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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Federal Designation for Knox Clinic Bolsters Its Community Health Mission

*Knox Clinic Achieves First “Federally Qualified Health Center, Look Alike”
Designation in the State of Maine Since 2000*

Rockland, Maine, September 8, 2026—On September 1, the Knox Clinic achieved its official designation as a Federally Qualified Health Center, Look Alike (FQHC-LAL). This milestone marks a tremendous leap forward for the non-profit organization, which was founded by volunteer physicians in 1999. Today, the Knox Clinic provides primary medical, dental, and behavioral healthcare. The clinic serves patients who are insured, underinsured, or uninsured, with a sliding scale for patients paying out of pocket or who have a high deductible.

In a message to the Knox Clinic staff and board, co-founder Dr. Paul Klainer said: “I just want to tell everyone how proud I am of the work that has been accomplished, taking a free clinic meeting one evening a week to a fully fledged Federally Qualified Health Center, Look Alike. It’s hard to thank enough people, from our dedicated staff, to the hundreds of volunteers over the years, to our generous donors and community collaborators.”

Federally Qualified Health Centers, known familiarly as Community Health Centers, are located in rural and medically underserved areas to patients regardless of insurance status. FQHC-LAL status enables the Knox Clinic to offer a sliding fee discount to patients based on their income levels.

Executive Director Meredith Batley said: “This thrilling new designation is part of the backbone that makes our wrap-around model of care more sustainable, our services more robust, and our access to federal grants much broader and more competitive in the long term. We have been working toward this designation for decades!”

Community Health Centers are vital to Maine's health care system. They comprise the largest independent primary care network in the state, providing high quality and accessible medical, behavioral, and dental health services for over 200,000 people (1 in 6 Mainers) at more than 100 service delivery sites in all 16 counties. Maine is home to 21 FQHCs, including two FQHC Look-Alikes. The Knox Clinic is one of only two Look Alikes in the state: Community Clinical Services in Lewiston was designated in 2000.

Along with seeing patients at its 22 White Street hub in Rockland and its Dental Program office in Rockport, the Knox Clinic is in the midst of comprehensive renovations that will transform the historic Bok Building, which the clinic purchased in October of 2024, into a full-service Community Health Center. Ultimately, the Knox Clinic plans to provide dental, medical, and behavioral health care under the same roof, allowing the clinic to provide integrated, whole-person care in one place.

To fund these efforts, the Knox Clinic launched their Project LiftOff! Capital Campaign in early 2025. The campaign has raised over \$7.6M to date, and seeks to raise at least an additional \$2M to support clinical expansion and Stage Two of construction.

Batley said: “Our hope is to be not only a *designated* Community Health Center, but an *exemplary* one. So the work is far from over! Demo and renovations on multiple floors of 22 White Street are ongoing, and we will soon welcome a new Family Medicine Provider. If we are to reach our full potential as a Community Health Center, we still very much depend on the generous donations and support of our incredible community.”

A celebration of the designation, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Dental Wing, are slated for late fall 2026.

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About the Knox Clinic: For more than 26 years, the Knox Clinic has been part of the fabric of Midcoast Maine, a place where neighbors look out for one another and where everyone deserves the chance to live a healthy, supported life. The Knox County Health Clinic was founded in June of 1999 by Dr. Paul and Jeannie Klainer with significant community support to provide primary medical care to the working people of Knox County, Maine who could not afford their own health insurance and did not qualify for Medicaid, Medicare or other programs. A Dental Program was added in April of 2001 to

serve patients both without insurance and those on Medicaid. In 2003, the Clinic began assisting patients in obtaining free medications through a Prescription Assistance Program (PAP). In 2008, the Clinic expanded its services to include mental health and wellness services. Today, the Knox Clinic is transforming into a full-time Community Health Center, one that offers consistent, compassionate, primary care.

About Federally Qualified Health Centers: Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) provide primary care services in underserved areas, provide care on a sliding fee scale based on ability to pay, and operate under a governing board that includes patients. A “Look Alike” is an outpatient clinic that the federal government has certified meets the FQHC requirements, but that does not receive Health Center Program funding under Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act. Look Alikes are eligible to apply for reimbursement under FQHC Medicare and Medicaid payment methodologies, and can access other FQHC benefits.

For more information about the Knox Clinic or the Project Lift!Off Campaign, please contact Executive Director Meredith Batley at 207-680-4545 or email meredith@knoxclinic.org.

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