

Long journey brings new nurse to South Coast



NOVEMBER 15, 2012 7:00 AM • [BY AMY MOSS STRONG](#)
[BANDON WESTERN WORLD](#)

BANDON — If you told Debra Guzman that a year and a half after surviving the devastating tornado in Joplin, MO. in May 2011, she would be living on the South Coast of Oregon, she wouldn't have believed it.

But the family practice nurse practitioner began work at Bandon Community Health Center recently and is enjoying every minute. Guzman joins family nurse practitioner Ingrid Tyson and physician Dr. Gail McClave.

Guzman most recently lived in Pendleton, where she worked as a nurse practitioner for the hospital's urgent care clinic.

Prior to that, Guzman lived for many years in Joplin, where, in May 2011, she and her three grown children survived the tornado that destroyed much of the town. One of her two sons lost everything. Her daughter was supposed to get married six days later. Guzman, a widow, helped her daughter put the wedding together anyway. The couple's wedding video was posted on CNN.

Prior to the tornado, Guzman had already decided to move. One son is working, the other son is in college and her daughter was planning to move with her new husband. Her travels took her to Pendleton, where she met her new husband, Ruben. They were married in May. He had lived in Bandon for six years previously, working as a paramedic, and had always wanted to go back, so he convinced Guzman to move to the coast, provided they could find jobs.

"There is something to me that's so peaceful about the ocean," she said. "Scary, yet calming."

Guzman immediately fell in love with her new job as well.

"The staff here is awesome," she said. "They have a great mission and so much knowledge and very strong backgrounds. Health care has gotten to be such a business because you have to keep the doors open, and it's not as focused on patient care because of that. But Bandon Community Health Center is really still all about the patient. The compassion is genuine and everyone works together to make things happen."

Extensive background

Guzman holds a Master's Degree in nursing and is a board certified family nurse practitioner. She has worked in healthcare for more than 17 years with emphasis in cardiac arenas for more than 12 years, including cardiac critical care, outpatient cath lab recovery and nuclear stress tests. She also ran a diabetes and wellness clinic, educating patients on diabetes management and healthy living. She hopes to raise awareness and increase education on diabetes, helping patients to manage their disease and decrease significant risk factors.

"Guzman's personal faith led her to pursue the healthcare field while successfully raising her three children," said BCHC Executive Director Linda Maxon. "She has a passion for helping empower patients to be a vital part of their own healthcare. She believes patients and providers should work together as a team in managing healthcare concerns."

Maxon also is excited to have Guzman join the BCHC team.

"This decision to add another family practice nurse practitioner will allow us to greatly enhance our services provided to the community and in the near future expand our hours of operation to provide families with more access to our services," Maxon said. "We have been growing over the past year, and are pleased with our growth and expanding access to Oregon's South Coast. Having two family nurse practitioners will increase access for patients of all ages."

BCHC works with the state of Oregon in offering programs such as the Contraceptive Care Program of Oregon, the Vaccine for Children and Oregon Adult Vaccine Program at no or low cost.

BCHC started in 2010 with Dr. McClave, a board certified internist and family practice physician, and a second provider. Now with Tyson and Guzman on board, the clinic will be able to expand its services.

BCHC also is expanding its insurance contracts and in 2013 will have established contracts with more insurance companies, Maxon said. BCHC is not federally funded and needs to provide services to insured patients to have the revenue to support the services it provides to uninsured patients, Maxon explained.

Guzman is just happy to be able to offer her services to anyone in need of care.

"As soon as I met all of the employees at the clinic, I knew this was the place for me," Guzman said. "They all worked together with the common goal of providing compassionate care to persons of all ages and walks of life. I witnessed the difference in this clinic. It was not just a business, it was a healthcare center with a personal touch. I am excited to be part of that mission."