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Local letters: North Edition

2:00 a.m. April 4, 2009

In response to "Students explore careers in health" (March 12)

The article cited the great work Oceanside High School is doing to prepare interested and at-risk teens for careers in the medical field. The school should be commended for its work. The allied health professions are in desperate need of qualified, bilingual employees.

Many people, especially teens, do not realize how easy it can be to enter the field as a young adult and, through additional schooling and on-site training, create a thriving career for oneself.

Vista Community Clinic is proud to be in the classroom at Oceanside High School on a weekly basis teaching teens the front-office skills your article discussed. Each year, 25 of those teens become so engaged in what they are learning that they choose to volunteer or intern at one of the clinic's five sites. Many of those who volunteer are later hired as employees.

We currently have six students or recent graduates from Oceanside High School working at the clinic. Some of the students have worked their way up the career ladder to become a clinic manager or project coordinator or they have returned to school to pursue a career in the medical field. One Oceanside High School student was recently accepted into an on-site Medical Assistant Training Program where he will learn the skills necessary to grow professionally in the health field.

The Health Academy at Oceanside should be commended for its work in opening doors for students. These types of programs are engaging and, through community partnerships, contribute greatly to work force development. When that happens, we all benefit.

DOROTHY LUJAN

Director, Patient Services Programs

Vista Community Clinic