

checkup

2026 | NO. 1

BECAUSE EVERYONE DESERVES HEALTHCARE



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Lives Here

In uncertain times, compassion
shines brighter than ever.



BVMI

Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative



Seeing Clearly Again

When Louis first walked into the clinic in October 2024, he was frightened—and exhausted. At 64, he works long hours in food preparation, lives with his wife, and helps care for his grandchildren. Louis had been coping for years with constant urination and worsening vision. By the time he finally sought help, he could barely see. Like many hardworking, uninsured adults, he had delayed care simply because he had nowhere to turn.

During his first visit, bloodwork revealed the cause: severely uncontrolled diabetes, with an A1c of 14. His vision loss and other symptoms were all linked to the disease. Our volunteer physician acted immediately, starting Louis on diabetes medication provided at no cost through a patient assistance program. A diabetic educator joined his care team, but Louis’ demanding job made it difficult to attend multiple appointments.

Rather than let that become a barrier, our team adapted. Karla, one of our dedicated nurses, met with Louis personally and provided his diabetes start-up education in one comprehensive visit, making sure he understood how to manage his condition and begin treatment right away.



I can’t believe how much my vision improved.

– Louis

The results were remarkable. Within weeks, Louis’ vision began to return and the constant urination subsided. When BVMI’s volunteer endocrinologist followed up, he was overwhelmed with gratitude. “I can’t believe how much my vision improved,” he said, still amazed that something he feared was lost was coming back. His daughter, a physician in Ecuador, celebrated the news from afar.

Because of compassionate supporters like you, patients like Louis receive life-changing care—restoring health, independence, and the priceless gift of sight.



Why I Show Up: Dr. Grishma Parikh

At BVMI, volunteer specialists help fill critical gaps in care for uninsured adults living with chronic disease. For endocrinologist Dr. Grishma Parikh, volunteering began with a simple connection and quickly became a lasting commitment.

Dr. Parikh first learned about BVMI through former BVMI Medical Director Dr. Art DeSimone, a neighbor who shared the clinic’s mission. She immediately recognized a pressing need for specialty care, particularly for

patients with diabetes—a condition that affects many in the clinic’s patient population. With high rates of uncontrolled diabetes, access to endocrinology care can mean the difference between stability and serious complications.

Over time, it’s the patients themselves who have kept her coming back. “The moments that remind me why this work matters are when patients return with gratitude in their hearts and eyes, telling me they feel so much



The moments that remind me why this work matters are when patients return with gratitude in their hearts and eyes, telling me they feel so much better.

– Grishma Parikh, MD

better,” she shares. Through consistent care, she has built strong relationships and bonds with her patients, many of whom rely on BVMI as their only source of specialty care.

Dr. Parikh knows that early intervention can prevent life-altering complications like cardiovascular disease, kidney failure, and neuropathy. But for her, the impact goes beyond treating individual patients. Education and early care, especially for younger adults, can help break cycles of chronic illness and create healthier futures for entire families.

“As a donor and volunteer myself, I see firsthand that the clinic ensures donations are utilized in the best possible way,” says Dr. Parikh. “The support of donors allows us to continue providing the right care to the patients who need it most.”



Volunteer Opportunities

Please tell your family, friends and colleagues about BVMI’s mission to provide free, high-quality healthcare to Bergen County’s working uninsured adults. While our new Garfield clinic will greatly expand our capacity to provide care, it also means we need more volunteers and more financial support.

“I volunteer to be of service, to help teach health promotion and disease prevention behaviors. I volunteer because I am a nurse and that’s what nurses do!”

– Donna O’Hern, BSN, MSN

Scan to Learn more



Dear Friend,

Across our country, many families are facing uncertainty about their healthcare. Coverage is shifting. Costs are rising. Neighbors who have always worked hard and played by the rules are wondering where they will turn if insurance disappears.

At BVMI, we see that worry every day.

But we also see something else: extraordinary compassion.

This April, during National Volunteer Month, we are reminded that every patient we serve is cared for by someone who chooses to show up. Retired physicians return to exam rooms. Nurses, interpreters, and community members give their evenings and weekends. They ensure that every person who walks through our doors is treated with dignity and respect.

As more individuals lose coverage, the need for free, high-quality care will grow. BVMI is prepared to meet that need – but we cannot do it without you.

Our volunteers provide the care. Your generosity makes it possible – funding medications, lab services, equipment, and the infrastructure that keeps our doors open to all.

In uncertain times, communities pull together. Thank you for being part of the light that ensures no one in our community goes without care.

With gratitude,
Amanda Missey,
President/CEO



Monday
July 13, 2026
Arcola
Country Club



Contact Erica Joy West,
bvmievents@bvmi.net,
for more information
and sponsorship
opportunities.



Donate

Healthcare can't wait, and neither can our patients.

Your generous gift today helps ensure access to free, compassionate care for our most vulnerable neighbors. Scan the QR code or go to BVMI.org/Donate



1,026
Patients served
in 2025



9,725
Visits

BVMI Recognizes National Volunteer Month

192

individuals volunteered in 2025

83

volunteers delivered patient care

109

provided non-clinical support

10,178

Volunteer hours contributed valued at \$707,967



Mission: Powered by passionate volunteers, BVMI delivers free, high-quality healthcare to Bergen County's working uninsured, helping them live healthy, productive lives.

BVMI.org

Follow Us!



BVMI is a BBB Accredited Charity, having met all 20 BBB standards of charity accountability after completing a rigorous evaluation.