

**Results Of the 2009 Fulton County Employee Clinic/Pharmacy Survey**

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Fulton County Health and Human Services Department  
Planning and Evaluation Division  
Staff: Brenda Sullivan, Ph.D., Research Analyst**

## **Results Of the 2009 Fulton County Employee Clinic/Pharmacy Survey**

The following report summarizes the preliminary results from Fulton County's 2009 *Employee Clinic/Pharmacy Survey* conducted during July 2009. The survey explored the interest Fulton employees may have in the establishment of an on-site, employee clinic/pharmacy. Over 2,600 employees, representing about thirty-eight percent (38%) of Fulton's full-time, part-time, temporary and contract staff persons, participated in the survey.<sup>1</sup>

### **SUMMARY**

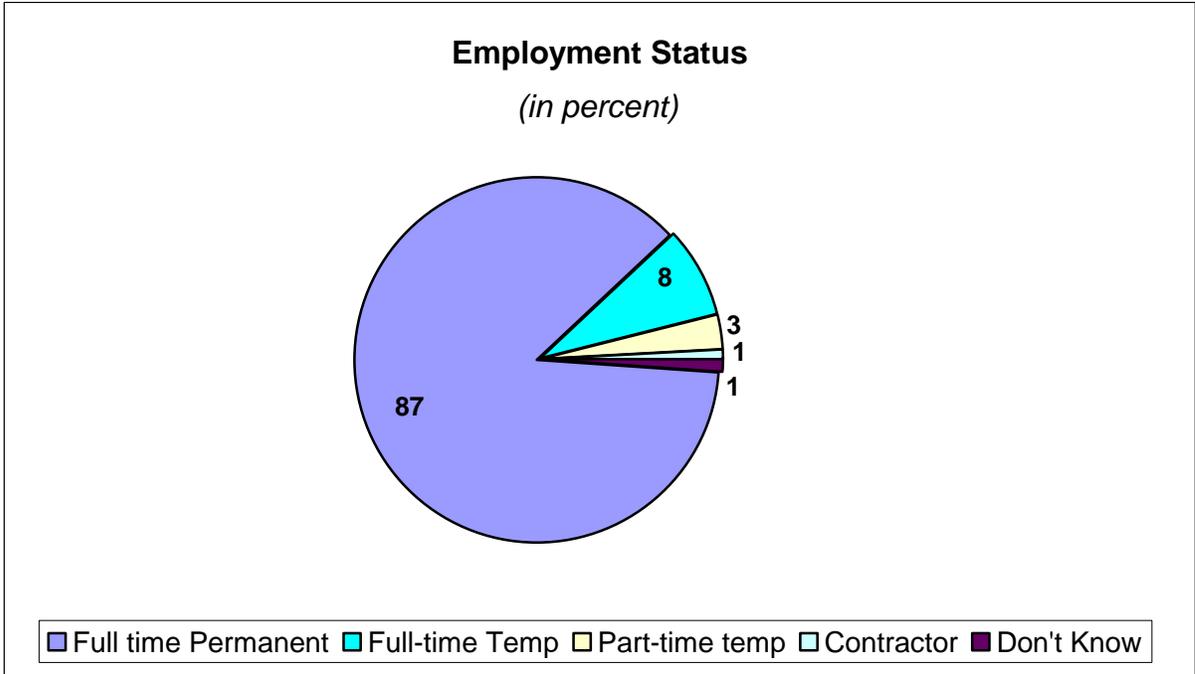
No longer are employer operated clinics and pharmacies only for work related injuries. Today, they are part of larger employer- driven health and wellness efforts. In July 2009, Fulton County surveyed over 2,600 Fulton County employees on their interest in the creation of an employee clinic/pharmacy located near the Government Center. Overall, employees have mixed feelings about the idea, although they are more supportive of a pharmacy than a clinic. While some county employees view the clinic/pharmacy as a possible benefit, individuals that currently have employee health insurance are concerned that an employee clinic/pharmacy will supplant and not supplement their benefits. In addition, all employees are concerned about the proposed downtown location of the service. When employees were asked for comments on why they would or would not use the services, a sizable portion were undecided and gave conditional responses, suggesting that the clinic/pharmacy idea may become palatable if marketed correctly.

### **Who participated in the survey ?**

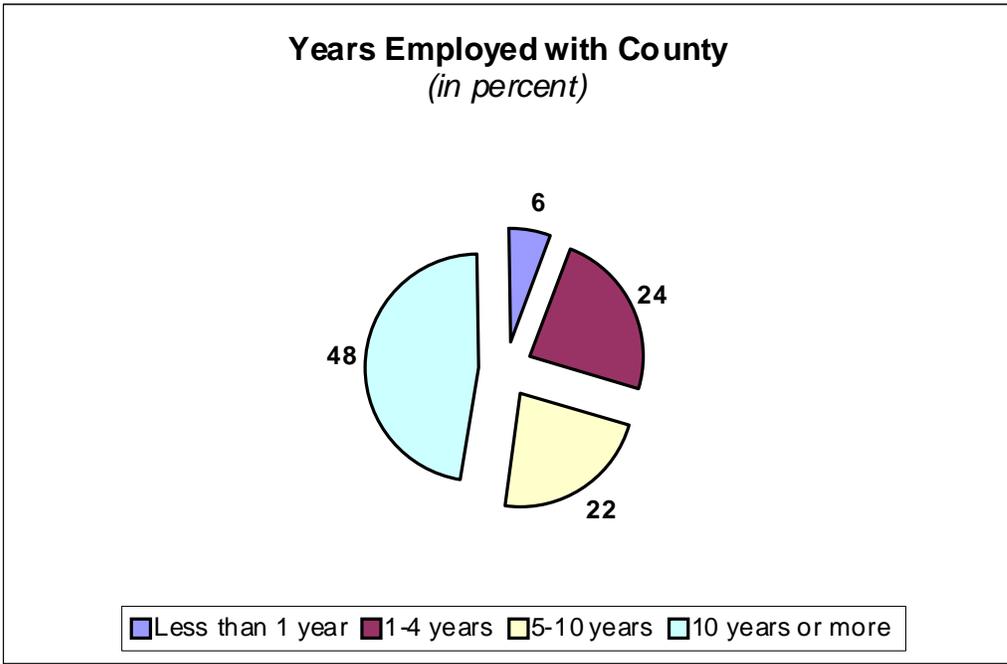
**Employment Status:** Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the respondents are full-time permanent employees and eligible for health insurance benefits. Contractors are one percent (1%) of all survey respondents. Eleven percent (11%) of the respondents are full-time temporary (FTT) and part-time temporary (PTT) employees, ineligible for health insurance benefits. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the temporary respondents (214) are classified as full-time temporary employees.

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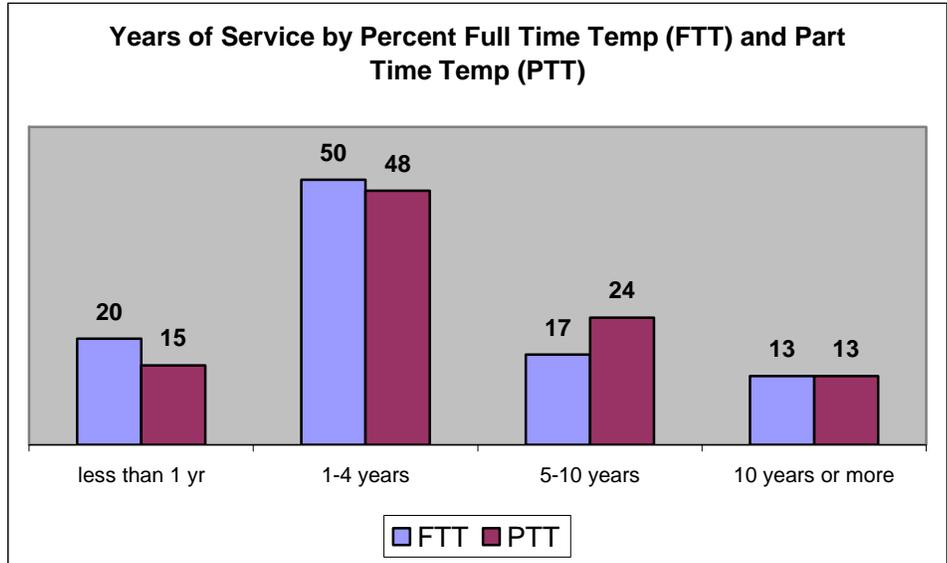
<sup>1</sup> About 250 surveys were completed manually; the remaining were completed online.



