

MEDICAL AND DENTAL DIRECTORY

Sun City Medical Building  
10820 & 10802 Oakmont Drive  
Sun City, Arizona

PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, GENERAL PRACTICE:  
SUN CITY MEDICAL BUILDING

Robert M. Stump, M.D.  
Office: 933-1001  
Home: 933-1479

Physician & Surgeon - General Practice  
Available for calls 24 hours  
Office opened Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri.  
No appt. necessary during office hours  
(Sun City resident)

Edgar J. Deissler, M.D.  
Office: 933-0051  
Home: 933-1150

Physician & Surgeon - General Practice  
Available for calls 24 hours  
Office opened Mon. Tues. Wed. Fri. Sat.  
Appointment preferred  
(Sun City resident)

.DENTAL:

M. W. Penrose, D.D.S.  
Office: 933-1611

Morning hours  
Wed. Thurs. Fri.

John C. Austin, Sr., D.D.S.  
Office: 933-1611

Afternoon hours  
Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri.

MEDICAL CLINIC  
SUN CITY MEDICAL BUILDING  
Phone 933-2351

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Mon. through Fri.  
9:00 am to 12:00 Saturday

W. O. Minturn, M.D.  
Genral Surgery & Chest Diseases  
Night: 258-8338

J. Daniel Potter, M.D.  
Internal Medicine  
254-8841

H. M. Purcell, M.D.  
Urology  
Night: 253-3440

T. A. Hartgraves, M.D.  
Radiologist  
933-2351

Truman Schmidt  
Optometrist  
Res. 276-2497

S. E. Light, M.D.  
Dermatologist  
933-2351

Irvin Shapiro, P.O.D.  
Chiropodist  
Res. 279-4161

ADDITIONAL DOCTOR AVAILABLE

Oscar W. Friske, M.D.  
Office: 933-3962  
Home: 933-3639

General Practice--Office in Youngtown  
11169 Arizona Ave.  
(Sun City resident)

AMBULANCE SERVICE  
933-2551

Immediate service available  
Golden Door Chapel - Youngtown

MEDICAL DIRECTORY - SUN CITY, ARIZONA

PHYSICIANS & SURGEONS - M. D.

Deissler, Edgar J. - General Practice  
12621 North 103rd Avenue  
Office: 933-0051 Home: 933-1150  
Available for calls 24 hours  
Office Hours Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri.  
10:00 A.M. to Noon  
2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.  
Sat. - 9:00 A.M. to Noon  
No appointment necessary during  
office hours

Holleman, William - General Practice  
Sun City Medical Bldg.  
108th & Oakmont Drive  
Office: 933-4559 Home: 933-3713  
Available for calls 24 hours  
Office hours Mon., Tues., Wed.,  
Thurs., Fri.  
10:00 A.M. to Noon  
2:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.  
Appointment preferred

Stump, Robert M. - General Practice  
Sun City Medical Bldg.  
108th & Oakmont Drive  
Office: 933-1001 Home: 933-1479  
Available for calls 24 hours  
Office hours Mon., Tues., Wed.,  
Thurs., Fri.  
10:00 A.M. to Noon  
2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.  
• No appointment necessary during  
office hours

CLINIC - Sun City Medical Building  
108th & Oakmont Drive  
Office hours Monday through Friday  
9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.  
Saturday - 9:00 A.M. to Noon

Light, S. E. - Dermatologist  
Office: 933-2351  
Appointment preferred

Lowe, Robert C. - Internal Medicine  
Office: 933-2351 Home: 933-3708  
Appointment preferred

Minturn, W. O. - General Surgery  
& Chest Diseases  
Office: 933-2351 Home: 258-8338  
Appointment preferred

Purcell, H. M. - Urology  
Office: 933-2351 Home: 253-3440  
Appointment preferred

Shapiro, Irvin, P.O.D. -  
Chiropracist  
Office: 933-2351 Home: 279-4161  
Appointment preferred

DENTISTS

Penrose, M. W., D.D.S.  
Sun City Medical Building  
108th & Oakmont Drive  
Office: 933-1611  
Office hours Wed., Thurs., Fri.  
Mornings only  
By appointment

Austin, John C., Sr., D.D.S.  
Sun City Medical Building  
108th & Oakmont Drive  
Office: 933-1611  
Office hours Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs.,  
Fri. - Afternoons only  
By appointment

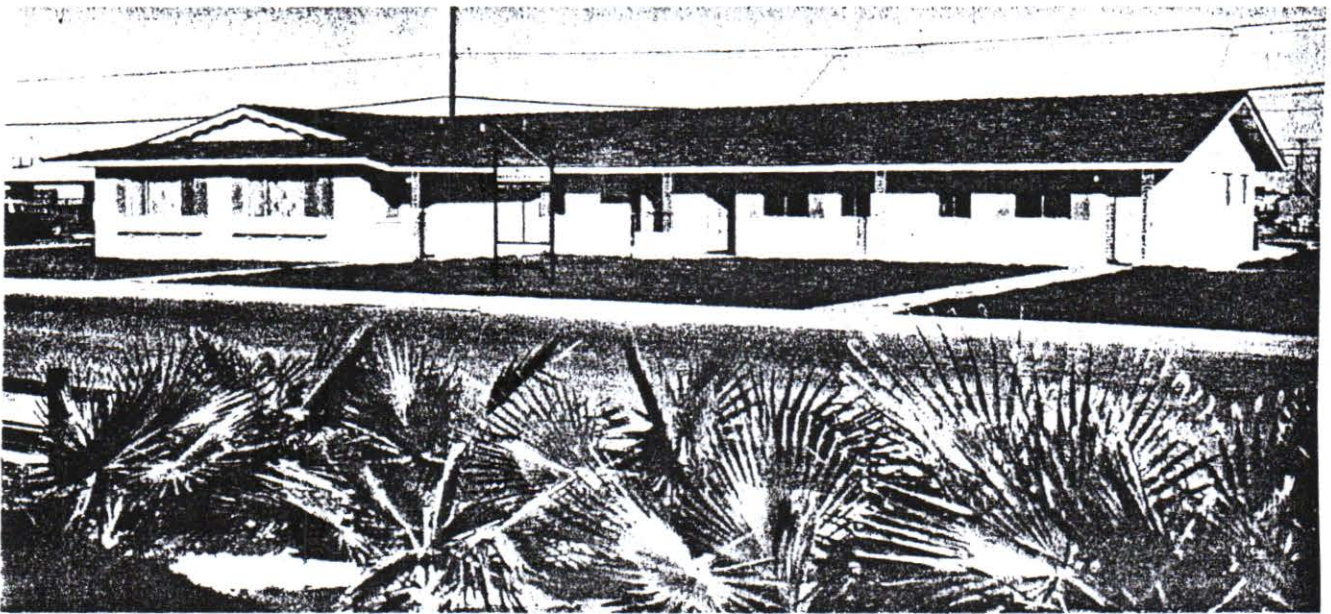
OPTOMETRIST

Truman Schmidt, O.D.  
Sun City Shopping Center  
10767 Grand Avenue  
Office: 933-2013  
By appointment

AMBULANCE SERVICE

Phone: 933-2551  
Immediate service available  
Golden Door Chapel - Youngtown

## Sun City Gets Modern New Medical And Dental Center



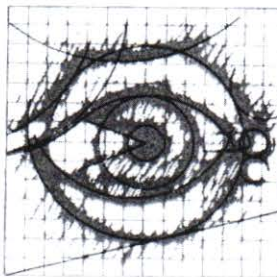
**THERE'S A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE NOW.** Medical facilities, important to every new and growing community, already have come to Webb's Sun City, with completion of the modern \$75,000 clinic pictured above. A physician and a dentist have occupied offices there and plans call for a clinic of specialists from Phoenix and Glendale to make periodic visits and maintain office hours on a part-time basis. Webb developers furnished the clinic with all basic medical equipment, and space has been provided for treatment rooms, receptionist rooms, a general laboratory, X-ray and testing rooms, and waiting rooms.

