



Volunteers in Medicine Model

The Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) model promotes a “Culture of Caring” while emphasizing the use of retired medical professionals and community volunteers. Being inclusive and welcoming to all is the foundation of the VIM Model. The “Culture of Caring” recognizes the strengths of those in need and respects their dignity. It prompts the idea that the manner in which people are treated during a visit to a VIM clinic is as important as the medical care they receive. Volunteers in Medicine clinics offer their services free of charge to patients and do not bill third party payers.

Volunteers in Medicine clinics are the result of community-directed initiatives. In order to thrive and succeed, a VIM clinic needs to be woven into the fabric of the community. Each VIM clinic is community-owned and supported, providing many benefits to its members:

- VIM clinics provide the uninsured and their families with primary care services
- Hospitals benefit from a decrease in non-urgent care for patients visiting their emergency rooms and unnecessary admissions related to untreated chronic conditions
- Retired medical volunteers are able to continue what they were trained to do, care for people
- Non-medical and community volunteers are able to support their neighbors in a nurturing, supportive environment

To be a Volunteers in Medicine clinic, a local organizing committee is required to:

- Complete a feasibility study
- Staff clinics primarily with medical and non-medical volunteers, tapping into the local pool of retired professionals when possible
- Provide quality primary health care services free of charge, without billing third party payers
- Adopt the inclusive “Culture of Caring” environment for their clinic
- Incorporate “Volunteers in Medicine” into the name of the clinic or make reference to being a “member of the VIM Alliance”

Once open, the VIM clinic is eligible to become a member of the VIM Alliance. Membership offers access to an online forum for discussion among clinic representatives, access to discounted purchasing programs, educational conference calls, and continued support from the Volunteers in Medicine national office. There is no membership fee; however, Volunteers in Medicine clinics are required to continue to uphold the VIM model and also complete the annual VIM Alliance Survey.