

McCall Star News, Friday, Aug. 12, 2011 – by Dan Gallagher

## Cascade group wants to open free medical clinic

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Cascade residents are working toward opening a free medical clinic as the weak economy continues on. On Sept. 4, the group plans a fund-raiser to help start up the service, which they have named the called the Moser Community Health Clinic.

An estimated 137 people in Cascade cannot afford health insurance, and are not eligible for Medicare or Medicaid, said John Gahl, a member of the Cascade Medical Center Board of Trustees. Organizers envision a clinic offered on Monday evenings starting in October. It would be named after Drs. John and Marge Moser, who once practiced in Cascade, Gahl said.

Local medical staff would see visitors for care and prescription medicine would be free of charge. “We would take donations,” Gahl said. “So, who pays for that? It’s not a tax-funded thing.” The organizers have spoken with every free clinic in Idaho, including the Community Care Clinic in McCall operated by Dr. Sarah Jessup.

“So, we’re not reinventing the wheel,” Gahl said. “We already are licensed by the state as a free clinic.”

### *\$6,000 Per Year Needed*

He estimated that the operation would need about \$6,000 a year to provide the free medications. The steering committee also includes Karolyn Plehal, Dr. Mikael Bedell, Cascade Medical Center CEO Bill Benke, Paula Fodrea of Western Idaho Community Action Partnership, Bill Wheeler, Dixie Hitt and Physician Assistant Jamie McNally. Patients would receive generic drugs at no cost through a partnership with Wheeler’s Pharmacy. The clinic is intended for local adults over age 18 with no insurance or means to pay a clinic or doctor visit. People covered by Medicare or Medicaid should not use the facility.

Gahl cited an example of the need for a free clinic. One local man laid off by Tamarack Resort was a diabetic and could not afford health insurance. He suffered a massive heart attack and had to be flown to a Boise hospital, a trip that cost \$15,000. The man ran up a huge bill at the hospital, but had little to pay. He ended up applying to Valley County as an indigent and eventually lost his home. “That can’t happen,” Gahl said. “I just believe that’s wrong.”

The fund-raiser is slated for 5 p.m. Sept. 4 at Armstrong Park . A dinner is slated with barbequed beef brisket, corn and rolls. The River Rock Bank is providing the music at no cost, and the La Flambe Fire Dancers from Garden Valley will light up at dusk. The cost of the dinner is \$20 per adult, \$10 for children 12 and under, \$35 for a couple or \$50 per family. There also will be an auction, with prizes including an Italian dinner for two cooked by Cascade High School Principal Pal Sartori, a pie baked by Dorothy “Mrs. G” Grimaud, river trips, raft trips, airplane rides, and a two-day canoe trip in the Snake River Birds of Prey Area. For more information, call Gahl at 634-6655. Send tax-deductible donations to Moser Community Health Clinic, Inc., Box 662, Cascade, ID 83611.