

pulse

Montage Health's Ohana —
a transformative model for
mental healthcare with a
singular focus on youth
and families

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE:

The Ohana story | Harnessing courage and building resilience

Introducing local teens to healthcare careers | Saving hearts in the community

Summer/Fall 2023
montagehealth.org/pulse



MONTAGE
Health

From the President/CEO



In just a few short weeks, a transformative project six years in the making will materialize as the Ohana campus opens to our community to further address youth mental health. In this edition of *Pulse*, you'll hear from two Ohana patients about how this innovative child and family mental health program from Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula has already been helping local kids and their families develop mental fitness and build resilience.

Ohana is the result of an unprecedented act of philanthropy on the Central Coast, with Bertie Bialek Elliot's \$105.8 million gift serving as the project's catalyst. This edition of *Pulse* highlights how philanthropy is a powerful tool in our mission to improve lives and inspire the pursuit of optimal health for all members of our community. You'll read how a generous charitable gift from Marv Silverman to create a state-of-the-art Ocular Suite inspired a remodel of the entire Outpatient Surgery Center at Community Hospital.

You'll also read how we're helping hearts in our community in a story about Leo Lukenas, a caddy who suffered a 30-minute cardiac arrest at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am; fast action on the course and his quadruple bypass surgery at Community Hospital gave him a second chance at life. A story on Tyler Heart Institute's new cardiac catheterization lab at Community Hospital further spotlights the strides Montage Health is making to ensure Monterey County hearts are happily beating for years to come.

We are continually working to improve the quality and care we provide the community through initiatives such as the introduction of Moxi, "co-bots" helping nurses spend more time at the patient bedside; our new Center for Physician Excellence, reducing barriers doctors face so they can provide high-quality care; and Community Hospital's new Crisis Stabilization Unit, providing a special location and team of clinical support for people experiencing a mental health crisis.

It is my pleasure to keep the community up to date on ways Montage Health improves lives by delivering exceptional care. On behalf of everyone at Montage Health, thank you for giving us the privilege to care for you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Packer MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steven Packer, MD
President/CEO
Montage Health

ON THE COVER

Interior of the new Ohana campus in Ryan Ranch, opening this fall.

Read about the innovative project on page 12.

Content

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Values and service standards

At Montage Health, we want to make a positive impact on the health and lives of the people in our community by delivering exceptional care and inspiring the pursuit of optimal health. We believe our community’s greatest resource is the health of its people. Our family of organizations is dedicated to coordinating care across all settings to meet each person’s own goals and needs.

People	Connection	Ownership	Excellence	Integrity
<p>We find joy in caring for those we serve.</p>	<p>We are dedicated to coordinating care across all settings.</p>	<p>We have ownership in Montage Health.</p>	<p>We collaborate to deliver the highest-quality care.</p>	<p>We are entrusted to serve our entire community and will do so with respect.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I care for those I serve with compassion and empathy. ■ I value my fellow colleagues and treat them with respect. ■ I am responsible for my own health and well-being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I see our services from the community’s perspective, as one healthcare system. ■ I work with other areas to make care simple for the patient. ■ I learn about Montage Health’s services to help each person access the resources they need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I speak up if I see an error or opportunity. ■ If I cannot solve a problem I will find someone who can. ■ I am a steward of Montage Health’s resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I ensure my work is consistent with the highest standards of care and service. ■ I share my expertise and seek ways to grow. ■ I invite the insight of others to improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I do the right thing. ■ I treat everyone with care, respect, and dignity and honor our differences. ■ I am honest and ethical as I perform my job.

As an organization, we’ve identified these as the core values we want to uphold. But we know it’s not enough to just say that these are our values. We must demonstrate them — live them — through our actions and in the care we provide.



The Ohana story

The United States is confronting a mental health crisis of staggering proportions among its most vulnerable populations: children, teenagers, and young adults. One in five young people suffers from some form of mental health disorder. And most mental health issues in adults can be traced back to their adolescence. The future is literally at stake.

When a young person suffers from a mental health disorder, the whole family feels the pain. In Monterey County, there are too many families in distress, and too few places for them to turn. But there is a ray of hope in the Monterey hills: Ohana, a transformative model for mental healthcare with a singular focus on youth and families.

A first-of-its-kind program, Ohana was created by nationally renowned youth mental health leaders and is staffed by experienced and compassionate mental health professionals. In Hawaiian, Ohana means “family” in the broadest sense — immediate and extended family, as well as the community of support around each individual. In the spirit of Ohana, everyone is family, and caring for the whole family is at the heart of the Ohana model.

Ohana is built on a breakthrough idea: mental illness is always treatable and can often be prevented, and mental fitness — like physical fitness — can be developed and sustained. This is at the core of Ohana’s long-term mission to reduce mental illness to 5 percent of our population.

Ohana is putting prevention into practice by partnering with schools and educators, pediatricians, and faith and parent groups, helping our communities recognize early warning signs of mental health issues before they develop into crises and providing compassionate guidance for raising emotionally healthy, resilient children.

The physical anchor of the Ohana model is the Ohana campus, an innovative mental health center uniquely designed for healing, opening this fall.

Every aspect of the Ohana campus has been thoughtfully planned to maximize its healing power, from its tree-lined, hillside setting to its open interior spaces, bathed in abundant natural light, with inspiring views from every room.

The Ohana campus is the embodiment of the Ohana model. But, Ohana is bigger than a building. Ohana is about fostering mental fitness and brighter futures for young people, and healthier communities throughout Monterey County.

Ohana means family. These are our children. The future is theirs. And Ohana is lighting the path forward.

OHANA SERVICES

The Ohana model of youth mental healthcare is designed to meet families where they are by offering a full spectrum of individualized services in a variety of settings, including:

- **Prevention and early intervention** — outreach programs in collaboration with community partners including schools, parent groups, nonprofits, local government, and pediatricians to engage families early, before issues arise. Educational programs are offered online and in-person, in English and in Spanish, to help meet youth and families in the environment most comfortable for them. A majority of these services are offered to youth, schools, and families at no cost
- **Outpatient care** — evidence-based treatments for a wide range of common mental health challenges faced by youth including individual, group, and family therapies, medication management, and skill-building focused on cultivating mental fitness
- **Higher levels of care** — care in more intensive treatment settings for complex problems, including after-school treatment, full-day treatment programs, and residential programs (opening early 2024)
- **Emergency care** — stabilization programs in a youth-friendly setting, with services that focus on supporting the full family through a crisis

Harnessing courage and building resilience

SAWYER BOYLE'S OHANA STORY

Sarah and Shawn Boyle were losing sleep and experiencing fear, anguish, and confusion. It's the struggle parents experience when their child is in distress — particularly when they can't figure out how to resolve it.

Their son, Sawyer, had always been athletic, academic, well-adjusted, and well-liked. He had a kind, compassionate, and easy-going demeanor and had many friends, interests, and hobbies. But then COVID-19 crept in, and the life he was leading in person, the social framework he was learning to navigate, collapsed into quarantine. Suddenly, he was alone in his room, conducting his life from a computer. His authentic life, as he knew and understood it, had become virtual. He was 8.

Harder still was the equally sudden return to an in-person life he no longer recognized. Sawyer, now 11, withdrew. He lost interest in sports. He found he needed to draw new boundaries with other kids, but didn't know or trust how to do that. Neither, it seemed, did the other kids, who also lost a year of social development and were struggling. When Sawyer told his parents he felt like there should be more to life and that this type of life wasn't fulfilling, they stopped sleeping. So had he.

