Welvista

Hope and wellness for the uninsured.

Nurturing Hope, Promoting Wellness

Since 1991, Welvista has had a positive impact on the lives of South Carolina residents living with chronic illnesses. Our Medication Assistance Pharmacy provides lifesaving prescription medication for eligible South Carolinians, while our Smiles for a Lifetime Dental program provides oral health care for children in rural school districts.

When I look back at our history and see how far we have come, I am just amazed. Our pharmacy started as a small closet with only a handful of medications in it, and now we have a building that houses a 6,600 sq. foot pharmacy stocked with over 275 medications. Each year we provide a vital lifeline to approximately 18,000 patients fulfilling our mission to enhance health and wellness for the uninsured.

Equally inspiring is our Smiles for a Lifetime dental program. We started with a single dental center in Allendale County that had a staggering 76% rate of decay among students. Today we have dental centers in four counties and we now see as little as 26% of decay. This is a testament to how oral health education and preventative care are making a real difference in the communities we serve.

None of this would be possible without the support of our community partners, donors, staff, and Board of Directors. We have been blessed over the years to have a strong network of supporters who know that each prescription filled and every smile restored has an impact that goes beyond the individual – it ripples through families and communities, nurturing hope and promoting wellness.

The future is bright for Welvista and we have a solid foundation to build on. In the coming year, we will forge new chapters of our story by growing our initiatives, increasing patient access, and fostering more community partnerships. We hope you are inspired by our patient's stories and encouraged by the work we are doing. With your help, we can continue saving lives and making smiles.

Juanita Wright, CEO

MAP

Medication Assistance
PHARMACY

Hope For Uninsured Patients

We first met David at our Board of Directors luncheon in May of 2024; he was working for Dupre Catering at the time. When he realized they were serving Welvista that day he knew he had to come say hello and share his story with us.

About three years ago David was in a terrible car accident that resulted in a broken hip, shattered arm, and a torn Achilles tendon. The severity of his injuries made it impossible for him to go back to work full-time. He relied on the settlement from his accident and the money he could earn from little side jobs to get by during his recovery. As time went on his hip began to hurt more than before and walking became impossible for him. Unable to walk or work, he had no choice but to move in with his family for help.

Eventually, David was diagnosed with Avascular Necrosis and told he needed hip replacement surgery; however, doctors told him he had to get his A1C and blood pressure under control before they could do it. Being unemployed and uninsured there was little hope that David could get his chronic illnesses under control without the proper medications that he could no longer afford.

Then one day while at a doctor's appointment at Lexington Medical Family Practice a social worker asked him if he had heard about Welvista's Medication Assistance Pharmacy (MAP), when he said no they proceeded to tell him all about the program, how it could help him, and then assisted him in filling out and submitting the application.

Shortly after that David began receiving his medications and was able to have his much-needed hip replacement surgery. When we met David, he had recently rejoined the workforce and was trying to get back on his feet. He said, “Welvista has honestly been a Godsend. I don’t know how the money is raised or how it officially works, but I can say without Welvista I, in no way, could afford my medication and may not be here today.”

We are thankful to the 170+ community partners like Lexington Medical Center that help connect patients with us from across the state. Together we are making a real difference in healthcare access in South Carolina.

If you are interested in connecting your organization with Welvista’s Medication Assistance Pharmacy reach out to us at 803-933-9183.

What is MAP?

Welvista's Medication Assistance Pharmacy (MAP) is a full-service mail-order pharmacy that provides a single point of access to FREE prescription medication for eligible, uninsured South Carolinians. For over three decades, we have provided life-sustaining medications to underserved patients across the Palmetto State and have grown into one of the largest charitable pharmacies in the nation.

It takes the concerted effort of several departments to provide our services. Our Patient Advocates work directly with healthcare providers and individuals to aid in the application process. Patient services specialists collaborate with advocates and patients to ensure enrollment requirements are met and process approved applications. The pharmacy then fills and ships the much-needed prescriptions directly to the patient's home.

2023 Calendar Year

17,743
Patients' Served

264,898
Scripts Filled

When patients must fill prescriptions through patient assistance programs or at different pharmacies they face many barriers to care. We reduce those barriers by providing mail-order service that addresses a patient's transportation needs and reduces the amount of time off from work, which often means a loss of income for hourly employees. Our patients also benefit from the use of a full-service pharmacy which gives them access to prescription monitoring, counseling by pharmacists, 24-hour automated refill requests, and Medication Therapy monitoring. Patients who are compliant with medication therapy decrease the use of emergency room visits and hospitalizations, which decreases healthcare costs for all of us that result from uncompensated healthcare.

Statewide Reach

Welvista creates statewide awareness of the MAP program through our Community Outreach Advocates. These advocates live in or near the SC counties they serve and help connect patients and providers with our program. In 2024 we doubled our Community Outreach Advocates from six to twelve. This will allow us to reach more healthcare providers and patients to educate them about MAP and how to successfully enroll in the program.

