Our Mission

History
   * A Collaborative Effort From The Start

Scope and Goals
   * A team approach to providing a cost effective continuum of care

Core Medical & Dental Services
   * Primary Healthcare... and more

Locations
   * Numerous Locations in Four NC Counties

Ancillary Services & Special Programs

Volunteer-Led Programs
   * Spirit, Dedication, Talent and Resource Help to Fulfill Our Goal

Collaborative Partnerships
   * A Goal to Initiate, Collaborate, but not duplicate Quality Care
In 1989, a Gaston County community-based indigent care task force composed of concerned citizens, business leaders, elected local officials, and representatives of Gaston Memorial Hospital, was formed to address needs of the growing uninsured population and the subsequent use of episodic emergency department care as an inappropriate substitute for primary care. The group was concerned with providing the right care at the right time at the right price. The result was the formation of Gaston Family Health Services (GFHS) with a mission to provide family healthcare to any in need, regardless of ability to pay. With technical assistance from the North Carolina Office of Rural Health, GFHS was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in 1991.

When planning for GFHS began in 1991, an estimated 35,000-50,000 of Gaston County’s 176,000 residents could not receive treatment in private medical practices because they were uninsured, Medicaid enrollees, or were unable to afford insurance co-payments and/or Medicaid deductibles. Their best option for non-urgent, primary medical care was to use the Emergency Department at Gaston Memorial Hospital – at that time, it was the second busiest emergency department in the state while Gaston was the state’s 7th most populous county.

To maximize opportunities to see more of the people needing health care services, the strategic planning committee submitted an application to become a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). *FQHCs qualify for enhanced reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid, as well as other benefits such as:

- Medical malpractice coverage through the Federal Tort Claims Act
- Eligibility to purchase prescription and non-prescription medications for patients at reduced cost through the 340(b) Federal Drug Pricing Program
- Access to National Health Service Corps
- Access to the Vaccine for Children program
- Eligibility for various other federal grants and programs

The initial application for FQHC* status in 1992 was approved, but not funded. Encouraged, the community provided funding through grants from the local tax base and the hospital’s foundation, to initiate services with hopes of being funded later. Local financial support to provide deficit funding for GFHS operations, continued. GFHS saw its first patients in 1992, received FQHC Look-Alike status in 1995. The Corporation received full FQHC status in 2002. General Dentistry was added in 1996, Bessemer City Health Care Center in 1998, GFHS Pediatric Dentistry in 2004, Gaston Family Medical Center in 2006, Open Door Dentistry and Statesville Family Medicine (Iredell County) in 2008, Helping Hands Health Center (Lincoln County), Cherryville and Highland Health Center (Gaston County) in 2010, Statesville Children’s Clinic (Iredell County), Davidson Family Health Services in 2012, and Catawba Family Care (Catawba County) in 2014.

* FQHC is an acronym for federally qualified health center—a community health center that has been designated by the federal government by adhering to regulations pertaining to the scope and quality of health services provided to anyone, regardless of ability to pay.
GFHS currently employees over 250 people in Catawba, Davidson, Gaston, Iredell and Lincoln counties, providing medical and dental primary care services in 14 sites to residents of all ages, regardless of their payer source. Over 40,000 patients are currently served directly by GFHS services, and more are touched through the organization’s collaborations with partners throughout these communities. GFHS also provides contract employee services to several organizations.

Funding for the operations of GFHS come from a variety of sources including local, State and Federal governments, private organizations and foundations, and patient care revenue. GFHS continues to address the challenges of improving services and providing care beyond that funded by traditional sponsors. To accomplish these goals, GFHS works to maintain existing support relationships and aggressively seeks additional funding from new program supporters.

