



Connecting for Health

marin community clinics



FALL 2019

Photo: Billy Cole

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Inside:
Acknowledging
our Donors

Our Mission

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

Guiding Edgar Through his Cancer Diagnosis

To Edgar, a Marin Community Clinics patient, the news of a cancer diagnosis came as a shock. He had just turned 37 and, despite having some leg pain, felt fairly healthy. Such terrifying news would disturb anyone — especially someone at his young age — and the timing couldn't have been worse. His first son had just been born and his wife was still recovering, so the last thing they needed was to deal with such an overwhelming situation.

"I was living the best time of my life bonding with my son. When I heard the word 'cancer' from my doctor my whole world collapsed. But Marin Community Clinics made it right."

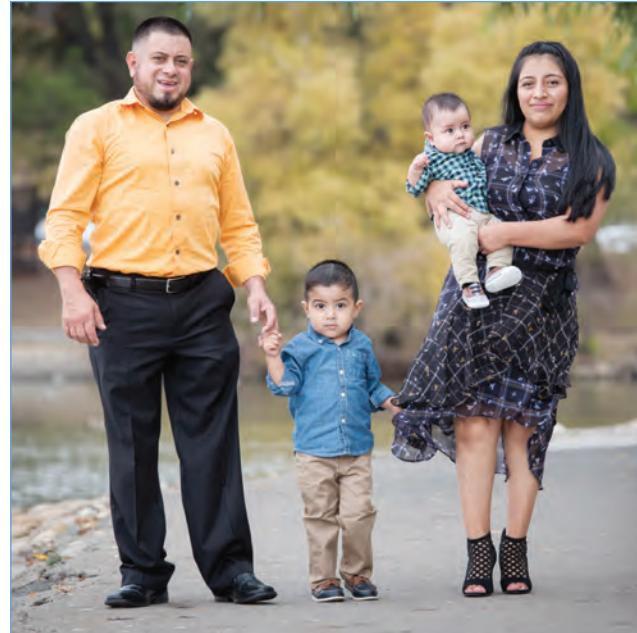
—Edgar

A stressful emotional and financial time

Edgar's Marin Community Clinics' doctor referred him to one of the local hospitals where he could receive care. Although he was ineligible for health insurance at the time — adding to his stress — the Clinics advocated and coordinated care for him through an agreement with the hospital for treating those without insurance. The result: treatment was initiated right away.

There was an additional insurmountable burden. While he was ill, Edgar took care of his son so that his wife could work and provide for the family. However, it still wasn't enough to pay the bills. That's when he reached out for support and the community came together to help — first his church and then several other organizations. Funds for food, shelter, and other basic needs were provided to his family for months.

The situation seemed to be progressing well when Edgar received more overwhelming news — the cancer treatment required a leg



Edgar and his family

Photo: Stuart Lirette

amputation. Edgar felt defeated. How could he endure this?

Community effort brings hope

Devastated, Edgar mourned the loss of his leg. He knew that getting a prosthetic leg would allow him to continue a more normal life. Without insurance, however, he couldn't afford a prosthetic leg.

After he had the surgery, the Clinics' team came together to help him once again. His doctor and care team, including our Care Navigators, rolled up their sleeves and reached out to community organizations. After talking to several, we were able to raise almost half of the amount needed to

"We provide so much more than medical and dental care. We advocate for our patients and treat them as if they were our family members."

—Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH, CEO

purchase the prosthesis. The Clinics was able to secure some of the funding through our Medical Assistance Fund, which is comprised of private contributions. Edgar was hopeful.

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Marin Community Clinics

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“Public Charge Rule” Injunction a Victory for Immigrants – for Now

This guest editorial was published in the Marin IJ on behalf of Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH, CEO and Omar Carrera, Canal Alliance’s CEO.



Imagine you are an immigrant living in Marin, where you’ve worked hard to secure a job, pay taxes and contribute to your community. Your children (U.S. citizens)

are receiving an education and your family has access to medical care through Medi-Cal. You’ve applied to become a lawful permanent resident, but you’re frightened that your application could be denied and you and your spouse deported based on your Medi-Cal enrollment.

Do you disenroll in this public benefit, despite the financial hardship it would impose, in order to ensure that your family stays together?

