

Bernstein Community Health Center celebrates 10 years of caring for our community

James D. Bernstein Community Health Center recently celebrated 10 years of providing high quality, integrated, affordable care to the community.

About 75 staff, community leaders and representatives from the offices of U.S. Senators Richard Burr and Thom Tillis attended the March 2 celebration, held in the center's conference room.

Bernstein Community Health Center is named for James D. Bernstein, founding director of the North Carolina Office of Rural Health. Bernstein Community Health Center is part of Greene County Health Care Inc. (GCHC) in Snow Hill.

The center offers medical, dental and behavioral health care to members of the Pitt County community and surrounding areas. The center provides care to the entire community, with a special focus on the medically underserved, uninsured and underinsured.

“Community health centers were created in the late 1960s in blighted areas, basically for two reasons,” said GCHC CEO Doug Smith, speaking to a group of visitors. “Community health centers (CHCs) were created to improve the health status of that community by providing residents access to affordable care. CHCs created jobs in their communities as well, improving their economic status.

“Community health centers are an integral part of our delivery of care nationally and certainly locally,” Smith said. “We are providing care to those in need at a lower daily cost than other physician settings – about \$1.88 compared to \$2.87. I believe we’re doing that because of our integrated care model. We offer medical, dental and behavioral health care at our community health centers. We also offer education each time we see our patients. The numbers tell our story. Community health centers reduce emergency, hospital and specialty care visits, saving the health care system \$24 billion a year nationally.”

Today, Bernstein Community Health Center offers pediatric, family and internal medicine, gynecology care, Medical Family Therapy services and dental care. Last year, Bernstein Community Health Center had 25,163 encounters with patients. GCHC served 42,527 patients and had 129,220 encounters with those patients.

About Greene County Health Care Inc.

Greene County Health Care Inc. (GCHC) is a group of six community health center sites in Greene, Pitt and Pamlico counties. Through the centers, GCHC provides medical, dental and behavioral health care. GCHC also offers Student Health Services in Greene County and Farmworker and Outreach & Enrollment services in eastern North Carolina. The organization's mission and vision are to provide high quality, integrated and affordable care to Greene, Pitt and Pamlico counties and eastern North Carolina, with a focus on the medically underserved, uninsured and underinsured. GCHC provides more than \$6,875,378 annually in uncompensated care.



GCHC CEO Doug Smith, right, talks about community health centers with, from left, Greenville Mayor Pro Tem Kandie D. Smith, Regional Representative Adam Caldwell, from U.S. Senator Thom Tillis's office, and GCHC Associate Medical Director Mackenzie Smith, M.D.