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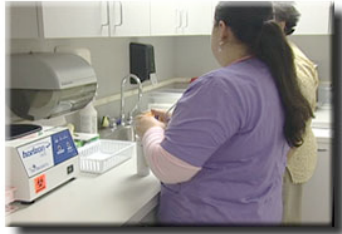
January 17, 2006

### Homeless Healthcare

By [Tammy Mori](#)

Yakima -

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A new health care center just opened its doors, and serves our local homeless population. Neighborhood Connections, a branch of Yakima's Neighborhood Health is the first clinic of its kind in our county.

"I'm excited about this for my friends. We have a lot of friends who are homeless and they need health care services," says Ellen Reyes.

Neither Ellen nor her friends don't have many options to get medical help.

Homeless and the uninsured can go to the emergency room for treatment of serious medical needs, but often can't afford the medication or get primary care.

That is why the word is spreading quickly, Neighborhood Connections on 102 South Naches Avenue, is offering medical and dental services for homeless.

"They can come to our clinic, be treated, diagnosed, and have ongoing care," says Annette Rodriguez, Outreach Coordinator.

The clinic just received a grant, allowing it to start operating the first of this year.

Those in need can get everything from maternity support, x-rays, and STD screenings, all for free. If they need additional medical help, the clinic will give them a voucher to the main branch of Yakima's Neighborhood Health.

"People see the homeless and have the stereotype that it's the drunk on the streets and it's not like that at all. It's families, women, and children. It's all kinds," Diane Trevino, outreach nurse.

To help get the word out Trevino is going to the Union Gospel mission, to tent cities and camps along the river.

"I have a backpack, a medical backpack to do triage out in the field if necessary," says Trevino.

And the clinic gives more than just medical attention.

"I do get to spend quite a bit of time with them in terms of educating them on their diseases," David Hibbs, nurse.

They are also gathering information from various organizations in our county, so the homeless can come to get resources on housing, clothing, and other services.

The clinic is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dental appointments are held on Monday and Friday. Their number is 509.574.4228.

#### EXTERNAL LINKS

Yakima Neighborhood Health <http://www.vnhs.org/>

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