



St. Mary's
Health Wagon



Empowering a healthier
APPALACHIA

Your compassion changes lives

2023 Gratitude Report

The Health Wagon's mission is to provide compassionate, quality health care to the medically underserved people in the mountains of Appalachia.

Our Service Area



Dear Friend,

Meet Sarah, a mother of two from Southwest Virginia. For years, she suffered from untreated dental pain because she couldn't afford care. Thanks to your incredible generosity, Sarah received life-changing treatment at our dental clinic, free of charge to the uninsured. This is just one of the ways your support makes a real difference.

In 2023, your donations helped us provide over 23,136 visits to nearly 7,737 unduplicated patients. You gave individuals facing health, dental, and vision issues a chance of healing. For many, access to health care without the burden of financial worry is an unimaginable relief.

But the need for your support remains urgent. Health conditions that went untreated during the pandemic are now

at the forefront, especially in Southwest Virginia, where poverty limits access to essential health care. We're committed to expanding our services, but we cannot do it without you.

Will you consider renewing your donation today? Every dollar you give ensures that we can continue treating patients at our stationary clinics, including the new dental clinic and St. Mary's Faith Pharmacy, and through our mobile health units and outreach events.

Your support makes it possible for people like Sarah to get the care they desperately need, and with more people turning to us for help, your generosity has never been more critical.

Together, we can bring lifesaving care to those who need it most. Thank you for being the heart of our mission.

We are so grateful for your past kindness and look forward to your continued support.

With heartfelt thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Teresa Tyson, FNP, FAANP".

Dr. Teresa Owens Tyson
MSN, FNP-BC, FAANP
President and CEO

EDNA *Patient*

I've known about the Health Wagon for a while, and I used to go to the clinics when I was still able to travel.

Nowadays, they come to my house. The caregivers who come to take my blood, check my blood pressure, and give me my routine vaccines ... they're so friendly and they do such a great job.

I feel so privileged when they come to see me! I've always had a good experience with the Health Wagon. The people are so friendly, and I feel comfortable asking whatever questions I need to ask.

When you don't have money to get medicine, you might worry that you'll be talked about or that people will look down on you, but at the Health Wagon it

isn't like that. They're really nice and always so friendly. Even if I'm grumpy, they always have a smile for me!

Part of going to the Health Wagon is that it's a community thing; no one feels left out. They do whatever they can do to help anybody. And you can see it—it's not a hidden thing. I love sharing their Facebook posts about when things are coming up, like special clinics or events.

The Health Wagon is my medical home, and my friendly home! They help me get the medicines I need, they stay on top of my checkups, and they help keep me healthy.

For shut-ins like me who can't travel to see a doctor, the Health Wagon is a lifesaver. They are great at what they do, and they do it with kindness and respect.

Navigator serves crucial role in health care



As the Medicaid/FAMIS Outreach Navigator with the Health Wagon, Megan Clark serves as a vital resource for families and individuals seeking coverage.

"The Health Wagon has always been about the community, and I always wanted to be part of something bigger," Megan says.

Many patients face barriers to accessing care, affecting

individuals across various socioeconomic levels and insurance types.

Medicaid/FAMIS enrollment can be a lifeline, offering preventive care, treatment for chronic conditions, and mental health services.

