

California Health Improvement Project (CHIP)

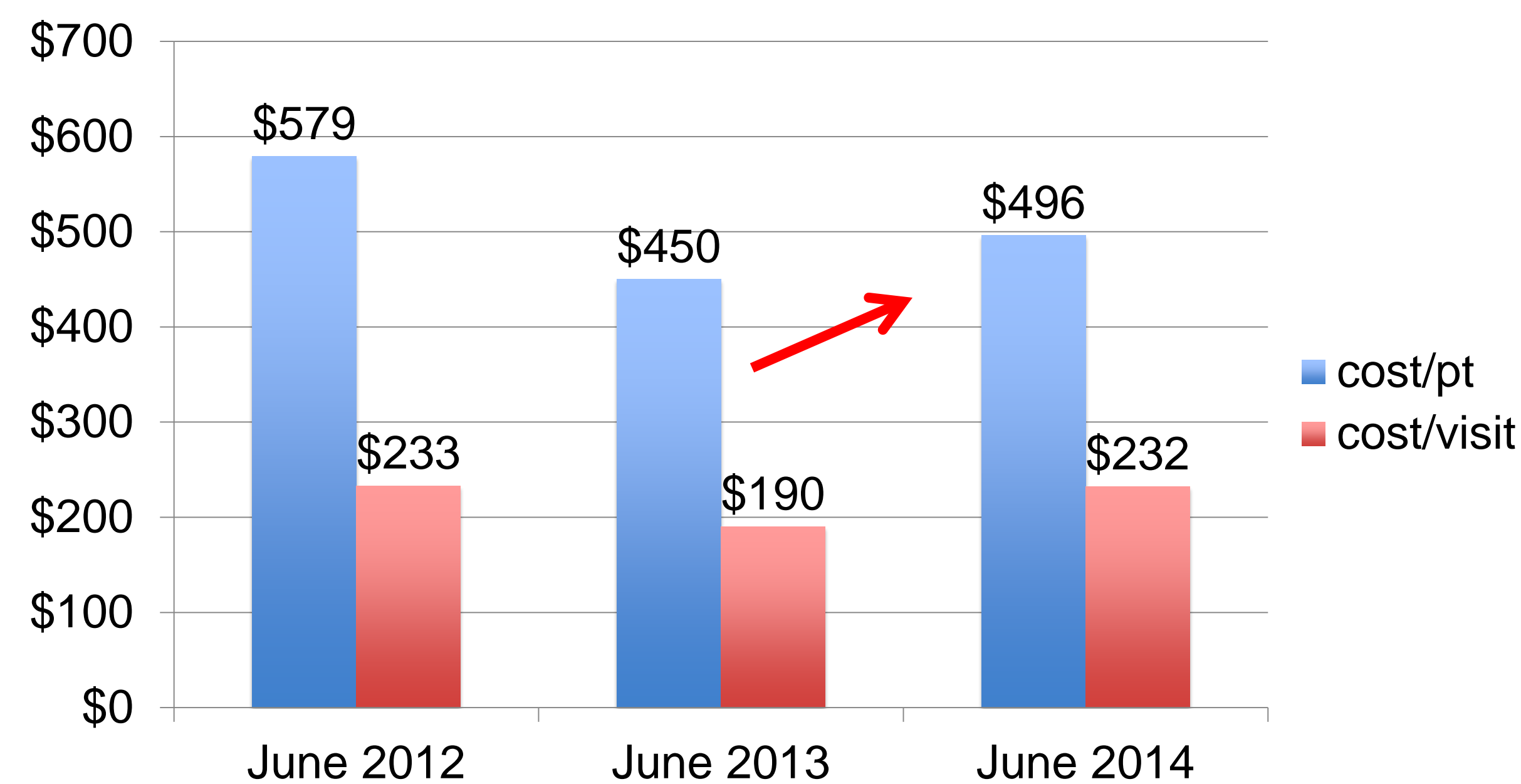
Strategic Guide for Free Clinics to Navigate the Affordable Care Act

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Problem Statement and Underlying Causes

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is impacting patient population and care delivery for free clinics, particularly in Medicaid expansion states. Free Clinics lack a strategic framework to ensure sustainability and navigate the dynamic impacts of the ACA on patient population and service delivery. When Clinic by the Bay opened in November 2010, the cost/patient and cost/visit were projected to decrease over time, as census and capacity grew. Rather than continued steady decrease, the Clinic experienced an increase in cost due to decreased census as a result of the ACA.

