

The semi-annual newsletter of Venice Family Clinic Spring 2011

Encounters

The Start of the Weekend

The Skate Surf Auction is just one new element of the Venice Art Walk & Auctions, but it illustrates so much of what is great about those three days in May.



Nathan Ota

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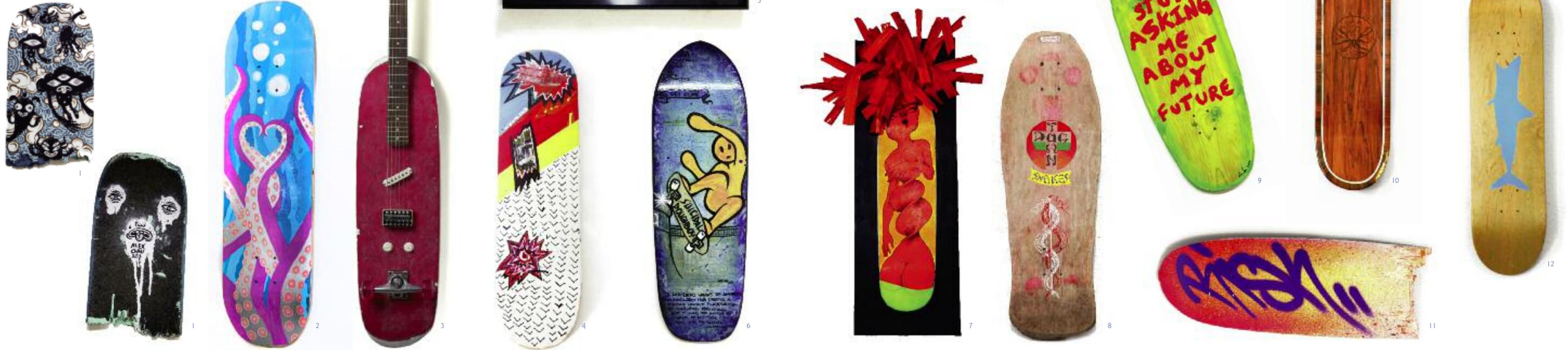
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The Start of the Weekend

The Skate Surf Auction is just one new element of the Venice Art Walk & Auctions, but it illustrates so much of what is great about those three days in May.



1) Alex Chiu, 2) Lizzie Armanto, 3) Anthony Ausgang, 4) Gregory Siff, 5) Todd Squires, 6) Lance Mountain, 7) JT Steiny, 8) MXF, 9) Pat Ngoho, 10) Paul Strong, 11) Risk, 12) Surfing In Jeans

On an afternoon in early April, Mark Farina eased his pickup to the curb in front of a home in Silverlake, checked the address in his notebook, and grabbed a blank skate deck—the board part of a skateboard—from a small collection in the truck bed.

“No one was home, so I threw the deck on the porch with a little note,” Farina says. “A couple days later, my phone rang and a voice said, ‘I found this skate deck with your note on it. Sounds great, I’ll do it. I used to donate to the Venice Art Walk 30 years ago.’ Each of these boards has a story behind it.”

The boards Farina is referring to are reused, recycled, and recreated skate decks featuring original works by dozens of L.A. studio artists, street artists, musicians, and athletes—from Anthony Ausgang and Scott Greiger to RISK and Smog City to Jeff Ho and Stacy Peralta. Each will be on exhibit and up for bid at the new Skate Surf Auction, which kicks off this year’s

Venice Art Walk & Auctions on Friday, May 20, at Track 16 at Bergamot Station.

And the stories Farina is alluding to are recent passages in an epic that began in Venice more than 30 years ago.

“Nothing says Venice more than the skateboard,” he says. “I grew up skateboarding in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and that’s how I ended up in Venice after art school. I consider myself part of the skateboard generation.”