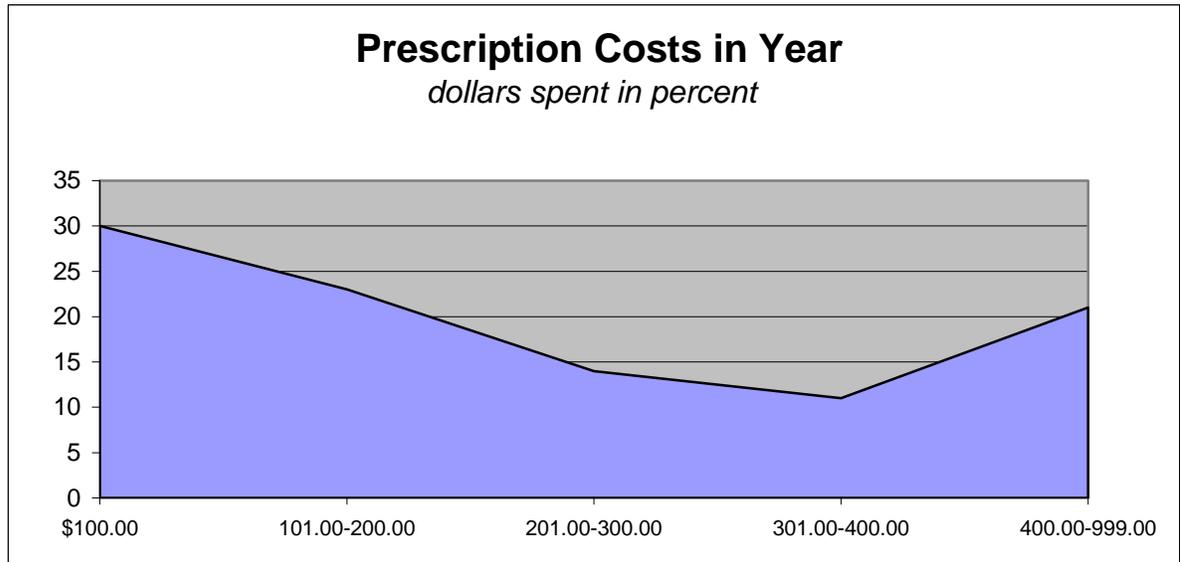
**Years Employed with Fulton County:** Due to technical problems, only the 2,387 employees that responded to the online survey answered questions about length of service with the County. Of that group, forty-eight percent (48%) have been Fulton County employees for a decade or more.



Forty-six percent (46%) of the respondents have been hired within the past 1-9 years. Six percent (6%) of the survey participants have worked for Fulton County for less than one year. However, fifty percent (50%) of all temporary employees that participated in the survey have been hired within the past four years.

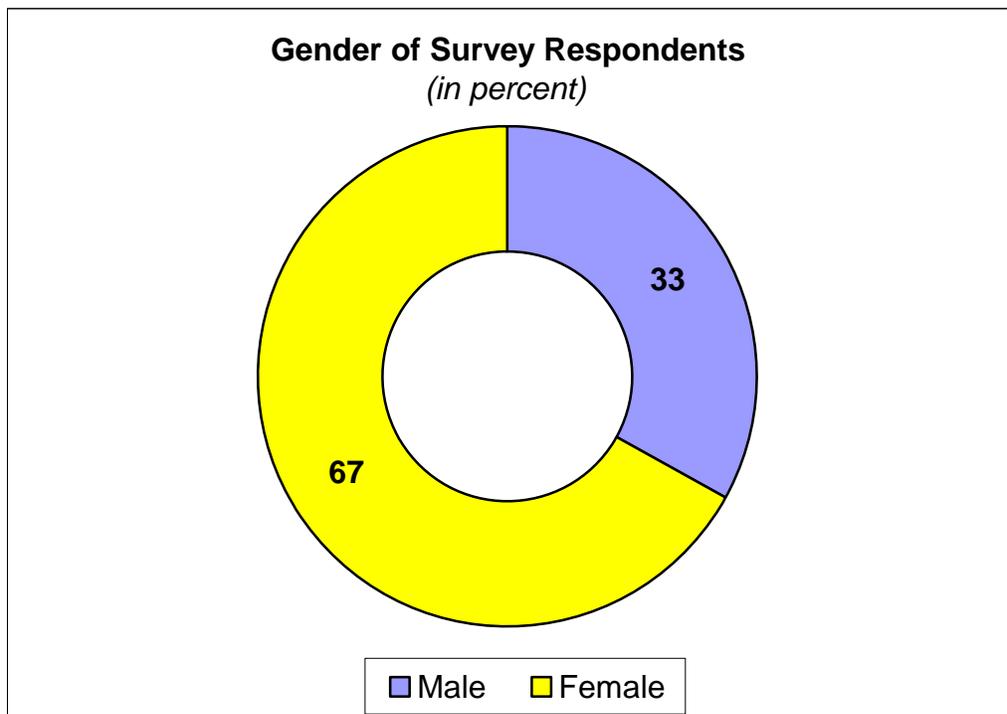
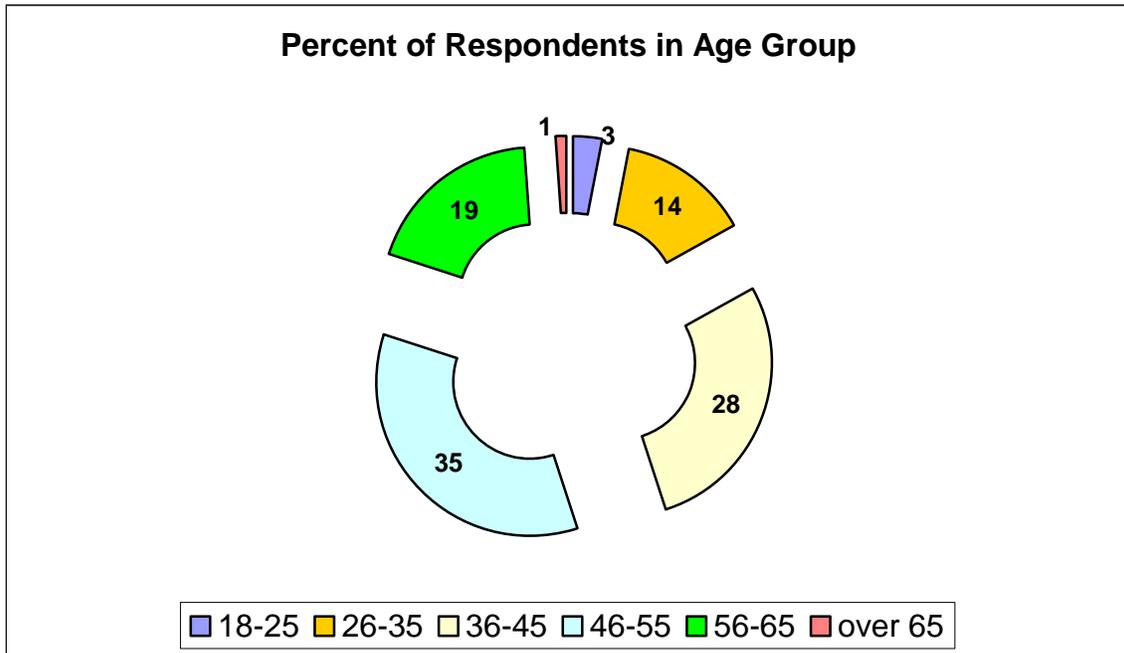


**Health Expenses:** Most respondents report spending less than \$300.00 dollars per year on prescriptions for themselves or members of their household.



