

“In the year 2006, Quality of Life Health Services, Inc. began its twenty-ninth year of ***People Caring About People***. What began as the dream of one individual, Dr. Roberta O. Watts, has grown into a comprehensive primary health care network of twelve centers, something never envisioned by the founding Board of Directors. Since its inception, Quality of Life has grown to serve more than seventy thousand people in both rural and urban communities throughout northeastern Alabama. Dr. Roberta O. Watts founded Etowah Quality of Life Council, Inc. in 1977, as a Community Health Center designed to address the medical and health care needs of medically underserved persons in Gadsden.

Dr. J.W. Stewart was also a key factor in implementing programs, which with the assistance of eight community leaders who served as members of the original Board of Directors, initiated work on the project. Development of a new community health center in Gadsden was a slow and tedious process that was further impeded by Federal and state regulations. However, perseverance paid off in 1978, when funding was secured for one of two proposed centers, the **Gadsden Neighborhood Health Center**. By early 1981, unexpectedly high growth led to approval for funding of a second medical center, the **J.W. Stewart Medical Center**, named after the first medical director of Etowah Quality of Life Council, and a founding Board Member. That same year, the Gadsden Neighborhood Health Clinic’s name changed to the **Roberta O. Watts Neighborhood Health Clinic** as a way of recognizing the efforts of Dr. Watts. For the next few years, the corporation was able to maintain a period of high growth, which ultimately led to a merger with the **Sardis City Medical Center** in 1985, the first rural health center. By the end of the first decade of operation, Quality of Life had three health care centers serving both rural and urban populations of Etowah and surrounding counties. In 1993, Etowah Quality of Life initiated expansion by opening a fourth medical center in Alabama City, the **Canterberry Family Practice Center**. With the opening of the **Emma Sansom ProCare** and the **Campbell Court ProCare** in 1994, the health care needs of public housing residents in Gadsden were addressed as a response to identified needs in those communities. By the end of 1994, six medical centers existed, and plans for two additional centers were pending. Quality of Life was forging a new direction and becoming a major health care network in Northeast Alabama. As a result in 1995, Etowah Quality of Life Council, Inc. changed its name to **Quality of Life Health Services, Inc.**, to identify commitment to complete health care in Gadsden-Etowah and the surrounding counties. During that same year, Quality of Life opened a seventh health center. Designed to meet the health care needs of the rural population of western Etowah and surrounding counties, the **W.T Scruggs Medical Center** was the second rural health center in the Quality of Life Health Network. In December 1997, a forty-six thousand square foot, comprehensive primary health care center, the **Quality of Life Health Complex**, was completed. This Complex now serves as the administrative headquarters and site for comprehensive health services for the Quality of Life Health Network, which offers specialized health care services for each member of the family. During 1999, Quality of Life Health Services took over operations of **Cullman Quality Health Care**. That center has meant a further expansion of the QOL service area. In the year 2000, Quality of Life Health Services received funding to open a ninth primary care center in Anniston, Alabama. **Anniston Quality Health Care** opened in February of 2001 and is located on Noble Street in downtown Anniston. In July of 2002, Quality of Life closed the Campbell Court location of ProCare opting for a larger location in Colley Homes. A federally-funded renovation project resulted in a facility with 2,600 square feet. In late 2002, Quality of Life was awarded an Oral Access Grant for Anniston. As a result, a dental component was added to the primary care operation in

Anniston during 2003. In the Cullman community, a capital project was undertaken during 2003. A new forty-five hundred square foot health care facility was constructed. The grand opening of the facility took place on May 16, 2003. This facility does have the capacity for a dental expansion at some future date.

On November 21, 2003 Quality of Life Health Services was notified that the application was approved to establish a School-Based Health Center on the campus of the Oscar Adams Elementary School. The **Gadsden Family and Student Health Solutions** now operates in a twenty-six hundred square foot facility on Raley Street. This program includes not only medical care for students and their families, but dental, mental health, and health education services. In April of 2004, Quality of Life reopened the **J.W. Stewart Neighborhood Health Clinic**. The clinic became a part of the J.W. Stewart Centro de Excelencia, located at 1409 Springfield Avenue, which will house other agencies and services for non-English speaking clients in the future.

During 2005, several new projects were implemented at Quality of Life Health Services. Anniston Quality Health Care was selected as the site of the primary care clinic for adult claimants of the Tolbert settlement. A capital project has begun, and health services (Tolbert Health Care) to claimants were initiated June 7, 2005. As part of this project a Capital build-out is underway at the Anniston facility on Noble Street. The entire upstairs area (approximately 7,000 square feet) is being renovated. The targeted completion date is August 2006.

On March 1, 2005, **Talladega Quality Health Care** opened its doors in a newly renovated building. Through a collaborative effort with the Rushing Springs District Missionary Baptist Association, Quality of Life pursued and secured federal funding to establish a primary care site at 110 Spring Street North in Talladega and an Outreach Hub at the Rushing Springs District Office.”