

# Mission Center Healthcare What a Difference a Year Makes!

R. Giuseppi Slater, M.D.

One year ago, the high tech Mission Center Healthcare opened in Soledad, California. The clinic was the inspiration of Irma Favela-Slater, PA-C, a former field worker who had always wanted to bring top level health care to South Monterey County. Together with her husband, Giuseppi Slater, M.D., FAAFP and partner Leopold Graupera, M.D., FACOG, Obstetrician/Gynecologist, they opened a visionary medical facility that integrated the latest medical technology with a bilingual/bicultural staff with deep roots in the local community.

The spacious waiting room, with its warm colors and tasteful artwork on the walls, feels welcoming. One notes the lack of filing cabinets at the reception area or elsewhere in this wireless, "paperless" clinic. All records are electronic, and the medical staff enters information on their wirelessly linked tablet computers. The back office areas are notable for a state-of-the-art digital imaging system and computerized full medical laboratory, as well as a new DEXA bone densitometer, for diagnosing and treating osteoporosis.

When the clinic opened, on Valentine's Day of 2005, it already featured several specialties. Open every single day of the year, Mission Center Healthcare has brought Advanced Urgent Care, the ability to care for most problems

usually requiring a visit to an emergency department, to an area far from hospital services. Dr. Slater, with his years of experience working in trauma centers, directing hospital emergency departments and teaching emergency medicine at Stanford University, together with the clinic's nurses and other staff, have utilized the clinic's advanced technology to provide care beyond the scope of urgent care centers.

In a similar fashion, Dr. Graupera, specialist in Obstetrics and Gynecology, has brought technology to the clinic that formerly required a visit to the hospital. He provides care for a broad range of women's health care problems, including infertility, abnormal uterine bleeding, urinary incontinence and high risk pregnancy care. Procedures like ultrasound and hysteroscopy are performed on-site, and hospital procedures include laparoscopy and complicated gynecologic surgery.

The clinic also offers full family medicine. Dr. Slater, who is board certified in Family Medicine as well as Emergency Medicine, along with his wife Irma and with board certified family physicians Janice Hartman, M.D. and Christopher O'Grady, M.D. provide care to all ages.

Occupational Medicine has been a clinic specialty from the onset. Local businesses and employers appreciate

that their injured workers can avoid costly and time-consuming emergency department visits because the clinic can care for most problems on-site, every day of the year. A full range of other services are also available, ranging from drug and alcohol testing to special physical examinations and screening exams.

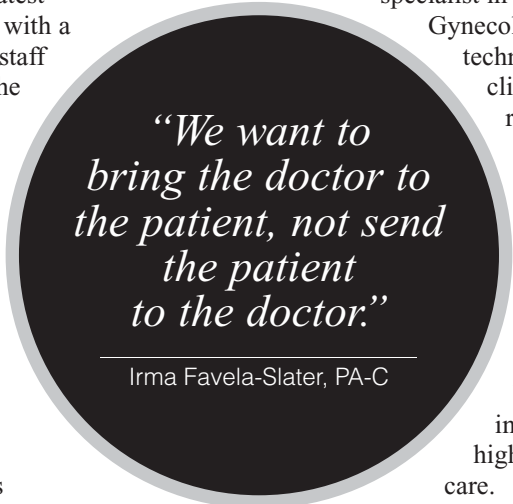
Mission Center Healthcare has grown beyond these roots. Partnering with other specialists, the center continues to bring more medical services to South Monterey County, becoming the multi-specialty hub for residents of this traditionally underserved area.

Orthopedics is now available on-site. Board-Certified orthopedic specialists Dr. Christopher Meckel and Dr. Sohrab Gollogly provide the full spectrum of orthopedic consultation and surgery, including joint implantation and spine surgery.

Gastroenterology, led by Dr. Daniel Luba of the Gastroenterology Consultants group, rotates a team of gastroenterology specialists through the clinic. Thanks to their care, patients now have convenient access to this important specialty, both for preventive care and for diagnosing and treating diseases.

Foot & Ankle specialist Scott Smith, DPM, brings his expertise to the clinic every week. He provides full spectrum podiatry services and ankle care to patients that were not available locally before.

At the one year mark, the partners feel they've only just begun. "We will continue our efforts to bring in more specialists and other services," says Dr. Graupera. In Irma's words, "We want to bring the doctor to the patient, not send the patient to the doctor." ■



Irma Favela-Slater, PA-C

COUNTY REPORT

## Report Marks Health Improvements and Declines for County Residents

A new Monterey County Health Department report titled *Health Profile 2005: TRENDS provides insights into whether the health of county residents is improving, worsening, or maintaining.*

For some of the 37 indicators of health, the report presents as many as ten years of data in the broad categories of Access to Health Care, Maternal and Child Health, Communicable Disease, Chronic Disease, Injury, Mental Health, and Environmental Health.

### IMPROVED HEALTH OUTCOMES

Many countywide health improvements are noted. For example, Monterey County's fetal death rate decreased 14% from 1995 to 2004, and the rate of infant deaths in the county decreased 10% during that time. The Health Department attributes these improvements, in part, to a significant

increase in women who received prenatal care during the first trimester of their pregnancy.

