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A Medical Director's Vision of a Women's Wellness Center

I'm proud that at the Center we strive to give every one of our patients excellent care without regard for their ability to pay. It's our mission that every patient has a true "medical home." A place where the medical provider knows them and their needs: well care visits, health questions, emergency care, and managing prescriptions. Alongside this traditional medical care, we also offer services such as acupuncture, chiropractic care, and naturopathy.

You'll read in this newsletter about Deanna's experience with us. I hope she represents the feelings of all our long-time patients. More than a third of our patients are over the age of 40 and many have come for more than a decade to our clinic. Over the past two years, we've seen a great increase in patients with chronic conditions. But because of community support, we've been able to meet these new needs with expanded services.

We've created a diabetes registry which allows us to track over 100 patients carefully; if patients who have diabetes follow certain guidelines for care they can prevent debilitating complications such as blindness, heart attacks, and amputation. We've also added extra time for case management, hired an acupuncturist, and developed a beneficial relationship with Westside Pharmacy. Our low-income patients now benefit from low prices on their prescriptions.

By enjoying a stable and trusted relationship with **ONE** healthcare provider, our long-time patients can better manage their medication and take advantage of the up-to-date health education we offer. They're able to avoid the emergency room and hospitalization by reducing symptoms and decreasing complications.

Deanna's grandchild may represent the growing younger population we see more of each day. Although children in our county can get subsidized medical insurance, once they reach 18, many of them become uninsured. Even if they work, many of them still fall below the federal poverty guidelines: making less than \$10,000 per year if they're single or less than \$22,000 if they marry and have

two kids.

People with financial stress are at increased risk for depression, obesity, anxiety, and overall poor health status. When their healthcare needs can not be met, they often find it hard to work, end up in the Emergency Room, and suffer avoidable medical complications.

We're trying to minimize those stressors that lead to disease, lack of productivity, and poor quality of life. My vision is that we continue to expand the services that promote **WELL-BEING** for our patients. We're hoping to offer visits with a nutritionist; group classes; a massage therapist; expanded hours for acupuncturists, chiropractors, naturopaths, and therapists.

It's because of your donations that we provide our patients with the time they need to not "fall between the cracks" in health care. Your continued support will help us achieve the Wellness Center that I envision.

Maria Mead, MD, has been our Medical Director since 2005. She loves taking care of women and children of all ages and working with the team at SCWHC to constantly improve upon our services.

Services We Provide:

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



Recent Tribute Gifts made to the S.C. Women's Health Center

For Mother's Day:

Lauralee Alben

- Sheila & Dean
Gottehrer

Lisa Berk

- Erica & William Ow

Patricia Bradshaw

- Gaye Clemson

Robin Carlson

- Kathleen McCarthy

Alice Chegia

- Kate Hartzell

Isabel Clemson

- Gaye Clemson

Ann-Marie Fine

- Sheila & Dean
Gottehrer

Karen Fine

- Sheila & Dean
Gottehrer

Leah Fine

- Sheila & Dean
Gottehrer

Nancy Finn

- Kate Hartzell

Kate Formichella, M.D.

- Janice Daugherty

Norma Hall

- Teresa Cardoza

Virginia Hartzell

- Kate Hartzell

Barbara Hyland

- Dr. Thomas O. Hyland

Betsy Kamehiro

- Stacy Kamehiro-
Stockwell & Robert
Stockwell, Jr.

Mary Keller

- Josephine & Irvin
Henning

Eva Kettles

- Marjorie & Sherman
Hauser

Marie Elise King

- Alyson King

Cornelia Mashian

- Dori Sadowsky

Margery McFarland

- Peter L. Sanford

Jane Michaelis

- Erica & William Ow

Gail Michaelis-Ow

- Erica & William Ow

**Linda Feldman
Nabokov**

- Julia Feldman

June Noninski

- Gaye Clemson

Regina Ruport

- Kate Hartzell

Evelyn Sanford

- Peter L. Sanford

Sandra Sanford

- Peter L. Sanford

Patty Schork

- Erica & William Ow

Mary Jo Schymeinsky

- Kate Hartzell

Samantha Sommer

- Carolyn Crandall

Michelle Stroet

- Petrus M. Stroet

Marcia Wertz

- Kate Hartzell

Molly Wertz

- Kate Hartzell

Tina Wertz

- Kate Hartzell

Ursula Wertz

- Kate Hartzell

Thank you!

