

Medicine in the Central Valley

Monday, 17 June 2013 22:43

By *Stephen Dufur*

While many are currently suffering the crushing burden of uncertain economic times, it is encouraging to know that an industry, outside of agriculture, has had the ability to offer assurance and solidity to the Central Valley. Within the past 20 years, our health care industry has grown in many substantial and innovative ways in order to improve our residents overall standard of living while also offering a level of commitment that will help better future generations.

Every industry is subject to pressures and complications, resulting in no singular economic institution being immune to the changing tide. Health care in the Central Valley has suffered from cutbacks in reimbursement, severe shortages of primary and specialty care physicians, and the consequences of legislative health care reform. Each of these obstacles will hinder new and groundbreaking ways that healthcare will be administered in the future. The reality for us all is that our local health care undertakings need provisions and cultivating in order to achieve a positive level of sustainability that also promotes advancement.

UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program

Established in 1975, UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program is a clinical branch of the University of California, San Francisco. UCSF Fresno plays a vital role in training and retaining physicians in our medically underserved region, providing health care to the Valley's diverse community, conducting research pertinent to Valley health issues and preparing students for careers in health and medicine.

On an annual basis, UCSF Fresno trains approximately 245 medical residents in eight specialties (emergency medicine, family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopaedic surgery, pediatrics, psychiatry and surgery) as well as dental residents who are specializing in oral and maxillofacial surgery. In addition, UCSF Fresno trains about 45 fellows in 12 sub-specialties, including acute care surgery, cardiovascular disease, emergency ultrasound, gastroenterology, hospice and palliative medicine, infectious disease, interventional cardiology, minimal invasive surgery, pulmonary critical care, psychosomatic medicine, surgery critical care, and wilderness medicine.

At any given time, there are about 290 medical residents and fellows receiving training at UCSF Fresno and the program graduates more than 80 new physicians each year. About 40 percent of these graduates remain in the San Joaquin Valley to practice.

In addition, UCSF Fresno trains about 250 medical students on a rotating basis throughout the year. And UCSF Fresno is a key partner in the training of medical students enrolled in the UC Merced San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education.

UCSF Fresno also started the Doctors Academy and Junior Doctors Academy for students interested in pursuing health careers. Both programs seek to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students who go on to become competitive applicants to health professions schools. The Summer Biomedical Internship Program was established as well, to provide a quality biomedical research experience for high school students. The program matches high school students with UCSF Fresno faculty members who have or are developing research projects. UC Merced

UC Merced opened Sept. 5, 2005, in the San Joaquin Valley. It is the first new American research university built in the 21st century, with a mission of research, teaching and service. UC Merced offers a growing number of majors and minors. Many of these satisfy medical school preparatory requirements and, importantly, offer students degrees that will immediately prepare them for the workplace.

In 2010, UC Merced partnered with UCSF Fresno and the UC Davis School of Medicine to train medical students in the San Joaquin Valley as part of the UC Merced San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education (PRIME).

PRIME is an innovative approach to training future physicians. It is a pathway that emphasizes quality of care anchored in community-based research and educational experiences. The diversity of the San Joaquin Valley, including health systems, diverse patient populations and broad community partnerships, is a core component of the effort to improve the health and health care of the region.

The collaboration is the latest addition to the University of California's innovative Programs in Medical Education (PRIMEs), which seek to increase the diversity of the medical profession and remedy the uneven distribution of physicians in California.

On August 1, 2011, the inaugural class of students in the UC Merced San Joaquin Valley-PRIME attended their first classes at UC Davis School of Medicine. Chosen from more than 150 applications, the first class came from Modesto, Fowler, Salinas, Fresno and Bakersfield. The second cohort was admitted last year and included students from Empire, Fresno, Soledad and Tracy. The admissions process is taking place now for the third cohort. Students in the inaugural cohort are scheduled to start clinical rotations in the San Joaquin Valley this spring.

