

## ACCESS TO BASIC HEALTHCARE

### Life Coaches Help Melanie Regain Control of Her Life

**“Life** Coaches work directly with patients who need healthcare services but cannot access them. They interview the patient and connect them with the type of primary care that best fits their needs,” noted Vanessa Dunlap, Life Coach Coordinator.

“They also connect them to community resources that can provide assistance with paying a mortgage or rent and enrolling in parenting classes. This aspect of the program, called Referrals and Brief Services, is needed because many people are finding themselves without a job or insurance for the first time in their lives,” Ms. Dunlap added.

The Obici Healthcare Foundation awarded a grant to Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia to fund two Life Coaches at Sentara Obici Hospital. Life Coaches Renee Austin and Mary Saldivar-Doty work directly with uninsured or underinsured patients who use the Emergency Room for primary care services.

“I got my life back!”

That was Melanie Bishop’s reaction to an encounter she had with a Renee Austin, a Catholic Charities Life Coach.

In February, Ms. Bishop had a health problem that was so persistent

that her boyfriend insisted on taking her to the Sentara Obici Hospital Emergency Room. The attending physician informed her that she had undiagnosed diabetes. With Ms. Bishop’s chronic condition and no access to primary care, she was eligible for a referral to one of the Life Coaches stationed in that Emergency Room.

*“With my life back,” Ms. Bishop said, “I have energy now. I used to come home from work and go to sleep. Now, I come home and want to do something like going for a walk or doing the laundry.”*

Soon after Ms. Bishop and Ms. Austin made contact, Ms. Bishop had

an appointment to receive care at the Western Tidewater Free Clinic. She was seen by a physician and received medication to treat diabetes.

“The implementation of the Life Coach program at Sentara Obici Emergency Department has been of tremendous value to the community,” said hospital President Kurt Hofelich. “With a focus on our mission to ‘improve health every day,’ this program is dedicated to improving our patients’ access to primary care, thus ensuring our patients receive comprehensive high-quality care in the most appropriate setting.” Since December, Ms. Dunlap said the Life Coaches served 267 people.

Mses. Austin and Saldivar-Doty believe Life Coaching is very rewarding. “This is a great program - we love our jobs!”



HELP'S ON THE WAY ~ Melanie Bishop (left) says that Renee Austin helped “get her life back.” Ms. Austin was responsible for putting Ms. Bishop in contact with the resources needed to treat an undiagnosed case of diabetes.

### GET INVOLVED!

COMMUNITY WALK FOR DIABETES—SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2011, SMITHFIELD, VIRGINIA

**STEP OUT | WALK TO STOP DIABETES**

American Diabetes Association.

Windsor Castle Park  
Smithfield, VA  
Check-in: 9:00 a.m.  
**Walk Start: 10:30 a.m.**

For more information or to register:  
[www.diabetes.org/hamptonroadsvawalk](http://www.diabetes.org/hamptonroadsvawalk)  
Shelby Frank - [sfrank@diabetes.org](mailto:sfrank@diabetes.org)  
424-6662 x3282

# FOUNDATION COMMUNITY PARTNERS

BY WILLIAM G. JACKSON, MD

According to Grantmakers in Health, “there are two main approaches to improving access to health care: removing financial barriers to care by broadening insurance coverage, and removing nonfinancial barriers to care by redesigning the delivery system.” The Obici Healthcare Foundation’s access strategy embraces both of these remedies through our partnerships with healthcare nonprofits.

The staff and Board of Directors at Obici Healthcare Foundation are serious about directing funds to change or remove barriers preventing access to healthcare by

strategically creating opportunities to work with healthcare nonprofits to address these obstacles.

The Foundation has funded programs that include: coordinating medical service referrals from healthcare safety net providers; providing

life coaches to assist uninsured and underinsured citizens resulting in reduced need for emergency room visits; providing electronic transmission and monitoring of individual health information (telehealth) services for people who live in remote portions of the service area; increasing access to mental health services for the homeless; helping individuals and families unravel legal barriers that prevent them from accessing medical coverage; overcoming transportation barriers; and providing free, quality healthcare to persons without insurance, just to mention a few.

Access to medical services is essential for improving quality of life and allowing more people to obtain and manage their chronic health condition. A Healthy People 2020 report said it well: “Access to health services means the timely use of personal health services to achieve the best health.”

The Foundation celebrates the commitment of our community partners who make access to basic healthcare more of a reality to those in need.



William G. Jackson, M.D.

*William Jackson, MD, is a member of the Obici Healthcare Foundation Board of Directors and an EVMS Associate Professor.*

## Foundation Support Spurs Growth of Community Health Centers, Free Clinics

Western Tidewater and Gates County residents are fortunate because unlike many rural communities, their region contains an impressive number of community health centers and free clinics:

### **Gates County Medical Center**

501 Main Street  
Gatesville, NC 27938  
252-357-1226

### **Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center**

*(service area includes Gates County)*

240 S. Academy Street  
Ahoskie, NC 27910  
252-332-3548

### **Surry Area Free Clinic**

479 Colonial Trace West  
Surry, VA 23883  
757-294-0132

### **Horizon Health Service, Inc.**

#### **Surry Medical Center**

440 Colonial Trail West  
Dendron, VA 23839  
757-294-3981

#### **Ivor Medical Center**

8575 Ivor Rd  
Ivor, VA 23866  
757-859-6161

#### **Ivor Dental Center**

8579 Ivor Rd  
Ivor, VA 23866  
757-859-9070

### **Horizon Health Service, Inc. (cont.)**

#### **Waverly Medical Center**

344 West Main Street  
Waverly, VA 23890  
804-834-8871

#### **Peninsula Institute for Community Health Main Street Physicians & Dental Office**

157 N. Main Street, Suite A  
Suffolk, VA 23434  
757-925-1866

#### **Western Tidewater Free Clinic**

2019 Meade Parkway  
Suffolk, VA 23434  
757-923-1060

*All of these health providers are current or former Foundation grantees.*



106 W. Finney Ave. • Suffolk, VA 23434 • (757) 539-8810 • [www.obicihcf.org](http://www.obicihcf.org)