



SPRING 2015

Photo: Tim Porter

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## Our Mission

To improve the health of our patients and community by providing high quality, cost-effective, culturally sensitive, patient-centered health care.

## Marin Community Clinics – a "Family Affair"

**M**arin Community Clinics' San Rafael clinic has been the medical and dental home for San Anselmo resident **Lynn Hinck** and her children for over 12 years.

*"We've used the Clinics in different ways at different times and for different reasons,"* reports Lynn.

Lynn, age 45, currently serves as Marin Program Director of Trackers Earth, a family-run company operating outdoor adult and youth programs. Although she has health insurance through her employer, her children are not covered and are on Medi-Cal.

There have been periods when Lynn herself didn't have health insurance because she was in graduate school or unemployed due to illness.

### The family's health home

Regardless of the circumstances, Marin Community Clinics has been there for them.

*"It's all there,"* says Lynn. *"Primary care, pediatric specialty care and referrals, behavioral health, dental, pharmacy. We've used it all – repairing broken arms, referrals for tonsillectomies, and more."*

Although Lynn receives her own specialty care at UCSF (she is a Stage III breast cancer survivor), she chooses to stay at the Clinics for her primary care.

*"The clinicians treat us like thinking people and are always informative and respectful,"* she reports. *"They take time to stop and explain to me - and my kids - what they are doing."*

*They look at my lifestyle, give me advice on nutrition and have made practical*

Photo: Stuart Lurette



Lynn Hinck and daughter Moira at the San Rafael Clinic

*suggestions for my back problems rather than just prescribing medications."*

### The children are fans too

When her middle daughter was 3 years old, she had extensive dental care from what Lynn describes as *"an expensive, but dismal office in the East Bay."* When the Clinics started providing dental care, the family's experience was very different. They found friendly staff and clean, modern facilities.

*"My daughter's a real cheerleader for the Clinics,"* reports Lynn. *"When one of her friends went to a different dental practice, Moira suggested that she go to the Clinics instead because the care she got was so good. Plus, they made her laugh and gave her big hugs."*

Another daughter, Alexis (now 18), began making her own appointments at the Clinics when she was 16 years old.

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## Coming of Age

By Linda Tavaszi, PhD, CEO

Photo: Jerry Downs



**F**orty-three years ago, Marin Community Clinics provided basic medical care to the underserved in church basements in Fairfax and Mill

Valley. Everyone did their best with limited resources and a small number of physicians and nurses volunteered their time.

We've come a long way since then.

Today, we are not only serving more people with sophisticated medical and dental care, but are playing a vital role in Health Care Reform by providing affordable, accessible care.

Marin Community Clinics now serves 35,000 individuals/year – 13.5% of Marin's population. Fifty percent of our patients are children. The people we serve come from all walks of life – those on Medi-Cal, Medicare, Covered California and private insurance. We have 240 staff (40 medical clinicians and 18 dentists) and a \$30 million annual budget.

### Expanded facilities and services

Today, we operate four medical clinics, three dental clinics and two teen clinics. Our facilities are modern and most are now also open evenings and weekends.

In addition to primary care for adults and children, we provide obstetrics and women's health, optometry, physical therapy, and have on-site labs and pharmacies. The addition of dental

services six years ago was a major development. Today, we have 19 dental chairs and operate seven days a week, serving 11,000 patients/year.

When patients have the need for specialized care, we either provide it ourselves or coordinate with community physicians and hospitals who provide the care. (See article on page 3)

### Quality and prevention focus

Our clinicians come with superb training from top-notch universities from across the U.S. They use an innovative Patient Centered Health Home approach that emphasizes the partnership of the patient and provider team.



I am proud to report that 98% of our patients say that they would recommend the Clinics to others. We have received quality recognitions from regional and national organizations.

Our staff is heavily invested in wellness and prevention, working hard to promote healthy diets, regular exercise and early screenings so that our patients can live longer, healthier lives.

### How has all of this been possible?

We have benefited by the changes and improvements made by everyone in the health care system. Marin Community Clinics is one of only 1,200 Federally Qualified Health Centers in the US; this designation allows us to receive federal funding and enhanced reimbursement.

Partnerships with organizations such as the County of Marin, the Marin Community Foundation, local

hospitals and other service agencies have made a big difference.

**“I am proud to report that 98% of our patients say they would recommend the Clinics to others.”**

**—Linda Tavaszi, CEO**

*Coming of Age— continued on page 7*

# When Patients Need more than Primary Care The Clinics' Specialty Care Program

## Q&A

with **Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer**

Photo: Clinics Staff



**Q** What do you mean by "Specialty Care?"

**A** As a family practice physician who has broad general knowledge of all aspects of medicine, there are times when I know my patients would benefit from seeing a clinician who has expertise in a focused area of medicine. Examples are orthopedists, gastroenterologists, urologists and cardiologists.

