

Wisconsin Association of Free and Charitable Clinics *AmeriCorps VISTA Program of the Year*

The Wisconsin Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (WAFCC) AmeriCorps VISTA project makes a substantial impact on health of the people of our state. Their members serve 160,000 Wisconsin residents who lack adequate medical care and are uninsured or underinsured. Believing that everyone should have an opportunity to receive proper medical care no matter their situation, WAFCC VISTA members serve in numerous ways at over 20 clinics throughout the state.

Over the last year, WAFCC VISTA members obtained over \$600,000 in grants and in-kind support for donations. These funds have helped their clinics keep their doors open and provide care to their communities during this critical time. Additionally, by obtaining these medical donations and opportunities, clinics have expanded their dental programs, received immunization support, and provided additional services for underserved and uninsured Wisconsinites.

This impact gained even greater significance during the COVID-19 pandemic over the last two years, as these vulnerable populations needed these clinics more than ever. The VISTA members with WAFCC stepped up their service in a time of desperation. Working to build the capacity of their clinics to serve the public, they rose to meet these needs with enthusiastic and innovative solutions. WAFCC VISTA members obtained over \$80,000 in COVID-19 aid for the clinics they served, including personal protective equipment, COVID-19 test kits, vaccine vouchers, and other needed elements. Their VISTA members have also been diligently working to provide education on COVID-19 at their sites and the communities they serve in multiple ways.

One of the key services that WAFCC VISTA members expanded was telemedicine. They obtained the resources necessary for telemedicine appointments to occur and helped staff at their site navigate and implement the technology. Due to these efforts, large numbers of patients were able to receive medical assistance during the pandemic that otherwise would not have been seen.

In addition to supporting the response to COVID-19 at their clinics, WAFCC VISTA members have worked to help their clinics refine their policies and procedures for the care they give their patients. As part of these efforts, nine of their VISTA members were instrumental in their clinics receiving the WAFCC Standards of Excellence Seal Award, which opens up many funding opportunities for their clinics and ensures that patients coming to these clinics receive the highest quality of care.

The Wisconsin Association of Free and Charitable Clinic VISTA project has fully embraced the VISTA mission of improving lives, combatting poverty, and strengthening the community through service. The commitment of WAFCC AmeriCorps VISTA members to connecting vulnerable populations in Wisconsin with the healthcare resources they need, has truly made a difference for others during the pandemic. The WAFCC VISTA members strengthened the ability of the clinics to rise above the challenges they faced due to the COVID-19 virus to provide quality health care to those in need.

