



connecting for Health

We Respond to Rising Demand for Dental Care

By Dee Katson

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In the summer of 2013, Marin Community Clinics completed an expansion of the San Rafael Dental clinic. Three more chairs were added to the six that were established in 2008. That expansion, together with the opening of the Novato Dental clinic's six chairs in 2010, marks a huge growth in just five short years. Even though the San Rafael clinic operates seven days a week, with Sundays reserved for pregnant women to protect them from exposure to nitrous oxide, it is still a challenge to keep up with demand.

In order to understand the significance of this growth, we sat down with the three dentists who conceived and built up our innovative dental program. In 2008 two highly respected Marin dentists – Dr. John Boland and Dr. Louis Geissberger – collaborated with the then newly hired director Dr. Connie Kadera, now our Chief Dental Officer, to establish the program. Their thoughts follow.

What impact has Marin Community Clinics' dental program had on low income families?

Dr. Boland: The impact is immeasurable. Before we opened, there was a long wait list at the County clinic, and virtually no private dentists would take low income patients. From the beginning we set out to focus on infants and very young children by educating parents about oral hygiene. This focus on prevention is helping.

Dr. Geissberger: The high usage of our dental services shows that there is still extreme need. Fortunately, the San Rafael clinic has now expanded to 9 chairs, and it is still busy. We have a good re-call system to remind patients to return for preventive care – focusing on prevention really works.

Dr. Kadera: We have seen lower rates of infection and decay. Our prevention program is working. When people are able to get preventive care, sooner rather than later, that inevitably means less pain, less time off from work, more time in school.

What is the biggest challenge you have faced in building the dental program?

Dr. Boland: There have not been any huge challenges because of the unwavering support from the board and administration, as well as generous funding from Marin Community Foundation/Sutter Health Access to Care Fund and individual donors.

Dental – continued on page 3



Dental assistant views digital X-rays while young patient waits in child-friendly dental environment

Leading Voices

Letter from Bill Kerr, Board Chair and Linda Tavaszi, CEO



The latest buzz around Marin Community Clinics – and health centers across the country – is about the Affordable Care Act (sometimes called Obamacare). Implementation of new components of the health reform measure will go into effect January 1, 2014, and we will be ready. Will you be ready?



Many of the reforms conceived in 2009 have already begun to improve lives. Those who are insured are already receiving free preventive care visits, and kids up to age 26 can stay insured on their parents' plans. Additional benefits are coming soon – no one can be denied coverage because of a pre-existing

condition, and all insurance companies must offer the same ten essential benefits.

If you are a business owner who already provides insurance to your employees, if you are employed and receive insurance from your employer, or if you are on Medicare, you probably won't see any major changes in 2014. However, if you are self-employed and struggling to pay for coverage, or if you work hard but do not receive benefits from your employer, your options for health insurance will change dramatically.

On October 1st of this year, enrollment began for insurance coverage effective in January 2014. Just about everyone will be required to have some form of health insurance. Fortunately, California is leading the way toward efficient implementation of health reform by setting up the largest health insurance exchange in the country, called Covered California. Anyone can purchase an individual or small business insurance plan through Covered California and, depending on their income, may receive premium assistance in the form of a tax credit that will help them pay for insurance.

Medi-Cal (California's version of the federal Medicaid program) is also expanding by covering adults under age 65 with incomes up to 138% of Federal Poverty Level. Currently, Medi-Cal has a lower income threshold for eligibility and there are asset limitations. With a few exceptions, adults who do not have dependent children cannot qualify now. In 2014,

the asset requirement will be dropped and only income will be considered. We expect as many as 4,300 of Marin Community Clinics' currently uninsured patients will qualify for Medi-Cal benefits under the new plan.

This summer, 16 of our employees were trained by Covered California to become Certified Educators. In addition, we have Certified Enrollment Counselors in each of our four main clinics to answer questions about Medi-Cal expansion, eligibility and other insurance options. And they can help people enroll when they are ready.

We have resources available for our current and potential patients. There is a new Insurance Information Help Line (415-755-2586) to get answers to specific questions or for general information. Inquiries can also be sent by email (InsuranceHelp@marinclinics.org) and our website has lots of other resources and links. We are collaborating with the County Health & Human Services Department to follow up on Medi-Cal enrollments. We are also working closely with the Redwood Community Health Coalition, a regional consortium of health centers, which has been funded by Covered California to assist community health centers with implementation. We invite you to follow the links on our website to learn more about the Affordable Care Act (www.marinclinics.org).

The Affordable Care Act is also enabling a very important long-term change in the way health care is delivered. The national move toward the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) concept has been mentioned in our previous newsletters, but may still be a mystery to most observers. Essentially, the PCMH movement will transform health care delivery from a fee-for-service orientation to an outcomes-based model. The PCMH focus is on patient access, team care and self-management, relying on care teams of proactive health care providers who engage with the patient to maintain or improve health.

