Member, Hackensack Economic Development Commission

Charlotte Sokol, MD – Retired internist; Fellow, American College of Physicians; Trustee, The Diabetes Foundation; Member, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists; Attending physician, Hackensack University Medical Center



Carl Wierum, MD – Retired internist and endocrinologist; Fellow, American College of Physicians; Section Chief, Internal Medicine, Englewood Hospital and Medical Center



Judith K. Winn, PhD – Immediate Past President, Bergen Community College; Past President, Northwest College, Houston, Texas College System; Vice-president, Burlington County College, New Jersey; Dean, Community College of Philadelphia



Meet Our Medical Director
Arthur DeSimone, MD

"My primary responsibility is to build a strong medical staff for our healthcare center," says Arthur DeSimone, MD. As BVMI's recently-appointed Medical Director, he has begun to reach out to the Bergen County medical community to recruit volunteers to serve our patients. Over 75 professionals have already expressed interest in our mission, and Dr. DeSimone is contacting them to explore their availability and qualifications. He is also using his extensive personal network to attract additional doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses and allied health workers.

"My primary responsibility is to build a strong medical staff for our healthcare center."

Dr. DeSimone was born and raised in New York City and attended high school, college and medical school there. He is a graduate of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and completed post-medical school training at Georgetown University Medical Center and the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center. He is board certified in Internal Medicine. Dr. DeSimone served in Vietnam with a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH), then began the private practice of internal medicine in Old Tappan. He has worked at The Valley Hospital, Ridgewood, for the past nine years, serving as Chief of Medicine at Bergen Regional Medical Center for Valley and, most recently, as Vice President, Medical Affairs for Valley.

Dr. DeSimone is married to Bonnie DeSimone, a Professor of Nursing at Dominican College. They have three married children and seven grandchildren.



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BVMI has established guidelines for the recruitment and training of personnel.

Human Resources Committee

BVMI's Human Resources Committee, co-chaired by John Snyder and Robert Honsinger, has prepared drafts of operating policies and procedures manuals for the BVMI healthcare center. It has also established guidelines for the recruitment and training of personnel. The committee anticipates implementing these and other projects as the opening of the center approaches.

To Donate or Volunteer, visit our website: www.BVMI.org

The goal of these measures is to encourage successful outcomes by making medications affordable.

Pharmacy Committee

BVMI's Pharmacy Committee, chaired by Carole Feingold, RN, has approved a formulary (the list of approved medications and prescription standards). However, a medication is of little value if the patient cannot afford to buy it and take it as prescribed. The committee has, therefore, taken steps to help our patients obtain the medicines they need at reasonable--or no--cost. Local major chain stores with pharmacies have been

approached to make low-cost generics available. BVMI's staff will help eligible patients enroll in the Patient Assistance Programs of individual pharmaceutical companies, which offer certain medications at no cost. BVMI is also asking drug company representatives to contribute samples to dispense to patients. The goal of these measures is to encourage successful outcomes by making medications affordable.

BVMI seeks to create a "culture of caring." We believe that the way people are treated is as important as the medical treatment they receive.

Medical Services Committee

BVMI's Medical Services Committee, co-chaired by Earl Wheaton, MD and Charlotte Sokol, MD, has been planning for staffing, equipping and furnishing the BVMI healthcare center, and establishing guidelines for all aspects of providing medical care. Comprehensive policy manuals have been developed with advice from similar facilities across the country. The committee worked closely with the architects to produce a plan for BVMI's space

that meets the needs of both patients and healthcare providers. It is currently seeking in-kind donations of equipment and furnishings, and is evaluating electronic medical records systems. The committee created a job description and coordinated the successful search for a medical director: Arthur DeSimone, MD, who brings many years of clinical experience and leadership to the position. (See "Meet Our Medical Director inside this edition.")



Meet Our Director of Development and External Affairs

Joan M. Wright

Former Assemblywoman Joan Wright's knowledge of Bergen County - its people, social services, community networks, and politics - has served BVMI well. She has built relationships, facilitated strategic planning, and moved us toward making our dream a reality. *Joan's insights and expertise have helped propel the organization to its present readiness*

for fundraising, development, and growth. As Director, Development and External Affairs, she is charged with fundraising, public/community relations, government relations, planning, and board education.

Joan's distinguished career in the public sector includes positions as Chief Operating Officer, Bergen Pines County Hospital; first Director, Bergen County Department of Human Services; Assistant Commissioner, NJ Department of Human Services; and Director, state Division on Women.

Elected offices include the NJ state Assembly and local office in

Woodcliff Lake. More recently, she served as Vice President Corporate Development, Bergen Regional Medical Center; and Administrative Director, Women's Health, Hackensack University Medical Center. Ms. Wright is President, The Wright Perspective, Inc., consultants to the non-profit sector.

A noted public speaker, Ms. Wright's leadership and record of achievement have been recognized by women's and civic organizations statewide. A graduate of Green Mountain College, she was awarded an Honorary Degree in Law from Centenary College. She resides in Hackensack.

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NewsLetter

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BVMI will provide free primary medical care to Bergen County residents with incomes between 100% and 200% of the prevailing federal income poverty guideline who have neither medical insurance nor the means to pay for care.

