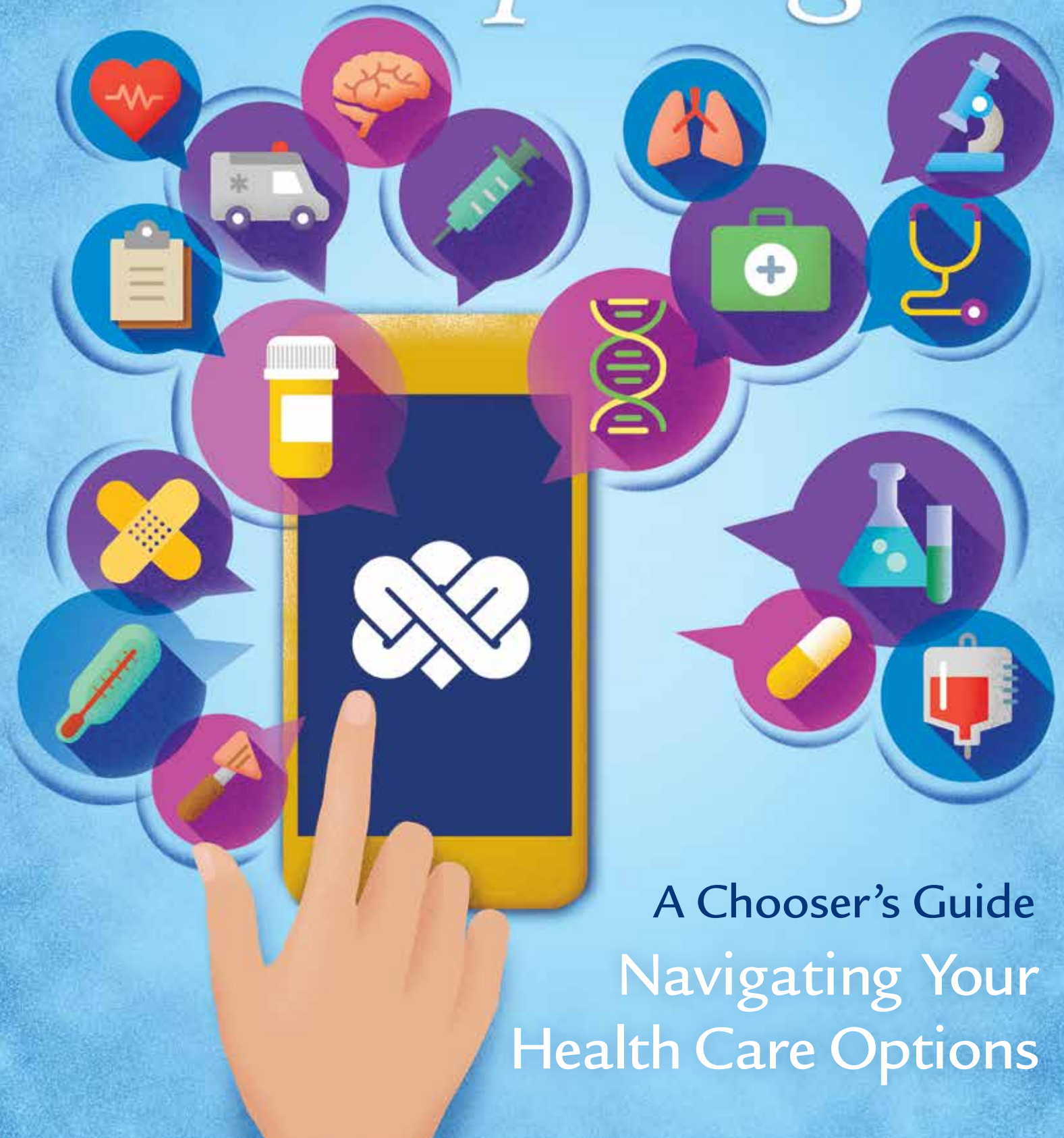


Wellspring



A Chooser's Guide
Navigating Your
Health Care Options



It's Decision Time

For tens of thousands of Solano County residents, an important decision is at hand. Sadly, most people will spend more time considering a new car purchase than researching which doctor and health system to trust with their well-being and the lives of their loved ones.

There is one connection that is often overlooked: When you enroll in a health plan, you are selecting the options you and your family will have when it comes to a physician or specialist. It also determines where you will have your baby—if that's in your plans—and how close you will be for everything from routine appointments to emergency care.

It was more than 60 years ago that a group of civic leaders and a handful of community physicians decided that Solano County needed an independent, community-focused health care system. They wanted a local choice, a not-for-profit provider of compassionate care and advanced medicine, close to home.

During the next six decades, NorthBay Healthcare evolved from a small, one-hospital operation, run by a few community doctors, to the county's most comprehensive health system that serves local residents from their first day in this world through their golden years.

Today it has an extraordinary relationship with Mayo Clinic as a member of its renowned Mayo Clinic Care Network.

This year, members of CalPERS will be welcomed to our services as Western Health Advantage becomes an option for public employees. And a new partnership with Canopy Health (*see related story, Page 24*) will open doors to more who wish to come here for their care.

Every day we live by our founders' guiding principles: Deliver extraordinary care, offer choices that other health care providers are unwilling or unable to, and ensure our patients benefit from advanced medicine without having to leave their community.

The current health care landscape in America is not easy to comprehend. Headlines during the past few months have injected uncertainty, unease and unwelcome discord. So as decision time arrives, I worry some may not deliberate fully and carefully.

This edition of *Wellspring* is our invitation—a “Choosers’ Guide”—for you to look long and hard at what is best for you and your family. When you explore your options, we believe you will choose NorthBay Healthcare.

Be well.

B. Konard Jones

President and Chief Executive Officer



12 He's Back on the Road

Thanks to joint replacement surgery with Dr. Andrew Brooks, retiree Donald Otis can now get in and out of his Chevrolet Corvette with no pain on his new knee.



14 A Team Approach

NorthBay Healthcare physicians are joined to nurse practitioners, physician assistants and medical support staff to deliver the care you need, when you need it.

Choose Well, Choose NorthBay

If it's fall, it must be Open Enrollment season.


That's the magical time of year—usually between August and December—when people can opt to change their health insurance and other benefit programs. Selecting your insurance plan determines who you can pick for your physician, so it's a pretty important choice. After all, your doctor just may save your life someday.

That's why NorthBay Healthcare has prepared this "Choosers' Guide" to Health Care. If you select any one of the 20-plus insurance plans we accept, it opens the door to a bevy of benefits for NorthBay Healthcare patients.

Not only do you get to select a primary physician who best suits your needs, you can take advantage of our Care 'til 8 after-hours service, call our advice nurse or request a reference to one of our 60-plus specialists.

Starting a family? NorthBay Medical Center is a great place to have a baby. We offer classes, lactation support and we've been deemed a Baby-Friendly facility.

In case of emergency, rest assured knowing that we have round-the-clock experts to get you back on your feet again.

You can relax, knowing that you're part of the NorthBay Healthcare family, a trusted partner in your community for nearly 60 years. We are the only locally owned, locally operated health care system in Solano County, and we are dedicated to your wellness. **That's why we're here.** 

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Our collaboration with Mayo Clinic, through the Mayo Clinic Care Network, allows more patients to stay home for answers to complex medical questions.

MAYO
CLINIC

CareNetwork
Member



22 An Added Advantage

When getting to the doctor is a challenge, Care 'til 8 offers extra hours, just when you need them.



A Tip About Tips

Scattered throughout this *Wellspring* issue you'll find helpful, healthy tips from NorthBay Healthcare providers. These will be featured throughout the year as part of #HealthTipTuesday on Facebook.

Wellspring is published quarterly by NorthBay Healthcare, Solano County's locally based nonprofit health care organization.

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k A patient chats with Shanaz Khambatta, D.O., during an appointment at the Center for Primary Care in Vacaville.

It's Important to Pick the Right Physician

When Shanaz Khambatta, D.O., started her family practice with NorthBay Healthcare in 2002, she was only the third doctor to join the organization's Center for Primary Care facility in Vacaville.

Today, she's the medical director for the primary care division which includes more than 20 pediatricians, family practice physicians, internal medicine doctors and psychologists with practices in Vacaville, Fairfield and Green Valley.

Picking the right ones for you and your family is very important, she said. "I care for many multigenerational families who enjoy all having the same physician," she said. "However, having a variety of physicians gives patients choices. Many of our youngest patients see our pediatricians. Others establish care with a family practice doctor as they enter adolescence and their transition to adulthood."

Individuals with complex medical conditions are probably best suited for an internal medicine doctor, who only cares for patients over the age of 18, and have extensive training in handling geriatric patients, said Dr. Khambatta.

"In addition, we have started inviting a number of specialists to share time and space in our primary care clinics," she said, which means that patients can go to their regular physician office and visit with a sleep specialist, a gynecologist or a urologist.

"This is an attempt to bring the doctor to the patient instead of sending the patient to the doctor," she said, noting that in early reviews, patients have been very pleased. Video visits are also being scheduled now with patients and their primary care physician.

But the care doesn't stop with the physician. NorthBay emphasizes a team-based approach. "It allows us to work collaboratively with patients and families toward a common goal," said Dr. Khambatta. Teams include nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, medical assistants, patient support representatives, psychologists and social workers.

"We are hoping to expand the team concept to include our specialists, pharmacy, and more," she said. "From all perspectives, the patient is at the center and the team cares for the patient." ❧

Health Care Conundrum? ...Ask Kelly!

Do you need help picking the perfect physician for you and your family? Kelly Rhoads-Poston has answers. Prior to joining NorthBay Healthcare 18 years ago as a marketing representative and health plan specialist, she worked in the insurance business.

She understands the complicated insurance landscape and goes out of her way to help others navigate it. And part of that is selecting a physician who fits the patient's needs, making her a matchmaker, of sorts.

To accomplish that, she gets to know NorthBay's physicians—more than 20 in primary care and many more in specialty care. "I find out what they're like and what's their style, so I can relay that to the community," she said.

If you call her, she'll toss out some quick questions to get started:

- Do you prefer a male or female doctor?
- Do you want an older or younger doctor?
- Would a family doctor or an internist better suit your needs?
- Do you like a doctor who likes to chat or who quickly gets down to business?
- What about location?

"We have primary care doctors in Vacaville, Fairfield and Green Valley, so there are plenty of choices in Solano County. Your doctor can be close to where you live, where you work, or both," said Kelly.

