



Brief History

After opening the first Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) clinic in Hilton Head, SC in the mid 1990s, Dr. Jack McConnell was deluged with inquiries from communities across the country. People concerned with the escalating problem of the uninsured were interested in replicating his unique approach which encourages retired medical professionals to volunteer their time and talents to treat those desperate for health care services in an "old fashioned" caring environment.

With funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Dr. McConnell founded the national Volunteers in Medicine office to promote and guide the development of a national network of free clinics. In three short years, there were fourteen VIM clinics established, serving the uninsured in their communities.

It was with the new millennium, however, that the VIM model got a tremendous boost from McNeil Consumer & Specialty Pharmaceuticals, makers of **TYLENOL®**. With their generous support, the VIM national office was able to respond in an organized and timely way to the hundreds of requests for assistance. An additional grant from the Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina Foundation allowed for a successful regional approach in the Carolinas.

In 2001, the VIM Alliance was formed to provide support and educational opportunities for the fledgling network of VIM clinics. Through the VIM Alliance, individual clinics could explore common issues and needs, share best practices and participate in an annual survey to measure clinic outcomes.

As the success of Volunteers in Medicine continues to spread, individuals and institutions are recognizing the accomplishments of Dr. McConnell and the national office. The American Medical Association established the Jack B. McConnell, MD Award for Excellence in Volunteerism to recognize the work of senior physicians who provide treatment to patients who lack access to health care.

VIM was selected as a recipient of the 2006 Manhattan Institute's Social Entrepreneurship Award. And in 2007, with support and funding from AARP, the American Osteopathic Association, the Cardinal Health Foundation, the Manhattan Institute, and Small Business California the first Volunteers in Medicine Alliance National Conference was held. Dr. McConnell and Volunteers in Medicine received the 2008 Harmony with Hope Award from the Elfenworks Foundation.

In October 2008, over 70 VIM clinics are up and running in 22 states, serving the uninsured in their areas. With a proven record of success and a demand for creating VIM clinics in communities across the country, Volunteers in Medicine is poised for a major national roll-out.

The history has only begun.