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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.

## SPECIAL ISSUE: WOMEN'S & CHILDREN'S HEALTH

### Breaking the Cycle of Trauma

#### One girl's story

One night, when Daniela was 11, her parents scooped her out of bed and, without any explanation, they left El Salvador. Her father was being threatened with death if he didn't pay off gang members and he feared for his family's safety.

Being suddenly uprooted was very difficult for Daniela – she felt her parents' stress and missed her friends and grandparents. Crossing over to the U.S. was hard. The family eventually settled in San Rafael, but going to school in Marin was tough for Daniela – she didn't speak English, was bullied because of her darker skin, and was teased about her parents being deported. Both parents worked several jobs, so weren't often at home, and there wasn't a lot of healthy food on the table. In El Salvador, she shared a room with her little brother; here, three families lived in a small, crowded apartment.

When Daniela and her family became Clinics patients, she was showing clear signs of trauma – flashbacks, nightmares, and mood swings.

*"We are very attuned to the signs of trauma and are committed to helping families in any way we can."*

— Heyman Oo, MD  
Clinics Pediatrician

Sometimes, she wouldn't eat because the food wasn't like what she had at home. She didn't want to go to school, afraid that her parents might be deported while she was in class.

#### Trauma and adversity can have life-long impact

Sadly, Daniela is not alone. Many of the children we serve, as well as their parents, are affected by trauma and adversity. In addition



Photo: L. Boughey

Dr. Oo (L) with Clinics patient

to the problems that Daniela faced, children may have experienced or witnessed domestic violence, parental separation due to immigration issues or incarceration, or mental illness/substance abuse in the household.

*"Multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are strongly related to development of long-term health issues,"* explains Tracey Hessel, MD, lead Clinics pediatrician. *"Timely prevention, screening and intervention can foster resilience and help break this cycle."*

#### Clinics Efforts Expanded

At Marin Community Clinics, we are very concerned about the extent of ACEs among the families we serve, so we recently embarked on a comprehensive program.

*"We are very attuned to the signs of trauma and are committed to helping families in any way we can,"* reports Heyman Oo, MD. She is working closely with a team of pediatricians and behavioral health specialists that includes Caren Schmidt, PsyD; Elizabeth Horevitz, PhD; Elizabeth Shaw, MD; and, Dr. Hessel.

This spring, Marin Community Clinics was one of just a few sites in the U.S. selected to participate in a pilot project that screens for trauma in pediatric patients, pregnant moms,

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## Addressing the Core Issues that Affect Health

By Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH, CEO



Photo: Clinics Staff

During its early years, Marin Community Clinics had limited resources. Basic medical care was provided by a small group of highly dedicated

volunteers and the clinic was located in a church basement. Today, thanks to the extraordinary support of the community, committed Board of Directors, and exceptional staff, we operate state-of-the-art clinics throughout Marin. Our staff of close to 400 provides a range of services that not only includes primary medical care, but also dental, behavioral health, and specialty medical care – and more.

Have we changed? Most certainly. But what has not changed is the legacy passed on by our founders – a passionate commitment to providing high quality, accessible, and affordable care to disenfranchised community members.

*“If we are going to make a lasting impact on the health of individuals and the community as a whole, we need to play a role in addressing the core issues that affect health.”*

—Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH, CEO

### Making a lasting impact on individual and community health

Now, more than ever before, we understand the necessity of “going deeper” than just offering basic medical and dental care.

If we are going to make a lasting impact on the health of individuals and the community as a whole, we must play a strong role in addressing the core issues that affect health. It’s a long list – lack of access to healthy food, transportation, and community resources; lack of information about risk factors and healthy lifestyles; and, more complex issues such as environmental stress, addiction, and trauma.

### Leveling the Playing Field

At Marin Community Clinics, we frequently talk about “leveling the playing field in health care” and “going the extra mile.” We mean it!

To that end, we have:

- increased our focus on prevention of chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension
- expanded our patient navigation services
- created support groups and educational sessions for patients
- developed a Dental Bravery Coach Program (see page 3)
- hired addiction specialists
- continued to enhance our behavioral health program, with emphasis on trauma assessment and treatment (see page 1)
- partnered with key organizations such as the County of Marin, First 5 Marin, UCSF, and coalitions of community clinics to develop innovative programs to address core issues, fill gaps in services, and advocate for accessible and affordable care.



