Cardiologist adds heart to the Family Health Centers of San Diego team

This April, Family Health Centers of San Diego (FHCSD) is expanding its range of services to include cardiology. Services will include cardiac consultation services and noninvasive testing, including pacemaker checks and exercise stress testing echocardiography.

Located at the corner of Market and 47th streets in San Diego, Diamond Neighborhoods Family Health Center will house the cardiology clinic in addition to a wide range of health care services currently offered, including dental, mental health, prenatal and pediatrics.

At the heart of this new department is FHCSD’s first Cardiologist, Dr. Jerome Robinson. With over 30 years of practice and countless experiences with patients served, Dr. Robinson’s vision for cardiology at FHCSD is to make it a place where we serve the needs of people who are not being served well.

In 2016 alone, FHCSD primary care providers made over 4,000 cardiology referrals. Many of those patients never received the cardiac care they needed due to Medi-Cal reimbursement rates, transportation barriers and patients’ anxiety with visiting a new provider. Offering cardiology services in-house will transform our patients’ experience, making it more efficient and convenient.

“As a community health center, we always strive to eliminate challenging barriers that prevent the underserved in our communities from receiving the care they need,” said CEO Fran Butler-Cohen. “We are proud Dr. Robinson is a partner in our shared vision.”

Patient care extends beyond the medical services we offer, and it is evident when a health care provider lives by that standard. With all the years he’s been in practice, Dr. Robinson truly understands the importance of building relationships with patients and being present in the communities he serves. “The reward is when you see someone who’s been on death’s bed and you bring them back to life,” said Dr. Robinson. “I don’t think I could ever retire.”

Next month, FHCSD’s Diamond Neighborhoods Family Health Center will host a meet-and-greet event for patients to meet Dr. Robinson and learn more about all the services available through the clinic.

Don’t forget, Diamond Neighborhoods Family Health Center is part of our Legacy Program, which allows donors to place their personal, company or family name, or the name of a loved one, on a clinic exam room, lobby or building exterior. If you’d like to participate in the Legacy Program, or learn more about it, contact Katie Gomez at (619) 515-2306.
How Far Would You Go To Turn a Wrong Into a Right?

If you knew that a certain segment of Americans had a suicide rate of 41% compared to the general public’s rate of 4.6%, you might be shocked. It might be further horrifying to know that many represented in that high rate of suicide were children. And of those children, most had been bullied, isolated, and even rejected and ridiculed by their own families.

Would you think something must be done to right this terrible wrong, if you knew that many of those were children who had no one to talk to, no place to turn, no safe point in their schools and no counselor to help re-direct their suicidal ideation?

This is the plight of transgender teens and young adults in America today.

The San Francisco-based Family Acceptance Project's research has demonstrated that “parental acceptance, and even neutrality, with regard to a child's sexual orientation can reduce the attempted suicide rate.” Research has clearly demonstrated those who are harassed, bullied, victimized, discriminated against or rejected by family and friends are more likely to attempt suicide. Some doctors and mental health experts agree that prevention begins with acceptance and kindness, especially by parents.

But community acceptance is also needed. Our differences are just differences. They are not a reason for isolation, rejection, bulling, torturing, harassing and victimizing a person. Our differences ask for understanding and compassion.

In 2000, Family Health Centers of San Diego took a bold step and established a Transgender Clinic. The FHCSD medical staff recognized that anxiety and depression experienced by transgender people were frequently the causes of chronically high stress levels linked to being part of a stigmatized minority. Today, this specialized clinic provides a safe and understanding place for high quality medical care. For 17 years, the clinic has quietly served the medical needs of this population.

Studies now suggest pediatricians should talk about gender issues with kids and parents during doctor visits, and most medical groups are now asking adults questions on sexual orientation and practices. These questions are designed to gather information needed to treat the whole person.

Soon, FHCSD will launch a training initiative to elevate the competence level among a group of our mental health staff to better care for the unique needs of this special population. The mental health providers serve a critical role in the establishment of trust and acceptance.

In 2016, FHCSD began planning the Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) certification journey. The HEI is the national LGBTQ benchmarking tool that evaluates health care facilities' policies and practices relative to the equity and inclusion of their LGBTQ patients, visitors and employees. The HEI 2016 has already evaluated over 2,000 health care facilities nationwide.

The FHCSD Mission Statement speaks to “providing care to everyone.” This external validation by HEI will ensure that the care we provide is culturally sensitive, welcoming, safe and the best that can be given to the transgender population.

Ann Haas, a senior consultant to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention says, “It’s getting better, but we’ve got a long way to go.” In our culture, we are often encouraged to “do what’s right.” Well, FHCSD intends to do what’s right to help turn around a suicide rate of 41%. The provision of culturally competent medical care and mental health services, an HEI certification and staff training sufficient to send a clear message that our environment is safe and welcoming is a darn good start.

That’s how far we are prepared to go to turn a wrong into a right.

