

East Cliff Family Health Center Welcomes All

Dominican Partnership Helps Clinic Bring Full Spectrum of Family Care

Since opening its doors on May 1, the East Cliff Family Health Center has offered pediatric care, family practice, mental health counseling, prenatal care and education, and other services in an area of Santa Cruz County that has never before had a facility quite like it.

Located on East Cliff Drive in Live Oak, the 9,000-square-foot primary care center is the second of two clinics operated by the Santa Cruz Community Health Centers. (The first is the Women's Health Center in downtown Santa Cruz, which has been serving the community for 40 years.)

With a modern design, an emphasis on natural light, and a play area for children in the waiting room, the center serves patients that were previously served by the Dominican pediatric clinic. A new electronic health care system was implemented to ease the transition between the two clinics, allowing patients' medical histories to transition alongside them.

Another key factor involved in the smooth transition was that members of the Dominican pediatric clinic's administrative and medical

staff joined the East Cliff Family Health Center, including Pediatric Medical Director Salem Magarian, MD.

"At Dominican, we were practicing as a community clinic in a hospital setting," Dr. Magarian said. "Now that we're truly in a community setting, it gives us more opportunity to change and grow our programs to meet the needs of our residents."

"We're absolutely delighted with the building, the staff is terrific, and the patients love it here," Dr. Magarian continued. "I believe it's the nicest outpatient clinic in Santa Cruz County in terms of design and architecture. It's set up so that it's just so easy to do exams and have conversations — it's so comfortable."

To ensure the successful launch of the clinic, Dominican Hospital provided a five-year \$1.5 million grant, while its parent company, Dignity Health, provided a low-interest \$2.5 million loan. Additionally, the Palo Alto Medical Foundation and Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center have provided investments of \$1.5 million over five years, according to Beverly Grova, vice president





Staff ready to welcome patients at the East Cliff Family Health Center.

of philanthropy for the Dominican Hospital Foundation.

“The Foundation funded the pediatric program at Dominican for many years, and we were actively involved with the transition to the new East Cliff Family Health Center,” Ms. Grova said. We wanted to ensure that donor funds invested in Dominican’s program would be honored by transitioning in a manner that would continue to serve existing patients, welcome new patients, and continue the best practices learned at Dominican.”

Leslie Conner, executive director of Santa Cruz Community Health Centers, said that nearly all of the patients previously served through Dominican’s pediatric clinic are now part of the East Cliff Family Health Center.

“We are adding pediatricians to the team and have plans to increase the number of children served,” Ms. Conner said. “The new team’s clinical philosophy is a great match with our own: that any child, regardless of circumstance, deserves access

to the health care and social service supports they need for healthy physical, social, and emotional development.

“The doctor-patient relationship is everything in health care, so the fact that we’re maintaining that for our youngest patients is very gratifying,” Ms. Conner continued. “And now, many new families have access to these experienced and caring providers. Looking forward we have plans to collaborate with the Live Oak School District and other agencies to identify and intervene early when a child or family is struggling with health, social, or emotional problems.”

Martina O’Sullivan, director for community engagement at Dominican, said the success of the transition has exceeded all expectations.

“The East Cliff Family Health Center is a perfect example of recognition of community need, collaboration of organizations with like mission, and synergy of the right services in the right place at the right time,” she said.