MEET THE WOMEN BEHIND THE VACCINE

West Wheatly (left) and Cheryl Coleman (right) have worked together since 2007.

Their partnership has remained solid even as their careers have taken them from Cincinnati Children's Hospital to Dayton Children's Hospital and finally to The HealthCare Connection (THCC).

With more than 30 years of nursing and management experience, Cheryl was inspired to work for a nonprofit to give back to the community where she grew up. She feels that she is able to evoke trust from the vaccine-hesitant community members since she is a Princeton graduate who was raised in Lincoln Heights and Woodlawn.

West brings a unique perspective to THCC. Her first career was with United Airlines as a chief purser, where she was in charge of the flight crew. She is well versed in customer service and provides tons of hospitality skills.

West and Cheryl refer to each vaccine as lifesaving gold. They lead by example and are fulfilled in their work so that no one is left behind without being vaccinated. Without them, THCC would not be able to provide hundreds of vaccines per week to our community.

COVID-19 TESTING UPDATE

During the first months of 2021, The HealthCare Connection (THCC) has been busy providing Covid-19 information to our patients and the community. THCC partnered with The Health Collaborative, University of Cincinnati and UC Health held five different “Test and Protect” Covid-19 testing events for residents of Lincoln Heights and Mt. Healthy. On January 20 and February 19, THCC hosted walk-in testing at its Lincoln Heights location, while February 12 and March 23 was at the Mt. Healthy location.

January also brought the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine to THCC. From January 15-March 23, THCC’s Lincoln Heights provided 1,573 first doses of the vaccine and 664 of the second doses for a total of 2,237. THCC's Mt. Healthy location has provided 1,463 first doses and 444 second doses for a total of 1,907 doses.
Dear Valued Donors, Community Partners, Friends and Neighbors,

The past year has proven to be challenging, at best, however with each challenge came an opportunity for change, innovation, and growth for The HealthCare Connection. We did so by implementing ways to continue offering compassionate care to all, regardless of circumstance. We did not retreat from our mission amidst a global pandemic. Our dedicated team leaned in at a time when our communities needed us most. I could not be more proud of each one of them.

While our focus on providing access to care has remained paramount, we have done so in a manner that did not compromise our patients' and staff's safety. We launched telehealth and phone services, improved ventilation, added extra oral suction machines, and increased sanitization efforts and social distancing measures to reduce or limit potential virus exposure. To that end, we have been able to begin offering more in-person visits and have improved patient satisfaction and enhanced employee fulfillment.

We stand stronger and more accessible to those in our communities needing quality, compassionate and comprehensive care as we enter 2021 which has brought new opportunities with the increase of COVID-19 vaccine availability. Once again, our team responded to the Call to Action and began administering vaccines to patients and community members alike. To date, we have vaccinated well over 2,000 individuals and have quickly transitioned a team of nurses led by our RN COVID Coordinator, Cheryl Coleman to offering the vaccine five days per week with additional evenings and weekends added as we are able.

While our operating environments have changed, our mission remains anchored in quality, culturally sensitive and accessible healthcare to ALL. We promise that our drive to innovate, grow, and adapt to the changing healthcare needs of our communities will only continue in 2021.

Regardless of where we are or where we go, we are better together.

Thank you for your unwavering support – we could not do it without you.

Jolene Joseph, DBH, LCSW, LISW-S, CHCEF
Chief Executive Officer

In memory of our beloved Board Member Vernon Rolf

In December 2020, THCC lost Vernon Rolf. Vernon was a board member since 2002 and served as the Board Chair from 2007-2009. For more than 30 years, he was a health care executive for different organizations. Aside from his knowledge of health administration, he also brought knowledge of finance. Vernon was the Chair of our Human Resources Committee. He will be greatly missed.
THCC HOSTS COVID-19 VACCINE POP-UP CLINIC

On Saturday, March 6, THCC hosted a Covid-19 vaccine pop-up clinic with the Ohio National Guard at the Mt. Healthy Family Practice. THCC and Ohio National Guard staff efficiently and safely administered 472 first doses of the Moderna Covid-19 vaccination. Representative Brad Wenstrup joined to assist in giving the vaccine. The second dose will only be provided for those that attended the March 6 pop-up clinic on April 3.

Need to schedule your first dose of the vaccine? THCC is scheduling appointments. To schedule your vaccine appointment, please call (513) 728-2125.

Using the power of social media to bridge the gap between African communities and the Covid-19 vaccine

THCC’s Abda Tall was interviewed by WCPO about how he is using social media to debunk the negative stigma around the Covid-19 vaccine within international communities in Cincinnati, especially in the African community.

As an interpreter of THCC, Abda has been working closely with patients to translate the importance of the vaccine. He says the language barrier prevents many non-English speaking people to receive the vaccine because they are scared or they do not understand the benefits. "My concern is for the confusion it will cause for not just children, but even for some of the adults...due to the lack of understanding what is said in the English language or what is being said in medical terms."

