

Private firm to provide health care for county workers

By **BETH KUHLES CHRONICLE CORRESPONDENT**

March 10, 2009, 9:19AM

Montgomery County has hired a private firm to provide an on-site medical clinic for county employees.

The clinic, which will be located in the Knox Building on 221 N. Thompson Street, can provide care to 3,300 county employees and their dependents as well as workmen's compensation services to 2,100 employees. By providing on-site health care services, the county is expected to save \$2 million over three years in health insurance costs and absenteeism.

"We are having a tremendous problem with absenteeism with people going to the doctor," said Montgomery County Judge Alan B. Sadler. "It will save money in absenteeism. It will save money in co-pays, and it is also letting us save tax dollars. And it is located in a local county building, so we don't have to pay lease costs."

The new service is expected to open in about seven or eight months, said Dennis McMahon, director of risk management for the county. The county is currently assessing whether to remodel the Knox building or build a new structure on site.

The facility can be used by employees and their dependents as a drop-in clinic for their everyday needs. That could include illnesses, such as sore throats, headaches or earaches, cough, sinuses, strains and sprain or to manage chronic diseases, such as diabetes or high cholesterol. Those on the county health plan would pay a small co-pay for the services.

The facility will offer all the services of a regular doctor's office, including lab testing. It also will provide preventative services, such as health risk assessments, doctor and nurse outreach services to people with high health risks, health management programs for obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure, disease and case management for high health risk, health training and education and seminars.

For workmen's compensation cases, it can provide treatment of job related injuries. This includes issues involving hearing, respiratory, mobile equipment tests and drug and alcohol screening.

In the future, the clinic is expected to offer pre-employment screening, including a physical and drug test, and prescription drugs. The pre-employment screening is currently done by outside contracts, while prescriptions are handled individually by employees. The clinic is expected to offer generic drugs only, McMahon said.

The clinic also will offer a toll-free number, an on-line scheduling system, and on-line medical management and tracking.

Advertisement



Loan Modification DVD + Software

as seen on     

MODIFY YOUR MORTGAGE YOURSELF
A COMPLETE STEP BY STEP GUIDE

Visit GetYourLoanModDVD.com Now!

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

The clinic would be in addition to the county's health coverage, with employees retaining their primary care physicians. The county, which is self-insured, spends about \$15 to \$16 million a year for health care, which include employee contribution and dental and vision plans which are supplemental offerings not covered by the county.

One of the biggest area of savings will be in reducing absenteeism.

"We have 96,000 hours of sick time a year," McMahon said. "It means a cost savings for the county, and a definite cost savings for employees. We are trying to stem the cost of rising health care for the county."

The use of employee clinics is growing across the county. In addition to providing immediate access to care for employees, it is often less costly than visiting a primary care physician or an emergency room. The central location and easy appointments often cut down on sick time for employees.

Advertisement



Loan Modification DVD + Software

as seen on **CNN** **M 20/20 NBC** **cnbc** **AS SEEN ON TV** **YAHOO!**

MODIFY YOUR MORTGAGE YOURSELF
A COMPLETE STEP BY STEP GUIDE

Visit **GetYourLoanModDVD.com** Now!

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**