

Grant will support BCHC services



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BANDON — A recent \$775,000 federal grant to Bandon Community Health Center will result in continued and additional services for South Coast residents, according to Linda Maxon, executive director.

“This award means that we will now have federal funding each year to support our operations,” Maxon said.

“This funding is significant in allowing us to expand our services in primary care, add mental health on site, work with local dentists to serve low-income uninsured with oral health services, outreach services, low-cost prescription medications and expand upon our existing programs with vaccinations and reproductive health to better serve communities of the Southern Oregon coast.”

Maxon was surprised when she heard they had received the award earlier this month. Since BCHC opened its doors in January 2010, founded by medical director Dr. Gail McClave as a not-for-profit certified Rural Health Center, the goal was to become a Federally Qualified Health Center.

BCHC’s board of directors felt pursuing the step to become a FQHC would provide the additional financial stability the clinic needed to move into the future, Maxon said.

“Although we felt we had a strong application, the process is very competitive,” she said. “Over 1,100 clinics nationwide applied and in September, 25 of the 1,100 applicants received awards. We didn’t expect to get an award in the 2013 round.”

Maxon said they remained hopeful for 2014, but did not expect to hear anything until mid-summer 2014.

“HRSA’s actions to award the 2014 NAPS’s less than one month after the 2013 awards was a surprise to everyone,” Maxon said.

Now that the clinic has received an award, it has 30 days to sign the contract and 120 days to work on coming into compliance. That means gearing up to get a third provider hired to replace family nurse practitioner Ingrid Tyson, who recently retired and moved out of the area.

Research on community demographics done by BCHC concluded there was a need for that type of clinic, Maxon added. Fourteen percent of the census tract for BCHC’s service area lived at or below the federal poverty level, with 50 percent living between 101 and 200 percent of the federal poverty level, meaning there was a large population of community members, including families, who were low income and likely did not or could not afford health insurance, thus were not seeking routine medical care.

“It is suggested by our research that our communities of the Southern Oregon coast also have a significant population of homeless — 550 to 600 within the census tract for Bandon, Langlois, Port Orford, Sixes and Agness,” Maxon said.

BCHC started with nine board of director members from Bandon. The clinic now has 13 board members from Bandon and Port Orford. Board members have backgrounds in healthcare management, business, mental health counseling and accounting. Sixty-five percent of them are patients of the clinic.

The clinic has grown from six employees to 12 employees who are tenured in serving in the medical fields, and 20-plus volunteers who serve in a number of capacities.

“I am incredibly blessed to work beside the talented people we have on our team,” Maxon said. “Our turnover is low, and our staff members choose BCHC as a place they want to work.”

What’s next for BCHC? Maxon said lots of hard work in getting its policies, procedures, services, systems and personnel all lined up to meet the requirements of being a FQHC.

“We are thrilled to have this award and take the work we do seriously,” she said. “There is much work to be done and we will complete this work with the same quality and care that we have done as a rural health center.”

“Basically, we’re just very, very grateful and this town had been very supportive from the beginning,” said McClave. “It’s their clinic and were excited for the future.”

http://theworldlink.com/bandon/news/grant-will-support-bchc-services/article_3c017a62-5236-11e3-9eac-0019bb2963f4.html