**Q** How do Marin Community Clinics' patients receive Specialty Care?

**A** In the past, we relied on a number of local physician specialists who generously donated their time. Today, a small group of physicians and other specialists continue to volunteer. Plus, we are now large enough that we have begun to hire our own specialists. (See [www.marinclinic.org/about-us/our-health-team/volunteer-clinicians](http://www.marinclinic.org/about-us/our-health-team/volunteer-clinicians) for a list of current specialists.)

**Q** What if the Clinics doesn't have the needed specialist?

**A** When a patient needs care that we don't provide, our Referral Department goes into action. The team works hard to find physicians, other clinicians or hospitals that will see

the patient, accept his/her insurance or provide care on a sliding fee scale. For adults who are uninsured, Operation Access facilitates free outpatient procedures (see page 5) and Kaiser Permanente conducts some evaluations and outpatient procedures.

Marin County has shortages in certain specialties, making it difficult to find a local expert able to see some of our patients. Hiring our own specialists is making a big difference.

**Q** How many Clinics patients are referred for Specialty Care?

**A** We have a very busy Referral Department. The six staff make about 1,200 referrals a month. Referrals for hernias, endoscopies, urologic procedures, cyst removals and biopsies are among the most common.

## Physician Volunteer Extraordinaire: Tim Sowerby, MD

**T**o the team at Marin Community Clinics, **Dr. Tim Sowerby** is an "angel." A board-certified gastroenterologist, he has volunteered at the Clinics for over 12 years.

Once a month, he comes to the Larkspur Clinic to see uninsured patients who have been referred by the Clinics' physicians. Patients come with abdominal pain, acid reflux disease, ulcers, rectal bleeding, colitis and other gastrointestinal problems. His medical partner **Danny Kao, MD** also volunteers.

### A Strong Patient Advocate

Dr. Sowerby evaluates the patient, deciding if a procedure or surgery is necessary. If the patient needs an endoscopy, colonoscopy or surgery, Dr. Sowerby will start the ball rolling with Operation Access. He is also an Operation Access volunteer, so performs many of the procedures himself at the Endoscopy Center of Marin or Marin General Hospital. If special effort is required to obtain donated services, he will get on the telephone to advocate for the patient.

"His commitment to people in need personifies the Clinics' mission," reports CEO **Linda Tavaszi**. "We are so blessed to

Photo: Stuart Lirette



*Tim Sowerby, MD consults with a patient*

*have a physician expert of this caliber caring for our patients. He is compassionate and consistently goes above and beyond."*

Dr. Sowerby is quite modest about his work at the Clinics. "I enjoy it," he explains. "The patients are very appreciative and the medical assistants make me feel welcome as a volunteer. It's very straightforward – no interruptions or billing issues for me to handle. It's just me and the patient."

Photo: Clinics Staff



## Clinician Spotlight

Meet Elizabeth Shaw, MD

One of Marin Community Clinics' 40 expert medical clinicians, **Dr. Elizabeth Shaw** is a real stand out. Board-certified in Family Medicine, she practices the full spectrum of her specialty - pre-natal care, pediatrics,

adult medicine, women's health and behavioral health. Somewhat unique within her specialty, she also performs certain gynecological, dermatological and orthopedic procedures. She is fluent in Spanish.

Her passions are disease prevention, quality improvement and, most importantly, her patients.

*"Every day, I realize how lucky I am,"* says Dr. Shaw. *"I love my patients – they are so genuine, trusting, and thankful."*

Dr. Shaw particularly enjoys taking care of women when they are pregnant, following them through the birth of their children, and then caring for the children along with the rest of the family.

*"Dr. Shaw is an outstanding physician and a real star,"* reports **Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH**, the Clinics' Chief Medical Officer. *"Not only does she provide superb patient care, but she is a strong advocate for community health centers, teamwork and quality improvement."*

In addition to her patient care practice, Dr. Shaw currently serves as the medical lead for Marin Community Clinics' Quality Program.

*"Community clinics are on the forefront of providing high quality, efficient care,"* she explained.

*Our Patient Centered Health Home, with its team approach, helps us provide care that is just as good - if not better - than care provided in other settings. My job is to help take the Clinics to an even higher level of care, with prevention as a top priority."*

**"She is an outstanding physician and a real star."**

**—Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH,  
Chief Medical Officer**

Dr. Shaw, who practices at the Novato Clinic, was born and raised in Calistoga and lives in Novato with her husband and child. She received her medical degree from the University of California (San Diego). To learn more about Dr. Shaw, visit [www.marinclinic.org/about-us/our-health-team/primary-care-providers](http://www.marinclinic.org/about-us/our-health-team/primary-care-providers).

