



arlington
freeclinic

Strategic Plan 2020



A LETTER FROM ARLINGTON FREE CLINIC'S PRESIDENT

For the past 26 years, Arlington Free Clinic has provided free, comprehensive healthcare to low income, uninsured Arlington residents. We are continually grateful to our wonderful community of volunteers and donors who make this care possible. Never has our work been more important.

Over the past four years, our Strategic Plan for 2017-2020 has been our guide as we have stretched to help our patients and our community in new and important ways. Our new, 3-chair dental clinic gives easy access to patients, many of whom have never seen a dentist, and creates a unique model where physicians, dentists, therapists, and others work side-by-side. Our new pharmacy provides easier access to prescription medication and improved privacy for education and counseling. We have taken big steps to improve health “beyond the exam room” through our social services case management program which connects patients to services essential for good health such as food, safety, and shelter.

Knowing that our Strategic Plan was designed to take us only through 2020, we began discussions about a new plan in January---only to have our world turned upside down by COVID-19. The pandemic hit our patients hard, and we paused planning efforts to focus on meeting their immediate needs. We secured the financial and technological resources required to deliver care during this extraordinary time. We expanded our role as an advocate for our patients and partnered with Arlington County to open a walk-through COVID-19 testing site for low income, uninsured residents without cars in the neighborhood where most of our patients live. We changed our work model to keep our staff, volunteers, and patients safe.

Although nonprofit organizations like Arlington Free Clinic are accustomed to navigating uncertainty, we do not know how this pandemic will affect society, the economy, or our own work in the months ahead. To help us, we have developed a new 18-month plan to guide our response to the pandemic and its economic consequences, and to provide a bridge between our current Strategic Plan (2017-2020) and our next full plan in (2022-2025). This document summarizes that new plan.

While these times are challenging for all of us, we know that they are even more difficult for our patients and their families. It is our community of supporters that gives us the confidence to plan for the uncertain days ahead and to know that we will continue to be here for our patients. We thank you for being part of our community and welcome your input and questions as we meet the challenges and opportunities of the days ahead.



Nancy T White

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020

Four years ago, Arlington Free Clinic adopted a strategic plan that took us through this year. Our 2017-2020 plan established four key areas of focus and set priorities within each focus area. We are proud to report that most of the 2017-2020 objectives have been successfully accomplished and implemented.

Looking forward, while we will continue to be guided by the objectives set by the 2017-2020 plan, the profound impact of COVID-19 on our community and our work requires adjustment of priorities. The plan which follows describes what we have accomplished, how we have responded to COVID-19, and our highest priorities for the next 18 months.



FOCUS AREA 1:

Provide quality patient-centered healthcare

Our progress over the last four years

Over the past four years, we have successfully grown and strengthened the clinic in multiple ways:

- We addressed the need for dental care in Arlington's safety net by building our own on-site dental program, as well as by partnering with other organizations to bring dental care to Arlington's most needy.
- We helped our eligible patients transition to Medicaid without experiencing disruption to their care.
- We embedded a mental health counselor and added a full-time social services case manager who helps address such needs as food, housing, safety, and employment.
- We launched a successful patient exercise program, "Move to Health."
- We adopted new pharmaceutical systems to make it easier for our patients to receive their medications more quickly and more conveniently and built a new pharmacy that enhances privacy for patient consultations

Our response to the pandemic

Since the pandemic arrived, we have been challenged to adapt as never before:

- We converted almost entirely to telehealth, equipping, and training our providers and interpreters, as well as working with our patients to help them adapt.
- Through a partnership with Arlington County and Virginia Hospital Center, we made COVID-19 testing available to those without insurance as well as to those who do not have cars and thus could not access drive-through sites. We also successfully advocated for a COVID-19 testing site in the neighborhood where most of our patients live, partnering with the hospital and the County to launch and maintain this site.
- We have made sure our patients continue to receive their medications safely by quickly setting up a front door staging area.
- We have kept our staff safe by securing protective equipment and implementing new protocols for staff who remained on-site, while moving as many as possible to working remotely, but making sure they remain connected.