Even when all the transitional excitement subsides, there will still be some uninsured patients who will need our help. We will continue to rely on the thoughtful and generous support of people like you to meet the demand for primary care medical and dental services. We hope you will continue to support us in the new world of health care delivery.

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Two generous local Marin County stores will donate up to 5% of your purchases to MCC when you designate us to receive contributions!

We invite you to register for a Community Card at **Mollie Stone's Markets** and/or **Woodlands Market**.

Registration forms are available on our website or in the stores.

It's that easy to support compassionate health care in our community!



Dental— continued from page 1

It is difficult to verify results of outreach programs. For example, in our fluoride varnish program in San Rafael, the medical staff refers children to the dental side when they come in for well-child pediatric visits. But it is hard to catch every child.

Dr. Geissberger: The no-show rate is too high. That adds to the difficulty we already have in keeping up with the demand. We try different strategies to minimize no-shows, but it remains a problem.

Dr. Kadera: At first, the challenge was lack of awareness that we existed. But very quickly we had a hard time keeping up with demand – we had some issues with long wait times. With more space in San Rafael and Novato, that has improved. A big challenge was the loss of Medi-Cal dental coverage for adults. Thankfully, Marin Community Foundation/Sutter Health Access to Care Fund has helped, but it is still hard to meet the demand for adult dental services. And, we still have emergencies every day – that tells us that there are still many people who cannot afford preventive care.



Young patient is ready for state-of-the-art Panoramic X-Ray.

What changes do you expect to see in 2014?

Dr. Boland: I expect to see greater efficiencies by building the staff. We hope to hire enough dentists to expand the fluoride/varnish program to Novato.

Dr. Geissberger: I hope we can build a pool of volunteer specialists, such as oral surgeons to work at the clinics.

Dr. Kadera: Adult dental coverage by Medi-Cal! We have been told that it will be reinstated by May of 2014. That will make a huge difference in our ability to help adults. We may have so much more demand that we will need to increase our hours to accommodate more patients. I would also like to increase access to specialty dental services next year. We currently have one oral surgeon who will take our patients on referral. But we still need more volunteer specialists, such as endodontists for complicated root canals and extractions that we can't handle.



John Boland, DDS, volunteers in the San Rafael Dental Clinic

What would you like people in the community to know about our dental services?

Dr. Boland: We are still the best kept secret in Marin. I would like to change that – I want people to know we exist, and that we are doing great things, especially for children.

Dr. Geissberger: We offer preventive, restorative, and emergency dental services for people of all ages, although as Dr. Kadera noted, access is limited for adults. We have state-of-the-art clinics in Novato and San Rafael. People still don't seem to know that we have a beautiful clinic in Novato.

Dr. Kadera: I want everyone to know that we have a fantastic team of providers and staff, who are dedicated and passionate about this community. Dr. Boland and Dr. Geissberger were volunteers who started with a vision of the future – they saw a tremendous need and cared enough to make it happen! We are all incredibly fortunate that they built this program.

Thank you to these generous supporters who donated from January 1, 2013 – June 30, 2013

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marin community clinics

Community Champion – Becky Oken

By Judith Snead

Becky Oken is usually quite private about her contributions. However, to encourage others to support Marin Community Clinics and consider creative ways of giving to align with their personal interests, she agreed to share her story.

Becky and her husband Jerry, member and former chair of our Board of Directors, have long been supporters of Marin Community Clinics. Their giving has included the annual campaign, 2007 Capital Campaign, and sponsorship of the Annual Summer Solstice Celebration. Following a recent clinic tour Becky came to staff with a request – she wanted to find a creative, tangible way to honor her late grandfather, Dr. Corydon F. Heard of Erie, Pennsylvania, and her father Corydon F. Heard, Jr.

Becky's grandfather was an Ear/Nose/Throat surgeon and her father was a hospital director at the Veterans' Administration for many years. Becky is proud of her family history and wanted to honor her elders in a way that symbolized their devotion to the health and well-being of others while incorporating her own interests.

Knowing that she wanted her special gift to benefit pediatric patients, Becky had several discussions with staff, including Lead Pediatrician Dr. Tracey Hessel, to determine the best use of this one-time gift. Ultimately the fund was used to purchase diagnostic equipment, nebulizers, and books. To improve treatment and assessment and to make appropriate specialist referrals, her gift allowed the purchase of tympanometers to

detect presence or absence of fluid in the ear, and panoptic ophthalmoscopes to conduct retinal exams to detect signs of hypertension. Nebulizers, which change medication from liquid to a more effective mist for infants and small children, are sometimes loaned to the families of young pediatric patients with asthma.

