

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Moore Free and Charitable Clinic's 'Dine, Dance, Donate!' June gala offers chance to brighten smiles of low-income Sandhills residents

June 10 charity fundraiser featuring Tom Bennett's bands will raise money for new dental clinic

SOUTHERN PINES, N.C. (May 27, 2022) – Renowned bandleader and Sandhills native Tom Bennett will celebrate his 50th year in the music business June 10 by headlining a charity event for Moore Free and Charitable Clinic that promises to bring brighter, healthier smiles to many faces.

“Dine, Dance Donate!” will raise money to help the nonprofit Southern Pines clinic launch a new dental clinic to serve limited-income, uninsured Sandhills residents. Tickets for the event at the Pinehurst Fair Barn are \$125 and can be purchased at www.ticketmesandhills.com.

[Moore Free and Charitable Clinic](#) has provided primary care and other health care services to the area's medically underserved and historically marginalized residents since 2004 but dental care will fill a critical gap because oral health issues often lead to broader health problems, said clinic CEO Tony Price.

A statewide dentist shortage makes access to dental care difficult even for those with dental coverage: All or part of each of North Carolina's 100 counties are federally designated dental health professional shortage areas. For uninsured residents on limited incomes, dental care is even further out of reach.

Price has raised enough money from individual donors and Moore County to get the project started. Work to expand the Moore Free and Charitable Clinic on Trimble Plant Road to accommodate dental care will begin in early summer and Price expects to begin treating patients in late 2022.

“We are eager to begin offering dental care as soon as possible,” Price said. “We receive appeals virtually on a daily basis from patients of our primary care clinic who desperately need treatment for neglected oral health issues that are causing them constant pain.”

“Dine, Dance, Donate!” will feature both of Bennett's bands – the Swing Street Little Big Band and The Carolina MoonDogs. Dinner will be provided by Elliott's Catering and a cash auction will give guests the chance to “bid” on dental chairs or a year's supply of toothpaste and other supplies for the dental clinic.

The [North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics](#), which works with 73 member clinics statewide, including Price's, has made expanding access to oral health care for clinic patients one of its top priorities. Several member clinics already offer dental care and others are exploring their options.

The association has held two “dental convenings” of its members and outside experts in the past six months to advance clinic dental initiatives and is also working to secure grants to help members defray the cost of standing up new dental clinics.

“North Carolina has a severe dental care disparity issue, and it is a serious health equity issue as well,” said Zachary Brian, program director of the N.C. Oral Health Collaborative for the N.C. Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation. “Free and charitable clinics can be an important part of the solution.”

Untreated oral health problems can not only lead to broader health complications but also diminished quality of life and reduced employability, Brian said. And lack of access to dental care for the uninsured

leads to clogged hospital emergency rooms, too. Recent studies show 2.5% of ER visits in North Carolina were for dental issues, compared to 1-2% nationally.

Proceeds from ticket sales for the June 10 event will also go toward defraying operating costs for the clinic's primary care and other services.

About Moore Free and Charitable Clinic

Founded in 2004, Moore Free & Charitable Clinic is a private nonprofit clinic delivering high-quality primary care services at low or no cost to eligible adult residents of Moore County, primarily those who are unable to obtain affordable medical care because they lack health insurance coverage. Providing a medical home for the uninsured reduces the burden of preventable health problems in our community and improves patient health outcomes by diagnosing and treating potentially disabling and even fatal chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. We are a local, community-based response that is improving the quality of life of Moore County residents daily. Learn more at www.moorefrecare.org.

About North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics

The North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics supports 73 member clinics in expanding access to health care, reducing health disparities and improving the health of uninsured and underinsured individuals. Member clinics are a vital part of North Carolina's safety net, providing care for 80,000 patients in 88 of the state's 100 counties, including primary and specialty medical care; dental care; pharmacy services; optometry; behavioral health care; lab tests and hospital referrals. The association supports member clinics with education, advocacy, research, funding and collaboration, and promotes quality health care for all North Carolinians. Learn more at www.ncafcc.org.

Media contact: David Coburn, Coburn Communications, david@coburncomm.com, 704.408.4276.

###