"Sawyer bravely continued to go to school, continued to do his homework, which could have led some people to assume he was OK," Sarah says. "All we knew for certain was that he was miserable."

The Boyles reached out to Sawyer's teacher, principal, school counselor, and the school administration to share what was going on, imploring them to keep a watchful eye over their son. They contacted their pediatrician for help and guidance, and were immediately referred to Ohana, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula's center for child, adolescent, and family mental health.

"When your child is hurting, you can't help but hurt," Sarah says. "It's hard not to internalize his pain. But this is why we reached out to our pediatrician and, ultimately, to Ohana. When our child struggles, the family struggles."

This also is why the Boyle family made a joint decision to speak candidly about Sawyer's struggles and the family's work with Ohana to help him navigate a healthy life path.

"We stress in our household that talking about this is going to help so many other people to normalize mental health issues," Sarah says. "Society talks regularly about all kinds of ailments from the neck down, and how to address them. Why can't we talk about health issues from the neck up?"

At Ohana, Sawyer was given tools to help build his confidence and sense of independence. He was introduced to different ways of looking at scenarios and situations, says his father, while learning not to take certain interactions to heart, letting them instead roll off his back.

"Ohana also has helped Sawyer realize that he, himself, has hang-ups, and that he may need to pivot to improve himself," Shawn says. "I think Sawyer is starting to get that when another person is harsh, it may be more about that person trying to figure out who they are. It's a constant exercise to have confidence, to stand tall, stay in his own sense of self in the presence of others' issues."

Through Ohana, Sawyer learned how to set boundaries. He learned how to define his emotions, distinguishing between those that are inappropriate and those that are valid but uncomfortable, and how to work through the feelings.

At first, Sawyer says, he was a bit nervous and didn't want to go to Ohana, but he found the staff made him feel comfortable right away. After his first class, he turned to his mom and said, "That was actually kind of fun."



Sawyer, Ohana patient, with parents Shawn and Sarah Boyle

Most importantly, he says, going to Ohana helps him realize he is not alone in his feelings. “And I’m learning how to spot emotions and how to work through them.”

Sawyer’s parents are proud of their son and grateful for the progress he’s made during his work with Ohana.

“He was willing to participate in this process,” Shawn says. “Ohana is not going to figure it all out for him. The parent and the child must take an active role in this to help the child

gain insight on how to rise above his issues. It takes courage to try to know yourself and to stay true to who you are, to understand that happiness is a choice.”

Sawyer and his parents

on camera:

montagehealth.org/sawyer-boyle



When your child is hurting, you can’t help but hurt.

— Sarah Boyle, mother of Ohana patient Sawyer Boyle





“

Now I work as an advocate for kids and students with disabilities. That has become one of the main purposes of my life and something I really want to do for the world.

— Jaelyn Parker, Ohana patient

”

Coping with adversity, embracing resilience, and building mental fitness

JAELYN PARKER'S OHANA STORY

Jaelyn Parker is no stranger to adversity — she was quite literally born into it. Parker and her twin sister were born prematurely, and for Parker, that resulted in cerebral palsy. Adversity is a recurring theme in Parker's life, but so, too, is resilience.

Parker never let cerebral palsy hold her back. She participated in beauty pageants, competed in the Special Olympics for track and field and earned a trip to compete at the state level, and was a paid contributor to Make Just Right, a design consultancy that specializes in helping products and services be more inclusive.

Parker had a harder time with excruciating anxiety and depression that was rooted in troubled personal relationships. The dynamic of some of her closest and most important relationships seemed to be defined by anger, arguments, and animosity, often causing Parker to isolate and shut down.

“I held a lot of resentment,” Parker says. “I had a difficult time expressing my emotions and how I felt, and I didn’t have the capacity to deal with my close relationships because I had issues of my own. It made me not trust people, not want to be around people, and I thought everything was dangerous.”

Those tense relationships resulted in Parker avoiding family time and often struggling to get out of bed. At age 12, Parker started thinking about suicide, struggling with her “will to live and be on this earth.” What Parker was going through was debilitating and painful.

Parker’s sister and brother were already receiving mental health treatment from Ohana. During a family group session, the family’s therapist recognized Parker’s distress. That’s when Parker began receiving Ohana’s outpatient therapy services.

“Immediately, when I started at Ohana, it was clear that they would be my collaborative team working towards my best interest,” Parker says. “When I met my psychiatrist, I fell in love with her. We got along and I enjoyed her company.”

Parker’s time at Ohana consisted of outpatient cognitive behavioral therapy and she was put on medication that she says was a lifesaver. “For the entire hour we would talk about situations that would happen and how I could handle them without having panic attacks. We’d work through my trust issues and the ways that my toxic relationships affected me.”

Parker’s time at Ohana didn’t come without significant challenges. During treatment, her therapist recognized that Parker also suffered from anorexia, and her suicidal thoughts reached a point where she was briefly hospitalized.

Ohana worked with Parker, standing by her side through every step of her healing journey. Parker learned tools and skills to manage her anxiety and depression in ways that would build upon her already

strong foundation of resilience and help her develop mental fitness. “Even though I still have anxiety and hard days with depression, I have the skills now to be able to cope and get through those difficult moments without doing something that is detrimental to my health and well-being,” she says.

In two years of hard work at Ohana, Parker came a long way. Despite everything she faced, she maintained excellent academic scores, earning a spot in Fresno State University’s Business Administration program where she just finished her freshman year.

“Today I’m somewhere I never thought I would be,” Parker says. “I’m not pretending anymore. I have a newfound hope. I didn’t think I would live through my freshman year of high school, let alone my freshman year of college. And that’s because my team at Ohana was there to support me and guide me through every experience.”

Although the adversity that Parker faced was the root of her anxiety and depression, it also contributed to who she is and who she aspires to be. “Now I work as an advocate for kids and students with disabilities. That has become one of the main purposes of my life and something I really want to do for the world.”

Jaelyn on camera:
montagehealth.org/jaelyn-parker



STRONGER TOGETHER



There is a Hawaiian saying for just this sort of effort: ‘A’ohe hana nui ke alu ‘ia’. ‘No task is too big when done together by all.’ Young people who are facing emotional and mental challenges can’t do it alone. Families can’t do it alone. Even the wonderful staff can’t do it alone. It takes a community — and that’s why I suggested ‘Ohana.’ And I’m so happy and proud to be part of this bigger effort.



— Bertie Bialek Elliott, whose historic \$105.8 million gift established Ohana

Learn more about:

- Free resources and classes available to build mental fitness
- Programs, services, and treatment settings
- How to get involved

More information:

montagehealth.org/ohana



Ohana campus: Designed for healing

While thousands of young people and their families have already been served by Ohana, a major physical milestone will be reached this fall: the opening of Ohana's award-winning campus.

Shaped by neuroscience research and developed by a leading global architecture firm, the Ohana campus is designed to instill in young people a sense of possibility by making them feel engaged, connected, safe, and supported.

Nestled among oak trees in the coastal canyon hills of Monterey's Ryan Ranch, the Ohana campus is built with sustainable materials, blends with the landscape, and reflects the natural surroundings. From private residential rooms to spaces devoted to music and art, Ohana will provide places where young people can heal, develop resilience, and discover possibilities through a variety of treatment programs.

In addition to providing patient care, Ohana will serve as a community center and gathering place for classes and programs dedicated to mental health and family support.