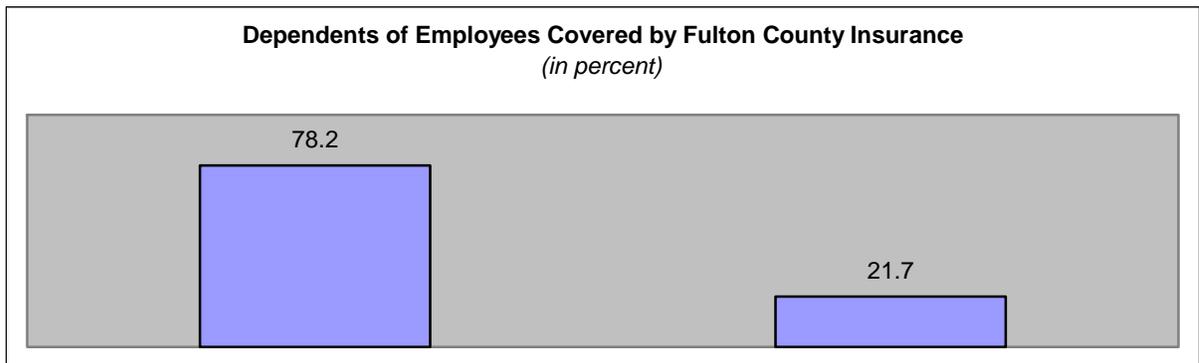
A significant percentage of the survey respondents (21%) spend over \$400.00 per year for prescriptions.

**Gender and Age:** Sixty-three percent (63%) of the respondents are between the ages of 36-55. Only three percent (3%) of the respondents are 18-25 years of age.



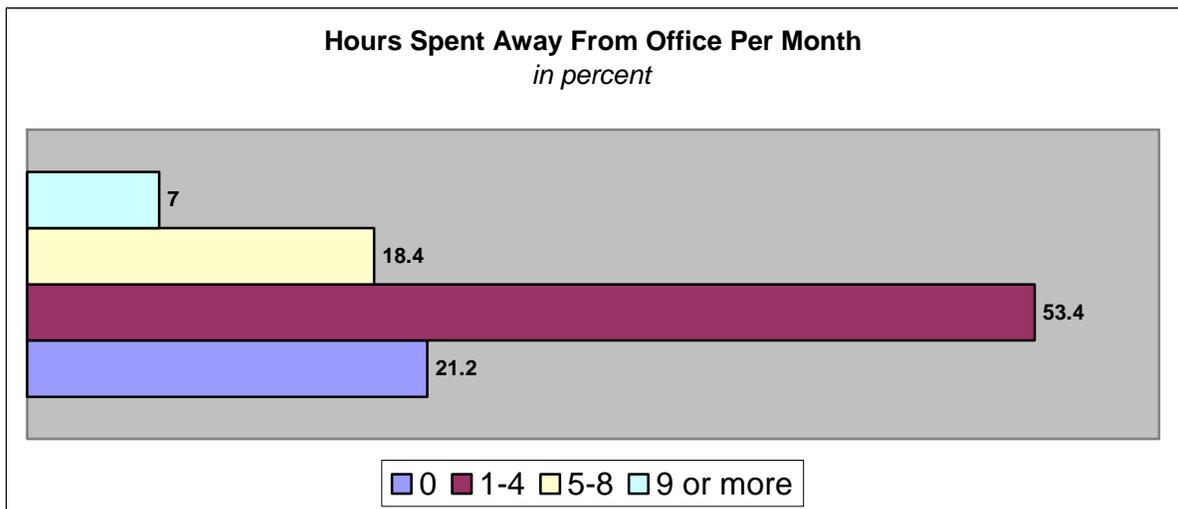
The majority of respondents are female employees.

Of the over 1,544 respondents that are covered by Fulton County's insurance, almost eighty percent (78.3) also have dependents that are covered by Fulton County's insurance.



### Time Spent Away From Office Due to Doctor Visits or Illness

**I. Observation:** *In Port St. Lucie, in the six months after the start of the clinic, there was a reduction of 20,000 hours of sick time taken as compared to the previous six months before the clinic opened.<sup>2</sup>*



**Survey Results:** Personal health concerns of Fulton County employees or members of their households occupy a portion of the workweek each month. Seventy-five percent, (75%) of the survey respondents report spending half a day or less per month away from the office for either their personal illness/ doctor visits or that of a household member. Twenty-one percent (21%) of the survey respondents report not taking time off, during work hours for doctor

<sup>2</sup> Brittni Johnson, City, County weigh employee health clinics, The Voice/SeminoleVoice.com, April 10, 2009, [www.seminolevoice.com/Seminole\\_Voice/article.asp?IDF-1695](http://www.seminolevoice.com/Seminole_Voice/article.asp?IDF-1695)

visits or illness. However, nearly a quarter of the respondents have taken a full day or more for illness or doctor visits.

Forty-six percent of the temporary and contractual employees that responded to the survey report spending 1-4 hours per month on illness or medical care issues for themselves or a member of their household. However, a third of the temporary and contractual employees report spending no time away from the office for medical concerns within a single month, compared to 19% for full time permanent employees.

**Implication:** More than half of the employees that participated in the survey spend a portion of a work day each month away from the office either due to a personal illness, or an illness of someone in the household. However, doctor visits or illnesses do not take up more than 4 hours a month for most of these employees.

### **Health Insurance Coverage**

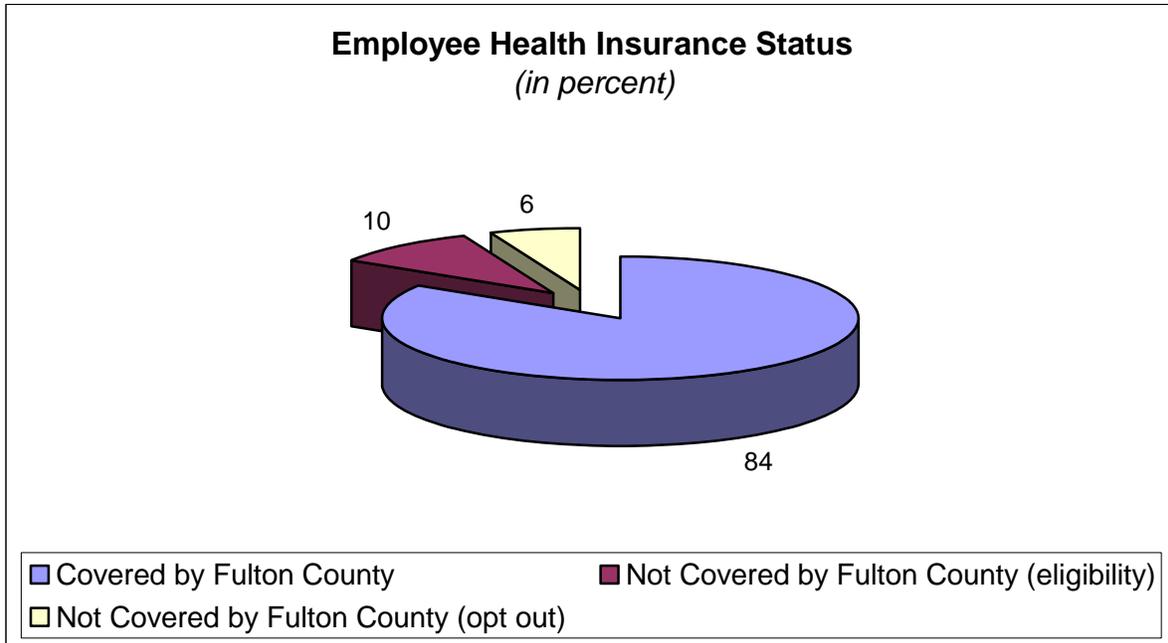
**II. Observation:** *"With the continuing increases in health insurance, folks are looking for creative ways to cut costs..." Spartanburg, S.C. County Administrator, Glenn Breed*<sup>3</sup>

**Survey Results:** Sixteen percent (16%) of the survey respondents are not covered by Fulton County's health insurance. Ten percent (10%) are not covered due to eligibility, and another six percent (6%) have opted not to participate in the County's employee plan.