### AREAS FOR CONCERN

While other good news was reported – especially in the area of environmental health, where improvements in air and shoreline water quality were seen – other health concerns were raised. "We continue to face challenges in several areas, including breast cancer cases, motor vehicle death rates, drug-related death rates, and sexually transmitted disease rates," stated Mr. Foster.

For example, county rates for chlamydia and gonorrhea cases increased significantly from 1995 to 2004. These sexually transmitted diseases are treatable, but if left untreated, may cause long-term harm, including reproductive health issues, and fetal and perinatal problems.

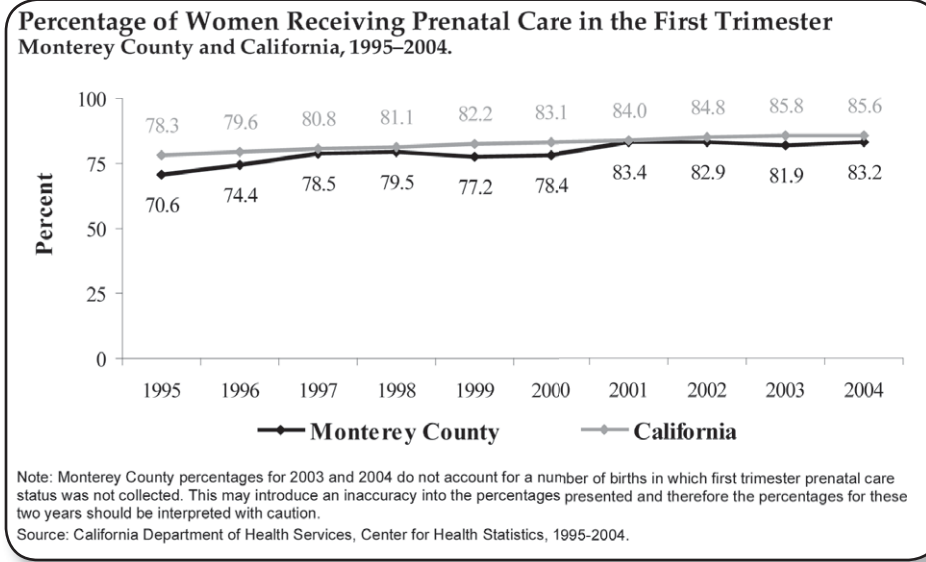
obese. This has serious implications for long-term problems, since excess body weight is associated with increased rates of diabetes, heart disease, and stroke, among other health concerns."

Even though chronic disease rates have improved locally and nationally, heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are still the leading causes of death and disability in the United States, accounting for 7 of every 10 deaths and affecting the quality of life of 90 million Americans. Ironically, although chronic diseases are among the most common and costly health problems, they are also among the most preventable through adopting healthy behaviors such as eating nutritious foods, being physically active, and avoiding tobacco use.

Three important Health Department initiatives are underway to address the county's most compelling health challenges. The first is Steps to a Healthier Salinas, a multi-year federally funded program to address obesity, asthma and diabetes within the City of Salinas. It is anticipated that this program will spread through community coalitions to address health issues throughout the county.

The second is the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63), which is expanding county mental health services and substance abuse services. It is anticipated that these new services will begin to address causes of suicide and drug-related deaths, and permit early detection of mental illness to reduce severity and long-term consequences.

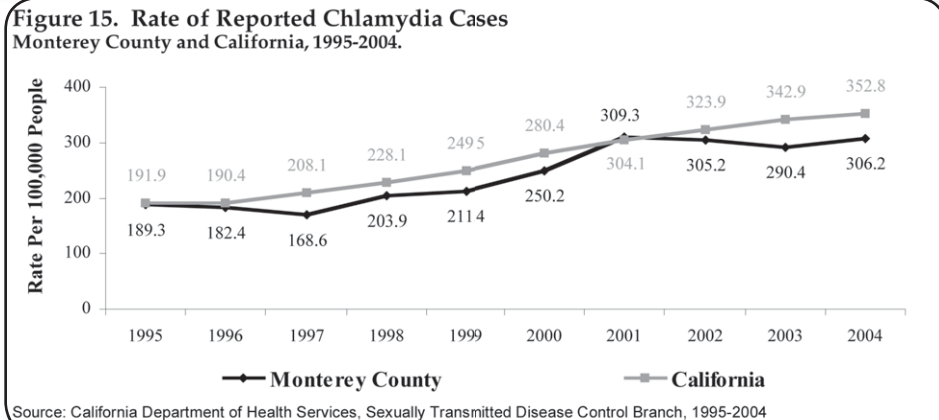
The third is the county's tremendous advances in infectious disease surveillance and response capacity. Extensive communication systems have been established with community



increase in women who received prenatal care during the first trimester of their pregnancy.