# Finally, An Eye Institute With Foresight.

In cooperation with Boswell Memorial Hospital, fourteen of the finest ophthalmologists in the Southwest have pioneered a new concept in outpatient eye surgery. Boswell Eye Institute.

We at the Institute are concerned about a solution to a seemingly impossible problem. Delivering the highest quality in eye surgery from the best doctors with compassion, understanding and the most advanced technology — all at a price you can afford. (In fact, in most cases Medicare will pay your bill at Boswell Eye Institute — we designed it that way!)

This unique facility is the only one of its kind in the world. A free standing, ultra-modern outpatient eye institute under the guidance of fourteen independent doctors of ophthalmology, who see eye to eye on how things should be done.



Located on the Boswell Memorial Campus, the Boswell Eye Institute performs a variety of surgeries such as: Intraocular Lens Implantation, Corneal Transplants, Glaucoma and Laser Procedures, Ocular Plastic Surgery, Vitro-retinal Surgery, and Cataract Extraction.

The Institute features five surgical suites and six treatment rooms so you can be assured of quick and proper attention.

At Boswell Eye Institute we offer you a well-respected staff that will go out of its way to make your surgical experience as personal and thorough as possible.

We also have state-of-the-art equipment and technology, and the most cost-effective eye care available.

See for yourself what foresight has done for eye surgery.

## Boswell Eye Institute

10541 W. Thunderbird Blvd.  
Sun City, Arizona 85351  
(602) 933-3402

# When Valley heats, visitors leave, need for service cools

## But when they arrive, demand rises on many things, especially hospitals

By Art Thomason  
The Arizona Republic

You can tell when summer's near in the Valley.

The hospitals empty, and the dumps fill with toasters.

It's time, once again, for Valley businesses to adjust to the most pronounced economic boom-bust this side of Florida.

Tony Leonard need only count the toasters in his landfill to figure that many of the southeast Valley's winter residents are heading home.

"In March, when it starts getting warmer, a lot of stuff, such as small appliances, is thrown away," he said. "It seems like the 'snowbirds' don't know what to do with it."

Leonard weighs trucks at the Salt River-Pima Maricopa Indian Community landfill, which is used by Mesa and Scottsdale.

And when his scales show heavier truckloads of garbage, they also become a barometer of the annual elevated demand for other city services in the Valley.

The most significant hikes in such services are:

- Hospital admissions statewide drop by about one-third in the summer. That means that many hospitals that are nearly full in the winter are half empty in the summer.
- Calls for paramedics — up to 200 more a month in some cities.
- Sewage-treatment costs — up by 20 percent in some areas.
- Requests for library cards — up fivefold in certain areas.
- Traffic accidents, particularly fender benders — up slightly.

The seasonal swings have a big impact on the state's struggling hospital industry, said John Rivers, president of the Arizona Hospital Association.

"It's purely a snowbird phenomenon," Rivers said. "The seasonal shift is really profound. It makes many Arizona hospitals extremely difficult to manage."

"It's a crisis this time of the year," said Grace Jones, a vice president of Sun Health Corp., which runs Del E. Webb and Walter O. Boswell Memorial hospitals in Sun City.

Both hospitals are so full during the season that they often must turn away patients. Sometimes they're forced to actually transfer patients from intensive-care units to other hospitals to make room for patients who are even more critically ill, Jones said.

The biggest problem is finding enough nurses, said Linda Murro, public-relations director for Lutheran Healthcare network, which owns Mesa and Valley Lutheran hospitals in the east Valley.

Lutheran actually transfers nurses from its hospitals in Alaska and Denver, Murro said. The hospitals also pay big bonuses to nurses willing

to sign up for a steady winter work schedule.

Hospitals are heavily affected because so many of the winter visitors are retired people who are covered by the Social Security-based Medicare system.

People older than 65 years of age visit the hospital three times as often and consume twice as many medical resources as younger people, Rivers said.

Unfortunately for hospitals, Medicare sharply limits payments. Ever since 1983, Medicare has paid hospitals a flat rate based on the disease being treated. That has put a tremendous strain on hospitals trying to treat patients as quickly and cheaply as possible.

Most hospitals in Arizona operate at a 3 to 5 percent loss in treating Medicare patients. Hospitals elsewhere in the country can sustain those losses because at least Medicare patients help pay for fixed overhead costs.

But that advantage gets turned on its head in Arizona because hospitals have to pay the overhead on beds used in the summer largely by money-losing Medicare patients, Rivers said.

"That makes running a hospital in Arizona tougher than most other places in the country," he said.

It's different for municipalities. Municipal officials say they have not tracked the additional costs for the increase in services, mainly because there has been no need to boost manpower, and winter residents, like year-round residents, pay taxes and fees for the services they use.

"The net cost benefit has to be positive," said Tim Hogan, director of the Center for Business Research at Arizona State University.

"Logically, most of the things that are the big-ticket items, snowbirds have nothing to do with: education, welfare, prisons. They would make some marginal use of a lot of services, but they aren't expensive ones."

Dick Bradford, water-quality engineer for Mesa, said, "We pay about \$150,000 a month during the winter for sewage treatment as opposed to \$120,000 during the summer months."

The peak, he said, has historically been in February, when sewage flows reach about 32 million gallons, as opposed to 27 million in summer.

But city revenues, Bradford said, swell during the winter, too, more than compensating for the increased costs.

Donna Headrick, who is in charge of circulation for the Apache Junction Library, said requests for library cards skyrocket from January through March.

"We started giving out 25 new cards a day in January," she said.

"Normally, we probably give out five or six cards a day."

Book circulation doesn't increase quite as dramatically, from 10,000 during the summer and fall to more than 13,000 in the winter, she said.

Winter residents also create an increase in movie- and audio-cassette rentals.

"They like the *Nova* series — documentaries and wildlife features — and how-to videotapes that cover subjects such as painting and country-Western dancing," Headrick said.

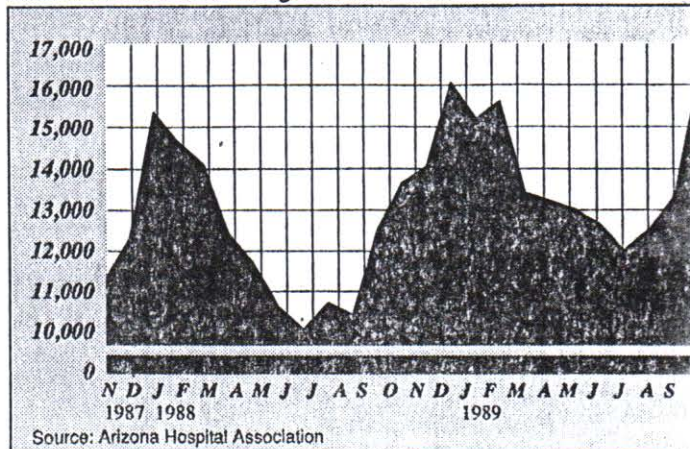
Sgt. Mike Hayes, spokesman for the Mesa Police Department, said traffic congestion is the biggest overall problem with the influx of winter residents.