Farina is a faculty mentor and head of the video lab at Otis College of Art and Design, and when he isn’t at work, in his studio, or tutoring students from Wildwood High School, he is making rounds to skate shops, like Active and ZJ Boarding House, and manufacturers, such as Carver Skateboards, to pick up used boards and “test” decks. He then takes them to his studio on Lincoln Boulevard, where he removes the grip tape and sands and primes them

before heading out again to deliver them to artists’ studios.

“We’ve been doing this for the past two months,” he says, noting that he hired two interns from Otis to help him and several other volunteers to put the auction together. “It’s a daily operation. I don’t go anywhere without at least a couple decks in my truck.”

The response from artists to the Skate Surf Auction illustrates the special place that both surf/skate culture and the Venice Art Walk & Auctions occupy in the hearts of Venetians and the larger arts community.

“We started off thinking we’d be doing well if we got 30 artists,” he says. “The last time I counted, I had 62 on my list, and we still have several weeks to go. And they’re not just professional artists. We even have a seven-year-old skateboarder who will be a pro someday.”

Meanwhile, the surf side of the Skate Surf Auction—organized by volunteer Jeffrey Sudzin—will feature eight

custom-shaped surfboards donated by Om Surfboards and featuring artwork by local tattoo artists. All proceeds from the auction will benefit Venice Family Clinic.

The number and variety of artists in the Skate Surf Auction is emblematic of the multitude of new elements in this year’s Venice Art Walk & Auctions.

For example, on Saturday, May 21, a new self-guided Art & Architecture Tour explores residences on Appleton Way, perhaps the hottest spot for new architecture in all of Venice, while a premium, docent-led Art & Architecture Tour visits a stunning collection of homes on the flats and hills from West L.A. to Brentwood. On Sunday, May 22, another self-guided Art & Architecture Tour ventures into secluded properties on Venice’s water and tree-lined streets.

Between the three tours, volunteers Rhonda DeVictor, Emily Christie, and Victoria Yust have assembled more than 15 homes by leading architects and designers like

Brooks + Scarpa, Cory Buckner, C/ARC, Thomas Carson, Sylvia Arth/Jeff Cook, du Architects, GRAYmatter Architecture, William Hefner, A. Quincy Jones, Barton Myers, Marmol Radziner, Modal Design, and Santiago Ortiz, as well as gardens by Suzanne McKeivitt and Z Freedman Landscape Design.

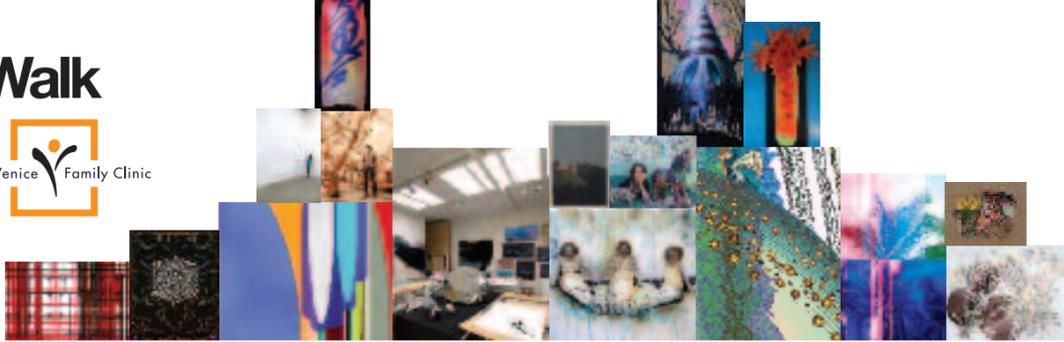
Sunday, of course, is also when the main event, the Venice Art Walk & Auctions, throws open the doors of Southern California’s quintessential arts community, with 50 artists’ studios and special exhibits—including 16 never before on the tour, such as those of sculptors Alex Andre and Stephen Glassman; painters Judy Nimtz, Sarah Stockstill, Michael Weber, and Jennifer Wolf; photographer Jamie Dean; and glassblower John Mooney—plus the monster 400-piece Silent Art Auction.

