

# Sen. Darling: Two Darling Healthcare Bills Signed into Law

Posted on Monday, Nov 25, 2019

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Madison – Two bills authored by State Senator Alberta Darling will improve care and increase access to free and charitable clinics in Wisconsin. Both bills were signed into law on Monday. Senator Darling says her loan-assistance legislation will encourage more health professionals to work in these clinics.

“Free and charitable clinics are an important safety net for the uninsured and under-insured,” Darling said, “It’s crucial these clinics be staffed with qualified health professionals.”

More than 150,000 Wisconsinites utilize the more than 100 free and charitable clinics throughout the state each year. Currently, health care professionals are eligible for loan assistance if they agree to serve in rural or “eligible practice areas” which are tribal lands or areas with primary care or mental health shortages defined by federal law. Senator Darling’s bill expands the loan assistance program to areas with free and charitable clinics. This simple change should encourage more professionals to work at these clinics which will lead to more people being treated. Also on Monday, Senator Darling’s bill to remove a disincentive for free and charitable clinics to serve the homeless. Currently, the state provides liability coverage for licensed health professionals who volunteer their services to provide outpatient care at free clinics. However, a gap in the law prevents coverage when treating the homeless. Senator Darling says the new law will close that insurance gap.

“We are so fortunate to have many excellent doctors volunteering their time in our free and charitable clinics,” Darling said, “Treating the homeless in free and charitable clinics should not jeopardize a volunteer doctor’s liability insurance. This bill changes that.”

Senator Darling represents portions of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington and Waukesha Counties.