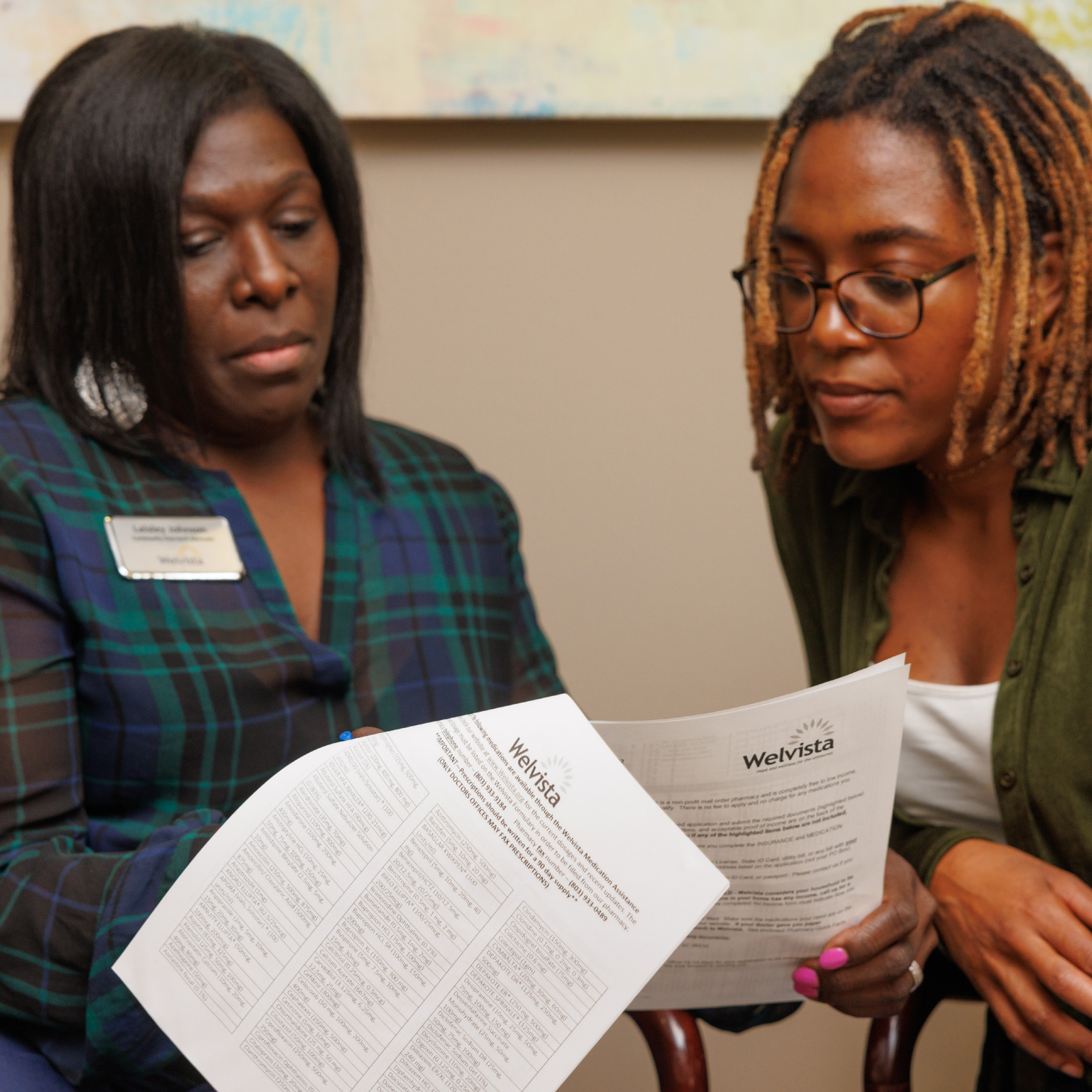
We also have a Hospital Advocacy Program. We contract with hospitals to provide a full-time Welvista employee who works at the hospital to identify and enroll qualified hospital patients in MAP. Upon discharge, patient's applications and prescriptions are "fast-tracked" at Welvista to mail or, in some cases, deliver medications to the patient when they leave the hospital. By providing medications so quickly after discharge, we help to reduce readmission to the hospital and emergency room visits. Hospital advocates aid in a hospital's mission of providing care to indigent patients and reducing the cost of readmissions.

We currently work with the following hospitals:

-Lexington Medical Center
-MUSC Health Columbia Medical Center Downtown
-MUSC Health Columbia Medical Center Northeast
-Tidelands Georgetown Memorial Hospital
-Tidelands Waccamaw Community Hospital

Additionally, we partner with free clinics, federally qualified health agencies, hospitals, SC Thrive, Access Health, and physician offices to enroll patients into our program.

> I refer people to you guys all the time, a lot of people lose their insurance and can't afford their prescriptions. Welvista comes in and saves the day for people that can't afford their medications.
>
> -Mary Garretson
> Office Adminstrator for MUSC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Smiles For a Lifetime

The Important Work We Do.