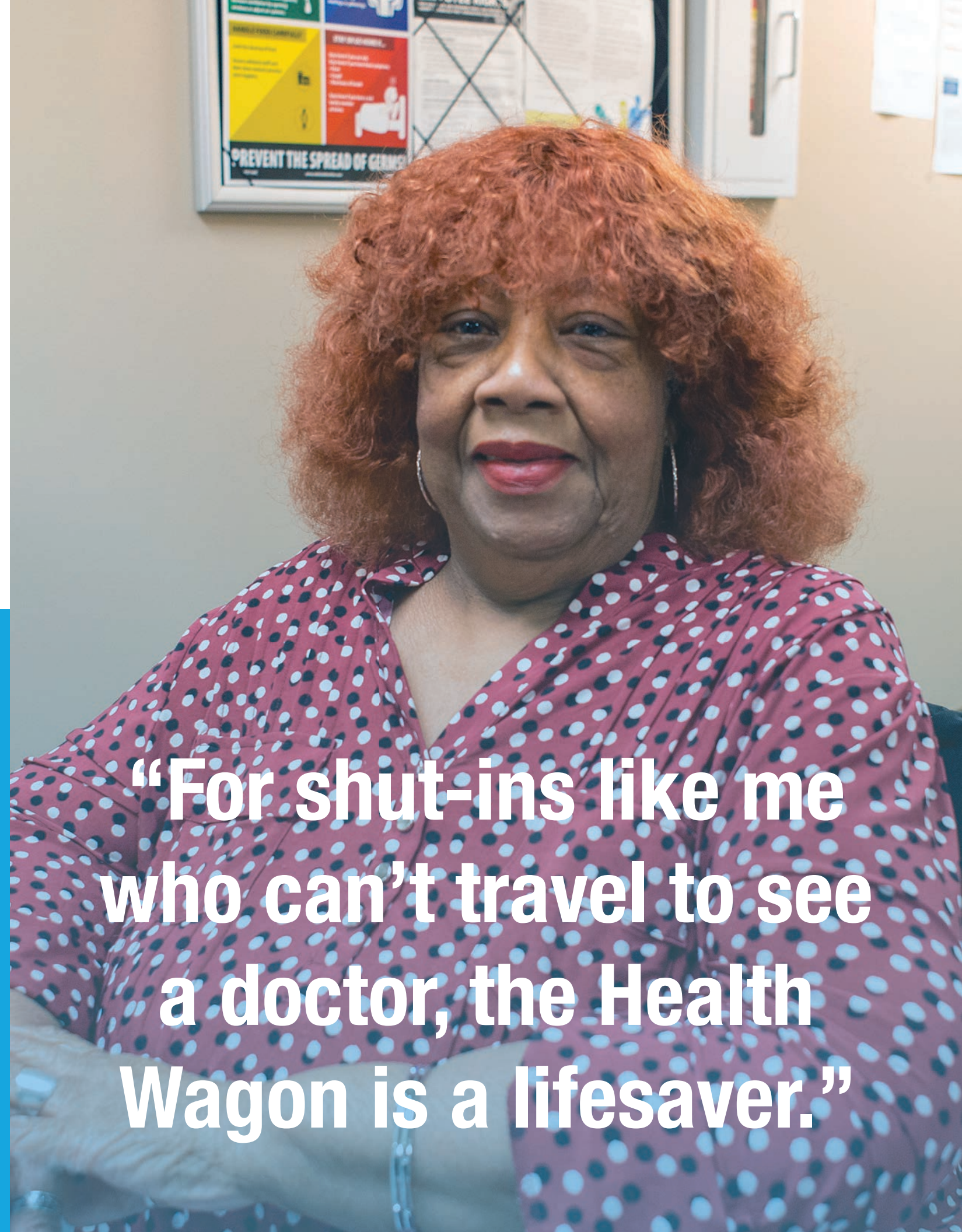
"We see our patients like family," Megan says, highlighting the personal connection that defines the Health Wagon's approach.

For those enrolled, it not only gives them access to necessary medical services but also provides them with peace of mind, knowing they have support in managing their health.

Megan plays a key role in ensuring everyone in the community has the opportunity for a healthier, more secure life.

The Health Wagon helps patients access:

- Specialty care
- Food and utilities
- Housing/rent/mortgage payment assistance
- Home repairs and ramps
- Pest control in the home
- Durable medical equipment
- Transportation
- Prescription assistance
- Dental/vision care
- Care of long COVID



“For shut-ins like me who can't travel to see a doctor, the Health Wagon is a lifesaver.”



LUANNE PICINICH *Donor*

Every year I give to a lot of groups, and a couple of years ago I realized that I wanted to donate to organizations where I could meet the people.

I started asking around, and a friend told me about the Health Wagon. I heard about their annual Thanksgiving food drive, and I knew that this outreach was where I could help out the most. I also felt the need to support local businesses, so I ordered through Food City, a grocery store known for supporting local farmers.