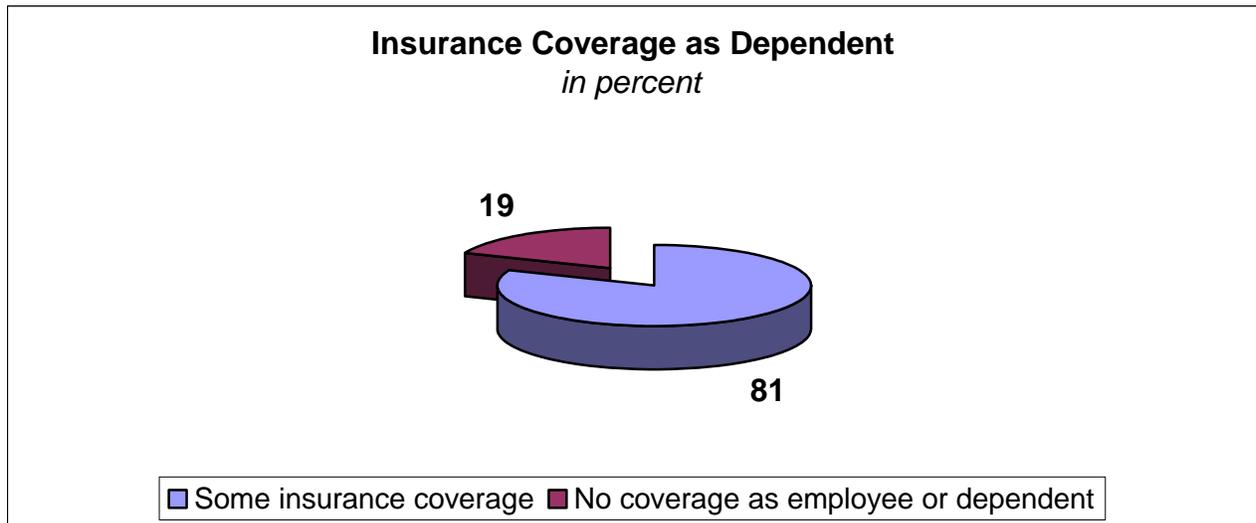
Moreover, nineteen percent (19%) of all respondents are not covered by any insurance either independently or as a dependent. However, fifty percent (50%) of the temporary and contractual employees are not covered by health insurance as a dependent.

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<sup>3</sup> John Byrum, County employees' free clinic saves money, may expand, GoUpstate.com, March 24, 2009  
[www.goupstate.com/article/20090324/articles/903241067](http://www.goupstate.com/article/20090324/articles/903241067)



Nineteen percent of the employees that do not have Fulton County coverage are also not covered as a dependent.

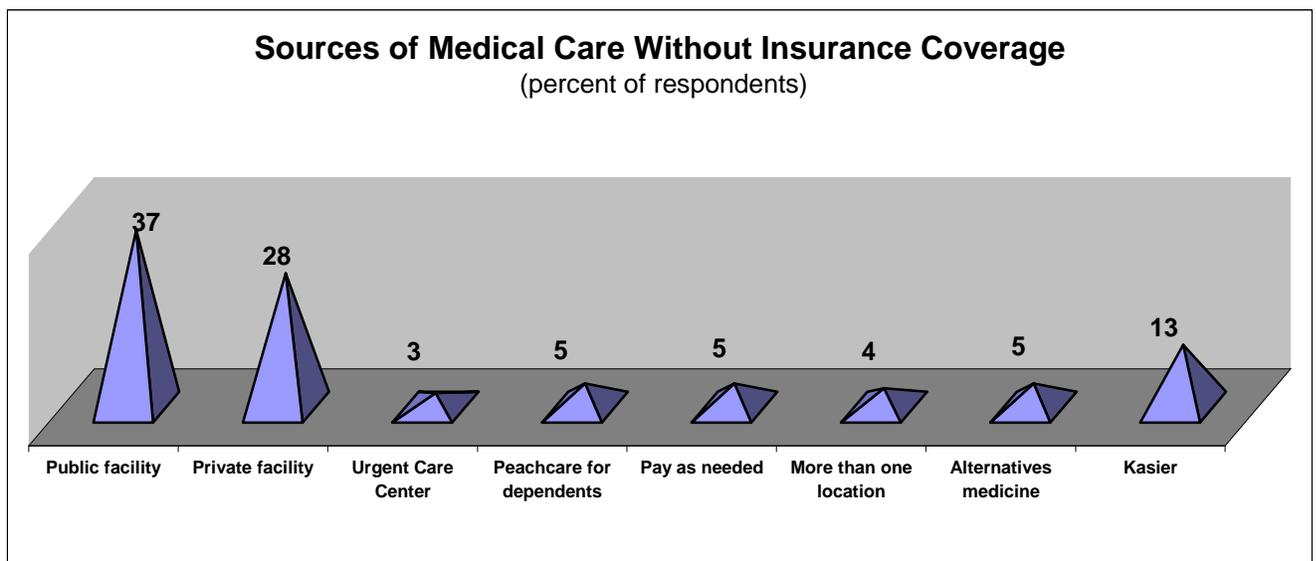


**Implication:** Nearly twenty percent (20%) of Fulton's employees may depend on self-coverage, or go without coverage since they do not have coverage as a dependent or employee. It is possible that two to three (2-3%) percent of Fulton's employees are already purchasing their own health insurance.

**III. Observation:** *One of the major tenants of Fulton County's new Common Ground approach is softening the burden of public medical facilities in caring for the uninsured. The lack of health insurance coverage requires additional personal and out of pocket and public expense.*

*" More than half of the visits to Grady's emergency department are for non-emergencies, or for urgent but primary care treatable or preventable conditions..."<sup>4</sup>*

**Survey Results:** Nearly eighty-eight percent (88%) of the respondents indicate that they have health insurance, and most likely receive their medical care through an insurance provider rather than use Fulton's public health facilities. However, when asked where they received their medical care if they do not have health insurance coverage 1/3 of the employees that did not have health insurance identified other public hospitals or clinics in the metro region as places where they sought medical care.



Five percent (5%) of the respondents have PeachCare coverage for their children as an alternative to employee/dependent coverage.

**Implication:** While Fulton County's uncovered employees may not be placing a strain on Fulton County's health facilities; other public facilities in the region are providing services to these employees and their dependents.