Applicants to the program must possess significant knowledge of and experience in the San Joaquin Valley, including familiarity with underserved populations, public health issues specific to the region and a desire to practice medicine in the San Joaquin Valley.

University Centers of Excellence

Created in 2006, the University Centers of Excellence partnered with UCSF Fresno to recruit top physicians who participate in research projects, educate and train the next generation of Valley doctors studying in Fresno and provide specialized patient care. There are now 17 distinct specialty faculty practices throughout Fresno. There are five offices located in North Fresno and twelve offices located in Downtown Fresno.

In providing specialized patient care the University Centers of Excellence faculty practice sites provide much needed access for residents of the Valley to the following: Cardiovascular, Critical Care, Dermatology, Endocrinology (Diabetes), Environmental Medicine, Gastroenterology (GI), Genetic Medicine, Gynecology, Hepatology, Infectious Disease, Internal Medicine, Neurology, Neurosurgery, Obstetrics, Occupational Medicine, Oncology, Orthopedics, Perinatology (high risk pregnancy), Pulmonary, Psychiatry, Rheumatology, Sleep Medicine, Surgery, Vascular Access Surgery and Vascular Surgery.

All University Centers of Excellence physicians are faculty members of the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). They teach, perform research studies and see patients right here in Fresno. As UCSF faculty members they and their colleagues teach in the following residency programs at UCSF Fresno: Emergency Medicine, Family & Community Medicine, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Orthopedic Surgery, Pediatrics, Psychiatry and Surgery. They also teach in the following fellowship programs at UCSF Fresno: Acute Care Surgery, Cardiovascular Disease, Gastroenterology, Emergency Ultrasound, Infectious Disease, Interventional Cardiology, Minimally Invasive Surgery, Palliative Medicine, Pulmonary & Critical Care, Psychosomatic Medicine, Surgical Critical Care and Wilderness Medicine.

They are UCSF Fresno.

Kaweah Delta Graduate Medical Education Programs

In July, Kaweah Delta Health Care District will become a teaching hospital as it welcomes its first class of resident physicians into the first two of five planned graduate medical education programs – emergency and family medicine. Next year, Kaweah Delta will add a psychiatry residency program and in following years, general surgery and transitional-year residency programs. The programs are affiliated with UC Irvine and are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

"This program is going to improve patient care, decrease wait times, and create more local doctors," said Lori Winston, M.D., Associate Director of the Emergency Medicine Residency Program.

Already, the programs are popular. For its first two residency programs – emergency and family medicine – Kaweah Delta received more than 700 applicants for just 12 spots in the two programs. Kaweah Delta's emergency medicine program is one of only 160 such programs in the country, said Dr. Michael Burg, Emergency Medicine Residency Program Director.

"We didn't quite know what the response would be, but many residency candidates have expressed a strong interest in coming here," Burg said.

Hanford Family Practice Residency Program

The Hanford Family Medicine Residency Program is the first in the Central Valley to be affiliated with the prestigious Loma Linda University Medical Center and the first residency in Kings County. Loma Linda University is a Seventh-day Adventist educational health-sciences institution. In 2008, it was ranked one of America's best hospitals by U.S. News Media Group.

Residents will spend their first six months of their internship training at the Loma Linda University Family Medicine Residency, followed by 2 ½ years at the Adventist Health / Hanford Family Medicine Residency in Hanford, California.

Unlike many other residencies, Hanford's longitudinal curriculum is designed to mimic the schedule of a rural family medicine physician. Residents will see their continuity patients at the residency's family medicine clinic and specialty clinics at the Adventist Health / Central Valley General Hospital campus in Hanford. They take Obstetrics call at Central Valley General Hospital and inpatient service call at Adventist Medical Center - Hanford. Residents have the opportunity to serve as first assists on surgeries including cesarean sections and are taught by family medicine physician faculty members along with other faculty made up of about 40 local practitioners and specialists.