I had food delivered to the Health Wagon's warehouse, then I came down from New York to help distribute the boxes. The first year I was there we fed about 200

families, and last year we were able to double our efforts. Most were families of 4, but we also helped those with up to 8—so we fed a lot of people!

I knew that not everyone likes turkey and not everyone has a freezer to store it, so with food vouchers I was able to give them all a delicious dinner of their choosing. Everyone I met was so thankful for what they got.

I even asked for addresses of those who couldn't get to the drive-through event, so I could deliver the food myself. The people were lovely, and there seemed to be such a need.

The volunteers and staff are wonderful, and I'm excited to come back and help again in 2024!

“The first year I was there we fed about 200 families, and last year we were able to double our efforts.”

Sister Bernie's Legacy

In the late 1970s, the Richmond Catholic Diocese learned of the dire health conditions faced by residents of Southwest Virginia.

The diocese requested a nun to come to the region to provide free health care to these needy and deserving people.

Sister Bernie Kenny of the order of Medical Missionaries of Mary stepped up, and in 1980, she started a legacy of health care for anyone in need in our region.

Armed with only her Volkswagen Beetle and lots of determination, Sister Bernie traveled our rural, winding roads, providing health care from the back of her tiny

car. This became the first free clinic in the region.

Before long, the local St. Mary's Hospital was providing medical supplies, a valuable partnership that supported the Health Wagon for over 25 years.

Sister Bernie proved her dedication to our region in 1989 when she was jailed for driving her mobile health clinic too slowly in front of a coal truck during a mining strike for health benefits. She was later released and charges were dismissed.

In 2004, Sister Bernie retired, handing over the reins of the Health Wagon to Dr. Teresa

Tyson, FNP-BC, who now serves as president and CEO.

The Health Wagon and Southwest Virginia will never forget the humble, hard-working nun who rose to answer the call of providing quality, affordable, accessible care to the medically underserved.



HEIDI LANG *Volunteer*

I first heard the story of the Health Wagon when Dr. Teresa Tyson, FNP-BC, and Dr. Paula Hill-Collins, FNP-BC, spoke at a conference in Washington, D.C. They spoke to people like me who are trying to raise up the next generation of health care providers.

As a pre-health professions advisor at Saginaw Valley State University, I made a commitment right then to bring our undergrad pre-medical, pre-dental, and pre-vet students down to volunteer at their outreach events whenever possible.

I do my best to prepare the students for what it will be like, but until you actually meet the people who are struggling and have these incredible health needs, you don't know what you don't know.

We volunteer at the event all day, starting at about 5 a.m., on Friday and Saturday and until noon Sunday. At night, we reflect on the day and talk about what we've learned and experienced.

My students do whatever is asked of them that's within the scope of their training. Some help with patient triage, others escort people from one station to another so they don't have to navigate the outreach location alone.

I want to give them as much patient exposure as I can so they'll become better providers. These events help them develop great listening skills. The most important thing to me is we treat everyone with dignity and respect.

I love this organization. I'm so empowered by what they do, how they serve, treating everyone with such great compassion.

Outreach Events in 2023

Patient encounters at our 2023 outreaches totaled 2,051.

Events included the following:

- Move Mountains Medical Mission Annual Outreach
- Miniature M7 events
- Give Kids a Smile Dental Clinic
- Belize Medical/Dental Outreach
- Lee County Healthy Day
- Mobile Unit visits

One-day partnership event with Quillen College of Medicine:

- 206 health encounters

Veterinary services added to M7 Outreach Event:

- 407 animals treated
- 1,734 procedures

Summer Feeding Program with Feeding Southwest Virginia, the USDA, and additional partners:

- 5,212 food boxes for kids
- 26,060 meals over summer break

VSP Mobile Clinic Outreach:

- 435 patients received exams, fabrication of eyeglasses, and treatment for eye disease

Davey's Back-to-School Shuffle:

- Giveaways of backpacks, school supplies, food boxes, and more in memory of the Health Wagon's late operations director, David "Davey" Meade

Thanksgiving Food Giveaway with Feeding Southwest Virginia and additional partners:

- 400 food boxes
- 200 food vouchers



“The most important thing to me is we treat everyone with dignity and respect.”