"And a certain amount of the winter residents, because of age or physical impairment, are victimized by crimes," Hayes said.

"It takes up a certain amount of man hours, but on the whole, it's not a number that would reflect an emergency or a need to add more people. Services are just stretched a little more in the winter."

### HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS

Number of patients older than 65 admitted to Arizona hospitals from November 1987 through October 1989.



Source: Arizona Hospital Association

### TAX REVENUE FROM VISITORS

Tax revenue from 'snowbirds,' 1988-89 season:

- Sales tax \$3.6 million
- Rental occupancy tax \$4.1 million
- Gasoline tax \$1.2 million
- Utility taxes \$1.4 million
- Total \$10.3 million

Source: ASU

# VA hospital to open SC site

By JULIE LARSON  
Daily News-Sun staff

By the end of summer Northwest Valley veterans will find medical treatment a little closer to home.

Instead of traveling to downtown Phoenix for care at the Carl T. Hayden Veterans Affairs Medical Center, veterans will be able to obtain medical services at a new satellite outpatient clinic at Plaza de Grande, 10147 Grand Ave., just east of 103rd Avenue.

The clinic is expected to open in three months.

"By establishing this clinic, we hope to make it easier for our eligible veterans on the west side of Phoenix to receive the quality care we provide without having to commute into the city," said John Fears,

medical center director, who announced the clinic's location Friday.

"We're real excited about the Northwest clinic. It's the first in the VA system to give access to our veteran patients. Rather than have them come in here for their care, we're going out to them to give them better service," Fears said.

The approximate 7,000 square-foot building is a former doctor's office and has some walls and some exam rooms set up. It will take between 60 to 90 days to get the rest of construction completed, hospital officials said. The space will be leased for about \$117,000 a year.

The VA intends to place in the clinic four physicians, four nurse practitioners, four registered nurses,

See Clinic to, A5

## Clinic to open in 3 months

—From A1  
a clinical pharmacist, phlebotomist, radiology technician, three health benefit advisors and clerical staff.

The staff will care for more than 2,500 veterans a year from the surrounding area and perform more than 20,000 outpatient visits. The clinic will be open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday offering primary care medicine to eligible veterans by appointment.

"Managed primary care is the direction this medical center is taking to enhance patient care while containing costs," Fears said. "By leasing space for this clinic, VA will have more room to treat pa-

tients while making services more convenient."

As part of a five-year lease, Plaza de Grande will build out the building to VA specifications.

Fears announced in March the VA was looking at three sites in the Northwest Valley for a satellite clinic. He said the key reason for opening a clinic in this area is that the Phoenix facility, 650 E. Indian School Road, can no longer handle the number of veterans who are using it.

VA officials intend to use the Northwest Valley clinic as a model to evaluate and improve, and then develop three other satellite clinics in the Phoenix area.

# VA clinic may open in August

By JULIE LARSON  
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Progress is being made on converting Plaza de Grande in Sun City to the new home of a Department of Veterans Affairs satellite outpatient clinic for Northwest Valley veterans.

John Fears, director of Carl T. Hayden Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Phoenix, said the lease agreement has been signed with the owner of the building at 10147 Grand Ave., just east of 103rd Avenue.

The owner is Principal Mutual Life Insurance Co. of Des Moines, Iowa. Under the terms of the agreement, the VA will lease the approximate 7,000 square-foot former doctor's office for about \$117,000 a year.

"We're well on our way," Fears said Monday. "The building is going to need some modifications, and the owner of the building is finishing up some construction drawings and going out to get a contractor through the competitive process."

Contractors have been invited to bid on the project, and once one is secured, work will begin on modifying the inside of the building to VA specifications. The building had some walls and some exam rooms already set up.

"It's going take about two weeks to finish the construction drawings and get a bidder, so the construction probably won't start until late July," Fears said. "Then it will take about 30 days to finish construction."

Fears added that he estimates staff will probably be able to move into the building by late August. "We originally planned for June 1, but it just takes time," he said.

The VA intends to place four physicians, four nurse practitioners, four registered nurses, a clinical pharmacist, phlebotomist, radiology technician, three health-benefit advisors and clerical staff in the clinic.

"We have a combination of people moving from the VA medical center downtown to the clinic and new people we have hired," Fears said. "We're in the process of familiarizing the new people with the VA system and for the people that are here, familiarizing them with what will happen in the future."

When the time comes to open the clinic, Fears said, "We are going to contact everyone who lives in that area who comes to us for their care, if we determine they're medically appropriate for that clinic. We then will give them a choice of continuing to come down here or receive their primary care at that clinic. Hopefully, a large majority of the people that are out there will elect to go to the clinic."

"Again, there are really two purposes in doing this," Fears added. "The No. 1 and most important is to give greater access to health care to the veterans who want to use our system, and at same time, we're going to a primary care model ... where we have these primary care clinics being first in line to the people who use our system and keeping them in the most appropriate level of care."

VA also is opening a satellite clinic in what was formerly the Williams Air Force Base hospital, in the East Valley.

"Then we have plans to start the process for two more clinics next fiscal year — dependent on resources and what we find from the clinic we're opening in the Northwest Valley," Fears said.

# Clinic screens veterans

By **JULIE LARSON**  
Daily News-Sun staff

Northwest Valley veterans may receive a letter by month's end telling them they are eligible for medical care at a clinic in Sun City.

Carl T. Hayden Veterans Affairs Medical Center will notify veterans who are able to receive their services through a satellite outpatient clinic that is expected to ease an overload at the medical center in Phoenix and reduce travel for Northwest Valley veterans.

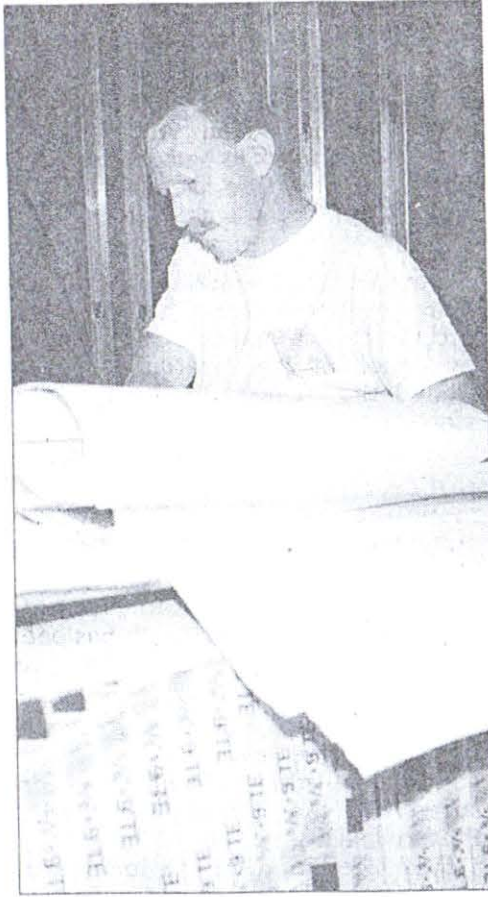
A physician is conducting patient profiles to determine which veterans will be able to go to the clinic in Plaza de Grande, 10147 Grand Ave., or if treatment requires the patient to continue visiting the VA center downtown.

The letters probably will go out in about three weeks, said Paula L. Pedene, public affairs officer for the medical center.

"Not all patients who live in the area will be eligible to go to the clinic — it depends on how sick or well they are," Pedene said. "An example is if they need radiology treatment, they will still have to go to the main hospital, or if they are receiving special care, such as in urology, they will have to go the hospital.

"The clinic will not be able to take walk-ins or emergencies; it has to be by appointment only," Pedene said.

