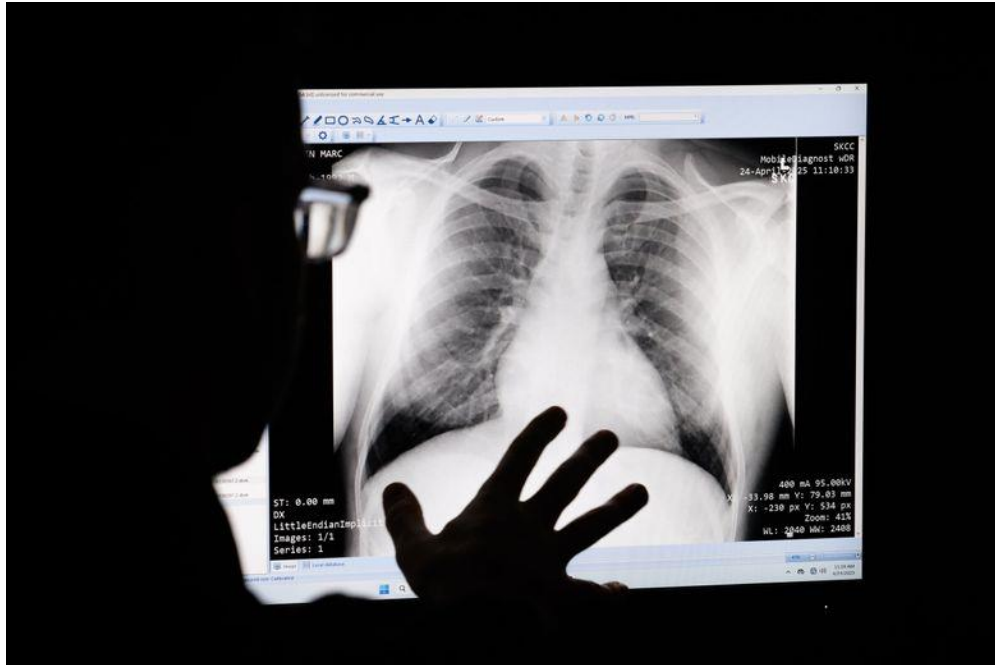


Thursday, May 1, 2025

# The Seattle Times

## Seattle/King County Clinic marks 10 years of health and dignity

By [The Seattle Times editorial board](#)



*Radiologist Dr. Jason Hartman checks an X-ray at the Seattle/King County Clinic, which provides free health care thanks to thousands of volunteers, at Seattle Center on Thursday. (Karen Ducey / The Seattle Times)*

Most King County residents probably missed a milestone last weekend. The [Seattle/King County Clinic](#) marked a decade of providing free dental, vision, medical and social services to thousands of our neighbors who struggle to access and afford care.

Over the past decade, the clinic has served more than 33,000 people, delivering nearly \$30 million worth of health services. The thousands who received checkups and treatments this year paid nothing because more than 4,000 clinical and support volunteers generously donated their time and expertise. Crucial support also came from local health care organizations, civic agencies, nonprofits and businesses.

This year's clinic ran April 24-27 at the Seattle Center. That venue, which typically hosts performances and public events, became a fully functioning health clinic. Providers were ready to work with patients who spoke any of more than three dozen languages.

The clinic is a powerful demonstration of this region's commitment to equity and compassion. It's a place where the uninsured, underinsured and those facing other challenges can receive the dignified care that so many people take for granted. Patients receive not only immediate health care for things like a decaying tooth or an infection, but also access to ongoing resources that will foster long-term well-being.

Demand outstripped capacity. Organizers handed out entry tickets at 5:30 each morning, and people were in line by then. The next time parents of means feel annoyed about waiting in line to buy a hot holiday gift, they should reflect on the fact that they are not queuing at an early hour to get their children's teeth checked.

Only a small percentage of attendees at the clinic were homeless. Most were people on the edge, housed but struggling to make ends meet and to take care of their families. About half lacked health insurance, indicating that the state's Medicaid (Apple Health, [st.news/apple](https://www.st.news/apple)) and Affordable Care Act marketplace ([st.news/plans](https://www.st.news/plans)) still have work to do in reaching eligible beneficiaries.

All of Seattle and King County benefit from addressing pervasive disparities in health care access. The clinic not only alleviates suffering, it also strengthens the fabric of the community. We hope for a day when this sort of clinic is no longer necessary. Until then, it is comforting to know that our community's spirit rises to meet the need at least once per year.

***The Seattle Times editorial board:*** members are editorial page editor Kate Riley, Frank A. Blethen, Melissa Davis, Josh Farley, Alex Fryer, Claudia Rowe, Carlton Winfrey and William K. Blethen (emeritus).

<https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/seattle-king-county-clinic-marks-10-years-of-health-and-dignity/>