Our wine event at Sestri's raised over \$7,000 for health care services to the uninsured! We thank the medical community for attending the event and supporting our programs. Also, we couldn't have put together such a fun evening without the following individuals and businesses:

**Dr. Allison Herman Steinmetz
K Wine & Spirits**

**Alexia Moore Wine Marketing
Physicians Medical Group of
S.C. County**

**Wells Shoemaker-Salamandre
Santa Cruz County Bank**

In Honor of:

Kate Delaplane-Yusen

- Penny Bryan

In Memory of:

Judith Beade

- Friday Shakespeare Club
- Gladys Naman

Alan Blumberg

-Elizabeth Otoole

My Dad

- Stella Robles-Quitason

To the rescue...

“Sandra,” newly pregnant, was looking for prenatal care. Her sister recommended she try our Women’s Health Center. Her sister had attended the prenatal program here and was so happy with its services that now she brings her baby to the clinic for pediatric exams.

Our perinatal health educators meet individually with patients to provide nutrition and health education and psychosocial support and referrals. One of the areas we discuss is dental care, which is an important part of pregnancy health services. A dental infection can lead to pregnancy complications. And since dental decay is caused by bacteria that can be transmitted from one person to another, parents who take good care of their teeth give their children a greater chance of having cavity-free teeth. Our perinatal educators know that because dental care is so important, Medi-Cal for pregnancy now covers one dental exam and cleaning, as well as emergency dental care.

During Sandra’s first prenatal visit with our perinatal health educator, she told us that she had never seen a dentist. We explained the benefits of dental care for both herself and her unborn child, and recommended she get a dental exam and cleaning. Sandra told us she couldn’t afford to follow our recommendation. She had no dental insurance, and her Medi-Cal worker had informed her that she couldn’t use Medi-Cal for dental care. Unfortunately, this wasn’t the first time we’d heard this. So, we advised Sandra that we would follow up with the Medi-Cal staff.

Later, we called the local supervisor at the Medi-Cal eligibility office and asked what dental information their office relayed to pregnant women. **The supervisor believed that pregnancy-only Medi-Cal would not cover dental care. After we explained that it did, and provided her with the public announcement of Medi-Cal dental benefits for pregnant women, she thanked us, and said she would retrain her staff.**

At Sandra’s next visit, we shared the news with her. A couple of months later, Sandra had seen a dentist and had made an appointment for a cleaning. Luckily, she didn’t have any cavities. But later on, when she had a toothache, she knew where to go and that her visit would be covered by Medi-Cal. She thanked us enthusiastically! It made her feel secure in her pregnancy knowing that we were looking out for all her health needs.

Our philosophy is that inexpensive preventive care is of incredible value to each patient and to the entire community. It’s important to us that our pregnant patients feel better and avoid expensive pregnancy and dental complications. And it’s important to our entire staff that we make sure to advocate for all our patients by educating all those concerned about the value of preventive care and the incredible resources in our community.

You can make sure that our educators and case workers continue to make positive changes for our patients. Write “education and case management program” in the memo section of your donation check or envelope today.

In her own words:

Deanna is a self-employed artist who also works at a local fitness center. At the clinic, we know her as a woman full of energy and love! She adopted her granddaughter, Chelsea, when she was two and has taken care of her mother with Alzheimer's as much as possible. Her mother is now in hospice care. And Chelsea turned 18 this year, which means that both Chelsea and Deanna have lost their Medi-Cal coverage. But they still have a medical home at our clinic!

I have a long history with the Santa Cruz Women's Health Center – over twenty years. The medical care has been excellent and yet the frosting on the cake has been the caring attitude that prevails.

I've seen different doctors and practitioners at SCWHC over the years and had good experiences over all. They've been outstanding because of the emotional support they give. Marilyn Marzell has been my main practitioner. She's always been extremely thorough and always took the time to listen. And Jenny has been fantastic about calling me and checking up if there was a problem or concern. There is no particular time that I can remember in my visits when everyone was not caring and prompt.

The Women's Health Center has always felt safe and comfortable. Today there is a great deal of talk about poor bedside manner and detached attitude among medical practitioners. SCWHC has never been short on hugs and emotional support.