ACA impact: Clinic by the Bay cost per patient & cost per visit 2012 – 2014



Project Description

Create a strategic guide for free clinics to strengthen and sustain their organization while navigating the dynamic impact of the ACA.

Goal and Objectives

Goal: Develop a strategic framework that will serve as a comprehensive tool for free clinics to apply to their organizations to ensure financial sustainability, patient population management and service delivery over the next three years.

Output-oriented Objective: By December 2014, with input from national free clinic leaders and Board members, create strategic framework to serve as guide – integrating key ACA landmarks, external analysis, and internal evaluation with a particular emphasis on best governance design.

Outcome-oriented Objectives:

1. By September 2015, Clinic by the Bay Board of Directors utilizes free clinic guide to create and adopt unique SWOT for internal use.
2. By January 2016, create Clinic by the Bay case study for national dissemination.

Outputs & Outcomes

Outputs Achieved

September 2014: Free Clinic SWOT Guide Created



Internal Assessment of organizational framework to navigate the ACA's external opportunities & threats.

Key Questions: How are organizational values actualized across all stakeholders? What best practices governance designs are in place? How is the strategic plan guiding operations & informing governance bi-directionally? How is marketing & fundraising creative, innovative & adept?

External Assessment specific to free clinic's community to determine most effective approach to adapt to ACA.

Key Questions: Are there enough FQHCs to support increased Medicaid population? How to target the new need – who are the uninsured/underinsured? What is the extent & impact of primary care doctor shortages? In 2017, when federal subsidy diminishes, how is the clinic prepared for possible surge of uninsured if state cannot sustain funding for increased Medicaid population?

October 2014: Clinic by the Bay SWOT evaluation/development began.

April 2015: Clinic by the Bay SWOT complete and adopted.

Outcomes Achieved

April 2015: A comprehensive SWOT framework was created and adopted as a guide at Clinic by the Bay.

Internal Strengths: clearly defined mission and vision; mission-driven in service delivery, fundraising, operations and valuing volunteers as key stakeholders.

Priority Internal Weaknesses to Strengthen: Governance & HR practices need to undergo comprehensive evaluation, adapt & align to organization's development.

Outcomes Achieved

April 2015 - Clinic by the Bay SWOT, continued:

External Market Opportunities: provide "bridge care" for newly insured, not yet connected; expand eligibility to include underinsured (i.e. exchange plans with high deductibles); create innovative small business fundraising partnerships.

External Market Threats: perception of no need - fundraising & marketing must educate about uninsured/underinsured with the ACA.

June 2015: National free clinic conferences have been identified for dissemination of the Free Clinic SWOT Guide as a tool, using Clinic by the Bay as a case study.

Lessons Learned

- ➔ **Prioritizing organizational evaluation in the face of dynamic and urgent needs is always a challenge, particularly in small nonprofits.**
- ➔ **Establishing a Board committee of at least three members (vs two individual Board champions) would insure early adoption and implementation of the strategic guide.**
- ➔ **Identifying organizational weaknesses has helped the Board prioritize and improve organizational policies/practices, which will lead to more informed decision making in the face of continued change in patient population and cost.**

About My Organization



Clinic by the Bay is a volunteer-powered free health clinic in the Excelsior neighborhood of San Francisco, serving working uninsured adults in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. Our goal is to improve access to comprehensive, quality health care for the region's working uninsured, while

for volunteerism and civic engagement. The clinic is 100% privately funded, accepts no government funding or insurance. More than 1,500 multilingual, working uninsured adults have enrolled in the clinic's care; 71% are immigrants. 93% report improved health and 83% report improved ability to work.

Contact Me

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CHCF HEALTH CARE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

To learn more about CHCF go to:
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