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The Evolution of the Anderson Valley Health Center

In January 1976, a group of community minded citizens wanted to establish healthcare locally. They were led by Franklin Apfel, M.D., Terri Anderson who became our office manager and then Clinic Administrator and Peggy Minicler, FNP who worked for us thru 2004. The Health Center was originally started as a cooperative where everyone received a salary of \$4/hour. Mark Apfel, M.D. joined the staff in September 1976 and is currently the Medical Director.

We received our first funding in January 1977 from Mendocino County and in July 1978, we started receiving money from the California Rural Health Division. By July 1979, we were receiving enough money from the State to pay for a full-time Physician at AVHC. We received additional grants at that time which allowed us to add X-Ray capability to our facility.

The AVHC continued to grow and we raised funds to build a new building which opened in December 1982 on property which we bought from the local School Board, behind the High School. Our new home was a great tribute to the community support and the vision and hard work of Terri Anderson.

The situation at the AVHC was relatively stable over the next 17 years except for continued issues regarding funding. In 1999, Terri Anderson retired and we hired Judith Dolan as our new Administrator. Judith brought a strong background in Behavioral Health and had run several programs in the Bay Area. During her time here, we opened our dental clinic at a separate site and started a Behavioral Health program.

In 2006, we started a major re-model to triple the size of our facility and move our dental clinic on site. We raised about \$1.25 million through local donations and grants and another \$2.1 million in two USDA loans and were able to open our new facility in the summer of 2008. We were the first Gold LEED certified (Green) health facility in California and the new building is a great tribute to our community and the hard work of Judith Dolan.

Unfortunately in 2009, due to the national/state financial crisis, we lost all of our State funding. The funding came from 9 different programs and accounted for about a third of our revenue (some \$350,000 per year). We instituted significant austerity measures and found a 2-year grant from the Kresge Foundation for \$150,000/year that Kresge was giving to non-Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) throughout the country. Only 20 of these grants were made nationwide and, fortunately, we received one. The Kresge grant allowed us to stay in business for the next two years. We had applied several times previously for an FQHC grant but were not successful. Thus we were an "FQHC-look-alike" clinic without federal funding. We applied again in 2011 and in August 2011 were notified that we had been given FQHC status and would receive a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) 330 Grant in the amount of \$650,000/year for three years.

We had an on-site Federal HRSA audit and review in October 2013 and passed 17 of the 19 program requirements. One area that we did not pass which has since been completed was Credentialing of the Medical Staff. The other area was Strategic Planning which was finalized in 2016. We did submit a Budget Period renewal application in January 2014 which resulted in continued federal funding through May 2017. We are working on a grant application now for three more years of continued federal funding.

Some of the differences between the Anderson Valley Health Center and other facilities are that we are the sole medical, dental and behavioral health provider for the community. The next nearest medical care is 30-40 minutes away over a winding mountain road. Because of this, we see most of the local people and have a greater variety of patients than most CHCs. We have several families where we have taken care of 6 generations! We have several wealthy patients and there are a number of retirees in the area with significant resources who have become very involved in multiple community activities. We see most of the locally employed people from the school district, wineries and other businesses. Nearly half of our patients are migrant and seasonal farm workers of Mexican decent. We do Workman's Compensation cases as well as handling most primary care needs. We have a significant number of uninsured patients. We have always tried to provide as many services as possible locally. We provide primary and urgent medical care. We do have a small Emergency room where we see emergencies and trauma victims who we can stabilize prior to transport to the hospital during business hours. We do have Digital X-Ray in both the medical and dental department. We have a Lab and Draw Station and do many Point of Care tests. We have a sliding scale arrangement with 2 outside labs as well as for Imaging at UVMC. Since there are no local pharmacies, we have developed an in-house Dispensary program.

The dental program includes two dentists, one of whom works part time and a staff of 3 dental assistants and provides routine cleaning and examination services and some restorative work. The Behavioral Health program includes one Psychologist and we actively seeking to recruit another provider.

Currently AVHC has an annual expense budget of just over \$2.8 million. Of this amount, \$1.3 million is supplied from federal 330 grants, another \$0.2 million from other grants and donations and \$1.4 million from Medi-Cal, Medicare, insurance and private pay for services.