

WEST COUNTY HEALTH CENTER GRAND OPENING COMMENTS
SUPERVISOR JOHN GIOIA
September 4, 2012

This is truly a great day for the residents of Contra Costa County and especially the residents of West County.

After working with many others for nearly 10 years to get the funding and find the right location, we finally have a brand new state-of-the-art Public Health Center that our West County community deserves and can be proud of.

With the opening of our new Health Center here in San Pablo, Contra Costa County is continuing its long and successful tradition of making the highest quality healthcare accessible to our community.

Many people don't know this fact – that the Contra Costa Health Plan, which is a healthcare coverage plan serving about 100,000 residents, was the first Federally qualified, State licensed, County sponsored HMO in the United States.

In establishing the County Health Plan in the early 1970's, Contra Costa County's political and health leaders understood the importance of providing quality healthcare to the greatest number of people.

This new Health Center symbolizes this County's continuing commitment to making quality healthcare accessible to everyone. And just as importantly, to reducing the health inequities that exist among people of different races, ethnicities, and income levels in our community.

This new Center will allow the County to improve access to high quality healthcare services in partnership with other healthcare providers in West County including Doctors Medical Center, Kaiser, LifeLong Brookside Community Health Center, and Planned Parenthood.

We first heard from the White House in December 2009 that we were awarded a \$12 million dollar Federal grant to replace our aging Richmond Health Center.

It took an amazing team effort to get this project designed and built in only two and a half years. The Health Department staff worked feverishly to write a grant application that could compete against applications from all over the United States.

Congressman Miller, who strongly supported our application, deserves our thanks and appreciation.

I appreciate my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors, who understand the importance of this clinic to our community and unanimously approved the financing plan to build this Center.

The San Pablo City Council and City Manager strongly supported our efforts to build this great facility in their city. They fast-tracked the transfer of the land and the approval of the project so we could meet the Federal grant deadlines to start construction.

It's hard to believe that groundbreaking was only 16 months ago.

The men and women of the Contra Costa Building and Construction Trades, Turner Construction and its subcontractors, and our own County General Services and Health Departments all worked very very hard to make sure this Center was built in record time.

Contra Costa County's commitment to high quality accessible healthcare doesn't end with the completion of this building.

When this Center opens to patients, our hard working and committed Health Services staff will be providing the best quality care to all those who walk through the front doors.

Our great doctors, nurses, lab techs, social workers, financial services and administrative staff, groundskeepers, and maintenance workers... most of whom live here in West County... will collectively provide the highest level of services that our community expects and deserves.

This Health Center will serve as a medical hub to the thousands of West County residents and will have the capacity to meet the newly insured patients expected under the Federal Healthcare Reform Law.

Each patient who enters this Center will walk by a plaque on the building that quotes the Constitution of the World Health Organization, which reads...

“The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.”

Quality healthcare is a right that all people deserve.

I am so proud to have had the chance to work with such a talented and committed team to help make this Center a reality.

Thank you all for coming today to celebrate this Grand Opening!

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