Also on Sunday, on the field at Westminster School, the hub of all the day’s events, Venice artist Kim

Schoenstadt will unveil Art Within Reach, a new pop-up store featuring signed, limited-edition, archival inkjet prints by 15 internationally recognized and emerging artists, including Delia Brown, Erin Cosgrove, Mara Lonner, Renee Petropoulos, Fay Ray, Eddie Ruscha, Analia Saban, Mungo Thompson, Jennifer Wolf, and Schoenstadt herself. Admission to Art Within Reach, like the Skate Surf Auction, is free and all proceeds from the sale of prints benefit Venice Family Clinic.

But no matter which of the events one explores, a common theme emerges. Venice is constantly remaking itself, often in an image no one could have predicted. The Skate Surf Auction just happens to be an apt metaphor.

“I love when someone asks, ‘Do you mind if I make it no longer looks like a skateboard? Do you mind if I make it into a sculpture?’” Farina explains. “‘Not at all,’ I tell them. ‘Go for it.’”



THE ORIGINAL VENICE EXPERIENCE



Friday, May 20, 2011

Skate Surf Auction, 6:00 – 10:00 pm

An incredible new exhibition and silent auction of skate decks and surfboards reshaped and recreated by more than 60 local artists, musicians, and athletes, at Track 16 at Bergamot Station. Free and open to the public

Saturday, May 21, 2011

Art & Architecture Tour: West L.A. – Flats North of Olympic to the Hills North of Sunset, 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

Traveling through the flatlands of West L.A. to the mountainsides of Brentwood, attendees will experience a microcosm of L.A. lifestyles—from dense urban living to hillside aeries looking out over the city. This premium, docent-led bus features a presentation by architect and author Cory Buckner about A. Quincy Jones and the Mutual Housing Association in Crestwood Hills, a hillside site at the edge of the Santa Monica Mountains, which is the only successful large-scale cooperative housing development and one of the few fully realized modernist projects in California. \$175 per person, includes box lunch and admission to Sunday's Venice Art Walk & Auctions

Art & Architecture Tour: Appleton Way—One Amazing Block + Much More, noon – 4:00 pm

Discover a hidden architectural enclave—Appleton Way in Venice, where several spectacular homes have sprouted in just the past five years. \$125 per person, includes admission to Sunday's Venice Art Walk & Auctions

Silent Art Auction Preview, 4:00 – 6:00 pm

Get a sneak peak of Sunday's incredible 400-piece auction, at Westminster School. Free and open to the public

Visit www.theveniceartwalk.org

for more information, including photos and descriptions of homes on the Art & Architecture Tours; lists of participating artists in the Studio Tours, Silent Art Auction, Skate Surf Auction, and Art Within Reach; volunteer opportunities; and more.

Tickets

for all events are available at www.theveniceartwalk.org or 310.392.9255.

Sunday, May 22, 2011

Venice Art Walk & Auctions

Register at Westminster School, 1010 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice

• **Studio Tour, 11:00 am – 4:00 pm:** More than 40 of Venice's most distinguished artists, including 15 never before on the tour, open their studios for one day to give the public a glimpse of what happens behind the scenes! \$50 per person

• **Silent Art Auction, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm:** Take home a piece of Venice. Hundreds of pieces—from paintings and sculptures to ceramics and photography—by established and emerging artists could be yours. Just bid! Free and open to the public

• **Art Within Reach, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm:** Own a piece of the future at a price point anyone can afford! This new addition showcases works by 15 internationally recognized and emerging artists, each of whom will create original, archival, digital inkjet prints in a signed and numbered edition of 20.

• **Artful Living, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm:** A silent auction of exquisite items for the home.

• **Food Fair, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm:** Great food from local restaurants.

• **Live music, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm**

Art & Architecture Tour: Water and Tree-Lined Streets of Venice, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Sunday's self-guided architecture tour features houses within walking or bicycling distance of Studio Tour artists' spaces, giving tour-goers the opportunity for a day filled with art and architecture. Two of the homes are on Venice's storied canals, and the others are on streets that were also part of Abbot Kinney's original "Venice of America"—now some of Venice's choicest addresses. \$125 per person, includes admission to the Venice Art Walk & Auctions

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The Stars Align at Silver Circle



There was a lot for the 500 attendees of Venice Family Clinic's Silver Circle gala to get excited about on Monday, February 28, 2011, at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel.