The philosophies embodied in our Mission Statement confirm our commitment to:

- Provide continuing comprehensive and accessible primary care services to individuals and families of all economic levels within Gaston, Lincoln, Iredell and Davidson counties.
- Provide primary care services to meet the physical as well as social health needs of individuals and families, promoting health maintenance, providing timely diagnostics, treatment and referral services
- Emphasize preventive care through patient and community education to help individuals become aware and responsible for their own health behaviors
- Coordinate primary care services with the community healthcare delivery system in order to make the best use of existing health care resources, when available to our patients
- Employ an interdisciplinary team approach in collaboration with other community providers to offer a continuum of appropriate patient/family-oriented care in a cost-effective manner.

4
Our Core Medical & Dental Services

Gaston Family Health Services provides comprehensive primary care to adults and children through a patient-centered model. GFHS addresses preventive care needs and the treatment of urgent, routine and chronic disease conditions. To further improve outcomes for the patient, and to provide care for the ‘whole’ patient, GFHS has incorporated behavioral health services, pharmacies, medication assistance programs, interpretation assistance, 24-hour provider availability, an after-hours medical advice line, specialty referrals, clinics and educational programs for diabetes, nutrition and asthma. GFHS is a ‘Medical Home” for its patients.

Gaston Family Health Services’ dental clinics also maintain a goal of treating patients regardless of ability to pay. In addition to providing a full range of adult primary dental services such as cleanings, fillings, extractions, root canals, crowns, partial dentures and full dentures, GFHS’ pediatric dentists perform full mouth restorations for pediatric and special needs patients.

Locations

Gaston County

1. Bessemer City Health Care Center
   119 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Bessemer City
2. Cherryville Health Center
   609 East Academy St., Cherryville
3. Gaston Family Health Services
   991 W. Hudson Blvd., Gastonia
4. Gaston Family Medical Center
   311 E. Third Ave., Gastonia
5. Highland Health Center
   609 N. Highland St., Gastonia
6. GFHS – General Dentistry
   991 W. Hudson Blvd., Gastonia
7. GFHS - Pediatric Dentistry
   890 Summit Crossing Place, Gastonia
8. Women’s and Children’s Counseling Center
   409 S. Oakland St., Gastonia
9. GFHS Administrative Offices
   200 E. Second Ave., Gastonia

Catawba County

10. Catawba Family Care
    133 First St., SE, Hickory

Davidson County

11. Davidson Health Services - Lexington
    420 N. Salisbury St., Lexington

   Davidson Health Services - Thomasville
   207 Old Lexington Rd., Thomasville

Iredell County

12. Statesville Children’s Clinic
    925-A Thomas St., Statesville
13. Statesville Family Medicine
    1022 Shelton Ave., Statesville
14. Open Door Dentistry
    425 Wilmington Ave., Statesville

Lincoln County

15. Helping Hands Health Center
    206 Gamble Dr., Suite C, Lincolnton
Ancillary Services & Special Programs

In addition to medical and dental care, GFHS provides enabling and supportive services through special programming to ensure comprehensive continuity of care for its patients.

Behavioral Health Counseling
Catawba, Davidson, Gaston, Iredell counties
The Behavioral Health Program at GFHS compliments its primary medical care allowing the organization to provide an integrated continuum of care. Staffed with a team of Licensed Clinical Social Workers, the program provides one-on-one counseling to patients suffering from a range of conditions including depression, anxiety, and substance dependence. Counseling services are coordinated with primary care to deliver a service model which has been proven to improve patient outcomes.

Dysplasia Specialty Care
Gaston, Iredell counties
Cervical Dysplasia is an abnormal change to the cells on the surface of the cervix, typically caused by HPV (Human papillomavirus) and is often detected by an abnormal Pap smear. If left untreated, dysplasia can become cancerous. The GFHS Dysplasia Specialty Clinic diagnoses and manages any abnormal changes to the cervix, providing a full range of screening and treatment options, including colposcopy and LEEPs.

