

People's Health Clinic builds community awareness

Locals gathered to learn about the PHC's impacts on community, and raise funds for clinic operations

Submitted by **AMY THOMPSON**

President, People's Health Clinic board

Park City resident Professor Paul Zane Pilzer and author of "The Wellness Revolution" officially kicked off the evening explaining the economic impacts of current health care:

"One of the greatest things about living today in the United States of America are the freedoms we enjoy and, for most of us, the very high level of medical care we and our children receive when we are ill.

One of the worst things about living today in the United States of America is the lack of medical care for those in our country most in need, including – 1. new immigrants to our country, 2. migrant workers away from home, and 3. people just getting started out searching for their part of the American dream.

In the United States last year, more than 1.6 million families filed bankruptcy, with the inability to pay medical bills the number one reason cited as the cause of bankruptcy. In Utah, the insolvency capital of the United States since 2002, we have the largest per capita number of personal bankruptcies in the nation. One in 37 families in

Utah file bankruptcy each year—mostly because of the lack of medical care for emergencies, and for preventative, prenatal, and pediatric care that can prevent medical emergencies.

Washington has been working on this terrible problem for years with virtually no results—I first testified before Congress on this issue almost 20 years ago. One of the reasons nothing has been done is that this problem is only an academic issue for our policymakers who live in sheltered communities in New York, LA, and DC. Our politicians do care about the big numbers – but they don't personally meet the needy people in their communities whose lives are sometimes ruled by the lack of basic medical care, or whose economic lives can be ruined when a child falls and breaks a wrist.

This is not the case in Park City and Summit County. In our small community, we see everyday the people among us without basic medical coverage – in the supermarket, cleaning our homes, working in restaurants, and sitting at the next desk to our children in school. And, because this is not simply a national or economic issue to us here in Park City, but a personal issue for our friends and neighbors, we have not been

sitting back waiting for Washington for a solution.

One of the greatest things about our community is the People's Health Clinic and the service it provides to our most needy neighbors and friends.

And these services are not just charity. The services that People's Health Clinic provides to our community come directly back to all of us daily in both economic returns and in a higher standard of living:

- A preventive or pre-natal visit to Peoples Health Clinic provides a \$100 retail value product at a cost to the patient of \$5, and the value of the visit often saves our community hundreds or thousands of dollars in reduced medical costs and emergency care. But even more important than the future medical savings, the healthy patient is available to return to being an economically productive member of our community.

- Our own children are healthier in school when, thanks to the Peoples Health Clinic, the child sitting at the next desk has received their immunizations and has a place to go when they are ill or fighting an illness

- We all dine out healthier in our wonderful Park City restaurants because the People's Health Clinic takes care of our servers and the kitchen staff ."

The reception continued with Medical Director Dr. John Hanrahan who explained more about the People's Health Clinic: "The People's Health Clinic is a vibrant and essential part of our community. We provide a bridge between segments of our community – Latinos and Anglos, lower and higher socioeconomic groups and different faith groups. This is truly a community non-profit that has far reaching impacts beyond direct medical care.

"You may agree with our board and staff and volunteers and patients that basic health care is a right everyone deserves. If you. You're likely to support us out of purely humanitarian and charitable beliefs.

"Let me close with a story of saving lives. Several of our patients have had a condition called placenta previa. This is a severe problem occurring when the placenta covers the cervix during labor, the baby can't enter the birth canal without pushing through the placenta, causing it to tear... Our prenatal care has saved the lives of several babies and their mothers by identifying these problems through ultrasounds and scheduling Cesarean sections. Your financial support of the People's Health Clinic has directly saved the lives of some of your neighbors and their children. That is a truly wonderful gift. What better gift to give for upcoming Hannukah and Christmas?"