



# Health Wagon

## Clintwood Office

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## Wise Office

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# Volunteer Handbook



## Welcome to the Team!

Thank you for expressing an interest in volunteering at the Health Wagon. We take great pride in how successfully our organization is run, but we could not be as productive and effective as we are without the assistance from our amazing volunteers! We hope this handbook helps you learn more about the clinic, its services, and the volunteer experience. Volunteers tell us that sharing their skills and time is extraordinarily rewarding.

More details are always available on the Health Wagon website at <http://thehealthwagon.org/hwwp/volunteer>.

### General Overview

The Health Wagon was founded in 1980 by Sr. Bernie Kenny with the order of Medical Missionaries of Mary. In December 2005, Sr. Bernie turned over the reins of the organization to Dr. Teresa Gardner who has been with The Health Wagon for over 20 years. The Health Wagon helps to meet the unique challenges of health care delivery to the medically underserved and indigent in poverty-stricken areas of rural Appalachia. Through a combination of innovative mobile health units and permanent facilities, health care doors are opened to many needy individuals, families, and communities. Private support is the lifeblood of the Health Wagon's ability to change lives in our six county service area.

### Clinic Overview

Mission Statement: The Health Wagon provides compassionate, quality health care to the medically under-served people in the mountains of Appalachia.

Days and Hours of Operations:

- Monday – Friday
- 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Components of the Health Care Outreach:

- Primary Health Care
- Urgent Care
- Specialty Care
- Referrals
- Health Education
- Pharmacy Connect
- Telemedicine
- Health Outreach Clinics Partners and Their Roles:
  - Catholic Diocese of Richmond

- o Funding Opportunities
- University of Virginia
  - o Telemedicine o Funding Opportunities o Student shadowing
- Appalachia School of Pharmacy
  - o Patient Education o Medication Management Patients

The Health Wagon is a free clinic and does not discriminate based on race, sex, or cultural background. Patients are required to complete an encounter form before each visit. Patients are asked to verify income and bring proper documentation including tax forms, pay stubs, etc. to help with eligibility requirements of outside agencies such as Pharmacy Connect. Patients are also asked to present any insurance information available. If at any time the medical providers feel that a patient could potential be a danger to the clinic, the providers have the right to discharge the patient from Health Wagon services and refer to a new provider. There are no fees for health care services; however, it is expected that each patient will make a small donation towards their care. Laboratory services provided at the Health Wagon are given at a discounted fee by an outside lab.

### Clinics

The Health Wagon schedules daily appointments for its two stationary clinics and mobile outreach units. The HW will also see patients on a walk-in basis if medically necessary. Patients are scheduled in 30 minute increments to decrease waiting time. The front desk is responsible for greeting patients, getting patient documents, scheduling appointments, checking patients in, and checking patients out. The nurse is responsible for setting up the clinic rooms. Rooms are cleaned after each patient, new bed protector put down, and all patient sensitive information removed.

The chain of authority is as follows:

Nurse Manager → Director of Operations → Clinical Director → Executive Director

In case of emergencies the urgent care team is initiated. The team consists of Teresa Gardner, Paula Hill-Collins, Henry Price Viers, Ethan Collins and Rachel Helton. Volunteers are expected to remove themselves from any urgent care situations. If a patient were to become aggressive, staff should immediately excuse themselves from the situation and contact 911. Under no circumstances should a staff member or volunteer try to approach an aggressive patient.

### Pharmaceuticals

The Health Wagon provides medications to patients through the Pharmacy Connect program. The providers oversee pharmaceuticals and Heather Mays coordinates the functions of PharmacyConnect. Patients must sign out medications in person. No one other than the patient can pick up pharmaceuticals. Pharmacy vouchers are provided to patients by the medical providers when necessitated. Several local pharmacies participate in the pharmacy voucher program. The medical provider is responsible for tracking all medications dispensed from the clinic and prescriptions written.

## Volunteer Opportunities

The following opportunities are currently available for medical and general volunteers:

- Answering Phones
- Assisting with Reports
- Cleaning
- Compiling Statistics
- Data Entry
- Filing
- Landscaping
- Mailing
- Painting
- Photocopying
- Pre-Exam Interviews
- Pulling Files
- Word Processing

## Volunteer Process

Volunteers must complete the Volunteer Application form (available on the Health Wagon website) and attach a photocopy of professional licenses if necessary. You may mail the application, drop it off at our front desk, or fax it to 276-328-8853. If you choose to mail your application, please direct it to the Health Wagon Attention Volunteer Coordinator at 5626 Patriot Dr., P.O. Box 7070, Wise, VA 24293. Volunteers must also provide three referrals, undergo a criminal background check, complete HIPAA training, and sign a confidentiality statement related to the Health Wagon. Volunteers must complete General Orientation for the Health Wagon before performing unsupervised duties and sign in and out each day. If you have additional questions, please contact Volunteer Coordinator at [Volunteer@thehealthwagon.org](mailto:Volunteer@thehealthwagon.org).

## Volunteer Guidelines Absences/Cancellations

We know you'll do your best to fulfill your shift commitments, but we also understand that emergencies and illnesses happen. If you must cancel a shift, please notify your supervisor (or team leader) by phone who will seek a substitute if possible. Any absence will be recorded in our system (unless notifications are in advance of one week). These are considered no-fault absences, and it helps us to understand the bigger picture of attendance. However, if absences become chronic, your program leader will discuss alternate scheduling options with you.

