Dear Friends

While the past year has been trying for all of us, I was heartened by the sense of kinship I felt as everyone came together to make real and tangible impacts on the lives of our patients. From our dedicated staff and volunteers to our invaluable supporters, we have a devoted community that helps us deliver the high quality care our patients have come to trust and depend on. And recently, our community got bigger.

On November 1, South Bay Family Health Care became a part of Venice Family Clinic and I am pleased to welcome our colleagues in the South Bay. This collaboration was driven by the recognition that together we have the capacity to serve more people in need and advance greater health equity. In this report, you will read about Venice Family Clinic’s pre-merger activity in 2021 and get an introduction to our merged organization. We look forward to sharing more with you in 2022 about how we will deliver better outcomes for our patients across our newly expanded service area.

We are building from a strong base. In 2021, we poured ourselves into finding new ways to provide care to our patients and keep them safe. We knew the need for greater access to comprehensive primary health care had never been more important. So we redoubled our commitment to our patients: essential workers who continue to risk their lives on the frontlines; people of color who face systemic racism that impacts their health; people experiencing homelessness; and people who face economic uncertainty every day.

When vaccines became available at the beginning of the year, we struggled at first to get enough doses for our patients, who are vulnerable and at greater risk. Our staff successfully advocated to get these much-needed vaccines, and we set up vaccine clinics and recruited hundreds of volunteers to administer shots.

We refined our approach to telehealth, finding that telephone visits worked better for our patients than video visits, which posed a barrier to care for many people who couldn’t afford the technology.

Building on our belief that food is medicine, we added enrollment specialists to our free food markets to help patients start and renew CalFresh food assistance applications. And through a year-long partnership with UCLA Dining, we provided more than half a million freshly prepared healthful meals to patients.

We continued to battle the homelessness crisis through our innovative street medicine program, bolstered by our new mobile clinic, a van equipped with everything needed to provide private exams to people living on the streets. This van has inspired others, and we have plans to launch another mobile clinic in 2022.

This historic public health crisis has shown us a lot about ourselves — including our ability to come together when it matters most to support the people in our community who need it most. I’m looking forward to all we will accomplish together harnessing our collective power to do good.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Benson Forer
Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director

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### 2021 by the numbers

Venice Family Clinic provided quality comprehensive health care to 25,089 people who might otherwise have gone without the care they needed.

- **117,178** patient visits
- **81,801** primary and specialty care visits
- **17,286** behavioral health visits
- **6,117** dental visits
- **7,878** health education visits
- **97%** lived below 200% of the federal poverty line*
- **74%** had health insurance
- **11,950** Children First Early Head Start home visits
- **36%** spoke Spanish as their primary language
- **20%** were Children
- **16%** experienced homelessness
- **9%** were seniors

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*Number only includes patients for whom we have income information. All numbers in this report reflect fiscal year 2021 (7/1/20 to 6/30/21) for Venice Family Clinic only, except where otherwise indicated. To learn more about our merger with South Bay Family Health Care and its history and impact on the community, see page 5.
Refining our approach to care

From home-based glucose monitoring to telehealth phone visits, Venice Family Clinic has been using nontraditional ways of providing quality health care since before the pandemic began. But over the past year, we honed our knowledge even more, finding additional ways to expand access to that care and help our patients achieve good health.

The ability to have telephone visits has meant the difference between life and death for some patients.

“Thanks to the therapy I got from Natalie, I didn’t feel alone anymore. She helped remind me of my reasons for living.”

When “Marcy” tested positive for COVID-19, she and her family decided it would be best for everyone if she isolated in one of their bedrooms. But all that time spent alone wore on Marcy, and she became very depressed and began to have thoughts about ending her life. One of our therapists, Natalie McKenna, LCSW, was able to start therapy with Marcy much quicker than usual because of the ease of telehealth, which turned out to be a good thing: Marcy shared that without our services and help, she would have “done something awful to herself.”

“Thanks to the therapy I got from Natalie, I didn’t feel alone anymore,” Marcy said. “She helped remind me of my reasons for living.”

Working together

Knowing that we needed to minimize the number of times we asked our patients to come into our clinics, some of our departments began collaborating in new ways to engage people.