Photo: Stuart Urelette

Given the continuing uncertainty about the Affordable Care Act and other developments on the national scene – such as concerns about reproductive rights and immigration policy (see page 7) – our work is more important than ever. With your help, Marin Community Clinics is not only here to stay, but has the resources and expertise to do more to improve the health of our community.

# Program Highlight

## Our Dental Bravery Coach Program

### Q&A with Connie Kadera, DDS, Chief Dental Officer

Photo: Clinics Staff



#### Q What is the Dental Bravery Coach Program?

**A** This is a special program that we provide in collaboration with our Behavioral Health Division to help kids and adults who have anxieties about going to the dentist. We identify patients who are having issues and bring in a Clinics social worker who uses special techniques to help.

#### Q Why did the Clinics create this program?

**A** Many of us don't like going to the dentist – primarily because we are anxious about discomfort and pain. For some time, we've observed that many of the kids and adults we treat in our Dental Clinics come with extremely strong fears about being in the dental chair. But it goes beyond that; while we are providing care, they often open up about their life issues.

They may have observed or been victims of physical violence or had negative experiences with dental care in the past, so that having someone (even a dental professional) touch them is frightening. The parents, who usually accompany their children, often project their own fears and anxieties on the children, who are generally fine when they first arrive. The end result: patients can freeze in the dental chair or even refuse care, so dental health becomes difficult to achieve.

#### Q How does your Whole Person Care approach fit in?

**A** One of the great things about our Clinics is the integrated care and our approach to Whole Person Care. In the past, we would refer patients to our Behavioral Health team to help manage the anxiety. Last year, we piloted a program with Clinics social worker **Pia Litz, LCSW**, to provide more structured support. It was so successful that it is now a permanent part of our care.

#### Q How does it work?

**A** We are fortunate to now have **Caitlin Greenberg, LCSW**, a bilingual/bicultural licensed clinical social worker, as a dedicated member of the dental team. When the staff identifies a patient or family that seems anxious, we contact her and a coaching appointment is made. After determining the root of the problem, she may suggest family counseling sessions or teach relaxation techniques such as breathing exercises.

Not every patient expresses their anxieties, so we are planning to conduct anxiety screening with all of our patients and offer this service to everyone who comes in our doors.



Photo: Stuart Lirette

*Dr. Kadera with dental patient*

#### Q What kind of results are you seeing?

**A** Having a social worker in place is clearly making a difference. Our patients are very open to help – they want to overcome their fears and get the dental work done. Already, the staff is reporting that patients seem calmer and that it's easier to perform the work. It's good for everyone!

## Ensuring Healthy Moms & Healthy Babies

### Our Pregnancy & Parenting Services

The minute we learn that a Clinics patient is pregnant, the entire team puts its arms around her to ensure that she has a healthy pregnancy and baby. She is immediately connected with one of the Clinics obstetrics nurses to plan for her care, and our doctors, nurses, nurse midwives, and behavioral health specialists step into action. When she goes to Marin General Hospital to deliver, a Clinics midwife is part of the team.

#### Life challenges can mean high risk pregnancies

Of the 500-600 women we care for each year, the majority are considered high risk for problem pregnancies.

*“Most are immigrants from Latin America and many come with life challenges,”* explains **Erinn Burke Lance**, Certified Nurse Midwife and Program Manager. *“Many have experienced trauma in their home country, including leaving children behind. They have fears around immigration issues and may avoid care during the important first trimester. Some have come to the U.S. alone, don’t have a partner, and are isolated. They may not know about pre-natal care, have chronic conditions such as diabetes, or don’t have access to healthy food. It can be a very tough time.”*

#### Keeping a close eye on pregnant moms



Knowing that pre-natal care is critical, we take special effort to ensure that patients feel safe under our care. Given their life challenges, we also focus on more than just their medical care.

Twice a month, obstetrical nurses, pediatricians, and behavioral health staff meet to discuss the most vulnerable patients. *“This team approach ensures that we provide the best possible care and that no one falls through the cracks,”* explains Lance. *“It also provides great continuity once the baby is born.”*

Program Manager/Nurse Midwife **Erinn Lance (R)** with patient



Patient receives ultrasound as part of her pre-natal care

#### Special programs make a difference

In addition to the core obstetrical services, the Clinics offers a number of special programs.