Ironically, she noted, a lot of people don't know what they prefer until they

are asked to think about it. "Some have had the same provider for years and suddenly have to find someone new," she said. "It can be intimidating."

Also intimidating is "open enrollment," that time of year when people can select or change their job-based health insurance, pick individual market health insurance or choose a new Medicare supplement.

NorthBay Healthcare works with more than 20 insurance companies (*see partial list at NorthBay.org/insurance*), and most Medicare supplement plans, said Kelly.

She knows the difference between an HMO and a PPO, as well as between Medi-Cal and Medicare. Do you have double coverage? She can help you get the most out of your health benefits.



Find something active that brings you joy and happiness: hiking, team sports, yoga. Try to do it at least once per week with time that is carved out and protected.

~Shanaz Khambatta, D.O.



Have a question?

Call Kelly Rhoads-Poston
(707) 646-3280

"The insurance world is complicated, and it's my job to help people get the answers they need," she explained. "If I don't know the answer, I'll find it."

Despite all the choices, selecting NorthBay is easy, stressed Kelly. "You can just look around and see all the growth occurring throughout our system in Solano County," she said.

"We are modernizing our flagship hospital in Fairfield, we have made remarkable additions to our Vacaville campus, and we continue to expand our footprint."

The bottom line? NorthBay is dedicated to improving health care in Solano County, and only Solano County, she said. "We started here, our headquarters are here, and every choice we make is specifically to benefit the citizens of Solano County. That makes NorthBay the obvious choice." ❧

Patients Benefit from Mayo Clinic Care Network


The exceptional care NorthBay Healthcare patients receive has been made even better thanks to a collaborative relationship with Mayo Clinic, launched in May 2016. NorthBay is a proud member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network, helping our patients get answers to complex medical questions — and peace of mind — while staying close to home.

In the first 16 months of this remarkable collaboration, 25 NorthBay physicians across 14 specialties submitted 188 eConsults — a process that allows NorthBay doctors to connect electronically and directly with Mayo specialists for additional input on a patient's care and at no cost to the patient.

The Mayo Clinic Care Network uses physician collaboration and technology to deliver a full spectrum of medical expertise, enhancing the care NorthBay can deliver on complex cases that might otherwise require a referral to a specialist outside of Solano County.

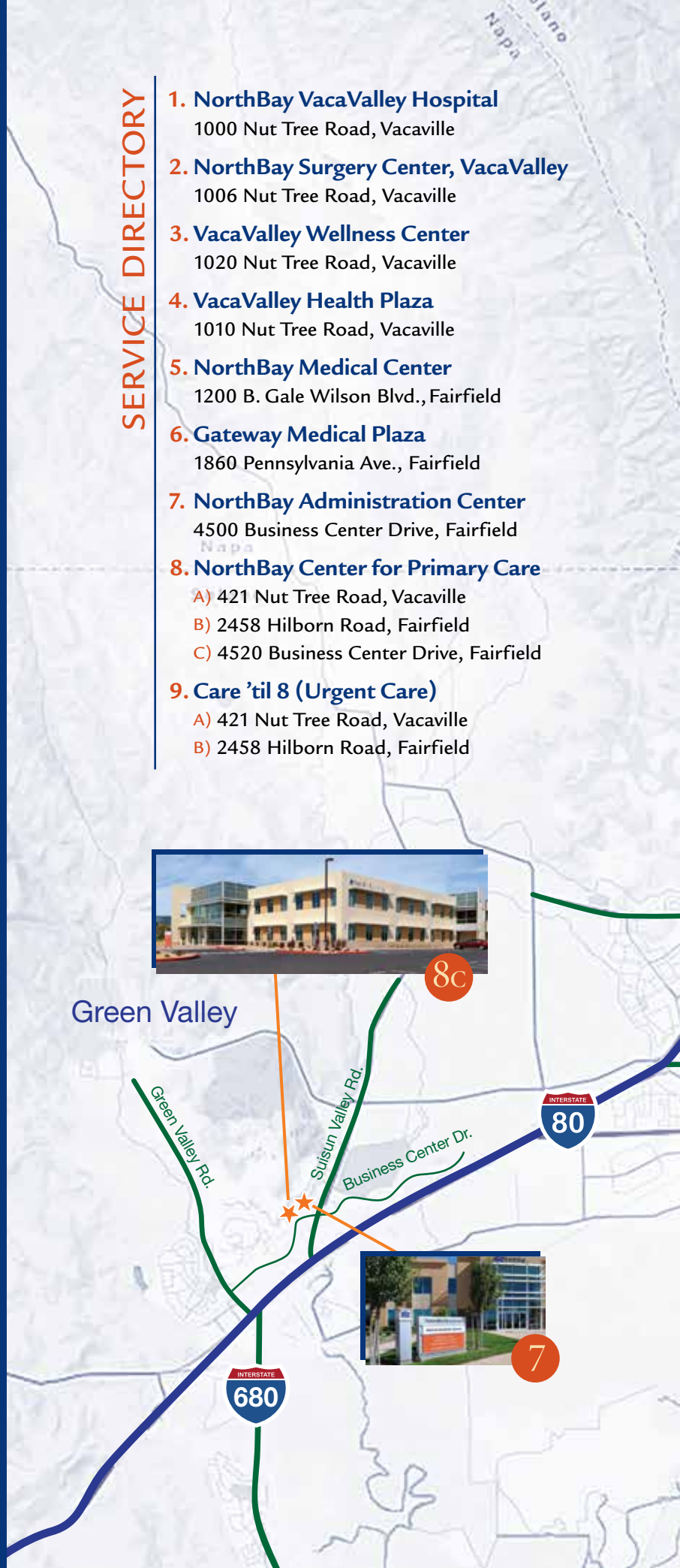
In addition to eConsults with Mayo Clinic, NorthBay doctors have access to additional services that include:

- AskMayoExpert, an online clinical resource that gives providers quick access to the latest Mayo-vetted information on the management, care and treatment of a variety of medical conditions.
- Health care consulting, which allows NorthBay to consult with Mayo Clinic as we work to set new standards in patient care as well as clinical, operational and administrative areas.
- eBoard conferences that invite NorthBay doctors to present and discuss complex cases, such as complex cancer diagnoses and treatments, with a multidisciplinary panel of Mayo Clinic specialists and other members of the care network.

NorthBay also has access to Mayo's extensive library of patient education materials and, in addition to ongoing educational opportunities, our staff have access to Mayo Clinic grand rounds, regular presentations that feature Mayo Clinic physicians and scientists. 

SERVICE DIRECTORY

- 1. NorthBay VacaValley Hospital**
1000 Nut Tree Road, Vacaville
- 2. NorthBay Surgery Center, VacaValley**
1006 Nut Tree Road, Vacaville
- 3. VacaValley Wellness Center**
1020 Nut Tree Road, Vacaville
- 4. VacaValley Health Plaza**
1010 Nut Tree Road, Vacaville
- 5. NorthBay Medical Center**
1200 B. Gale Wilson Blvd., Fairfield
- 6. Gateway Medical Plaza**
1860 Pennsylvania Ave., Fairfield
- 7. NorthBay Administration Center**
4500 Business Center Drive, Fairfield
- 8. NorthBay Center for Primary Care**
 - A) 421 Nut Tree Road, Vacaville
 - B) 2458 Hilborn Road, Fairfield
 - C) 4520 Business Center Drive, Fairfield
- 9. Care 'til 8 (Urgent Care)**
 - A) 421 Nut Tree Road, Vacaville
 - B) 2458 Hilborn Road, Fairfield





Making Specialists More Accessible

If you've been to a Center for Primary Care (CPC) recently, you might have noticed something new—specialists' offices. "In an effort to make care more convenient for patients, some of our specialists are now holding office hours in the CPCs," said Wayne Gietz, vice president of Ambulatory Services.

NorthBay OB/GYNs Shanna Snow, D.O., and Rachel Villalon, M.D., have been seeing patients at the Vacaville and Green Valley CPCs for the past few months. This has been so successful that now Urologist Herkanwal Khaira, M.D., has office hours at the Vacaville CPC.

Sleep medicine appointments, available on Saturdays once a month with pulmonologist Donald Doyle, M.D., at the Hilborn CPC, are also proving popular. "This is a trend we plan to continue," Wayne added. "Locating specialty services close to where our patients live and work makes it easier for our patients to get care."

Two Center for Women's Health physicians have permanently relocated their practices to the primary care offices. Internal Medicine Physician Teresa Whitley, M.D., is now located at the Vacaville CPC while Family Practitioner and Women's Health Specialist Lauren Weber, D.O., is now at the Green Valley CPC. "With construction taking place at NorthBay Medical Center and parking difficult for patients, this move is to make access to our physicians easier for our patients."

Health Care Where and When You Need It

NorthBay Healthcare is Solano County's only locally based, locally managed nonprofit health care organization. Our mission is to provide patients with the advanced care they need while remaining close to home. The 132-bed NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield and the 50-bed VacaValley Hospital in Vacaville, anchor a system that includes three primary care medical offices and a wide range of specialist practices.

For a complete list of NorthBay Healthcare services, visit NorthBay.org/Directory.

Safe Sips

Healthy Drinks

Most parents know it's important to get children to eat healthy foods, but what about getting them to enjoy healthy drinks? It's a question that has been the focus of attention for leading pediatricians and dietitians lately. The American Academy of Pediatrics has issued advisories for parents to avoid 100 percent fruit juice for babies under the age of 1 and to avoid sports and energy drinks for older children and adolescents.



NorthBay Healthcare pediatrician Bruce Hewett, M.D., and his daughter, NorthBay dietitian Laura Hitt, R.D.

None of that surprises NorthBay Healthcare pediatrician Bruce Hewett, M.D., and his daughter, NorthBay dietitian Laura Hitt, R.D. They've been advising parents similarly for years.

"I get this question a lot from parents, about what's appropriate and what isn't," said Dr. Hewett, who works at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care in Vacaville. "No juice for children under a year and only modest amounts for toddlers."

The concern is that juice offers no nutritional benefits early in life, and can actually take away from what babies really need: breast milk or formula, and the protein, fat and minerals (like calcium) that they provide.

"Fruit juice is not a substitute for fruit as children grow," added Laura, who works with patients at the NorthBay Center for Diabetes & Endocrinology as well as at the Center for Primary Care. "Fruit juices don't offer the nutrients. There is no protein, no fiber. A better option would be a piece of fruit and a glass of water."

