

Neighborhood news and views

West Salem clinic sponsors community health fair

BY SEBASTIAN DE ASSIS
Special to the Statesman Journal

Committed to serving the health care needs of the underserved population in Marion and Polk counties, Northwest Human Services West Salem Clinic sponsored a health fair, joining the national campaign to recognize the invaluable contributions of America's community health centers.

The event took place Aug. 13 at the West Salem Clinic campus at 1233 Edgewater NW. In addition to several information and health screening booths, there were entertainment, food and refreshments for the crowd who attended the event.

"We're very excited about sponsoring this health fair," said Ruthie Berrell, West Salem clinic operations manager. "People don't realize the critical role that community health clinics play in the welfare of communities across



KARON CATTERSON | Special to the Statesman Journal
Medical assistant Amber Olson checks the blood pressure of a health fair participant Aug. 13 during Northwest Human Services West Salem Clinic's Health Fair.

the country."

There are 6,300 community health centers in urban and rural areas in all 50 states and territories, including 150 sites in Oregon. According to the White House Office of Management and Budget, commu-

nity health centers save the health care system up to \$17.6 billion per year and is considered on of the most effective federal programs. Northwest Human Services is a federally qualified community health center.

How to contribute

Neighborhood news and views is a place for you to talk about community events, give your opinion about goings-on in your area and respond to stories you've read in your weekly edition. It's also a place to share event photos. Submissions are limited to 350 words. Photos need to be as large as your digital camera will generate; identify those pictured and give include the photographer's name.

Send submissions to westsalem@statesmanjournal.com, or for other ways to submit information, turn to Page 2.

Every year, the National Association of Community Health Clinics celebrates National Health Center Week. Founded in 1970, NACHC is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to enhance and expand access to quality, community-responsive health

care for the medically underserved and uninsured.

"I can't thank these people enough," said Daniel, a homeless patient at the health fair. "When I'm sick, I come here and they always take good care of me. I don't know what I'd do without them."

Indeed, with 665,000 Oregonians living without health coverage, rising health insurance premiums and an increasing number of employers limiting health benefits, the clinic is an asset to our community.

Because of the great success and positive response from the community, the West Salem clinic will organize another health fair next year. Check your listings to watch the broadcast of this year's event on CCTV.

Sebastian de Assis the community relations and development director for Northwest Human Services. He can be reached at sdeassis@nwhumanservices.org.