West County Celebrates the Grand Opening of a New Health Center

Health workers, politicians and residents celebrated on Tuesday the opening of a $45 million medical center that will serve West County residents and replace the aging Richmond Health Center.

Located within a block of Doctors Hospital and Brookside Health Center in San Pablo, the state-of-the-art facility completes a medical hub. “This new health center symbolizes this county’s continuing commitment to making quality healthcare accessible to everyone,” said County Supervisor John Gioia, “and reducing the health inequities that exist among people of different races, ethnicities and income levels in our community.”

The facility, which broke ground in May 2011, was completed on time and under budget. Its 58 exam rooms will continue to offer all the health services administered at the Richmond location.

“Today you’re looking at the future of healthcare in America,” said Congressman George Miller, who helped secure $12 million in federal stimulus money to build the center.

- more -
Tuesday’s opening featured complimentary refreshments from local merchants, live music and tours of the 53,000-square-foot center. Among the attendees were doctors and nurses who said they are excited to work in the new building. “It’s going to change the patients’ expectations [and] improve their morale,” said nurse Gina Zimmerman.

Some Richmond residents said they wished the facility had been built in Richmond. One said that patients had a hard enough time reaching the Richmond Health Center, and that finding the new center in San Pablo will be a challenge. Roughly 7,000 patients use the Richmond Health Center, and all will be moved to the new facility.

The San Pablo location is on major bus lines that connect it to Richmond. It has the capacity to take extra patients when provisions in the Affordable Care Act increase the number of insured residents, Gioia said. The facility will also have extended evening and weekend hours.

The center is expected to be the first LEED-certified building in San Pablo. LEED certification requires “green” design, construction and operation — which includes sustainable materials, water efficiency, high indoor environmental quality, and the recycling of construction materials — to reach the Silver standard level. The building was designed by Mountain View-based architecture company Hawley Peterson Snyder and built by Northern California’s Turner Construction.

The center is slated to begin accepting patients in October, when the Richmond Health Center will close.

###