Construction is under way to convert the former doctor's office into the clinic, which is expected to open in mid- to late-October. The facility will have 24 examination rooms and



a medical staff of about 22 people.

Patients who receive a letter informing them they are eligible to go to clinic but don't want to, can still go to the hospital downtown, Pedene said. People who are unsure where their appointment is or have questions regarding the clinic, may call ambulatory care at 277-5551, Ext. 7463.

The VA will lease the 7,000 square-foot building for about \$117,000 a year and will staff the center by transferring employees from downtown and hiring personnel.

The VA also will investigate the possibility of opening other clinics in the metropolitan Phoenix area, based on resources and the success of the clinic in Sun City.



Paul Gonzalez of Goettl Refrigeration installs ductwork at the Sun City Veterans Affairs satellite clinic. Eric Frey, far left, of W.E. Frey and Associates studies blueprints during the renovation of the clinic at Plaza de Grande, 10147 Grand Ave.



# Vets embrace SC clinic D.S.N.

## Physicians offer convenient care for area seniors

By BRUCE ELLISON  
Staff writer

SUN CITY — More than 2,000 veterans are using the Northwest Valley VA Clinic here for their medical care, rather than driving to the VA's Hayden Medical Center in downtown Phoenix.

The Department of Veterans Affairs opened a satellite office on Grand Avenue Oct. 24 in response to complaints that the Hayden center, at 7th Street and Indian School Road, was too far away from the large number of retired vets in the Sun Cities area.

Clinical workers have found that the patients served here are not typical of those treated elsewhere in the VA system, said Dr. Robert Sandifur, the physician who directs the Northwest Valley clinic.

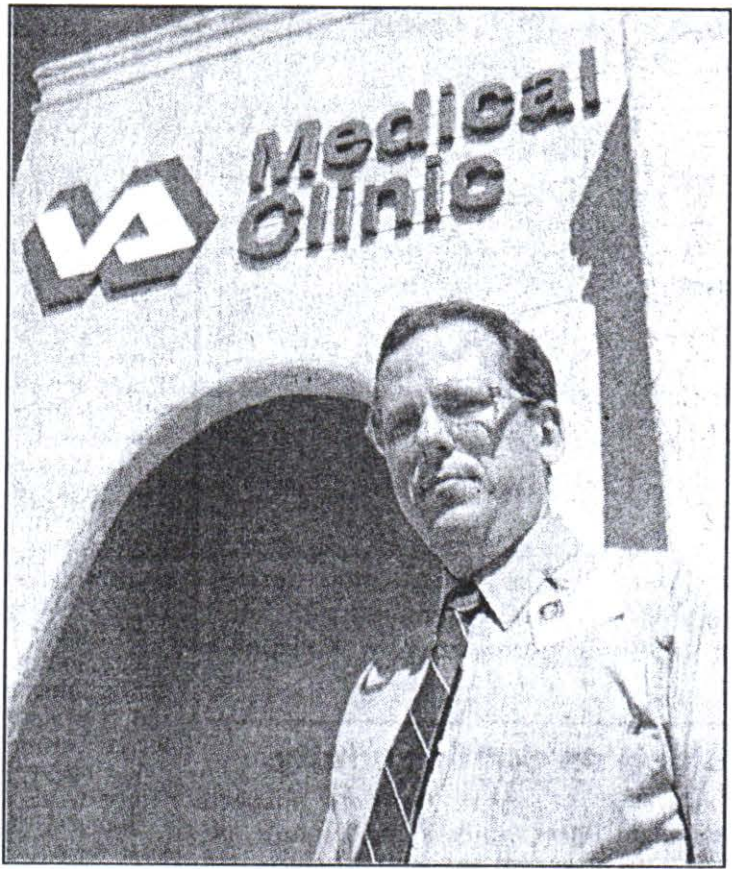
"There are more geriatric patients here than we would see at Hayden," he said, "and they tend to have different medical problems, both physical and psychological, than the general VA patient load."

One reason, Dr. Sandifur said, is the high proportion of World War II vets in the area who had been prisoners of war.

"They don't talk about it much," he said, "but some still have psychological or social adjustment problems from that era" 50 years ago.

"A poor sleep pattern is prevalent, they had or have skin conditions from those days that festered; they may have been malnourished during their imprisonment and still suffer from the effects of that. Many have bowel disorders."

Psychological counseling and dietary help is available at the clinic, the doctor said.



Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

A series of about 20 symptoms, coupled with a service record that includes POW status, automatically qualifies such vets for free care under the service-connected disability rules, the doctor said.

In addition, Sandifur said, the patients the VA clinic serves are not typical of the overall Sun Cities population. "For one thing," he said, "they are almost all men" while women make up the majority of Sun Cities residents.

Robert Harrah, a Sun City veteran of World War II who had been a prisoner in Germany, said that many of his service colleagues "may be suffering from those (POW-related) illness and not realize they are entitled to VA care for them."

Some, he said, "just don't want to complain and so let things slide." He encouraged vets with the kinds of symptoms Sandifur described to check with the clinic to see if they qualify for free care.

Looking at the center's first 10 months of operation, Sandifur said "comments from our patients have been almost universally positive."

"Driving to the Hayden facility had been a big issue for some people in the northwest," he said. "So is parking and navigating through the complex of buildings there."

Care provided at Hayden, which has full hospital facilities, "is outstanding, but the physical aspects of the complex can be daunting."

► See 12 full-time, A5

7-22-95

Dr. Robert Sandifur is medical director of the Northwest Valley VA Clinic in Sun City, which serves several area retired veterans.

VF MEDICAL CENTERS

(over)

## ■ From A1

Sandifur said. That, plus a wide range of services in Sun City, has encouraged vets to use the Sun City center for all but the most critical hospital care.

"The clinic staff sees some complex cases," Sandifur said, but only has to refer patients downtown for certain specialized tests, such as CAT scans or MRI exams. Radiology services are provided in Sun City through a contract with a local radiologist, Sandifur said.

A well-equipped pharmacy also can supply about 98 percent of the prescription drugs needed for the vets.

Medical records maintained at Hayden are connected by computer with the satellite office, and can be called up on request.

Sandifur operates with a dozen full-time professionals — three doctors, two nurse practitioners, three registered nurses, two pharmacists, a pharmacy technician, a lab technician.

A part-time clinical psychologist and a part-time social worker also visit regularly.

VA leased the facility for five years. It is one of two in the Valley that serve vets in outlying areas. The other is at

the former Williams Air Force Base in the East Valley.

Although most of the patients are from the Sun Cities, other, younger vets from Peoria, parts of Glendale and Wickenburg also make use of it.

Veterans with service-connected disabilities, and those who meet certain income requirements, are eligible for VA medical treatment at no charge. Vets with covered employment and older than 65 also are eligible for Medicare, which does have a premium payment, deductibles and co-payments.

# Sun City clinic draws patients, volunteers

SUN CITY — Health care provided to veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs hasn't been affected by many of the changes occurring in private medical plans — and vets, especially seniors, find that stability comforting, says Dr. Robert Sandifur.

Sandifur, who heads the VA's Northwest satellite clinic here, notes that "unlike private plans, we can't disenroll anyone."

Over the years, he said, "there has been a continuity in health care provided by VA that has made the system

stable and reliable" for those who need it.

"The VA is not undergoing the rapid changes that are under way in the private sector," Sandifur said. "We are not acting as gatekeepers (to ration care), or as HMOs, like a managed-care plan." Nor are the VA clinics in competition with other organizations for patients. They don't run full-page newspaper ads to lure new customers.