"Improved health outcomes in Monterey County are likely due to advances in prevention education, disease surveillance, immunization, medical treatment, and better personal lifestyle choices" commented Len Foster, Health Department director. "Challenges still exist nationally and locally, particularly for health outcomes that are shown to be closely tied with socioeconomic disparities."

The report also highlighted achievements in chronic and communicable diseases: Monterey County experienced decreased annual death rates due to cancer, heart disease, and stroke. Annual cases of hepatitis



### ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS

Individual behaviors can have a great impact on personal health, according to Dr. Hugh Stallworth, Monterey County Health Officer. "In 2003, nearly 58% of Monterey County adults self-reported that they were overweight or

physicians, clinics, hospitals and laboratories to permit rapid detection, reporting, and response to infectious diseases. ■

Health Profile 2005: TRENDS may be downloaded from the Monterey County Health Department website at <http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/health/publications>

HEALTH AWARENESS

## Assessing Your Health: Sleep May Be More Important Than You Think

*If counting sheep is not working for you, here are some facts you may want to sleep on-chronic sleep deprivation can do more than make you tired.*

It can significantly affect your health, safety, performance, and lifestyle.

Most people are surprised to learn that sleeping less than six or seven hours a night can increase their mortality risk more than smoking, high blood pressure or heart disease.

Losing as little as one and a half hours of sleep for just one night could result in a reduction of daytime alertness by as much as 32 percent. This loss can impair memory and the ability to think and process information effectively.

Decreased alertness can also affect your life by limiting your participation in activities that require sustained attention, such as reading a book or watching your favorite TV show. And the risk of receiving an occupational injury more than doubles when a person is sleepy.

Car accidents are another problem. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates conservatively that each year drowsy driving is responsible for at least 100,000 automobiles crashed, 71,000 injuries and 1,550 fatalities.

As many as 70 million Americans have sleep disturbances-which include taking a long time to get to sleep, sleeping less and waking up frequently.

Sleep disturbances may in fact be a symptom of a much larger problem, especially if they are associated with irritability and mood swings. Emotional stress, racing thoughts and restlessness can be signs of something more serious, such as bipolar disorder.

"If someone is experiencing restlessness and irritability,

along with sadness or emotional ups and downs for more than two weeks," said Dr. Ellen Frank, professor of psychiatry and psychology, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, "they should seek medical attention from a specialist who is trained to diagnose or perhaps just rule out depression or bipolar disorder."

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) has launched a new Web site, [www.sleeplessinamerica.org](http://www.sleeplessinamerica.org), which offers educational resources that provide screening for sleeplessness, information on when to see a doctor and a questionnaire to determine when sleeplessness might be symptomatic of a more serious illness. The Web site is also available in Spanish.

For additional information on depression and bipolar disorder, as well as confidential self-screeners for both illnesses, visit DBSA's site at [www.dbsalliance.org](http://www.dbsalliance.org) or call (800) 826-3632.

DBSA is a patient-directed advocacy organization for depression and bipolar disorder with more than 1,000 peer-run support groups nationwide. The organization's mission is to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders. Assisted by a 65-member Scientific Advisory Board comprised of the top researchers and clinicians in the field of mood disorders, the organization helps more than four million people each year.

Let your doctor know about any sleep problems you may have since they could be symptoms of a physical or mental condition.

## Simple Solutions For A Super Sleep Experience

If you're like most people, you've occasionally settled down after a hard day at work for a refreshing and restful sleep only to wind up counting sheep. With more than half of all Americans (52 percent) considering themselves "poor sleepers," you're not alone when it comes to having trouble getting some z's.

It turns out Americans are tossing and turning more than ever. In fact, nearly 65 percent of Americans are losing sleep as a result of stress, while 32 percent of Americans complain about losing sleep at least one night per week-sending sleepyheads everywhere in search of some much needed shut-eye.

In addition to plush pillows, there are several other simple ways to guarantee a ticket to sleepy town. Here are some quick-fix tips to designing the perfect sleep experience at home

• **MATRESS MATTERS.** There's more to a mattress than meets the eye. Choosing a mattress that's right for you can mean the difference between a peaceful night and a scary nightmare. According to Consumer Reports, pick a mattress with a coil count above 390 and you can be snoring in no time.

• **TICKTOCK, FIND A GOOD CLOCK.** With so many confusing versions of the clock radio on the market, it's no wonder we work up a sweat just trying to find a local station. For a more pleasurable wake-up experience, look for universal clock radios that offer simple alarm settings and a digital display that allows you to select your favorite type of music effortlessly.

• **SUPREME SHEETS.** Everyone knows the higher the thread count -the more pleasurable the sleep experience. So snuggle down into a bed fitted with the most luxurious linens and enjoy a rejuvenating slumber fit for royalty. For the softest feel, stay above 200 thread count and avoid any fabrics less than 175.

One hotel chain has found a way to create a good night's sleep. The Sweet Dreams by Doubletree Sleep Experience meets today's travelers' sleep needs with a custom-designed plush-top mattress, mountains of lush pillows and luxurious bedding and an easy-to-use alarm clock that whisks you away to a great night's sleep and wakes you up refreshed for the next day of business or pleasure.