For starters, it was the fifth consecutive year that Silver Circle—Venice Family Clinic's premier giving group and its biggest annual fundraising event—raised more than \$1 million. It did so with the help of three exceptional honorees: writer/director/producer Judd Apatow, who was honored with the Humanitarian Award; health care consultant Jeffrey E. Sinaiko, who received the Irma Colen Leadership Award; and Clinic Co-Founder Mayer B. Davidson, MD, who was given the inaugural Visionary Award.

In addition, Apatow, who has been a major donor to the Clinic for the last ten years, recruited a number of celebrity friends to attend, including actors Seth Rogen, Jonah Hill, and Johnny Knoxville, as well as top-flight entertainment, from actor/comedian/writer Patton Oswalt to Los Angeles indie-rock band EELS to Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Fiona Apple. Another of Apatow's friends, actor and comedian Nick Kroll, emceed the event.

Moments into the evening, former Clinic patient Laura Liguori, who presented the Visionary Award to Dr. Mayer Davidson, silenced the crowd with her harrowing story of losing her health insurance when she needed it most and, eventually, finding her way to Venice Family Clinic and Dr. Davidson, an endocrinologist, who arranged for her to receive free treatment to cure her thyroid condition.

"The famous novelist Edith Wharton once wrote, 'There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it,'" Liguori said. "In this case, Dr. Davidson was my candle and Venice Family Clinic was the mirror that reflected his light."

In his acceptance remarks, Dr. Davidson, who has been a volunteer at Venice Family Clinic for the last

1) Actress and former Venice Family Clinic patient Laura Liguori presented the 2011 Visionary Award to the Clinic's Co-Founder, Mayer B. Davidson, MD. 2) Writer/director/producer Judd Apatow (second from right), recipient of the 2011 Humanitarian Award, was joined on the red carpet by (left to right) actor Johnny Knoxville, Silver Circle Co-Chair Julie Liker, actor Jonah Hill, and actor and comedian Nick Kroll, who emceed the event. 3) Health care consultant and longtime Board of Directors member Jeffrey E. Sinaiko was presented with the 2011 Irma Colen Leadership Award by Venice Family Clinic's CEO, Elizabeth Benson Forer. 4) Los Angeles indie-rock band EELS performed. 5) Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Fiona Apple closed the evening. Photos: Margaret Molloy

40 years and has seen it grow into the largest free clinic in the country, summarized the secret to the Clinic's success in a single word.

"Persistence," he said.

Shortly after, longtime Board of Directors member and Finance Chair Jeffrey E. Sinaiko was awarded the Irma Colen Leadership Award. He was so moved by his friends' and family members' participation in the event that he announced he would make a matching \$25,000 donation.

And following a stand-up performance by Patton Oswalt, Board of Trustees member Dr. Harley Liker—who co-chaired the evening with his wife, Julie, and New Regency Productions Co-Chairman Hutch Parker—took the stage for a live appeal, in which numerous guests made additional \$1,000 donations.

EELS then performed a three-song set before Seth Rogen presented the Humanitarian Award to Judd Apatow. Before handing off to Fiona Apple to close the evening, Apatow, who proved in his acceptance speech why he is one of the most sought-after comedy minds in the business, got serious.

"What I do by writing checks," he explained, "is a very small thing compared to the people who give their lives to help other people."



One Thing to Remember From the CEO

Dear friends,

More than a year after it took effect, the landmark health reform law, known as the Affordable Care Act, still confuses many Americans. Some of this confusion is understandable. After all, the law is quite complex, with a multitude of provisions that could affect the insured and uninsured, children and seniors, small businesses and big businesses, and medical manufacturers and health care providers in different ways.