There are other reasons to avoid the 100 percent juice option for young children, said Dr. Hewett.

"You don't want children to develop an affinity for sweet, sugary drinks," he explained. "The fact is, the more sugar you consume the more you crave it and that correlates directly to obesity and other health issues."

Laura added that it's also important not to send the child to bed with a juice bottle or let them drink a lot of it between meals. It's not healthy for their teeth and can impact their overall appetite.

Dr. Hewett said he also warns parents not to link food or drink to emotions. "Don't reward with food or put a high emotional value on it," he explained. "Don't tell them 'If you are good today, you can have two cookies.' Instead, try telling them, 'If you are good today, you will

Meet our Pediatricians



NORTHBAY
Center for Primary Care

(707) 646-5500

Visit NorthBay.org



Matthew Heeren, M.D.
Vacaville

as Important as Healthy Food in a Child's Diet

If you commit to consuming only water as your drink of choice, you can make great strides toward keeping a healthy weight.

~Matthew Heeren, M.D.



get 30 minutes of uninterrupted play time with daddy? That puts the value on what they really want, which is their parents' time."

As children get older and more active, sipping healthy drinks remains important, both Dr. Hewett and Laura agreed. Laura said one important piece of advice for parents is to not to keep soda in the home. "It just should not be an option. It should only be available on rare occasions."

And as for sport drinks, Dr. Hewett tells parents to give Gatorade when a child is vomiting and can't hold anything down, but otherwise keep the energy and sport drinks out of the dietary equation.

Sport drinks, which contain carbohydrates, minerals, electrolytes and flavoring, are intended to replace water and electrolytes lost through sweating during exercise. They can be helpful for young athletes engaged in prolonged, vigorous physical activities, but in most cases are unnecessary on the sports field or the school lunchroom.

Energy drinks don't belong in any child's diet, added Laura. The drinks contain stimulants like caffeine, guarana and taurine. Caffeine in particular has been linked to a number of harmful health effects in children. "Water should be the drink of choice," Dr. Hewett said. ☒

Recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics

- No juice for infants under age 1. Intake of juice should be limited to, at most, 4 ounces daily for toddlers ages 1–3. For children ages 4–6, fruit juice should be restricted to 4 to 6 ounces daily; and for children ages 7–18, juice intake should be limited to 8 ounces or 1 cup of the recommended 2 to 2 ½ cups of fruit servings per day.
- Toddlers should not be given juice from bottles or easily transportable "sippy cups" that allow them to consume juice easily throughout the day. The excessive exposure of the teeth to carbohydrates can lead to tooth decay, as well. Toddlers should not be given juice at bedtime.
- Children should be encouraged to eat whole fruits and be educated about the benefits of the fruit as compared with juice, which lacks dietary fiber and may contribute to excessive weight gain.
- Human milk or infant formula is sufficient for infants, and low-fat/nonfat milk and water for older children.
- Consumption of unpasteurized juice products should be strongly discouraged for children of all ages.
- Children who take specific forms of medication should not be given grapefruit juice, which can interfere with the medication's effectiveness. In addition, fruit juice is not appropriate in the treatment of dehydration or management of diarrhea.
- Energy drinks pose potential health risks because of the stimulants they contain, and should never be consumed by children or adolescents.
- Routine ingestion of carbohydrate-containing sports drinks by children and adolescents should be avoided or restricted, because they can increase the risk of overweight and obesity, as well as dental erosion.



Bruce Hewett, M.D.
Vacaville



Michael Ginsberg, M.D.
Fairfield



Judy Yang, D.O.
Fairfield



Gilbert Chang, M.D.
Green Valley

Meet our Physicians Family Practice



Shanaz Khambatta, D.O.
Vacaville



Stephen Newman, M.D.
Vacaville



Marikit Bituin B. Parker, M.D.
Vacaville



Douglas Freeman, M.D.
Fairfield



Ehsan Ghods, D.O.
Green Valley



Alina Hongsakaphadana, M.D.
Green Valley



Dr. Lauren Weber, D.O.
Green Valley



Angela Brennan, D.O., M.P.H.
Fairfield



Ana Cherry, M.D.
Vacaville

Weight M

There is no getting around it. Your weight and your health are connected. A recent study published in the New England Journal of Medicine found that 2 billion adults and children globally are overweight or obese and suffer health problems because of it. And the United States leads the way with the highest level of obesity among children and young adults. The findings represent “a growing and disturbing global public health crisis,” said the authors of the paper.

Obesity is an issue that is a growing concern in Solano County as well, said Ehsan Ghods, D.O., a family practice physician at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care in Green Valley.

“Solano has a problem,” he said, noting that residents here, on average, are more obese and in poorer shape than their counterparts statewide. “We have one of the highest obesity rates in the state and that means a higher rate for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and sleep apnea. These are all directly associated with obesity.”

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, Dr. Ghods noted, and obesity can contribute to cancer and other disorders, including increased arthritis pain, joint pain and an overall lower level of healthy body function and quality of life.

“Studies have shown that obesity is also common with depression—not just because of how you feel about the way you look, but because of the chronic disease and pain associated with it,” he said.

There is much that can be done to reverse and prevent the problems associated with obesity, Dr. Ghods said. “When I see a patient who is dealing with this and wants to know what to do, the first step I take is to ask how motivated they are to change their life and improve their weight,” he said. “Frequently they have already started and have been dieting (cutting calories) which has worked, but they’ve stopped.”

The problem often lies in trying to maintain an effort to lose weight when the lifestyle changes a person chooses are simply not sustainable.

“When cutting calories, you lose the weight but eventually you give up because it’s too difficult to maintain. You get hungry or view the diet changes as a temporary thing,” said Dr. Ghods.

Maintaining a change requires work and Dr. Ghods said it should involve the whole family.

“If you are all in it together and modify, everyone benefits,” he said. “If mom has to cook differently for herself and her family, it’s not going to work. No one has enough time to do that.”

atters | Obesity a Growing Problem in Solano County

And he has tips for patients on maintaining their health as well as the health of their family. “I tell patients to be more active but if that means they have to always get away from their children or spouse to exercise, it can put a strain on them,” he said. “If, instead, they choose activities they can do together, it will increase their own activity level and maintain a cohesive family. It’s good for everyone.”

For those not sure where to begin with a weight loss effort, Dr. Ghods advises a visit with their physician to assess their health and talk about different diet options. “It’s important to pick something that is sustainable for their lifestyle.” ❄



Kids do as you do, so be a role model and eat healthy yourself. Choose nutritious snacks, eat at the table and don’t skip meals.

~Gilbert Chang, M.D.



Dr. Ehsan Ghods consults with a patient during a checkup at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care in Green Valley.

Get the Most Out of Your

Whether you meet with your doctor once a year or once a month, you should aim to get the most out of every moment you have together. How can you make that happen? Good communication is essential.

"Preparation and participation will help you have a successful doctor's appointment," said Ali Hassani, M.D., an internal medicine physician with the NorthBay Center for Primary Care in Vacaville.

Preparation includes having all of your lab tests completed, and being able to share updates from any specialists you've seen. It includes keeping track of your blood pressure and blood sugar (if needed) and bringing these records to your appointment. Is there any important information you need to share with your doctor that has happened since your last visit? You don't want to leave your doctor's office only to remember hours later questions you forgot to ask.

"I rely on my patients to adequately describe their symptoms and concerns," Dr. Hassani added.

"Think about your symptoms and write them down. When did your pain start? What does it feel like? If you were injured, when did the accident happen and where are you hurt?"

If you have a chronic condition, learn all you can about your disease and be assertive about your care. The more you understand your condition, the more informed your questions can be. Ask if your doctor has brochures, CDs or DVDs to help you understand your condition or treatment.

"Knowledge is power and you are your own best health advocate," said Dr. Hassani. "But I don't recommend 'Dr. Google' because there is so much information online you may worry yourself needlessly."

Plan to be totally honest with your doctor. Your doctor must have a complete understanding of



Dr. Ali Hassani examines a patient's ear during a routine visit at the Center for Primary Care in Vacaville.

Doctor Visit

your health to give you the best treatment. Don't let embarrassment prevent you from discussing a topic that may contribute to your current health concerns. Note any changes you've noticed in your appetite, weight, sleep or energy level.

Make a list of all your medications, especially if you are taking a variety of drugs. Be sure to include over-the-counter drugs on your list. (It's a good idea to keep this list in your purse or wallet in case of emergencies.) Make a note to mention any adverse side effects you may have experienced from your medications. If you've stopped taking a prescribed medication, be sure to tell your doctor.

You may want to ask a family member to accompany you on your doctor's visit. Medical information can be complex, and it's often helpful to have someone who can listen and take notes for you.

"I want everyone to be involved in decision-making," Dr. Hassani added. "It's much easier to come up with a workable plan of care for the patient when I have active involvement from the patient and his or her loved ones. If a family member has noticed anything different with the patient, I also encourage them to speak up.

"And please speak up if you miss or don't understand something. Doctors are happy to repeat anything you need clarification on."

Finally, if you are seeing a new doctor, plan to make your old medical records available to him or her. It is helpful to provide your new physician with your previous physician's name, address and phone number. ☒



Try to get a mix of aerobic and resistance or weight-bearing exercise at least three to five times a week to help prevent osteoporosis, heart disease, cancer and diabetes. ~Teresa Whitley, M.D.

