

Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative

DOING MORE FOR MORE PEOPLE

SPECIAL REPORT: BVMI RESPONDS TO COVID-19







Because of generous supporters like you, TEAM BVMI was able to respond quickly ...







... to meet the challenge of delivering care to our Bergen County neighbors.









Our BVMI family was truly resilient over these last several months. As they stared down COVID-19, volunteers and staff continued to serve our patients. Patients and their families faced this new health threat bravely. And donors held fast in their support.

While it's not over yet, there are bright spots. Telehealth is now one of ours. The learning curve was dizzying, but worth it. Even with our clinic temporarily closed, we were still able to "see" patients, by phone or on their computers. Telehealth helped protect us all.

We've done our best to meet our patients' ongoing health needs, while working to keep them safe from the coronavirus. We've educated them about its warning signs, how it spreads, and how to treat it.

BVMI's team members have really stepped up, well beyond their job descriptions. They've made sure our patients have access to food and other social services they need right now. We've even formed some new community partnerships as a result.

Our donors have stayed right by our side through it all, and have ensured that we can continue to serve our patients throughout the crisis. And several new donors have been inspired to help, knowing that their generosity will make a huge difference in the lives of our patients.

We've reopened our doors with a tremendous amount of gratitude. Please know that you are one of BVMI's heroes in 2020!



Amanda Missey, President/CEO amissey@bvmi.net 201-518-8484

PS: Looking forward to seeing you at BVMI's VIRTUAL NO-GO GALA on Thursday, September 17 at 7:00 pm

TEAM BVMI: DONORS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS RESPOND TO COVID-19











TELEHEALTH = GOOD MEDICINE AT BVMI

Learning to do things a new way can be hard. It can also be a blessing. Enter telehealth at BVML

Healthcare by phone or video technology has been quietly tiptoeing into our lives over the last several years. Not anymore. Today it wears running shoes.

The word telehealth has shed its quotation marks and most of the uneasiness it brought to patients and healthcare providers in the past. With the arrival of COVID-19, it's also been a welcome tool.

BVMI has embraced this option and learned how to use it in ways that best serve our patients.

"During the growth of the pandemic, safety dictated a 'hold' on in-person visits," said Amanda Missey, BVMI's President/CEO. "We formed triage teams that got to work right away, answering phone calls. People's basic medical needs didn't stop just because we couldn't see them in person. They still needed routine tests, prescriptions, urgent care and more. And with a major health crisis on our hands, we had to provide the kind of education and guidance that could help our patients and their families avoid or deal with COVID-19 — especially those living in close quarters."

To expand our approach to telehealth at BVMI, we needed tools and training. We knew we couldn't do it alone — and luckily, we didn't have to. Volunteers in Medicine America, our national nonprofit, partnered with Doxy.me to provide a solid technology platform to its affiliate clinics across the country.

Still, we needed additional funding to move ahead. As always, our donors were there for us. Every single contribution helped. Our largest gift came from the Russell Berrie Foundation. They saw the potential for improving access and quality of care in underserved communities through telehealth, and provided an \$85,000 grant.

"We are longtime funders of BVMI, for both basic primary healthcare and our innovative Diabetes Prevention Program," said Ruth Salzman, the Foundation's Executive Director. "This time we asked how we could help them establish a telehealth program. We're delighted that our support is enabling uninterrupted access for patients — and opening up new opportunities for BVMI to serve them more effectively."

"If there is a silver lining to be found in anything that has happened during COVID-19, it's the potential to reach patients who can't always come to our clinic," said Rita Prospero, BVMI's Telehealth Manager.

"Transportation issues and scheduling conflicts are very real considerations for many of them."

BVM/s medical providers often have challenges with transportation and scheduling, too. With that in mind, we believe the telehealth model will help us recruit more doctors, nurses, interpreters and other types of volunteers. As of this writing, we have 20 practitioners providing care in this way. We welcome those yet to come!

We've already noticed some benefits of using telehealth at BVMI. We've had better success with our diabetes education efforts, and more patients are keeping up with their mental health visits. Down the road, it's possible that some of our chronic care follow-up visits could be virtual ones.

On June 29, we began a slow, careful reopening of our clinic. It's happening in stages, with safety protocols in place for patients, staff and volunteers. Telehealth will also continue to be a big part of how we care for our entire BVMI family.

Will this constantly-evolving technology ever fully replace face-to-face visits at BVMI? No, and we don't want it to. But by using telehealth as wisely as possible, we see the ability to serve more patients with the same quality and compassion that they need and expect. What was born out of necessity at BVMI is now a plus — and a big one at that.

"When our clinic had to go on hiatus, we kicked into overdrive," Rosa explained. "Our patients received a letter, assuring them that they could

still call us with medical issues."

"We kept thinking on our feet," added Rosa. "Starting with patients in greatest financial need, we called each one to explain that we could assist in ways beyond healthcare. Food insecurity and unemployment were two of their most immediate concerns."

Rosa found local resources, and she researched government benefits. "At one point, I did a test run on applying for unemployment," she said. "I wanted to make sure I could explain things clearly to patients.