Diabetes Disease Management
Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln counties
Diabetes is the most common chronic disease at GFHS, affecting almost 20% of medical patients. The Gaston Diabetes Center, operating since 1999, provides a comprehensive American Diabetes Association recognized diabetes management and education program for any patient in need. The Center offers organized classes in English and Spanish as well as one-on-one counseling for diabetes and nutrition. In Gaston County, uninsured patients receive ophthalmological screenings for diabetic retinopathy and other eye diseases, and can access services in our on-site podiatry clinics.

Case Management of HIV Patients
Gaston, Iredell counties
Many HIV positive patients have lost the support of their families and some are unable to hold jobs due to their illness. Thanks to the Ryan White Care Act grant, and the Department of Medical Assistance, GFHS staffs a team of HIV Case Managers whose primary role is to coordinate a continuum of care and assist clients in achieving and maintaining optimal health. Case Managers also assist clients in identifying community resources that may be beneficial in achieving and/or maintaining a level of independent functioning.

GFHS also provides medical and dental services to many HIV infected patients.

ACCESS Dental Program
Gaston, Iredell counties
GFHS’ ACCESS dental program has partnered with Title 1 elementary schools and the Head Start programs in Gaston County since 2000, providing dental care to school children otherwise unlikely to receive it. Children are bused to clinics during school hours, where they receive oral health education, preventative care, examinations and treatment. All care is provided at no cost to the patient. Building on this success, the program expanded to Iredell County in 2009. The program continues to grow, expanding on the proven success in meeting a glaring need in the community, and establishing lasting oral care habits for children at an early age.
Medication Assistance
Gaston, Lincoln, Iredell, Davidson Counties
Understanding that having a diagnosis and a prescription without access to medications can create an ethical and practical dilemma, GFHS offers a number of medication assistance programs for its patients:

Medication Assistance Program (MAP)
Gaston, Lincoln, Iredell, Davidson counties
The MAP program helps patients without insurance, and who financially qualify, gain access to free medicines through the various pharmaceutical manufacturers’ indigent patient assistance programs. This program has been extraordinarily successful, and is offered at all GFHS’ Workplace Wellness program partners with employers of varying sizes (from one to hundreds of employees) enabling them to tailor a self-funded health care program to optimize employees’ health and the company’s resources. The program provides primary health care services at the worksite, at GFHS’ conveniently-located medical clinics, or both. Workplace Wellness also provides a pharmacy program and wellness screenings. Clinical services provided include primary and acute care, chronic disease management and well check-ups.

Current GFHS Workplace Wellness Partners:
Affinia/Wix
Beverly Knits
Boggs Marketing Group
Choice USA Beverage
EnviروClean of Gastonia
Gaston County Government
Johnson Insurance Group
Home Instead Senior Care
Kiser Harriss Chemical Distribution Centers
Pharr Yarns
Roehling Engineering Plastics
Stabilus
Specialty Textiles, Inc. (STI)

Childhood Health Outreach Program (CHOP)
Gaston County
The CHOP program works to integrate medical and dental services for GFHS’ patients, and coordinates access to dental care for children served through the Gaston County Department of Health & Human Services’ WIC and Child Health clinics. Through educational literature, on-site advice and appointment services, patients are educated on dental services offered and assisted in obtaining care in a seamless, convenient manner.

Pharmacy Services
Gaston, Lincoln, Iredell, Davidson counties
As a Federally Qualified Health Center, GFHS can purchase medications at significant discounts. Through its pharmacies, GFHS can pass these discounted medications to uninsured, low-income patients at a fraction of the cost of retail pharmacies.

GFHS operates pharmacies at the following locations:
Davidson Health Services, Lexington, NC
Gaston Family Health Services - Hudson, Gastonia, NC
Helping Hands Health Center, Lincolnton, NC
Highland Health Center, Gastonia NC
Statesville Family Medicine, Statesville, NC
Collaborative Partnerships
A Goal To Initiate, Collaborate, But Not Duplicate Quality Care

Collaboration with organizations in the community is not only the foundation upon which GFHS was formed; it continues to be an integral part of its success. GFHS fills gaps. Collaborative strategies leverage scant resources to improve the comprehensiveness and spectrum of care available to GFHS patients.

