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Orinda urgent care center back in operation

By Nick Marnell



Dr. Patricio Chavez, second from left, with staff of Sutter Urgent Care in Orinda. Photo Clayton Warren

Sutter Urgent Care in Orinda reopened Dec. 1 after the facility shut down in April because of difficulty with doctor staffing. "It's all settled now," said Dr. Patricio Chavez, medical director of the Sutter Urgent Care Department. "A physician or an advanced practitioner is now available every day."

The center is open from noon until 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on weekends and holidays. "Our goal is to open at 8 a.m. once we have the added capacity," Chavez said. "For now, we felt it would be better to capture patients who need care after regular business hours."

Sutter Urgent Care in Orinda offers a limited level of care, as do most urgent care centers, which market a faster, more convenient and cheaper alternative to the hospital emergency room. The Orinda facility will treat non-life threatening injuries, like flu-related symptoms, sprains and abrasions, and offers basic lab work and X-rays. But advanced imaging services, like MRIs or CT scans, are not available. Nor will the Orinda Center treat infants less than 3 months old.

"One of our goals is to reduce trips to the hospital emergency room," said Chavez, who noted that 30 percent of all emergency room patients could be treated successfully in an urgent care center. Should a patient require hospitalization, the Orinda center will arrange for ambulance transport with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

Two other urgent care facilities exist in Lamorinda, but Chavez stressed the benefit of Sutter Urgent Care in Orinda. "We're the front door to a large, integrated health care system, with access to primary and specialty care," he said, explaining that satisfied walk-in patients can become long-term patients of the Sutter Health Network by making a connection with a primary care physician.

Medicare and Medi-Cal, as well as private commercial insurance, are accepted at the center, and no appointment is necessary. Sutter Urgent Care in Orinda is located at 12 Camino Encinas in the Sutter East Bay Medical Foundation building.

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