

## **New community clinic opens doors in Idaho Falls**

*Clinic offers affordable care and targets low-income individuals in area*

After several years of planning and significant grant donations, the new Idaho Falls Community Family Clinic is open to the public.

The clinic, operated by Caldwell-based nonprofit Community Council of Idaho, offers medical services to low-income individuals regardless of whether they're insured, uninsured or use Medicare or Medicaid. A bilingual staff also accommodates Spanish-speaking patients.

Demand started to render the old clinic inadequate two years ago, Community Council spokeswoman Sonnay Alvarez said. The new clinic at 2100 Alan St., contains 16 exam rooms, and is more than double the size of the old clinic, which had five exam rooms.

"We were getting overcrowded, so we weren't able to see as many patients as we wanted," Alvarez said. "We'll be able to serve more people and extend our reach."

The clinic will be open 60 hours per week — 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday.

Patients can receive annual exams, preventative health services, chronic disease management, immunizations, lab services, access to discounted medication and birth control, among other things.

The SHC Telehealth Care Network also allows children to video conference with physicians at Shriners Hospitals for Children in Salt Lake City.

The Community Family Clinic is Idaho Falls' only Federally Qualified Health Center. The next nearest qualified office is Community Family Clinic's Roberts location. The federal designation mandates comprehensive health services, a sliding fee scale, service to an underserved population and enhanced reimbursement through Medicaid or Medicare.

"That's huge as far as what we can offer affordably," Alvarez said.

In 2015, the clinic served 2,695 people, of which 55 percent were uninsured, according to the nonprofit's website (<http://www.communitycouncilofidaho.org/home>).

The clinic achieved only 7.3 percent penetration of the local low-income population in 2013, leaving more than 33,000 residents unserved. That's the largest number among Community Council of Idaho's three clinics, the website said.

"A lot of the population remains unserved, so we're hoping with the new clinic we get more buzz so people know these services are offered," Alvarez said.

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**by Kevin Trevellyan**

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Clinic construction began last year. The building was funded in part by a \$1 million grant and a \$300,000 grant that was matched with additional donations and Community Council funds.

“It’s really great to finally see the clinic open after all the monitoring we’ve been doing,” Alvarez said. “A couple months ago they showed us where the rooms would be, but it’s hard to imagine from a wood frame. To go in and see the fully finished clinic come to life is amazing.”

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