The campus features sweeping views of nature, rounded edges and natural materials, refuge spaces, gardens for therapy and cooking, private patios for caregivers to recharge, and integration with the site's terraced landscape.

The campus is also designed for the well-being of caregivers and staff. Ohana's environment and dedicated areas for staff to tend to their own wellness and self-care are aimed at lowering levels of fatigue and burnout, so they can successfully care for Monterey County children and their families.

Explore the Ohana campus:
montagehealth.org/ohanacampus



Renderings of the Ohana campus







Montage Health Foundation's Healthcare Careers Academy volunteers get hands-on learning in Community Hospital's laboratory

Introducing local teens to healthcare careers

Montage Health Foundation's newest volunteer program, Healthcare Careers Academy, is introducing local teens to careers in healthcare.

One of those teens is Salinas High School student Tatiana Jauregui. When she's not at school, track practice, or studying, Tatiana volunteers at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula through the foundation's Healthcare Careers Academy.

Greeting visitors, taking flowers to patients, delivering lab specimens, and working in the Emergency department are among the tasks that keep Tatiana's Saturday afternoons interesting.

"The hospital helps so many people, so its need for help is big, too," she says. "Volunteering feels good because every day they tell me how they appreciate how much I help the staff and patients."

Similar sentiments are shared by teens in the program's first cohort, who are exploring an array of healthcare careers through hands-on learning.

The students commit to a minimum of one 2.5-hour volunteer shift per week, plus sessions where they hear from industry professionals including doctors, nurses, therapists, and administrators. They receive in-person training in departments including the Comprehensive Cancer Center, Radiology, and Laboratory Services. Collectively, the students have served more than 3,000 volunteer hours since September 2022.

"The Healthcare Careers Academy was born from a strong desire among local teenagers to do something to help their community during the pandemic," says Michele Melicia Young, Director of Montage Health Foundation. "We received countless inquiries from young people asking how they can help, how they can make a difference. It became very apparent that we needed a program to harness this desire among youth to help their community."

The academy was created by Luke Dilger, a former teacher and Service Learning Director for Montage Health Foundation's Auxiliary. The first volunteer group began in June 2022 with a two-month summer intensive program, giving students the opportunity to receive guidance and mentorship from healthcare professionals.

The students could then participate in the academy's first year-long session, which ran through May. "We wanted to take the program beyond just volunteering and community service," Young says. "We wanted to turn this program into an opportunity to gain real-world experience in the healthcare field. It is truly an investment in our community. If we can foster a passion for healthcare careers among local youth, then the hope is that they go to college, get their education, and come back to serve the communities they are from."



I want to come back to the Monterey area and work here because I really do love the community. I really do love the people and the patients and the staff and just everything about it. If people out there want an opportunity in the healthcare field, they really should volunteer. It has been an amazing experience getting to learn about not only the hospital and its people, but also about myself."

— Tatiana Jauregui,
Healthcare Careers
Academy service learner





PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

Inspiring service learners to pursue college-level healthcare programs is one of the main goals of the academy. High school seniors who reach 100 volunteer hours for the year are eligible for a scholarship from the Montage Health Foundation Auxiliary. This year, three seniors hit that benchmark and were each awarded a \$10,000 scholarship for their college freshman year.

Throughout the year-long program, local healthcare experts and professionals meet with the students to answer their questions, give them tips for getting into college, share why they chose their career paths, and tell them what to expect academically. The academy also provides students with letters of recommendation and helps them secure healthcare internships. Combine all this with the many volunteer hours that each service learner accumulates, and their college applications begin to stand out among their peers.



AN INVESTMENT IN LOCAL HEALTHCARE

Healthcare Careers Academy is an investment that Montage Health Foundation believes will pay dividends in the future. The program is funded and operated by Montage Health Foundation and is free for participants.

With a healthcare worker shortage across the country and here in Monterey County, programs like the academy are imperative to the long-term vitality of the healthcare industry.

"After college, I want to come back here to the hospital," Tatiana says. "I want to come back to the Monterey area and work here because I really do love the community. I really do love the people and the patients and the staff and just everything about it. If people out there want an opportunity in the healthcare field, they really should volunteer. It has been an amazing experience getting to learn about not only the hospital and its people, but also about myself."



GET INVOLVED

The 2023–2024 Healthcare Careers Academy session is full at this time. Applications for the summer session typically open in May. Students must be at least 14 years old, in high school, and able to commit to at least one 2.5-hour volunteer shift per week.

Learn more about future opportunities with the Healthcare Careers Academy and Montage Health Foundation's other initiatives at montagehealth.org/service-learning.



Programs like this aren't possible without community support. Contributions help Montage Health Foundation cultivate a healthier community by meeting today's needs and realizing dreams and plans for the future. Support programs like Healthcare Careers Academy by making a donation or giving back as a volunteer at montagehealthfoundation.org.





We wanted to take this program beyond just volunteering and community service. We wanted to turn it into an opportunity for young people to gain real-world experience in the healthcare field.

— Michele Melicia Young, Director, Montage Health Foundation



Montage Health Foundation's Healthcare Careers Academy service learners get first-hand experience delivering meals to patient rooms at Community Hospital

Leo Lukenas and one of his care providers, Dr. Michael Davis, William R. Lewis, MD Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit Medical Director, Community Hospital



Saving hearts in the community

CADDY WHO COLLAPSED AT AT&T PEBBLE BEACH PRO-AM MAKES REMARKABLE RECOVERY AT COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

When Leo Lukenas collapsed on the 11th fairway during the second round of the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am in February and suffered a 30-minute cardiac arrest, his prognosis was grim. Fewer than 10 percent of people who have a cardiac arrest outside a hospital survive, according to the American Heart Association. Each year, out-of-hospital cardiac arrests claim nearly 350,000 lives in the United States.

Thankfully, Lukenas collapsed next to Sgt. Kelly Bunn of the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office. Bunn immediately began performing CPR, continuing until paramedics arrived and transported Lukenas to Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula.

After receiving emergency care, Lukenas was moved to the hospital's Intensive Care Unit and was diagnosed with severe coronary artery disease. He underwent quadruple bypass surgery to restore blood flow to his heart, followed by cardiac rehabilitation therapy.

"Leo is very lucky to be here today, and that is in large part due to the actions of Sgt. Bunn and Leo's timely transportation to the hospital," says Dr. Gregory Spowart, cardiothoracic and vascular surgeon with Montage Medical Group. "Surviving cardiac arrest is rare, and Leo's high spirits and fast recovery make his case even more of an outlier."

Bunn's actions, swift response from paramedics, and lifesaving care at Community Hospital gave Lukenas a second chance at life.

"It seems like it was a bad thing that happened to me — it wasn't," Lukenas says. "It was a blessing in disguise...because I had a problem with my heart, and something was going to go wrong sooner or later."

At a Montage Health news conference, Lukenas had the opportunity to thank and embrace Bunn, along with the doctors, nurses, and paramedics who played roles in saving his life.

"The moment I will be most proud of is this moment, watching Leo not be in a hospital bed, being able to walk, talk, and move around," Bunn said at the news conference. "There's a lot of emotions right now, but it's just a very proud moment for me to be sitting next to him in the company of all the people who helped him get to this point."

Lukenas and his family generously provided funding to Montage Health Foundation for an automated external defibrillator to be used by First Tee, a nonprofit organization that focuses on golf and building character for youth.