But the Affordable Care Act really is worth taking the time to understand, not just because it is law but because it contains benefits for almost every American.

As a case in point, we present in this issue of *Encounters* an introduction to the single most important element of the Affordable Care Act to Venice Family Clinic and its patients: the expansion of Medicaid to cover all legal residents whose income is 133% of the federal poverty level (currently about \$14,500 for a single adult or \$29,700 for a family of four) or less.

Right now, Medicaid—known in California as Medi-Cal—covers only aged, blind, and disabled people whose incomes are within 100% of the federal poverty level, plus some pregnant women and children. In 2014, not only will the income level be raised to 133%, but one will no longer need to be aged, blind, disabled, pregnant, or a child to qualify.

This initiative, by itself, is one of the most profound policy developments in Venice Family Clinic's 40-year history. On a national level, it will help some 16 million low-income people, including approximately half of Venice Family Clinic's uninsured patients, gain access to health coverage. On an individual level, its importance was articulated perfectly by Venice Family Clinic's Health Insurance Program Manager, Karen Lauterbach, at a recent rally at Watts Health Center, organized by Congresswoman Maxine Waters, commemorating the one-year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act.

"We meet with patients who say, 'I'm sick, I have diabetes, I'm starting to lose my vision. Is there a program that will help me get all of the health care I need?'" Lauterbach explained. "So often we have to say, in essence, 'I'm sorry, there isn't a program for you. You're just not sick enough, not vision impaired enough, not disabled enough.'"

She and I and everyone else at Venice Family Clinic look forward to the day when no one has to hear, or say, something so outrageous. We will be a lot closer to that day come 2014.

Thank you for your support,

Elizabeth Benson Forer, MSW/MPH
CEO and Executive Director

Thousands of Clinic Patients to Become Insured through the Expansion of Medicaid in 2014

On January 1, 2014, one of the most important changes in the history of the American health care system—the expansion of Medicaid to cover all legal residents whose incomes are within 133% of the federal poverty level*—will take effect as part of the health reform law, known as the Affordable Care Act.

While the health care crisis in America has affected everyone, the poor have suffered a disproportionate burden—in financial cost, reduced quality of life, and shortened life expectancy. Following are just a few of the thousands of Venice Family Clinic patients who, in their current financial situations, will gain health coverage under the expansion of Medicaid, which in California is known as Medi-Cal.

For some, it will be the first time in their lives they have had health insurance. And all patients, besides being able to continue visiting Venice Family Clinic, will enjoy access to new, affordable options for primary and specialty care, mental health services, laboratory and diagnostic services, and prescription medications.



Brittany Tyler Kemp LeGault is just 23 years old, but already she is battling numerous chronic diseases, including diabetes, asthma, and hypothyroidism. Apart from a three-month stretch when she was covered by Medi-Cal as a youth, she has always been uninsured and, until she found Venice Family Clinic, often was only able to access treatment in emergency rooms.

"I was diabetic and I didn't know it," she says. "I was constantly sick and constantly suicidal because I was in so much pain."

Over the last two years, though, she has managed to get her conditions under control with regular visits to Clinic, where she gets her insulin, lancets, test strips, and needles, as well as thyroid, asthma, and sinus

medications. Still, she is homeless, unemployed, and unable to buy private coverage on her own. Medi-Cal might be the only coverage she will get for quite a while.

"Since I started coming here, everything has gotten considerably better, but this is the only place I can go," she says, seemingly overwhelmed by the prospect of Medi-Cal coverage. "That would be the best thing ever."

Curtis Johnson, 58, has been on both sides of the health insurance divide. For years, he had coverage through his job as a sales manager at a local car dealership. But after he had a stroke, in early 2006, he lost his job and was unable to afford the \$1,800 per month it would have cost him to keep his insurance through COBRA.

"As far as going out to buy it on my own, it was even more expensive because I was coming off a stroke," he says. "I had also had a recent hip replacement, I have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and glaucoma, and I'm diabetic. Insurance companies look at my record and completely shake their heads."