Staffers who work at the VA's Sun City offices all have

► See VA clinic, p. 7

## ■ From A1

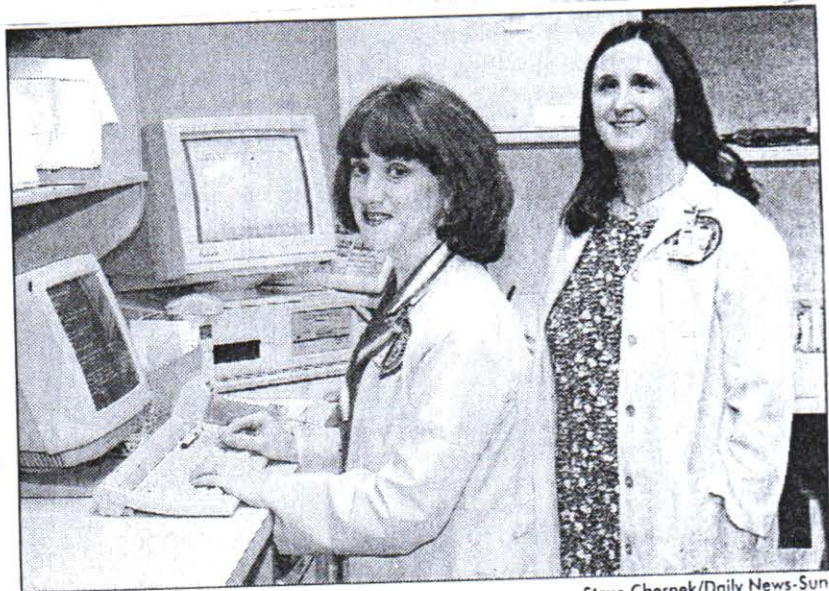
volunteered for the duty. "We have no problem with recruitment," Sandifur said.

Like the patients, many of the staff members prefer not to have to drive downtown.

Jackie Cunningham of Glendale, a pharmacist, said she enjoys working at the VA clinic because there is much more discussion and interaction with patients than there would be in a hospital where doctors order drugs, pharmacists dispense them and nurses administer them.

"It's nice to see the benefits of what you do in person, and talk with the people who are being helped," Cunningham said.

Dorthea Williams, a registered nurse, also said patients in the satellite clinic are "wonderful people" and that she enjoys working with them.



Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

Valerie Lang, left, is a staff pharmacist and Jackie Cunningham is clinical pharmacist at the Northwest Valley VA Clinic in Sun City. The local clinic saves veterans trips to Phoenix.

# Veterans hail Sun City medical clinic

By CHRISTINE A. GOW  
Staff writer

SUN CITY — Northwest Valley veterans applauded the location and personalized service of the Veterans Affairs medical clinic.

"This is wonderful," said Sun Citian Frank Davis, a Navy veteran. "They have great service, you don't have to travel so far and there's no waiting."

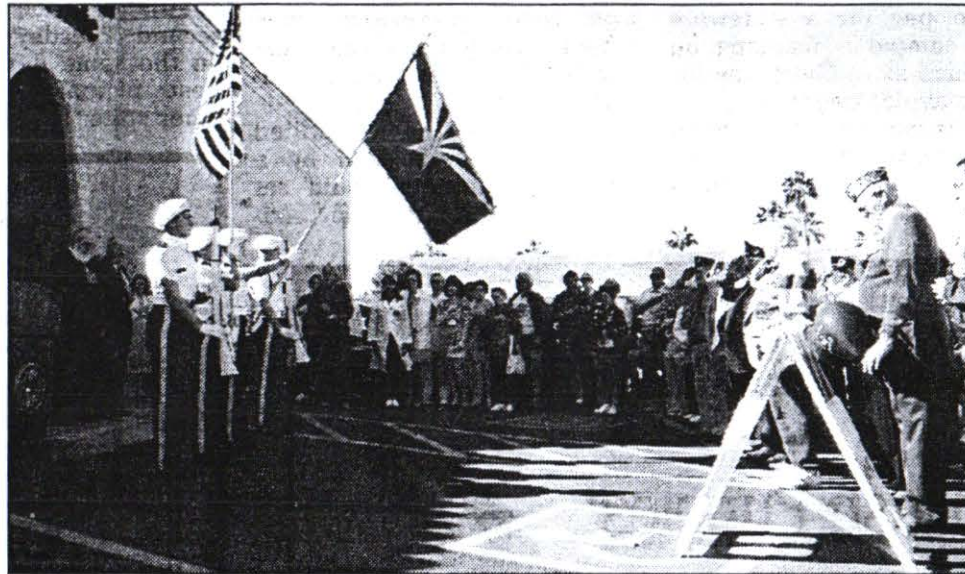
The Northwest clinic is located in the Plaza de Grande Medical Building in Sun City, 10147 N. Grand Ave. The clinic is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and offers primary-care service, routine laboratory tests, and a pharmacy.

Almost 1,300 veterans have saved a trip downtown for medical care since the Department of Veterans Affairs opened its Sun City clinic in October.

The Northwest Extension Clinic serves veterans in the Northwest Valley who otherwise would have to travel to the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center at 650 E. Indian School Road for medical benefits.

"Everybody seems very appreciative that we're here," said Dr. Robert Sandifur, medical director at the Northwest-clinic. "It's a matter of convenience. It took some people 45 minutes to travel downtown."

It took Army veteran M.H. Clayton all day to travel to the downtown clinic, wait his turn, be seen by a



Frances Guarino/Daily News-Sun

Several Northwest Valley veterans helped celebrate the dedication of Sun City's new Veterans Affairs clinic Friday.

doctor and then travel back to Sun City.

"I think it's great. It's something we need because there are so many war veterans out here," he said.

"It's been very convenient for us to travel here from Sun City West. I had to go 30 miles to Indian School. It took too long," Army veteran Samuel Cohen said. "It lightens the load, and it takes a lot of pressure off of the main clinic."

During fiscal years 1992 and '93, the Hayden medical center recorded more than 6,000 outpatient visits

from veterans in the Northwest Valley.

That prompted the Department of Veterans Affairs to expand, said Paula Pedene, public affairs officer at Hayden medical center. In October it opened two medical facilities, one in the southeast and one in the northwest part of the Valley.

The Department of Veterans Affairs also changed its service to offer each veteran a primary-care doctor. In the past, patients would walk into Hayden and be seen by the doctor on duty, Pedene said. Now veterans will

be seen on an appointment basis by their assigned doctor.

"There's less waiting. We run it more like a private practice," Sandifur said. "You get to know people fairly well and it's a more personalized service."

There are 17 full-time employees at the clinic, including three doctors, four nurses, a pharmacist and a dietitian.

Cohen hailed the staff at the Northwest clinic.