What the rule means to many

In Marin County, this is a question that approximately 19,500 people in mixed-status families are asking themselves — all because of changes to the government’s public charge rule. The rule, which has been in effect for decades, assesses whether or not someone who wants to enter the U.S. or apply for permanent residency is likely to become dependent on public benefits.

In October 2018, a policy update was introduced by the Trump Administration that created new and tougher definitions of “dependency.” It was slated to be implemented on October 15 of this year. Enrollment in Medi-Cal, food-stamp programs and housing subsidies would now be considered: Non-English speaking immigrants, those without formal education, unemployed people, and those with debts also would be affected. Estimates indicate that up to two-thirds of future immigrants could be excluded from the U.S. based on these changes.

The fact is that almost 75% of low-income immigrants in Marin who access these benefits are employed, and it is these very benefits that help them make ends meet in our highly inequitable county.

While many immigrants in Marin County are exempt from the rule, fear is rampant. An alarming number are disenrolling from public benefits, patients are cancelling medical appointments, and children are not being immunized. Rumors abound and stress is high. We call this the “chilling effect.” The public health consequences are clear — harm to children (including U.S. citizens) and reduced access to medical care, food assistance and housing support.

But there is good news! Due to the extraordinary efforts of immigration advocacy organizations, these controversial policy changes are now on hold. Just days before it was to be implemented, five courts (including the federal court in our region) issued preliminary injunctions that blocked the rule throughout the U.S. This is a victory

Due to the extraordinary efforts of immigration advocacy organizations, these controversial policy changes are now on hold.

for all of us, especially the thousands of immigrants who come to the U.S. to find a better life and who contribute so much to our society. However, the fight is not over. The injunction is temporary, and as we went to press, it remains likely that the Trump administration will file an appeal.

Last year, organizations across Marin recognized the impact that the proposed changes would have and began collaborating to educate immigrant communities, leaders, and legislators about the consequences. Earlier this month, Marin Community

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Marin Community Clinics and Center Point

Integrating Substance Abuse Treatment with Primary Care

Q & A Marin Community Clinics and Center Point, Inc., one of Marin's long-time providers of vital substance use and mental health disorder treatment and supportive services, have formed a new partnership. This important development has enabled both organizations to build an integrated care clinic with a robust rehabilitation path for many community members.

How is a “single point of entry” enabled through this partnership?

Marin Community Clinics recently opened a clinic within Center Point’s Multi-Service Center in San Rafael. The Clinics’ care team provides medical evaluations, required by Center Point’s admission process, as well as additional medical services. This model enables Center Point to admit clients in an easy and efficient manner as it offers a single point of entry into the program. Otherwise, clients would need to overcome transportation and other possible barriers that could significantly delay treatment.

“Being connected to Marin Community Clinics as a medical home is a major accomplishment for Center Point clients.”

—Marc Hering, Center Point Vice President

Our next step: further integration of behavioral health services.

What are the benefits of this collaboration?

Working together to help Center Point clients allows both organizations to more efficiently communicate and further address issues. For example, the timely exchange of medical tests, results, and information will lead to improved health care quality, safety, and outcomes.

If Center Point clients are already Clinics’ patients, they continue to receive care. If not, they can easily become patients. Center Point clients have historically used the emergency room to receive care for a variety of reasons — not having health insurance, not knowing where to

Photo: Lindsay Bouhey, MCC



Clinic's team at Center Point: Douglas Lim, Family Nurse Practitioner and Patricia Galvan, Medical Assistant.

go, being affected by the stigma associated with homelessness and addiction, among others.

What is Center Point?

Center Point is a non-profit organization that is one of the nation’s leading health and social services agencies, with programs in California and Texas. It provides comprehensive services to adults, families, homeless individuals, veterans, substance users, those with mental health issues, those who are unemployed, and those

involved with the criminal justice system. The program’s fundamental goal is to develop individual, personal, and moral responsibility and to nurture the full potential of those served.

What services does Center Point offer?

Services include assessment and evaluation, residential programs, outpatient programs, relapse prevention and aftercare, transitional and permanent housing, job preparation training, vocational programs, job placement assistance, case management and specialized gender-appropriate services. Ongoing recovery support is provided

“Access to preventive care and many other important services can make a big difference in the lives of patients who have multiple health and social issues. This collaboration reinforces our commitment to the recovery of these individuals.”

