

SC free clinic model now replicated nationwide

November 27 2013, by Bruce Smith

What began two decades ago on Hilton Head Island as a free clinic using retired physicians and volunteers to care for the working poor has become a model for dozens of similar clinics nationwide. There are now 96 Volunteers in Medicine Clinics in 29 states.

The Hilton Head clinic sees more than 33,000 patient visits a year and offers a variety of services ranging from dental and eye care and [mental health treatment](#) and [family practice](#). Nationally, Volunteers in Medicine clinics had about 400,000 patient visits.

Some clinics, like the one on Hilton Head, use primarily retired physicians. Others use practicing physicians who donate their time.

Each clinic is independent but the national group offers help to those who want to start them.

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