

Ashe County Free Medical Clinic

(ACFMC)



Patient Handbook

Our Mission:

Our mission is to serve the health and wellness needs of the medically uninsured who live or work in Ashe County, North Carolina.

105 E. Main St.
(Corner of Hwy. 88 and Old 16)
P.O. Box 1506
Jefferson, NC 28640
(336) 846-4649
www.acfmc.org
Email: clinic@acfmc.org

I. WELCOME

Welcome to the Ashe County Free Medical Clinic. We are here to assist you with your health care needs. Please feel free to ask questions of the staff and volunteers at any time. As a patient of the clinic you have certain rights and there are also things that the clinic expects from you.

II. CLINIC RULES

- No alcohol or street drugs are permitted on the property at any time.
- Please limit the use of cell phones and pagers while at the clinic.
- No smoking, food or drink in the clinic.
- Rudeness, abusive or offensive language is not allowed.
- Concealed handguns and other weapons are not allowed.
- Please be patient and pick up after yourself.
- Please notify the clinic at least 24 hours ahead of time to cancel any appointment or you will receive a “no show.”

Please bring either your medications with you to each appointment or bring a list of current medications so that we can keep our records up to date.



III. BASIC QUALIFICATIONS TO BE A CLINIC PATIENT

- Income guidelines must be met and depend on the number of people in the household and on the income of related household members. Proof of income is required which can be a pay stub, federal tax form, bank statement or a letter from the employer.
- You must complete and sign an Application for Services.
- You must be able to show that you live or work in Ashe County.
- You cannot be a patient if you have any kind of health insurance, VA benefits, Medicaid or Medicare.
- You must be able to show that you are between the ages of 19 and 64.

The free clinic is not an emergency or urgent care office. Patients may be seen as a walk in only if there are enough volunteers and time available. The clinic does not treat sexually transmitted diseases, conduct immunizations, do family planning or treat pregnant women.

Call for an appointment for eligibility. You must have an appointment to attend.

Once the qualifications are met, you are given your appointment to see the provider (doctor). You are eligible for 1 year at a time after which you must re-qualify and update your financial information. The clinic will remind you when this is necessary.



IV. C LINIC SERVICES

A. Health Care

The clinic treats patients who have chronic health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and other problems. You must have an appointment to be seen. The clinic sees patients with medical appointments on Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or on Thursdays from noon to 4:00 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

B. The Staff

The clinic has a few paid part time employees but most of the workers are volunteers from the community. Your care will be provided by a nurse, medical doctor, physician assistant or nurse practitioner.

C. Referrals

Your clinic provider may ask you to see another specialist or doctor. The clinic may send you for physical therapy, massage therapy or to see a chiropractor, dentist, surgeon, bone, eye, foot, lung, cancer, kidney, or heart doctor. Some of these services are not free and the clinic will let you know if there will be a charge. The clinic will make the first appointment for you. **If you miss an appointment with a specialist, the clinic can decide not to see you for 12 months so it is very important for you to keep these appointments.** If the specialist orders other medications, lab tests or any other special tests or X-rays there may be a charge to you. Please call the clinic to see if assistance is available to get the medications or tests.



D. X-rays, Lab Work and Other Tests

Most lab work can be done at the clinic at no charge on Thursdays after 6:30 p.m. or on Fridays from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Simple X-rays can also be done for no charge at Ashe Memorial Hospital. If you need a special test like an MRI, CT scan or ultrasound, you will be charged on a sliding scale. **It is important that you take your financial paper work to the financial assistance department at the hospital so that you will not be billed.** The hospital will discuss this with you when you register for the test.

E. Medications

You may be asked to contact the Ashe Medication Assistance Program at Family Central (982-6000). The staff there will help you get your medications for free or at low cost. **You must call them as soon as possible and be prepared to take your financial paper work to your appointment with them.** It may take 3 months to get the medication from the assistance program. In the meantime, the Clinic is willing to pay for a 3 month supply of most medications from Jefferson Drug or will give you sample medications from the clinic. Please call the Clinic before you run out of your medications.

V. CLINIC APPOINTMENTS

Sometimes something come up and you must cancel your appointment. If you need to cancel or reschedule, please call the clinic **at least 24 hours** before the appointment time. If no one is there to answer the phone, leave a message.

Many people make appointments but do not show up and others call too late to cancel. Missed and cancelled appointments waste the



time and resources of the clinic and prevent others from being able to see the doctor and receive medical care. **IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO KEEP YOUR APPOINTMENTS.**

Here is the clinic policy about missed appointments:

If you miss the initial appointment or do not call 24 hours in advance to reschedule, you will not be able to make another appointment for 12 months.

