

Healthcare with Heart



“All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.”

—Albert Einstein

The Sister Mary Philippa Health Center is the heart of St. Mary's Medical Center's response to the community. As San Francisco's largest non-tax supported clinic, the Center provides primary and specialty health services *free of charge* or at a *reduced rate* to thousands of uninsured and underserved members of our community. Of the 5,000 patients currently registered, 1,700 do not have public or private health insurance coverage.

The Center provides outpatient health services including adult primary care, medical and surgical specialties, HIV care, advice nurse, social services, translation services, patient advocacy, diabetes education, nutrition, and pharmacy. The Center also offers urgent care services for the University of San Francisco. The Center is staffed primarily by a rotation of numerous physicians, such as faculty, attending, residents, or fellows. After Center hours, an on call resident answers the triage line, gives advice, and makes appropriate referrals.

The Center serves a socially and ethnically diverse population. Approximately 40 percent are Indo-Asian, with the largest group being Vietnamese. Cambodian, Chinese and Laotian make up the rest of the Indo-Asian patients. About 20 percent of the patient population is Hispanic, another 20 percent Caucasian, and the remaining 10 percent African American.

The Center provides care across a broad age spectrum with about 20 percent of the visits being geriatric. Some of the most frequent diagnoses include hypertension, diabetes, substance abuse and cardiopulmonary problems. The Center also has about 450 adult HIV positive patients.

Pictured on left: Patients Russell and Christine

Free blood pressure screenings are provided every Monday from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm, and the Center has working relationships with several community agencies to provide primary care for their clients. These agencies include Baker Places, Walden House, Delancy Street, and the Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center. ♦

Caring that Goes Beyond the Center walls

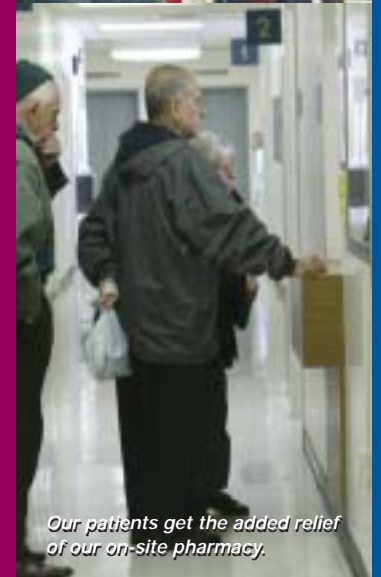
Last August, a young patient was admitted to the hospital due to balance problems and frequent falls. Prior to being hospitalized, the 38 year-old had been homeless for four days because he was two weeks behind in paying his rent. He was unable to pay his rent because he had lost his job as a result of his physical problems. While an inpatient, he was diagnosed with advanced multiple sclerosis. Upon his discharge, he did not have the resources to pay the back rent nor did he have the funds to rent a new place. The Center paid his back rent and covered an additional month to tide him over until his Social Security disability benefits were awarded. ♦



*Barry Lawlor, M.S.,
Manager,
Community Health Services*



*On-site translators, Sina Hong
and Lien Su ensure our patients'
needs are understood.*



*Our patients get the added relief
of our on-site pharmacy.*



Left to right: Joan Brosnan (R.N., Treatment Advocate), Andy Leas (Coordinator of HIV Services), Pippa Gordon (HIV Social Worker), Jude Swider (HIV Case Manager), and Ernie Somers (Assistant Coordinator)