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# OCEANSIDE CLINIC ADDS NEW PEDIATRIC WING

## \$7.5M facility increases number of available exam rooms to 18

By Edward Sifuentes 5:06 A.M. FEB. 28, 2015

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Oceanside — North County Health Services has opened a new \$7.5 million pediatrics office in Oceanside that officials say will help serve an expected increase in patients under new federal health insurance rules.

The project more than quadrupled the size of the nonprofit's existing clinic at 2210 Mesa Drive from 3,000 to 12,600 square feet, officials said. The new building, decorated in a nautical theme, has two large waiting rooms, a children's play area, conference space and exam rooms.

"It's really a gift to the community," said Deizel Sarte, North County Health Services' chief medical officer.

Built with the help of a \$5 million federal grant, the pediatric office is expected to increase the number of patients seen on-site from about 5,000 each year to roughly 25,000, officials said.

The expansion will help the clinic cope with an anticipated increase in the number of patients it expects to serve as a result of the implementation of the federal Affordable Care Act, which helps uninsured families enroll in health plans, officials said.



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North County Health Services now serves more than 60,000 patients each year through its 10 community health centers in Carlsbad, Encinitas, San Marcos, Oceanside and Ramona, and through two mobile clinics. It offers low- or no-cost services depending on family income and offers insurance enrollment services.

Most of the patients, about 95 percent, are low-income families who earn less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level, or about \$47,000 a year for a family of four, officials said.

North County Health Services started seeing patients at the Mesa Drive facility 21 years ago in a small suite. It later moved into a slightly larger building that sits across the parking lot from the new building.

The new building increased the number of exam rooms from six to 18. It also added two health education rooms, a visiting room, a lactation consultation room and a financial consultation room.

The additional space will allow doctors to see more patients and much sooner, which can be critical in some instances, said Dr. Edward Curley.

“We’ve instituted same-day appointments so that if a child has a fever overnight, the parent can call right when the clinic opens and grab an appointment,” Curley said. “From a medical standpoint, it’s better to see the child day one rather than have to go to urgent care or not see us at all.”

Curley said he hopes to use the conference room to offer CPR, exercise and healthy eating classes.

Officials said the facility has already served more than 700 patients since it opened Feb. 16.

One of those who visited the clinic on Thursday was Oceanside resident Eva Hernandez, who brought her 9-year-old daughter, Juanita, to see a doctor about a pain in her knee. Hernandez praised the new facility, saying she had been bringing her three children to the clinic for 13 years.

“This is very beautiful,” she said. “It’s very comfortable.”

Three doctors work out of the facility and one additional doctor is starting in April, Curley said. Eventually, the facility could accommodate up to six doctors working simultaneously, he said.

North County Health Services bought the Mission Mesa location for \$1.3 million in 2010. It also includes the clinic’s women’s health center and its WIC services building.


The \$5 million grant from the U.S. Health and Human Services Administration covered only part of the construction cost of the new facility. The remaining \$2.5 million came from a mix of foundation grants and individual donations, officials said.

A grand-opening ceremony is expected to be held on April 9.



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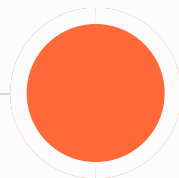
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