If you have two (2) missed appointments in 6 months, you will not be able to make another appointment for the next 6 months.

If you miss one appointment with a specialist you have been referred to without calling either the specialist's office or the clinic at least 24 hours in advance, you will not be able to make an appointment at the clinic for the next 12 months.

We will try and contact you and remind you of your appointments. Please be sure the clinic has a phone number where we can reach you.

VI. PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Patients have a right to be notified in writing of their rights and responsibilities before treatment begins and to exercise those rights. The patient's family or guardian may exercise the patient's rights when the patient has been judged incompetent. Providers have an obligation to protect and promote the rights of their patients including the following rights.



A. Patients Have a Right to Dignity and Respect

Patients have the right:

- To be treated with respect and not be discriminated against.
- To be informed of the process for acceptance and continuation of service and eligibility.
- To have relationships with clinic staff that are based on honesty and ethical standards of conduct.
- To be informed of the procedure they can follow to lodge complaints about care that is, or fails to be, furnished, and/or in regards to a lack of respect for property. To lodge a complaint, call the Clinic at 336-846-4649.
- To know about the disposition of such complaints within 72 hours.
- To be advised of clinic procedures for discharge.
- To voice their grievances without fear of discrimination or reprisal for having done so.

B. Decision Making

Patients have the right:

- To be notified in advance about the care that is to be furnished and the discipline of the staff.
- To participate in their plan of care and be advised that they have the right to do so.



- To be informed of rights to make decisions concerning medical care, including the right to accept or refuse treatment.
- Clinic providers have the right to refer the patient to another source of care if the patient's refusal to comply with the plan of care threatens to compromise the provider's commitment to quality care.

C. Privacy

Patients have the right:

- To confidentiality of the medical record as well as information about their health, social and financial circumstances.
- To expect the clinic to release information only as required by law or authorized by the patient and be informed of procedures for disclosure.
- To have financial eligibility information remain confidential.

D. Quality of Care

Patients have the right:

- To receive care of the highest quality.
- To have the provider explain their care in terms they understand.

E. Patient Responsibilities

Patients have the responsibility:



- To advise the provider of any problems or dissatisfaction with the services provided.
- To notify the provider if the visit schedule needs to be changed or if they are unable to keep their appointments.
- To carry out mutually agreed upon responsibilities regarding medical care.
- To provide accurate and complete information about your condition and needs, as well as accurate information for eligibility determination.
- To treat the clinic staff with respect.
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VII. HEALTH LITERACY INFORMATION

Ask Me 3™

Every time you talk with a doctor or nurse, use the **Ask Me 3™** questions to better understand your health.

A. Good Questions for your Good Health

- What is my main problem?
- What do I need to do?
- Why is it important for me to do this?

B. Asking these questions can help you:

- Take care of your health.
- Prepare for medical tests.
- Take your medications the right way.

C. You can ask questions when:

- You see the doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- You prepare for a medical test or procedure.
- You get your medications.



D. What if I ask and still do not understand?

- Let your doctor, nurse or pharmacist know if you still do not understand what you need to do.
- You might say, **“This is new to me. Will you please explain that to me one more time?”**

Who needs to Ask Me 3™?

Everyone wants help with health information. You are not alone if you find things confusing at times. Asking questions helps you understand how to stay well or to get better.



IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Ashe County Free Medical Clinic	846-4649
ACTA Transportation.....	846-2000
Appalachian District Health Department	246-9449
(Immunizations, Family Planning, STD Clinic, Women’s Screening Clinic)	
A Safe Home for Everyone	982-8851
Domestic Violence Assistance: ASHE	
HOTLINE – ASHE, 24 hours a day	246-5400
Ashe Medication Assistance Center	846-6002/6001
Ashe Memorial Hospital.....	846-7101
Ashe Really Cares	982-5234
Department of Social Services.....	846-5700
Adult Services, Food Stamps, Medicaid.....	846-5714
Employment Security Commission	982-4212
Jefferson Drug	246-9492
Job Link	982-5627
Legal Aid	828-264-5640
Mountain Hearts	846-0744
New River Mental Health.....	246-3844
Northwest Regional Housing.....	846-8877
Poison Control.....	800-848-6946
Social Security Administration	800-772-1213
or	336-667-8506
Wal-Mart Pharmacy	246-3119



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