Lukenas was treated at Tyler Heart Institute, Community Hospital's cardiovascular department, which brings together the best area doctors, including experienced cardiologists, surgeons, and other specialists. Providing comprehensive, personalized care for all ages and stages of cardiovascular health, it's the only full-scope multidisciplinary cardiology practice on the Monterey Peninsula.

"We want our patients to reach their optimal health so they can be physically active in a capacity that fits their life," says Dr. Mark Carvalho, Chief Executive Officer of Montage Medical Group.

The institute offers comprehensive cardiovascular care, including a cardiac catheterization lab, minimally invasive procedures, and open-heart surgery.

"The care patients receive at Tyler Heart Institute is completely coordinated, meaning patients can receive world-class care right here in our community," says Dr. Steven Cabrales, Vice President and Chief Medical Officer at Montage Health. "They don't have to travel to the Bay Area since we offer it all under one roof."

Bringing together innovative cardiac procedures and the experts to perform them were key goals when Tyler Heart Institute was founded at Community Hospital with a generous donation from William and Susanne Tyler, ensuring that Monterey County hearts keep happily beating for years to come.

Photos from the news conference:

montagehealth.org/caddy



SYMPTOMS OF HEART FAILURE

If you have heart failure, you may experience:

- Coughing, wheezing, or shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Fluid buildup that can cause ankle swelling
- Weakness

HEART FAILURE CAUSES

Your risk for heart failure is higher if you have:

- Coronary artery disease
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Heart attack
- Heart muscle disorder that weakens the heart
- Heart valve disease
- Peripheral vascular disease

Learn more:

montagehealth.org/heart-failure





Rendering of Community Hospital's newly renovated cardiac catheterization lab

New cardiac catheterization lab: Increasing access and options for heart care

A major renovation of the cardiac catheterization or cath lab at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula is laying the foundation for more and more complex heart and vascular care for the community.

The lab will have two procedure rooms with state-of-the-art tools; one will have a “biplane” X-ray system that gives doctors real-time visualization from two angles, needed for certain interventions. The rooms are also being converted into hybrid operating rooms, equipping them to handle surgical procedures usually performed in operating rooms, if needed.

“We have excellent physicians and a talented multidisciplinary clinical team, and this project is going to elevate everything we do,” says Julie Rush, Director of the hospital’s Tyler Heart Institute. The lab is expected to open at the end of 2023.

Catheterization labs are for diagnosing and treating a range of cardiac and vascular conditions in a minimally invasive way. Instead of a large incision required for “open” surgery, a thin, flexible tube called a catheter is



inserted through a small incision in the patient’s groin, arm, or neck, and then threaded through a blood vessel. Through the catheter, doctors can perform procedures including opening clogged arteries, replacing valves, and repairing heart defects. When issues can be treated in a cath lab rather than through surgery, recovery is generally faster and easier.

In addition to the two procedure rooms, Community Hospital has an electrophysiology lab to treat heart-rhythm issues. Having the three rooms will enable the hospital to serve more patients, addressing community and physician demand, says Dr. Pir Shah, Medical Director of the cath lab.

Shah anticipates increases in already-offered procedures including transcatheter aortic valve replacement, closure of holes in the heart, and vascular treatments such as placing stents in arteries in the legs to improve blood flow.

With the advances in the cath lab, Tyler Heart Institute plans to add new procedures, says Dr. Ahmad Edris, Director of Interventional Cardiology and Structural Heart Disease at Montage Medical Group. Those include:

- Implants to repair leaky mitral valves to improve blood flow in the heart
- Valve-in-valve replacement, in which a new valve is inserted in a previously replaced valve that is no longer working properly
- Ethanol ablation, to shrink an enlarged, stiff heart wall by injecting it with alcohol

“There are needs for these kinds of procedures in the community,” says Edris, who performed them elsewhere before being recruited to Tyler Heart Institute this year. “A lot of patients are being under-diagnosed or being sent to the Bay Area. I think they’re going to get a higher level of care here.”

A longer-range plan is to develop and staff a neurointerventional program to diagnose and treat issues of the brain and nervous system, says Dr. Steven Cabrales, Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of Montage Health. For example, he says, the minimally invasive approach of a cath lab could be used to break up or remove blood clots from the brain.

“With our investment in innovation,” Cabrales says, “we are building for the future as well as upgrading to better meet current needs.”

More on heart and vascular care at Montage Health:

montagehealth.org/heart



A lot of patients are being under-diagnosed or being sent to the Bay Area. I think they’re going to get a higher level of care here.



— Dr. Ahmad Edris, Director, Interventional Cardiology/Structural Heart Disease, Montage Medical Group

Read more about Dr. Edris:

montagehealth.org/new-cardiologist



Small changes, big results: How the Health Coaching program from Aspire Health changed a Monterey County man's life

Rudy Torres began to struggle with weight-gain in his early 30s, and any time he would make some progress to shed some pounds, the Del Rey Oaks resident would gain them back soon after. He struggled to find a diet and exercise regimen that worked for him.

When Torres was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure, he realized it was time to get serious about making sustainable lifestyle changes. Then he learned about the Health Coaching program from Aspire Health.

Torres joined the program and was paired with health coach Julian Echeverry. After more than a year in the program, Torres lost 30 pounds, reduced his body mass index from 44.22 to 28.76, lowered his A1c blood sugar level from 6.5 to 6.3, got his blood pressure down from 152/84 to 139/75, and significantly improved the diabetic nerve pain in his feet.

Montage Health spoke with Torres to learn more about his story and what made his Health Coaching journey so successful.



What made you want to join the Health Coaching program at Aspire Health?



A big motivator for me was my type 2 diabetes diagnosis. That gave me a shock and at that point, it was enough fooling around. I also have a grandson, and even the little things were difficult for me. We would go outside and throw the ball around, but that's where it stopped. I wanted to be more involved and active with my grandkids.

I started gaining weight when I was in my 30s, and I told myself that I would get back on track in my 40s. Before I knew it, I was in my 50s, then in my 60s. The weight kept piling on and I was up to 272 pounds. That's when it got through to me that I really had to do something.

So, when I learned about the Health Coaching program with my health insurance, Aspire Health, I figured I'd give it a shot. It has been great getting to know my health coach, Julian, and his encouragement has been extremely helpful.



Why do you think this program has been so successful for you?



It wasn't magic and I didn't receive a strict set of guidelines detailing a diet and exercise routine. Julian was more focused on encouraging me, and that turned into a desire on my part to not let him down. He didn't tell me anything that my wife hadn't already been telling me for years, but the fact that it was coming from my health coach had a huge impact on my motivation.

When I'd meet with Julian, we'd set a goal for me to work toward before we met again. It was a conversation between us, all about what I want to do, what I want to accomplish. He wasn't just telling me what to do — we were working on it together. And if I failed, or if I didn't live up to expectations, or I only lost one pound, or I gained a pound or two, it wasn't a big deal. We won't always have perfect results, so we focus on continuing to move forward.

Paying attention to my meal portions has made a big difference in my health. I stopped going for seconds, or if I went for seconds, I'd get vegetables instead of another piece of steak. I started ordering side salads instead of chips or fries, I reduced sugar, I replaced starchy vegetables with non-starchy vegetables, and we eat out

much less now. When we do eat out, I order healthy options. These are all simple changes that I knew I had to make, and Julian's guidance and encouragement are what helped me get there.



How is your health now compared to before you started the program?



