

**Rhode Island Free Clinic (RIFC)**  
*Frequently Asked Questions*

*What is the mission of RIFC?*

The mission of Rhode Island Free Clinic is to offer high-quality preventative and primary medical services to individuals who do not have or cannot afford health insurance. Its medical clinics are staffed by professional health care providers who **volunteer** their time and expertise. Many also provide supervision to students in health care fields from our state's leading academic institutions.

*Why is RIFC necessary?*

**There are more than 90,000 uninsured adults in Rhode Island. Most are employed in at least one, sometimes two, low-paying jobs and hovering at or just above the poverty line.** Without access to primary medical care many patients see a physician in the emergency room - when their illness(es) have escalated to critical level(s) . There, they will be treated and sent home with a prescription that they usually cannot afford to fill and an appointment with a primary care physician that will be during their work hours, thus jeopardizing their jobs, and again, an office visit too expensive for them to afford. As a result, these individuals do not follow-up with a primary care physician nor do they take the medication as prescribed. And so the cycle continues. **These individuals need to be healthy so they can continue to support themselves and their families, while still providing economic value to our community.**

*How is RIFC different from the Community Health Centers?*

RIFC only sees patients who are completely uninsured and charges **nothing** for its services, including medications. Facilitated referrals to no/low cost diagnostic and specialty services are also provided. We are completely staffed by **volunteers** - all of our translators, physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, diabetic educators, and nutritionists donate their time and services. RIFC also provides community based educational opportunities for medical, nursing and pharmacy students.

*Is RIFC a walk-in clinic?*

RIFC is not a walk-in clinic at present, although we hold at least one walk-in day per month to accept new patients. We are a medical home for our patients, who have follow-up appointments as necessary and can be referred to our internal specialty clinics - podiatry, diabetes, women's and mental health or to specialty services donated at no or low cost by hospitals and private practices. RIFC focuses on continuing care. We do not handle emergency or urgent care cases.

*Where does RIFC get the money/equipment/manpower to operate?*

RIFC is an independent non-profit organization and is NOT FEDERALLY FUNDED. Much of our support is in-kind, that is, donated services, equipment, etc. RIFC is staffed solely by **volunteers**. Operating, program, and equipment expenses are funded through individual donations and private and corporate grants from CVS Charitable Trust, Inc.; Champlin Foundations; Ida Ballou Littlefield Memorial Trust; June Rockwell Levy Foundation; Lifespan; Ocean State Charities Trust; Rhode Island Foundation; and others.

*What types of support does RIFC need?*

ALL non-profits need money to operate; we too have to pay our electric bill and the only source of funds is charitable donations. RIFC is also in need of **volunteers**: physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, nutritionists, and translators. We need daytime administrative assistance to provide support for RIFC's infrastructure. Fundraising is becoming increasingly important as we work to expand the size and services of the clinic. RIFC has a wonderful base of support, but the more people donating in whatever way then can, the more impact RIFC can make.

**There are many ways you can help! Please call (401) 274-6347 for more information.**