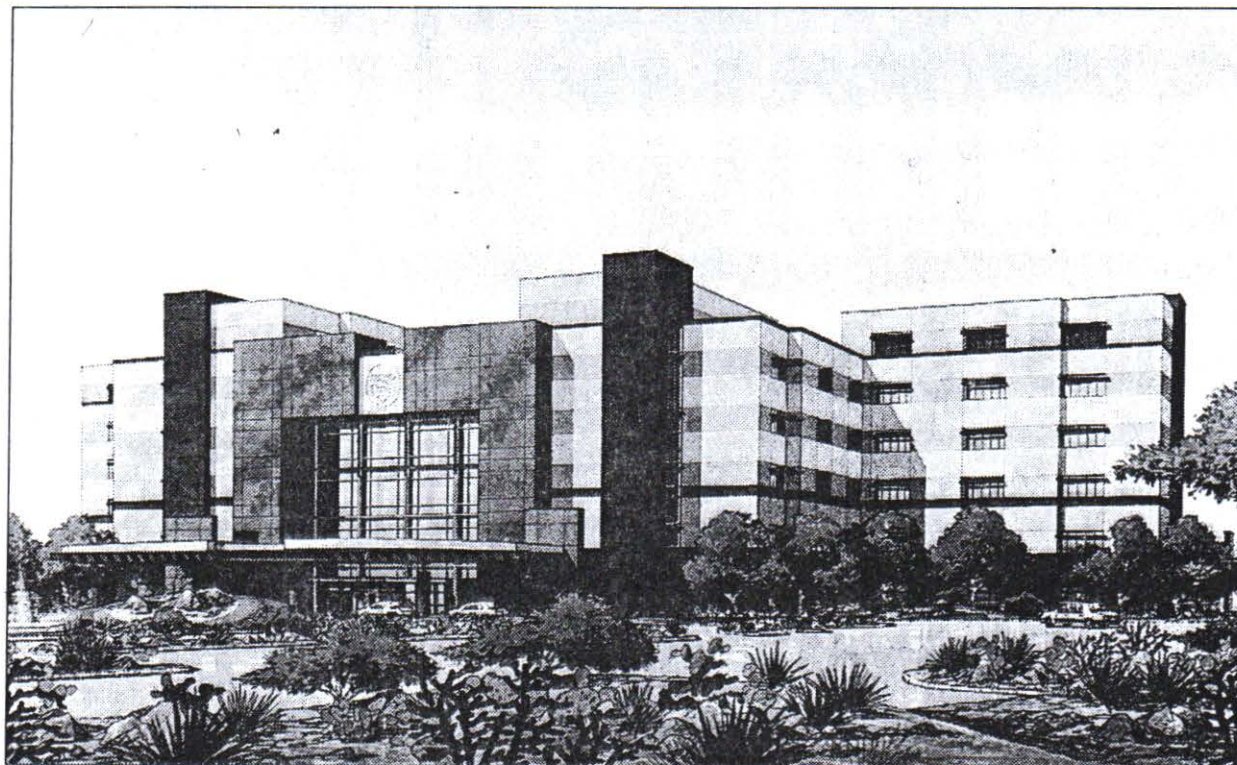
"I've never had better treatment than what I got here," he said. "They have an excellent medical staff. They've been very cooperative. They sympathize with the needs of the veterans."

Glen Hill of Surprise said the service he receives at the clinic is "the best."

"Coming in here, they make you feel at home. They seem to have a sincere interest in the veteran. I don't think I've had better service," he said.

Friday, the clinic was dedicated with an open house. Phoenix VA Director John Fears spoke at the dedication. Also present at the ceremony were Ed Cirillo from Property Owners and Residents Association and Youngtown Councilwoman Betty Barron.

The clinic is looking for volunteers. For information, call 222-6419. To make an appointment, call 222-2631.



Submitted art

The Mayo Clinic hospital will be linked to the Sun Cities by the Loop 101 freeway. The hospital is scheduled to open in the fall of 1998.

# Sun City connection boosts Mayo Clinic

By **BRUCE ELLISON**  
Staff writer

By the time it opens in the fall of 1998, a Mayo Clinic hospital in Northeast Phoenix will be easily accessible to Sun Cities area patients by the then-completed Loop 101 freeway.

Mayo, based in Rochester, Minn., operates a clinic in Scottsdale that draws about 2,800 patient registrations a year from residents of the Sun City area, its administrator, Robert Martin, said.

A Valley Metro bus line that serves Sun City, Youngtown and Peoria, and runs to the Mayo Clinic, was instituted in part to help local residents reach the Scottsdale clinic.

But that clinic lacks an acute care hospital, and so is unable to provide the total medical services which some patients need. That prompted Mayo to decide to design and build its first from-the-ground-up hospital. Other Mayo hospitals, including that in Rochester, have been bought from others and remodeled or upgraded.

The \$80 million hospital will be at 56th Street and Union Hills Drive, a mile north of Bell Road, and a few blocks south of the alignment of the Agua Fria/Pima Freeway, or Loop 101.

It will be about five miles closer to the Sun Cities than the Mayo Clinic Scottsdale.

"One of the things that we at Mayo believe we do really well, and that differentiates us from other health care providers, is offer the full complement of services for very

complicated diseases or illnesses, in one site," said Martin.

"From radiology for oncology treatment to MRIs and specialized nursing care, we have a 100-year tradition of offering completeness in our care, and this new hospital will make sure we continue to do just that," Martin said.

By having all services available in one site, Martin said, Mayo doctors and other specialists are able to talk directly to one another about complicated cases, without the need for inter-provider referrals, transfers of records and the like.

Research which the clinics do also is immediately available to staff in case it could prove valuable in deciding a course of treatment, he added.

The hospital and the freeway should be ready by late 1998, Martin said.

Mayo bought the 210-acre site from the State of Arizona Land Department last year for \$14.8 million.

Robert G. Tancredi, M.D., chairman of the Mayo Scottsdale governing board, said the clinic "held focus groups and asked patients what would make a hospital experience as comfortable, stress-free and convenient as possible.

"Then we designed our hospital to be patient- and visitor-friendly."

For the first time, Tancredi said, "we had the opportunity to use our experience and expertise to plan a hospital to meet the specific needs of our patients and caregivers."

All of the surgical specialties represented at Mayo Clinic Scottsdale will be offered at the new unit, Tancredi said. There now are 56 different medical and surgical specialties at Mayo Scottsdale.

Among the specialties Mayo now offers are care for cerebrovascular disease, endocrinology, epilepsy, liver ailments, cancers, Parkinson's disease, and thoracic diseases.

The new structure will be five stories tall, and contain 370,000 square feet. It will have 132 medical and surgical beds, with another 40 beds in an associated skilled nursing and rehabilitation unit.

The hospital will offer full emergency room service, as well as an urgent-care unit.

It will have diagnostic imaging areas, a full-service clinical laboratory, 14 operating suites for both in-patient and out-patient procedures, cancer treatment facilities including an oncology unit and a special bone marrow transplant unit.

Mayo long has been noted for its expertise in cancer treatment.

PHOTO: MEDICAL CENTER

# Housing wishes, needs of elderly often ignored

By **ROBIN ESTRIN**  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**B**OSTON — Millions of older Americans have been shuffled off to adult day care and assisted living facilities at the wishes of their children, their doctors, or their insurance companies.

But in too many cases, no one bothered to ask the elders what they wanted, according to a new Brandeis University study.

Even older people with full mental capacities aren't being consulted often enough, said John Capitman, a professor at Brandeis' Institute for Health Policy.

"Mom is still an adult, and an adult with a whole life of experience," he said.

The adult children who are sending their parents to long-term care programs "wouldn't want somebody else to tell them, 'No, you can't live at home.'"

With funding from the federal Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging, Capitman spent four years interviewing more than 1,000 elderly people around the country, as well as their relatives. His staff also interviewed doctors and facility administrators.

His research focused primarily on adult day care centers — where seniors are sent for several hours each day — and assisted living facilities, which are similar to nursing homes but offer less intensive nursing care.

In his interviews, Capitman heard a familiar refrain.

"When we visited people in assisted living, consistently they said: 'My child made the decision. I didn't choose to be here,'" he said Jan. 11.

Most seniors seemed to have adjusted to their new circumstances. But then there were people he interviewed like the 80-something woman in New Haven, Conn., whose family had placed her in

assisted living against her wishes.