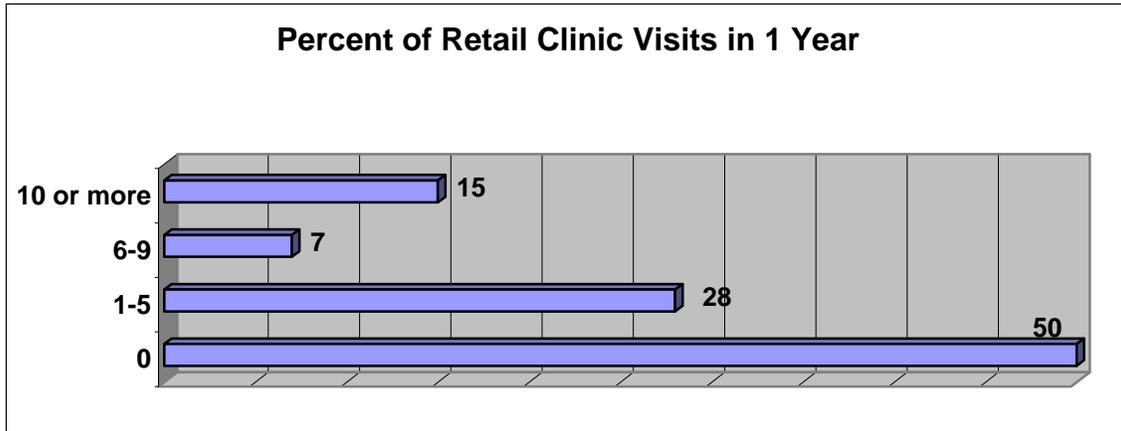
### Employee Interest in a Workplace Clinic

**IV. Observation:** *Today, more healthcare choices and resources are available, influencing many employers to revisit the company-doctor approach but expand it well beyond the work site and into the general healthcare marketplace.<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>4</sup> Fulton County Government, Common Ground: Creating Equity through Public Policy and Community Engagement, December 2008

<sup>5</sup> A. Michael LaPenna, Workplace Medical Clinics: The Employer-redesigned 'Company Doctor', Journal of Healthcare Management, 54:2

**Survey Results:** In general Fulton employees that responded to the survey are familiar with retail clinics, as nearly half of the employees have made at least one visit to a retail clinic within the past year.



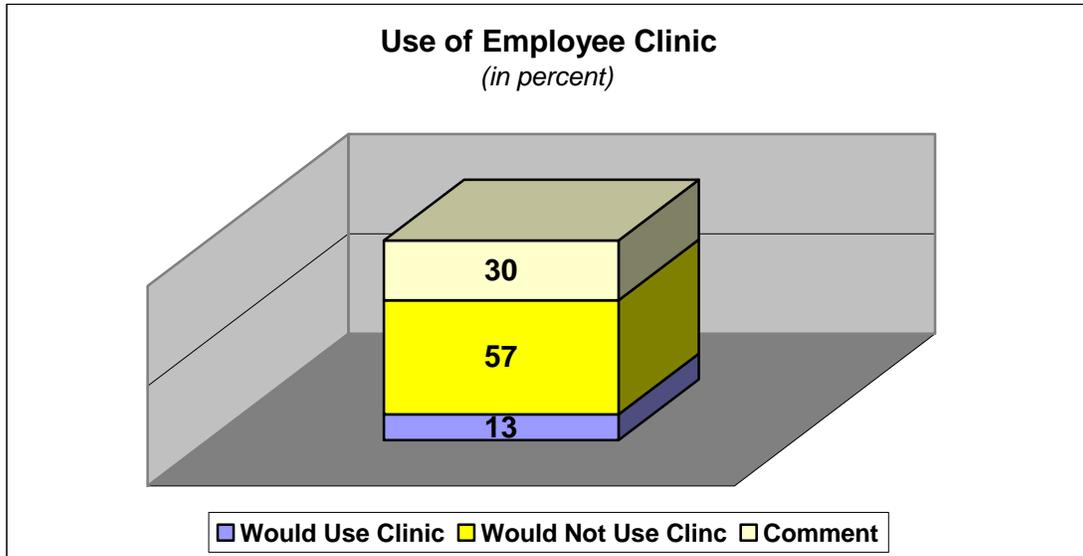
**Implication:** Fulton County employees are familiar with the retail clinic type setting. However, based on responses to their interest in using an employee clinic; employees that do visit retail clinics prefer to patronize services close to their place of residence.

**V. Observation:** *Summer County, TN, contracts with ..... to run its clinics, which, County official Hank Thompson said, is key to having employees feel comfortable at the clinics...You don't want the doctor to be an employee of the county... Employees feel more comfortable when it's not a county employee knowing their medical business...<sup>6</sup>*

**Survey Results:** Overall, forty-six percent (46%) of the respondents clearly state that they would use the clinic, comments on interest in the employee clinic represent 35% of all responses. On the other, sixty-three percent (63%) of the temporary and contractual employees that participated in the survey stated that they would use a workplace clinic.

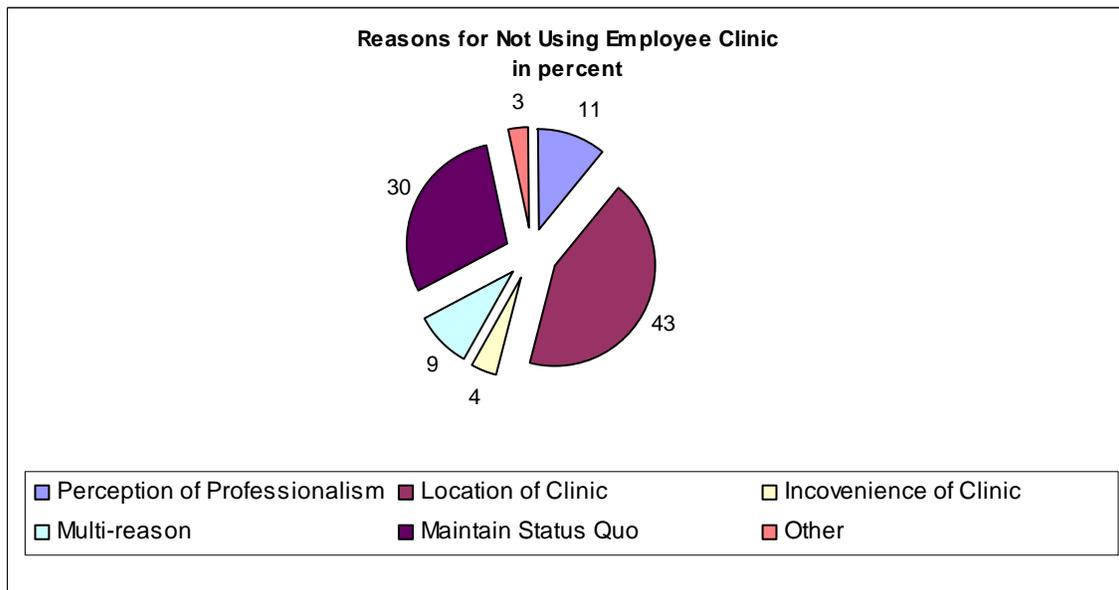
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<sup>6</sup> Charles Booth, Clinic saves money for county workers and government, *Tennessean.com*, Sunday 8 7 05.



### Respondent's Comments About An Employee Clinic

Sixty-seven percent, (67%) of the respondents that gave additional comments noted that they would not use the clinic. The principal reasons employees do not want to use the clinic include its location and a desire to keep their current doctor. However, fourteen percent (14%) of the respondents noted a conditional interest in using the employee clinic, if their concerns of location and possible cost can be addressed.



A quarter of those that would not use the clinic note 1) inconvenience of location, 2) privacy concerns and, 3) interest in keeping their current services as reasons they would not use the employee clinic.