Meet our Physicians Internal Medicine



Amanda Adkins, M.D.
Fairfield



Kulbir Bajwa, M.D.
Vacaville



Madhav Goyal, M.D.
Vacaville



Ali Hassani, M.D.
Vacaville



Michelle Katzaroff, D.O.
Green Valley



Loc Tan Nguyen, M.D.
Fairfield



Levon Tchakmakjian, M.D.
Fairfield



Teresa Whitley, M.D.
Vacaville



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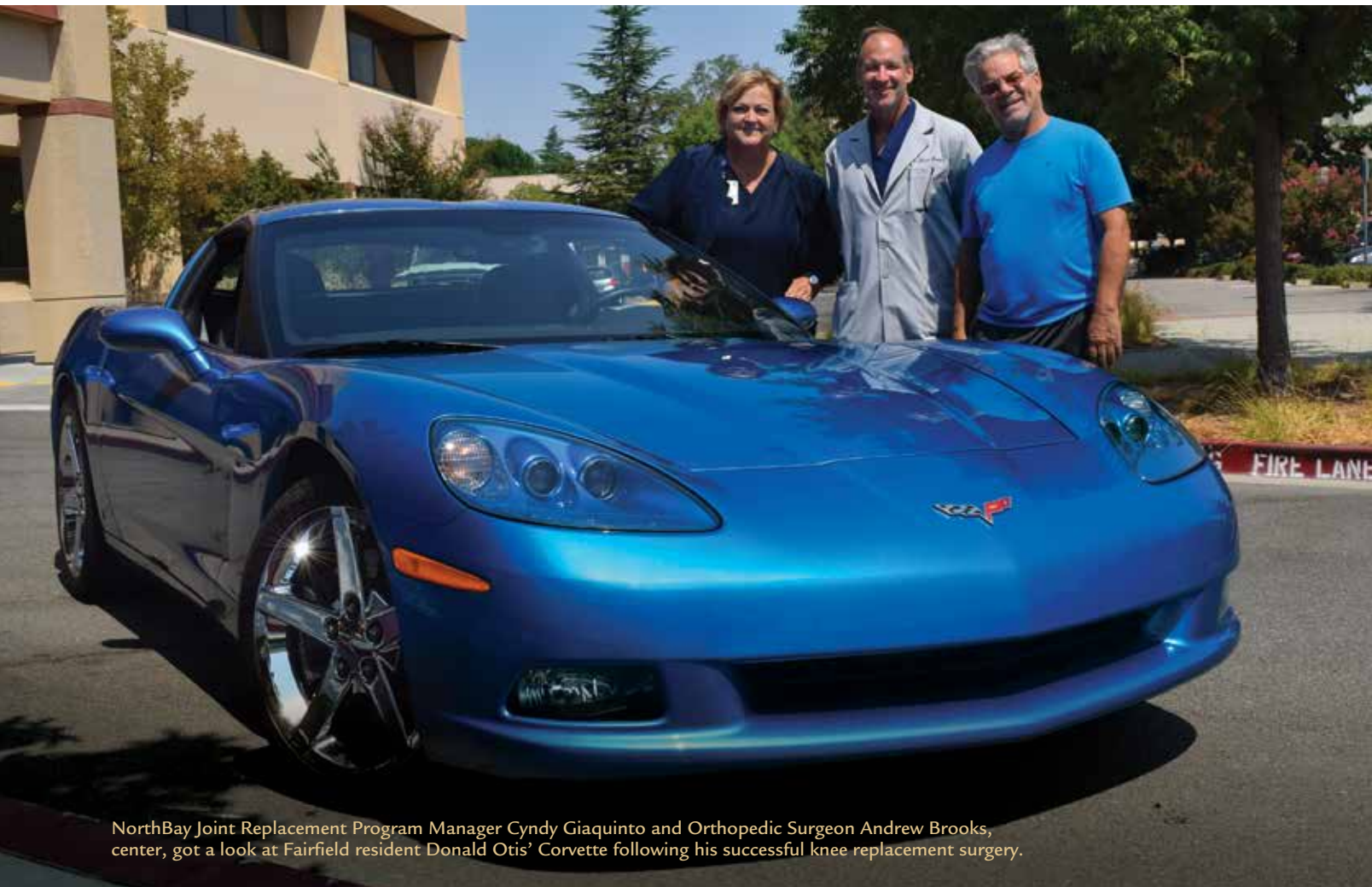
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Knee Replacement Gets Car Buff Back on the Road

It wasn't a midlife crisis that caused Donald Otis, 66, to buy a Jetstream Blue Metallic Chevy Corvette last year, he said, it was a retirement crisis. When Don retired after 40 years as a professional forester with the U.S. Forest Service he decided to make his retirement dream come true—he would buy a Corvette. But first, he became an expert on everything Corvette.

"I schooled myself on the car—the engines, the models, the colors," he said. "I knew where every used Corvette in Northern California was located. I had tried 100 cars by the time I found an ad on Craig's List for a 2008 coupe. As soon as I saw the car, I knew it was the one."

Driving with the wind in their hair was a joy he and his wife Sheri, both car buffs, couldn't get enough of....



NorthBay Joint Replacement Program Manager Cyndy Giaquinto and Orthopedic Surgeon Andrew Brooks, center, got a look at Fairfield resident Donald Otis' Corvette following his successful knee replacement surgery.

Meet our Physicians Orthopedics



Robert Peterson, M.D.
Vacaville



Andrew Brooks, M.D.
Vacaville



Daniel Birkbeck, M.D.
Vacaville

until one day Don's gimpy knee locked up and he couldn't get into his pride and joy. He turned to a medical expert for help.

"I knew I needed surgery," he said. "I injured my knee back in the 1970s when I was in the service, and I struggled with it for years. I had arthroscopic surgery in 1995, but I could never quite straighten my leg."

His physician, Douglas Freeman, M.D., at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care in Fairfield, referred him to Orthopedic Surgeon Andrew Brooks, M.D., and the NorthBay Joint Replacement Program at VacaValley Hospital. The program has nurtured hundreds of knee and hip replacement patients back to health since opening in 2007.

"Dr. Brooks recommended a total knee replacement because I had arthritis and bone spurs in my knee," Don said. Arthritis is a general term meaning joint inflammation. The most common form is osteoarthritis, affecting nearly 21 million Americans. As people age, the chances of osteoarthritis increases. It can also be caused by family history, obesity, injuries to the joint and previous surgeries where cartilage was removed from a joint.

Total knee replacement surgery involves replacing the knee joint with an artificial joint made of metal and plastic. The materials used in an artificial joint are very strong and designed to last a long time inside the body.

Many factors, like age, bone density and the shape of your joints determine what type of joint replacement hardware a patient receives and how it is inserted into the knee.

The experts at the NorthBay Joint Replacement Program carefully planned every step of Don's care to promote a successful surgery and speedy recovery. Thanks to new technology and pain management, Don was home two days after surgery.



Donald demonstrates how he moves his still-recovering knee into his retirement Corvette.

"Dr. Brooks said I was in the top 25 of all-time bad knees he had operated on," Don remembered. A usual knee replacement takes an hour and a half—Don's took more than three hours.

Surgery, however, is just the first step toward a healthy knee. "I had talked to many people who had undergone knee replacement and their message was the same: 'Don't slack off on your physical therapy or you will pay for it later,'" Don said.

He underwent two weeks of in-home physical therapy followed by eight weeks of outpatient rehabilitation. "I did my exercises religiously. It hurt and I had to force myself to do them," he said. "But the work paid off. I'm delighted with my progress."

He had nothing but praise for the team that cared for him. "My wife managed physician's offices for 40 years, so we're very familiar with the medical field," Don explained. "But never, in 40 years, have we been treated as well as in Dr. Brook's office, by his entire staff and that of the Joint Replacement Program."

And, best of all, Don and Sheri are back on the road, cruising in their Corvette with the wind in their hair. ❧



We've all heard that there is no "cure" for arthritis. The battle with arthritis is over motion. The key is to keep moving and stretching to maintain the use of your joints. ~Robert Peterson, M.D.



Cornelis Elmes, M.D.
Fairfield



Jay Parkin, M.D.
Fairfield



Steven Siegal, M.D.
Fairfield



Kevin Miller, D.P.M.
Vacaville



NORTHBAY™
Center for Orthopedics

Vacaville: (707) 624-7900

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Info at NorthBay.org

Meet the Providers on Your Health Care Team

Nurse practitioners and physician assistants are valuable members of the NorthBay Center for Primary Care health care team. In fact, the Affordable Care Act categorizes primary care providers as physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

Both NPs and PAs complete patient assessments, prescribe treatment, and perform diagnostic tests to determine the health of their patients. And both have pursued their advanced training because they want to help people and have a passion for making them as healthy as possible.



Nurse Practitioner Nicholas “Niko” Lazarewicz sees patients at the Center for Primary Care in Vacaville.

What is a Nurse Practitioner?

A nurse practitioner, or N.P., is an advanced practice nurse with specialized training to diagnose and treat illness. A registered nurse acquires a nurse practitioner certification when he or she advances from a bachelor's degree to a master's or doctoral degree and qualifies through a national exam.

N.P.s diagnose, treat and help patients manage acute and chronic illnesses. They perform physical examinations, prescribe medications, interpret medical history and order and perform diagnostic tests and procedures. N.P.s at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care work collaboratively

with physicians and provide medical appointments to several physicians' patients.

“Working in a primary care setting is great,” said Nicholas “Niko” Lazarewicz, a nurse practitioner at the Center for Primary Care in Vacaville. “I get to see a broad range of patients, from children to seniors. And I get to form relationships that I hope will last for years.”

Niko graduated from college with a science degree and worked in medical research for a few years before deciding he wanted a job with more interaction with people. He found a four-year program at Samuel Merritt University in Oakland that would first turn him into a nurse and ultimately a nurse practitioner. As a nurse, he worked night shifts in an ICU while studying to qualify as a nurse practitioner. The N.P. course work included learning diagnostic skills, understanding pharmaceuticals, and having clinical rotations.

“Working as a nurse in the ICU was good training, but once a patient left the hospital, we never interacted again,” Niko said. His goal was to practice where he could get to know his patients and follow up on their health conditions.

At the Center for Primary Care he collaborates with several physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants to provide optimal care for patients. “We have a very supportive environment here. I feel very comfortable consulting with my colleagues when I have questions.”

In a busy practice, some days are a balancing act, but he makes sure he gives each patient the time they need. He said a good day is when he has a variety of patients, but a really great day is when he's helped someone quit smoking.

“That doesn't just make my day, it makes my week! To help someone improve their health—well, that's why I'm here!” Niko added. ☒

What is a Physician Assistant?

