

Tri-Cities Community Health Opens New Energy-smart Center for Affordable Care

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Pasco's newly opened downtown community health clinic came about thanks to a successful \$7.4 million

Facilities Investment Program grant via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). According to Diann Kummer, RN, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Nursing Officer for Tri-Cities Community

Health (TCCH), the new Minnie Pesina Clinical Services Building has grown from concept to reality just when the community needs it most. The facility houses dental (expanded to 12 offertories) services,



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behavioral health and chemical dependency, Women, Infant, Children (WIC) and First Step programs, as well as the Call Center, Medical Records and Facilities departments. She credits Peter Theobald with Community Link Consulting for securing the grant.

Tri-Cities Community Health (formerly known as La Clinica) serves the region's diverse population well, but their old space proved insufficient for housing the services needed to satisfy growing care demands. "We have multiple service lines and assessments showed a real necessity to expand if we were going to meet our constituents' needs," Kummer says. Although originally planning to purchase property and build, she explains, "We looked at viable locations, and financially, it really made more sense to capitalize on something we already owned."

Facing Court Street in downtown Pasco, the 40,000 sf building (three stories and a basement) fully utilizes the 10,000 sf site footprint. Meier Architecture Engineering's Renata Presby, AIA, LEED AP, says the Meier team employed state-of-the-art sustainability software and documentation processes. "The project was constructed in only 11 months. BouTen Construction took a tiered approach to the process, which really facilitated the pace."

Though TCCH did not seek LEED certification, they were committed to incorporating many LEED components into the building design. Aaron Maxey, TCCH Corporate Compliance Officer and Grant Administrator, managed the project

alongside Kummer. Speaking to the strong sustainability credentials Meier brought to the table, as well as the construction methods BouTen used, Maxey explains, "We wanted to provide a healthier work and patient environment, as well as be an energy efficient building. We feel very fortunate to have been able to do this."

To promote the desired measures, Meier used regional and renewable materials and those with low to no VOC to assure top indoor air quality. Double-glazed windows with Low E coatings reduce heat gain as well as decrease cooling loads. The roof also contributes to lower solar heat gain in the building, thanks to a high solar reflectance index. Even the location is efficient - right on a corner, on major public transportation routes.

The visually appealing building includes a glass curtain wall that invites the outside in, while also blunting the boxy effect typical of rectangular buildings. Of the interior's warm tones and soft materials, Presby says, "They reflect our region's vegetation of sage greens, desert yellows and reds. It's the polar opposite of traditional healthcare facilities' cold whites." Each floor's colors and materials align with the care focus and what best suits the patients and care providers.

For instance, colors and fabrics on the third floor, where children and families come for WIC and First Step services, are soft and cheerful. Skylights bring in natural light. "It really brightens the mood for kids," Kummer says. "And the parents as

well - a very family friendly environment." By contrast, in Behavioral Health's second floor offices, patients find somber yet soothing colors, as well as privacy, thanks to carefully selected acoustics and flooring that promote quiet. Every office has a door and shades that maintain patient confidentiality. On the first floor, the main entry opens into a bright and comfortably busy lobby with access to the newly expanded dental offices.

The TCCH Minnie Pesina building hits all the high spots for efficiency, safety and business continuance design. A bilingual, advanced voice evacuation system replaces traditional alarms of disorienting horns and bells. Lights and floor patterning make it easier for patients to navigate the building. Redundant IT functions that allow remote access from another nearby TCCH facility assure co-location functionality. Access to public transit and an adjacent TCCH-owned parking lot makes it easy for patients to get to and from the services they need.

Kummer and Maxey agree that with architectural design excellence and a patient-centered focus, the new building will help catapult their programs. "Patients can get the care they need, regardless of ability to pay. And as the future of healthcare evolves, we'll be prepared for the changes."

For more information on Tri-Cities Community Health services, visit <http://www.tcc-health.org/>.

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