Community Medical Centers

All of Community Medical Centers' facilities -- including Community Regional Medical Center, Clovis Community Medical Center and Fresno Heart & Surgical Hospital – are wired and connected through an electronic medical record system that enhances patient safety, giving physicians' instant access 24/7 to life-saving information and allows data to be shared to insure the best possible care for our patients. Also, to keep patients better informed about their care and treatment, all Community hospitals have a great system called the Getwell Network, which turns the in-room TV monitor into an interactive experience for patients and helps them stay informed about their care as well as be entertained and connected right from the bedside.

Community Regional Medical Centers

As the only hospital with comprehensive burn and Level 1 Trauma centers in the Valley, Community Regional Medical Center brings area residents the highest level of care available in the region. In February 2013, Community Regional was chosen as the first in the nation to introduce a new technology for robotically assisted partial knee replacement, the NavioPFS system.

NavioPFS™, unlike other robotic surgery platforms, puts the instrumentation in the surgeon's hands and assists by providing computer-defined boundaries to follow. The new technology allows patients to skip the pre-surgery CT scan, since it uses motion sensors placed around and on the knee during surgery to capture movement and the bone structure and then feed it to a nearby computer for mapping. Planning software helps the surgeon size and align the knee implant and also tailor each surgery to a patient's unique anatomy and movement patterns. It makes partial knee replacement surgery a more practical solution by adding the precision of robotics to the skill and experience of the surgeon. Partial knee replacement benefits patients with osteoarthritis by preserving ligaments and saving healthy cartilage and bone – all of which are sacrificed in full knee replacement, and recovery time is faster and incisions can be smaller with this kind of surgery.

The Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Community Regional with 84 beds is one of the largest in California. Community Regional serves as the high-risk pregnancy and birthing center for a five-county region and for the past several years has delivered the most under-3 pound babies in the state. It's the only NICU in the Valley where moms and babies can stay together while receiving care.

Besides Community Regional's continued investment in leading-edge technologies, patients receive the convenience of coordinated care throughout our state-of-the-art facilities located on our 58-acre campus in downtown Fresno. Our affiliation with University of California San Francisco gives our patients access to some of the brightest physicians in the country. Through our "Centers of Excellence" (Central California Neuroscience Institute, Joint Replacement Program, Primary Stroke Center, Pulmonary Rehabilitation and Asthma Education and Management) and our premier programs and services, Community Regional is truly unrivaled in the region and measures up with top hospitals across the nation.

Saint Agnes Medical Center

This past year, Saint Agnes Medical Center took a giant leap forward in transforming patient care and safety with the introduction of its state-of-the-art Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system. The new EMR system replaces paper medical records and streamlines patient care. With a few simple keystrokes, caregivers can access their patients' complete medical records and evidence-based tools that reduce errors and standardize best practices. Physicians enter orders into a computer, which eliminates the need to decipher difficult-to-read handwriting, and can securely review test results remotely. Prescriptions are automatically checked against the patient's records for potential drug interactions and allergies and to ensure appropriate medication dosing. And caregivers have more time to focus on being at the patient's bedside.

Another significant milestone for Saint Agnes – building upon its 25 year partnership with Children's Hospital Central California – is the construction of an expanded Neonatal ICU. Operated by Children's Hospital staff, the new satellite unit will replace the existing Neonatal ICU – growing from six to eight beds and from a Level II to a Level III unit to care for high acuity newborns.

Saint Agnes was also pleased to open a new patient floor – 6-North – last spring. The addition boasts 28 private patient rooms for post-surgical patients and an eight-bed critical care unit.

Kaiser Permanente

In the age of computerized electronic health records and telemedicine, Kaiser Permanente has led the Valley in innovative ways to help patients gain access to primary care physicians and specialists alike. With the recently implemented Telederm Service at all six of the Fresno area primary care departments, patients can have real time consultations with a dermatologist. Now, photographs can often be sent directly to a teledermatologist, who can receive and review the information, make a diagnosis, and recommend a treatment plan.