My granddaughter is losing her Medi-Cal eligibility in August. You do the best that you can, right? I'm happy that even without Medi-Cal, we know we'll have a very personal relationship with our doctors at the clinic.

Thank you so much!

You can help Deanna and women like her with their short-term medical costs. Your donation today will ensure that a patient's immediate medical needs are subsidized while they work with a case manager to find affordable health care programs.



A Note from the Board... Kathleen McCarthy



There are few human rights as fundamental as a woman's right to health care. And yet, in our local area alone too many women cannot find a "medical home" because they are uninsured or under insured. I became acutely aware of this shortage in my first job as the case manager for a program that served women in a county correctional facility. I worked with women to determine what services they would need upon their release to ensure their successful reentry into the community.

I can still recall many of the meetings I had with the women in our program. One young woman struggled with mental illness and could not afford the medical care or medication that she needed. Another had such severe dental decay that she was continually turned away from job interviews because of her appearance. Several women suffered from chronic diseases that had not been managed properly in years because they lacked access to health care

services. Overall, it became clear that poor health—whether mental, physical, or emotional—was the root cause of most if not all of their problems, and that access to quality health care services would be essential for their success in the future.

I now work for the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust, a local nonprofit health care foundation dedicated to improving the health and quality of life for all Pajaro Valley residents. I oversee the Trust's grantmaking program and activities and participate in a variety of community healthcare initiatives and collaborations. This rewarding work gives me the opportunity to assist many worthy nonprofit agencies meeting the health care needs in the South County. Through this experience, I have come to understand the importance of developing fundraising partnerships with individual residents in the community who support our health care mission.

The same is true for the Women's Health Center. When asked to join the Board last year, I was excited at the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to an agency that assures access to high quality health care to medically underserved and uninsured women and children. In this volunteer role, it is very satisfying to advocate for many of the same health issues that affected the women I worked with early in my career.

I am also proud to be a donor to Women's Health Center. The Center relies on a patchwork of public and private funding to support its services and operations. In the face of government budget cuts and decreased reimbursement from all payor sources, the need for private fund raising support has never been greater.

I encourage you to join me and all the members of our Board of Directors in making the most generous gift you can to ensure that Women's Health Center will maintain its capacity to serve the women in our community in greatest need.

Kathleen comes to our Board with a strong commitment to social change and the non-profit sector. Her experience includes community development volunteer work in Belize, Cuba and on the Navajo Reservation.



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We accept Medi-Cal, 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 patients who have no form of medical coverage and are in need.

Choose to support a healthy community! Donate to SCWHC for patient need.

Raul Medina and his family were born and raised in Santa Cruz County. His current construction employer would rather pay cash than deal with government bureaucracy. This means that Raul can't provide income documentation to Healthy Families, a state program. And they'll not approve his eligibility for subsidized care without it. Raul knows the importance of preventive care but he worries about paying all the other family bills. Last year, he paid \$930 for his wife's and son's medical visits. He can't afford that again, so his family must do without. Until his wife reads a brochure about our clinic...

Your \$1000 gift can subsidize a working family's annual checkups and minor acute care visits during those times they're not eligible for other healthcare programs.

Maria's job does not provide health insurance and she's unable to find affordable coverage on the open market because of her diabetes, a pre-existing condition. So Maria has to choose between paying for ongoing medicine needs, visiting a doctor this year, or her monthly home bills. Until she calls the SCWHC...

Your \$250 gift can allow a working uninsured woman to schedule regular doctor appointments and provide her with up to six months of medicine for her chronic disease.

A divorced mom with two children, Rosie, finally found a job with a good salary of \$28,000. It doesn't provide affordable health coverage for her two kids but the hours allow her to spend more time with them. Yet, when Jack comes down with a painful ear infection, Rosie finds out that cuts in the state and federal budget will stop her son from receiving services through subsidized health programs. She decides to put aside some of her utility bills to pay for her child's needs now. She also rethinks the "quality" of her higher salary. Until she's told her son can be seen at the SCWHC...

Your \$100 gift can pay for a child's first exam at our clinic, provide him with needed antibiotics, and help his family enroll in Healthy Kids, a local subsidy program for those children who are uninsured.

Your gift of any size WILL guarantee quality healthcare, even when someone is in financial difficulties.

Write **"for patient need"** on the memo section of your check or on your envelope and we'll make sure it provides services to those most in need. Thank you!