Before Julian and the Health Coaching program helped me establish a healthier lifestyle, I was taking four gabapentin pills every day for the nerve damage in my feet caused by my diabetes. That made walking very painful, so I wasn't much of a walker. Now, I've weaned off to just half of a pill per day. I like to take my dog to the dog park for exercise, and the park is down the hill from our house. The walk back up the hill is a great workout and I'm getting better at it as time goes on. I realized that the more active I am, the less I'm affected by the symptoms of diabetes like the nerve pain in my feet. Everything feels a little bit better when I do exercise, so that encourages me to try to do more.

Throughout my life I would lose and gain weight because I couldn't stay on track. I would be doing well and lose some weight, but then a life event would knock me off track and I'd be right back where I started. Julian helped me realize that missteps and failure are OK. We are all going to fail and that is part of life. Because of Julian's encouragement, any time I get knocked off track now, I'm able to shake it off and pick back up where I left off.

I would encourage everybody who is going through what I went through to put your ego down and try it. You never know what it might do for your life. Put that ego down and take that first step.

More on Aspire Health:
aspirehealthplan.org



Rudy Torres, Aspire Health member, getting some exercise on a walk with his dog





More than 120 Monterey County elementary school students joined The Beast at Healthy Youth Field Day, presented by Aspire Health and Montage Health Foundation, at Cardinale Stadium, home of the Monterey Bay Football Club

Population Health community program highlights

Aspire Health's Population Health division helps improve the health and well-being of Monterey County residents through programs and services that provide solutions to overcome barriers to good health. Participating community members can be more active, independent, and in control of their health.

DON'T FEED THE DIABETES

About half of Monterey County residents have type 2 diabetes or prediabetes, well above the national average. The disease puts families, friends, neighbors — perhaps even you — in danger of blindness, heart disease, and more.

To address that troubling statistic, Aspire Health's Don't Feed the Diabetes campaign is helping educate the community about the dangers of diabetes and how to reduce risk. During 2022, the campaign reached more than 290,000 Monterey County residents and had a presence at 21 community events.

Don't Feed the Diabetes also enhanced its school outreach in 2022, empowering more than 5,500 students in 37 schools to take action against diabetes.

The campaign's new animated video teaches students about type 2 diabetes in an understandable, fun, and engaging short clip featuring The Beast, the campaign's mascot. This devious creature creatively shines a light on the dangers of diabetes, bringing awareness to risky behaviors that "feed the diabetes."

Recognition from the American Hospital Association highlights the positive impact that the Don't Feed the Diabetes campaign makes on our community's health. Montage Health and Salinas Valley Health received the association's Dick Davidson NOVA Award, which recognizes collaborative efforts between hospitals to improve community health.

Learn more:
[pophealth.aspirehealth.org/
diabetes-prevention](https://pophealth.aspirehealth.org/diabetes-prevention)





HEALTHY TOGETHER

Aspire Health's Healthy Together program, formerly called the Pediatric Wellness Program, expanded to reach more families with the aim of curbing the alarming rates of childhood obesity and diabetes in Monterey County.

Healthy Together's expansion places a premium on the current and future health of our families through enhanced education and activities, larger and updated teaching spaces, a bilingual participant workbook in Spanish and English, an increase from four to six education sessions, and more flexible scheduling for families.

The family-focused program is offered in Spanish and English, Monday through Friday, with group class and individual appointment options. The classes and activities offer fun and engaging sessions on topics including setting goals, healthy eating, and physical activity. Highly trained, certified coaches use pediatrician recommendations and a family-focused approach to inspire lifelong healthy habits.

The recent program changes have made it easier for children and families to create their own wellness journey, meeting their unique health needs, busy schedules, location, and technology capabilities.

Healthy Together is funded by Montage Health Foundation and Salinas Valley Health Foundation, making the program free for families.

Healthy Together video:
aspirehealth.org/healthytogether



\$182.9 million

Through the **Community Benefit program**, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula worked with 225 organizations, businesses, and public agencies to improve the health of the community.

\$177.2 MILLION

Improving access to care for the community through financial assistance for low-income patients, travel assistance to medical appointments for patients in need, and grant support for Monterey County health clinics

\$3.2 MILLION

Providing health education and wellness resources, including free classes, counseling, support groups, and publications to improve community well-being

\$1.9 MILLION

Building healthy communities by donating health services, medical equipment, and blood, as well as offering support groups and making phone calls to homebound residents

\$518,631

Supporting special care for people who face major obstacles to good health, such as those experiencing homelessness, behavioral health issues, substance use disorder, or poverty

6,580

Volunteer hours supporting community health

More on Community Hospital's Community Benefit program:
montagehealth.org/communitybenefit



COMMUNITY BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT



Supporting community wellness through Meals on Wheels

As a part of Community Hospital's Community Benefit mission to support health education and wellness in the community, in 2022 the Community Benefit program awarded a **\$10,000 grant** to Meals on Wheels of the Monterey Peninsula to offer chair yoga, tai chi, and strength and balance classes to seniors, disabled adults, veterans, and other underserved populations in the community. Class participants benefited through improved strength and balance, increased flexibility, and more socialization opportunities.

"These classes have not only improved my physical well-being but have given me great opportunities to meet new people, which helps my mental health as well. Before I took these classes my family was concerned because I fell often, but now I feel confident leaving my house and being a part of my community."

— Class participant

With support from Community Hospital's Community Benefit program, in 2022 Meals on Wheels of the Monterey Peninsula provided **6,700 hours** of wellness classes for 253 seniors and underserved community members.

Improving lives in Monterey County

PRESCRIBE SAFE

Saving lives in the fight against addiction



Montage Health's Prescribe Safe program launched in 2014 and partners with local businesses and agencies to address the opioid addiction problem in Monterey County. By 2018, Monterey County had improved to have the second-lowest

opioid-related death rate of any county in California. But, in the last several years, counterfeit medications have entered the market, many with a toxic or lethal dose of fentanyl, causing a staggering increase in opioid-related overdoses and deaths. To combat this deadly threat, Prescribe Safe held 40 community presentations in 2022 and distributed 3,550 doses of naloxone, the opioid overdose antidote. The Prescribe Safe team is working on a curriculum for middle and high schools on substance use education and prevention, which it will pilot in fall 2023. Prescribe Safe's increased prevention efforts aim to save and improve lives by helping to prevent and address addiction.

BLUE ZONES PROJECT MONTEREY COUNTY

Live longer, better



Montage Health's commitment to community well-being is reflected through sponsorship of Blue Zones Project Monterey County, a community-wide well-being initiative that focuses on creating sustainable change where people live, work, learn, and play. The program creates an

environment where the healthy choice is the easy choice, and has engaged more than 30,000 Monterey County residents through more than 200 volunteer events, resulting in more than 10,000 hours of community volunteer service. With 48 approved worksites, 40 approved schools, seven approved grocery stores, and 43 approved restaurants, Montage Health works with Blue Zones Project Monterey County to foster a community where residents live longer, better.

KIDS EAT RIGHT

Promoting healthy eating and exercise in our schools



Last year marked the official return of Kids Eat Right after a two-year closure due to COVID-19. The program is free for participants and designed to provide science-based nutrition education to children and families. The small but mighty team picked up where it left off and is moving full-steam

ahead in 2023, attending community events, delivering hands-on learning in schools, and providing fresh produce bags to local families. The program was offered at 18 schools during the school year, reaching nearly 2,500 students. Since 2022, Kids Eat Right has had a presence at 28 community events, reaching more than 2,200 people, and held nine family workshops connecting 160 people to resources and family wellness opportunities. Kids Eat Right partners with community organizations including Blue Zones Project, Aspire Health, Boys and Girls Club, Community Partnership for Youth, Girls Inc., MEarth, and all Monterey County libraries.