Kaiser Permanente makes it easy and convenient for its members to connect to their primary caregivers and specialists using online tools that help them manage their health. Through a new mobile app, members are able to book appointments, view lab results and order prescription medications using their smart phone or tablet. They also can get regular health tips and receive reminders on health screenings they may need. More than 1.7 million Kaiser Permanente Northern California members also are registered for kp.org – an online health tool – that allows members to access their labs, e-mail their doctors, view past visit information and manage their prescription medications through the My Health Manager feature. Kaiser Permanente caregivers also have immediate access to a members' critical medical information through KP Health

Connect, Kaiser Permanente's national electronic medical record system that integrates a member's clinical record with appointments, registration, recent lab results, prescriptions, emailing your doctor and billing. Through the use of technology, Kaiser Permanente provides its members with innovative online tools they can use to get care how and when they want it.

Fresno Heart & Surgical Hospital

Fresno Heart & Surgical Hospital is known for its high quality care and patient satisfaction. Most recently its cardiac program was recognized by HealthGrades® as one of America's 100 Best Hospitals for Coronary Intervention™ because of consistently good outcomes for patients undergoing cath lab and cardiology procedures.

This is the latest in a string of recognitions for Fresno Heart & Surgical, which has earned 5-star (top) ratings from HealthGrades for the past five years in a row for carotid surgery. It has also earned the 5-star rating and HealthGrades' Bariatric Surgery Excellence Award™ for four years in a row and has ranked among the top 5% in the nation for weight-loss surgery for the past three years.

The hospital gets consistently rave reviews from patients for communication, cleanliness, comfort and responsiveness of caregivers and has received HealthGrades' Outstanding Patient Experience Award for the past six years in a row. Fresno Heart & Surgical was the first in the hospital network to incorporate the Get Well network

– an education and entertainment portal that patients can utilize to keep better informed about their care.

Besides its other services, Fresno Heart & Surgical's Congestive Heart Failure Program provides heart failure patients with care in an outpatient setting to better manage their disease, improve quality of life and reduce frequent hospitalizations, emergency department visits and readmissions.

VA Central California Health Care System

Not a stranger to using innovation and technology to improve access and quality for their patients, the VA system was the first full-spectrum adopters of electronic health records throughout the country. Recently, the VA Central California Health Care System implemented the Rural Telehealth Network for its Valley veterans and patients.

One program in particular, the Care Coordination Home Telehealth Program for CHF (Congestive Heart Failure) patients, utilizes a multi-disciplinary team of nurses, primary care providers, and specialists in closely monitoring the daily nuances of this complicated chronic disease. Through this network, veterans from remote areas such as Mariposa, Yosemite, Ahwanee or Squaw Valley have direct access to much needed health services via telemedicine when it counts the most.

Kaweah Delta Medical Center

In the southern Central Valley, we can't help but be awed by the sprawling 581-bed Kaweah Delta Medical Center located in Visalia. While in the past few years, Kaweah Delta Medical Center has grown substantially, it continues to display its commitment to providing patients with state-of-the-art technology and healthcare services that are nationally accredited by commissions such as Joint Commission, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), and the Commission on Magnet® Recognition.

Kaweah Delta is the ninth-busiest hospital in the state in performing open-heart surgeries and has significantly advanced pediatric and obstetric care through its NICU and Family Birth Center. The addition of robotic surgery is also a major achievement for the community. In fact, Kaweah Delta recently unveiled a third application of robotic surgery - single-site gall bladder surgery. Prior to gall bladder surgery, Kaweah Delta became the first hospital in Tulare and Kings Counties to use the daVinci® Si robotic surgery system in 2011, when it began performing robotic urological and gynecological procedures. To date, eight local surgeons have performed hundreds of robotic surgeries at Kaweah Delta.