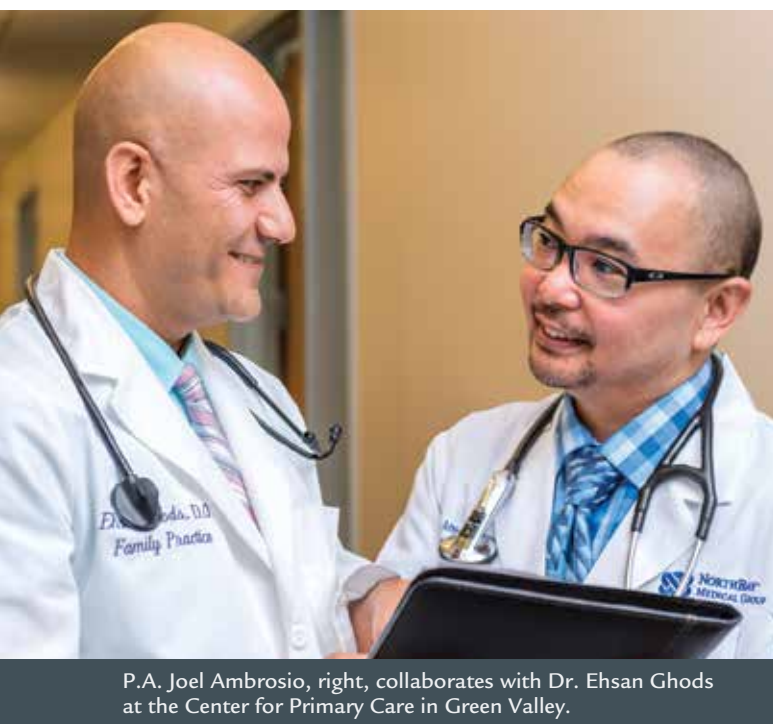
Physician Assistants, or P.A.s, are medical professionals with advanced education and clinical training. While they practice under the supervision of a physician, they exercise a great deal of autonomy in caring for patients.

“We do not ‘assist’ physicians as our title may imply,” said Joel Ambrosio, P.A., who collaborates with family practitioner Ehsan Ghods, D.O., at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care in Green Valley. “We are medical providers who hold our own licenses and are held to the same high standards as our physician colleagues.”

P.A.s take medical history, conduct physical examinations, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive care and write prescriptions. Sometimes a “doctor’s appointment” is actually an appointment with a P.A.

“Joel has been a great complement to my team,” said Dr. Ghods. “He has been helpful in managing my patient panel by providing access to care for same day acute illnesses and follow-ups which allows me to be more available for complex cases that need more of my attention.”

The profession of physician assistant began in the mid-1960s when there was a shortage of primary care doctors. Dr. Eugene Stead of Duke University Medical Center had the idea of taking a group of military medics, who already possessed a high level of medical training and experience from the Vietnam War, and expanding their education to help fill the need for medical providers. He used the fast-track physician training curriculum used to supply doctors to the field during World War II as his model, and the P.A. profession was born.



P.A. Joel Ambrosio, right, collaborates with Dr. Ehsan Ghods at the Center for Primary Care in Green Valley.



High blood pressure makes you more likely to have heart disease or a stroke. Because it doesn’t usually cause warning symptoms, you could be at risk without even knowing it. It’s important to have your blood pressure checked regularly by a healthcare professional.

~Ehsan Ghods, D.O.



“Through the years P.A. education has evolved to keep pace with the ever-changing environment of medicine, but we continue to train in the medical model similar to physicians,” Joel explained. He began his medical career as a medic in the Navy. He went on to graduate from the Stanford University School of Medicine Primary Care Associate Program, followed by earning a master’s degree in Physician Assistant Studies with a concentration in clinical medicine at A.T. Still University in Arizona. He studied pathophysiology, anatomy, genetics, microbiology, pharmacology and clinical skills, followed by a rigorous year of clinical training. During the clinical phase, he spent more than 2,000 hours divided into rotations in internal medicine, family medicine, emergency medicine, surgery, pediatrics, psychiatry and OB/GYN.

“Much of my clinical year was spent learning right alongside the medical students,” Joel added. “A P.A.’s training may be shorter compared to traditional medical school, but it is nonetheless very challenging.”

After graduation, P.A.s must sit for a national exam known as the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam, or PANCE for short. Then they apply for licensing at the medical board of the state in which they wish to practice.

At the Center for Primary Care, physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners use a team approach to caring for their patients. On a typical day, Joel will see 10 to 12 patients, ranging from pre-op and post-Emergency Department appointments to primary care and minor procedures, such as suturing wounds.

“I enjoy getting to know patients and following them through their medical conditions,” Joel said. “Even the small victories, like getting someone back to work, or finding a solution to their problem, are very rewarding.”



NorthBay Women and Children's Services Clinical Manager Heather Trout, R.N., and Shanna Snow, D.O., agree that if a vaginal birth is possible, it's the healthiest choice for a baby and mother alike.

A Labor Day Decision: Pushing for Better Beginnings

There are a lot of good reasons why moms should strive for a natural birth, without the surgical intervention known as a C-section (aka Cesarean section). Not only do they avoid the risks of surgery, such as bleeding, scarring and infection, but they can begin breastfeeding sooner, and they can go home sooner, too.

Babies born vaginally tend to be healthier, too. Fluid is squeezed out of a baby's lungs during a natural birth,

which is a good thing, because they'll be less likely to suffer respiratory problems.

They also receive "good bacteria" from their moms as they travel through the birth canal. That helps boost their immune system.

For those reasons and more, NorthBay Healthcare is part of a collaborative of hospitals across the state encouraging women—and doctors—to avoid C-sections when possible.

"It's always going to be an option," explained Dr. Shanna Snow, an obstetrician and gynecologist for the NorthBay Center for Women's Health. "We have to put the health of the mother and baby first. But if there's a choice, we are encouraging all our physicians who deliver babies at NorthBay Medical Center to push for natural birth."

It only makes sense, she explained. "When you have national guidelines founded on good evidence, and there are choices we can make to improve the lives of our moms and babies, then that's what we should do," said Dr. Snow. "I think it's awesome that NorthBay, as a community hospital, is really on top of things and up-to-date with the latest and greatest."



All women of child-bearing age should consider taking folic acid 400 mcg daily. If a pregnancy occurs, this can prevent malformations and may reduce miscarriages.

~Shanna Snow, M.D.



Heather Troutt, R.N., clinical manager for NorthBay Women and Children's Services agrees. In fact, she's working on her master's degree through Touro University and her thesis focuses on empowering nurses to use interventions to help moms deliver naturally.

NorthBay Medical Center, which has been delivering babies since 1960, is part of the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative, which includes 69 other hospitals. The focus is on first-time moms, past 37 weeks, because in practice women who have already had C-sections are far more likely to deliver by C-section again. "If we can reduce the number of first-time moms who have C-sections, it will make vaginal births more likely with the next pregnancy," said Heather.

The NorthBay team participates in monthly webinars, and discusses successes, plans and barriers with a physician mentor group. "We're looking at how we can empower our whole team—including physicians, nurses and support staff—to work together and strive for more safe, vaginal births," said Heather.

In April, NorthBay conducted a skills fair to train staff on how positions affect labor. It has also been incorporated into "Labor of Love" classes, which are offered free for expectant parents who plan to deliver at NorthBay Medical Center.

And although high-risk patients are monitored consistently, NorthBay is starting to monitor lower-risk moms on an intermittent basis, which means they can walk around, sit on a birth ball and try different positions to progress their labor. It all improves their chances at avoiding a C-section.

Most moms want to deliver naturally, said Dr. Snow. "But you do get a few who request a C-section—usually because they're afraid they won't be successful. We use education to reassure them that vaginal birth may be possible. And when they learn it's best for their baby, that's really what they want.

"It's all about realizing the successful outcome: a healthy mom and a healthy baby." ❧

Meet our Obstetricians/ Gynecologists



Andrew Lin, M.D.
Fairfield



Shanna Snow, D.O.
Fairfield



Rachel Villalon, M.D.
Fairfield



NORTHBAY™
Women & Children's Services

(707) 646-4100 • Visit NorthBay.org

NorthBay Helps Parents Take 'Baby Steps'

Parents-to-be and new parents who might be a little nervous about those first three very important years of their child's life now have a reassuring companion—Baby Steps by NorthBay.

NorthBay Healthcare joined forces this summer with a Boston-based health technology company to deliver health education and support from pregnancy through a child's third birthday on patients' smart phones and computers



through mobile texts and emails. Families can sign up to receive this service at NorthBay.org/Cherish. Each message is customized to coincide with milestones in a child's development. That means parents with newborns receive information about caring for a newborn while parents with toddlers will receive relevant information on their age and stage.

Recognizing that patients are increasingly using smartphones as their primary means of online access, NorthBay leaders expect Baby Steps will better engage patients in their health care. Patients have the choice of connecting with NorthBay by email or text, with both options optimized for mobile viewing," said Sarah Jewel, director of Business Development.

NorthBay Medical Center was designated as a Baby-Friendly facility in 2014.



Trauma: Ready!

CRUSH, CRASH, CRUNCH...

Nobody plans to fall off a ladder, get bitten by a dog or be involved in a car crash. But the unexpected can happen, and when it does, a team of highly qualified, trauma-trained professionals are on standby 24/7 in NorthBay Healthcare's two Emergency Departments.

NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield was verified as a Level II trauma center in 2014 and again in 2017 by the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma, elevating it one step away from a teaching hospital. The hospital has since become the busiest trauma center in Solano County, due in part to its central location. The majority of all life-threatening or serious injuries will receive first care here, according to Heather Venezio, R.N., Trauma Program director.

NorthBay Medical Center's verification as an accredited Chest Pain Center, Certified Stroke Center and an Emergency Department Approved for Pediatrics

(EDAP) may also help explain why so many seriously ill or injured patients are transported here, she added.

NorthBay VacaValley Hospital's Emergency Department is also a Certified Stroke Center and EDAP, and its staff is well versed in all things trauma. Both facilities have helipads to receive and transport critically ill and injured patients.

What sends most people to the ED? A slip, trip or fall, Heather said. More people injure themselves on a ground level fall than anything else, but right behind are falls from animals or playground equipment, from balconies or beds, down stairs, out windows or off ladders.

NorthBay not only treats fall injuries but has a program in place to help prevent them, according to Heather. "We oversee several fall prevention classes in the community—Stepping On, Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance, and Matter of Balance—and the classes have reduced falls among participants by approximately 60 percent."

Meet our Trauma Team Physician Leaders



Peter Zopfi, D.O.
Fairfield



Haroon Mojaddidi, M.D.
Fairfield



William Fulton, M.D.
Fairfield



Injuries sustained from motor vehicle accidents and penetrating wounds are the next two most frequent incidents to send a patient to the NorthBay Trauma Center. But since staff never knows what will arrive at their doors next, they must be prepared to treat everything in between—from dog bites to workplace injuries, from burns to drownings.