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## Marin Community Clinics – a "Family Affair"

Recently, when she was home from college, she made an appointment for a checkup, reports the proud mother. Alexis considers the Clinics her medical home.

**"The Clinics has been there for whatever we need"**

**—Lynn Hinck**

*"The Clinics has been there for whatever we need,"* concluded Lynn.

Of note, Lynn has been on the Marin Community Clinics'

Board of Directors for two years. Regulations require that 50% of the board be comprised of Clinic patients and Lynn is pleased to serve.

*"The Clinics' leadership takes our ideas and feedback very seriously,"* reports Lynn, *"and it has been invaluable to me to have this experience."*



Photo: Jocelyn Knight

Marin Community Clinics Dental Offices

## Celebrating Community Health Champions

This year's Solstice event will honor two outstanding Community Health Champions. (See page 8 for event details).

### Leslie Cunningham, Physical Therapist

When Larkspur resident **Leslie Cunningham** retired after 32 years as a physical therapist, she knew she wanted to stay involved with patients. She learned about Marin Community Clinics— and the rest is history!

Leslie now volunteers four to six days a month, rotating among our medical clinics. When uninsured patients are recovering from surgery, injuries, or stroke, or suffer from chronic pain, our medical team refers them to Leslie for physical therapy.

A graduate of Stanford University's Master's program in Physical Therapy, she brings great enthusiasm to her work.

*"I love physical therapy, the Clinics' staff and helping patients," she explained. "The patients I see are motivated and very receptive to my help."*



Leslie Cunningham with a patient

**Susan Wiebers**, Novato Clinic director, reports that *"Leslie goes above and beyond to meet the needs of our patients. She brainstorms with them to create a treatment plan that works for their lifestyles - and has amazing results."*

### Operation Access

Since 1993, not-for-profit **Operation Access** has facilitated free outpatient surgical procedures and diagnostic services for over 2,000 uninsured Marin residents. Over \$4 million in charity care was provided in just 2014 alone.

Working with Marin's community clinics, three hospitals, as well as participating surgery centers, diagnostic centers, physicians and nurses, Operation Access makes it possible



Photo: Bill Horton

*Operation Access makes it possible for low-income patients to receive much-needed specialty care*

for low-income patients to receive much-needed specialty care. Common procedures include gallbladder removal, hernia repair, gynecological procedures, orthopedic surgeries, eye procedures and colonoscopies. Everyone who participates donates their services.

In Marin, two-thirds of referrals to Operation Access come from Marin Community Clinics. When the Clinics team determines that specialized care may be necessary, our Referral Department contacts Operation Access. Then, Operation Access identifies the appropriate medical provider, coordinates the care, and provides interpretation and case management.

*"Operation Access plays a vital role in serving our patients," reports Meilyn Santana, the Clinics' Referral Department Manager. "Without its help, many would be in continuing pain and unable to work. This partnership among Marin's health providers and Operation Access makes a big difference to their lives."*

Want to learn more? Visit [www.operationaccess.org](http://www.operationaccess.org)

Photo: Tim Porter

## Your Donations Make a Difference

### Donor Family Profile: Charis Denison and Scott Hummel

Donations from generous community members allow the Clinics to both sustain and expand patient programs and services. Read about what motivates one family to give.

In the mid-1990s, prior to his death from cancer, Paul Denison, along with his wife Elizabeth, established the Denison Family Foundation. Since that time, the foundation has served as a means for the Denisons — collectively and individually — to make strategic philanthropic choices that have a wide range and deep impact.

As a part of this process, **Charis Denison** and her husband **Scott Hummel** have supported the Marin Community Clinics for almost a decade.

### A commitment to social justice

The opportunity for Charis and Scott to be active participants as grantors through the foundation is particularly compelling for them. Contrary to many donors with family foundations, they are middle class — she is a high school teacher and educational consultant, and he is a designer and account director for digital strategy and production. They met through their common backgrounds in social justice and community-based education.

Charis had been board chair for the Haight Ashbury Food Program in San Francisco, and Scott had been a board member with the Apeiron Institute for Sustainable Living in Providence, RI. Yet, having access to the foundation has allowed them to think strategically and make financial gifts that are far more impactful than what they would be able to do based on their own personal income.

Charis, in particular, was drawn to the Clinics based in part on her experience working for eight years with the Haight Ashbury Food Program. During her tenure she worked with the leadership of the Haight Ashbury Free Clinic to establish a partnership through which the Clinic provided health care services on-site at the Food Program while hungry San Franciscans were in line waiting for a meal.

