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Affordable health care promise of new clinic

Health care is a major concern for many — from where to get it to how to pay for it.

That's why the low-cost Caring Hands Healthcare Centers has opened a branch in McAlester.

"CCHC is not a free clinic, but we provide health services based on ability to pay," Gayla Burow, executive administrative assistant, said. "No one is refused care because of an inability to pay.

"Cost of care is based on a sliding fee schedule determined by household size and income. SoonerCare is welcomed. Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance are also accepted."

The clinic's Open House will be Thursday from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. and again from 4 p.m. until 6 p.m.

Here is the weekly schedule for McAlester's Caring Hands clinic:

Monday: pediatrics and mental health

Tuesday: women's health

Wednesday: pediatrics

Thursday: mental health

Friday: family practice

Saturday: family practice

To schedule an appointment, call 426-0900.

CHHC began seeing pediatric patients a few days ago. Regina Ballard, ARNP, C-PNP is "a certified nurse practitioner ready to take care of Pittsburg County children," Burow said. "She is an essential member of the health care team providing care for children — infants through young adult, age 21.

Burow said Ballard provides the following pediatric services: Well Child Care, including well child exams, school and sports physicals, Head Start physicals, routine developmental screenings and childhood immunizations.

Also, she treats acute illnesses such as ear infections and colds and manages chronic illnesses such as asthma and diabetes.

She can order laboratory and diagnostic tests and prescribe medications, Burow said.

Ballard also offers nutritional counseling, breastfeeding education, guidance regarding common child health concerns and parent/child education on normal growth and development.

CHHC, which also has a clinic in Hartshorne, will be hosting its Second Annual Shamrock Dinner and Auction Benefit March 14 at 6:30 p.m. at the Southeast Expo Center.

All proceeds, Burow said, will benefit the McAlester clinic. For more information or for tickets to the benefit, call 426-0900.