

# **Proposal to the Atkinson Foundation RotaCare Clinics, Daly City and Coastside**

## **Purpose and Amount of Request**

Operational support in the amount of \$10,000 is requested from the Atkinson Foundation for the Seton RotaCare Clinics in Daly City and Half Moon Bay. The RotaCare Clinics provide free urgent medical care—as well as x-rays, lab tests, EKGs, medications, blood pressure check, and assessment of other vital signs—to the underserved populations of Northern San Mateo County and the San Mateo County coastal area: the working poor, unemployed, underemployed, and immigrants. All RotaCare patients are uninsured or underinsured. The RotaCare Clinics are staffed by a rotating corps of approximately 140 volunteers, including Seton physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, pharmacists, registration and data entry clerks, community service workers, and language translators. Seton's RotaCare volunteers donate a total of approximately 5,500 hours per year.

## **Organizational Background: Seton Medical Center and Seton Coastside**

Seton Medical Center and Seton Coastside are nonprofit hospitals, dedicated to the mission of St. Vincent de Paul's Daughters of Charity: to serve the sick and the poor with compassionate care for the mind, body, and spirit.

In 1912, the Daughters of Charity established **Seton Medical Center**, formerly Mary's Help Hospital, in downtown San Francisco. The following year, at the hospital, the Daughters opened the first free outpatient clinic in California. Since then, Seton has evolved into a major medical center, with a comprehensive range of over fifty medical, surgical, and specialty programs. In 1965 Mary's Help was relocated in Daly City, and in 1983 renamed Seton Medical Center. Throughout the years, its dedication to the Daughters' mission to serve the sick and the poor—with compassionate care for the mind, body, and spirit—has never wavered.

Acquired by the Daughters of Charity in 1980, **Seton Coastside** in Moss Beach provides the only 24-hour emergency room on the Pacific Coast between Santa Cruz and Daly City, a five-bed medical acute care unit, diagnostic and rehabilitative services, and many health education programs. Seton Medical Center *Coastside* is best known, however, for its exemplary 116-bed skilled nursing facility. Physicians from hospitals throughout the county regularly refer elderly and chronically ill patients to the Coastside facility, where they know that their patients will receive the very best in compassionate, respectful long-term care.

From July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004, the Seton hospitals provided \$45 million in unreimbursed charity care and free community health and health education programs, equating to 21.6% of total hospital expenditures.

## **Organizational History: RotaCare Clinics**

In 1989, a family physician in Campbell, California was asked to see a homeless patient residing in a shelter in Santa Clara. RotaCare Clinics have been in existence since 1989, when that first homeless Santa Clara patient was treated. Today, there are nine RotaCare Bay Area clinics in all. RotaCare Bay Area is a volunteer-driven coalition of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, interpreters/translators, and administrative staff who provide free medical care to people who have the most need and the least access to medical services. The Daly City and Coastsides RotaCare Clinics were established by Seton Medical Center in June, 1993.

Seton's two RotaCare Clinics are **the only free urgent care clinics in San Mateo County**. The Daly City RotaCare Clinic is housed in the Radiation Oncology Department at Seton Medical Center, and is open every Monday evening, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The Coastsides RotaCare Clinic was housed at the Seton *Coastsides* hospital in Moss Beach until 1999, when it relocated to Half Moon Bay in order to be closer to where patients live. The Coastsides RotaCare Clinic is open each Wednesday evening, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

No appointments are necessary; patients are seen on a first come, first served basis. This makes RotaCare services easier to access for patients who do not have a phone to make an appointment, or who speak little or no English or Spanish, or who are undocumented and hesitant about setting up a formal appointment. Spanish interpreters are always present at the clinics.

## **Need for RotaCare in San Mateo County**

The RotaCare Clinics are vitally needed in San Mateo County. Over 40,000 children in San Mateo County live in poverty, according to a June, 2002 report by California Food Policy Advocates. In a March, 2003, unemployment in San Mateo County stood at 5.1%, and rising, according to a report in the *San Mateo County Times*. This figure does not include the working poor, whose numbers are also increasing due to the economic downturn.

The number of uninsured and underinsured patients utilizing RotaCare Clinics is increasing steadily. Many are undocumented immigrants, who are ineligible for public insurance programs.

