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Central Health, CommUnityCare and Seton Healthcare Family Partner on Specialty Care Improvements

Transition of four specialty clinics to community-based setting set for February

(Austin) – Four specialty care clinics serving Travis County’s low-income and uninsured residents will transition in February to a new location designed to better serve patients. The transition is the latest step in a collaborative effort among Central Health—the healthcare district serving Travis County—and local health care providers including CommUnityCare and Seton Healthcare Family, to improve access to health care, reduce wait times to see specialist doctors and increase convenience for patients.

The dermatology, cardiology, endocrinology and gastroenterology specialty clinics located at the Paul Bass Clinic at University Medical Center Brackenridge will transition services to the Central Health Southeast Health & Wellness Center on Feb. 27. The clinics are staffed by Seton specialty care physicians, many of whom will continue to provide care at the new location. The clinics will continue to accept referrals for low-income and uninsured patients, including those enrolled in Central Health’s Medical Access Program (MAP).

“The transition of these specialty services to the Central Health Southeast Health & Wellness Center represents an important step in our work to improve the health of Travis County’s low-income and uninsured residents,” said Larry Wallace, Central Health Interim President and CEO. “The new location will provide greater access and convenience to patients. This transition also aligns with our goal of embedding more specialty care services in locations that also offer primary care, allowing for improved coordination between patients’ medical providers.

“We are also very excited to continue the expansion of services available at the Southeast Health & Wellness Center. Improving access to specialty care services was a promise we made—and have kept—to the community when we designed this facility.”

The Southeast Health & Wellness Center, located at 2901 Montopolis Drive in Austin, is a one-stop-shop for patients; offering primary care, specialty care, dental, on-demand medicine and tele-consults, pharmacy and other services all in one location. Completed in 2016, the Southeast Health & Wellness Center was designed to increase and improve health-based services to the historically underserved areas of southeast Austin and Travis County. According to a recent demographic study released by Central Health, Southeast Travis County contains one of the county’s largest concentrations of families living in poverty.



CommUnityCare, which runs Travis County's largest network of federally qualified health centers, will operate the clinics at the Southeast Health & Wellness Center. CommUnityCare is contracting with Seton Healthcare Family physicians to provide specialty care services at the clinics. The Community Care Collaborative—a nonprofit partnership of Central Health and Seton—will provide financial support.

“Seton is committed to improving the delivery of care through its collaboration with Central Health so that every person experiences compassionate and personalized care,” said Jesus Garza, Seton president and CEO, and senior vice president for Ascension's Texas ministry. “Transitioning specialty services to the Southeast Health and Wellness Center places them closer to the people we serve, reduces drive time and parking challenges and allows patients to receive specialty care in the same place they visit for primary care.”

In conjunction with the transition, CommUnityCare is dedicating additional personnel to help reduce wait times and ensure patients are receiving care in the most appropriate settings.

“We have two nurses dedicated to reviewing our wait lists and determining if some patients would better benefit from receiving care from a primary care physician or other source immediately rather than waiting to see a specialist,” said Terri Sabella, CommUnityCare chief operating officer and chief nursing officer. “This strategy will help reduce the wait list for all patients. We are also assigning three full time employees to manage the scheduling, referrals and appointments with these specialists.”

The relocation of dermatology, cardiology, endocrinology and gastroenterology specialty services is a another step in a larger effort by Central Health and its community partners to transition services to locations that offer greater convenience and improved access to care.

Central Health is here to make our community stronger by investing in access to health care for low-income and uninsured residents. We are the local public entity that connects low-income Travis County residents to high quality, cost effective health care. We work with a network of partners to eliminate health disparities to reach our vision of Travis County becoming a model healthy community

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