



Creating A New Community Health Center in Thomaston

Why Thomaston?

A: Thomaston is centrally located to help serve the peninsula communities and other surrounding towns.

Thomaston's comprehensive plan includes a need for healthcare in town. This prompted members of the Select Board to approach the Knox Clinic and together we submitted a joint proposal for Knox County American Rescue Plan Act funds to move the Knox Clinic to Thomaston, resulting in a 1.2 million federal grant award.

Why the Thomaston Green?

A: Our goal is to build not just a health center, but a community hub that brings people together. It will be most successful if it is centrally located, easily accessible, and already a part of a thriving community, rather than in an industrial park or remote location.

The many ideas put forward to increase connection and use of the Thomaston Green are valuable, and fit well with our broader understanding of community health and wellness.

We intend to explore how our center could improve year round access to the Green through dual purpose design, such as public bathrooms, or a shared parking area. As a 501c3 nonprofit we would be a perfect partner for grants to create accessible walking paths, assist with community gardens, or other projects.

What are the benefits to the Town and its residents by permitting the Clinic to build on the Thomaston Green?

A: Residents will have convenient access to affordable, quality primary care, dental care, behavioral health counseling, prescription assistance, and wellness services close to home!

Apart from helping create a healthier community, there is considerable evidence that community health centers have very real economic benefits to their towns as well. Because our services will be offered to all residents of Knox County, we can serve as an important "anchor" to the downtown, welcoming residents from other towns who visit us to also support Thomaston's downtown businesses.

If you are interested in reading more about the benefits of community health centers to your community, please see our handout 'Community Health Centers Economic and Social Benefits'

Who is the Knox Clinic?

A: We are currently a volunteer based nonprofit in Rockland providing free/low cost care to our uninsured and underinsured neighbors. With this move we will be able to grow our services to care for everyone!

What health services does the Knox Clinic currently provide to residents of Knox County?

A: Our part time staff and volunteers provide free/low cost primary care, dental cleanings, fillings, extractions and dentures, as well as 1.2 million dollars worth of prescription assistance annually, short term counseling, resource navigation, and wellness care including reiki, acupuncture and more. The Clinic is the only dental practice in Knox County that takes MaineCare patients. Last year, approximately 70 Thomaston residents received affordable care.

What health-related services will Knox Clinic provide should they relocate to Thomaston?

A: This transition will enable us to hire medical staff to expand primary care services to the community, as well as dental, counseling, recovery support, smoking cessation, resource navigation, nutrition, and wellness services. Long term we would love to support additional services like chronic pain management or vision depending on community interest.

Will you treat patients with substance use disorder?

A: Just like other local primary care offices, we will provide medical care, counseling, and substance use recovery treatment to all who would benefit. We will not be a methadone dispensary; this service is already available in Thomaston.

Who can receive services at the new Clinic in Thomaston?

A: Everyone! Once we begin to ramp up at the new location, the Clinic staff will see patients without insurance on a sliding scale, as well as those with Medicare, MaineCare and private insurance coverage. We believe everyone deserves access to care!

Will the Clinic pay for the purchase of the land on the Thomaston Green?

A: Yes, the Clinic will pay for the land upon which it will build its new health center.

What prompts the need to move?

A: As part of our strategic planning process we completed a Barriers to Care Survey with over 500 responses. Two out of three respondents feel they are not getting the care they need when they need it. Cost is the number one reason people do not get the care they need. These results inspire us to do more.

We do not have access to medical exam space currently, except for Wednesday evenings, which prevents us from expanding access to care. We've also learned that the Bok Building in Rockland, which has been the home of the Knox Clinic for many years, is for sale.

A community health center would allow us to do so much more to meet the needs of our residents, and would move us towards a more integrated holistic model with all of our services located conveniently in one center.

What will the new health center look like?

A: The new Clinic building will be consistent with the design standards developed specifically for the Thomaston Green. The building and its site plan will be consistent with the Thomaston Zoning Ordinance, and will be subject to Planning Board approval; such approval will address such issues as landscaping, screening, parking and access from Route One.

Our goal is create a building that will be as “green” and ecologically friendly as possible.

How can I let the Clinic know what I think our community needs are?

A: We want to hear from you! Please join us for one of our upcoming community meetings to learn more.

At each of these meeting you will be asked “what is important to you?” Your answers will be honestly reviewed and weighed into our future plans. The re-location of the Clinic to Thomaston is a work-in-progress, and addressing the needs of the Town's residents is vitally important to us.

The Clinic is hosting a meeting Monday April 17th 2pm and again at 6pm at the Thomaston Public Library Conference Room. There will also be a town lead workshop with the Select board on Thursday May 11th at 6pm, Thomaston Municipal Building.

If you would like to get involved before the 17th, please reach out to Meredith at Meredith@knoxclinic.org