

BH Health Clinic F

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Staff Writer

CASSOPOLIS — A Bangor-based health care association plans to open a clinic in the main section of the former Farmers & Merchants Bank building on West Main Street in Benton Harbor, the Southwestern Michigan Commission heard Tuesday.

E. Roberta Ryder, executive director of the Migrant and Rural Community Health Association (MARCHA), said the clinic will be aimed at providing walk-in health care for inner-city residents and the unemployed whose health benefits may have run out. The clinic is scheduled to open in late February or early March, she added.

The federal government is making funds available for such clinics to help people who aren't covered by conventional means of health insurance or Medicaid, Mrs. Ryder stated.

The Southwestern Michigan Commission meeting Tuesday in Cassopolis cleared MARCHA's application for a \$1.09 million federal grant and a \$217,291 state grant for one year's operation of all MARCHA clinics. MARCHA, a private, non-profit organization, also operates clinics in Holland, Bangor, and Eau Claire, Mrs. Ryder said.

MARCHA's grant applications will be sent to the appropriate federal and state agencies for further action. MARCHA in Decem-

ber received the approval of the Southwest Michigan Health Systems Agency to open its Benton Harbor clinic.

Mrs. Ryder said MARCHA also plans to take in \$199,614 in payments directly from patients for a total annual operating budget of \$1.5 million. The clinics charge for services on a sliding fee scale based on patients' ability to pay, but are forbidden by law to refuse services to anyone, she

added.

The Benton Harbor clinic will have either one full-time or two part-time physicians plus four other employees, Mrs. Ryder said. She said she is currently negotiating with several Twin Cities area physicians who are interested in working at the clinic, but declined to release the physicians' names.

The former F&M Building is now owned by Jade Development Co. headed by

John Dickey.

The four MARCHA clinics in 1983 will likely serve over 15,000 people who will visit the clinics over 68,000 times, Mrs. Ryder said.

MARCHA was formerly known as BCV (Berrien-Cass-Van Buren) Health Services Inc. and has been in existence since 1971, Mrs. Ryder said.



WILL OPEN CLINIC: Officials of Migrant and Rural Community Health Association at meeting of Southwestern Michigan Commission are Velma Dimas (left), director of supplemental services, and E. Roberta Ryder, executive director. MARCHA will open clinic in former Farmers & Merchants Bank building in downtown Benton Harbor.

Bangor-Based Agency Seeking \$1.3 Million Operating Grants



CLINIC SITE: Migrant and Rural Community Health Association will rent first floor of central portion of former Farmers & Merchants Bank building in Benton Harbor for walk-in clinic. Main lobby section, to be used for clinic.

nas some 5,000 square feet of space. Rent rate and length of lease have not yet been determined, MARCHA officials said. Building is owned by Jade Development Co. headed by John Dickey.