“We pride ourselves on not turning patients away for any reason.”

JAZLYN ROWE

JAZLYN ROWE *Provider*

As a native of Wise County, my roots run deep in rural Appalachia. My passion for serving the underserved led me to pursue an education in health care and become a nurse practitioner.

During my undergraduate years, I volunteered at the Health Wagon, and while working on my master’s degree I completed my clinical hours here too. I got to truly see what the Health Wagon’s mission was. And after I graduated, they offered me a job!

Because the Health Wagon is a free health clinic in a rural area, our providers wear many hats. On a typical workday, I’ll see my patients, write policy, and sit in on meetings about funding and our partnerships with places like UVA and the University of Tennessee.

We keep our schedules open so our workflow goes

efficiently and we can take walk-ins all day. We pride ourselves on not turning patients away for any reason.

Providers like myself will also oversee areas of the M7 event, one of our most rewarding outreaches. Last year I was over general medical, so I made sure all the supplies were there for our volunteers and ensured the patients all had what they needed.

And of course, one of the most important things we are able to do is travel around the region with our mobile clinics. All of our providers go every month to set up a mobile unit in places where there is a lot of foot traffic. This means we’re able to offer full-service health care that allows patients to not have to come to the clinic.

The majority of our funding comes from our generous donors and without them, we wouldn’t be able to provide the care that we do!

DATESIA *Patient*

Even though I was lucky enough to have insurance, when I had to get my knee checked out, my regular doctor’s office wouldn’t let me come in because of an outstanding bill I couldn’t pay at the time.

The pain became too much to bear, and that’s when I decided to reach out to the Health Wagon.

I couldn’t believe how quickly I was able to be seen. Their nurse practitioner, CJ Ratliff, exceeded expectations, going as far as arranging for an X-ray of my knee. Before meeting CJ, I had never met a doctor who really cared about my health and took me seriously.

The X-ray came back clear, so CJ sent me for other types of scans. As it turns out, several injuries in the past had damaged my knee to the point where I had developed

arthritis at just 27. With the right medication, my knee started feeling better, and I was able to get some other health issues treated that had been making me feel much older than I was.

Now my whole family is getting better health care thanks to the Health Wagon.

I cannot express how blessed and thankful we are to have the doctor we have. It’s majorly impacted my life. Being able to breathe easy knowing if my baby gets sick, I can take her there, and to know that someone is there to put their arms around you and say, “I got you.”

Until you’re in our shoes, you cannot experience what we have felt. If you’re on the fence about making a donation to the Health Wagon, please know that every single penny you give is going to save a life!

Our Services



Primary/Preventive Care

Acute Disease Management
After-Hours Clinics
Chronic Disease Management
Medical Therapy Management
Medication-Assisted Treatment (injectable Sublocade to reduce diversion)
Medicare and Medicaid Enrollment
Sports Physical Assessments
Annual Physical Assessments
COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination Clinics
Pneumococcal Vaccines
Diabetes Education
CDL Certification
Influenza Vaccine Clinics
Intravenous Infusion Therapies



Specialty Care and Diagnostics

Bone Density Screenings
Behavioral Health Clinics
Cancer Screening Clinics (Cystoscopy, Mammography, Pap Smears, Lung Screenings)
Cardiovascular Disease Management
Colposcopy Clinics
Dermatology Clinics
Echocardiogram Clinics
Endocrinology Clinics
Hepatitis C Clinics
Lab Services
Nephrology Clinics
Ostomy Clinics
Pharmacy Connect and Medication Assistance

Podiatry Clinics
Pre-Op and Post-Op Surgery Clinics
Psychiatry Clinics
Psychological Counseling
Pulmonary Clinics
Referrals and Follow-Up Systems
Skin Cancer Screenings
Telemedicine Clinics (Cardiology, Colposcopy, Gastroenterology, Nephrology, Pain Management, and Primary Care)
Dermatology Services
Diagnostic Services