“Our ED staff has to have a high level of knowledge on everything, not just one specialty,” Heather added. So, 100 percent of the staff are required to maintain Trauma Nurse (TNCC) certification, as well as certification in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), Basic Life Support (BLS), wound infiltration, moderate/deep sedation, triage, and pediatric asthma.

Although trauma surgeons, nurses and anesthesiologists are on deck for the first line of care, they are also supported by an extensive list of sub-specialists—physicians whose training gives them expertise in the more complex aspects of a specialty—who are available to provide additional support at a moment’s notice.

“The call list is required by the American College of Surgeons as part of our Level II verification,” explained J. Peter Zopfi, D.O., NorthBay Medical Center Trauma director, “but NorthBay has been able to attract some very talented physicians to that list. We also collaborate with medical personnel at David Grant Medical Center at Travis Air Force Base. The depth of the call list’s expertise means NorthBay Healthcare can treat many kinds of injuries that would have been sent to hospitals outside the county before.” ❧

When to Call an Ambulance

Your child falls and you suspect a broken bone. Or, an adult grabs their chest in sudden pain. Your first panicked instinct might be to pile everyone into the car and drive to an Emergency Department, but the time you spend driving through traffic may actually delay critical treatment.

When is the right time to call 9-1-1? If you are unsure whether a situation is an emergency, it’s best to go ahead and call, according to The 9-1-1 Association. The dispatcher is trained to ask all the right questions to determine the severity of the situation, and to assist you as much as possible until the appropriate first responders arrive.

These first responders will also have been alerted to your situation while en route, and can prepare for the appropriate emergency treatment. Ambulance crews know how to move a patient without causing further injury, and, when en route to the hospital, can monitor a patient’s condition and be ready to act should it worsen or become life-threatening.

The ambulance crew also alerts the Emergency Department about the patient’s condition and their expected arrival time so doctors and nurses can prepare for immediate treatment.

When you call 9-1-1, the dispatcher will ask a number of questions. Stay as calm as possible, listen carefully to all the questions and don’t hang up until instructed to. Be prepared to give your name, the location of the emergency and location of the victim, and nature of the medical problem. If you’re calling from a cell phone, look for landmarks, cross streets and be able to provide an accurate address.

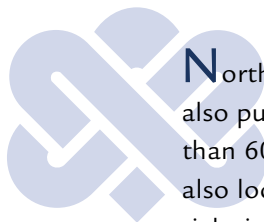


There are three essential steps in fall prevention: Removing trip hazards such as loose rugs; have your physician go over your complete list of medications to identify any that interact and can cause dizziness; and exercise.

~J. Peter Zopfi, D.O.



Specialists Abound



NorthBay Healthcare doesn't just offer a great selection of primary care physicians, it also puts a strong slate of specialists in your corner. Not only do NorthBay's team of more than 60 specialists span the gamut, from heart and vascular to neurosurgery, but they're also located close to home—in medical offices in Fairfield and Vacaville—and sometimes right in your doctor's office at the Center for Primary Care.

Here are some of the specialty practices that round out the NorthBay Healthcare Group. For a complete and up-to-date list, check NorthBay.org.

CANCER

A team of physicians whose specialties include oncology, hematology and radiology, are all located in the NorthBay Cancer Center in Vacaville. The same location offers radiation therapy on the first floor, infusion services on the third floor, and an in-house pharmacy that delivers precise medications for infusions. An oncoplastic surgeon offers breast reconstruction. In addition, a genetic counselor uses cutting-edge technology to offer genetic risk evaluations to patients who might warrant genetic testing.



HEART & VASCULAR

A team of physicians, surgeons, advanced health practitioners and technicians offer comprehensive cardiothoracic surgery, vascular surgery and cardiology care around the clock, including minimally invasive interventional procedures. The team treats a full spectrum of heart conditions using some of the most advanced surgical techniques. Vascular surgeons also provide in-office care for varicose veins and peripheral artery disease. For those living with heart failure, NorthBay's Heart Health Program provides guidance, education and expert care, including outpatient cardiac rehabilitation.



GENERAL SURGERY

NorthBay's general surgeons offer procedures such as hernia repairs, gall bladder removal, colon cancer surgery and hemorrhoid removal.

ORTHOPEDICS

A team of physicians, surgeons and advanced health practitioners make up NorthBay Orthopedics. From our stellar joint replacement programs to sports medicine to surgery, they are ready to care for aches, pains, breaks and strains.



UROLOGY

A team of physicians and an advanced health practitioner deliver urological services at both NorthBay Healthcare hospital campuses in Fairfield and Vacaville as well as a once-a-week Napa clinic. NorthBay offers the innovative Urolift procedure for the treatment of enlarged prostate or BHP.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

A highly skilled team of physical, occupational and speech therapists provide expert care both before and after surgery.

DIABETES & ENDOCRINOLOGY

A team of endocrinologists, advanced health practitioners, registered dietitians and certified diabetic nurse educators help manage diabetes and disorders of the endocrine system such as thyroid, pituitary, hormone concerns and osteoporosis. Walk-and-Talk appointments use the indoor track next door at HealthSpring Fitness during a physician appointment; after the appointment is over, the patient has full use of the facility for the rest of the day.



for Easy Access ✓

PAIN MANAGEMENT

Our care team for Pain Management includes physicians who consult with nutritionists, physical therapists and more. They focus on everything from back and neck pain to runner's knee, headaches, chest wall pain, spinal pain and more. There are locations in Vacaville and Fairfield.



RHEUMATOLOGY

A NorthBay rheumatologist cares for patients with conditions affecting the joints, muscles and connective tissues such as gout, fibromyalgia, lupus and rheumatoid arthritis.



PULMONOLOGY

A NorthBay pulmonologist specializing in sleep medicine helps with conditions such as insomnia, sleep walking, sleep talking and restless leg syndrome.

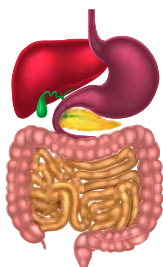
PULMONARY MEDICINE

Pulmonologists focus on helping patients living with asthma, COPD, and pulmonary hypertension. Pulmonary function testing is offered in office.



GASTROENTEROLOGY

Physicians, advanced health practitioners and nurses make up a team of experts who use a variety of advanced treatments to address digestive health concerns, including pancreatitis, colitis, gall bladder and biliary tract disease, colon, bowel, pancreatic and gallbladder cancer. The team also specializes in the treatment of hepatitis C and irritable bowel syndrome.



NEUROSCIENCE

A team of neurosurgeons, neurologists and advanced health practitioners handle everything from brain surgery to complex neurological conditions that affect the brain, spine and nervous system.

PODIATRIC SURGERY

A team of specialists focuses on feet and ankles, offering everything from foot care and post-traumatic arthritic programs to total ankle replacement and the creation of orthotics to relieve pain.



INFECTIOUS DISEASE

NorthBay Healthcare's infectious disease expert focuses on treating issues such as pneumonia, non-healing wounds, skin/tissue and bone infections, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDs.

INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

This specialty features a team of physicians in the VacaValley Wellness Center covering everything from Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) to acupuncture and functional medicine, which addresses the underlying causes for many diseases, including sleep, stress, nutrition, hormonal stability, activity level and environmental exposure.

WOUND CARE

A team of specialists at NorthBay Wound Care, on the first floor of the VacaValley Health Plaza in Vacaville, offers a variety of treatments and therapies. Patients with nonhealing wounds can be treated with hyperbaric oxygen therapy, negative pressure wound therapy, compression therapy, bio-engineered skin substitutes, ostomy care and wound debridement. ✂





Janice Vertudez, nurse practitioner at Care 'til 8 at the Center for Primary Care in Fairfield, smiles as she pats the tummy of Vanta Escalante, 4, while listening to the heartbeat of sister Zuri, 7, during a recent visit.



Care 'til 8: A NorthBay Advantage

One of the many advantages of being a NorthBay Healthcare patient is that Care 'til 8 is at your service. Launched at the Center for Primary Care locations in Fairfield and Vacaville in 2015, it's a low-cost, convenient alternative to traditional urgent care centers or emergency rooms.

Can't get an appointment with your regular doctor right away? **Can't get away from work** until after 5? "Care 'til 8 is the perfect alternative for getting immediate attention, for issues such as a sinus infection, strep throat, bronchitis, rash, pink eye or tonsillitis," said Omar Siddiqui, practice manager for Care 'til 8.

Care 'til 8 is not for life-threatening issues or chronic illnesses, nor are providers allowed by policy to prescribe or refill opiod-based pain medications such as Norco or Percocet and benzodiazpine-based anxiety medications, such as Avitan or Xanax. The service operates Monday through Friday, from 12:30 to 8 p.m. and on weekends, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

It's even open most holidays. Your co-pay is the same price as a doctor's visit with no added cost.

Have a sprain? X-ray is available in the Fairfield CPC from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the weekends. In Vacaville, X-ray services are available from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

You can even schedule an appointment in advance by calling (707) 646-5500. Appointments are preferred. Walk-ins are accepted based on capacity.

Care 'til 8 locations are at 2458 Hilborn Road in Fairfield and 421 Nut Tree Road in Vacaville.

Not a NorthBay patient? A number of payment options and insurance plans are accepted. Visit www.NorthBay.org for a complete list of accepted insurances. Click on Insurance under the Patients & Visitors tab. Self-pay rates are also available.

Call (707) 646-5500 or visit NorthBay.org/care8 for additional information. ☒

Medical Center's Modernization Project Grows

The first phase of a \$157 million modernization of NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield is slated to open in the third quarter of 2019. The three-story, 77,000-square-foot wing will be watertight by mid-October, prior to the rainy season. The building's steel structure and metal decks are in place and mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems are being roughed in, according to Joelyn Gropp, assistant vice president of Real Estate & Facilities Development for NorthBay Healthcare.

To accommodate growth and minimize cost and disruption later, space on the third floor that was set aside for future expansion will now be developed with the current phase of construction. The extra space will be built as general surgery operating rooms; one with robotic capacity, and another with the ability to be converted to an endoscopy room.


The extra construction will add approximately five months to the project, Joelyn explained.

"The building incorporates a modern design with large areas of glass and metal panels to reflect the advanced medicine we deliver," Joelyn said. "The exterior glass walls will lend to the healing environment we are creating by providing



lots of natural light deep inside the building and views to the beautifully landscaped areas outside."

