

# Physician Citizen of the Year finds uninsured not only ones in need of free health care

By Steve Busalacchi

It was 1998 when Patrick Wolf, DO, of Marshfield Clinic, realized his dream of opening a free medical clinic. As an urgent care physician, he knew the health care system was not adequately serving everyone in need. But it wasn't until after he and his colleagues actually began running the Free Clinic that they realized it was serving more than the uninsured, but the underinsured, as well.

"We found that we were serving two sub-populations—those with no insurance and those with very high deductibles who could not always afford to pay for health care," Dr Wolf told *Cattails*, the Marshfield Clinic newsletter.

For his efforts, the Wisconsin Medical Society named Dr Wolf its 2007 Physician Citizen of the Year. Each year 1 doctor is selected who exemplifies professionalism, volunteerism, and service to his or her community.

"What greater form of altruism exists than offering medical help to those who have nowhere else to turn?" said Brad Manning, MD, then president of the Wisconsin Medical Society, during the awards presentation. "And for his excellent example, we all owe Dr Wolf a debt of gratitude."

Society CEO/EVP Susan Turney, MD, added, "Physicians are extremely impressed with Dr Wolf's tireless efforts to establish and operate a Free Clinic in Marshfield."

Among them is Peter Dalum, MD, a Marshfield Clinic colleague

said Dr Dalum in his nomination letter to the Society. "He knows that keeping a simple, low-key approach to provide care in a setting that people feel comfortable in, ultimately allows many an entry point for the care that they need."

The Free Clinic has grown over the years and now has 2 exam rooms, laboratory services and multiple health professionals who volunteer. Doctor Wolf is quick to point out that this clinic would not be possible without the dedication and service of volunteers like Dr Dalum, Kenneth Musana, MD, Deborah Wilson, MD, as well as Nurse Practitioner Carol Hamus and Physician Assistant Rich Nesbitt. He's also grateful to Ministry Health Care for its continual financial support of the clinic and to Marshfield Clinic for providing referral medical services.

"He has in his quiet, unassuming way provided inspiration to others who have wanted to serve, and at the same time has witnessed an ever-increasing population of grateful patients," said Dr Dalum.

At his awards ceremony, Dr Wolf's acceptance speech was brief and to the point: "Thank you," he said, to rousing applause.



2007 Physician Citizen of the Year Patrick Wolf, DO, is congratulated by Bradley Manning, MD, during the Wisconsin Medical Society Annual Meeting. Manning, who was Society president at the time, presented the award to Wolf, who was chosen for the annual recognition because of his work to establish and maintain a free clinic in Marshfield.

and fellow free clinic volunteer. "Doctor Wolf has shown those around him that there always remains the need to address the fears and anxieties that many patients, especially the disenfranchised, have about medical care,"

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