Dental, Vision, Auditory

Ophthalmology
Optometry
Eye Exams and Eyeglasses (Fabrication)
Dental Care (fillings, extractions, crowns, root canals)
Periodontics
Denture Fabrication (3D Printing)
Oral Cancer Screenings
Night Guards
Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) Clinics
Hearing Aid Assistance



Social and Outreach

Transportation Assistance
Pastoral Care
Referrals & Follow-Up Systems
Nutrition Counseling
Counseling Services

SARAH *Patient*

When I moved to Southwest Virginia almost a decade ago, I didn't have insurance, and I was struggling with anxiety and depression. The Health Wagon helped get me started on medication, and they were the first to give me that "light" to keep me going when I didn't think I could make it.

The Health Wagon also helped me get Medicaid, which helped tremendously when I later experienced a high-risk pregnancy because of congenital uterine deformity and other conditions. I was able to have a healthy baby thanks to that insurance coverage.

I'm currently two to three weeks out from another birth* and I have gestational diabetes. The Health Wagon helped me get the equipment to monitor my glucose, and the results go straight to my OB/GYN, which is incredibly convenient.

Cara Robinson Stewart, a family nurse practitioner at the Health Wagon, is my go-to—anytime I need anything, she steps up. Dr. Paula Hill-Collins, FNP-BC, has also been a lifesaver. After my first pregnancy, she noticed lingering signs of pre-eclampsia, which is very dangerous. Getting that treated saved my life.

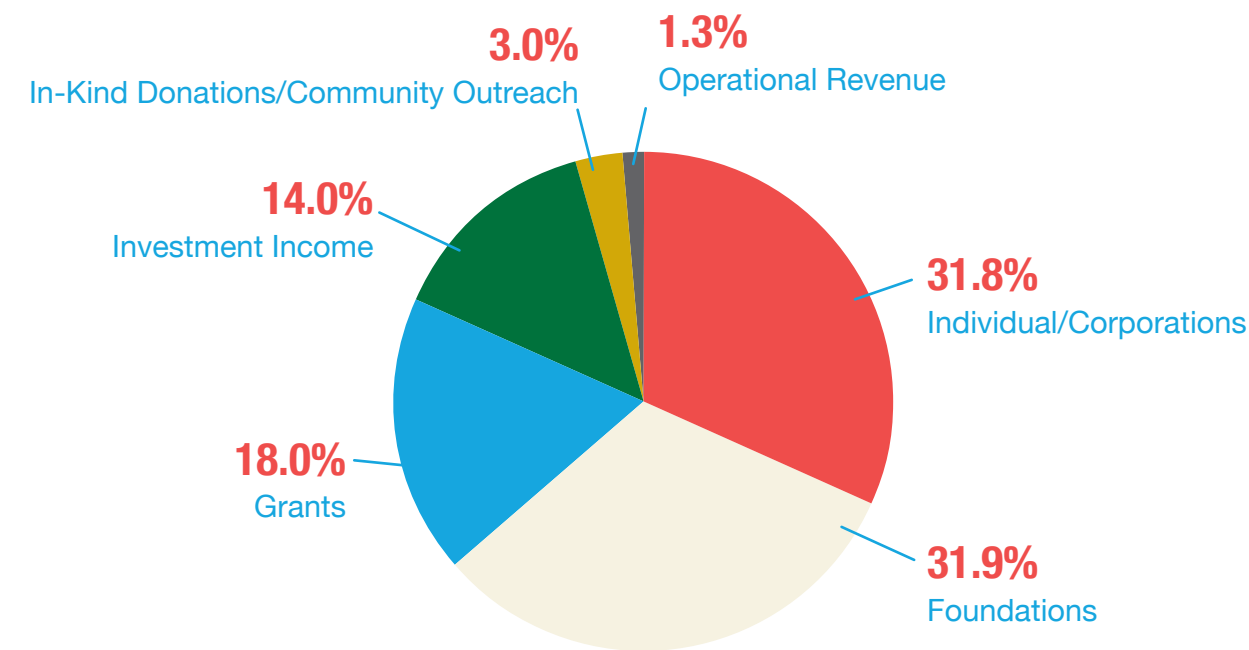
The Health Wagon has stepped up in every aspect of my life!