In January of 2024, four-year-old student, Jackson Lawson, visited the Smiles for a Lifetime dental center in Hampton, South Carolina complaining of a toothache. When dental hygienist, Crystal Jones, came in to do an X-ray, she quickly found that Jackson's mouth was simply too small to bite down for a bitewing (BWX) or periapical X-ray (PA), but because of his pain level, she knew it was important to get some form of imaging to help diagnose the cause.

It is not standard practice to perform Panoramic (PAN) X-rays on children under the age of six, so Crystal asked the center manager, Renee Stanley, if she could perform the PAN on him anyway. Because our dental teams are committed to always do what is best for the student regardless of standard practice or cost, permission was given to do the PAN X-ray.

The results of the X-ray were unexpected to say the least. Crystal said, "What we saw on the PAN was shocking. This four-year-old had something concerning in his lower right jaw." The imaging showed that the child had no bone left in this area of his mouth, in addition to a mass of some sort. "Our stomachs were in knots," she said. Not knowing if that mass was a cyst, infection, or something far worse, Dr. James Hurteau immediately referred Jackson to an oral surgeon for further evaluation.

In February, Jackson was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma at MUSC in Charleston. He completed radiation

treatment at UF Health Florida in Jacksonville, Florida, and is now receiving chemotherapy at MUSC. His intense treatment will end in December 2024 and he will then receive one year of maintenance at MUSC.

Jackson's mother Reanna said, "Our family is extremely grateful for the quick response to Jackson's dental pain. When Renee called me and said something was wrong, I took him to Charleston the next day. If it weren't for the SMILES office, I don't know where we'd be today with Jackson's diagnosis. Cancer is scary, and to see your baby boy go through everything he has is heart-wrenching. But he is fighting it and beating his cancer one day at a time. He has been a rockstar throughout this entire process. Thank you, SMILES, for caring so much about the kids in this district! Your hard work and dedication do not go unnoticed."

It is hard to say how long this mass might have gone undiscovered if not for the care given by the Hampton SMILES staff. In discussions amongst staff after his initial visit Crystal shared, "I am thankful for this program. I am thankful that I can do what is best for the child regardless of what insurance tells me (age wise). It was a God "wink" that this child could not bite down for a BWX or PA and that we decided to do a PAN." You can join us in cheering him and his family on through his treatment and recovery by joining his Facebook Group Page – JACKSON STRONG.

Stories like Jackson's are exactly why the work we do at Smiles for a Lifetime is so vitally important.

What is SMILES?

The Smiles for a Lifetime pediatric dental program provides a solution to the lack of oral health care in rural communities. By offering preventative and restorative dental care to the students in K4-12th grades we are able to improve their oral health and give them a smile they can be proud of.

Our dental centers are located on school property and we provide transportation to and from the school to their dental appointments. This alleviates some of the stress that parents experience when they have to take time off from work for their childs appointment. We also work closely with district and school staff to ensure that minimal learning time is lost.

2023-2024 School Year

Our Dental Centers follow the school calendar for the districts in which they serve and are open August to May each year.

4,370
Patients' Served

6,224
Restorative Services

Smiles for a Lifetime accepts private insurance and Medicaid. If a student has neither, services are provided at no cost to the parent thanks to the generous support of our donors.

Each center has licensed dentists and hygienists, dental assistants and administrative staff who are dedicated to the mission of making every smile a healthy smile.

Our Dentists

Ron Banik, DMD

Charles Ingle, DDS

Lee Walker, DMD

Mark Barry, DDS

Darby Kelley, DMD

Jon Wimer, DMD

James Hentz, DMD

Keith Kirkland, DMD

Edward Wise, DMD

James Hurteau, DMD

Patrick McKnight, DMD

Jamye Horres-Hurteau, DMD

John Poole, DMD

Smiles for a Lifetime partners with licensed dentists from across the state to provide children with the highest quality of care. Many of our dentists live and practice elsewhere, some traveling up to four hours a day to serve at one of our dental centers.

Because most of our dentists are either in private practice or are retired, their schedules need to be flexible and they only work a few days a month depending on their availabilty. Anyone that is interested in a position should reach out to Georgia Famuliner at 803-300-7028.

> I thoroughly enjoy being a part of the SMILES team. At the end of the day, you know you've truly made a difference in a child's life. It makes you feel good on the drive home.
>
> -James Hurteau, DMD

Smiles For a Lifetime

> SMILES has earned a gold star in my book. Their friendly staff, commitment to student well-being, and the convenience they offer to parents make them stand out as a beacon of oral health in our community.
>
> -Sheila Leath , Principal
> Allendale-Fairfax Elementary

Allendale
3269 Allendale-Fairfax Hwy.
Fairfax, SC 29810

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16 Weinberg Street
Manning, SC 29102

Dillon
1730A Highway 301 North
Dillon, SC 29536

Hampton
395 Pine Street East
Varnville, SC 29944

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