



Dr. Kelly Motadel examines 11-month-old Elizabeth Garcia at the Vista Community Clinic on Wednesday afternoon. The clinic received an \$11.5 million federal grant this week that, among other things, will allow it to expand its women's services department. JAMIE SCOTT LYTLE | jlytle@nctimes.com

Health agencies get big boost

Vista Community Clinic nabs \$11 million federal grant

By PAUL SISSON
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It was smiles all around at the Vista Community Clinic on Wednesday after the organization's employees learned that the health care provider will receive an \$11.5 million federal grant to expand its Vale Terrace Drive facility, allowing the clinic to serve more needy North County residents.

"I'm just so happy. The adrenaline's just starting to wear off," said Barbara Mannino, the clinic's chief executive officer, on Wednesday afternoon.

Mannino said the cash, plus an additional \$8.9 mil-

lion in borrowing and savings, will be used to build a 24,000-square-foot building behind the clinic's main facility near Brengle Terrace Park in Vista.

The building, which will also include a new parking garage, will expand the clinic's women's services department and will allow the organization to serve an additional 12,200 low-income patients per year, according to a grant write-up provided by the organization.

"It can't come a moment too soon," Mannino said. "Last month we saw a 14 percent increase (in

See Vista, Page A7

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NORTH COUNTY TIMES



SURPRISE!
Essay contest nets free bikes for over 100 students at Lincoln Elementary. Page B1

MISSING AMERICANS INVESTIGATED
Five American Muslims captured in Pakistan are being investigated for possible terror links. Page A9

MOSTLY CLOUDY
High 60s, low 40s, Page A2



Vista

Continued from Page A1

patients) over the previous year."

Clinics countywide have reported increases in the number of patients coming through their doors as a nationwide recession leaves ever-larger numbers of residents out of work and without health insurance.

Dr. Jack Klausen, an obstetrician and gynecologist at the clinic, said women's services bring in the largest number of patients who must often deal with long waits because of space constraints.

"We need more exam rooms, more waiting rooms," Klausen said. "Right now it doesn't do any good to hire more people, because we don't have anywhere to put them."

Mannino said the grant stipulates that the new addition, which will replace the Williamston Health Promotion Center building that sits on clinic-owned land just north of the main building, must be completed by December 2011.

The existing building, which must be torn down, now houses office space for administrative employees and classrooms for patient outreach and training programs that the clinic oversees.

President Barack Obama announced a total of \$600 million in grants for 85 community clinics nationwide on Wednesday. The grants are part of the larger \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed by the president in February.

The Vista clinic is one of two in San Diego County that received an award. The Centro de Salud de la Comunidad San Ysidro also received a \$9.7 million grant. The Vista clinic grant ranked 12th in the nation, coming in far ahead of the \$5.9 million average among all clinics.

Mannino said she believed that the clinic's request, which was selected from more than 700 requests nationwide, stood out because the clinic already owns the land where the expansion will sit and because it is easy for the clinic to demonstrate growing demand for its services.

"We know that by 2016 we need to double our square footage if we are going to continue to serve the community," she said.

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