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For Immediate Release

New Wellness Model Helps the Uninsured Get Relief from Chronic Pain

**Venice Family Clinic's Simms/Mann Health and Wellness Center
Uses Acupuncture and Chiropractic to Relieve Pain;
Wins Award for Creating a Model that Other Clinics Can Copy**

Venice, CA, December 4, 2008 – When the California HealthCare Foundation recently selected Venice Family Clinic to receive its new LEAP Award, it wasn't just because the chronic pain program at the Clinic's Simms/Mann Health and Wellness Center has helped uninsured patients get the care they need.

"This is a model that clinics across the state and around the country could adopt," says Myles Spar, MD, Director of Integrative Medicine at Venice Family Clinic's Simms/Mann Health and Wellness Center.

The California HealthCare Foundation, an independent philanthropy committed to improving the way health care is delivered and financed in California, created its LEAP Award (Leveraging Excellence, Advancing Practice) to recognize model health care practices and innovative ways of meeting the health needs of the state's underserved populations.

The chronic pain program at Venice Family Clinic's Simms/Mann Health and Wellness Center uses acupuncture and chiropractic care, as well as counseling, to help patients manage pain from back injuries, migraines, carpal tunnel syndrome, and other conditions.

Chronic pain is especially hard on those with low incomes because many are manual laborers and are unable to work effectively through the pain. In addition, many live paycheck to paycheck and are devastated by any loss of income. Making matters worse, free clinics rarely offer treatment for chronic pain.

"There's a six-month wait list for many surgeries at County hospitals, and waiting that long can be agonizing, given that prescription pain-killing drugs are often unaffordable and over-the-counter pain relievers carry serious side effects from long-term use," Dr. Spar says. "Acupuncture and chiropractic, on the other hand, are relatively inexpensive to administer and can provide relief in a matter of weeks."

The chronic pain program is just one of several activities at Venice Family Clinic's Simms/Mann Health and Wellness Center, which is home to the nation's first health, wellness and integrative medicine program offered at a free clinic. Venice Family Clinic's Simms/Mann Health and Wellness Center also features stress management, parenting and nutrition skills training, and family weight management programs, as well as health and wellness promotion, including tools to help patients find no- or low-cost fitness resources in the communities where they live.

"This program takes a larger view of chronic pain by also incorporating prevention," Dr. Spar says. "Practitioners give patients exercise recommendations, nutritional information, and stress reduction tips to help them avoid re-injury."

Venice Family Clinic's Simms/Mann Health and Wellness Center was launched in 2006 with generous funding from The Simms/Mann Family Foundation and features a wide range of evidence-based integrated services, which focus on the whole person and whole family, in both individual and group settings. The building is designed to create an environment that supports patient healing, healthy lifestyles, and overall wellbeing. It includes a free-standing computer kiosk with health and wellness programming, health education literature, and health promotion television programming in the waiting area.

Read case summaries of the 2008 LEAP Award winners at www.chcf.org/topics/view.cfm?itemID=133804

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Venice Family Clinic's mission is to provide free, quality health care to people in need. Established in 1970 by founder Phillip Rossman, MD, and co-founder Mayer B. Davidson, MD, the Clinic has grown from a small storefront operation into the largest free clinic in the country. With the help of approximately 1,500 volunteers, including more than 400 physicians, Venice Family Clinic provides a medical home for 23,500 patients through eight sites in Venice, Santa Monica, Mar Vista and Culver City.