Once the vaccine became available at THCC, Abda has been using his cell phone to upload videos of patients receiving the vaccine to his Facebook page. He hopes that by uploading these videos, more people in local and other African communities across the United States will see them and help save lives.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Center for Disease Control (CDC), has conducted studies that show the Covid-19 vaccine will prevent you from contracting the virus. Here are some key things you should know before receiving the vaccine:

- The vaccine is safe
- It is a safer way to help build protection for yourself and others
- The vaccine is an important tool to help stop the pandemic
- It is available to anyone
But sometimes, there are obstacles to receiving healthcare. Like a pandemic, for example. Even during a pandemic, Ralls felt it was safe to visit THCC. That is why, when she received an email that THCC was providing Covid-19 testing and the vaccine, she did not hesitate to schedule an appointment. “I am tired of worrying about the virus,” said Ralls. “Too many people are not taking it seriously and taking caution.”

Ralls came to THCC to receive both doses of the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine. Like many others who are concerned about the Covid-19 virus, Ralls felt it was a necessity to be vaccinated. “It’s definitely a sigh of relief. I am thankful for the THCC staff for their awesome work in our neighborhood.”

Share your story with us! If you have a story you like to share, please email Hannah Jones at, hannahj@healthcare-connection.org.

Viking School-Based Health Center: Keeping Kids Healthy During the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Princeton City School District, in partnership with THCC, offers care to students and their siblings ages newborn to 19 years of age at the Viking School-Based Health Center (VSBHC) located in Princeton's High School/Middle School's Viking Village.

Provides healthcare and support services, including:
- treatment of common illnesses
- treatment of injury
- management of chronic conditions (like asthma)
- sports physicals
- vaccines
- behavioral/mental screenings
- referrals to other medical providers as needed

The Viking School-Based Health Center is a convenient way for students to receive quality healthcare at their school. Any student in the Princeton District can enroll and be seen by Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, Elena Roach in person or via telehealth.

For more information about the School-Based Health Center located at Princeton Middle/High School, please call (513) 864-1545, or visit www.princetonschools.net/domain/412.

“I can’t think of a better way to deliver primary care and preventive care to not only students but their families than through school-based clinics.” – Elena Roach
Welcome New Providers to the THCC Family

**Amber Gentry, FNP**, is a nurse practitioner specializing in family nursing. Amber graduated from The Christ Hospital School of Nursing in 2004 and received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Cincinnati in 2015. She received her Master of Science in Nursing at UC in 2015, where she had a focus in Family Nurse Practitioner. Over the past 16 years, she has found passion in being an advocate for building solid provider-client relationships by always providing quality care.

**Qaiser Ahmed, DDS**, is joining THCC’s dental team at both Lincoln Heights and Mt. Healthy locations. He received his Doctor of Dental Surgery from Virginia Commonwealth University and is a National Health Service Corps scholar. He received his Bachelors in Biology from the University of Maryland, and Masters in Biology Medicine from Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia. Prior to joining THCC, Dr. Ahmed worked in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania providing dental care to a wide range of patients including children.

**Caylyn Cable, EFDA**, is joining THCC as a Dental Hygienist. Cable graduated from Scarlet Oaks Dental Assisting School in 2002 as a Certified Dental Assistant (CDA). She continued her education to become an EFDA, which is a dental auxiliary, who can do restorative work such as dental fillings. From 2005–2007, Cable worked with Dr. Riddle as one of the first EFDA at Lincoln Heights until going back to school full-time at the University of Cincinnati. She graduated in 2009 with an Associates of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene. Her dental background is a wide variety, including pediatrics, school-based fluoride programs, periodontics and community oral health.

**Joanne DeGreg, MD**, is coming to THCC as a Family Medicine Specialist. She graduated from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine’s medical school in 1986. DeGreg has more than 35 years of experience in the medical field, particularly in Internal Medicine. She is currently working closing with Dr. Mary Weatherington’s patients and is an affiliate of the University of Cincinnati Medical Center.
The HealthCare Connection
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The mission of The HealthCare Connection is to provide quality, culturally sensitive and accessible primary health care services focusing on the medically underserved, underinsured and uninsured residing in northern Hamilton County and surrounding areas.

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Jolene Joseph,
DBH, LCSW, LISW-S, CHCEF
Chief Executive Officer

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Purchase a Brick and Leave Your Legacy
You can leave a lasting legacy at the new Mt. Healthy Family Practice by participating in the Commemorative Brick Campaign. The campaign was launched in 2020 to create a beautiful walkway into the new health center. The bricks are $150 each in which $120 of your purchase is tax deductible. To purchase a brick for yourself or in honor or memory of a friend or loved one, visit www.healthcare-connection.com/give/.

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