

Health care providers debut new clinics for primary, urgent care

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Dr. David Peterman, CEO of Primary Health Medical Group, welcomes guests to the newly opened clinic in Caldwell.

Courtesy of PHMG

After a warm reception for its recently opened pediatric/urgent care clinic concept on Eagle Road, Primary Health Medical Group is ramping up for even more locations in the Treasure Valley.

Other players are also looking to stake their claims for a share of the convenient care business, thanks to medical staffers at brick-and-mortar locations and, more recently, doctors helping treat patients via the internet.

An example of the latter is Albertsons' new Market Street in Meridian. A vendor, Phoenix-based Akos Med Clinic, is tucked into a corner of the mammoth store that can provide walk-in care on a virtual basis. It is one of 12 that the grocery chain has in operation, and the first one outside Arizona.



The self-guided approach is the focus of the Akos Med Clinics at the Albertsons Market Street in Meridian. Photo courtesy of Albertsons.

When patients visit the Akos Med Clinic, they sit in front of a computer screen and a rack of simple, FDA-approved medical devices that measure blood oxygen content, blood pressure, temperature, weight and other vital signs. The user is guided by augmented reality through self-administered steps to collect the medical data, as well as ear, nose and throat images, and chest, lung and abdomen sounds.

Follow-up questions are asked until the information necessary for a diagnostic decision is collected. The total process typically takes less than 15 minutes. A complete patient workup is sent electronically to an Akos provider with a breakdown of potential illnesses and treatment options. Through a video consultation, the provider engages with the patient to check information, verify the diagnosis, and confirm or modify the treatment plan formulated by the system.

Cash visits are \$75, about half the cost of a typical urgent care visit, Akos said.

“We are committed to providing our customers unprecedented convenience for their total health needs,” said Joe Leyba, director of pharmacy for Albertsons Cos. Southwest, where 11 of the Akos clinics are located.

Elsewhere, North Canyon Medical Center plans to open a primary care and orthopedics clinic this spring on Eastland Drive in northeast Twin Falls. North Canyon opened a clinic last year in Buhl.



Appleton Clinics has opened for business in Idaho, offering patients services for a set fee.
Courtesy of Appleton Clinics

Also looking to expand its business footprint is Appleton Clinics of Idaho, a Colorado-based company that offers monthly health care at a set price. Clients often pair membership with a high-deductible health insurance or “catastrophic” plan to cover specialists, hospitalizations and the like.

Adult patients pay \$99 a month for the service. There's no charge for two children per adult member. Patients, in turn, get their primary care needs met, all without having to file insurance claims, meet deductibles or fork out copays.

"You can go as often as you need," said Clinic Director Dr. Jamie Faught, who used to feel rushed in her former practice and spent any free time requesting prior authorizations from insurance companies to treat patients.

The clinic opened last October at 1675 E. Riverside Drive in Eagle.

With people moving to Idaho in droves, many will require a new medical provider somewhere down the line, which also results in building opportunities for the state's development community.

Case in point is Rocky Mountain Companies, a full-service commercial real estate and development and investment firm that has found a strong synergy with its tenant Primary Health. Rocky Mountain is the landlord for most of Primary's 19 clinic locations in the Boise metro area.

The health care provider is trying to establish itself in booming areas of the Treasure Valley, said Dr. David Peterman, CEO of the medical group. Rocky Mountain has been a valued business partner, he said in a recent IBR interview.

To keep up with demand for medical services, Primary Health recently sold a minority stake in the business to Blue Cross of Idaho. The money will fund new clinics and additional staff, both organizations said.

News of the alignment coincided with the opening of Primary Health's 19th facility on April 15 in North Caldwell.



Primary Health Medical Group opened its 19th clinic at Ten Mile and Franklin roads. Photo courtesy of Primary Health Medical Group.

“We are very excited to be part of the College Marketplace development,” said Peterman.

“Caldwell is one of the fastest-growing areas in Idaho, and we appreciate the community’s loyal support as we expand access.

“Our existing Caldwell clinic is one of our busiest, and we will be able to serve the community even better with this second location.”

Services will include walk-in urgent care and work injury care, as well as family medicine by appointment. Virtually all insurance plans are accepted, and a discount is offered for self-pay patients.

Next up for the medical group? With families flocking to Kuna, Rocky Mountain Cos. is seeking to build a new 6,340-square-foot clinic for Primary Health at 1474 N. Meridian Road, near the corner of North Meridian and East Deer Flat roads.

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