While our Health Education department continued to provide healthful food to anyone in the community at our free food markets, our Health Insurance Enrollment department teamed up with them, sending enrollment specialists to our markets to provide information on CalFresh, California’s food assistance program. New CalFresh applications jumped from zero to 87 in one month after the introduction of this staff at our markets. Health Insurance Enrollment staff also started going along with our street medicine teams to help people experiencing homelessness with their Medi-Cal applications.

Bringing care to the people

The Clinic found several more ways to reach patients besides the traditional model of in-person care.

We introduced our first mobile clinic, a van fully equipped to provide the same level of care as we do in-clinic to people experiencing homelessness. The concept has been well-received, and we have plans to launch another, larger mobile unit in 2022.

Our pharmacy launched a prescription medication delivery service that makes it easier for our patients to get the medicine they need while keeping them safe at home.

We also expanded our diabetes care team to bring care directly to patients who are unable to make it into a clinic.

Provision of blood glucose meters has been another way to increase access. We’ve learned even more over the past year about the efficacy of telehealth visits, specifically that telephone visits have been successful for many patients, including those for our patients undergoing substance use treatment or therapy for behavioral health issues. Phone visits lower barriers to care and can often serve as an effective and less overwhelming way of engaging people who may be hesitant to receive such services in the first place, such as patients with severe anxiety, depression or difficulties with organization. Answering a phone call from home is often much easier than having to take all the steps necessary to make it into a clinic.

Raymond is one such patient. He was diagnosed with diabetes several years ago and struggles with mounting challenges associated with his health. Before he joined the Clinic, he used a cell phone to track his glucose levels, but this didn’t always work. In January 2022, We introduced a new mobile clinic van to enhance our innovative street medicine program.

We are on a mission to bring health and justice to the people we serve. Last year we launched a fundraising initiative, The Power of Us, to align with our work in six areas: achieving health equity, building mental health access, controlling pandemics and epidemics, defeating homelessness, ending hunger, and fighting for our children. Here is more of the recent work we’ve done in these areas thanks to philanthropic support and partnerships.

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To learn more about The Power of Us, visit venicefamilyclinic.org/powerofus.
We meet people where they are as opposed to where we might like them to be...
Anita Zamora to ABC Australia

Dr. Gilmore Chung in the Los Angeles Times

As soon as you kick someone out, it’s them against the world. If you are working with them, you have a chance to get them to a better day.

Anita Zamora, our deputy director and chief operations officer, was interviewed by the Los Angeles Times, Santa Monica Daily Press and ABC Australia about inequities in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. She also wrote in Capitol Weekly how community health centers like Venice Family Clinic were best poised to reach traditionally underserved populations and offered fairness in distributing the vaccines.

Dr. Coley King and Karen Lauterbach on the health care needs of people experiencing homelessness

Dr. Coley King, our director of homeless services, was quoted in The New York Times Magazine, Spectrum News1 and Santa Monica Daily Press on the importance of ending challenges in providing care to his patients who are unhoused. He wrote in The Argonaut on the need for solutions at the federal level that address housing. Karen Lauterbach, our director of community programs and advocacy, discussed the benefits of presumptive eligibility for Medi-Cal among people experiencing homelessness in Capitol & Main.

Dr. Michelle Aguilar on the benefits of telephone telehealth visits

Dr. Michelle Aguilar, who leads our pediatrics program, wrote in Capitol Weekly about how crucial it is to keep telephone telehealth visits as an option for patients, who find phone visits more accessible. Federally qualified health centers like Venice Family Clinic supported legislation that would make permanent Medi-Cal reimbursement for audio telehealth visits. California Assembly Bill 133 was passed and signed by Gov. Newsom to guarantee full payment for these visits through the end of 2022.

Dr. Gilmore Chung on the need for effective treatments to fight the opioid crisis

Dr. Gilmore Chung, our director of addiction services, spoke to the Los Angeles Times and wrote in Capitol Weekly on the dangers of fentanyl and how harm reduction, a public health strategy that aims to reduce the negative consequences associated with drug and alcohol use, could help combat the opioid crisis.

On November 1, 2021, Venice Family Clinic and South Bay Family Health Care merged, becoming a unified organization to serve people from the Santa Monica Mountains through the South Bay.

Each clinic has more than 50 years of experience, and after collaborating for many years, our two organizations decided to solidify the relationship to better serve our patients and people still in need of care in the combined service area.

We look forward to sharing our expertise with each other to grow and evolve our innovative programs.

Anita Zamora on vaccine equity

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