**at the time of this writing*

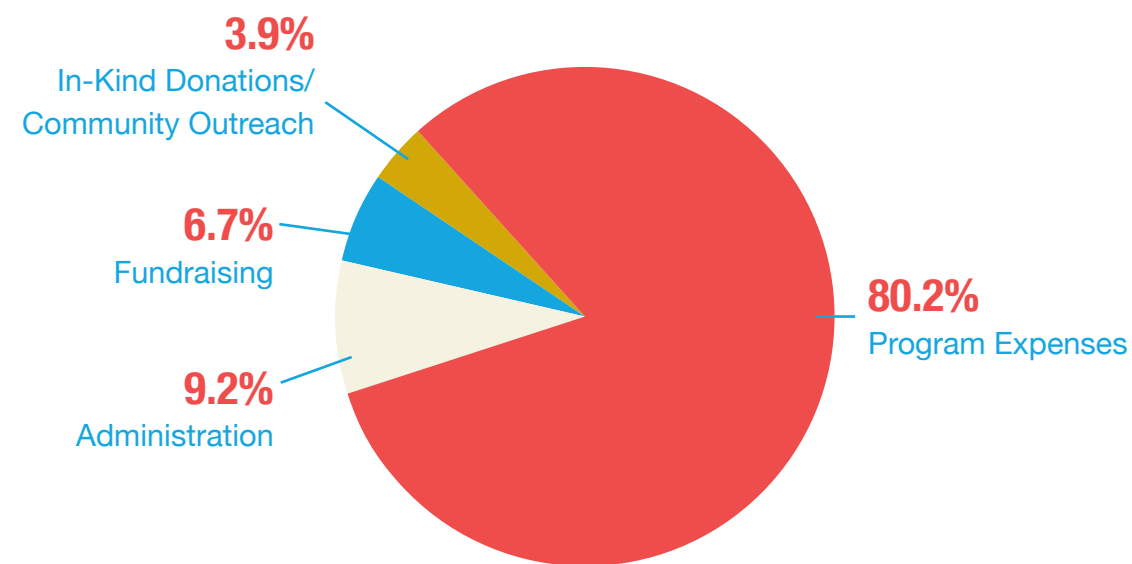


Your financial gifts help make everything possible!
Creating healthier futures because of you!

