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## Stat Med An oasis of urgent care between Berkeley and Walnut Creek

By *Sophie Braccini*

From left: Dr. Armando Samaniego, Terri Fadelli R.N., and Dr. Stuart Shikora. Photo Sophie Braccini

A month ago Dr. Armando Samaniego and his partners opened the first Lamorinda urgent care facility in Lafayette, Stat Med. The clinic is open seven days a week, including holidays, with expert emergency medical staff ready to address any urgent medical need or to simply give a flu shot on the weekend.

"Our clinic is set up to handle any urgent condition people might have that is not a life threatening emergency," explains Samaniego, who has been an emergency room physician for more than 25 years. The rule of thumb: if you have to call 911 and need to be transported by an ambulance, you should go to an emergency room; if you are driving your own car, downtown Lafayette is closer and the new facility is staffed with the same quality professionals, without a long wait. "We are very good at screening and triage because that's what we've done in the emergency rooms all these years," adds Samaniego. "If you come here and the situation requires hospitalization, we will get you started and initiate the transfer."

Located on Dewing Avenue just off Mount Diablo Boulevard, the clinic has ample parking. Exam rooms are stocked with the same equipment as emergency rooms. Stat Med shares the ground floor of the building with the existing radiology practice of Dr. Brad Piatt, so patients have access to x-rays, ultrasounds or even MRIs.

Piatt and Samaniego got to know each other when their sons played on the Campolindo High School football team together (they graduated in 2012); the son of Stat Med's registered nurse, Terri Fadelli, also played football at Campo. The group also includes Dr. Stuart Shikora, of Orinda, and Dr. Allen Read, who lives in Walnut Creek. Stat Med is a tight knit team of emergency specialists, all members of the American Board of Emergency Medicine, with additional specialties, such as trauma care.

"Emergency rooms today see a lot of patients who just cannot get another type of care and the consequence is that they are often crowded," says Samaniego. "Stat Med is also here for last minute medical needs, such as prescription refills, sports physicals, or travel medicine, when the primary care physicians' offices are closed or backed up."

During its first few weeks the staff treated patients with abdominal pains, allergic reactions, fractures, wounds requiring stitches, asthma, fevers, pneumonia and urinary tract infections, to name a few. Weekends and holidays have been especially busy. "Over the holidays we had several people visiting from out of town who came directly to the clinic," says Fadelli. "People from Texas, Florida or Indiana said that they are used to urgent care clinics, where they go all the time when they are in need of immediate treatment that's not life threatening."

Samaniego prepared carefully when starting the business. Knowing that being an entrepreneur was not the same thing as being a doctor, although he had been running departments, he decided to get a business degree. "First I looked at local business schools like Saint Mary's, but my med school roommate convinced me to go to Irvine, which offers an executive health care MBA," he says. It was no small commitment, but he made it work.

"The primary care physicians are overwhelmed, the ERs are overwhelmed, so I think there is a real niche for a service like ours here," Samaniego adds. He plans to continue his physician duties in addition to running the business, because his first love is taking care of people. "What I enjoy here is that I spend more time one on one with the patients, and it is a great opportunity to provide a service to the community," he says.

Stat Med, at 970 Dewing Ave., Suite 100-B, accepts all major insurance, including Medicare, and is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends and holidays. For more information, visit [statmed.com](http://statmed.com) or call (925) 297-6396.

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