Additionally, Kaweah Delta recently purchased the GreenLight™ laser surgery system, the most advanced in the region, according to local surgeons, to provide relief for men suffering from enlarged prostates. The laser is the cornerstone of Kaweah Delta's new Endourology Suite which houses a fixed surgical table, a second laser and other technologies that allow doctors to treat a wide variety of conditions of the bladder and kidney. Such technology adds to the impressive technology housed in Kaweah Delta's Acequia Wing, home to its cardiovascular center. New amenities include 12 dedicated emergency beds in the emergency room for incoming heart patients, a dedicated 20-bed Cardiovascular Care Unit, four state-of-the-art cardiovascular cath labs, three dedicated state-of-the-art cardiovascular surgery suites, a dedicated Endovascular Surgery Suite featuring a robotic imaging system, and a 26-bed Cardiac Telemetry Unit and 20-bed Cardiac Intensive Care Unit. Kaweah Delta was the first in the region to do endoscopic vein harvesting and continues to be a leader in this technology.

Also, this summer, Kaweah Delta Medical Center's helipad will welcome its first helicopter landing, the first of many landings to help save lives in the South Valley. As the only level III trauma center in Tulare and Kings counties, Kaweah Delta's \$2.7 million helipad will help get trauma victims care immediately and help transfer newborns and adults in need of a higher level of care out of the area.

Tulare Regional Medical Center

Looking further south, TRMC has brought together highly qualified urologists and sophisticated medical technology to benefit residents of the Central San Joaquin Valley. The Urology Center of Robotic Surgery at TRMC showcases an alliance with the Keck Doctors of USC in offering minimally invasive urologic robotic surgery as an alternative to both open surgery and laparoscopy.

The affiliation with USC and the purchase of the robotic surgery system precedes the opening of TRMC's 115,000 square foot state of the art Medical Tower. The Medical Tower, opening 2014, includes an expanded Emergency Department, State of the Art Imaging Department, 5 surgical suites; including a hybrid operating suite with capabilities of all procedures short of heart transplants, one entire floor dedicated to Labor, Delivery, Recovery and Postpartum and 26 new private patient rooms.

Tulare Regional Medical Center is the only hospital in the Central Valley with two national healthcare accreditations; The Joint Commission and DNV Healthcare, Inc. After survey in February, DNV has recommended Tulare Regional Medical Center for ISO 9001 Certification.

When obtained, Tulare Regional Medical Center will be the only hospital north of the grape vine to earn the ISO 9001 quality distinction.

Clovis Community Medical Center

Clovis Community Medical Center opened its five-story bed tower in November 2012, marking a major milestone in an expansion and renovation project that will make it the only comprehensive hospital in the area with all-private rooms. Other major improvements now open include additional labor and delivery rooms, a Level 2 neonatal intensive care unit, state-of-the-art surgical suites, da Vinci® robotic technology, a new parking structure, a redesigned lobby and a new dining area. Other additions include seven inpatient operating rooms, an inpatient endoscopy suite, pre- and post-operative areas and a larger, more private emergency department.

The transformation of the hospital was "patient-inspired" with many new amenities that include room-service style dining, private rooms and the Get Well Network, which turns the television in patient rooms into an entertainment and education portal. Patients are able to request games and movies on demand and become more engaged in their care through video education courses tailored for them.

The massive construction project began in 2010 and is slated to continue through 2014. Still to come is a medical

plaza that will allow more physicians to open offices near the hospital, a high-tech Health & Education Conference

Center with a 200-seat auditorium, a new cardiac cath lab, expanded ancillary services, such as pharmacy, laboratory and radiology, and a dedicated Women's and Infants' Pavilion. When the expansion and renovation is finished, the hospital will increase from 109 general rooms to 204 private rooms, improving comfort and privacy for patients and families.