## **Program Description/Services**

Seton's two RotaCare Clinics serve a combined total of approximately 1,800 patient visits per year, offering the following services:

- On-site urgent care for basic illnesses, infections, sore throat, rashes, fever, and minor injuries and sprains
- Laboratory, diagnostic, and x-ray services
- Prescriptions filled for free (30-day supply)
- Immunizations (4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month for children under 18 years of age, Daly City Clinic only)

- Physical therapy at Seton *Coastside*, via referral by Half Moon Bay RotaCare.
- Referrals to Seton Medical Center ophthalmologist and/or Site for Sore Eyes.
- Social needs referrals within the local community, including shelters, counseling, food assistance, transportation, federal and state aid programs, and drug and alcohol programs
- Referrals to Operation Access for free minor surgery (such as cataract or hernia operation)
- Health education about each patient's diagnosis or disease, and instructions for follow-up care (including specialist referrals when necessary)

Both RotaCare Clinics collaborate closely with the San Mateo County Public Health Department. RotaCare patients with chronic health problems are referred to San Mateo County's Well Program for long-term care. Other patients, with needs beyond the scope of the clinic, are referred to San Mateo County General Hospital.

RotaCare's community service volunteers also provide patients with education and information about public insurance programs such as Medi-Cal, Healthy Kids, and Healthy Families.

In these ways, RotaCare plays a vital role in a matrix of services for medically indigent and underinsured individuals in the county of San Mateo.

### **Staff Qualifications**

All RotaCare physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, physician assistants, and pharmacists are licensed healthcare providers who practice at Seton Medical Center or Seton *Coastside*.

### **Population Served**

*All RotaCare patients are uninsured or underinsured.* If patients are undocumented immigrants, they are ineligible for care in public facilities and under county health coverage programs. Therefore, the RotaCare Clinic is their only healthcare resource.

The Daly City RotaCare Clinic serves the underserved populations of Northern San Mateo County: the working poor, underemployed, unemployed, and immigrants. Most patients reside in Daly City, a predominantly Filipino and Hispanic community. The Coastside RotaCare Clinic in Half Moon Bay serves patients who reside in the Half Moon Bay, Pescadero, Moss Beach, and San Gregorio areas. Eighty percent of the patients that come to the Coastside RotaCare Clinic are Hispanic and speak Spanish as their primary language. The majority of patients are adults; 33% are agricultural workers; 29% are homeless persons; and 81% earn less than the federal poverty guidelines.

### **Objectives/Outcomes**

- The two RotaCare Clinics, together, will continue to serve between 30 and 40 patients per week, or between 1,500 and 2,000 patients per year.

- Patients with minor illnesses and injuries will leave the clinic with their urgent medical needs met and/or with prescribed follow-up care (e.g. x-ray; instructions to return at a later date; referral to ophthalmologist, etc.)
- Patients with prescription needs will leave the clinic with a 30-day supply of the appropriate pharmaceuticals or, if the necessary pharmaceuticals are not in stock, a voucher to pick up the pharmaceuticals at the Seton Medical Center outpatient pharmacy in Daly City or Long's Drugs in Half Moon Bay.
- When patients leave the clinic, the majority of them will have obtained information and directions about enrolling in public assistance programs for which they might qualify, such as Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, California Kids, and the Well Program.
- Approximately 75 children will receive free immunizations at the Daly City RotaCare Clinic in a year's time.

### **Evaluation**

We will evaluate our success on the basis of whether or not the program meets the expected outcomes outlined above. Each licensed public clinic in California must undergo an annual recertification process for Title 22, and is required to submit a report to the State on the number of patients seen, as well as patient demographics and diagnoses. We will use the data from the Title 22 report to measure the success of our objectives.

We will also evaluate our success based on verbal feedback and patient satisfaction surveys in English, Spanish, and Tagalog. Our goal is that at least 80% of patients will express satisfaction with the care they received at the Daly City or Coastside RotaCare Clinic.

### **Conclusion**

The Seton RotaCare Clinics in Daly City and Half Moon Bay provide vital, needed services to the medically uninsured residents of San Mateo County. Support from the Atkinson Foundation will help to ensure that the clinics continue to meet the needs of underserved individuals, who might otherwise have no practical access to urgent healthcare or information on available medical and social services.