MONTAGE WELLNESS CENTER

Keeping communities healthy and active



Members are empowered to improve their fitness in a welcoming, encouraging, and inclusive atmosphere at Montage Wellness Center. State-of-the-art facilities in Marina and Salinas make Montage Wellness Center a leader in the Monterey County fitness industry, featuring warm

water therapy pools, lap swimming pools, steam rooms, cardio and strength equipment and machines, degreed and certified personal trainers, and 75 combined weekly classes, ranging from low to moderate intensity, including yoga, indoor cycling, tai chi, aqua aerobics, and Zumba.



Moxi greets a Community Hospital nurse



We go into nursing to spend time caring for our patients. That's where we find true meaning in what we do.

— Debbie Sober,
Vice President/
Chief Nursing Officer
Montage Health

Meet Moxi: Community Hospital introduces 'co-bots'

Robots named Moxi joined Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula's team this year, tasked with routine but time-consuming duties like picking up and delivering supplies, medication, and small equipment. The goal is to give clinical staff, especially nurses, more time to focus on their patients.

Designed to serve as capable, useful teammates that support — not replace — valued nurses and hospital staff, the Moxi robots have been rolling around Community Hospital since mid-February. They started by mapping the layout, much like a Roomba vacuum cleaner maps the floorplan of a house, and are now hard at work improving clinical workflows and efficiency.

About the size of a human, Moxi has sparkling eyes of heart-shaped lights and emits a “meep” sound to

alert people of its presence. It has a robotic arm that can open doors and push buttons and can wave to people it passes. Its torso has three secure storage compartments for the items it's delivering.

Diligent Robotics Inc., maker of Moxi, estimates as much as one-third of a nurse's time is spent on non-patient-facing work. Moxi was created to change that, working as a “co-bot” to collaborate with staff.

“In healthcare, we have to look at doing our work differently,” says Debbie Sober, Vice President/Chief Nursing Officer at Montage Health. “We need to leverage various tools and technology to allow our nurses and staff to be at the bedside spending more time with our patients. We have to be careful not to put all of our trust in electronics, because we need our brains for critical thinking and our human touch for care. But we need to lean into technology to help us.”



Community Hospital was the first hospital in Northern or Central California to add Moxi robots, and the third in California. Hospital leaders visited Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, which had four Moxi robots, and Sober says, “we knew right away that we had to bring Moxi to Monterey.”

Moxi’s technical features include:

- Social intelligence: can open elevators and doors on its own and won’t bump into people or objects
- Mobile manipulation: can interact with the hospital’s existing environment without requiring significant infrastructure investments
- Human-guided learning: the more that staff use Moxi, the more Moxi learns and adapts to the hospital

Requests for Moxi to perform tasks are made on iPads at kiosks in specific areas of Community Hospital. Moxi can prioritize tasks and can make several stops. Items can only be retrieved from Moxi’s drawers by the person who requested them, using their badge for electronic access. Moxi robots are monitored 24/7 by staff at the

Austin, Texas headquarters of Diligent Robotics, who can troubleshoot or alert hospital staff if issues develop.

“I’m very excited about the positive impact Moxi is making. Patients are seeing their nurses more and know that we are truly investing in their care,” says Faith Merriam, Community Hospital’s Nursing Director and leader of the Moxi project.

The robots are owned and maintained by Diligent Robotics and used at Community Hospital through a paid subscription system. Funding is provided by Montage Health Foundation, which has supported numerous innovative efforts to improve patient care.

“We go into nursing to spend time caring for our patients,” Sober says. “That’s where we find the true meaning in what we do.”

More Moxi photos:
montagehealth.org/moxi





Crisis Stabilization Unit — adult unit

New Crisis Stabilization Unit: Help for patients in crisis

Local communities saw a mental health milestone in March 2023 with the opening of Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula's new Crisis Stabilization Unit, which provides a faster, more focused pathway to care for patients experiencing a mental health crisis.

The dedicated space and specially trained staff are for people who go to the Emergency department in crisis, but don't require hospitalization. The goals are to get them specific, brief care to manage the crisis and ensure they have the services and support they need to be able to go home safely.

"Someone in a mental health crisis may be experiencing suicidal thoughts, significant stressors at home or in life that they are having trouble managing, or concurrent challenges with mental illness and substance use," says Dr. Veronica Searles Quick, Director of Crisis Psychiatry at Ohana, Community Hospital's youth and family mental health program. "They often just need therapeutic support, a period of respite, and some space to recuperate. If we transfer a patient with a mental health concern to a more therapeutic environment more quickly,

it benefits our patient and clears a bed in the Emergency department for another patient to be seen."

The Crisis Stabilization Unit opened on March 20, 2023, for patients 18 and older. A separate, adjacent area for those 17 and younger opened on July 17, partially staffed by Ohana.

The need is significant. In January 2023, considered a typical month, 146 Emergency department patients needed mental health assistance or evaluation. "Based on the initial evaluation and safety assessment, many of these patients would have been appropriate to receive care in the new Crisis Stabilization Unit," says Alexandra Keller, Director of Behavioral Health Services at Community Hospital.



Crisis Stabilization Unit — pediatric unit

Historically, people who went to the Emergency department in crisis had sometimes-lengthy waits for evaluation and related support. If it was determined they needed inpatient care, the wait could be even longer. Adults may go to Garden Pavilion, Community Hospital's inpatient mental health unit, if it's appropriate for their needs and a bed is available. For young people, Ohana's residential unit at its Ryan Ranch campus will open in 2024, but for now, there are no other beds for youth in Monterey County. "Finding available inpatient space somewhere in California can take days or longer," Searles Quick says.

The Crisis Stabilization Unit eases this challenge of limited access to services, benefiting the patients who meet clinical and safety criteria and freeing Emergency department staff

and space for non-mental health emergencies.

"It also reduces burnout for staff," Searles Quick says. "Watching and caring for patients in the Emergency department, sometimes for days, when we know they need mental health support in a psychiatric setting, is hard for everyone."

The unit is staffed with psychiatrists as well as registered nurses and social workers with mental health training. The space was designed with the patients in mind, enabling group and individual therapy, consultations, meetings with families, interaction among patients, respite, and "quiet time."

The primary areas — one for young people, one for adults — are open spaces with comfortable reclining chairs, activities, and kitchenettes. The adult unit features one "quiet room," when private space is needed,



One of our goals for the unit is to reduce the need for hospitalization because these patients will have time to recuperate in a therapeutic space.

— Dr. Veronica Searles Quick,
Director, Crisis Psychiatry,
Ohana



and the children's area has two individual rooms and one quiet room. Up to eight adults and five young people can be accommodated.

Adult stays usually last no longer than 24 hours, while children's can be a bit longer, with active participation from family playing a key role in the intervention.

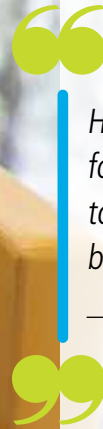
"One of our goals for the unit is to reduce the need for hospitalization," Searles Quick says, "because these patients will have time to recuperate in a therapeutic space."

