



# Economic Opportunity Program, Inc.

*Strengthening the fabric of our community*

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## Economic Opportunity Program, Inc. (EOP), Elmira NY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
November 16, 2022

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### Services

### **Economic Opportunity Program, Inc. (EOP) Celebrates the ACCEL Clinic’s 1st Anniversary with 100 Children and Individuals Served**

Birth to Five School  
Readiness Program

Center of Excellence  
(New Day Program)

Community Food for Jobs  
Program & Bistro

Energy Services Bureau

Ernie Davis Community  
Center

Family Support Services

Libertad-Elmira Veteran and  
Family Program

Literacy Volunteers of  
Chemung & Schuyler  
Counties

**Elmira, NY (Nov. 16, 2022)** - On November 2, 2021, representatives from Arnot Health, the Chemung County Health Department, EOP, Inc., Common Ground Health, and LECOM cut the ceremonial red ribbon to announce the opening of the ACCEL Clinic in Elmira, New York. One year later, the community health clinic is pleased to announce that more than 100 individuals (78 children and 28 adults) have received lead testing through the program.

Children in Chemung County have higher lead levels compared to children across New York State (11% vs. 5%). High lead levels in children can lead to serious health and behavioral issues later in life. However, when lead poisoning is identified early, many of these issues can be reversed with proper treatment and remediation.

Elizabeth Derr is the Health Educator and Health Services Coordinator at EOP, Inc., and she has been involved with the ACCEL Clinic since it opened last year. She says, “Lead is a metal that can hurt children and adults. Children may not look or act sick, but a blood test could show they have lead poisoning. It can harm their growth, behavior, and ability to learn. Lead can also be a problem for adults as well; especially pregnant women and their babies.”

Samantha White, Public Health Program Coordinator at the Chemung County Health Department states, “Lead exposure is preventable, and the ACCEL Clinic is playing a vital role in early detection. We can all prevent exposure to lead in our own households by keeping an eye out for peeling and chipping paint, washing hands and toys often, wet-mopping, and taking our shoes off when we come in the front door, but lead exposure is a community-wide issue. The ACCEL Clinic is bridging the gap in our community by connecting families with resources to live their healthiest lives.”

ACCEL stands for Arnot Health, Chemung County Health Department, EOP, Inc., and LECOM, and the name represents the way these organizations have come together to stand in the gap for families who experience various barriers to the medical care they need. The ACCEL Clinic is underwritten by Excellus BlueCross BlueShield.

Andrea Ogunwumi, CEO of EOP, Inc. states, “We are greater than the sum of our parts,” in reference to how many organizations have united with the common goal of addressing lead poisoning in Chemung County. “If one in the community is at risk, we’re all at risk.”

Peter Buzzetti III, Public Health Director at the Chemung County Health Department says, “The ACCEL Clinic was in the planning stages for years, and it is rewarding to see it operational. Children and adults are able to access lead testing, and the community partnerships between Arnot Health, the Chemung County Health Department, EOP, Inc., and LECOM are strengthened. We look forward to the continued success of this clinic and engaging in more public health projects with valued community partners.”

Ken Roberts, Director of Marketing, Communications & Community Relations at Arnot Health, cited the collaboration and cooperation needed to launch the ACCEL Clinic a year ago. “Every one of the partners in this initiative plays an important role in operating the clinic and sustaining momentum toward the development of more health and wellness offerings,” he said. “This would not have been possible without the individual contributions of each partner, and we take shared pride in what we’ve been able to achieve thus far.”

Currently, the ACCEL Clinic is primarily focused on lead testing. However, additional phases are in the process of being implemented as the program expands to serve the needs of individuals and families in Chemung County. Phase 2 will address immunizations, including flu vaccines and standard vaccines needed for children to attend school. Phase 3 will address mental health with a special focus on the challenges facing children post-COVID. Phase 4 and beyond will include programs aimed toward smoking cessation and diabetes prevention.

Dr. Richard Terry, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at LECOM is proud to have around 50 LECOM students participating in the ACCEL Clinic by administering lead screenings. He says, “Part of our mission at LECOM is to give back to the community and improve the overall welfare of the community we’re in. Our students are taught that early in their formative years in medical school. We’re not just talking about it. We’re doing it.” Dr. Terry is excited about the future of the ACCEL Clinic and believes that other regions could benefit from the same framework while engaging LECOM students at the other 16 campuses in New York State. “We have to break down all social and political barriers. Think in terms of, what would be best for the community? How can we work together? This could be done in other areas at an even larger scale. Collaboration needs to happen for the best outcomes for the community. That’s the key to this project. We’re all working together for the greater good.”

Jessica Renner, Regional President of Excellus BlueCross BlueShield says they are excited to be a part of this collaborative effort to overcome the social determinants of healthcare in Chemung County. “We’re committed to improving the health of our community. As a nonprofit health plan, it’s a priority to do our part to facilitate access to high-quality healthcare.”

The ACCEL Clinic is located at the Ernie Davis Family Center in Elmira, and it is free to the general public. Appointments are scheduled for Thursdays from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. To make an appointment, please call Elizabeth Derr at 607-215-6868.

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# Community Health Clinic

Thursdays, 2-4 PM

Lead Screenings

New Offerings:

**Blood Pressure Screenings  
For Adults & Children**

**Ernie Davis Family Center  
650 Baldwin Street, Elmira, NY 14901  
(607) 734-6208 ext. 277**

Underwritten by:

Excellus