The new wing will also include a modern cafeteria with indoor and outdoor seating, nutrition services, diagnostic imaging and central supply. Also included are 22 new "patient rooms of the future" featuring the latest technology in health care, and 17 additional post-acute care beds.

The architect for the project is Ratcliff Architects of Emeryville and the contractor is DPR Construction of Sacramento. 

Work is underway to make the NorthBay Medical Center expansion watertight before the rainy season. The new wing will open in 2019.



Canopy Health Alliance Offers Broad Access

A contract between Western Health Advantage (WHA) and Canopy Health, (a new provider-owned health care alliance started by UCSF and John Muir Health) offers Bay Area employees the opportunity to receive affordable, high-quality health care.


Effective Jan. 1, WHA's contract with Canopy Health extends the WHA network of hospitals and physicians across the Bay Area, giving most WHA members access to some of the finest medical facilities in California, including UCSF and UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital.

The expanded network will offer most WHA members access to more than 4,000 participating physicians and 13 hospitals and numerous urgent care centers located across seven Bay Area counties (Marin, Sonoma, San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano and San Mateo).

WHA members will select a primary care physician from a larger list of providers and then they can be referred to any of Canopy Health's more than 3,000 specialists, regardless of medical group affiliation. WHA's unique Advantage Referral program allows doctors to refer patients to any specialist in the network, not just those within their particular medical group.

"WHA is excited to join Canopy Health and their new health care alliance of high-quality providers and hospitals. We welcome the opportunity to bring enhanced access to small and large businesses in the Bay Area at a cost that fits company budgets," said Garry Maisel, president and CEO of Western Health Advantage.

WHA is a not-for-profit HMO founded 20 years ago by NorthBay Healthcare and Dignity Health as a local alternative to the large national health insurance plans. With more than 135,000 members, WHA attributes its success to its affordable rates and personal, hands-on approach with members.

Contact Kelly Rhoads-Poston at (707) 646-3280 or krhoadsposton@northbay.org for more information about WHA, Canopy Health and how you can choose NorthBay Healthcare. 

Trauma Center Earns High Marks

NorthBay Trauma Center received an impressive review from the American College of Surgeons (ACS), earning a three-year verification, the most possible, during a recent assessment by the nationally known leader in trauma.

At the conclusion of the meticulous two-day review, the ACS surveyors found no deficiencies in the Fairfield-based Level II trauma center. It was the first trauma center in the county, opening in NorthBay Medical Center in 2011.

"To have the most rigorous verification organization in the country come, examine our program and validate that we provide optimal care for the critically injured patients in our community is extremely gratifying," said Dr. J. Peter Zopfi, Trauma medical director at NorthBay Healthcare. "It solidified our commitment not only to those in need of life-saving care, but also to our community, which deserves the highest level of care."

The ACS a scientific and educational association of surgeons founded in 1913 to improve the quality of care by setting high standards for surgical education and practice.

"The hospital functions as an essential component of the Solano County emergency response system at multiple levels," evaluators wrote in their report, adding that NorthBay Medical Center works effectively with UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital and nearby academic hospitals' trauma units to provide more advanced care that creates "a novel solution to a community need."

NorthBay Trauma Center received high marks for its performance improvement efforts, its community education programs and its commitment to helping train pre-hospital emergency response teams to ensure the best possible outcome for critically injured patients.





The NorthBay Medical Center lobby is being transformed into the new Emergency Department waiting room.

First Phase of Emergency Department Expansion Opens at NorthBay Medical Center

The newly enlarged Emergency Department at NorthBay Medical Center is now open to the public. It is the first of three construction phases that will transform the department into a state-of-the-art facility and offer an expanded trauma center.

This phase remodeled the old hospital lobby into a new 7,000-square-foot waiting, registration and patient care area. It has been designed to treat less acute patients. You will recognize the same large windows that formerly framed the lobby incorporated into the design.

The registration window faces the former main entry doors to the hospital. Movement through this part of the Emergency Department is clockwise, with patients finding the triage room to their left just past the registration area.

Next come six large patient examination rooms and the nurses' station. Two more exam rooms will have curtains rather than solid walls.

Once patients complete their care, they continue traveling clockwise to the discharge area, which has its own waiting area. Ambulances will still use their regular entrance when arriving with patients.

Phase II of the project begins Oct. 19 and will close the mid-section of the ED for remodeling. 🏗️

"The program is very active in the community in education and outreach activities," reviewers said.

Dr. Zopfi and Trauma Program Director Heather Venezio were singled out as "knowledgeable and organized with systems in place for effective management of the program," as well as being leaders in the community.

"Achieving and maintaining the highest level of verification from the ACS is no small feat," explained Venezio. "These are exceptional experts in the field. They understand trauma is a 'team sport' that requires collaboration of every person who comes into contact with a critically injured patient."

In a letter to NorthBay President and CEO B. Konard Jones, the two leaders of the ACS's Verification Review Committee, R. Todd Maxson, MD, and Daniel Margulies, MD, wrote, "The Committee on Trauma would like to extend its congratulations to the NorthBay Medical Center on its verification as a Level II trauma center."

Other strengths that set NorthBay Trauma Center apart from most programs, the examiners said, included:

- A cohesive staff of surgeons dedicated to the trauma program's goals;
- A "strong collaborative relationship" between the emergency department and the trauma team;
- NorthBay neurosurgeons who are responsive and work effectively with trauma team leaders;
- Having a fellowship-trained orthopedic trauma surgeon on the NorthBay staff; and
- Conducting disaster drills with Fairfield Fire Department and other public safety agencies. 🏠



Chief Quality Officer Adds Duties, Operations Focus

NorthBay Healthcare Vice President and Chief Quality Officer Nicole Brocato has added the title of vice president of Operations to her role

at NorthBay Healthcare. She has been serving as the interim vice president of Operations since January.

“Throughout the search process, Nicole has done an excellent job of leading the Operations Division, providing continued oversight of the construction projects, as well as maintaining the high level of quality assurance we rely on for the success of our organization,” said Aimee Brewer, president of NorthBay Healthcare Group, in making the announcement. “We hope that by consolidating these two positions at a higher level, we will bring compatible teams and processes into even greater collaboration and communication under Nicole’s leadership.”

Nicole joined NorthBay Healthcare in 2014 as director of Performance Management. Six months later, she was promoted to vice president and chief quality officer. She is a registered nurse and has a master’s degree in business administration from the University of San Diego, and certification in project management and Lean/Six Sigma.



New Assistant Vice President Takes on CPCs

Damaris Valera began her new role as assistant vice president for Primary Care at NorthBay Healthcare this summer. She most

recently served as chief operation officer for Lamprey Health Care in Newmarket, New Hampshire.

In her new position, she oversees operations at the Center for Primary Care facilities in Vacaville, Green Valley and Fairfield, as well as the Center for Women’s Health, also in Fairfield.

“Damaris’s experience in ambulatory delivery systems is perfectly aligned with our efforts toward building a fully integrated system, focused on population health,” said Wayne Gietz, vice president of Ambulatory Services. “This, coupled with her extensive experience building access and developing programs, has all of us very excited about the future of primary care under her leadership.”

She has a master’s degree in organizational leadership from South New Hampshire University, where she graduated with high honors. She also earned a Human Resources Graduate Certificate and has a bachelor’s degree in psychology.

NorthBay Healthcare Welcomes Two New Board Chairmen

Two NorthBay Healthcare boards installed new chairmen this year. Mark Sievers is now chairman of the board of NorthBay Healthcare Corporation, taking the reins from longtime chairman Ben Huber. Dennis Landis is the new chairman of the NorthBay Healthcare Foundation Board of Directors. He replaces local attorney Chris Sweeney. Both Huber and Sweeney remain as board members on their respective boards.

“We are changing the guard, but only in the sense of one experienced leader stepping up to take the role long filled by another skilled leader,” said NorthBay Healthcare President/CEO B. Konard Jones, emphasizing that continuity of leadership is important to the organization.

Sievers is president of Epsilon Financial Group of Fairfield, a wealth management firm for individuals, trusts, foundations and businesses. In 2000 he became a director of the board that administered hospital operations. He also has served on the governing entity of NorthBay Health Advantage, which oversees innovation and business development. He has been a member of the corporate board since September 2002.



Mark Sievers



Dennis Landis

Sievers is a founder of the Solano Wine & Food Jubilee, which celebrated its 30th anniversary this year. The largest continuous charity event in the county, it has raised millions for NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement to care for residents who could not otherwise afford the service.

Landis, a retired Fairfield restaurateur, has been on the NorthBay Healthcare Foundation board for 16 years. “Dennis has been a longtime supporter of NorthBay Healthcare and an active member of our Foundation board,” said Brett Johnson, president of the NorthBay Healthcare Foundation.

Grateful Recipient is a Blood Drive Champion

When Vacaville resident Suzanne Clark was diagnosed with Guillain-Barre syndrome in 2013, she required five treatments of a special blood product, and each one required 1,000 units of blood to produce.

She has never forgotten how those donations of blood made her recovery possible. That's why she wants to pay it forward and has stepped up as a champion for a special blood drive Nov. 3 at the VacaValley Wellness Center.

Suzanne, a longtime member of Soroptimist International of Vacaville, has brought her organization forward to partner with NorthBay Healthcare and NorthBay HealthSpring Fitness in sponsoring a one-day drive, which is open to the public.

Guillain-Barre syndrome is a rare disorder in which the body's immune system attacks nerves. Its cause is unknown. It can spread quickly and cause paralysis in the entire body.

Suzanne's illness came on out of nowhere, she says, remembering that she was in training for a 5K race. She'd lost 42 pounds and felt great. Then one day, her legs started bothering her. Her back hurt. She ended up in an emergency room where doctors recognized her symptoms and started five days of treatments that saved her life.

Suzanne, 60, spent months in a wheelchair and rehabilitation, before discovering the Movement is Medicine program at NorthBay HealthSpring Fitness, Solano County's only medical fitness center. Though hard work with Fitness Specialist Julie Cassara, Suzanne has been able to rebuild her strength and mobility.

HealthSpring Fitness was happy to step up as a blood drive partner to support Suzanne's goal, and is encouraging its members to consider a donation. Massage therapists will offer free five-minute chair massages to donors between 1 and 2 p.m. during the blood drive.



