

August 2026



FREE & CHARITABLE CLINICS MONTH

STRONGER TOGETHER



Visit our website
www.illinoisfreeclinics.org

For all questions, collaborations, & press releases,
please contact:
jacinta@illinoisfreeclinics.org

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ICON KEY:



Health Equity PRO TIP



Takeaway or action item



Click the link to navigate to the webpage



How to Contact Your Legislators



Contact your elected officials through their official social media accounts.

Please contact your state and federal legislators about the **importance of free and charitable clinics**. Free and charitable clinics are included in the Illinois FY2027 budget. To contact your district legislators, please follow the steps below:

Find My Elected Officials



Enter the address for which you are attempting to locate districts/officials, then click "Find Address"



Once you have determined the correct location is being displayed, click "Confirm Address" to see the associated districts/officials



Director of Health Justice & Equity

Markisha J. Woodson, PhD, MSPH, MBA, MCHES

The Illinois Association of Free and Charitable Clinics has made a major step in addressing diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice with the addition of a Director of Health Justice and Equity on their team. This role is crucial in addressing systemic issues that cause health inequity. While the primary function of my role will be with the IAFCC, I will also be a support to the member clinics.

As the Director of Health Justice and Equity, I am steadfast in my commitment to **transforming access to care for all individuals**, regardless of their background or circumstance. My commitment is rooted in the belief that **healthcare is a fundamental human right**, and I strive to **dismantle systemic barriers** that have historically **marginalized** and **underserved** communities.

First and foremost, our approach is centered on addressing the root causes of healthcare disparities. We recognize that inequities in access to care stem from a complex interplay of socioeconomic factors, discrimination, and inadequate infrastructure. Education and outreach are fundamental pillars of this strategy. With this new role, we'll seek to raise awareness about healthcare disparities and **empower communities** to advocate for their rights. Through culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate outreach and education, we ensure that underserved populations have the information and resources they need to make informed decisions about their health.

Collaboration is key to our success. We cannot do this work without our member clinics. You are the ones in the community working with the people and hearing their voices. Your input will be key in developing innovative solutions that address the unique challenges faced by marginalized communities. By working together, we leverage collective expertise to implement sustainable changes that improve access to care.

Data-driven decision-making is at the heart of our efforts. We will conduct research and analysis to identify disparities, measure progress, and inform recommendations. Ultimately, our goal is to create a healthcare system where access to quality care is not determined by race or ethnicity. We envision a future where every individual has the opportunity to achieve their highest level of health and well-being. Together, through unwavering dedication and collective action, we will continue to pave the way towards a more just and equitable healthcare system for all.

Free & Charitable Clinics Month

August is Illinois Free & Charitable Clinics Month and we want to make sure every Illinoisan knows about it!

3 Tried & True To Dos

-- more on each of these throughout the toolkit --



Reach out to
local and state
officials



Join the month-long social media campaign
and mark your posts with
#FCCM2026



Wear Blue on
Wednesday,
August 19th!

4 Quick Facts

- 1 136,000+** Patient visits in 2025, including medical, dental, and behavioral health
- 2 5,550+** Volunteers, including physicians, dentists, pharmacists, PAs, and more
- 3 OVER 80%** Of the patients served are people of color
- 4 \$70 MILLION+** In health care services delivered and diverted from the emergency room

What can you do?

Inform the community of the impact of the clinics with **data** and **patient testimony**.

How can you increase awareness?

- **Declare August 2026** as Free & Charitable Clinics Month (FCCM) in your community through your local leaders and governments.
- **Thank** your legislators and invite them to your clinic.
- **Inform the community** of the impact of the clinics with **data** and **patient experiences**.
- Host an **open house** for your community.
- Hold Events for **Patient** and **Volunteer** Recruitment.
- **Participate** in a local health fair
- **Stay up to date** on all relevant news, bills, and resources and **share with your networks**.
 - [News Updates](#) 
 - [FCCM 2026](#)



Spread the Word

Be proud of your work, day in and day out.
Participate in this year's social media campaign.
Below are ideas for what to post.