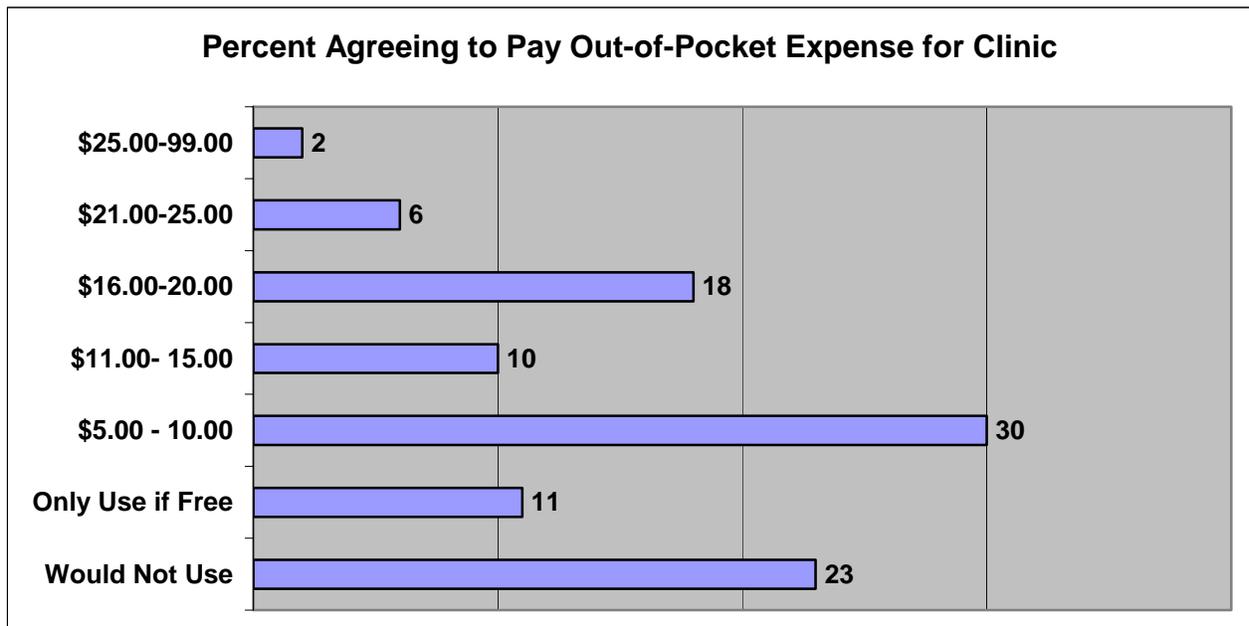
**Implication:** Based on their comments, any interest or concerns Fulton County employees have about using an employee clinic are driven by: 1) their current medical care needs, 2) perceptions of quality and privacy, and most of all 3) the location of the clinic. Employees have mixed feelings about the idea of an employee clinic, and are concerned about using the clinic to supplement or supplant their current care. Fourteen percent of the comments about an employee clinic were conditional suggesting that interest in using the clinic might be increased through an education campaign that fully explains the purpose of the clinic.

**VI. Observation:** *Hewitt and Associates recently surveyed 248 large and mid-sized companies... They reported that twenty-five percent (25%) of the employees used the clinics...*<sup>7</sup>

**Survey Results:** Fifty-two percent of the respondents report that they might visit the employee clinic at least once a year, even if they do not care to use it on a regular basis. Only forty percent (40%) of the respondents with dependents covered by the Fulton County health plan think their dependents might use the clinic at least once a year. They further state that their dependents would not use the clinic for the same reasons they (the employee) would not use it: location, traffic, distance from home etc. However, sixty five percent (65%) of the employees that would use the clinic agree to paying some type of out-of-pocket expense.

**Implication:** Given the proper campaign, it might be possible to encourage staff to use the clinic, if it was made convenient for employees and their dependents.

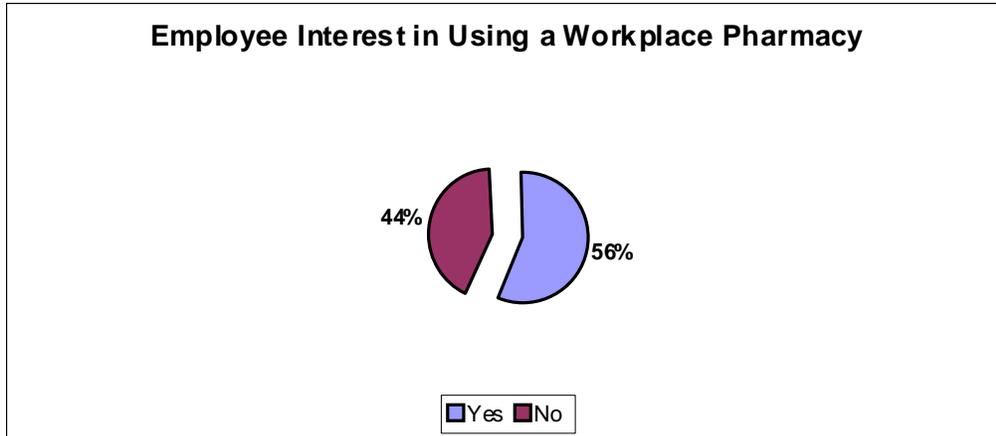
Sixty five percent (65%) of the respondents agree to pay an out of pocket expense to use the employee clinic.



<sup>7</sup> Don Mooradian, Jobsite health Clinics Open Door to Savings, HealthLeaders InterStudy, Tennessee Health Plan Analysis, Fall 2008, 20:4

## Employee Interest in a Workplace Pharmacy<sup>8</sup>

**VII. Observation:** *Hewitt and Associates recently surveyed 248 large and mid-sized companies... They reported that half of the employees used the pharmacies...*<sup>9</sup>



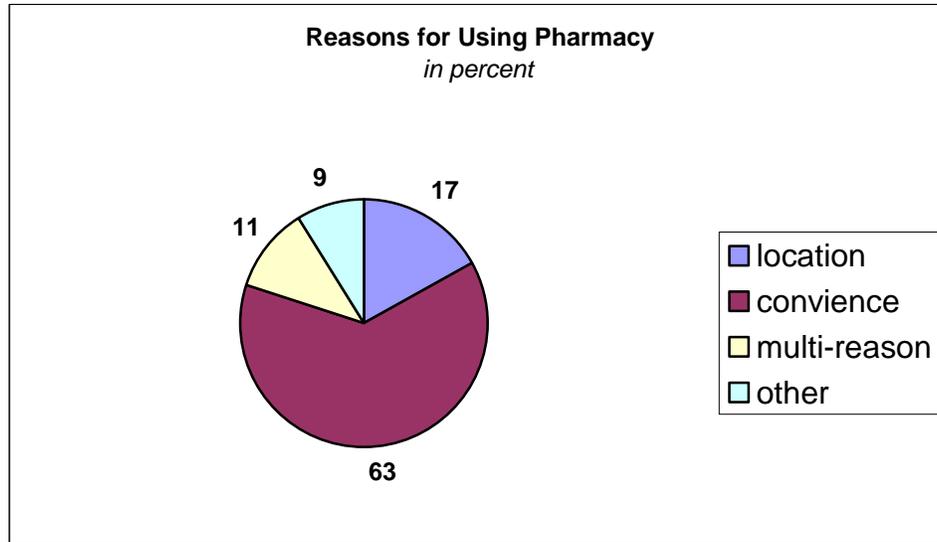
**Survey Results:** Contrary to their limited willingness to use an employee clinic, sixty-three (63%) of the respondents stated that they would be willing to use the employee pharmacy. However, when asked for reasons why they would or would not use the pharmacy, respondents were divided; and those not interested in the pharmacy were most vocal with 51 percent of the comments. The response from temporary and contractual employees was even higher; as seventy-five percent (75%) of these respondents indicated that they would use the workplace pharmacy.

### Comments on Using a Workplace Pharmacy

Fifty-one percent of the comments were in favor of the pharmacy; and thirty-four percent of the comments were conditional. Conditional comments state that employees would use the pharmacy if it met certain needs, such as cost, location, and ease of access.

<sup>8</sup> Eight percent of all responses in this section were obtained from part time and full time temporary employees.

<sup>9</sup> Don Mooradian, Jobsite Health Clinics Open Door to Savings, HealthLeaders InterStudy, Tennessee Health Plan Analysis, Fall 2008, 20:4



Fifty four percent (54%) of the respondents noted that they would use the pharmacy at least once per month. Only forty-six percent (46%) of the respondents with dependents noted that their dependents might also use the pharmacy.

**Implication:** There is greater employee interest in an employee pharmacy than a clinic and the employee-pharmacy is viewed as a convenience.