From its inception, GFHS has maintained strong relationships and received support from a number of local community service and healthcare organizations. Collaboration with hospitals and County Health Departments goes beyond financial support: hospitals collaborate with GFHS on patient referrals and in-patient care; the co-location of some GFHS clinics with Health Departments provides patients a full continuum of care in one place.

In addition, GFHS maintains working referral arrangements with many organizations in the community who offer services ranging from behavioral health to transportation assistance. For GFHS, collaboration extends to playing a key role in the establishment, development and decision-making of new organizations, as well as providing contract staffing functions for them. GFHS shares such a relationship with the following organizations:

COMMUNITY HEALTH PARTNERS (CHP)
Gaston, Lincoln counties
GFHS has been a lead partner in the Community Care of North Carolina Primary Care Case Management program known as Community Health Partners (CHP) since 1998. CHP serves Gaston and Lincoln counties, and is one of 14 such networks across NC. The program is funded by Medicaid and aims to control costs and improve quality of care for high risk, high cost recipients. Cost containment is achieved by educating patients on the appropriate use of services, and self-management of chronic conditions. The program also educates primary care providers on evidence-based guidelines and quality improvement opportunities. GFHS provides staffing and management support for CHP. CHP’s success created opportunities to build relationships with private primary care providers and educate them on the value of community-based programming for the underserved and vulnerable.

HEALTHNET
Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln counties
The HealthNet teams work with healthcare providers who volunteer their services by providing specialty medical care, hospital services, labs, diagnostics, medication, education and navigation for qualifying low income uninsured patients suffering from chronic medical conditions. GFHS works closely with HealthNet, providing primary care services for these patients, facilitating referrals, and providing contacted employees. Millions of dollars worth of donated medical care and medications is leveraged through infrastructure grants from the Duke Endowment, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of NC Foundation, NC Office of Rural Health and Community Care, CaroMont Foundation, Sisters of Mercy of NC Foundation and the Glenn Foundation.
Senior Total Life Care (Senior TLC)

Gaston County
Senior Total Life Care is a new PACE program in Gastonia, NC starting in 2013. (PACE – Programs of All-inclusive Programs for the Elderly). GFHS has partnered with CaroMont Health and Lutheran Services for the Aged to bring this much needed service to the Gaston community.

PACE is a federally sponsored program of full-service medical day care for low-income, older adults and people over age 55 living with disabilities. The program was created to provide the elderly, their families, caregivers, and professional health care providers the flexibility to meet eligible patients’ health care needs and help them continue living in the community as opposed to a nursing home placement.

Senior TLC occupies a 20,000 sq ft facility, fully staffed with an interdisciplinary medical team providing its patients all necessary care and services covered by Medicare and Medicaid, as well as additional medically-necessary care and services not covered by Medicare and Medicaid. STLC provides coverage for prescription drugs, primary and specialty physician care, transportation, home care, checkups, hospital visits, and even nursing home stays whenever necessary. The patients’ ability to pay will never keep them from getting the care needed.

Volunteer-led Specialty Services & Clinics

Davidson, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln counties

Providing comprehensive care is part of GFHS’ philosophy, and volunteers play an important role in our ability to offer this level of service to our patients. Many local volunteer providers and members of the community dedicate their time, talent and resources to help achieve this goal. GFHS is grateful for their charitable contribution and service to our organization in all the communities served, and their impact on improving healthcare.

Through the help of numerous volunteer providers and members of the community, eligible GFHS patients can benefit from several specialty clinics and services offered at various locations. These services include eye exams and corrective lenses, podiatry services, women’s screening clinics, minor surgical procedures, nephrology and endocrinology clinics, diabetes and hypertension education classes, to name a few.