### Meeting basic human needs

After they moved to Fairfax in 2002, she was compelled to explore how Marin addressed the basic human needs of its underserved population.



Photo courtesy of the Denison/Hummel Family

Scott Hummel and Charis Denison, with children Finn and Day

Charis explains, “I heard about Marin Community Clinics and was intrigued to find out how it cares for people who are often ‘invisible,’ especially those living in the Canal Area of San Rafael. The more I learned, the more impressed I became.

*It’s a well-run organization that provides essential services. And it’s compassion-based, which is very important to me.*

*We see health care as a universal need. We all get sick. The idea that we are all obligated to care for one another is the essence of being human. And the Marin Community*

*Clinics allows our family a means to support the work of caring in a way that we are unable to do, directly, on our own.”*

When Charis and Scott donate to the Clinics, they do not restrict the funds to any particular use. “The Clinics’ leadership knows what the needs are, and it’s run so well. We trust them to make the right decision.”

To find out more about how you can support Marin Community Clinics, visit our website at [www.marinclinic.org/support-us](http://www.marinclinic.org/support-us).

### Looking for the Donor Listing?

Thanks to the generosity of our many donors, the Donor Listing has outgrown available space in the newsletter. You will now find it at: [www.marinclinic.org/support-us](http://www.marinclinic.org/support-us), where it will be regularly updated.

*Heartfelt thanks to all of our wonderful donors!*

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## Coming of Age

Last, but certainly not least, has been the tremendous philanthropic community support the Clinics has received over the years. In the past 15 years alone, we have raised \$22 million from generous community donors. These funds have played a critical role in our ability to not only maintain current programs, but also to modernize our facilities and provide additional patient care services.

### A thriving clinic system contributes to the health of the entire community

Our focus on prevention reduces chronic illnesses, which has a tremendous impact on families and employers. Fewer unnecessary visits to hospital Emergency Departments reduces waiting times for everyone. And, we are helping to drive down the overall cost of health care.

*“Marin County’s implementation of the historic Affordable Care Act has been a textbook example of how to interpret and translate into action a complex Federal law,” reports Larry Meredith, PhD, former Director, County of Marin Health & Human Services. “This journey has significantly benefited from the Clinics’ dedication to ease of access, service excellence and innovation.”*



Photo: Tim Porter

Tracey Hessel, MD with a pediatric patient

## Ten Things You may not Know about Marin Community Clinics

1. Our not-for-profit mission is to improve the health of our patients and community by providing high quality, cost-effective, culturally sensitive, patient-centered health care. ✓
2. We have seen a significant increase in patients because more people now have health insurance and are seeking care.
3. Our Clinics are open evenings and weekends in addition to weekdays. ✓
4. We have 19 dental chairs that operate 7 days/week.
5. Our clinicians are experts in their fields and are board certified or licensed. ✓
6. We are one of only 1,200 Federally Qualified Health Centers in the U.S. and have been recognized for our high quality of care. ✓
7. Prevention is a key focus. One example: our weekly Community Health Hubs. ✓
8. Volunteer and paid specialists see patients at our Clinics or at their private offices. ✓
9. We have strong community partners, including the County of Marin, hospitals, the Marin Community Foundation and Marin’s other three community clinics. ✓
10. Our success is due in great part to generous donors and supporters.

For more information  
visit [www.marinclinics.org](http://www.marinclinics.org) or email [info@marinclinic.org](mailto:info@marinclinic.org)



Connecting for Health is a publication of Marin Community Clinics.



marin community clinics

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## Solstice Celebration slated for Wednesday, June 24

**Raises funds for patient care programs**

Mark your calendars – Marin Community Clinics’ popular annual fundraiser is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 24** (Marin Art & Garden Center, 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm). This year’s theme is *Here Comes the Sun!*

The Clinics’ only annual fundraising event, proceeds help provide vital services to patients, which in turn makes our community the strongest and healthiest it can be.

The event will honor two Community Health Champions, physical therapist **Leslie Cunningham** and **Operation Access** (see page 5). Two high school students, **Carolina Perez** and **Maria Benitez**, will be recognized as Youth Champions for their volunteer work to promote community health.

Come and enjoy a wonderful evening and meet others who are united in their support of the Clinics. Tickets for the event are \$100/person or \$95/person when purchased online at [www.marinclinic.org/support-us](http://www.marinclinic.org/support-us). For more information, to purchase a ticket, or to become a Solstice Sponsor, contact [gifts@marinclinic.org](mailto:gifts@marinclinic.org) or call 415-526-8527.

### 2014 Community Health Champions



Honoree **Judie Shaw** with Len Shaw.

Photo: Jocelyn Knight



Honoree **Al Varner, MD** with Clinics staff

Photo: Jocelyn Knight