

NEWS RELEASE

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Uninsured?

**Local health center offers special program
to help those without insurance**

SAN MARCOS, Ca. September 27, 2013 – With Health Care Reform on the horizon, new insurance options will soon be available to a larger population in 2014, but for the estimated 20%¹ of North County residents who are uninsured, a new option will soon be available. North County Health Services (NCHS) is soon kicking off a simple solution—a new, one-fee payment option to help.

Beginning October 1st, anyone without insurance can come to one of North County Health Services' 10 locations and pay a flat fee which includes their visit, all labs, any x-rays or procedures they would need – included in one low price. This flat fee would range from \$40, \$50 or \$60 depending on income and family size. This is unprecedented as community clinics, or health centers, typically charge a low fee for the visit and any testing, procedures or lab work is all an additional discounted, but extra, expense – until now.

“We wanted to make accessing health care easier for our community, and give patients the peace of mind knowing they won't have any looming laboratory or other related bills after their visit. It really goes back to the heart of our mission,” says Deizel Sarte, COO of North County Health Services.

NCHS foresees this simple yet revolutionary plan as providing a great benefit to the community, and one local uninsured resident Jordan Kloos, agrees. Kloos, an Oceanside small business owner, is spending 12-15 hour days working to establish his start-up lighting company and, like many in the community, is uninsured. “With owning my own business, the cost of health care and insurance plans simply exceeds what I can afford at the moment.” When Kloos gets sick, he explains he typically uses over-the-counter medications or cough syrups or looks to the Internet, like WebMD, for advice. “If I get sick, I would consider spending the money out of pocket to see a doctor, but what I worry about is the potential extra expenses,” explains Kloos. “I don't want to go in and know what's wrong and not be able to afford the solution. It's the extra testing or expenses that I worry about. The unknown really keeps me from even considering it.”

For over 40 years, North County Health Services has welcomed the uninsured, but including all labs, x-rays and procedures is cutting-edge. NCHS believes this new payment structure will help open the door to many in the North County area who find themselves uninsured. “This is a clear indication to our community that we are truly committed to the complete care and well-being of our patients” adds Sarte. While this new low fee doesn’t cover prescription medications patients may need, North County Health Services does have Pharmacies on site at their two largest locations, in San Marcos and Oceanside, offering special discounted rates to qualifying patients. Additionally, NCHS also offers same-day appointment availability and transportation services.

When asked about how NCHS’ low fee for the uninsured would affect him, Kloos remarks he is encouraged, “It feels like they’re looking out for the community’s needs. I would definitely consider making an appointment now and would pass the word along to fellow uninsured business owners and friends.”

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About North County Health Services (NCHS)

North County Health Services is a private not-for-profit organization that serves over 60,000 patients annually at 10 community health centers in Carlsbad, Encinitas, Oceanside, San Marcos and Ramona, and through two mobile clinics. NCHS has been providing affordable, quality & comprehensive care to members of our north San Diego County communities who are uninsured or underinsured for over 40 years. Services at NCHS include pediatrics, obstetrics, gynecology, dental care, internal medicine, adolescent medicine, radiology, pharmacy and transportation services as well as community health outreach, prevention and disease management programs. We accept private insurances, Medi-Cal and Medicare. If you are uninsured, you may be eligible for low or no-cost programs based on your income, qualify for a discount or use our monthly payment plan. For more information, visit www.nchs-health.org or call 760-736-6767.

ⁱ (Center on Policy Initiatives, 2011)