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

VITAL EVENT!

NO-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

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

QUESTIONS?
Contact Barbara Loscalzo, Special Events Manager, at 201-318-8492 or Barbara@bvmi.net.

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.

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Lynn Diamond Healthcare Center
76 Essex Street, Suite 100
Hackensack, NJ 07601
201-342-8478
bvmi.org
DEAR FRIEND

7:00 pm on Thursday, September 17 at
201-518-8484
amissey@bvmi.net

Amanda Missey, President/CEO

Please know that you are one of
in the lives of our patients.

Our donors have stayed right by our
community partnerships as a result.
Now. We've even formed some new

learning to do things a new way can be hard.

Team BVMI: Donors, staff and volunteers respond to COVID-19

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 could do it alone – and luckily, we didn't have to. Volunteers in Medicine America, our national nonprofit, partnered with DVSS 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 uninter-

spective and scheduling conflicts are very real considera-
tions for many of them."

BVMI'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.

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"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."

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Dr. Lisa Ann Miller and her husband, Bob Miller, might describe themselves as “retired,” but you’d never know it. This busy couple calls Florida their home these days, yet pieces of their hearts still reside in New Jersey.

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.”