Fitness Specialist Julie Casaras, left, of NorthBay HealthSpring Fitness, supports the Nov. 3 blood drive championed by Suzanne Clark.

#HealthTipTuesday: 'Engage-Mint' Reminder

You've liked us on Facebook, now NorthBay wants to take our relationship to a whole new level. We want you to be engaged. Don't just follow our #HealthTipTuesday posts — share them. Comment on them! By doing so, you just might win a \$50 gift card.

#HealthTipTuesday was launched in September to showcase some of NorthBay Healthcare's 100-plus providers. To remind our patients to engage with us, we've been handing out "Engage-Mints" on Tuesdays at Center for Primary Care appointments this fall (one per patient, per visit, while supplies last.) The small tin, filled with sugar-free "Engage-Mints," features the contest details printed on the cover.


Once a month, a drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card is held, and the winner is announced on Facebook.

So watch for #HealthTipTuesday posts on Facebook. Comment or share and you might win!



Sign Up Now to Donate Blood Nov. 3

The blood drive begins at 9 a.m. and runs through 4 p.m. in the conference facility on the first floor of the VacaValley Wellness Center, 1020 Nut Tree Road. Enter through the HealthSpring Fitness lobby.

Donors are encouraged to book an appointment in advance online, and thus save themselves from having to wait. Visit www.bloodsource.org/drives and enter location code H101. Walk-ins will also be welcome. Donors are advised to eat and drink before donating blood and to bring a photo ID. 



Annual Flu Shot is Healthy Choice

October is the start of flu season and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend getting your annual flu shot as soon as the vaccine becomes available. Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a variety of viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions are at high risk for serious flu complications. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated each year. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, and missed work and school, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations.

An annual flu shot is needed because flu viruses are constantly changing, according to Mercille Locke, R.N., infection prevention program manager at NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield. Also, the protection offered by a flu vaccine declines over time, which is why annual vaccinations are important.


Each year, laboratories around the world collect flu viruses to determine what strains will be most active during the upcoming flu season. From this information, virus strains are selected for the flu

vaccine that is offered in the fall. For the past few years trivalent (three strain) and quadrivalent (four strain) vaccines have been available.

The timing of flu is very unpredictable and can vary from season to season. Flu activity most commonly peaks in the United States in January or February. However, seasonal flu activity can begin as early as September and continue as late as March.

The CDC advises everyone age 6 months and older to get a flu vaccine every year. It is especially important that certain people get vaccinated, including pregnant women, people age 50 and older or younger than 5, anyone with certain chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes and asthma, and people who live in or work in nursing homes or long-term care facilities.

It takes about two weeks for your body to build antibodies after you receive the shot. During that time you may still get the flu. Whether you get your vaccination early or late in the flu season, you will be protected for the entire year.

Talk to your physician about receiving this year's flu vaccination. More information can be found at NorthBay.org. 

Welcome New Physicians

The NorthBay Center for Primary Care welcomes two new family practitioners to its practice:



Marikit Bituin Parker, M.D.

Marikit Bituin Parker, M.D., earned her medical degree from Silliman University Medical School in the Philippines. She completed post-graduate training in family medicine at the University of Michigan—Mid Michigan Medical Center in Midland. She practices at the Vacaville Center for Primary Care.

Angela Brennan, D.O., M.P.H., earned both her doctor of osteopathic medicine degree and Master of Public Health degree at Touro University College



Angela Brennan, D.O., M.P.H.

of Osteopathic Medicine in Vallejo. She completed a residency in family practice at Natividad Family Medicine Residency—UCSF Affiliated in Salinas. She practices at the Fairfield Center for Primary Care. To make an appointment with either physician, call (707) 646-5500.

Community Health Education Classes

Healthier Living • A six-week class offered several times during the year, taught in conjunction with Solano Public Health and the Area Agency on Aging. Classes are free but space is limited. Call (707) 646-5469.

Caregivers' Support Group • For anyone involved in caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or a dementia-related illness. Meets second Wednesday of month, 7 to 9 p.m. at the Adult Day Center in Vacaville. Cost: Free. (707) 624-7971 or (707) 624-7970.

Grief and Bereavement Support Groups • Adult support groups meet every other Wednesday, noon to 1 p.m., in Fairfield. Cost: Free. Please call (707) 646-3517.

Supporting Parents After A Loss • Meets the last Wednesday of each month from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at NorthBay Medical Center, Annex Building. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-5433.

Widows Grief Support Group • Support group meets every first and third Wednesday noon to 1 p.m. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-3517.

Compassionate Care Knitters • Meets second and fourth Mondays, 10 a.m. to noon. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-3517.

Adult Grief Support Class, Journey Through Grief • Class meets weekly for eight sessions. Limited to 12 people per group. Participants follow a step-by-step approach using a book and journal. Cost: Free. For schedule and to register, call (707) 646-3517.


Loss Due to Suicide Support Group • Meets first and third Mondays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-3517.

Veteran's Grief Support Group • A grief support group for men meets on the second and fourth Thursdays from 10 to 11 a.m. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-3517 for dates.

Pulmonary Education Series • Three-session course meets on Tuesdays from 12:30 to 2 p.m. at NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield and on the third and fourth Tuesdays at 9 a.m. at the VacaValley Wellness Center in Vacaville. A new course begins each month. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-5072.

Congestive Heart Failure Class • Class meets every Wednesday from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. at NorthBay Medical Center and on the first and second Tuesdays at 9 a.m. at the VacaValley Wellness Center in Vacaville. Cost: Free. Call (707) 646-5072.

New Beginnings Support Group • For stroke survivors, caregivers and family members. Third Tuesday of the month, 10 to 11:30 a.m. at VacaValley Health Plaza, Suite 240, Vacaville. Cost: Free. Call Elizabeth Gladney at (707) 646-4034.

 For a complete schedule of classes and events, visit NorthBay.org/calendar.

Maternal/Child Health Classes

All prenatal and maternal child health classes are free if you are delivering at NorthBay Medical Center. Sign up at NorthBay.org or call (707) 646-4162.

Labor of Love

A four-week prepared childbirth class for moms and dads or coaches.

Labor of Love—Weekend Class

A prepared childbirth class for moms and dads or coaches. Held Friday evenings and Saturdays.

Newborn Care

Expectant parents are instructed on daily care, nutrition, safety and development for the first few months of life. One-session course.

Maternity Orientation and Tour

A tour of NorthBay Medical Center's maternity unit. Information about hospital registration, birth certificates, and other pertinent information is provided.

Breastfeeding the Baby-Friendly Way

Babies are born to breastfeed. Learn normal newborn behavior and what to expect from a lactation expert. Support persons are encouraged and welcomed.

Car Seat Class

Educates expectant parents on the choosing and proper use of infant and child car restraints.



Nov. 2 Cancer Event

A pair of cancer specialists—one from Mayo Clinic and one from NorthBay Healthcare—will offer insight as to how genetic blueprints can offer clues that lead to better diagnoses, earlier intervention and customized treatment plans.

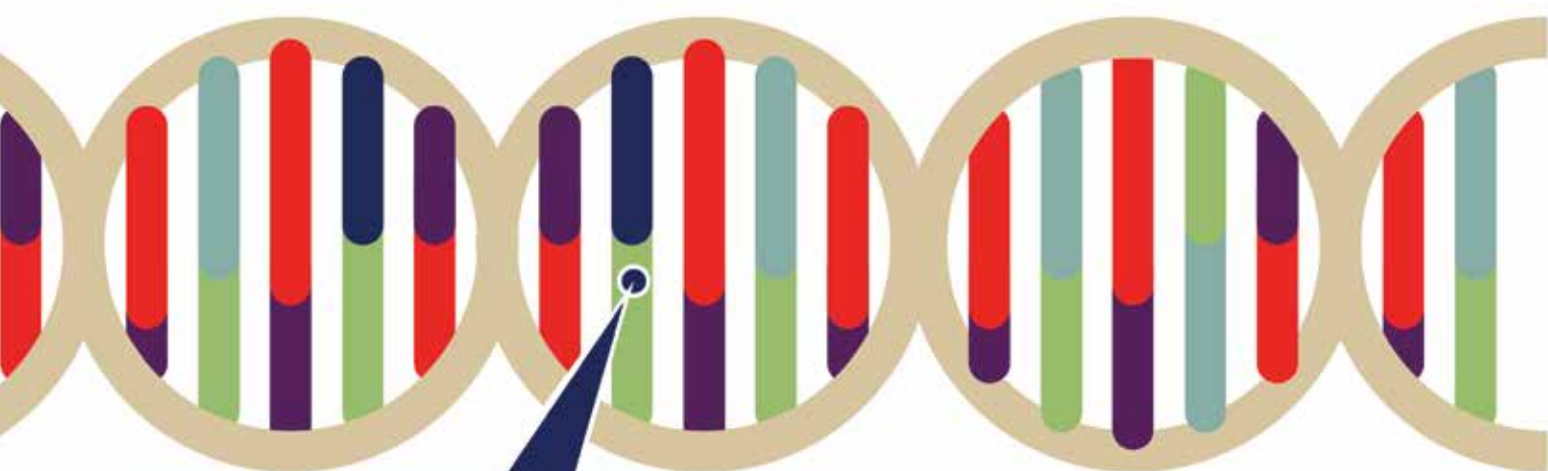
The event will be at noon, Nov. 2, at NorthBay Healthcare Administration Center, 4500 Business Center Drive in Fairfield. Cost for the lunch is \$15. Seating is limited and reservations are required. Visit Northbay.org/precision. Email Events@NorthBay.org or call (707) 646-3280.



c/o NorthBay Healthcare Group
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Fairfield, CA 94533-3587
Telephone (707) 646-3336
NorthBay.org

Using Your Genes to Fight Cancer

How Precision Medicine Will Change Your Future



Your genetic blueprint offers clues that lead to better diagnoses, earlier intervention and custom treatment plans.

Join our national and local experts and discover how the new field of Precision Medicine is transforming the future of health care.

Wednesday, November 2
12–1:30pm Check in at 11:30
Cost: \$15 • Lunch included

NorthBay Healthcare Administration Center
4500 Business Center Dr., Fairfield

RSVP NorthBay.org/Clues
Events@NorthBay.org
or 707.646.3280

WITH **Alan H. Bryce, M.D.,**
Oncologist, Mayo Clinic
James Long, M.D.,
Oncologist, NorthBay
Cancer Center



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