You might wonder how books fit into a health care setting. Marin Community Clinics participates in the nationwide "Reach Out and Read" program. We distribute books to children aged 6 months – 5 years during their well-child visits to encourage literacy and education. Pediatricians reinforce parents' role as the first and most important teacher in their children's lives, encouraging them to read aloud to their children during the critical early years of cognitive and language development. Reach Out and Read makes literacy promotion a part of regular checkups so that children enter school prepared to excel. Supporting this program was a perfect fit for Becky, who has been a reading tutor at San Pedro Elementary School through Marin County School Volunteers for 13 years. Becky said that, "Reading is such an important ability, and it is widely recognized that education is linked to health status. I love to read and to watch children learn to read and enjoy it."

We are grateful to Becky for her ongoing support of our programs and for choosing to honor her deceased grandfather and father with a special contribution to benefit our pediatric patients for years to come.

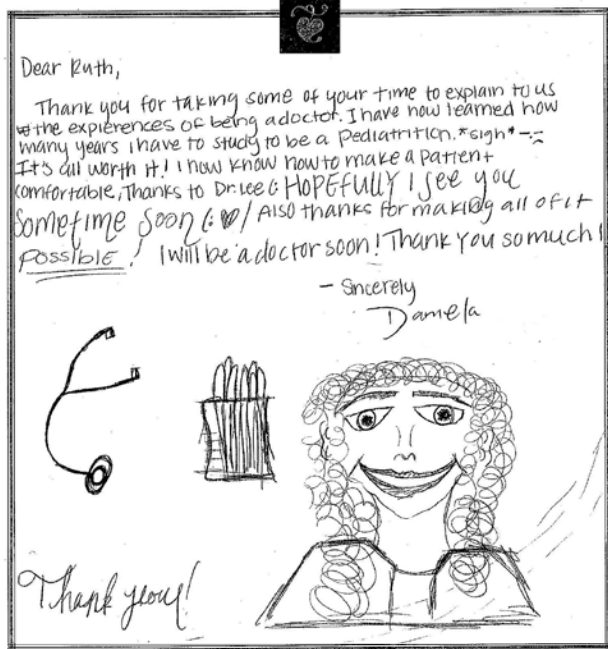


Jerry & Becky Oken

What else is new? Visit our website for:

- ❖ Community cards offered by Mollie Stone's Markets and Woodlands Market help support our programs
- ❖ More useful links to resources for information on the coming implementation of the Affordable Care Act
- ❖ Don't forget to LIKE us on Facebook!

www.marinclinics.org



Davidson Middle School Job Shadow Day

Eighth graders from Davidson Middle School visited our San Rafael clinic to participate in a job shadow program in May 2013. Students were able to learn about medical professions alongside Dr. Aida Calvillo, and other doctors, nurse practitioners and medical assistants. The day in the clinic opened students' eyes to their future opportunities.

MCC is proud to be able to open doors and minds for tomorrow's medical professionals!

Summer Solstice Celebration

The 2013 version of Summer Solstice offered all the magic and even more whimsy and spice for the annual celebration of the season. A taste of local mead (honey wine made in Point Reyes) and creative wreaths assured the magic of ancient times. And the photo booth allowed us to channel our inner celebrity.

Dr. Steven Schroeder and Dr. Georgianna Farren –our Champions – were honored and beautifully framed by glorious sunshine and an inspiring call to action articulated by Tom Peters, President and CEO of Marin Community Foundation.

You won't want to miss the celebration next year! **Please plan to join us at the Marin Art and Garden Center in Ross on Thursday, June 19, 2014.**



Ben Aune of Operation Access poses with San Rafael Clinic Director Ruth Rivera-Sura





marin community clinics

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Health Care Reform is coming soon!

Starting in January 2014, most people will be required to have health insurance. The Affordable Care Act will bring good news for those of us who are currently uninsured, or under-insured, or struggling to pay the high cost of individual health plans. It is very good news for the many people previously denied Medi-Cal coverage who may now be eligible. For people between 18 and 65 years of age, Medi-Cal is expanding the maximum income level and eliminating asset restrictions, making it easier for individuals to qualify.

Health care reform is coming!
Call, qualify and enroll
for free or affordable health coverage.

Still, not everyone will be eligible for Medi-Cal. If your income is too high for Medi-Cal, you may be able to buy insurance through Covered California, an online insurance marketplace that will allow individuals to compare and purchase health insurance. Depending on your income, you may qualify for premium assistance to reduce the cost of your insurance. Open enrollment for Medi-Cal and Covered California began October 1st 2013. It is important to become informed and sign up immediately so that you're covered in 2014.

Marin Community Clinics has trained Educators and Enrollment Counselors to help you make informed decisions about your health coverage.

For information and to see if you are eligible for Medi-Cal or insurance premium assistance:

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- Visit any of our clinics to speak to a Certified Enrollment Counselor and to get help with the enrollment process.