He has been a patient of Venice Family Clinic ever since he lost his insurance and has succeeded at getting most of the specialty care he has needed through referrals to volunteers, as well as by calling in a few favors from his former doctors.

"This organization is wonderful. It's a real blessing. But I think [the expansion of Medicaid] is a wonderful thing, particularly for people in my situation. If your income drops like mine has, it's not possible to pay for insurance."



Frances Casarez, 58, has been a patient of Venice Family Clinic for the past four years. While her three children are all insured through their employers, the last time she was insured was 20 years ago, when she was a field worker in Idaho. Going years without regular medical attention during middle age caused or exacerbated numerous health issues, including back problems, anxiety, declining vision, and dental

pain. In addition, twice in the last two and half years she had to visit an emergency room—once for her back and once for chest pains—and she is still paying off the bills.

"I don't even have money to make payments," she says.

She, too, has no desire to switch health care providers, but she understands the limits to Venice Family Clinic's services and looks forward to plugging into the larger health care system once she has her Medi-Cal card.

"Oh, that will be great," she says. "They've done what they could here, and I love my doctor. I wouldn't change, unless I had to move. But I could get so many more things taken care of."

* Per 2011 guidelines: \$14,484 for an individual, \$29,726 for a family of four

And in the Meantime...

Thanks to a funding waiver from the federal government, the State of California does not have to wait until January 1, 2014, to begin building the framework for the expansion of Medi-Cal. Already, counties across the state have begun enrolling low-income and uninsured people in special programs with Medi-Cal-like benefits. In Los Angeles County, this program is known as Healthy Way L.A., and while it is technically not insurance, it furnishes payment to clinics and hospitals for providing care to enrollees. And on January 1, 2014, qualified enrollees will be automatically enrolled in Medi-Cal.

Where to Look for Information about the Health Reform Law

healthcare.ca.gov

The California Health and Human Services Agency set up this site to help residents track the implementation of the health reform law at the state level and understand the various programs available to them.

healthcare.gov

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services created this site to help consumers navigate the health care system. It features a step-by-step interactive process for determining your options for obtaining health coverage, as well as resources for learning more about preventive care, comparing the quality of care offered by various types of providers, and understanding the changes set forth in the health reform law.

healthreform.kff.org

The Kaiser Family Foundation serves as a non-partisan source of facts, information, and analysis for policymakers, the media, the health care community, and the public. Its web site includes intensive research and policy analysis, as well as basic information about the health reform law, surveys of public attitudes related to the law, and implementation news specific to all 50 states.

whitehouse.gov/healthreform

President Barack Obama's official web site provides easy-to-understand information about how the law works, examples of how it will benefit patients, stories from individuals and families who need reform most, and facts addressing various myths about the law.



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Kaiser Permanente West Los Angeles Hosts Surgery Access Day for Uninsured Patients

In the early morning hours of Saturday, April 9, Venice Family Clinic patient Loren Abraham, 42, changes out of his street clothes and into a blue gown on the third floor of Kaiser Permanente's West Los Angeles Medical Center. In a few minutes, he will be in surgery, but he is remarkably at ease.

"Normally, surgery is something you would avoid," he says, "but actually I'm very much looking forward to this."

For more than a year, Abraham's life has been turned upside down by a hernia that has kept him from working, exercising, even sleeping at times. In the process, he has lost his health insurance and developed mental health issues.

"I don't have a lot of education, so I usually have jobs that require a little more physical activity," he says. "So the importance of getting this surgery is greater to me. It's at a point where just basic functions have gotten pretty difficult."



Loren Abraham, 42, is visited before his hernia repair surgery by anesthesiologist Licerio Castro, MD, one of 20 Kaiser Permanente staff members who volunteered for the April 9 Surgery Access Day. Abraham and two other Venice Family Clinic patients received free surgeries that morning. Photo: Tim Smith

There are thousands of low-income and uninsured Angelenos in Abraham's dilemma, in which they are unable to work because of their hernias or other conditions, but, without income and often lacking substantial savings, they cannot possibly pay thousands of dollars out of pocket for surgery. Usually, their only option is surgery at a County hospital, but wait times there can be more than a year for hernias.

