

# Clinic weaves in more hours

**Tapestry Healthcare to run four days a week to meet public's need**

By **LINDA STEWART BALL**  
Staff Writer

**MCKINNEY**—Nine hours isn't enough time to treat all the sick children, adults and senior citizens who hobble, wheeze and cough through the door at Tapestry Healthcare three nights a week.

Last Thursday, the nonprofit McKinney clinic opened two hours early, and Tapestry volunteers were still seeing patients seated in the nearly packed waiting room more than three hours after the scheduled 9 p.m. closing time.



Ray Coleman

"There's just an overwhelming need, and we're trying to meet that," said Ray A. Coleman, Tapestry's founder and chief executive officer.

Since opening its doors in February, the charitable clinic has treated 625 patients in 943 visits.

Six months later, its board of directors has decided to expand Tapestry's hours and move from three three-hour nights a week to four 10-hour days.

Beginning Aug. 30, the clinic will be open 40 hours a week, Monday through Thursday. It also will hire its first full-time staff members — a physician assistant, medical assistant and office clerk — to take some of the burden off their volunteer doctors, nurses and staff.

"Quite frankly, people experience burnout," Mr. Coleman said, explaining that health care professionals were donating their medical expertise after putting in a long day's work in their own practices. "They were getting tired."

However, Tapestry officials concede that they don't have the money needed to pay salaries on a long-term basis.

"We're going to take a step out

on faith," said Mr. Coleman, a McKinney resident with a background in health care and social services who said he'll continue working unpaid for the organization. "It's more important that I take care of my staff than me. Mine will come."

Tapestry hopes to become a federally-funded community health care center, similar to the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Health Clinic in Dallas. But until that happens, it will continue to rely heavily on patient revenue and donations.

The McKinney clinic is one of four grass-roots centers that have sprung up in Collin County to serve the growing number of uninsured, underinsured and low-wage workers who are unable to afford basic health care.

More than 78,000 people living in Collin County are estimated to lack health insurance, according to a comprehensive study by the Dallas/Fort Worth Hospital Council in 2002.

Tapestry charges clients on a sliding scale based on a person's income and the number of people in the household.

"Honey, I don't know what I'd do [without Tapestry]," said Harry West, 35, of McKinney, after having some blood work done at the clinic Thursday night. "It's been a struggle before they got here."

Mr. West is blind, having lost his sight nearly two years ago from complications related to diabetes and high blood pressure. He lost his \$38,000 a year job as a retail store manager in Allen. He said the cost of his medications would swallow the bulk of his \$621 Social Security check. He pays \$9 to \$20 per visit.

Tapestry is in a modest one-story brick and frame building near downtown McKinney.

"This is really a huge blessing for this city," said Joni Phillips, director of health services for the McKinney Independent School District, which has 24 registered nurses at its schools. "With so many people losing their jobs, I would say we are faced daily with kids that are sick, underinsured or who don't have insurance but fail

## **TAPESTRY HEALTHCARE**

**Location:** 402 N. Tennessee St. (southwest corner of Lamar and Tennessee) in McKinney

**Hours:** 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Starting Aug. 30: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Closed Fridays.

**Payment:** Sliding-scale fee based on income and family size.

Medicare, Medicaid and other medical insurance also accepted.

**Contact:** 1-888-540-7701 or 972-540-7700, [www.tapestryhealthcare.org](http://www.tapestryhealthcare.org)

### **OTHER CLINICS**

#### **Collin County Adult Clinic**

**Location:** 1100 W. 15th St., Suite 210 (southwest corner of 15th and Alma) in Plano

**Contact:** 972-679-0035, [www.CollinCountyAdultClinic.org](http://www.CollinCountyAdultClinic.org)

#### **Plano Children's Medical Clinic**

**Location:** 1407 14th St. in Plano  
**Contact:** 972-801-9689

#### **Children and Community Health Center of McKinney**

**Location:** Westpark campus of North Central Medical Center, 120 S. Central Expressway, Suite 106 in McKinney.  
**Contact:** 972-547-0606

hearing tests or vision tests and don't have any way to get served."

Now they can refer children to Tapestry or the Children and Community Health Center of McKinney, a free evening clinic that opened this month.

Lucio R. Gonzales Jr., Tapestry's new clinical director, recently left a full-time position as a physician assistant in Dallas to accept the paid post at Tapestry.

He began volunteering in June. "I volunteered for one night, then it became two nights and three nights a week," said Mr. Gonzales, who is bilingual. "I enjoy the people. ... We don't target just one population or age range. We do the whole spectrum."

"These are people that need help and nobody else will see. They've been turned away so many times that they're frustrated with the health care system."

"Once I get them in and tell them how I can help, they're very, very grateful."

To make an appointment or to volunteer to help, call Tapestry at 1-888-540-7701 or 972-540-7700.