

# Health center in line for money

Noah Fowle

439-9374 - nfowle@petoskeynews.com

**EAST JORDAN** — More dollars from the federal stimulus package are headed to Northern Michigan.

The East Jordan Family Health Center is the most recent local beneficiary of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, and is slated to receive \$189,000.

The money will be used over a two-year period and will be drawn down as needed, said the health center's executive director Dan McKinnon.

"We are addressing the increasing need of under-insured and uninsured patients," he said. "With recent layoffs, a lot of patients that previously had coverage are having trouble with expensive deductibles."

Operating on a sliding scale program, McKinnon said the family health center is set up to address anyone at under 200 percent of the poverty level and said considering the current poverty level

adjustments he expects more people to be eligible for the program. There are no geographic or residential



See center, stimulus details online.

restrictions on who can access the three clinics in East Jordan, Bellaire and Central Lake. Last year, the health centers treated more than 10,000 patients.

"In August, we began seeing a trend of more people applying for our sliding fee program," he said.

The clinics support a staff of nearly 60-employees, and McKinnon said that the stimulus money will help fund a new position, patient resource coordinator, whose goal is to connect patients to other social services in the area as well as assist them with applications for pharmaceutical company's patient assistance programs.

"These health centers are not only a means to treat the health needs of the underserved," McKinnon said. "They also operate as an economic engine employing clinicians, other trained medical

staff and clerical staff."

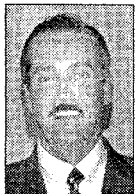
In 2007, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services calculated that community health programs treated more than 16-million patients, or one-in-19 Americans.

Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, recently joined with Rep. Bart Stupak to applaud the announcement of federal money going to community health centers across the country.

"Community Health Centers play a critical role in providing necessary health care services at a time when family budgets are tightening and the cost of care has never been higher," Levin said.

"With families losing their jobs and health insurance, community health centers serve as the family doctor to many in our state who are struggling to pay for health care," Stabenow added.

McKinnon, who traveled to Washington D.C. earlier this month to meet with White House officials and Michigan lawmakers, said he also hopes the health centers will see some funding for needed infrastructure improvements.



McKinnon