

# Message from the CEO

Good Health is a Way of Life

Everybody wants to feel good, to constantly experience a wonderful vibrant, healthy sensation in body and mind. But consistently feeling good involves more than taking an aspirin for a headache, or seeing your doctor when a serious health problem arises.



Older adults learn how to exercise after lunch at the Open House for our Grand Avenue Adult Health Center in Escondido

Many people consider Neighborhood Healthcare to be a treatment center, a place to come when they aren't feeling good. And, when you're sick, do not hesitate to see us! However, we believe our most important role is to help our neighbors avoid becoming ill in the first place.

The prenatal exams we provide are essential to the health of both mother and child. We try to make it as easy as possible for parents to bring children in for regular checkups. Our medical staff encourages periodic exams for adults at risk of particular diseases. We provide dental care that prevents serious oral and other physical ailments. Affordable behavioral health counseling helps people cope with life's inevitable problems in a positive manner, and avoid resorting to drugs, alcohol, or violence.

And, through community health programs, we strongly encourage people to develop a lifestyle based on healthy choices. We offer education and intervention programs related to healthy eating, overall physical fitness, maintaining a healthy weight, teen issues and taking care of your teeth.

Some 65,000 people a year make more than 231,000 visits to Neighborhood Healthcare centers. Our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. James Schultz, estimates that as many as 50% of those visits would not be necessary if the individuals and their families had made different lifestyle choices over the years.

Tobacco, alcohol, and drugs are obvious causes of illness. But food choices and exercise are other important health considerations. Dr. Schultz, in our monthly health column for the North County Times, wrote, "It has become too easy to get calories, and too hard to expend them. Without trying at all, in today's American society, most of us will become obese and many of us will get diabetes."

Changing the habits of one's lifestyle is hard – perhaps the hardest thing in the world to do. However, we at Neighborhood Healthcare are here to support positive changes in your life. The following pages address what we are doing in this area, and in other community-based programs that include dental care, general health care, and behavioral health for individuals who otherwise might not be served.

***This year's accomplishments:*** We opened two new health centers in 2007-2008. **In Escondido**, a beautiful center opened in April 2008 focusing on the needs of older adults. **In Temecula** a health center opened in October 2007 offering primary health care and behavioral health/counseling services thus allowing us to convert our original Temecula health center into a women's center focusing on prenatal and women's needs. **Dental services were added to our rural Pauma Valley location** in July 2008, providing dental care to a population that had no dental resources. **Our large El Cajon health center** is in the middle of a major expansion/renovation project scheduled for completion in April 2009.

***Looking to the future:*** Through the generous donation from the Alan Gold family we were able to purchase land in Poway to **build a health center to serve Poway, Rancho Penasquitos and Rancho Bernardo**. This area has pockets of low income residents with no access to affordable health care.

Because of the increasing complexity of providing quality medical care to a patient population that often has complex and chronic medical problems, it is essential to have state of the art **health information technology**. Our strategic plan for 2009-2010 moves us towards implementation of an electronic health record system as part of an overall plan to utilize information technology as a basis for improving quality of care for all patients of all ages.

*Tracy Ream, MPAH*  
Neighborhood Healthcare CEO

