



**A Message from  
Marin Community Clinics' CEO**  
August 9, 2021

Dear Marin Community Clinics Family,

This week (August 8-14) Marin Community Clinics celebrates National Health Center Week, an annual celebration to raise awareness about America's health centers.

I'd like to share a brief history of community health centers. They grew out of the actions of civil rights and community health activists in the 1960s who sought to improve the lives of Americans living in poverty. One of these activists was Dr. Jack Geiger, who had witnessed community-based health care improving the health of poverty-stricken South Africans. In addition to treating sick patients, doctors and activists used grants to improve South African communities' sanitation and access to clean water, reduce hunger, and improve education. Replicating that model of care, he and other pioneers established health centers under President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty via grants from the Office of Economic Opportunity. They established the first "neighborhood health centers" in Boston, Massachusetts, and Mound Bayou, Mississippi in 1965.

Community health centers grew from there, leveraging resources of local communities with federal funds to establish neighborhood clinics in areas of need. This model empowered communities to establish and direct health services at the local level and generated evidence that affordable and accessible health care services benefit the individuals served while also improving public health.

Today, Federally Qualified Health Centers, including Marin Community Clinics, provide health care to approximately 1 in 11 Americans. Following in the footsteps of community health pioneers, Marin Community Clinics doesn't stop at providing medical, dental, and behavioral health care. With your support, we distribute free, healthy foods each week, promote literacy, provide oral hygiene and nutrition education, assist with enrolling in health insurance and programs such as CalFresh, link patients to community resources for housing and transportation, and much more.

Community health centers have received longstanding bipartisan support by administrations and policymakers at all levels, and within the private and public sectors. From the Marin County Board of Supervisors to the President of the United States, this week community health centers are being recognized for providing excellent health care and for playing a vital part of the nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. From the beginning of the pandemic, Marin Community Clinics and health centers across the country found innovative ways to provide vital health services to their patients and communities.

Much has been lost in this ongoing pandemic. While this is a week of celebration, it is also a time to reflect on the past 18 months and remember those who lost their lives. On Friday, August 13, at 8:30 a.m. our staff will commemorate those many lives by lighting a virtual candle and having a moment of silence.



Each day this week we will engage in various activities in recognition of National Health Center Week. Please check us out on Facebook or Instagram to follow our celebrations. Today, members of our dental team will go to Ritter Center, one of our sister community health centers, to provide oral health screenings and distribute oral hygiene kits and snacks to their clients who are marginally housed or homeless.

Thank you for your support of Marin Community Clinics and our mission to promote health and wellness through excellent, compassionate care for all.

**We are all in this together.**

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mitesh S. Popat".

Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH  
Chief Executive Officer

**SUNDAY 8/8**  
Public Health in  
Housing Day

**TUESDAY 8/10**  
Agricultural Worker  
Health Day

**THURSDAY 8/12**  
Stakeholder  
Appreciation Day

**SATURDAY 8/14**  
Children's Health  
Day

**MONDAY 8/9**  
Health Care for the  
Homeless Day

**WEDNESDAY 8/11**  
Patient  
Appreciation Day

**FRIDAY 8/13**  
Health Center Staff  
Appreciation Day