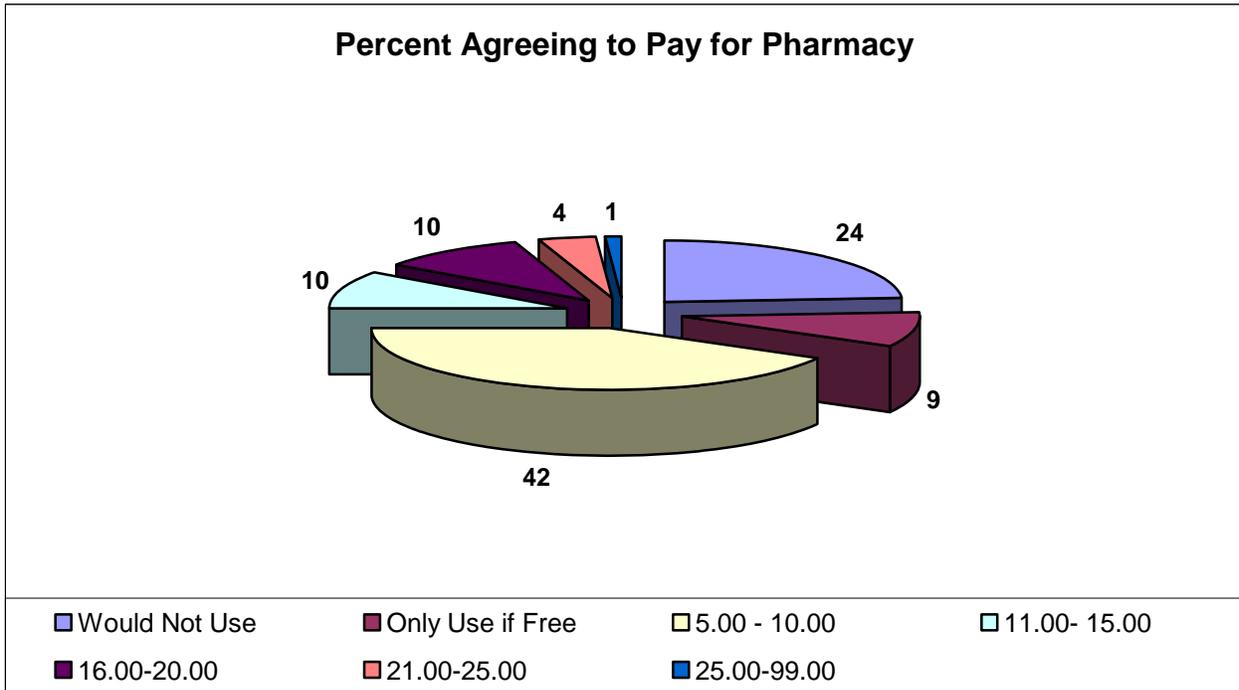
**VIII. Observation:** *Rutherford County, TN employees have not been paying to use the onsite clinic, but beginning in January 2009, the 250 persons with high-deductible plans will have a co-pay for non-preventive services.*<sup>10</sup>

**Survey Results:** Employees are willing to pay out of pocket for services at an employee pharmacy. However, most are willing to pay no more than \$10.00 as a co-pay.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Sixty-seven percent of those that would use the pharmacy would be willing to pay an out of pocket fee.



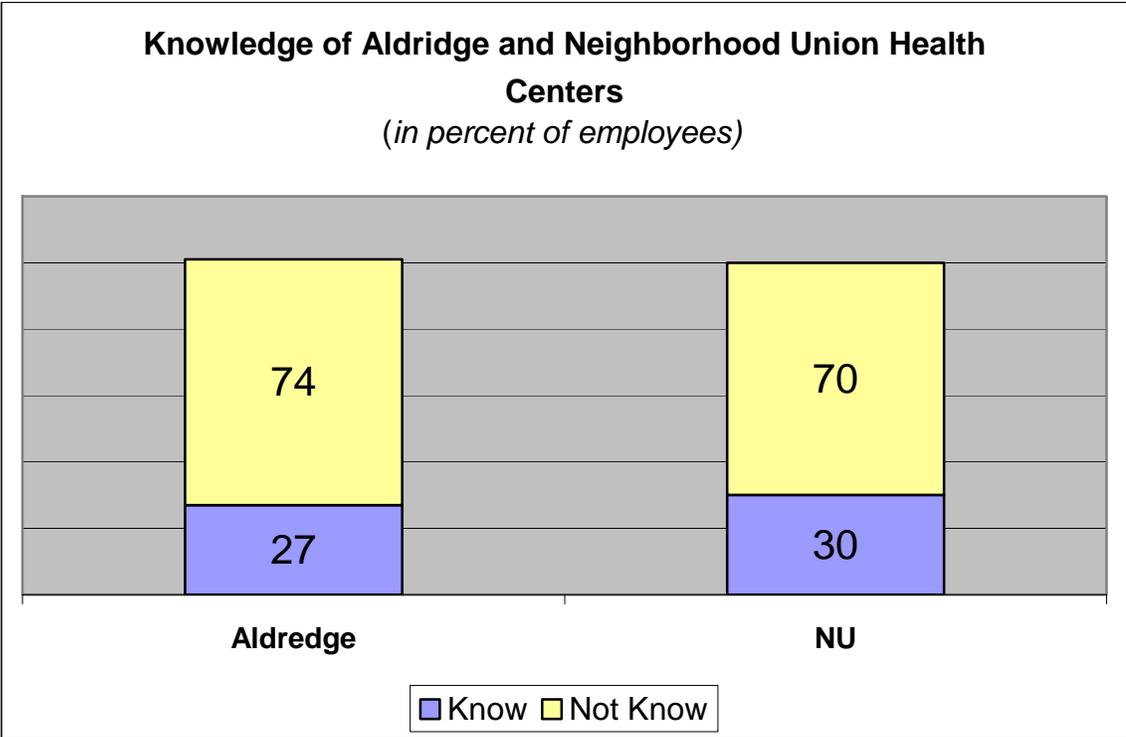
**Implication:** Fulton County employees may be inclined to use the pharmacy if it demonstrates a savings for them, and is less time consuming than the methods they currently use to meet their prescription needs.

### **Knowledge of the New Services At Neighborhood Union and Aldridge Health Centers**

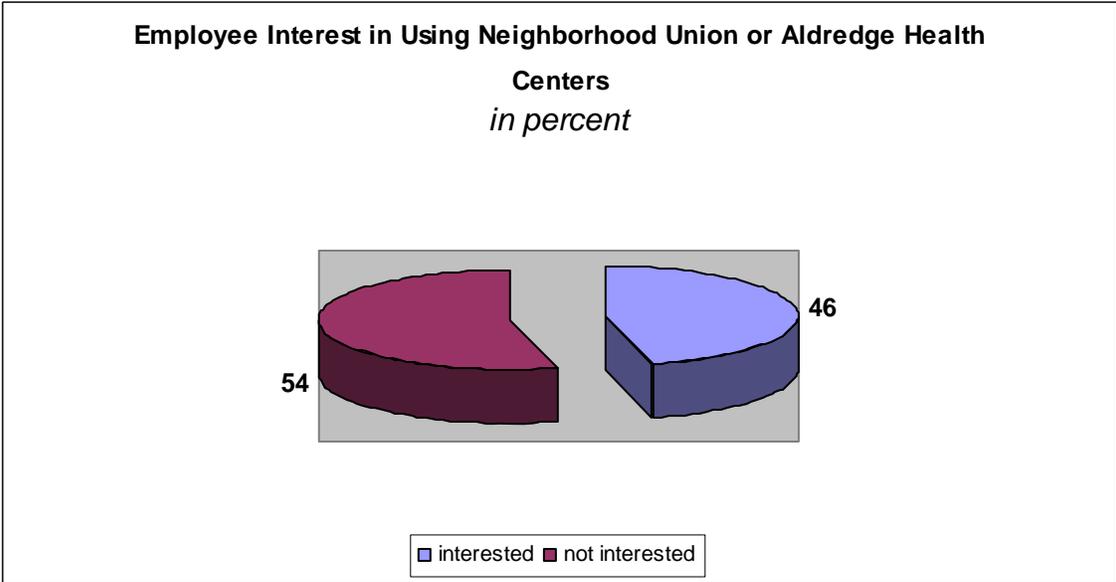
**IX. Observation:** *A major strength of the [Neighborhood Union] Health Center location is the Center's ability to serve as a springboard for future county initiatives that address the social determinants of health...*<sup>11</sup>

**Survey Results:** Most respondents do not know about Fulton County's new Aldridge or Neighborhood Union Health Centers .

