

Community clinics are health safety net

H1N1 started with a young boy in a rural area, traveled throughout the world and infected more than 6,000 people in the United States alone. What have we learned? We have learned that our health is inextricably linked. Our good health depends upon the health of those

we share an airplane with, those we meet in the grocery store and sit next to in the classroom.

More than 47 million people in the United States don't have health insurance.

These individuals are more likely to forgo primary care, and instead end up in our emergency departments.

During the first few days of H1N1, Vista Community Clinic saw more than three times the normal number of walk-in patients. Our appointment lines were flooded with calls. People were scared, and they didn't have anywhere else to go.

Community clinics are the health care safety net, providing low-cost medical care to those who are low-income and/or without health insurance. We are weathering tremendous cuts in the state budget and decreased private funding — and yet our doors are still open. I urge you to learn about and support community clinics as if your health depended upon them, for in many ways it does.

BARBARA MANNINO
CEO
Vista Community Clinic

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