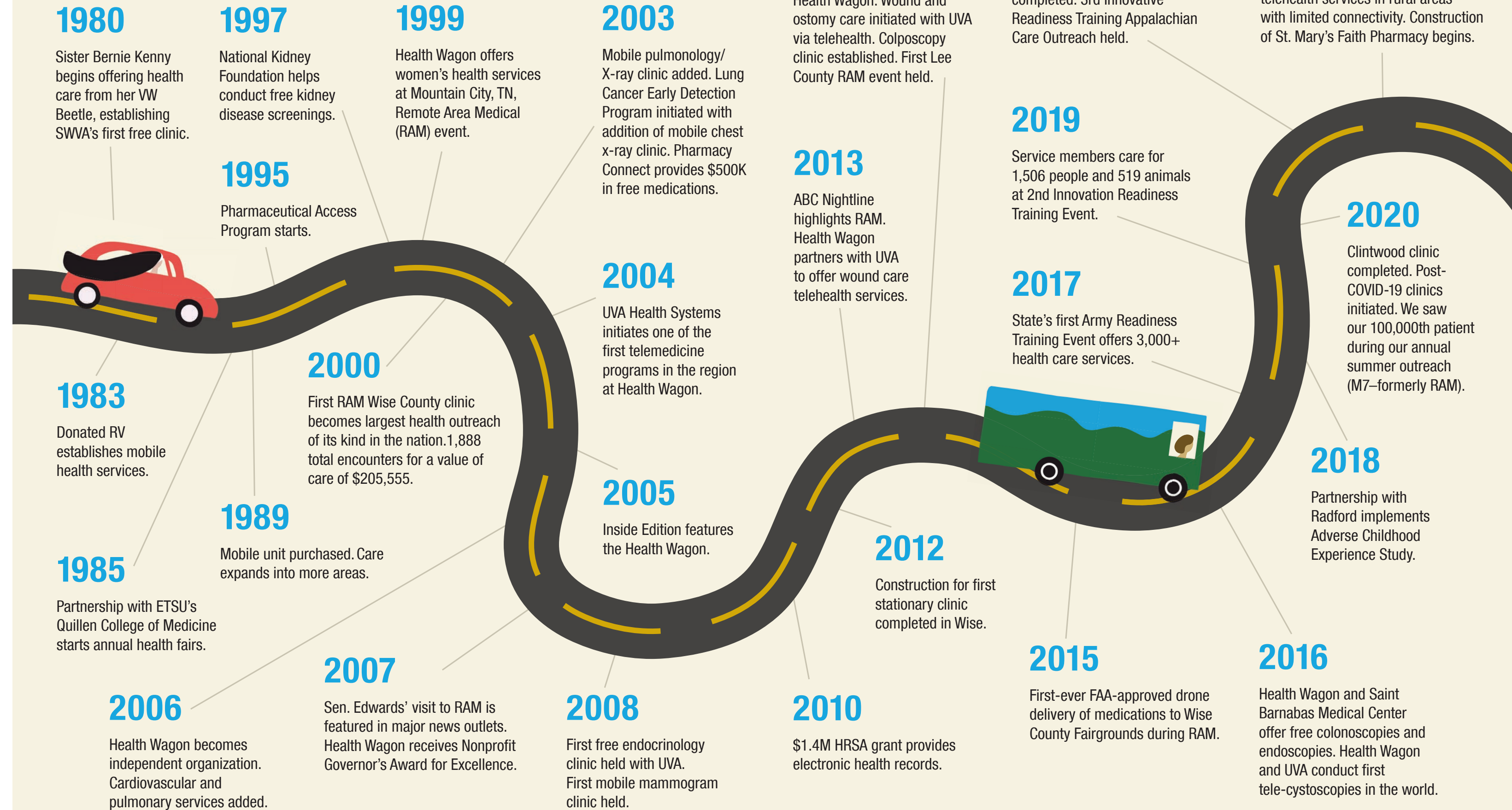
2023 Funds Raised



2023 Expenses Breakdown: \$6,444,168



The Health Wagon Timeline



Initiatives

The Health Wagon partners with a variety of organizations to offer expanded services and initiatives to help the residents of our region:

- American Breast Cancer Foundation: *Mammography and Ultrasound Cancer Screening Program*
- AmeriCares/Eli Lilly Diabetes Outreach
- BEAT Diabetes
- Becton Dickinson: *Heart-to-Heart, National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics Point of Care Testing Program*
- CDC Diabetes Prevention Program
- CDC Partnering for Vaccine Equity (P4VE) Program
- Community Outreaches and Health Fairs
- Davey Store
- Diagnostic Screening Programs: *X-Ray and Ultrasound*
- Food Distributions and Food Pantry
- Loan Closet Program for Medical Equipment
- Lung Cancer Early Screening Program
- Move Mountains Medical Missions (formerly Wise Remote Area Medical)
- Obstructive Sleep Apnea Resources
- Retinopathy Screening Program
- Sister Bernie Kenny Scholarship
- Social Services/Giveaway Events Supported by United Breast Cancer Foundation
- VAFCC Outreach and Enrollment
- Virginia Health Care Foundation Medicaid Expansion Enrollment

Celebrating One Year of Smiles: Owens and Hill Dental Health Clinic

We are excited to celebrate the first anniversary of Owens and Hill Dental Health Clinic! Since opening, we've expanded our services and patient reach beyond expectations. While our mobile unit continues serving the community, the new clinic has enhanced our capabilities. With more staff, advanced services, and year-round operations, we're committed to providing comprehensive care for all. Thanks to your support, we've treated more patients than ever. With 10 exam rooms, a denture lab, oral cancer screening, and 3D printing, we ensure continuous care. Here's to many more smiles ahead!



Disease and Death Rates Higher in the SWVA region

Southwest Virginia is a scenic place filled with wonderful people, but the health outlook for this region isn't so rosy.