Our priorities going forward

The uncertainty of our times makes providing quality patient-centered healthcare more important than ever, and this set of objectives will remain our highest priority in the months ahead. More specifically, we will:

- Adapt our care delivery models of onsite care and telehealth based upon the severity of the virus in our community and our ability to safety and effectively provide care.
- Remain focused on our patients' overall health and well-being, finding ways to not just treat their illnesses and injuries, but to maintain both physical and mental health.
- Continue to expand and deepen our role in meeting the health needs of low-income community members—whether through continued support of COVID-19 testing or other partnerships that improve health for our low-income neighbors.
- Expand our mental health support by hiring a full-time mental health program manager and recruiting additional volunteer mental health professionals.

FOCUS AREA 1:

Provide quality patient-centered healthcare

Our progress over the last four years

(continued)

- We have expanded and deepened partnerships focused on addressing the social determinants of health of our patients through data collection, advocacy, and collaboration.



Our response to the pandemic

(continued)

- We have doubled the number of patients being assisted by our social services case manager, who has strengthened relationships with community partners in areas such as food, housing, employment, and domestic violence.
- We have continued to provide emergency and prosthodontic dental care, and we are working to adapt our space and protocols to resume other dental procedures.
- We have developed new ways to continue our exercise program by distributing programs online and moving classes outdoors.



Our priorities going forward

(continued)

- Resume comprehensive dental care, adopting the protocols required to keep our patients, staff, and volunteers safe.
- Adapt and strengthen our vaccination programs, making sure our patients receive vaccinations against influenza and other communicable diseases while minimizing the risk of transmission of COVID-19, and closely monitoring the development of vaccines against COVID-19 to advocate for access for our patients.
- Work with county staff, elected leaders, and funders to remove barriers to telehealth for our patient communities.
- Continue to strengthen and deepen our work in addressing community conditions that impact the health of our patients.

FOCUS AREA 2:

Sustain and strengthen AFC's volunteer model of care delivery

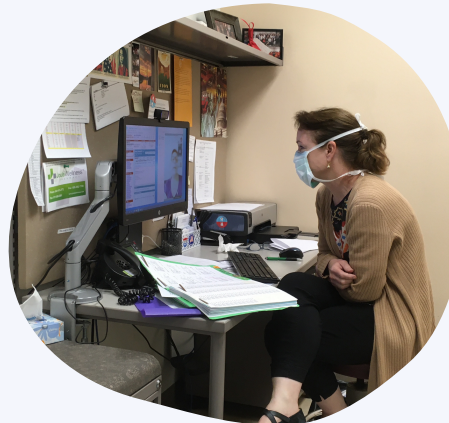
Our progress over the last four years

Two years ago, AFC conducted a thorough study of our volunteer program. We've since developed and implemented new methods for recruitment, onboarding, and recognition, have changed our software management system to make scheduling and communication easier, and restructured our summer intern program.



Our response to the pandemic

Our volunteer program has been greatly affected by COVID-19. To keep everyone safe from the virus, we have called upon our volunteers to provide care through telehealth. Physicians have conducted telehealth visits from their homes and offices. Nurses and nurse practitioners have volunteered at the walk-thru COVID 19 testing-site. Volunteer interpreters have provided essential support on 4-way telehealth calls. A small number of pharmacy and clinical volunteers have undergone AFC's screening protocols to assist onsite.



Our priorities going forward

In the months ahead, we must protect the health and safety of our volunteers while continuing to provide patient care through a robust volunteer model. Priorities include:

- Adapting our volunteer program in response to the severity of the virus in our community and our ability to safely and effectively provide care.
- Identifying and providing resources and training to make telehealth easier and more effective.
- Casting a wider net for potential volunteers due to the option for telehealth.
- Finding and testing new ways to recruit and orient volunteers, especially in key areas of need such as mental health.
- Finding new roles and responsibilities for volunteers, keeping them connected and engaged until we can all be back together safely.
- Building a new volunteer program to support transition to Epic, the new electronic health record.