- In 2011, the Clinics adopted the *Centering Pregnancy* model to provide additional pre-natal support to patients. Proven to decrease premature deliveries, the program fosters community and educates the moms about pregnancy, labor, birth, postpartum, breastfeeding, self-care, and baby care.

This summer, a *Centering Parenting* program was added. Both programs, which are held in Spanish, not only allow providers to spend more time with patients but also create a sense of community.

*“The minute a pregnant woman comes to us, we put our arms around her to ensure that she has a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.”*

—**Erinn Burke Lance, CNM**  
**Obstetrics Program Manager**

- *Specialized caseworkers*, funded by the State’s Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program, see Medi-Cal enrollees throughout their pregnancy. They determine if the woman has support at home, arrange for practical needs such as car seats and breast pumps, prepare the woman for the hospital, and lead childbirth education classes.

*continued on page 5*

### Our Services for Pregnant Moms

- Bilingual pre-natal care
- Childbirth education classes
- Nutrition classes
- Centering Pregnancy & Centering Parenting – group education & support (Spanish)
- Lactation counseling
- Pre- & post-natal yoga
- Infant car seat classes
- Referrals to acupuncture, chiropractic & physical therapy

We offer a full array of women’s health services. Visit <http://www.marinclinic.org/health-care-services/patient-resources>



## What's New at Marin Community Clinics?

### Marin Community Clinics among the highest performing health centers in U.S.



The federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which oversees 1,352 federally-funded community clinics, recently released its annual Quality Leader awards for 2017. Marin Community Clinics was rated among the top 30% in the US for quality as well as the top quality performer among Marin County's community clinics.

We received high ratings for our work in the following areas: overall quality leader, enhancing access to care, addressing health disparities, patient center medical home, quality improvement efforts, advancing health information technology, and electronic health record reporting. A \$215,542 award accompanied the recognition.

*"We are very proud of the fact that we continue to receive this annual recognition for our efforts,"* reported **Jose Chibras, MD**, Chief Medical Officer. *"It's a testament to the dedication and passion of everyone at the Clinics and to our focus on 'going above and beyond'."*

### Advocating for Breast Feeding



This summer, Clinics pediatrician **Lisa Leavitt, MD**, joined other Marin health leaders to educate the community regarding the benefits of breastfeeding over commercial formulas.

The focus: the superior nutrition provided by breastfeeding, reduced health risk, improved infant health, and lifelong benefits. Read more: <http://www.marinclinic.org/marin-voice-breastfeeding/>



Photo: Stuart Lurette  
Laurie Mann (L) & Jackie Jones (R)

### Two New Leaders Join the Clinics

This Spring, Marin Community Clinics welcomed two new leaders to our team.

**Jackie Jones**, a seasoned medical administrator, joined us as Director of Medical Operations. Jones has worked as an operations leader for a large private

medical group as well as several community health centers, including Petaluma Health Center and Clinica de la Raza, where she served as a regional manager. In her Clinics role, she oversees the operations of our medical clinics, working closely with the Chief Medical Officer to ensure high quality, standardized care, proper work flows, and continuity of care.

**Laurie Mann** recently joined us as Dental Operations Director. A long-time dental practice management expert, she has developed and managed dental clinics both nationally and internationally. Her work has included setting up mobile clinics for large employers as well as mobile clinics and a not-for-profit foundation for homeless individuals. At the Clinics, she oversees the management of our three dental clinics, working with the Chief Dental Officer and supporting all members of the team to ensure high quality care and efficient patient flow.

*"Joining the Clinics made me realize how much I enjoy this work,"* said Jones. *"It can be hard work, but everyone is on board to do the best for our patients."* Mann says that she is pleased to be back in the not-for-profit world. *"The Clinics is the perfect fit for me. Using my expertise to give back is very meaningful."*

CEO **Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH** summed it up: *"We have grown exponentially over the past few years; Jackie's and Laurie's expertise and passion for our work will serve the organization and our patients well."*

## Ensuring Healthy Moms & Healthy Babies continued from page 4

- This year, we introduced a new program that assigns volunteer *birthing coaches* ("doulas") to work with women who are otherwise without support.
- The team works closely with our Behavioral Health Division on *Resilient Beginnings*, a component of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) program. While babies are still in the womb, mothers are screened for

medical, psychological, and social traumas, and are referred to the behavioral health team for necessary treatment (see page 1).

