

# Building a Healthier Community

Neighborhood Health Clinic expands campus to meet uninsured patients' needs

A family's dream to make health care accessible to their community's lower-income, working-class population continues to come true as the Neighborhood Health Clinic, founded by Nancy and Bill Lascheid, expands to include a second campus.

"On Apr. 12, 1999, we opened the doors to the Neighborhood Health Clinic — three small rooms in the old Grand Central Station with donated exam tables," Nancy said. "We posted flyers in gas stations, laundromats and so forth."

That night, they saw just eight patients. Eighteen years later, they've had as many as 82 patients scheduled for medical services in one day.

Leslie Lascheid is now at the helm of the clinic, working with her mother to maintain the mission Nancy started with Bill, who passed in 2014.

Nancy Lascheid, co-founder of Neighborhood Health Clinic and daughter Leslie Lascheid, CEO, help keep the business running as the clinic expands to welcome more patients.

CREDIT: LAKE SIMS

"Having the opportunity to be a part of what my mom and dad started means a tremendous amount to me," says Leslie, who joined the clinic as its CEO in 2012.

Prior to becoming CEO, Leslie worked as a global vice president and chief operations officer for a consulting firm working with medical device companies, among numerous other management positions that prepared her well for taking over her family's philanthropic venture.

She played an integral role in the clinic's expansion, including securing the land just south of the clinic for building the new campus.

"I was able to secure the property prior to my father's passing and share with him that we were able to close on the real estate," Leslie said. "As the new construction is progressing, I can see the medical campus my dad talked about for years, and he's smiling."

The clinic is adding a building, which will connect to the current building and nearly double the clinic's size. Expected to be complete in early 2019, the new building adds four dental operatories; a full radiological suite with MRI, CAT scan and ultrasound equipment; as well as additional specialties, complete with exam rooms, administrative space and a new board room.

The expansion has proved necessary to meet the demand, with an influx of people in Collier County who qualify for the clinic; 50,000 people in Collier County could potentially qualify at any given time.

These potential patients can't afford medical attention, as they are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty income level, and have been denied Medicaid services, which can

happen for multiple reasons, like overall income being too high or issues filling out paperwork.

In addition to meeting demand, the clinic's expansion will keep patient care all on one campus, which is a high priority for the clinic.

"What will happen to the patient is, they'll be able to see their physician, their nurse and have their lab work done right then," said Marcie Burland, development coordinator at Neighborhood Health Clinic, who goes on to explain that the average patient at Neighborhood Health Clinic doesn't have just one chronic disease, but is working on managing multiple issues. With the patients' health care all in one building, they are able to get back to work more quickly.

"If they are not working, they're not being paid, and their family is not getting food on their table," Burland said. "It is imperative that they have their job and their health."

It takes more than 700 clinic volunteers to serve the demand. The increase in space also allows more volunteers to be working at the same time.

Nancy says that their goal has been to create an environment where the patients feel the clinic is their 'medical home,' where the volunteer staff is able to treat patients with the highest quality and scope of care. Increasing the campus allows the clinic to better reach that goal.

"I remember family conversations when my parents talked about their vision for a medical home for low-income workers," said Leslie. "Thanks to all the volunteers and donors in Collier County, it's a reality. Our expansion of both services and space continues." ❁

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