Clinics

Share the great work of your clinic!

Highlight how free and charitable clinics strengthen the healthcare safety net by **posting stories** of how your clinic addresses critical healthcare needs. Present data on the benefits of your clinic to patients in the state of Illinois.

Share the **number of patients** seen in a year, patient/provider testimonies, or if your clinic has specialists.

Volunteers

We couldn't do anything without our volunteers!

This is a great way to engage our volunteers to spread the word and **share their stories** about why they volunteer, **what they gain**, and what they **provide** in our communities.

Share **testimonials and quotes** from volunteers working in clinics across the state on their stories, experiences, and their impact.

Patients

Share patient stories from your clinic!

It is crucial for clinics to shine a spotlight on the individuals they serve. By highlighting patient stories, clinics can vividly demonstrate the **impact** of their work, foster **empathy**, and **inspire** potential funders to invest in their mission.

Share how a patient has **managed their condition** because of the care from your clinic or how a patient received needed **dental/mental health** care because of your clinic.

Collaborations

Thank you to our donors & partners!

Highlight how free and charitable clinics **strengthen** the healthcare **safety net** by posting stories of how your clinic addresses **critical healthcare needs**. Present data on the benefits of your clinic to patients in the state of Illinois.

Share the **number of patients** your clinic has seen in a year, or share teamwork and partnership collaborations.



Tag us and use the hashtags

#FCCM2026

#ILFCCM2026



Teach your audience about the customs of a certain native culture or religion that might interfere with how an individual interacts with or views health care providers



Example Social Media Posts

Here are a few example posts you can make to highlight the great work your clinic is doing! Please use the hashtags **#FCCM2026** or **#ILFCCM2026** to spread the word!

Clinics



"Illinois free and charitable clinics do more than provide medical care. They support the whole person. Many clinics also offer **health education, social services, counseling, dental care, exercise programs**, and other resources that help patients build healthier lives and stronger communities."

#FCCM2026
#ILFCCM2026



Highlight the SDOH barriers that you work to tear down every day. For example, highlight the percentage of patients seen who are provided with a translator or a provider who speaks their native language at each visit.

Collaborations



"Hippocrates Medical Clinic is proud to be selected as **1 of 6 clinics nationwide** to launch the Heart to Heart International Point-of-Care Lab Partnership."

#FCCM2026 #ILFCCM2026

Patients & Volunteers



"Our medical providers are **essential partners** in this work, generously volunteering their time and expertise beyond the demands of their regular workdays. **Physicians, nurse practitioners, PAs, and DOs** help make compassionate, high-quality care possible for patients across our communities."

#FCCM2026
#ILFCCM2026

Mini-Grants & Event Calendar



During August, IAFCC is spearheading Illinois' 14th annual **Free and Charitable Clinics Month** because we want **everyone** to know the essential and vital role you play in the safety net healthcare system in Illinois.

This year, the maximum potential **mini-grant** available was **\$1,000**, determined based on alignment of clinic projects with IAFCC values.

Mini-Grant Applications are now closed and have been awarded!

We are proud to say we were able to award mini-grants of \$250 to \$1,000 to **29 member clinics** that applied for the grants. All grant reports are due **September 30, 2026**, to report on activities funded by the mini-grants.



Check in at the [IAFCC Website](#) or subscribe to the [FCCM Calendar](#) to attend events supporting and promoting IL Free and Charitable Clinics during August and into September. 



Wear Blue Day

To celebrate **Free and Charitable Clinics Month**, IAFCC encourages our clinics to participate in a color day on **Wednesday, August 19th, 2026**



Wear any shade of blue! Wear a blue wig or hat, or paint your nails blue.
 ➡ **Have fun with it!**

Share your photos on social media using the hashtags:



#FCCM2026
#ILFCCM2026
#WearBlueDayIL



Send your **Wear Blue Day** photos to:
jacinta@illinoisfeeclinics.org