*"Marin Community Clinics is a model for how to provide high quality, integrated obstetrics care to high risk moms,"* concludes Lance. *"We know how to take care of them and love doing it."*

## Your Contributions Make a Difference

### Donor Profile: Marin Community Foundation

Read why the Marin Community Foundation supports the Clinics and how it has played a critical role in our success.

When listening to **Dr. Tom Peters**, President & CEO of Marin Community Foundation (MCF) and **Shirin Vakharia**, MCF's Director of Health & Aging, talk about Marin Community Clinics, it is clear that they are real fans.



Shirin Vakharia and Dr. Tom Peters, MCF

#### A partnership to achieve health equity

"MCF has a long-standing commitment to health equity and supporting the health care safety net," explains Ms. Vakharia. "When we look at how to make an impact, supporting the Clinics is a natural choice. Not only does it serve 80% of Marin's underserved population, but it provides highly sophisticated, integrated care."

"Marin Community Clinics is a significant and much needed provider in Marin," says Dr. Peters. "Access to health care is a fundamental human right. Until the U.S. has a policy of universal access, there needs to be a respectful and high quality dedicated organization that cares for the underserved. The Clinics is certainly that."

"The team at the Clinics carries out its mission every day, providing all the elements of care and with a strong focus on the social determinants of health," says Ms. Vakharia. "Their quality of care is unquestionably 'gold standard.'"

#### Long-standing Support

MCF, the tenth largest community foundation in the U.S., has been a major funder of the Clinics since its early years. Since 1997, with the generosity of scores of its donors, MCF has provided grants totaling \$14 million. Support has ranged from the San Rafael and Novato capital campaigns to obstetrics services planning and quality efforts. MCF administered the five-year Sutter Health Access to Care grant, of which the Clinics was one recipient. Currently, MCF is funding a planning grant for a new Clinics program called "Healthy Eating Active Living," addressing senior nutrition issues.

*"Marin Community Clinics works every day to make the vision of universal access to care a reality."*

—**Shirin Vakharia**,  
Director of Health & Aging, MCF

"We are trying to achieve the same thing," she continues. "Marin Community Clinics is the expert in health care and MCF has the resources to help. We listen to where it is moving and to learn how we can help on its journey."

*"MCC is a fabulous investment that offers something for every type of donor."*

**Dr. Tom Peters, President & CEO, MCF**

Both Dr. Peters and Ms. Vakharia speak enthusiastically about the Clinics' leadership, including its executives, physicians and staff. "They are courageous," reports Dr. Peters, "and are key players in larger community discussions about challenging issues such as immigration and housing."

Dr. Peters notes that operating community clinics is complicated and requires perceptive and rigorous management. "Donors give with their hearts," he says, "but they also need to know that the organization is well managed. MCC is a fabulous investment that offers something for every type of donor."

Marin Community Clinics extends its heartfelt appreciation to The Marin Community Foundation. "Its support has been instrumental in our ability to create state-of-the-art clinics and implement innovative programs," reports **Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH, CEO**. "To us, MCF is more than a donor – it is a valued partner in improving the health of the community."

To make a donation online rather than through the mail, please visit [www.marinclinics.org/support-us](http://www.marinclinics.org/support-us).

For a tour of our Clinics, please email [gifts@marinclinics.org](mailto:gifts@marinclinics.org) or call 415-526-8527.

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## Call to Action: Federal Immigration Proposal

Community leaders are mobilizing in response to a proposal from the Trump Administration that would penalize certain immigrants seeking to change their legal status if they receive public benefits or are likely to become a “public charge.”

The proposal would expand the list of public benefits in the “public charge test” to include Medicaid, Medicare Part D subsidies, Section 8 housing, and CalFresh (food subsidies). Under the proposal, this would result in a “heavily weighted negative factor” in reviewing an immigrant’s application.

### Reaction & Response

Many people in the immigrant community are reacting out of fear and abandoning their public benefits – including healthcare, housing and nutrition assistance – leaving vulnerable families at risk.

*“We are hearing that these changes will have a chilling effect and are likely to harm entire communities.”*

**Damon Connolly,**  
President, Marin County Board of Supervisors

*“The Marin County Board of Supervisors is concerned about the effects of this proposal and is committed to supporting residents,”* said **Damon Connolly**, Board President. *“We are hearing that these changes will have a chilling effect and deter people from receiving the services they need for their health and wellness.”*

*“This proposal willfully ignores the other half of the immigration equation – the innovation, determination, and contribution of*

*immigrants. It should be rejected out of hand,”* stated **Dr. Thomas Peters**, President & CEO, Marin Community Foundation.