This pervasive and chronic need compelled Kaiser Permanente to organize the quarterly Surgery Access Day. A part of Kaiser Permanente's Community Benefit program, Surgery Access Day is a collaborative effort between Kaiser Permanente and local community clinics that provides donated surgical procedures to uninsured and underinsured patients.



Since 2009, Kaiser Permanente West Los Angeles Medical Center has hosted quarterly Surgery Access Days to provide donated surgical procedures to uninsured and underinsured patients of local clinics. There are thousands of low-income Angelenos who are unable to work because of their hernias or other conditions and cannot pay out of pocket for surgery. Photo: Tim Smith

"It's central to who we are as an organization and as people. We care about our communities," says Todd Sachs, MD, FACS, Assistant Area Medical Director for the Kaiser Permanente West Los Angeles Medical Center, who has participated in each of the Surgery Access Days since he spearheaded the program here in late 2009. "It's so gratifying to help these patients because they've been suffering for months, sometimes years, with hernias and gallbladder disease. For us to be able to help them is a wonderful thing."

And Kaiser Permanente does it all through the help of volunteers. On this particular morning, 20 Kaiser Permanente staff members—from surgeons and anesthesiologists to nurses and medical assistants—are gathered on their day off.

"Everybody is very eager to volunteer," explains fellow surgeon Jan Takasugi, MD, who, like Dr. Sachs, has volunteered at each of the Surgery Access Days in West Los Angeles since 2009. "In fact, there's always a line of people who want to get involved."

The Surgery Access Day is now a key component of the Westside-South Bay Specialty Care Coalition—a partnership between Kaiser Permanente West Los Angeles, Venice Family Clinic, South Bay Family Health Center, Westside Family Health Center, COPE Health Solutions, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, UCLA Health System, Little Company of Mary, and Saint John's Health Center. To date, 36 low-income and uninsured patients have accessed free surgeries through Kaiser Permanente West Los Angeles's Surgery Access Day.

A few days after his surgery, Abraham is at home, resting and looking forward to his recovery.

"I have to put the pieces back together, slowly, but it's nice that I can look forward to getting back to the way my life was," he says. "I'm very appreciative for the operation and for Venice Family Clinic and Kaiser for setting it all up. Big relief. It's a very positive thing. I'm just happy."



Check Out the Clinic's New Web Site

Check out Venice Family Clinic's refreshed web site, at www.venicefamilyclinic.org. It has several new features, including a News section with web-exclusive content, expanded information about giving opportunities, added search functionality, and even a Facebook feed!

Julie Loreda, 1959 – 2011



Venice Family Clinic lost a dear friend when staff member Julie Loreda passed away on Wednesday, April 13. Julie joined the Clinic in 1994 as a Senior Clerk in medical records and was later promoted to Front Office Receptionist and

then Clinic Coordinator. A lifelong resident of Venice, she will always be remembered for her dedication to her community and her gentleness and warmth with Clinic patients, including teens at the Culver City Youth Health Center and homeless people at local shelters. She is survived by her husband, three children, and two grandchildren, as well as her parents.

In Memory of Venice Family Clinic's Recently Departed Supporters

Joseph Aidlin, Alan Armer, Irving Ashkenas, Suzanne Baum, Charles E. Bell, Delores Berg, Willard Chotiner, Dr. Leonard Comess, Blake Edwards, Irving Feintech, John Frankel, Toba Greinetz, Sidney Harman, Norman King, Edward Louis B. Koblitz, Christian Montoya, Dr. Seymour Morrow, Theodore S. Negrin, Sandra "Sandi" Nimoy, Richard S. Polachek, DDS, David Rappoport, Robert Recht, James R. Robie, Leonard Sachs, Corrine Shukartsi, Sanford Sigoloff, Dr. S. Jerome Tamkin, Sherman Teller, Frederick R. Waingrow, Lester Ziffren