Sometimes, I'd even talk to children who were helping their parents make sense of it all."

Approximately 70% of BVMI's patients speak Spanish, Rosa's first language. She sees that as an advantage, and says she can also relate on a cultural level.

"It's been an absolute team effort at BVMI," said Rosa. "We've all pitched in, especially when it comes to meeting food needs. With community partners, volunteers, and donors, we've been able to distribute fresh produce from our parking lot, deliver non-perishable food to patients' homes, and provide gift cards for groceries. Being fairly new here, it was a bonus for me to be able to connect patients' names with faces, while sharing more resource information."

People like Barbara Porsche, a BVMI volunteer nurse, paint a clear picture of the team spirit we're proud of. Since March, she's donated to our COVID-19 Emergency Patient Fund three times, and provided bag after bag of groceries. "It upset me that people didn't have enough to eat," said Barbara. "I was just trying to do my part."

BVMI DELIVERS:

Meeting patients' essential needs

"A big part of my role at BVMI is to explore our patients' Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) — the conditions in which they are born, grow, live, work and age," says Rosa Flores-Campos, MSW, BVMI's Case Manager. "We believe we can have a bigger impact on our patients' health if we also connect them with other resources they need."

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IRTUAL EVENT

O-GO GALA together at home

JOIN US FOR THIS FREE VIRTUAL EVENT THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 17, 2020 AT 7PM HONORING THE INSERRA FAMILY

& INSERRA SUPERMARKETS SHOPRITE ESSENTIAL WORKERS

Featuring:

- AN AUCTION OF FUN AND UNIQUE ITEMS
- **GREAT ENTERTAINMENT**
- **50-50 RAFFLE**
- **SPECIAL GUESTS**
- **STORIES OF HOW YOUR GENEROSITY HAS** HELPED US MEET THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19.

Join the fun:

There's NO COST to join the party, but we hope you will be inspired to support us! With your help, BVMI can continue the important work of providing help and hope to our Bergen County neighbors.

REGISTER!

Go to www.bvmi.org/no-gogala to register for this FREE virtual event or information on becoming a sponsor.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Barbara Loscalzo, **Special Events Manager,** at 201-518-8492 or Barbara@bvmi.net.



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Powered by passionate volunteers, BVMI meets the medical needs of low-income, working, uninsured adults in Bergen County by providing free, comprehensive, patientcentered primary healthcare.













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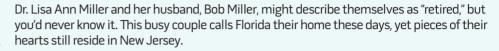




THANK YOU

FOR PROVIDING HELP AND HOPE TO OUR BERGEN COUNTY NEIGHBORS

SECURING THE FUTURE





Dr. Miller is an OB-GYN who started volunteering with BVMI in 2010, while in private practice. And she still volunteers during her time in New Jersey each year. "I've always loved the continuity of care that BMVI provides," she said. "I have patients that I've seen since the clinic opened. And now with telehealth, it's easier to stay in contact. Leaving BVMI is not an option for me!"

The Millers are valued members of BVMI's Legacy Society. Bob, whose background is in investment management, also understands the value of investing in one's health. "BVMI takes away the immense worry of how to stay well when you can't afford health insurance," he said. "Food, shelter and healthcare are basic human needs. You need access to all three in order to thrive."

When asked why they give to the Legacy Society, Dr. Miller said, "BVMI is well run, and has expanded so much over the last 10 years." Bob added, "We believe BVMI will be around for a long time, with the help of Legacy Society members and many other supporters."

The Millers also volunteer their expertise and donate to their Florida neighbors, through organizations such as F.I.S.H. of SANCAP, Community Housing & Resources (CHR), and the Senior Friendship Centers' health clinic in Fort Myers. We can say they really care, both "here" and "there."

TAKE THE 2020 LEGACY CHALLENGE!
JOIN THE DR. SAMUEL A. CASSELL
LEGACY SOCIETY

Help us secure the future of BVMI while making an impact today. For every new planned gift, BVMI will receive \$1,000.

To get started, contact Amanda Missey, BVMI President/CEO 201-518-8484, amissey@bvmi.net

BVMI'S NEXT GEN DONORS: MY WHY

Kathleen DiGiulio: "I support BVMI because healthcare is a human right. Setting up a recurring donation through BVMI's Monthly Refill Program helps ensure no one in Bergen County has to go without healthcare."

Erica West: "BVMI has created a model of healthcare we aspire to in America — the patient is treated as a person, not a list of symptoms. At BVMI, patients are in partnership with their doctors, allowing them to take ownership of their health. When people build healthier lifestyles,

it is systemically passed down within their families, creating healthier generations and a healthier community for all of us."

Nikhil Varma: "BVMI is one of the

few organizations directly addressing a growing need for vulnerable populations to receive quality medical services. I witnessed firsthand how BVMI effectively engages its community especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic — through case management outreach, telehealth appointments, and food drives. It is important to continue supporting that success and keep the momentum going."





THANK YOU!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND YOUR COMMITMENT TO BVMI!

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