The unit is designed for patients who are evaluated in the Emergency department and meet specific criteria, including:

- Are experiencing a mental health crisis that can benefit from a short-term intervention
- Do not require hospitalization or inpatient treatment
- Are not violent
- Do not have advanced dementia

Learn more:
[montagehealth.org/
crisis-stabilization-unit](https://montagehealth.org/crisis-stabilization-unit)





Having been eyesight-conscious for eight decades, I wanted to do something local on behalf of Montage Health.

— Marv Silverman, philanthropist

A philanthropist's vision for improving eye health

Donation to Montage Health Foundation for new eye procedure suite inspires full renovation of Outpatient Surgery Center

Marv Silverman has worn glasses since he was a little boy. The challenges of imperfect vision, paired with an appreciation for the benefits of corrective lenses, have long inspired him to champion the visually impaired and focus on eye health in philanthropic ways.

Silverman's interest in serving his community inspired him to leave his real estate law office one day per week to create audio recordings of law books for blind and visually impaired students and colleagues of the law via Learning Ally. Formerly known as Recording for the Blind, the organization serves K-12, college, and graduate students, as well as veterans who cannot read standard print due to blindness, visual impairment, or dyslexia.

Upon retiring, Silverman moved to Carmel, where he expanded his philanthropy and estate planning to include local and national organizations that benefit the visually impaired. Yet, Silverman sought to expand his philanthropy beyond visual impairment to eye health.

"Having been eyesight-conscious for eight decades, I wanted to do something local on behalf of Montage Health," says Silverman. "I went to see Dr. Steven Packer,

President and CEO of Montage Health, to explore what I might do, and he said that eye surgery requires specialized equipment and technology that has to be brought into the standard surgical suite to accommodate these delicate procedures. I thought it would be great to fund a permanent eye operatory suite."

Thanks to Silverman's generous support, the new Ocular Suite — a beautiful, well-lit space with a glass

focal wall, new eye-exam chairs, and cutting-edge medical equipment for the new eye-procedure room — can accommodate the more than 800 eye procedures administered at Community Hospital each year. A Steris sound and camera system introduces image-sharing technology that enables the surgeon to consult with other practitioners and allows the pathology department to assess the patient's surgical site for recommendations on further treatment.

Silverman's significant gift to Montage Health Foundation also served as a catalyst for remodeling Community Hospital's entire Outpatient Surgery Center.

In complement to the new, state-of-the-art Ocular Suite, the Outpatient Surgery Center underwent renovation to enhance patient experience and care. Three larger operating rooms and two larger procedure rooms, remodeled to include private surgical bays, underwent advanced infection-prevention measures via enhanced Steris lights, booms, and clean-suite technology. The spacious environment, which enables a more streamlined patient experience, from check-in to discharge, has been renovated to provide a beautiful and calming environment conducive to healing and well-being.

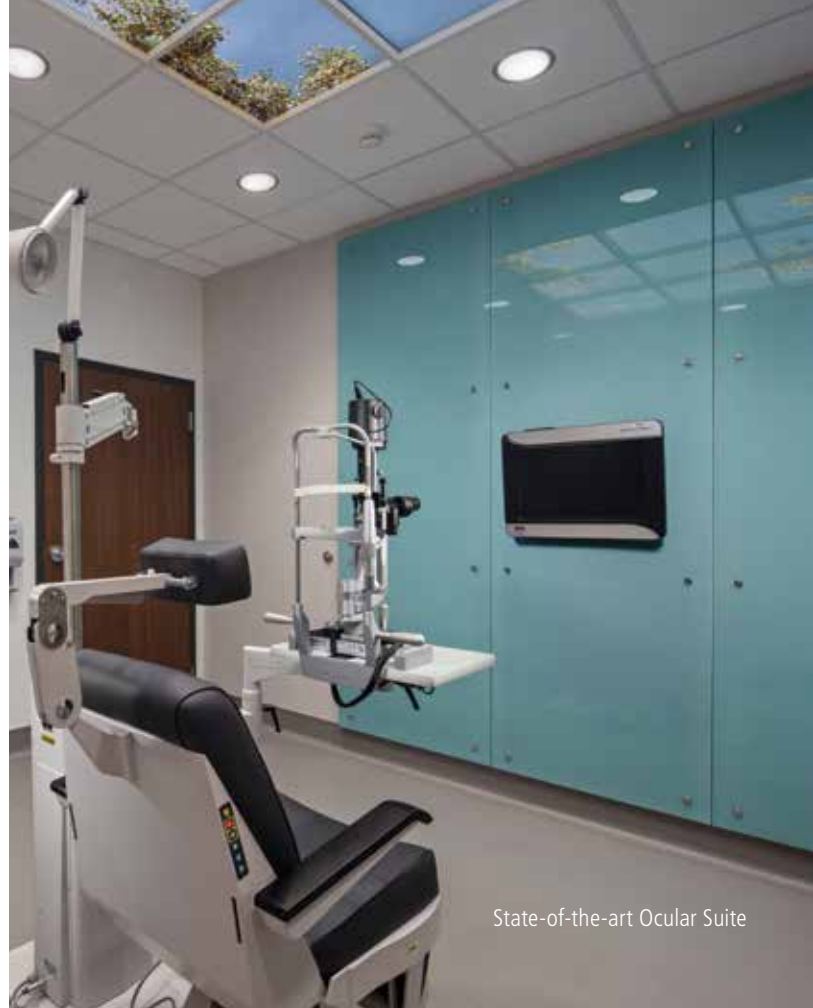
Both the Ocular Suite and Outpatient Surgery Center completed their full renovations in 2022 and are actively seeing patients and improving the health of the local community.

Many mornings, Silverman, who calls himself "an enthusiastic golfer," can be seen swinging a club on coastal greens. "Other than corrective lenses and the standard cataract surgery, I've been pretty lucky," he says. "I'm grateful I can still see well enough to get out and hit golf balls."

Philanthropy is instrumental in Montage Health's mission to improve lives and inspire the pursuit of optimal health. View Montage Health Foundation's 2022 donors and volunteers at montagehealth.org/2022champions.



Tour the newly remodeled Outpatient Surgery Center:
montagehealth.org/opsc



State-of-the-art Ocular Suite



Newly renovated operating room in the Outpatient Surgery Center



Montage Medical Group: Meeting the need for more extraordinary doctors

Primary care doctors are in high demand on a national level, with an ever-growing number leaving the profession, reporting burnout they attribute to long, stressful days, cumbersome mandates for computerized documentation, diminishing numbers of support staff, and inadequate compensation.

Factor in the sky-high cost of living on the Monterey Peninsula, and a clear picture emerges of the recruiting challenges faced by Montage Medical Group, the physician-led organization serving the healthcare needs of communities in the Monterey area.

Despite the challenges, Montage Medical Group welcomed 20 new doctors, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners in 2022, already has added 16 to its

workforce in 2023, and expects to hire at least two more by the end of the year, according to Dr. Mark Carvalho, Chief Executive Officer of Montage Medical Group.

“We’re really trying to increase our number of our primary care providers; that’s our greatest need right now,” Carvalho says. When he came aboard as CEO in early 2020, there were 61 doctors, physician assistants, and



nurse practitioners — a population that has blossomed to 95.

A 2022 study calculated that the Monterey Peninsula was operating with 21 fewer primary caregivers than it realistically needed, and Salinas had a shortage of more than 40.

But Montage Medical Group’s hiring success over the past two years is noteworthy, considering that the strong demand for doctors is nationwide, creating fierce recruiting competition.

“I recently returned from the national conference of the American College of Physicians, where we actually brought a recruiting booth,” Carvalho says. “When people heard

where we were from, they invariably said, ‘Of course I’d love to live there, but I could never afford it.’ Most wouldn’t give us a second look.”

