



Have you heard?

Have you heard that the governor and the state legislature are developing a package that would provide insurance coverage for most, if not all, Californians? Ok, you have. But don't local clinics like the Santa Cruz Women's Health Center find ways to provide services for all the uninsured here in your community already?

We try . . .

Our clinicians provided over 17,000 visits last year to over 4200 patients. We could easily see more people if we had the space and, of course, the funding. (We're busting at the seams here.) Of the patients we see, at least 45 percent of them are uninsured. I can proudly state that we provide them with high quality care.

We visit and treat the patient first, worry about the cost to us later. Sometimes we find a government or private program that will subsidize an uninsured patient's visit. I also have an incredible crew of medical providers, medical assistants and administrative staff that work tirelessly in finding discounts from labs and pharmacies or researching and acquiring funds from a variety of private funders for costs patients can't cover. **We put together a pretty impressive and workable health care system with very little support from medical insurers.**

But there are three big problems with this approach:

1. We spend a lot of time and money to make the funding happen (money diverted from actual health care);
2. Many of our patients are still not covered for specialty care, hospitalizations and other costly services so they do without; and
3. Obviously, the clinic can't bleed money, so demand for our services exceeds our capabilities to help the uninsured. There are individuals around you who must go to the emergency department for all their needs.

This is not a good way to provide primary care services for anyone and a costly measure for everyone.

Physicians for a National Health Program detail both the



Executive Director Patrick Meehan

problems of our current health care structure and possible solutions in better detail than I can here. I encourage you to visit their website at www.pnhp.org.

Solving the problem of the uninsured in California is in everyone's interest. It will result in both money saved and a healthier state. There are steps you can take now. Support the bold efforts of those trying to improve upon the current system and support even more strongly the efforts to enact a single-payer system. We already have well over fifty percent of the country on government-funded health care, anyway, and the government run systems like Medicare have much lower administrative costs than private insurance – less than 10 percent compared to about 30 percent. The website, www.healthcareforall.org can update you on current efforts for single-payer plans in California.

Finally, until there are no longer uninsured Americans, please support the Women's Health Center's efforts to shore up the safety net system of health care. Your donations allow us to provide care to so many women and children living in your community. If it's your first gift to us or a slightly higher gift than normal, you'll help increase our capabilities too!





My First Encounter with the Women's Health Center

Thirty years ago this last October, I started working in the health care field in Santa Cruz County. Through these same years I've also had the pleasure of working with the Women's Health Center: as an employee, as a volunteer on advisory boards, and as a member of the Board of Directors for the last six years. Plus, I'm a patient here. So, each of these experiences leads me to a greater appreciation of the work that the Women's Health Center performs in our community.

My first encounter with the Women's Health Center, however, goes back even further to when I was a student: without insurance, full of questions, sure that I was dying, and very scared. This clinic was there for me, and provided the kind of caring, personal care I've come to know over the years as central to its mission. Not only did I receive the medical care I required, but the clinician provided information, answered questions, and suggested reading material so I could understand what was happening to my body.

Today, each person that comes to the clinic receives the same respectful care and personal attention that I experienced over 30 years ago. YES, our services have expanded, our building may look different (though it is still bulging at the seams!) and the populations that we serve have changed, BUT the core values of the organization have not altered. The excellent medical care that our staff gives every day makes me proud of my association, and pleased to be a supporter of the Women's Health Center.

Keeping this sort of organization running is not an easy undertaking, and requires a commitment not only of time and energy, but of funds as well. A great deal of our funding must come from generous community members like you. Without the fiscal backing of our community, reaching out to women and children that need a "medical home" will not happen.

Please join me by being a donor to the Santa Cruz Women's Health Center. The clinic adds so much to our community: providing essential services and retaining the values of respectful care while striving to be the best in the health field. **The scared student that I was and the health care professional that I am today, thank you for your support!**

Kate Hartzell is a family nurse practitioner and the Director of Student Health Services at Cabrillo College. She currently serves as the Chair of the S.C. Women's Health Center's Board.

**Clinic Open House:
Wednesday, November 14, 6 to 8 pm**

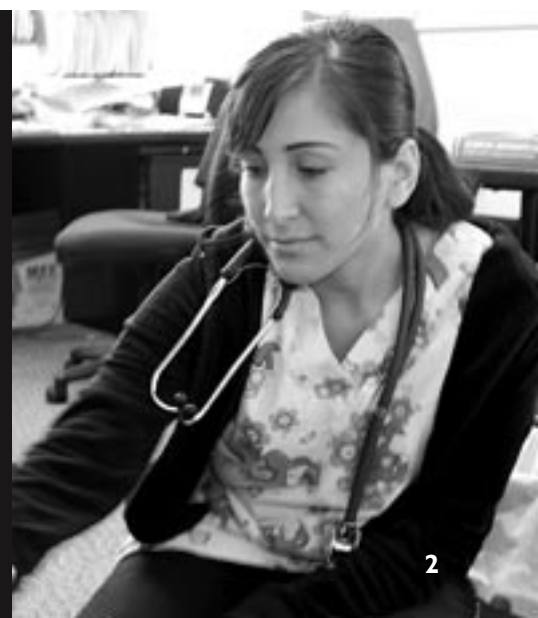
Drop in for a Visit! Enjoy the treats!

Learn more about the medical services we offer and our green construction!

Special Programs:

In addition to medical services we offer:

**Information and Referral Services • Perinatal Care and Counseling •
Mental Health Counseling (for patients only) Integrative Medicine •
Health Education and Publications**





I Don't Know Where I Would Go . . .