Although the DHS proposal won’t take effect until after the public comment period closes, Marin Community Clinics and other service providers are finding that their clients, many of whom have been misinformed, are currently unnecessarily disenrolling from programs or declining to register for new ones.

*“We are concerned,”* explained **Dr. Mitesh Popat, CEO**. *“Our priority is to dispel misinformation and ensure our patients receive needed health care services.”*

Marin Community Clinics has joined a local Public Charge Working Group to coordinate information gathering and public outreach. Other members include the County of Marin, the Marin County Office of Education, the Marin Community Foundation, First 5 Marin, and the Marin Children and Families Commission. The Working Group posts public information about the public charge issue online at [www.marinhhs.org/public-charge](http://www.marinhhs.org/public-charge).

### Action Needed by December 10!

We encourage you to learn more and submit your comments regarding the impact of these changes. *Comments are due by December 10, 2018.* Submit by mail to Samantha Deshommes, Department of Homeland Security, 20 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20529-2140; letters must reference “DHS Docket No. USCIS-2010-0012.” For more information and to submit online comments, visit [www.bit.ly/CAcomments](http://www.bit.ly/CAcomments).



Photo: iStock / Oghphoto

## Breaking the Cycle of Trauma continued from page 1

and newborns. *“Patients can be extremely resilient and don’t always show overt signs of trauma right away, but serious problems can emerge later,”* reports **Schmidt**. *“With these screening tools, we will be able to identify more children and parents who might benefit from additional support.”*

### Taking Action

We are not stopping with screenings – we are also intervening. Any child screened as high risk is referred to our Patient Navigation Team, which determines the best course of action for the child and family.

*“Children like Daniela and their families have experienced heart-breaking traumas,”* concluded Schmidt. *“But they are resilient, and we are here to provide the resources needed to support their strengths and break the cycle.”*

Our thanks to The Center for Youth Wellness, First 5 Marin, and the Center for Care Innovation/Resilience Beginnings Program, which fund several of the services.

### Our Comprehensive Services

- Individual counseling with the children and/or their parents
- Two special case managers: one follows pregnant women whose babies are at high risk for trauma due to problems such as substance abuse; the other bridges support from obstetrics to pediatrics
- Positive Parenting group sessions
- Stress reduction groups for teenagers
- “Eat, Play, & Grow,” a children’s nutrition group
- Partnering with schools to address a child’s issues
- Referrals to our Health Hubs as well as outside legal and housing agencies
- Everyone at the Clinics, from providers to front office staff, is receiving “trauma-informed” training.
- Participation in efforts to evaluate outcomes and identify best practices that can be shared across the U.S.



marin community clinics

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## Dental Program Marks 10th Anniversary

### 54,000 visits and still going strong

In 2008, Marin Community Clinics opened its first dental clinic for low income residents.

In response to a State mandate, we focused most of our efforts on pediatric dentistry. That first year, we operated just six dental chairs and served 5,500 children.

Since then, the program has grown by leaps and bounds. Today, we have 27 dental chairs and 100 staff. We provide care to both adults and children in three state-of-the-art facilities; in 2017, the team provided close to 54,000 services.

### Going above and beyond

*“We do a lot more besides cleaning teeth and treating dental decay,” reports **Connie Kadera, DDS**, Chief Dental Officer. “We have a strong focus on prevention and oral hygiene education. And, consistent with our ‘health home’ approach, we work closely with medical providers to ensure integrated care. We also offer weekend and evening hours and have designated times for pregnant women to protect them from nitrous oxide.”*



Photo: Jocelyn Knight

### Donors generosity helps cover cost of care

*“Marin Community Clinics started with a robust pediatric dental program that also served a few adults,” explains **Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH, CEO**. “In recent years, we have increased services to adults to meet the tremendous need.*

*Many adults have had minimal-to-no dental care and often require extensive work and more frequent visits. But there is no Medi-Cal funding like there is for children. Our sliding fee scale helps some of them; for others, we rely on the generosity of our donors to cover the costs of the care.”*

Regardless of the challenges, the Dental Program will continue to grow to meet community need. An added plus: our patients love us!