Carvalho believes Montage Medical Group’s hiring success can largely be attributed to a substantial level of support from Montage Health’s Center for Physician Excellence, which provides funding to assist physicians with student loan payments and mortgage support if they choose to move here.

“When I talk to physicians who are looking to come here, I also try to reinforce that Montage Health is a physician-led and clinically-led organization, from the top down. We always start with, ‘What healthcare services does our community need and how can we address that need?’” Carvalho says.

“I want them to understand that we have great resources here, including the philanthropy from Montage Health Foundation, which really helps support doctors in their development. We have autonomy and resources that you don’t have at a big corporation. Quite frankly, those things make us pretty nimble.”

Despite the competitive hiring climate, Montage Health is heavily focused on the future, which includes growth. Short- and long-term aspirations include adding an endovascular surgeon and a dermatologist, and expanding palliative, geriatric, neurological, and stroke care.

Montage Medical Group also plans to open a new 50,000-square-foot campus in Ryan Ranch in 2025, and expansion of its existing facility in Marina is also under discussion.



We’re really trying to increase our number of our primary care providers. That’s our greatest need right now.

— Dr. Mark Carvalho, Chief Executive Officer, Montage Medical Group



Learn more about Montage Medical Group and make an appointment:
montagemedicalgroup.org





Montage Medical Group's pulmonology team, from left, Dr. Yosuf Subat, Dr. Jaya Prakash Sugunaraj, and Dr. Antonette Ajayi

Increasing specialty access for Monterey County patients

In 2020, the Association of American Medical Colleges published a study projecting the United States to be short by as many as 86,700 specialists by 2023. In a recent American Medical Association study, one out of five doctors plan to leave the workforce in the next two years.

In an already competitive atmosphere, Monterey County faces additional obstacles to recruiting new doctors such as the high cost of living. The doctor shortage is further compounded by the age demographics of Monterey County patients and doctors: 14 percent of Monterey County residents are over age 65, and a 2020 Montage Health study found that 41 percent of local doctors are over age 60. This means that Monterey County has a high percentage of people who need regular healthcare services, coupled with a physician workforce with increasing retirements.

To address this community need, Montage Health has invested in doctor recruitment efforts for the area, and the effort has paid off. In response to a demonstrated need for additional pulmonary and urological care, Montage Medical Group recently recruited several new pulmonologists and urologists and continues to prioritize physician recruitment, increasing access for Monterey County patients.

Meet our new pulmonologists

Dr. Antonette Ajayi

Dr. Ajayi attended David Geffen School of Medicine at the UCLA PRIME Program and was chief resident during her internal medicine residency at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Santa Clara. She completed her fellowship in pulmonary critical care medicine at Stanford Medical Center and is board-certified in internal medicine, pulmonary medicine, and critical care medicine.

Dr. Yosuf Subat

During his studies at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, Dr. Subat enjoyed the dynamic of learning something from a book and then using that material to help people get well. Dr. Subat appreciates the diversity of his work. One week, he says, he's in the Intensive Care Unit, dealing with high-stakes situations that require precise focus and quick decisions. The following



Montage Medical Group's urology team, from left, Dr. Harsha Mittakanti, Dr. Jon Soble, Rebecca Singh, NP, Dr. Kyla Velaer, Dr. Evan Rosen, Dr. Craig Stauffer, and Jennifer Panning, NP

week, he will sit down with a patient to make decisions together, building a collaborative patient-physician relationship.

Dr. Prakash Sugunaraj

Dr. Sugunaraj has expertise in managing asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, interstitial lung disease, sarcoid, and bronchoscopy. He did his residency at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi and Griffin Hospital/Yale University, and clinical training and fellowship at Geisinger in Pennsylvania. He served as an associate physician at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine and as an assistant professor at Temple University. Dr. Sugunaraj has published many scientific articles and brings his compassion and personalized care to each patient.

Meet our new urologists

Dr. Evan Gary Rosen

Urology allows Dr. Rosen the balance between spending time in the clinic and operating room. He enjoys meeting people in the office just as much as he enjoys learning new surgical skills and advancements in minimally invasive surgery. He defines quality healthcare as addressing all medical issues at hand, offering cutting edge medicine in a concise and affordable fashion, and following up to reach patient goals.

Dr. Jon Soble

Following his fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic in advanced minimally invasive urology, Dr. Soble started his career at the University of Chicago as surgical director of their kidney stone program. He received his bachelor's and medical degrees from Northwestern University and completed his residency at Washington University in St. Louis.

Dr. Soble brings more than 20 years of experience and expertise in minimally invasive surgical and medical management of urologic conditions. He is passionate about delivering personalized, exceptional care for his patients, and being a native Californian, he is delighted to be back home on the Central Coast.

Dr. Kyla Velaer

Before medical school, Dr. Velaer studied biochemistry at the University of Kansas, spent two years as a researcher at a bioengineering startup, and traveled through Asia as a golf caddy. She graduated from the University of Iowa College of Medicine where she was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society and awarded the Nathan G. Alcock Scholarship for outstanding achievement in urology. During residency at Stanford, she completed specialized training in quality improvement and worked on programs to increase access to urology care.

CENTER FOR PHYSICIAN EXCELLENCE

Cultivating excellence for local doctors

When doctors are supported, connected, and engaged, they are better equipped to provide patients with excellent healthcare. This is the idea behind Montage Health's new Center for Physician Excellence, a physician-driven center that is designed to cultivate and sustain a thriving local medical community.

The center opened on March 30 and offers programs and initiatives to support the professional development, personal well-being, and community connection of the nearly 600 local doctors and advanced practice providers affiliated with Montage Health.

"Our goal is to offer well-rounded, comprehensive services to support our medical staff, enabling them to provide excellent healthcare to our patients and community," says Melissa Rosenthal, Director of the Center for Physician Excellence.

The center's offerings include:

- Continuing education, clinical advancement, and professional development, providing doctors with opportunities to grow expertise
- Wellness services to support emotional, mental, and physical well-being
- Grants for skill development and field advancement
- Clinical efficiency improvement initiatives
- Financial health services including student loan support, financial planning, and homeownership support to help doctors plan for their futures and stay local
- Volunteer opportunities to give back to the local community and beyond
- Social events to connect doctors with colleagues, family, and community

"We value our physicians' work and dedication to the health of our community, and know they are vital to all we do today and in the future," says Dr. Steven Packer, President/CEO of Montage Health.

The center is made possible thanks to grants from Montage Health Foundation and the Lucas Fund for Physician Excellence. The Lucas Fund was created through a \$5 million gift by local philanthropist Sally Lucas to Montage Health Foundation and is strengthened through ongoing gifts from the community.

Like many communities across the country, Monterey County is faced with a shortage of doctors, coupled with obstacles to recruitment, including the cost of housing and high cost of living. "Recruiting and retaining the best doctors is critical to support the health and vitality of our community," says Kevin Causey, Vice President and Chief Development Officer at Montage Health Foundation. "Montage Health Foundation is proud to support this important work, and we're grateful for the generous support of community partners like Sally Lucas and the Lucas Fund for Physician Excellence."

"My late husband Don and I felt blessed to have Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula and its doctors available to us," Lucas says. "My desire is to make sure this continues in the future, and I hope this donation helps encourage brilliant doctors to live and practice in this very special community."

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— Sally Lucas, philanthropist

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