

# Free Clinics: Local Responses to Health Care Needs



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In community after community, *pro bono* and student-run health clinics have sprung up over the past 30 years, providing critically needed care to medically underserved populations. *Free Clinics* is a mosaic formed by accounts of such clinics around the United States. These wide-ranging narratives? from urban to rural, from primary care to behavioral health care? provide examples that will assist other communities seeking to find the model that best fits their needs.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has improved access to health care for many Americans, but millions remain and will remain uninsured or underinsured. Free clinics provide non-emergency care to those in need. Nationwide, professionals can be found offering volunteer services at these clinics.

Contributors to this volume?typically people with personal familiarity (as clinicians or area residents) with the clinics they write about?cover a variety of topics, including a review of the literature, data-driven accounts of clinic usage, and ethical guidelines for student-run clinics. They describe the motivations of clinic staff, the day-to-day work of a family nurse practitioner working in clinics and teaching at a university, the challenges and rewards of providing health care for homeless people, and more. Student-run clinics are the topic of the second section: in addition to providing care to a small subset of those in need, student-run clinics are an important venue for training future clinicians and helping the seeds of altruism with which many enter their professions to germinate.

*Free Clinics* will be useful to policymakers, students and faculty in public health and health policy programs, and clinicians and students who are embarking on launching new clinics.



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