High levels of unemployment, a rural environment, and many residents being uninsured combine to cause an increased incidence of diseases and death.

More than half of the households here live below the federal poverty line¹, and 93% of the Health Wagon's patients have an annual income of less than \$20,000.

The Virginia counties the Health Wagon serves: Lee, Wise, Scott, Dickenson, Buchanan, and Russell, are some of the least healthy counties in the state².

Historically, many residents of Southwest Virginia work in coal mines—until the back-breaking labor and environmental conditions start to cause health problems.

Among the most prevalent diseases connected to coal mining is black lung, caused by the accumulation of coal dust in the lungs. Having black lung also increases the risk of developing bronchitis and COPD.³

COPD, along with diabetes and heart disease, are some of the top chronic conditions we treat at the Health Wagon.

The high incidence of these diseases make it clear why the services we offer for free, with the help of generous donors, are so important to the amazing people who live here.

1. National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities
 2. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps
 3. Columbia University Irving Medical Center

FACTS

Death rates from common causes are higher in the Health Wagon's service area than in Virginia overall. **People in our service area are*:**

44% more likely to die from **diabetes**

76% more likely to die from **unintentional injuries**

40% more likely to die from **heart disease**

46% more likely to **commit suicide**

65% more likely to die from **chronic obstructive pulmonary disease**

53% more likely to die from **pneumonia or influenza**

62% more likely to die from **chronic liver disease**

*Source: Appalachian Regional Commission. Averages based on age-adjusted death rates for 2021.

Vital Stats

7,737
Unique Patient Visits

23,136
Total Patient Visits

\$4,893,840
Value of Care

\$714,821
Pharmacy Connect Total Value of Rx Ordered

264
Pharmacy Connect Total Rx Ordered

761
Pharmacy Connect Active Patients

60
436
Vision Patients for eye exams and eyeglass fabrication

+
Top chronic conditions treated: **Cardiovascular/Hypertension, COVID-19, Endocrinology/Diabetes, Depression, Pulmonary (Tobacco)**

🌙
Our first year operating an **after-hours clinic** has provided care to **684 unique patients**, totaling **1,059 visits**.

4
Mobile Units

4
Clinics

1
Pharmacy

Our first year operating Owens and Hill Dental Health Clinic.

4,276
Dental Patient Encounters

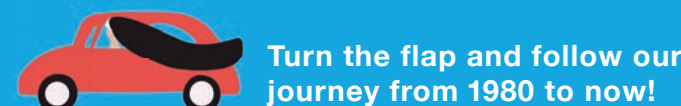
298
Emergency Dental Visits

\$1,197,280
Total Value of Dental Care

1,107
New Dental Patients

1,837
Unique Dental Patients

301
Dentures and Prosthetic Visits



How You Can Help



Donate Online

Visit thehealthwagon.org/donate or scan the QR code.



Donate by Phone

Call (276) 325-0529.



Donate by Mail

St. Mary's Health Wagon
P.O. Box 7070
Wise, VA 24293



Leave a Gift in Your Will

Follow in the footsteps of Sister Bernie and give to the Sister Bernie Legacy Fund. A gift in your will to the Health Wagon will provide:

- Tens of thousands of health care provider visits to deserving people each year
- Access to medical specialists and 65 specialty programs
- Training for medical and nursing students
- Job opportunities in the region
- Access to medical care through mobile units, stand-alone clinics, and telehealth
- Vision and dental care
- Health care at no cost for deserving people

Learn more about planned giving, donating through an IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution, stocks, and gifts outside of wills at thehealthwagon.org/legacy.



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The information presented in this gratitude report is accurate to the best of our knowledge and based on data available at the time of publication. Every effort has been made to ensure the reliability and completeness of the information contained herein. The Health Wagon reserves the right to make changes and updates to the information as needed.

Numerous photos in this report by Earl Cash, vastwidelens.com; Chuck Clisso, clisso.com; and Tim C. Cox, timccox.com.

A portion of design services for this report were provided as an in-kind donation by Hillhouse Creative, hillhousecreative.com.



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