—José Chibrás, MD, Chief Medical Officer

as well as opportunities to participate in transitional housing and supportive services. In Marin County, Center Point’s headquarters is in San Rafael. The residential and outpatient programs include three locations in San Rafael and a variety of transitional housing sites located around the county. Center Point accepts Medi-Cal, private insurance, and has a sliding scale fee structure.

Meet Our Dedicated Staff

Read about some of the many dedicated and passionate Marin Community Clinics' clinicians and staff who work tirelessly to deliver the best care to our patients and community. We are proud of our staff and thankful for their hard work. They are the heart of our organization and without them we would not be as successful as we are today.

Photo: Lindsay Boughey, MCC



Mikhail Babayev is one of the Clinics' complex care managers. Like many of our patients, he immigrated to the U.S. at a young age — in his case, after leaving Russia. Mikhail grew up in Sacramento and is one of seven children. His family didn't have a lot of resources and relied on public benefits and case management assistance. “*The services we received were so important and helped us so much. I don't think I would have made it had we not received the support we did,*” he says.

The assistance Mikhail received growing up inspired him to be the first member of his family to attend college and



to pursue a career in the behavioral health field. He holds a Masters of Social Work from the University of New England and is studying to become a licensed social worker. He has been working at the Clinics for a year and is happy to support people with the same needs he had growing up. He also appreciates the care integration model we have and the convenience of communicating with other providers. *“The integration of care that the Clinics offers is really great. I can talk to other providers who are also working with my patients and can consult, share patients' concerns, and work with them to make the most of the care provided.”*

Mikhail lives in Rohnert Park with his wife and cat. He enjoys exploring new places, fishing and watching football.

—Mikhail Babayev, Complex Care Manager

Photo: Lindsay Boughey, MCC



Maria Dominguez is celebrating a milestone this year — her 20th year working at our clinics! She started working at the small Greenbrae clinic we used to run on the Marin General Hospital grounds (out of a modular building). Since then she has not only watched, but also contributed to our growth. Throughout the years, she helped several different departments and wore many hats. Direct patient support and customer service became her areas of expertise and passion. *“I love connecting with people and being able to help them. After 20 years, it feels more like a friendship with patients...we know each other so well, birthdays, family growth, and many other milestones.”*



Maria, who was born in Mexico and raised in California, is grateful for the opportunity to help the Latino community. She started interpreting for her parents at a very young age and continues to do so. Being able to help people, especially in their native language, is one of the main influences on her career at the Clinics. *“I truly enjoy getting smiles when patients realize I can help them in their native language... It's so important for people to be able to properly communicate and to have their concerns addressed when they're sick.”*

In her spare time, Maria enjoys travelling, going to concerts, and reading. She lives in the East Bay with her husband and dog.

—Maria Dominguez, Front Office Receptionist



The Clinics' Health Information Management System (HIMS) Supervisor **Tisa Thompson** is a busy woman! Besides leading the HIMS team, she has licenses and certificates that allow her to have several occasional side jobs — real estate, notary and finger print licenses. She also has a full-service management certificate, etiquette consultant certificate, and is a Mary Kay beauty products representative.

Tisa enjoys working at the Clinics because of the commitment of the employees. ***"We provide such great care at the Clinics and I believe that's possible because everyone works together"***

and helps one another. Everyone puts their heart into what they do." After working as a HIMS technician for a year, she became the department's supervisor. Tisa holds a bachelor's degree in political science from San Francisco State University and a master's in public administration with a health concentration from California State University. The education Tisa received and skills she developed have helped her to provide great leadership support to her team. ***"Supervising my team is another reason why I like working here. I'm passionate about coaching and mentoring people."*** she says. Tisa enjoys travelling, reading, and spending time with her granddaughter during her free time. She lives in Solano County with her husband and youngest son.

—Tisa Thompson, MPA/HCA, HIMS Supervisor



From patient, to board member, to employee! **Nildes Cardoso** had the chance to experience first-hand the care we provide and to contribute to the growth and improvement of our clinics. Before becoming a Clinics' employee, Nildes worked as a nanny for a family in Marin for many years. During this time, she came to our Clinics for care. Helping people has always been a passion and she had been looking for an opportunity to help her community. The recommendation to become a board member came from her Clinics' doctor and Nildes saw it as great volunteer opportunity. ***"Marin Community Clinics' mission inspired me to become a board member and to do more for my community. I truly enjoyed serving on a board with people"***

who care so much about the health of others."

