

<http://snovalleystar.com/2009/08/20/enrollment-begins-for-hospitals-affordable-access-program>

Enrollment for Snoqualmie Hospital's Affordable Access Program is going well, according to Clinic Operation Administrator Kris Haight.

"We've heard from people in the community who can't afford health care that this is a great offering," Haight said.

The Affordable Access Program will provide primary care services such as checkups, physicals and other visits to the North Bend Medical Clinic for a monthly rate of \$30. Beyond the monthly rate, enrollees will pay only \$5 per clinic visit, and a one-time \$45 set-up fee. The program does not cover specialty and emergency care.

The program is designed to promote health, prevent disease, diagnose and treat minor illnesses and injuries, as well as manage chronic diseases.

The enrollment deadline for a participant to start the program in September was extended to Aug. 18. Now that the deadline has passed, new enrollees can start the program in October. However, Haight said that since the program is new, the hospital may allow some flexibility for individuals who want to participate in the program before October.

"Primary health care services must be able to focus on long-term health and promotion and disease prevention, in addition to addressing more immediate patient needs in order to truly benefit the community," North Bend Clinic Physicians' Assistant Ken Wiscomb said. "Financial barriers often stand in the way of both levels of service. Folks end up receiving urgent care in the emergency room or putting off other health concerns until they too become urgent. This increases costs and further limits access. I believe providing affordable access to primary care is the first step towards fixing this problem and improving the health and well-being of our community."

For more information about the program, contact the hospital at 831-3430 and leave contact information to receive a return call, or send an e-mail to affordableaccess@snoqualmiehospital.org, or simply drop by the North Bend Medical Clinic at 213 Bendigo Boulevard North, Suite 1.

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