"I don't know what terrible sin I must have done that I'm still alive and living like this," she told Capitman.

By ignoring their parents' wishes, adult children are placing seniors in programs that often don't meet their needs, the researcher said.

"There's a lot of potential for an older person's expression of their own needs to get lost in the shuffle," said Jane Tilly, associate director for long-term care policy research at the American Association of Retired Persons' Public Policy Institute, which did not participate in the study.

Nationwide, some 6.5 million people over age 65 have disabilities and are receiving care ranging from home health services to 24-hour nursing home assistance.

The health care system contributes to the problem by refusing to pay for lengthy hospital stays, forcing many elders to move to nursing homes or

other facilities when they'd rather return to their own houses or apartments, he said.

President Clinton has recently proposed tax breaks and other steps to ease the financial strain on families caring for chronically ill or disabled relatives.

Americans, Capitman said, need to do a better job of preparing elders to make difficult living decisions. And their children, he said, need to pay closer attention to what aging parents really want.

But the AARP's Tilly warned that too often, caregivers — including adult children and elderly spouses — try to keep a disabled relative at home, placing too heavy a burden on family members.

The problem is only going to continue.

The 65-to-74 year-old set is expected to nearly double, from 18 million Americans in 2000 to 35 million in 2050, according to census projections. The population between ages 75 and 84 will likely more than double, from 12 million in 2000 to 26 million in 2050.

# Nursing homes' function evolves

Medicare changes cited as cause for decline in residency, study reports

By BRUCE ELLISON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A newly released federal study has found that the proportion of elderly Americans living in nursing homes has declined in 10 years.

Had the trends of 1985 continued through 1995, the report says, about 250,000 more Americans over 65 would have been living in the care centers than the 1.4 million who actually did.

The change occurred even as the number of elderly Americans has been increasing.

"A change in the role of the nursing home" is behind the reduction, the study concludes.

The comparison turned up in the federal study shows "some unexpected shifts in the way elders are using the nursing home," Brandeis University researcher Christine E. Bishop told The Washington Post.

Nursing homes today focus increasingly on people with severe disabilities, the report said, and on what it called "a group of patients barely in evidence in 1985: people receiving temporary, Medicare-covered care following surgery or illness."

It is precisely those two categories that have been hit by cuts in Medicare reimbursements, financially wounding the nursing home business even as the private-pay long-term residents decided to go elsewhere.

None of that comes as news to nursing home operators in the Sun Cities.

And, they said, the trend has continued since the report, the *National Nursing Home Survey* conducted by the



Steve Chernek/Daily News-Sun

Many retirees who don't need extensive care are turning away from traditional nursing homes and moving into living facilities that offer a resort-like atmosphere, such as Desert Amelyst in Peoria, where residents Bill and Jean Stolberg sit down for lunch.

**'A decade ago, the frail ill went to nursing homes; there was no alternative. But now there is a variety of facilities.'**

Karen Barno  
Assisted Living  
Federation of America.

National Center for Health Statistics, was compiled.

In the last year, many nursing homes have seen a variety of woes pile up as changes in federal Medicare reimbursements and coverages have put the financial squeeze on the homes.

About a dozen assisted living and independent living complexes have been built in the Sun Cities area over the last five years, ranging from Grandview Terrace in Sun City West to the Arden Courts Alzheimer's facility in Peoria, and the still-under way Youngtown Gardens complex in Youngtown.

"A decade ago, the frail ill

went to nursing homes," said Karen Barno, president of the Arizona chapter of the Assisted Living Federation of America.

"There was no alternative.

"But now there is a variety of facilities," from congregate apartments to assisted living to Alzheimer's and dementia facilities, all for people who don't need medical care but who can no longer live alone, she said.

There's generally a big cost saving between nursing home rates that can run \$125 or more a day, and the variety of assisted living accommodations that can cost as little as \$2,000 a month.

"The demand for those facilities is there," Barno said — one

reason so many have appeared, or been sketched out on the drawing boards in the Sun Cities area in the last few years.

The area's high concentration of seniors makes it likely that more people here will need such accommodation than in the Phoenix area in general.

Data compiled by Garry Davis & Associates, a consulting firm, show there are about 2,900 skilled-nursing beds available in the Northwest Valley, and about 1,700 assisted-living units of various kinds, with more under construction.

Vacancies in nursing homes began rising last year. Davis has reported, saying the change was the first he had seen in a decade.

Alan Brown, vice president for operations at Arizona Baptist Retirement Centers, notes that "everyone wants to remain at the lowest level of care possible," with staying at home the best choice.

The Baptists run the Baptist Village complex in Youngtown, and a nursing home in Surprise, among other sites.

When assisted-living facilities, and even apartment complexes that included food and maid service appeared, they offered an additional choice over the largely institutional nursing home setting, Brown said.

"On the negative side," he said, "Those assisted-living complexes are a way in which the elderly 'spend down' their cash, staying in the facility as long as possible, before they must go to a nursing home."

That leaves the new nursing home resident with fewer assets and less able to pay, and in turn results in a public assistance of some sort, often from ALTCS, the Arizona Long Term Care System.

ALTCS pays the nursing home operator less money than it would receive from a private-pay patient, he said.

Still, Brown worries that there may be too many assisted-living facilities in the area, something that Sharon Harper of the Plaza Companies warned about more than a year ago in a speech in Phoenix.

DVE

Daily News-Sun • Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2000

# Nursing home chain blames Medicare cuts for financial woes

**SUN CITY:** Mariner Post-Acute Network nursing homes seek bankruptcy protection

MARY K. REINHART  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A nursing home corporation with facilities in Sun City and Glendale filed for bankruptcy protection Tuesday, the third major national chain to do so since September.

Mariner Post-Acute Network, which has 11 nursing homes in Arizona and more than 400 nationwide, blamed its debt on cuts in federal health care funding.

"It's going to have no effect on patient care whatsoever," said Kim Spell, vice president of corporation communications for the Atlanta-based firm. "We're not closing any homes. We're not laying off any workers."

Mariner, which filed for protection under Chapter 11 reorganization in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware, said it has secured \$150 million in debt financing from Chase Manhattan and PNC banks.

Arizona regulators will visit Mariner's Arizona

## Mariner Post-Acute Network homes in West Valley

- Desert Haven Nursing Center, Phoenix
- Desert Sky Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center, Glendale
- Desert Sky Retirement Center, Glendale
- Desert Terrace Nursing Center, Phoenix
- GranCare Healthcare Center, Phoenix
- Hearthstone, Sun City
- Highland Manor Nursing Home, Phoenix
- Village Green Healthcare Center, Phoenix

facilities within the next month and monitor them more closely during the proceedings.

"We'll be looking for any problems," said Mary Wiley, an assistant health department director who oversees Assurance and Licensure Services. "Do they have enough food? Do they have enough staff? Is the power turned on?"

State inspectors already were tracking dozens of nursing homes whose parent companies have filed for bankruptcy. The biggest: Kentucky-based Vencor, with eight Arizona facilities, and Sun

**See Nursing home, A5**

## From A1

Healthcare Group of Albuquerque, which has 11 nursing homes here. Sun Healthcare is not associated with Sun Health of Sun City.

Nursing home administrators said cuts in Medicare reimbursement have devastated the industry. Mariner said its reimbursement rate was cut by \$115 a day for every nursing home resident.

Hardest hit were nursing home corporations that relied on Medicare patients or side businesses, like physical and speech therapy, that were capped by Congress.

"It was a real business decision, without as much thought as to what it means to residents," said Sarah Green Burger,

executive director of the National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform.