FOCUS AREA 3:

Drive organizational excellence

Our progress over the last four years

AFC's committed staff has both navigated and implemented several major changes over the past four years:

- We have made strides toward acquiring a new electronic health record system. Last year, we accepted Virginia Hospital Center's generous offer to donate use of their electronic health record system, Epic. This installation is budgeted for calendar year 2021.
- We have invested in new technology systems that support teamwork and collaboration and allow for remote work by staff.
- We have developed more effective processes for managing data to evaluate programs, assess patient outcomes, and provide reports to funders and the community.
- We have improved our technology security systems to protect us against cyber-threats.

Our response to the pandemic

The arrival of the pandemic has required an immediate focus on the well-being of our staff, put pressure on our technology systems, and delayed implementation of our new electronic health record system. More specifically:

- Nearly every job at AFC has changed dramatically, and over half of our staff have been working remotely. Dental assistants have supported curbside medication pick-up, nurses have coordinated telehealth visits from home, and dental and administrative staff have scheduled over 1000 COVID-19 tests at the local walk-through site.
- We have maintained our full staff with benefits and have been encouraged to see how much of our work can be accomplished remotely.
- We have taken action to protect our on-site staff, instituting regular temperature checks, health screenings, social distancing measures, and cleaning protocols.

Our priorities going forward

In the coming months, it will be essential for AFC to have an engaged and healthy staff prepared to adapt to the constantly changing environment, as well as the technology required to do our work. Priorities will include:

- Make planning a priority as we carefully monitor the severity of the virus, the health of the economy, and their impact on our work.
- Adapt operations in response to the severity of the virus in our community to provide a safe work environment.
- Continuing to prioritize health and safety in determining when and how we increase our on-site work.
- Finding ways to support our staff through this crisis, including strong and effective communication, clear expectations, technology support, and flexibility for childcare, health, and family needs.

FOCUS AREA 3:

Drive organizational excellence

Our response to the pandemic

(continued)

- We have secured the personal protective equipment (PPE) necessary to protect our staff and volunteers and have adopted new procedures regarding its use.
- Installation of Epic has been delayed, but the onboarding is planned within the next six months.



Our priorities going forward

(continued)

- Exploring new and better ways to use technology to communicate with our patients and to support their health—everything from the monitoring of vital signs and key health metrics to offering online exercise classes.
- Successfully transitioning to our new electronic health record system. We have a team in place; we will be instituting both staff and volunteer training; and we will launch a new scribe program to support our volunteer healthcare providers.



FOCUS AREA 4:

Develop Sufficient Resources to Meet Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

Our progress over the last four years

Since 2017, AFC has strengthened our systems for donor solicitation, communication, and stewardship and has experienced four years of growth in individual giving. Among our markers of success:

- We conducted a successful campaign for the new dental program.
- We implemented a communication plan for our major donor group, the Sheehy Society.
- Our annual gala has continued to grow, year after year, and is a much-anticipated event in our community.
- New grants and partnerships have led to funding to provide screening for genetic markers for breast and ovarian cancer, detect and treat hepatitis, and advocate for community conditions that impact the health of those we serve.

Our response to the pandemic

Our loyal donors—and many first-time donors—have responded to the COVID 19 crisis with great generosity, ensuring our financial stability. In addition, we have responded to the pandemic in three ways:

- We have made special efforts to bring our donors along with us on our journey through the pandemic with special communications, board member outreach, and timely social media posts.
- We quickly made the decision to convert our 2020 gala to a virtual event—which will require creativity, technology, and talent—and a hope that our guests will join us for something new and different this year.
- We have pursued new opportunities for institutional funding related to the crisis and have successfully applied for grants to support our work.

Our priorities going forward

In the coming months, we face great uncertainty in both the economy and the health of our community. Our priorities therefore include:

- Maintaining a sharp focus on our financial health and metrics during these times of economic uncertainty.
- Prioritizing our relationships and communication with donors, including efforts to engage new donors as part of our AFC family.
- Refining our social media strategy and using technology in new ways to share stories of our work with both current and prospective donors.
- Carefully evaluating lessons learned from our 2020 virtual gala to determine how best to raise essential funds through virtual events until we can safely gather again in person.
- Aggressively pursuing institutional funding opportunities, with and without partners, that are consistent with our mission, capacity, and strategic priorities.

