Longtime finance chief will leave for mission work

A cornerstone of La Clinica’s leadership team for more than two decades is looking forward to the next chapter in her life. Chief Financial Officer Angelica Ruppe started at La Clinica in 1994. She has provided financial guidance for more than two decades as La Clinica has transformed from a single tiny health center with a $700,000 annual budget to a 17-center operation that manages $31 million annually.

In 2015, she took a sabbatical and worked for a month with HIV patients and an orphanage in Camaroon, Africa. She became interested in following that path more fully and will leave La Clinica at the end of July.

“It has been a true privilege to work for such a heartfelt organization,” she said. “I love the mission, I love the people I work with, I love to serve those who need our services.”

(Left) Shortly after she arrived at La Clinica, Angelica Ruppe helped open Phoenix Health Center. (Photo from La Clinica archives)

New state money provides support for La Clinica’s outreach to uninsured kids

When he first walked into a La Clinica health center last year, Ethan was a strong reader with an impressive vocabulary and great critical thinking skills. He was also failing his middle school classes, struggling with mental health issues, and worried about his family’s food and shelter.

Ethan, whose name has been changed for this story, stood out in one other way: Like more than 1,000 young La Clinica patients in 2015, he was uninsured, lacking medical coverage despite state and federal programs that aim to sign up every child possible.

La Clinica has always served these children, but now the Oregon Health Authority is providing the organization with new resources to reach out to uninsured kids and their families. This group includes children like Ethan whose parents have not signed them up for state-sponsored insurance and kids whose immigration status makes them ineligible for state and federal programs.

La Clinica will use the money to expand services at several elementary schools and make room for kids to be seen at other health centers when the schools are closed. It will also hire a bilingual mental health therapist and a community health worker and expand dental outreach in the community.

Ethan is back in school and doing well now thanks to the support he and his family received.

“We know there are lots of kids out there in that situation,” said Ed Smith-Burns, La Clinica’s outreach director. “This money will allow us to make a real difference.”

(Above left) Hygiene Coordinator Corrina Piercy works on a student at Jackson Elementary School in Medford. (Photo courtesy Jim Craven)

INSIDE

New direction on horizon for longtime CFO Angelica Ruppe, right

Acupuncture service starts

Fundraiser totals $102,775

The Oregon Health Authority safety net grant is a one-time, $500,000 award that will allow La Clinica to build infrastructure to serve 500 new medical patients, 400 new dental patients, and 100 new behavioral health patients by 2018.

Uninsured patients 0-17 at La Clinica in 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total served</th>
<th>Uninsured</th>
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<td>3,128</td>
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*Does not include community outreach

Medical  Dental*

3,128 3,966

INSIDE

Wishing you happiest of holidays from all of us at La Clinica

OUR VISION: Absolute excellence. Open-hearted community. Well-being for all.
Behavioral health clinicians join patient care teams

Doctors and dentists are at home with patients who need a physical exam or root canal. Bring them anxiety, depression, or serious mental illness, and they may need additional support.

Enter the behavioral health clinician, a master-level licensed mental-health provider who works as part of a medical or dental care team. La Clinica has hired three behavioral health clinicians who are seeing patients with needs that stretch beyond those of traditional medical or dental health care. In addition to working with mental illness, the clinicians address addiction, emotional issues, lack of housing or child care, and more. They see patients already receiving care from La Clinica—meaning those patients don’t have to wait for that care in a community system stressed by demand.

The approach is addressing a consistent need at La Clinica, said Dan Sengenberger, medical director for operations and outcomes.

“The majority of our patients would benefit from some level of behavioral health intervention, whether for insomnia or substance use or mental illness,” Dr. Sengenberger said. “It has been challenging to access this care in the community. This is helping us make behavioral health services much more available.”

The project was made possible in part by financial support from coordinated care organizations AllCare and Jackson Care Connect.

(Above) Heather Starbird listens to a patient during an appointment. She is one of a trio of La Clinica employees now working as behavioral health clinicians embedded in patient care teams.

Wings soon available for low-income patients

La Clinica’s wellness service is growing. Since its launch in 2015, La Clinica has added dozens of nutrition and movement classes and educational groups for patients. Earlier this year it added the service of a physical therapist, who is available to patients as part of their regular visits to the doctor. La Clinica served 420 patients in 1,605 classes in 2015 as part of the program. It served 632 patients in 3,118 classes through September this year. The program is on track to double the number of patients served from 2015 to 2016.

Acupuncture service will be available at Wellness Center

A partnership between La Clinica and a holistic care organization will bring acupuncture services to La Clinica patients beginning next month.

Two licensed acupuncturists from Medford Holistic Health/Ashland Holistic Health will use Wellness Center space to welcome La Clinica patients into their practice.

Acupuncture, in which practitioners prick the skin with needles to alleviate physical and emotional symptoms, is newly covered by the Oregon Health Plan. The acupuncturists also will accept private insurance and will offer an income-based sliding scale for uninsured patients.

Acupuncture was among the most-requested options for care when La Clinica conducted a patient survey before opening the Wellness Center in 2015.

Classes’ popularity grows

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“Behavioral health clinicians join patient care teams”

Dr. Sengenberger, medical director for operations and outcomes, said La Clinica’s partnership with two licensed acupuncturists from a holistic care organization will bring acupuncture services to La Clinica patients beginning next month.

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