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## New Urgent Care Facility Opens In Orinda

By Sophie Braccini



Dr. Jeffery Leinen, Medical Director, Sutter Health Urgent Care in Orinda Photo Sophie Braccini

the Medical Director for Sutter Health in Antioch until 2011 when that group asked him to start setting up urgent care facilities in Antioch, Castro Valley, Hercules, Berkeley and now Orinda.

"Roughly 80 percent of emergency patients do not need to be hospitalized, so many of those patients can be taken care of in an urgent care facility staffed with doctors specialized in emergency medicine," Leinen says. The emergency doctor explains that emergency rooms are very expensive because they have to be staffed 24/7 and have to be able to handle everything at any moment.

"Taking care of you and your earache is not in itself expensive, but making sure that you have all the staff with all the specialties and equipment to treat anything makes it a very expensive proposition," he says.

Leinen is adamant that the urgent care is not there to replace the primary care physician, but those physicians are not always available for urgent medical problem. "You can come and see me to address your urgent medical problem, and the general practitioner will be informed of what was done," he says. He also believes that some types of interventions are better taken care of by urgent care, such as treating lacerations or broken limbs.

Leinen also sees young adults who do not have a primary care physician. "Our number-one reason for visits is upper respiratory tract infection, the number-two sore throat and number-three is urinary tract infection," he says. "Half of our patients don't have a primary care physician." He also sees people newly arrived in the area, or needing urgent care for themselves or their kids after hours.

Orinda is getting healthier, at least in terms of care centers.

Sutter Health, a medical group with presence in more than 100 Northern California cities and towns, is opening its own urgent care centers, the most recent one in Orinda.

"The cost of a visit to our center is a tenth of the cost of the E.R. and the wait time is a fourth," says Medical Director for Urgent Care for Sutter East Bay Dr. Jeffery Leinen. "It is a win-win solution."

The new urgent care facility opened on March 1 on the ground floor of the Sutter Health building at 12 Camino Encinas in Orinda, close to the BART station. It is open 5 to 9 p.m. Monday to Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekends and holidays.

Leinen chose emergency medicine as his specialty because for him it is fun. "Every day is a different day, and you get to treat everybody and everything," he explains. He did his residency at the University of Chicago in emergency medicine, moved to Austin, Texas, to practice his specialty, then came to Northern California in 2004. He was

The bedside labs and X-Ray can be done immediately onsite, and if needed, the labs can be run at another facility and the urgent care doctor will do the follow-up, especially if the client does not have a primary care physician.

Leinen says that the hours the urgent care clinic is opened will change. "It is the patients who will tell us when to be opened," he says. He adds that he had 50 visits in the first two weeks of opening, just through word-of-mouth. If the numbers of visits grows fast Leinen can call on the other emergency medicine doctors employed by Sutter Health in the area.

There is another urgent care facility in Lamorinda, StatMed in Lafayette, located at 970 Dewing Ave. It is open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. during the week and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends.

Most insurance companies cover visits at an urgent care facility.

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