Nildes' career in the medical field started in her native country Brazil. For 17 years, she worked as a nurse assistant at several hospitals. While serving as a board member, she learned about the employment opportunities the Clinics offered and decided to go back to the medical field. She is currently working as a sterilizer technician and is studying to be a dental assistant. She hopes to complete her certification soon and work closely with patients, which she enjoys very much.

Nildes volunteers at a spiritual center, where she is able to learn about religion and help people. She enjoys reading and learning more about spiritual matters during her free time. She lives in San Rafael.

—Nildes Cardoso, Sterilizer Dental Assistant



Erik Schten, MD is one of the Clinics' senior clinicians. He has been providing medical care as a primary care physician since 2001 and has special expertise in dermatology, geriatric medicine, and epidemiology. Besides being busy working as a clinician, he serves as the Site Medical Director for our Novato North clinic where he is in charge of the medical operations and clinician support.

When Dr. Schten interviewed at the Clinics, he felt moved by the dedication that the providers and staff had to our mission and our patients. To this day, he continues to be inspired and

passionate about the work he and others do. ***"Every day I see patients fight through what seems like impossible obstacles and unbearable life challenges, things I would have trouble even imagining. I feel humbled and proud to support their personal heroism."*** Dr. Schten lived in Ethiopia and Colombia when he was a child, which sparked his interest in working with diverse populations and later led him to work at the Clinics.

Dr. Schten received his medical degree from the Medical College of Wisconsin and did his residency at the University of California, San Diego Medical Center.

In his free time, he enjoys outdoor activities, meditating, listening to music, and travelling.

—Erik Schten, MD

Your Contributions Make a Difference

Donor Profile: Jordan Shields

Multiple connections to Marin Community Clinics inspires philanthropy.

Meet **Jordan Shields**, a Marin Community Clinics' supporter who has been involved with us in multiple ways and who is committed to supporting our mission.

Jordan has good reasons to be a fan of the Clinics — his great grandchildren are patients, and he has family members who are Clinics' employees. Because of his different interactions with the Clinics, Jordan has a deep understanding of the need for the services we offer to our patients and community.

Philanthropy as a priority

Jordan, who has been a Novato resident for 34 years, is a partner (and in some cases owner) of several companies including the Arrows Benefits Group, Personal Prospective, Patriot Growth Insurance Services, and Iron Skies Advisors.

Giving back to the community is a family tradition, and a priority — Jordan, his wife Kathy, and children have always been involved with organizations and programs that work to build and strengthen communities.

At the Arrows Benefits Group, for example, employees are compensated for their volunteer time and encouraged to

engage in community work. *"Arrows Benefits Group is a philanthropy-oriented organization and is committed to our clients, and also to addressing the needs of our community."*

In addition to donating to the Clinics, Jordan and Arrow Benefits Group support Big Brothers and Big Sisters, United Cerebral Palsy, and North Bay Children's Center, among others. Traditionally, Jordan has donated to healthcare facilities in Marin, so he felt strongly that he wanted to include Marin Community Clinics in his philanthropy efforts.

"Marin Community Clinics is key to the overall community health as they're open to treat everyone. The support and services provided to many of our community members benefits us all."

—Jordan Shields

county, the Clinics probably has the biggest community impact."

What would Jordan say to potential donors?

"Marin is known to be a wealthy county, but there are also 'pockets of poverty' and a lot of people who are not able to secure insurance or have jobs that offer benefits. The Clinics takes care of these people." "I have watched how much the Clinics has expanded, and that is truly encouraging. Full health services are being offered to everyone, not just to those with limited resources. Supporting an organization such as the Clinics is critical to making a lasting impact in our community's health. Everyone should do it."



Photo: Billy Cole

Jordan & Kathy Shields (R, L) with Bank of Marin's Executive Vice President, Retail Banking, Peter Pelham (C) at the 2019 Summer Solstice.

Jordan began donating to Marin Community Clinics a few years ago, including sponsoring our Summer Solstice Celebration. In recent years, he has seen his family members who are Clinics patients thrive and be happy with the services they receive. He also knows that his family members who work at the Clinics think highly of the organization and are

proud of their contributions to our success. So, it just made sense for him to get more involved and contribute to our growth. As he says, *"Among the healthcare facilities in our*

county, the Clinics probably has the biggest community impact."

