



# VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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## Caring for Our Community's Most Valuable Resource

David J. Fant, Executive Director  
Shenandoah Valley Medical System

David J. Fant is the executive director of the Shenandoah Valley Medical System (SVMS) in Martinsburg, West Virginia, which provides services to residents of the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and northeastern Virginia.

Mr. Fant has more than 30 years of experience in administering health services programs and organizations. Prior to joining SVMS in 1996, he served as a senior advisor to Fortune 500 companies regarding the development of a national health services strategy and product.

He previously served as the director of Managed Health Care Initiatives for the Department of Defense in Washington, DC, where he directed implementation and oversight of DOD's largest managed health care demonstration. And, as a health services administrator for the United States Air Force, he oversaw the operational management of select Air Force hospitals and ambulatory care clinics and managed major repair and construction projects and Life Safety Code compliance for select USAF hospitals.

Mr. Fant earned a master's degree in health care administration from the University of Minnesota in 1982. He received his bachelor's degree from Farleigh Dickenson University in New Jersey in 1969.

It is a great honor and gives one the highest satisfaction to work with a staff and board of directors who are firmly committed to the mission of an organization dedicated to the well-being of our community. Shenandoah Valley Medical System (SVMS) is a not-for-profit community health center with its primary office in Martinsburg, West Virginia. Our mission is to "promote health and wellness by providing access to a full range of coordinated primary healthcare services for the entire community."

This commitment and dedication traces back to the early roots of the organization. Over 35 years ago a few nurses, dedicated to addressing the unmet primary health care needs in the area, worked tirelessly to establish a health center committed to eliminating health disparities and ensuring that everyone could have affordable access to the quality primary health care that they deserve.

From its modest beginning, SVMS has grown to its current size of 52 clinicians and 210 support



staff. Over the years the board of directors has responded to identified needs in the community by approving additions in services and sites, such as expanding the scope of women's health care, adding behavioral health services in 1999 and oral health services in 2009. Additional locations now include Charles Town and Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, and Winchester, Virginia.

In 2011, the staff of Shenandoah Valley Medical System provided over 160,000 health care and related services to more than 40,000 individuals. These services included internal medicine, pediatrics, family practice, obstetrics and gynecology, nurse midwifery, psychiatry, psychotherapy, substance abuse counseling, oral health care, nutrition support, health education, interpretive services, care management, pharmacy assistance, laboratory diagnostics and radiology services. The SVMS staff provides these services with the same compassion and dedication to patients of all financial classes; those who are insured, those who have Medicare or Medicaid or those who are uninsured.

Staff and board members give back to the community in so many ways, working consistently to ensure that families and individuals of the Eastern Panhandle and surrounding areas enjoy the best possible health status. SVMS believes that the community cannot grow and prosper unless health care



During this outreach activity, two patients were sent to SVMS's primary care clinicians for definitive evaluation and medical care, two clients were scheduled to receive restorative and pain-mitigating dental care at SVMS's Healthy Smiles Community Oral Health Center, and one client was referred to the emergency room for immediate care.

If SVMS staff had not intervened, one client's outcome may have resulted in a stroke, as a result of his uncontrolled blood pressure. One patient might have fallen into a diabetic coma due to his uncontrolled diabetes, and one would have continued to suffer pain due to his extreme oral health condition. One individual was started on a weight control and exercise program and progressed in four weeks from being unable to do one sit-up to being able to perform ten sit-ups without discomfort. An uninsured, chronically homeless teenager was referred to our school-based therapy program to address depression and anger issues, prevent violence and diminish depressive symptoms and suicide risks. This young person is not eligible for Medicaid, as the family has no fixed address.

Shenandoah Valley Medical System, through its committed staff and array of services at Shenandoah Community Health, Shenandoah Behavioral Health Services, Shenandoah Women's Health and the Winchester Family Health Center, supports these programs so that all, regardless of ability to pay, may obtain primary health care services, provided and managed in a way to achieve the best possible outcomes. The board and staff of Shenandoah Valley Medical System are thankful and express the greatest appreciation for all that the community has done for, and on behalf of, the organization. We all reiterate this organization's strong and unyielding commitment to give back to the community its most valuable resource – healthier individuals and families – so that they may give back to the community in their own unique and special ways. ▽

services are available to all, and all are served with equal commitment and dedication. Shenandoah Valley Medical System's board of directors volunteer substantial time and expertise to make sure the organization provides the community with quality, accessible, affordable and compassionate health care services.

To minimize and, when possible, eliminate financial barriers to medical care for those patients without adequate health insurance, our staff relentlessly pursues grants, donations and volunteer support to enable and facilitate the provision of primary healthcare and to expand options and choices for SVMS patients. In 2011, SVMS was able to subsidize the cost to the patient for over 17,000 health enhancing primary care, women's health, behavioral health and oral health services.

To ensure that patients without insurance have the best possible opportunity to benefit from their clinician visit, our staff provides basic medical laboratory and radiology services and obtains prescription medications which are made available at no charge. For those who have no way to get to SVMS for their medical appointment, transportation can be provided. Health educators, interpreters and social workers also are available to assist patients when needed.

Recognizing the critical importance of good nutrition to overall health, SVMS's

staff works with the West Virginia Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) program to provide health assessments and nutrition vouchers to address specific nutritional needs of more than 9,000 mothers and children a year. The Starting Points Community Kitchen in Morgan County served over 19,000 meals in 2011, free of charge to those in need.

SVMS is fully involved in and committed to collaborations at multiple levels with other service and health agencies on a local, regional and state basis. That coordination minimizes duplication of services, makes efficient use of scarce resource funds, gives support to other community agencies, provides a continuum of care and assistance for members of the community and enables the medical community to better respond to emergencies and disasters. For example, inter-agency collaboration resulted in the commissioning of the Medical Reserve Corps, the identification of the need for school-based programming and subsequent provision by SVMS Behavioral Health staff of training for students and teachers regarding bullying, and outreach programs to address the healthcare needs of the homeless.

Putting faces on health disparity issues makes the impact of SVMS's services more vivid. Recently, during the course of one day, health assessments and care management were provided for 11 clients.