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River Valley Family Health Center hits growth spurt in 2023 with new clinic and programs

By Rhiannon Bergman rhiannonb@montrosepress.com

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Sketch of the exterior of the new Delta clinic opening May 2023 (Courtesy Photo/River Valley Family Health Center)

River Valley Family Health Center is poised to open its new, expanded clinic in Delta in just a few months. On top of the new clinics it has added to the region over the last five years, the federally qualified health center has also expanded services.

River Valley, with clinics in Montrose, Olathe and Delta, serves historically under-served populations with medical, emotional, behavioral, mental health and dental services. It accepts all insurance, include Medicare and Medicaid.

River Valley leaders updated the community earlier this month, when CEO Kaye Hotsenpiller, Chief Medical Officer Jeannie Mueller and Chief Operations Officer Karen Winkelmann pre: the multi-clinic healthcare center and its plans to those attending The Forum in Montrose.

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Mueller discussed River Valley's team-based care model. This model allows patients with a variety of health issues to get them all checked out in a single visit, helping them avoid trips all over town. "We have something very very special at River Valley, in that we can do what we call a one-stop shop," said Mueller.

Running as a federally qualified health center for 10 years, River Valley has expanded across the Western Slope. In August of 2019, River Valley opened a new Montrose center at 1010 S. Rio Grande Ave. In 2021, River Valley created a Convenient Care Clinic near Delta Health, looking to fill the hole left behind with Delta Health Urgent Care's closing. The Convenient Care Clinic serves everyone.

Perhaps the biggest showcase of expansion is in River Valley's new Delta clinic, looking to open in May at 1250 Valley View Drive.

This clinic will replace their current River Valley Delta clinic at 107 West 11th St. and the Convenient Care Clinic, combining them into one building. This new clinic will be just over 18,000 square feet, containing 20 exam rooms, two procedure rooms, four behavioral health rooms, and seven dental chairs. It will also contain a pharmacy where people may walk in or drive through.

The new Delta clinic will exceed Montrose's in terms of size.

Aside from opening new clinics in the last five years, River Valley has also made a push for new services to be included by providers.

In 2018, River Valley began adding substance use assisted treatment programs to the roster. At the end of February it will begin offering cooking classes for patients through the Montrose clinic.

"Our hope once we open Delta (Delta's new clinic) is to offer the same service," Hotsenpiller said.

"We are adding chronic care management (in the next year), specifically for our medicare patients," said Hotsenpiller. River Valley expects this will keep patients at home and out of emergency rooms.

In 2022, a pediatrician joined the current Delta clinic to serve patients under the age of 18.

One specific program that deserves highlighting is River Valley's Migrant and Seasonal Workers Program. From May to the end of September, River Valley strives to provide much needed services to these workers throughout the farming season.

The biggest support River Valley brings to these workers are onsite clinics throughout the season. These onsite clinics utilize tents, farm warehouses and common kitchens to check workers' fluid levels, provide vaccines, and more. If workers need further care they can schedule an appointment at one of the clinics.

For the first time last year River Valley sent a dietitian in to teach about the importance of healthy eating and staying hydrated. The health center also brought Mueller to teach yoga last summer.

Hotsenpiller told the press that local farms appreciate River Valley's services to help prevent injuries to their workers. According to the clinic's Forum presentation, River Valley also gives gloves, sunscreen, toothpaste and toothbrushes to these seasonal workers.

With exponential growth, however, River Valley must ensure the stability of its infrastructure.

Aside from assessing and increasing staff wages, River Valley has also created a wellness committee and a morale committee to support workers' mental health.

"We are going to look at some partnerships with some childcare facilities," said Hotsenpiller when discussing the importance of finding good quality and safe childcare for staff with families.

Hotsenpiller also said River Valley continues to be a part of community housing conversations. Staff numbers are also growing, with the count increasing from 106 staff members at the end of 2021 to now 128 members.

River Valley received multiple accolades in 2022, including Health Center Quality Leader. To get set up as a future patient for River Valley Family Health Center, or to learn more about services, visit www.rivervalleyfhc.com/.