<sup>11</sup> Fulton County Government, **Common Ground**

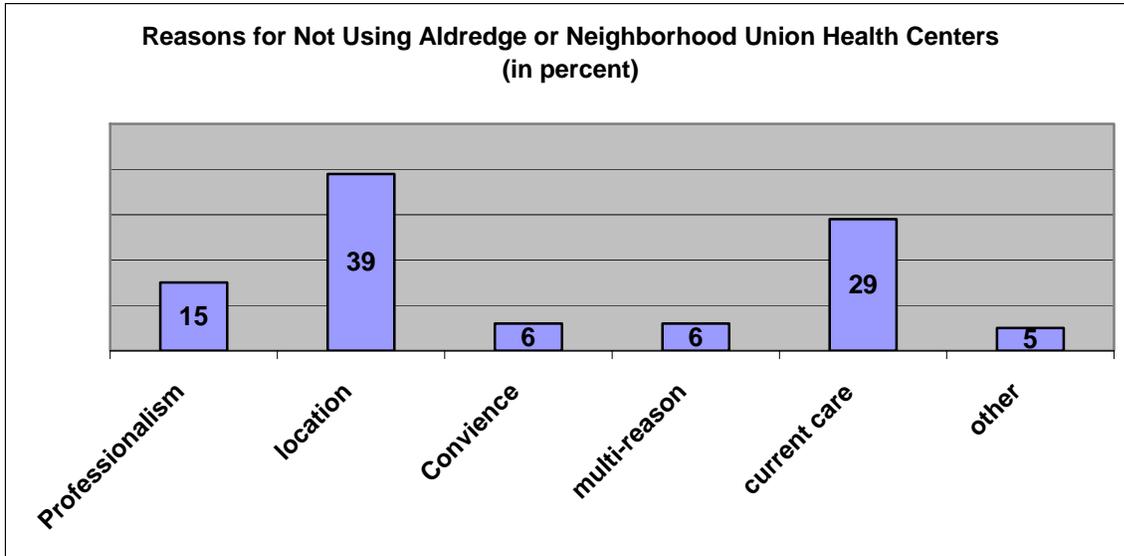


The level of employee interest in using the Neighborhood Union or Aldridge Health Centers may be fueled, in part, by the lack of knowledge about the centers or the new services provided there. The current level of employee interest in using the Aldridge and Neighborhood Union centers are driven by the same factors that affect their interest in using an employee clinic at 141 Pryor, location, current use of a primary physician and convenience.



Fifty-four percent of the survey respondents indicated that they were not interested in using either the Aldridge or Neighborhood Union Health Centers. Moreover, nine hundred

respondents provided comments- and seventy-one percent of the comments identified reasons for not wanting to use either Aldredge or Neighborhood Union.



The most frequently cited reasons (46 %) for not using the centers were related to the center's location, and a preference for existing medical arrangements. However, seventeen percent (17%) of the comments were conditional, (*i.e., I would use the health centers if...*) ; suggesting that some disinterest could be averted by exploring some of the concerns expressed by the respondents.

Contrary to the overall results, when temporary and contractual employee responses were isolated from the whole two-thirds, or sixty-six percent of them indicated that they would use the Aldredge and Neighborhood Union Health Centers.

**Implication:** If Fulton County wishes to extend employee privileges to its public health, facilities it may be necessary to inform employees about the services. However, advertising alone will not alleviate employee concerns. Employees may have some interest in taking advantage of the services at these and other public health centers provided their concerns about service restrictions, geography, quality, and costs at these facilities are addressed.

## Recommendations

A supplemental study of local government employee clinics and pharmacies illustrated the various employer based clinic/pharmacy models that are available. (See Appendix A). Some of these models are: 1) clinic only; 2) pharmacy only; 3) clinic/dispensary; and 4) clinic/pharmacy. Other, usually smaller governments, provide services for their employees at their local public health centers. In some cases, the employer establishes a dispensary instead of a pharmacy; while other governments offer a full pharmacy. Fulton County might wish to review the benefits and costs of these models.

Governments have often opted for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider to operate the facility. Most hire consultants to advise them on a suitable structure. Governments also partner with other local governments and authorities in providing the service as a collective. Taking these options into account, the following recommendations are based on the preliminary results of the *2006 Fulton County Employee Clinic/Pharmacy Survey*.

**Recommendation 1. With the help of a specialized consultant, Fulton County should explore the start-up cost related to establishing a clinic/pharmacy before further consideration.**

Research on other employee clinic/pharmacies suggest the following cost should be taken into account:

1) Medical equipment -

The type of medical equipment provided will shape the type of services delivered at a clinic.

2) Building renovations-

Existing buildings are often renovated to house private exam rooms and equipment. Special codes may need to be followed.

3) Security-

Pharmacies need to be secured.

4) Staffing-

Usually high quality medical staff are not considered employees of the local governments and are hired by a third party. The skill level and specialties of the staff will shape the services offered at the clinic.

5) Management-

Some operations are managed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party that is involved in staffing and daily operations.

6) Overall savings-

Possible savings of an employee clinic/pharmacy vs. employer shared health benefits

**Recommendation 2: If a cost-benefit analysis demonstrates that, an employee clinic/pharmacy is feasible Fulton County should further explore employee interest before making final decisions.**

Information obtained from the current survey only touches the surface. It will be necessary to obtain in-depth information regarding what lies below the surface when employees are thinking of the benefits or challenges associated with an employee clinic/pharmacy. Any additional information gathering should accompany a plan to which employees can respond. In addition, the dissemination of the plan should be part of a larger education campaign to inform employees about the strengths and limitations of the plan.

**Recommendation 3: The differences in opinion between permanent and temporary employees over the benefits of an employee clinic/pharmacy should be addressed.**

The survey results suggested real differences between the opinions of temporary/contractual and permanent employees over the value of an employee clinic/pharmacy. If an employee/clinic pharmacy is instituted, Fulton County would need to conduct a cost benefit analysis that takes into consideration the cost of the clinic/pharmacy over other, less expensive methods of providing help to temporary employees and assisting them with their health care costs.



## Appendix A: RESULTS OF TELEPHONE SURVEY ON EMPLOYEE CLINICS

<b>Government</b>	<b>Clinic/Pharmacy</b>	<b>Provider/3<sup>rd</sup> Party</b>	<b>Special Arrangements</b>	<b>Serve Temp/Part-time Employees</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Remote Locations</b>	<b>Worker's Comp Site</b>	<b>NACO/NLC Health member</b>	<b>Savings</b>
Port St. Lucie, FL	clinic/dispensary	Crown Consultants/ CareHere	paid based on number of employees in health plan	N/A	walking distance from City Hall	N/A	yes	no	2 million
Maricopa County, Az	clinic/pharmacy	Walgreen health Initiative	only for benefit eligible employees	information not available	close to main offices	no answer	no- not a work injury model	no	\$575,000
Richmond County, NC	clinic	use county nurse-practitioner	no insurance used	now free to all employees (under review for 2010)	centrally located public health site	N/A	no	no	don't know
Spartanburg, NC	clinic	Blue Choice	Well Regional Hospital	12-15% of employees don't have health insurance- library currently not part of clinic	2-3 blocks from main building	no information provided	no	no	0% increase from provider
Palm Beach, FL	clinic/dispensary	Crown Consultants/CareHere	Blue Cross pays for administration, materials and equipment	N/A- county may plan one and ask schools to share costs	strip mall ¼ from City Hall	N/A	yes for 1-2 visits	no	½ million \$500,000