To make a donation online, please visit www.marinclinics.org/support-us.
For a tour of our Clinics, please email gifts@marinclinics.org or call 415-526-8527.

For more information, visit www.marinclinics.org or email info@marinclinics.org

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What's New at Marin Community Clinics?

New Board Chair Named



Photo: Lindsay Bouhey, MCC

Cristina MacKenzie was named the new Clinics' board chair in July. MacKenzie, who is currently the Compliance and Privacy Officer for Kaiser Permanente's Marin and Sonoma Counties Health Plan and Foundation Hospitals, is serving a two-year term ending June 30, 2021.

"It is an honor and a privilege to be part of this organization that serves the underserved and uninsured in Marin," explained MacKenzie. "I've lived in this community since 1978, and it is a pleasure to give back."

Leading the 16-member board of directors, she has served on the Clinics' board since 2012. She has served as chair of the Compliance and Strategic Planning Committees and as a member of the Finance and Audit Committees.

"Cristina has many years of healthcare experience in a variety of settings, which will serve us well," reported Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH, CEO.

First Chief Behavioral Health Officer Appointed



Elizabeth Horevitz, PhD, LCSW has accepted the Chief Behavioral Health Officer position and joined the Marin Community Clinics' executive team. Dr. Horevitz started working at the Clinics in 2015 as a behavioral health provider and was promoted to Director of Behavioral Health in the same year. She has been instrumental in the expansion of behavioral health services and initiating trauma informed care practices.

Dr. Horevitz has over 15 years of overall behavioral health provider experience, in addition to her teaching and publication experience.

"I'm thrilled to step into the role of Chief Behavioral Health Officer and join the executive team," says Dr. Horevitz. *"I'm proud to work at an organization that so deeply values the role that behavioral health plays in overall health, and treating the 'whole person' (mind, body and spirit)."*

Guiding Edgar Through his Cancer Diagnosis

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More generosity — and a miracle

While the Clinics was tirelessly raising more funds, something extraordinary happened. Edgar's former employer received the news of his medical crisis and decided to donate the remainder of the funds needed. Everyone rejoiced.

Edgar received the prosthetic leg, which made it possible for him to go back to work as a landscaper and to lead a normal life. Because he had undergone a substantial amount of chemotherapy, he had been told he would be unlikely to father any more children. Months later, they received wonderful news — his wife became pregnant. Today, their second son is 5 months old.

Edgar is extremely grateful for all the help he received from so many people at the Clinics and in the community. Most importantly, he is thankful for being alive, being able to enjoy his family, and once again being able to provide for them.

"Public Charge Rule" Injunction

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Clinics and Canal Alliance joined forces to provide weekly, on-site legal consultations to Marin Community Clinics patients who are concerned about the implications of the rule for their families.

"We recognize the need to meet our patients where they are, to provide the tools and information they need, and to empower them to make informed choices."

Judge George B. Daniels, who issued one of the injunctions, wrote that, *"the rule...is repugnant to the American dream of the opportunity for prosperity and success through hard work and upward mobility. Immigrants have always come to this country seeking a better life for themselves...With or without help, most succeed."* We couldn't agree more.



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Marin Community Clinics Rated in the Top 10% of U.S. Health Centers



The Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA), which oversees over 1,300 federally-funded community health centers, reviewed the clinical performance of its members in August and subsequently released several quality awards.

Marin Community Clinics received six Quality Improvement Awards! Only 14 Health Centers out of 158 in California received this many awards from HRSA. Most importantly, the Clinics received a Gold designation for Health Care Quality Leader, which is the most prestigious recognition for overall clinical performance.

Other Federal Commendations Received:

Access Enhancer – recognized for increasing the total numbers of patients receiving comprehensive care.

Health Disparities Reducer – recognized for exceeding several Healthy People 2020 goals across racial and ethnic groups.

Advancing Health Information Technology for Quality – recognized for utilizing technology including telehealth services to increase access to care and advance quality.

Clinical Quality Improvers – recognized for demonstrating over 15% improvement on a clinical quality measure.

Patient Centered Medical Home – recognized health centers with patient-centered medical home (PCMH) status.

“The Clinics’ healthcare team is always striving to continually improve health outcomes for the patients we serve.”

—José Chibrás, MD, Chief Medical Officer