Mercy Medical Center in Merced

Mercy Medical Center Merced is a modern, 196-bed Joint Commission-approved hospital that recently went through major renovations and continues to serve the Merced community for the past 85 years. It has a very active emergency room and a large, up-to-date and busy 24-bed ICU/CCU/TCU. It is the major obstetrical hospital in the area. It has diagnostic facilities often found only in larger community hospitals such as a Cardiac Catheterization Lab, CT Scanner, and MRI.

Mercy is now a Joint Commission Certified Stroke Center. The Certificate of Distinction for Primary Stroke Centers received by Mercy Medical Center recognizes centers that follow the best practices for stroke care. It is highly sought-after, and given only to medical centers maintaining the highest standards of training, patient care, and community education with regard to strokes.

It took two years and the dedicated efforts of many Mercy healthcare providers to get this certification. The hospital hired a full-time coordinator to help begin the educational component of the program and complete the application for the certification process. Work teams were formed. Policies were developed for procedures and implementation, and outreach was conducted with area emergency medical service personnel. Nurses, physicians and emergency medical service personnel received extensive training in identifying and expediting treatment to minimize long-term disability.

A particularly important facet of the certification is to analyze and use standardized performance measure data to continually improve treatment plans for patients in the future.

"It was a lot of hard work for our teams, but such a great acknowledgement of our combined efforts to have gained the certification on our first review," says Phillip Brown, RN, Director of Emergency Services.

Adventist Medical Center - Hanford

Kings County recently welcomed a milestone in health care with the opening of Adventist Medical Center – Hanford in December 2010. This new state-of-the-art accredited hospital features 142 private medical-surgical beds, six 600-square-foot operating rooms, a cardiac cath lab, 26 emergency treatment rooms, complete radiographic imaging, an automated laboratory, 22 intensive care beds, helipad and computerized medical records. Each room features a 32-inch flat-screen television with GetWellNetwork, an interactive education and entertainment system that includes a keyboard and wireless Internet access.

Adventist Medical Plaza - Dinuba

The innovative Adventist Medical Plaza - Dinuba is helping to provide new access to services for the Dinuba area. The center opened in late 2012 to provide imaging, urgent care, laboratory, and JobCare occupational medicine services in a calming, serene environment.

Board-certified emergency physicians and staff provide extended-hour urgent care services seven days a week at the plaza. They and other care staff are available to treat minor illnesses and injuries such as earaches, nausea, flu, fever, rashes, animal and insect bites, minor bone fractures and minor cuts requiring stitches.

Medical imaging services include CT scans, X-rays and ultrasound, with readings provided by board-certified radiologists who are based at hospitals and universities.

The plaza's clinical laboratory services provide patients with multiple hospital-level services and fast turnaround times. JobCare occupational medicine is devoted to the prevention and management of occupational injury, illness and disability, and protection of health and productivity of workers in the community.

Adventist Medical Center - Reedley

The struggling Sierra Kings District Hospital in Reedley got a second chance when Adventist Health / Central Valley Network acquired the 49-bed hospital and Birthing Center in Reedley as well as rural health clinics in Reedley, Parlier, Dinuba and Orange Cove. The district filed for bankruptcy protection in October 2009.

In June 2011, Reedley district voters approved ballot initiative Measure G for Adventist Health to own and operate the hospital and clinics with a 96% yes vote. Hundreds of eligible employees were hired as Adventist Health employees and more than 100 physicians and providers are joined the new Reedley medical staff.

Since the acquisition, the hospital has seen many improvements including a new Children's Health pediatric clinic with 11 exam rooms and improved equipment, a new MRI modular with advanced MRI services, and established new Emergency Department practices with CEP America, and a new hospitalist program with Galen Inpatient Physicians.

