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Coast Community Health Center sees continued growth

AMY MOSS STRONG Bandon Western World Nov 1, 2017



Pharmacist Karen Smith, right, and certified pharmacy technician Nicole Felton are keeping clients at the new Coast Community Health Center pharmacy. No pictured: pharmacy director
Amy Moss Strong, Bandon Western World

BANDON – It's been seven years since Coast Community Health Center opened its facility in Bandon and the center continues its success and growth with a new pharmacy, additional providers and expanded services that now reach into Curry County.

To celebrate the opening of Bandon's first 340B pharmacy at Coast Community Health Center, health center staff and board directors, along with the Bandon Chamber of Commerce invite the public to a ribbon cutting ceremony at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 8, at 1010 First St. SE.

Learn how the new pharmacy positively impacts patient care and enjoy refreshments from Pablo's Corner and the Beverage Barn.

The pharmacy

As a federally funded community health center, CCHC now provides prescriptions through the 340B pharmacy at a reduced cost by passing along rebates from pharmaceutical manufacturers. Patients receive the quality services of a tenured, in-house pharmacy director while saving money on prescriptions.

Pharmacy Director Zane Smith, RPh, is a licensed pharmacist with more than 30 years experience in retail pharmacy services. Zane and his wife Karen Smith are both certified compound pharmacists. Together, they have opened and staffed five 340B pharmacies for health centers in Oregon.

Medical Director Dr. Carla McKelvey describes the new pharmacy as another step in the health center's commitment to the most comprehensive care possible with a pharmacy team that provides great service and patient education.

The decision to invest in a new pharmacy was based on the challenge many patients face when paying for prescriptions, board vice-chairwoman Leesa Cobb announced in June.

"Our commitment, as a not-for-profit community health center, is to offer you high quality health care services at the best price, treating the mind, body, and mouth, regardless of your ability to pay for services," said Cobb. "Offering pharmacy services only continues to build on our model of health care services for the community."

At this time, the pharmacy can only fill prescriptions for CCHC patients. The service is a benefit of the Health Resources Services Administration of Federally Qualified Health Center programs.

"We've invested \$110,000 to open the pharmacy," said CCHC Executive Director Linda Maxon. "People thank us because they can now afford prescriptions. Every day, people are getting healthier and have more money in their pockets because they can afford to take their medications every day instead of every other day. It's making a difference for a lot of people in the community."

The health center appreciates local business and community member support and welcomes the public to join in this free event to celebrate the new pharmacy.

The pharmacy is open from 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday-Friday.

History of CCHC

Coast Community Health Center was established in 2009 as Bandon Community Health Center.

The health center was formed as a nonprofit rural health center by 65 community member volunteers committed to the mission of providing high quality, affordable primary health care services for all residents of Bandon and the surrounding areas.

The health center's first clinic opened in 2010. Between 2014 and 2015, the organization adopted the name Coast Community Health Center, moved to its present, larger facility in Bandon and opened the Port Orford outreach office.

The move and name change reflected the organization's growth and the need for expanded health services to more Southern Oregon Coast residents, said Maxon.

"As one of two Federally Qualified Health Centers in Coos and Curry counties, CCHC serves as a safety net for patients in need of care," Maxon said.

"I just feel that health care is fundamentally a human right and I couldn't pass up the opportunity to bring something of value to this community," she added. "The work done by Dr. McClave and 65 volunteers and board members was handed to me. It was very humbling."

Since 2010, CCHC has grown from six employees to now employing more than 30 with family-wage jobs and benefits.

"We have developed jobs that allow local people to discover new careers in the health care field, some of which are non-traditional health care jobs that make a tremendous difference in the lives of our community members," Maxon said.

CCHC has benefited from awards and grants by private donors and publicly funded grants. These include an award from The Ford Family Foundation; gifts from the Mr. and Mrs. Michael L. Keiser Fund, Oregon Community Foundation; Mildred E. and Harvey S. Mudd Foundation; and Meyer Memorial Trust Foundation award. Publicly funded grants include HRSA Health Center Planning Grant, funding to be a Federally Qualified Health Center, and Oregon Health Authority insurance enrollment assistance grants.

In 2013, the health center partnered with the Port Orford/Langlois schools to provide outreach services to families in the 2CJ school district at the Pacific High School Pirate Wellness Center.

Also in 2013, the health center earned Federally Qualified Health Center status. And Maxon was the 2014 Oregon Primary Care Association Growth Award recipient for outstanding contribution to

the state's network of community health centers for her facilitation of the competitive federal application.

CCHC was recognized in 2016 as a Patient-Centered Primary Care Home by the Oregon Health Authority. The PCPCH program is part of the state's effort to fulfill a vision for better health, better care and lower costs for all Oregonians.

"What I do here has a real deep meaning to me because we're able to help the most vulnerable families in the area," said Maxon, who moved to Bandon from Portland with her husband and daughter, but grew up in Manitoba, Canada.

"I never knew how socially and economically challenged the area when we came to vacation here before moving permanently," she said. "I was astounded at the level of poverty and need."

CCHC is a private, not-for-profit Oregon corporation governed by a volunteer board of directors who live in Coos and Curry counties and who all take an active role in shaping the direction of the health center and the progress of health care in the region.

"Our job is to be good stewards and provide excellent services," Maxon said. "We've always focused on how to take care of health needs, but also what other needs a person or family might have."

Providers

CCHC is now able to offer pediatric care with the center's new medical director, Dr. Carla McKelvey.

McKelvey is a pediatric physician who has served children and teenagers since 1996. Her management experience includes positions at private and publicly funded health centers. At North Bend Medical Center in Coos Bay, McKelvey was the medical director for the center's grant-funded Care Management Program from 2009 to 2013. She also served as interim Quality Improvement Director for Waterfall Community Health Center in North Bend.

"I'm a strong believer in team-based care," McKelvey said. "When we make health care decisions, or lifestyle decisions, it needs to be a group decision involving the provider, the parent and the patient."

McKelvey also founded the FEARsome clinic, which supports foster families in Coos and Curry counties, and now at CCHC.

Board Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Patricia Savage joined CCHC in July also serving pediatric and adolescent patients. McKelvey and Savage together now offer 40 hours of expertise for children's care.

The family and adult care team is led by family practice physician Dr. Hank Holmes and longtime certified nurse practitioner Laura Franklin.

The center also recently had two new medical professionals join: Board Certified Family Nurse Practitioner Whitney Lynn, from Kentucky, and Board Certified Physician Assistant Andrew Fraser, an Oregon Health & Sciences University graduate.

“We’ve doubled our care team for family practice and adults,” said Maxon.

CCHC is accepting new patients of all ages, and provides services such as pediatric and adolescent health and women’s and men’s health care and elder care.

Same day and next day services are now available with the expanded staff and include regular wellness check-ups, employment and sport physicals, immunizations, laboratory, screening and education, blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, reproductive health, reproductive health services for men and women, mental health, and healthy lifestyle coaching.

Outreach services

CCHC has community outreach workers and Oregon Health Plan enrollment assisters available at their Bandon and Port Orford offices Monday through Friday.

Outreach workers are also in local schools while school is in session, to help connect students and families to health care services.

On Tuesdays, services are offered from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Pirate Wellness Center at Pacific High School in Port Orford.

On Wednesdays, outreach workers are available from noon-3 p.m. at Bandon High School and from 3-4 p.m. at Ocean Crest Elementary School.

CCHC is open from 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. on Fridays. The Port Orford Outreach Office is open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information or to make an appointment, call 541-347-2529 or visit www.coastcommunityhealth.org.

Amy Moss-Strong

