

Medical clinic's doors open to those in need

Hurt Family Medical Clinic serves thousands of low- and no-income patients.

By **ELYSSE JAMES**

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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A comprehensive clinic for low- or no-income patients that includes optometry, chiropractic, mental health, medical and dental care, is tucked away in the Village of Hope on the former Tustin Marine base.

The Hurtt Family Medical Clinic, which like Village of Hope is part of the Orange County Rescue Mission, takes most medical insurance but also works with those who don't have insurance or don't have an income. Employees also help patients get insurance.

"You can make a difference," said Martha Carranza, nurse practitioner manager. "It's about being bicultural too."

The clinic's employees, who are all bilingual, say they work hard to establish relationships with the patients to ensure they come back and continue their care.

"It's not just about the body. It's about the mind, about the soul, because if one is out of whack, everything is out of whack," said medical center director Gladys Amavizca.

The clinic, formerly Casa de Salud at Broadway Street and Edinger Avenue in Santa Ana, has three regular exam rooms, one pediatric exam room, two dental exam rooms and a lab. Casa de Salud was taken over by the Orange County Rescue Mission in 2004 and moved to the Village of Hope building in July 2008.



Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Rebecca Hogan checks out Sydnie Partida, 3, as part of a Well Child physical Friday at the Village of Hope's Health Center.

MIGUEL VASCONCELLOS, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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If you go

What: Hurtt Family Health Clinic, which serves low-income and no-income patients.

Where: 1 Hope Drive, Tustin.

Hours: 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday; 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday; 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

Information: 714-247-4348, 714-247-0300 or ocrm-hcs@rescuemission.org.

Source: Hurtt Family Health Clinic

Languages spoken at the Hurtt Family Health Clinic

- English
- French
- Italian
- Portuguese
- Spanish

By the numbers

1 laboratory

The clinic is staffed by 13 employees. The rest are volunteers and students from Vanguard University, UC Irvine and Saddleback College who earn clinical hours working there. Students from Pepperdine University, UC Irvine staff the mental health rooms. Students log about 6,300 clinical hours per year.

Having student workers is important, Amavizca said, because the students will have a better understanding of the homeless and low-income population. They will get an idea of what they can afford and what treatments work in a low- or no-income environment. For example, someone living in a motel, if they could afford to fill a prescription, would typically not be able to refrigerate the medication. A homeless diabetic person would have trouble keeping insulin without it being stolen, or could be arrested for having the needles required for treatment.

"This is my ideal job," said Janie Rodriguez, clinic coordinator. "Everybody looks out for the patient's best interest. Working with the population we do, you have to have a heart for it."

In the last year, the clinic has had about 3,000 patients, with 10,000 visits.

"We're extremely busy, with 20 to 28 patients per day, per provider," Carranza said. The clinic has three providers.

About 80 percent of the patients are diabetic, Carranza said, so the center helps people get the needed insulin and educates them about diabetes and nutrition.

The center places an emphasis on education, with classes on breast health, mammograms, quitting smoking, nutrition, diabetes and other topics. Medical professionals teach patients to read the results from lab work and provide printouts for the patients to take home.

1 pediatric exam rooms
2 dental exam rooms
3 regular exam rooms
6 days a week the clinic is open
13 employees
80 percent of patients are diabetic
3,000 patients visit the clinic
10,000 visits to the clinic last year
Source: Hurtt Family Medical Clinic

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"We have relationships with our patients,"

Amavizca said. "They know we're trying to make their lives better. They learn, so they can see the results."

Amavizca has been with the [Orange County Rescue Mission](#) for 10 years. She says she's spent time in a Rescue Mission mobile medical unit in poorer neighborhoods to help people who don't have insurance, can't afford medical care, or are too ashamed to try.

"Our goal is to never have to turn people away," said Jim Palmer, president of the nonprofit. He worked to build the original mobile unit in his front yard using a motor home, he said. "Lots of people are still scared of medicine, so we take the care to them."

The mobile center has been out of commission for more than a year due to lack of funding, but the center has [recently become a Federally Qualified Health Center](#), earning it \$1.3 million over two years that will help put the mobile clinic back on the streets. The money will also help the center hire a dentist.

The funding is especially important now, because more people have been coming into the clinic after losing jobs or insurance.

"With the economy, it's picked up even more. People you wouldn't normally see coming in have been coming in," Amavizca said.

Since this time last year, the Village of Hope has had a 302 percent increase in requests for help. The nonprofit still needs food donations and money to fund its programs.

To donate or volunteer: 714-247-4300, or to make a clinic appointment: 714-247-0300

Contact the writer: 949-553-2918 or ejames@ocregister.com