Felicity Rosencranz, a practicing massage therapist, began visiting the Women's Health Center almost immediately after moving to the Santa Cruz area nearly 23 years ago. Today, she also brings her two small sons for their well child exams and any urgent care needs.

The following is from a conversation at her last medical visit with her medical assistant, Elena Hermosillo. Elena has worked with the Women's Health Center for four years. One of Elena's goals is to become a nurse practitioner and continue helping people in need.

What first brought you to the Women's Health Center?

I was initially drawn to the principles of the clinic and its safe environment. I wanted to participate with an organization that put the principals of justice, community awareness and equality into action. You help empower women!

What keeps you coming to us?

Now, it feels like home for me and my two children. You have a holistic center and offer a lot of services for all of us. I don't like to feel threatened. Here, I feel safe. It feels comfortable, so you can get help with everything. The clinic always feels like it's on my side with all my health needs and those of my kids. It's multicultural, progressive. I've received a lot of advocacy here. I don't feel ignored, it's always handled respectfully. The clinic walks its talk!

What would you change about us? Are there any other services we should provide?

I hope that everyone here feels rewarded in the work they do – the medical providers, the medical assistants, and the front office. They're all of equal value to me – exceptional people. I don't know where we'd go if your doors were closed.

I also love to come here and see all the different type of people who come to the clinic. It just feels alive. So don't change that.

When your child is sick and needs to be seen right away... we're here to help!

The staff at the clinic always ensures that there is a medical provider everyday who is available for urgent care appointments. So when a parent or guardian calls the clinic with questions regarding their child's health, we treat the call in an urgent manner. We make certain that all parents receive a call back and a same-day appointment, if necessary.

But, what if your child is uninsured? This can certainly be a source of stress and frustration for parents and is often a barrier to care for children. As part of our mission, **we'll not turn away any patient because they can't afford to pay.** So CALL US!

Most commonly, if your child is uninsured, we'll enroll him or her in CHDP Gateway (Child Health and Disability Prevention), a temporary form of Medi-Cal. We also assist parents and children with applications for Healthy Families and Healthy Kids, which provide excellent medical coverage to children who would otherwise be uninsured.

But don't wait for when your child is definitely sick! As a primary health care center, we emphasize the need for prevention, and hope to see you and your children regularly. Plus, we have extensive educational materials that parents are given at almost every visit for free, including info on everything from immunizations to bike helmets. And to every parent with children under 5 years old, we have a free kit provided by First 5 Santa Cruz. The kit comes with a guide to community resources, as well as a DVD and books that describe a child's development and teach parenting techniques.

And speaking of prevention, it's the beginning of flu season again. Be sure to get your kids in early for a flu shot this year to avoid those nasty flu symptoms! Flu shots are covered by Medi-Cal and most private insurances.

Julia Stevens is the Perinatal and Special Projects Coordinator at the SCWHC. She is bilingual in English and Spanish and has been with us for 2 1/2 years.



Improving Our Community's Health: Beginning with the Environment

We see an increasing number of people, particularly young children, with asthma and allergies at the clinic. So, it was decided early on, that we would always factor in environmental health issues with any new project. Our Green Construction Project, funded with a construction grant and completed this October, added two new exam rooms, a bike locker, a "cool roof" overlay and solar electric panels. We'll be able to see more patients and save energy, but, more importantly, using solar energy will allow the clinic to decrease asthma-causing particulates in the air and offset carbon dioxide, smog-producing nitrogen oxide, and acid-rain producing sulfur-dioxide.

Green systems have been in place since the Center's inception in 1974. Even before the coining of the environmental movement phrase "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle," staff and volunteers were reusing white paper printed on one side, donating grocery bags for use in the clinic, and using real cups, plates and utensils. Additionally, all of our furniture and a significant portion of the medical equipment were recycled. We've never allowed cigarette smoking or incense burning in the building, and discouraged the use of perfumes by staff and volunteers.

The clinic's solar electric system is sized at 9010 watts DC, and will generate an average of 12,000 kilowatt-hours a year. It represents a savings of about one-third of the Women's Health Center's PG&E electricity costs. Plans are already in place to increase the number of solar panels on our roof. We hope to eventually get 70 percent of our daily electricity from the sun.

The Center, along with the staff of Full Circle Solar, will introduce the public to the greening materials used in the construction at a Clinic Open House. **Visitors to 250 Locust Street (behind the downtown library) can tour through the remodeled clinic and its two new exam rooms and bike shelter, talk with experts on solar electricity and green construction, and enjoy some tasty treats on Wednesday, November 14. Open House hours will run from 6 to 8 pm.**



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250 Locust Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

831-427-3500
www.SCWomensHealth.org

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Photos, pages 1, 2 & 6: Jon Kersey Photography

Services

The **Santa Cruz Women's Health Center** is a community-based clinic established in 1974 by and for women. We provide affordable and quality medical services to women and children. Our medical staff speak Spanish!

250 Locust Street, Downtown Santa Cruz (Behind the Public Library)
831-427-3500

Hours of Operation

Monday: 8:30 to 5:00, Tuesday: 8:30 to 8:00, Wednesday: 12:30 to 5:00, Thursday: 8:30 to 8:00, Friday: 8:30 to 5:00,
Saturday: 8:30 to 12:00.

Services We Provide:

- General Medicine
- Women's Health Services
- Family Planning
- Pregnancy Testing
- Prenatal
- Pediatric
- Chronic Care
- Mental Health Services
- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic
- Naturopathy

We accept MediCal, Medicare, and several insurance plans. **Yet, NO ONE IS TURNED AWAY for lack of finances!** Fees are determined on a sliding scale basis. We subsidize clients who have no form of medical coverage and are in need. We also have extensive case management to help enroll patients who are uninsured or under-insured in programs to cover their care.