

Mobile health unit 2012 schedule

February
Mount Vernon

March
Reidsville
Fort Gaines
Hawkinsville
Willacoochee
Clayton

April
Rome
Manchester
Alma

May
Dublin
Norman Park*
Jefferson

June
Augusta*
Bainbridge**
Norcross
Statesboro

July
Lovejoy
Hiawassee
Lawrenceville

August
Pearson
Blairsville
Moultrie
Decatur

September
LaFayette
Habersham
County
Toccoa
Waycross

October
Perry
Norman Park*
Statesboro
Moreland
Bowman

November
Moreland
Bowman
Thomasville
Albany
Winder
Ministers only
***Migrant*

Mobile health unit provides gospel witness

By Joe Westbury
Managing Editor

An eight-year-old has a severe earache in Statesboro.

A migrant worker has not been to the dentist for a cleaning in 10 years.

A single mother of three has digestive problems for which she cannot afford a visit to the doctor's office – but she still has to work two part-time jobs to make ends meet for her children.

A bivocational minister of 30 years' service has developed extremely high blood pressure for which he needs help before it leads to a stroke.

Each individual struggles to maintain his or her health but in today's weak economy there is little assistance. They work full- or part-time jobs or, in some instances, no job at all. And few have little, if any, medical insurance that keeps them well enough to stay on the job.

That's where the Baptist Mobile Health Ministry



The state-of-the-art **Georgia Baptist mobile health unit** travels the state bringing badly needed dental care to under- or uninsured ministers and their wives and the general population. The unit was largely purchased by grants from the Baptist Health Care Ministry Foundation. The ministry is supported through Georgia Baptist gifts to the Cooperative Program. JOE WESTBURY/Index

serves a vital role in providing quality care state-wide through the auspices of Georgia Baptist churches and associations. The 17-year-old ministry, housed in the Baptist Missions and Ministry Center in Duluth, stays on the road bringing medical, dental, and vision care to under-insured or non-insured residents who have little access to health care.

This year the ministry's mobile van will travel to 32 locations through 90 clinic days to bring medical care to a variety of sites statewide. Doctors and nurses will donate their time to serve in six migrant camps, four clinics for under-insured ministers and their spouses, and 18 events open to the general community.

Ministry touched 4,440 lives in 2011

Last year 4,440 individuals visited sites where the clinics were held, seeking assistance ranging from minimal to sometimes life-saving care.

Georgia Baptists, through their gifts to the Cooperative Program, provide the use of the mobile unit to churches and associations who schedule the unit for a day or more. The sponsoring groups then arrange for local health care volunteers to staff the unit.

In the vast majority of instances the clinics are open to anyone in the community, with the services being offered – medical, dental, or both – determined by the host. Other times the clinics are directed to a specific group, such as under-insured ministers, carnival employees, or migrant workers.

Some of the greatest needs are seen in the migrant camps, says administrator assistant and site coordinator Diana Brown.

“Contrary to what many believe, most of those we serve in the migrant camps – those who harvest the fruit and vegetables that appear on our dinner tables every night – are here legally on work permits. They are among some of the

hardest-working individuals in the state but they have no access to basic medical care for themselves or their children.”

While the volunteers share their medical skills, they also share their faith where appropriate. Providing a Gospel witness is an important part of the ministry, Brown says.

“We have helped plant seeds in communities across the state where they didn't know they had such strong medical needs, and that opens the door for ongoing ministry of the church and association. Several churches and associations have since launched their own clinics that have a powerful ongoing presence.”

The ministry is currently using a \$320,000 mobile unit that was largely provided by funds from the Baptist Health Care Ministry Foundation. The unit includes three dental chairs and work stations, an instrument sterilizer, and X-ray equipment. It is fully furnished with supplies and an onboard generator so it can operate anywhere in the state.

This year the Foundation gave \$79,000 toward the purchase of a second unit, which is expected to cost \$420,000.

“We are grateful to Georgia Baptists for their generous support of the Cooperative Program. We would not be able to provide this service, as well as a Gospel witness, without their help,” Brown said.



George, a fairgrounds employee, is screened before a health evaluation in Hiawassee provided by the Georgia Baptist mobile health unit in this file photo. Individuals are treated by professionals such as First Baptist Blairsville member and registered nurse **Patricia Baldwin**, left, and counseled by local ministers such as **Keith Ivey**, right, director of Georgia Mountain Resort Ministries. JOE WESTBURY/Index

Your Cooperative Program dollars at work

The mobile health unit is available to churches and associations who want to provide this ministry to the community. Diana Brown, coordinator for the unit, not only schedules the use of the unit but also provides help on site.

The mobile health unit, supported through the Cooperative Program and state missions offerings, is booked for 2012 and half of 2013 but is currently taking reservations for open dates through 2014. Brown reminds potential hosts that it

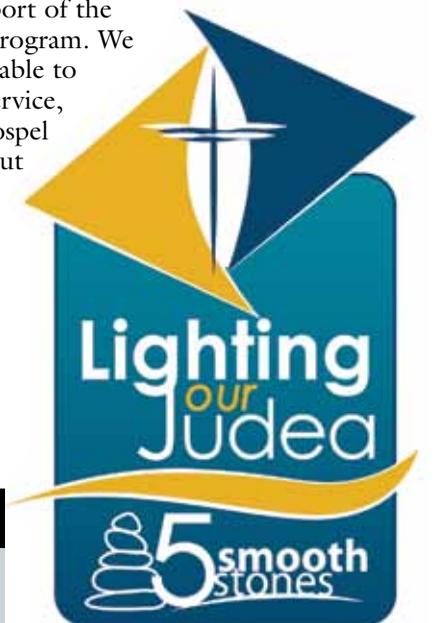
takes six months or more to get on the schedule.

For scheduling information, contact Brown at dbrown@gabaptist.org or (770) 936-5215 or (800) RING-GBC.

The unit is also in need of donated dental supplies.

Contact Brown for information on tax-deductible donated supplies.

Your church's giving through the Cooperative Program is vital to the missions and ministries of the GBC and Southern Baptist Convention.



THANK YOU FOR SENDING YOUR GIFTS TO:
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