

# Ames clinic awarded funding

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A consortium of health care providers has received more than \$500,000 from the federal government to open a community health center in Ames.

Urbandale-based Primary Health Care Inc., was awarded a \$537,140 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant was made available through the Affordable Care Act, according to a release from Sen. Tom Harkin's office.

"This announcement is further proof that the ACA continues to deliver better access to quality health care for people in Iowa and across the country," Harkin said in the release.

Kelly Huntsman, executive director for Primary Health Care Inc., said the clinic will begin offering services in the early part of next year. A location has not been determined, but Huntsman said there are several potential locations the company is looking at. Huntsman said the grant is ongoing and will help fund the costs of operating the clinic.

The clinic will serve "vulnerable populations," Huntsman said. That can include the uninsured, Medicaid recipients and homeless patients, or non-English speaking patients.

Huntsman said the community health center also will help patients enroll in new coverage opportunities for the uninsured made available through the Affordable Care Act. The clinic will be able to see those patients, too, although they'll have the option to get services elsewhere as well, she said.

Once the clinic reaches full staffing, there will be three providers. The clinic will also have a nursing staff, a behavioral health staff member and access to lab services.

"It's basic primary care services that will be available in the community," she said.

Partners in the project are Mary Greeley Medical Center, Quality of Life Alliance, McFarland Clinic, Mid-Iowa Community Action and service providers who work with the homeless.

In 2010, local and area groups, including Mary Greeley Medical Center, worked with Primary Health Care to apply for a similar grant but the effort was unsuccessful. The 2010 application was one of about 900 submitted to the government, but there was only funding for 350.

With funding now approved, the group will plan to open the clinic Monday through Friday and eventually add a least one evening a week, and possibly weekends, Huntsman said.

"We're very excited about it," she said.