Kaweah Delta Medical Center

Turning over to Tulare County, we can't help but be awed by the sprawling 581-bed Kaweah Delta Medical Center located in Visalia. Kaweah Delta's new Acequia Wing is home to the cardiovascular center. New amenities include 12 dedicated emergency beds in the emergency room for incoming heart patients, a dedicated 20-bed Cardiovascular Care Unit, four state-of-the-art cardiovascular cath labs, three dedicated state-of-the-art cardiovascular surgery suites, a dedicated Endovascular Surgery Suite featuring a robotic imaging system, and a 26-bed Cardiac Telemetry Unit and 20-bed Cardiac Intensive Care Unit. Kaweah Delta was the first in the region to do endoscopic vein harvesting and continues to be a leader in this technology.

Fresno Surgical Hospital

Fresno Surgical Hospital's (FSH) recently completed two-year re-construction project further enhances the hospital's

hotel-like atmosphere and allows it to keep pace with growing patient demand.

The project included a complete re-construction of five of FSH's nine operating rooms and an internal re-design which increased the number of pre-op and post-op beds from 14 to 28. This allows FSH to increase its surgical capacity by an estimated 25-30 percent. Hospital officials point to FSH's reputation for outstanding patient satisfaction, high-quality care and lower costs as the reason for the increased patient demand.

FSH is recognized as a top performer both in the state of California and nationally. Recently, FSH was ranked number one in California for Joint Replacement two years in a row by Healthgrades® and was named by Becker's Hospital Review as one of the Top 50 Hospitals with Best Patient Rankings.

FSH is a fully-licensed, Joint Commission-accredited hospital providing service lines dedicated to Orthopedics, Total Joint, Neurosurgery - Spine, Spine Intervention - Pain Management, Women's Health, Urology, General Surgery and many other inpatient and outpatient surgical procedures.

The hospital was founded in 1984 by local physicians. Today, more than 80 surgeons – many of whom are the leaders in their specialties – choose to operate at FSH, serving approximately 8,200 patients annually.

Children's Hospital Central California

Madera County is home to Children's Hospital Central California – the only children's hospital in the San Joaquin Valley and the second largest children's hospital in the state. The 348-bed facility with more than 40 pediatric specialties is one of the 10 largest hospitals of its type in the nation. Their 88-bed, regional Level III neonatal intensive care unit continues to provide the highest level care for premature and ill infants in the Valley while achieving some of the best outcomes in the country.

In mid-2010, Children's Hospital opened the Willson Heart Center's new \$4 million, state-of-the-art pediatric catheterization laboratory. That same year they launched a Maternal Fetal Center in collaboration with Saint Agnes Medical Center to provide care for at-risk mothers and their unborn babies. The Maternal Fetal Center continues to grow rapidly, from seeing 40 patients a month initially to over 700 patients a month today. In May 2011, the 60,000-square-foot, \$66 million hospital expansion named Paramount Farms Plaza opened to its first patients. This project included new surgical suites, increased medical imaging, an expanded emergency department, and an extension of their pediatric intensive care unit (PICU).

Children's Hospital was also the first children's hospital west of the Rockies to receive Magnet Nursing designation, the highest nursing benchmark in the world, and they are one of fewer than 10 PICUs in the nation to receive the Beacon Award for Critical Care Excellence.

And that is indeed a good word to use to sum up the standard to which we associate the different Central Valley programs and health care facilities – excellence. It generates a sense of local pride and determination that we could hold our own here in the Valley and are second to none when it comes to world-class health care for every member of our region. It also embodies our hopes for generations to come and makes us believe in a bright and sustainable future for medicine in the Central Valley.

Popular

[Muscle Testing](#)

[Your Own Worst Enemy: The Madness of Self-Defeating Choices](#)

[Candida: One Bad Bug](#)

[Ancient & Hot: The Art of Threading and Sugaring](#)

[Hoarding: Uncluttering an Emerging Mental Health Issue](#)

About Valley Health Magazine

Valley Health Magazine is a bi-monthly full color publication dedicated to increasing the awareness of health issues, services, products, and new technologies available in the Central Valley.



Join us on Facebook!

© 2013 Valley Health Magazine

[Home](#) [Features](#) [Media](#) [Past Issues](#) [Contact](#) [Subscribe](#)