



\$1 Million grant awarded to Marin Community Clinic for Novato site

Gift brings clinic closer to eligibility for federal grant

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Wednesday, August 13, 2008 2:35 PM PDT

The Marin Community Clinic's fund-raising campaign got a shot in the arm Tuesday when the Marin Community Foundation (MCF) announced its gift of \$1 million to be used for the new Novato clinic. Dr. Thomas Peters, MCF president and CEO, announced the gift at a gathering at the clinic's new site at 6100 Redwood Boulevard. Grace Hughes, who chairs the capital campaign for the new Novato clinic, said she was thrilled with the news.

"We have a goal of raising \$2.8 million. That's our budget for completing the Novato project," said Hughes. "So this helps a lot toward reaching our goal."

The campaign is under pressure to raise \$2.8 million quickly in order to have the new Novato site up and running by Jan. 1, 2009. If the new clinic can be opened on time, it will be eligible for federal grants of \$600,000 annually.

Also on hand for the announcement was Betty DeBerry-Sumner, DDS, MPH. Dr. DeBerry-Sumner is also a Captain in the United States Public Health Commissioned Corps within the Department of Health and Human Services.

"She essentially oversees all of the federally qualified health centers in the Bay Area," said Hughes. "Bottom line — she's really instrumental in making the recommendation that we get that \$600,000 a year grant that will make us viable."

Since the campaign began earlier this year, Novato business and civic leaders have lined up in support of the clinic. Two Novato residents, Kim Kaselionis and Martin Sleath, co-chair the campaign with Hughes. Supervisor Judy Arnold, Marin County School Superintendent Mary Jane Burke and community leaders Ernie Gray and Dietrich Stroeh have also joined the Novato campaign committee.

Advocates of the clinic say it provides preventative and regular health care to those who might otherwise be forced to seek medical care in hospital emergency rooms. In California, hospitals are mandated to provide healthcare to emergency room patients, regardless of the patient's ability to pay for services. This practice impacts the hospital both financially and through its ability to provide critical care.

The current Novato site of the Marin Community Clinic is located at Professional Center Drive. Staff says the facility is limited in both size and access.

In an interview last week, John Shen, executive director of the Marin Community Clinic, said the new clinic will better serve the community. The current Novato clinic has only 10 examination rooms. Shen said the new facility will have 18 examination rooms and will offer women's health services and mental health services.

Dr. Peters said the foundation's gift will further establish the position that an individual's access to health care should not be based on finances. After Peters announced the gift, he invited former Marin County Supervisor and current Marin Community Foundation board member Gary Giacomini to speak. The board had earlier made a \$1 million grant to the Marin Community Clinic's campaign in southern Marin to build a clinic in San Rafael and to renovate its Greenbrae clinic. Giacomini praised Supervisor Arnold and her efforts to encourage the foundation to support the Novato clinic.

"Judy is someone who can urge you along, without being a pest," he said. "But she let me know that if the foundation had given \$1 million to southern Marin, I damn well better make sure we do the same for northern Marin."



ADVANCE PHOTO A gift of health: Marin Community Foundation president and CEO Dr. Thomas Peters, left, announces a grant of \$1 million for the Novato site of the Marin Community Clinic Tuesday. Seated, center, Marin County Supervisor Judy Arnold and Dr. Betty DeBerry-Sumner with the Department of Health and Human Services. Novato City Council member Jeanne MacLeamy, background, standing, also attended.



ADVANCE PHOTO Dr. Betty DeBerry-Sumner with the Department of Health and Human Services. Her department oversees all of the federally qualified health centers in the Bay Area.