Donor Spotlight

Cardiology of Southern California joins FHCSD’s Corporate Sponsorship Program

Much can be said about an organization based on its mission and partnerships. Family Health Centers of San Diego’s (FHCSD) partner, Cardiology of Southern California (CSC), not only dedicates its practice to improve health care services for all, but also supports other organizations to increase these efforts. The heart and soul of the practice is their caring providers whose mission has always been “To provide high quality cardiac care to the people and families of our most vulnerable communities regardless of their personal or financial circumstances.”

With a new office at 1310 3rd Avenue, Chula Vista CA 91911, and original office at Paradise Valley Hospital located at 655 Euclid Avenue in National City, CSC is expanding their services into the surrounding community. When asked about their vision to expand, they replied, “We hope to reach into the inner recesses of our society, where people do not have access to adequate or sophisticated health care, and provide the best quality care and at the most affordable price.”

With their success, CSC has also expanded their philanthropic support to humanitarian nonprofits in the same communities where they provide their life-saving services. Most notably is their support to FHCSD’s Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) program. This program allows our partners to show financial support for the services our MMUs provide. As a gesture of thanks, FHCSD proudly displays our partners’ logo/message on the exterior of one MMU for three years.

CSC was one of the first to recognize the impact of the MMUs in the community and raised their hand immediately in support of the program. Dr. Sharf, a provider and founding member of CSC emphasized, “We choose to support FHCSD because together our missions are symbiotic in how we collaborate very closely to provide the absolute best health care to our region’s underserved and uninsured.”

Corporate Sponsor opportunities are still available! To learn more about how to contribute to MMUs, please visit www.fhcsd.org/mmu-donations or call (619) 515-2306.
Every year, Family Health Centers of San Diego participates in San Diego County’s “Love Your Heart” event, which provides free blood pressure screenings to the public, patients and FHCSD employees. This event is part of the County’s Live Well San Diego program. At this year’s event, 289 people received free blood pressure screenings at 9 FHCSD sites!
Ways to Give

Spirit of the Barrio
Called the “Best use of a lunch hour” by San Diego Magazine, Spirit of the Barrio is Family Health Centers of San Diego’s signature fundraising event. Held five times throughout the year at our Logan Heights Family Health Center, this fun-filled luncheon promises to entertain, inform and educate attendees with relevant panel presentations and a delicious tamale lunch! Table sponsorships and individual tickets available.

Mobile Medical Units
Since 1998, our Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) have provided health care to uninsured and medically underserved children, teens and adults in collaboration with elementary schools, community centers, social service agencies, rehabilitation facilities, battered women’s shelters, public housing complexes and homeless shelters. By breaking down transportation barriers for individuals and families in need of health care, our three units serve 3,443 children, women and men through 4,628 individual health care encounters annually. Each donation helps keep these units on the road and providing care for San Diego’s underserved communities.
   • Individual - Commit to support FHCSD with an annual pledge or one-time donation, and in turn your name/family name will be displayed on the back of an MMU for three years.
   • Corporate - FHCSD offers three levels of corporate sponsorship, and in turn your logo will be prominently displayed on the side of an MMU for three years.

Residency Program
In 2014, Family Health Centers of San Diego (FHCSD) created the Family Medicine Residency Training Program. The mission of the program is to train physicians from diverse backgrounds who are interested in providing care to the underserved communities of San Diego, while providing high-quality, broad-based clinical education and experience. With limited funding and continual budget cuts, Family Health Centers of San Diego needs your help in ensuring this program continues!

Naming Opportunities
FHCSD offers donors exclusive opportunities to name exam rooms, waiting areas, labs and more!

Baby Boutique
Our Baby Boutique program was founded to encourage new and expecting moms to follow through with important wellness checkups and attend classes to learn the basics of infant care, including breastfeeding and nutrition. For every pre- and postnatal appointment or class they complete, parents can redeem “Baby Buck Points” at Baby Boutique locations for baby clothes, supplies, children’s books and toys. This innovative program was founded in 2010 as an initiative to encourage new moms to complete their postpartum care, while providing them with items to meet their baby’s needs.

Reach Out and Read
Do you have children’s books lying around collecting dust? FHCSD’s Reach Out and Read program can give those books a new home and ensure a deserving child starts school ready to learn! Throughout 2016, we distributed over 9,000 books to children, promoting literacy and language skills.

Vehicle Donation Program
You can support Family Health Centers of San Diego by donating your used car, motorcycle, RV or boat! We will even take care of the details so you do not have to. We provide you with a hassle-free pick up and can get the most value from your donated vehicle, and it’s tax-deductible!

Programs & Services
Family Health Centers of San Diego provides many vital services to our patients. You can designate your donation to ensure we are able to continue providing these critically needed services.
   • Healthcare for the Homeless
   • Pediatrics
   • Women’s Services
   • Mental Health Services
   • Vision Services
   • LGBT Services