## Compensation

There is no monetary compensation for Health Wagon volunteers. However, the reward of helping fellow members of your community is limitless. Patient gratitude is the best compensation of all. Discretionary Service Volunteer service is at the sole discretion of the Health Wagon. The Health Wagon reserves the right to end the volunteer relationship at any time for any reason. Likewise, the volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to dissolve their relationship with the Health Wagon. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to volunteer program staff.

### Dress Code

The dress code is casual professional, but you are welcome to dress comfortably (No holey jeans, short shorts, or low cut tops). Lab coats or scrubs are acceptable for medical and dental volunteers. Please restrict the use of strong perfumes or scents as some patients have sensitivities to them. We ask that volunteers wear close-toed shoes for their safety while volunteering in the clinic.

### Timeliness

We all expect to arrive on time. Should something delay you, please call ahead to let us know so we may adjust clinic flow if necessary. Can't Make Your Shift? Two hours before start of clinic the number of waiting patients we accept is based on the number of scheduled volunteers. Therefore it is VERY IMPORTANT that we know of a volunteer absence as SOON as possible. If you are unable to attend your scheduled shift TODAY or TONIGHT, please contact us as soon as possible.

### Cultural Competency Guidelines

While culture is an essential mediator in people's health status, culture is not the only factor that shapes us. Other factors including environment, economics, genetics, previous and current health status, and psycho-social factors exert considerable influence on our well-being. These compelling complexities should remind us that we all need to consider many factors before making assumptions. Cultural Context Because health care is a cultural as well as scientific construct, arising from beliefs about the nature of disease and the human body, cultural issues are central in the delivery of health services treatment and preventive interventions. When treating patients of a culture that is different than your own it is important not to assume anything. Communication with the patient is the best strategy for creating an appropriate treatment. Health Wagon patients have little or no income and may come from a variety of ethnic cultures.

This summary is a brief and general overview and we encourage you to do further readings.

### Patient Struggles

- **Pride** - Many patients are dealing with a loss of pride when seeking charity medical care. Some patients deal with life struggles that many of us cannot imagine. Many have suffered unfortunate symptoms for weeks, months, and even years before receiving care. While some may project an attitude of entitlement, this may in fact be a survival 'front', a pride reflex developed to combat a sense of helplessness. Most of our patients truly do not have any other resource for medical care except the emergency room, and no other resource for dental care.
- **Stress** – Many of our patients experience high levels of stress as they engage in the day-to-day survival associated with unemployment and poverty. Some patients work multiple jobs and still live under the

federal poverty level with numerous family members to support in their household. You may see health issues severely compounded by stress.

- Emotional states - Some patients may slip into an emotional or agitated state when faced with what might seem a minor barrier, or when overwhelmed by an abundance of new information.
- Mental illness – Some patients are dealing with undiagnosed or poorly managed mental illnesses. There are services available to refer them for mental health care.
- Homelessness – Only a small percentage of Free Clinic patients are homeless, but it is important to know that many of the homeless in the U.S. do not have a regular place to sleep or have a regular diet. They may not be receiving the rest and nutrition they need to recuperate and it may take longer to bring about the desired health care results. Language Barriers
- Many patients may speak English well enough for conversation, but may need extra time and help understanding medical instructions. When interpretation is successful, the intended message and its meaning are appropriately conveyed.
- Look and speak directly to the patient, even when an interpreter is present. Not only do you show respect this way, but you also have an opportunity to pick up on the patient's non-verbal cues.
- Look for signs of comprehension difficulties. Please keep this in mind, and remember that speaking in normal conversational tones clearly and slowly may help aid their understanding.
- Verify the patient understands what is being said by asking open-ended questions, rather than those which evoke yes/no answers.
- A patient who utilizes an interpreter may also understand and/or speak some English, but may be more comfortable, when in a medical setting, with interpretation into their native language. Patient Literacy Sometimes patients of any literacy and socioeconomic level will not tell Health Care Providers when they don't understand something. Low literacy patients may respond better to practical advice and demonstrations.
- Slow down; simplify, limit the information you offer and repeat the instructions.
- Show patients pictures, models and demonstrations to illustrate what you want them to do.
- Listen and check for understanding by asking open-ended questions such as "How are you going to take this medication?"
- Be positive and hopeful. Emphasize the benefits of compliance, such as living longer or breathing more easily.
- Some patients may be functioning at a lower reading level, or may not be able to read at all. They may be embarrassed to admit this. Do not assume patients can read written instructions, and when in doubt, speak or read the instructions to them.
- Take the time to ensure that all patients leave with a complete understanding of how to take their medications, what to expect from procedures, and other medical instructions. For more information: Cultural Competence Resources for Health Care Providers <http://www.hrsa.gov/culturalcompetence/>

The Providers Guide to Quality & Culture

<http://erc.msh.org/mainpage.cfm?file=1.0.htm&module=provider&language=English> Office of Minority Health <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/> Credentialing The Health Wagon verifies all medical licenses through the Board of Health.

### Complaints

Complaints are to follow the chain of authority listed above.

### Dismissal

The Health Wagon retains the right to dismiss any volunteer who they view as being detrimental to patient care and the overall function of the Health Wagon. This is at the sole discretion of the Executive Director. Confidentiality Policy Patient confidentiality at the Health Wagon is extremely important. The Health Wagon follows guidelines outlined by HIPAA. Anyone who does not follow the confidentiality policy will be immediately dismissed from the Health Wagon. Anyone who knowingly does not report a breach of confidentiality will also be dismissed from the Health Wagon. All staff and volunteers are required to sign the Health Wagon confidentiality statement.