Burger said people with loved ones in financially troubled nursing homes should watch closely to ensure that staffing stays at the same level. Anyone looking for a nursing home should consider the facility's financial health, she said.

"Medicare used to be the rich uncle," said Anne Lindeman, head of the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. "Now they can't make it with Medicare."

Lindeman said some nursing homes refuse to accept patients who are too sick.

"They are very leery about who they take. They want people who are going to get up and out quickly," said said. "The whole

system is in trouble."

Under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, a company can continue normal operations under the bankruptcy court's supervision. Creditors must approve any reorganization plan.

The value of Mariner stock plummeted last year, and trading was suspended on the New York Stock Exchange in October because of the company's deteriorating financial condition.

House Health Committee chairwoman Susan Gerard, R-Phoenix, blamed Congress for the nursing homes' financial woes. But she also said market forces are at work, with Phoenix area nursing homes running a 20 percent vacancy rate.

"I just don't see how anybody thinks they can be in this line of work for profit," she said.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2003

# CIGNA casts off AHCCCS

**EMMA JOHNSON**  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

About 75,000 of Maricopa County's poor will be forced to change health insurance policies by Oct. 1.

CIGNA HealthCare announced Tuesday it will not seek to renew its contract with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System — the state's Medicaid program. CIGNA cited loss of profits, reimbursement rates, and an inability to compete in the market.

March 31 marks the deadline for health insurers wishing to contract with AHCCCS.

"Other plans should be able to absorb the CIGNA membership coming free," said Jim Hertel, publisher of Arizona Managed Care newsletter. "But because CIGNA uses its own medical group to service this population means (some) will be faced with the prospect of finding a new physician."

About 22,000 members receive their health care through CIGNA's clinics.

CIGNA, which has contracted with AHCCCS since 1994, has not renewed any of the Medicaid contracts it had held throughout the country, said company spokeswoman Tania Graves.

The state's budget crisis and proposed cuts to the AHCCCS program could be raising concerns, Hertel said.

AHCCCS spokesman Frank Lopez said bidders must prove they can accommodate future members, including those currently insured by CIGNA.

*Emma Johnson can be reached at 480-898-6373 or [ejohnson@aztrib.com](mailto:ejohnson@aztrib.com).*



WEDNESDAY, OCT. 27, 2004

## Neurological office opens for business

STAFF REPORT

Arizona Neurological Institute will have a grand opening from 1 to 4 p.m. in Sun Lakes Medical Building in Sun City.

Located at 10474 W. Thunderbird Blvd., the event showcases the largest full-service neurological care facility in the West Valley. The company offers neurological evaluations, which can determine changes in attention, memory, language, problem solving or other cognitive functions.

With the addition of two neuropsychologists, the number of physicians in the practice has grown to 10.

The Arizona Neurological Institute also houses clinical research. Sun Health Imaging Center occupies the first floor of the medical building.

It's equipped with the latest technology, including Positron Emission Tomography scan, Magnetic Resonance Imaging and the RIS/PACS system.

"While our physicians will continue to provide patients with the latest and highest level of care with compassion, we have greatly complemented our practice with the addition of neuropsychology, research and advanced imaging capabilities," said Maninder Kahlon, founder of the institute.

"Our ability to now offer one-stop neurological care all in one place elevates our practice to the next level in providing a high-quality patient experience."

The institute serves more than 200 patients a day, and includes the Sun Cities areas, Northwest Valley communities, central Phoenix and Scottsdale. Neurologists treat disorders of the nervous system, brain, spinal cord, nerves and pain. They can diagnose or treat strokes, seizures, headaches, migraines, spinal cord injuries and peripheral neuropathy.

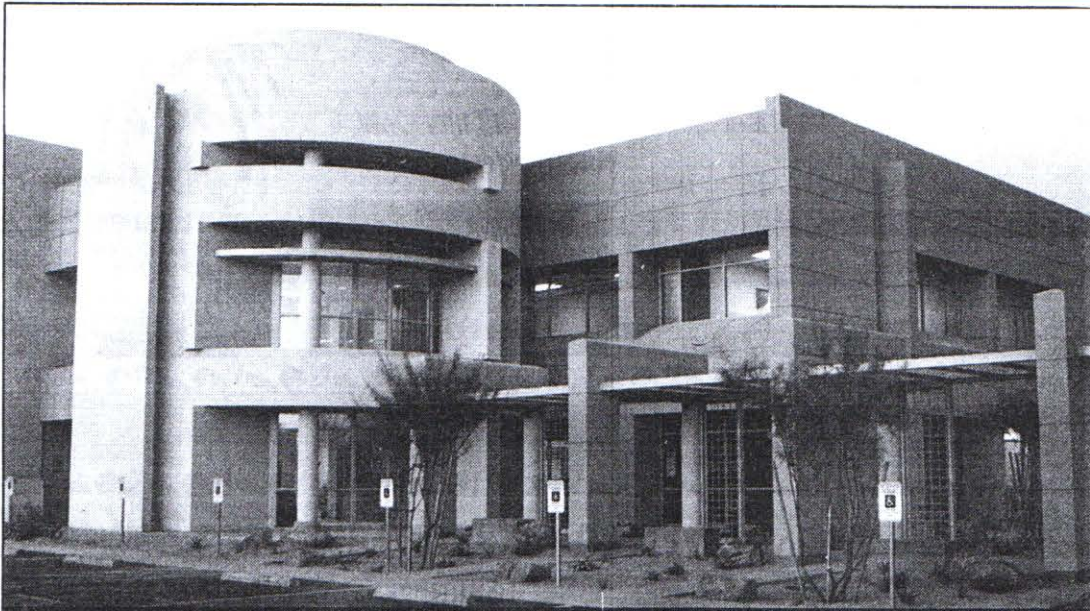


*The Physicians of Arizona Neurological Institute*

Maninder S. Kahlon, M.D.  
J. Douglas Newman, M.D.  
Atul Syal, M.D.  
Jatin Shah, M.D.  
Jason Reinhart, D.O.

Andre Hagevik, M.D. Ph.D.  
Andrew Gorman, D.O.  
Seth Larson, M.D.  
Dane Higgins, Ph.D.  
Steven Savlov, Ph.D.





## *Announcing*

# Arizona Neurological Institute's grand new offices!

The Lakes Medical Building  
10474 W. Thunderbird Blvd., Suite 200  
Sun City, AZ 85351

For more than a decade, people in the west Valley have looked to Arizona Neurology for their neurological services, both inpatient and out. As we expanded our facilities to many parts of the Sun Cities area, we continually worked to provide up-to-date services to the benefit of the people of these communities.

Now, with the opening of our new 13,000 sq. ft. headquarters on the second floor of the Lakes Medical Building, Arizona Neurology has a new name – Arizona Neurological Institute – to reflect our increased capabilities in the provision of state-of-the-art neurological services for the people of the west Valley. In addition to the new facility in Sun City, we will continue to provide services in our Glendale, Sun City West and Arrowhead offices.

The founder of our group, Dr. Maninder Kahlon, Director of the Department of Neurology at the Sun Health Alzheimer's Center, Boswell and Del E. Webb Memorial hospitals, notes, "Now our patients will have the benefit of all neurological services – including consultations, all kinds of EEGs, diagnoses and treatments of sleep disorders, dizziness and balance disorders, memory loss, and follow-up on the psychological aspects of neurological problems – in one superb facility, close to an imaging center, across from Boswell Memorial hospital, with the most advanced equipment and finest practitioners. We even have a research unit. There's nothing else like it in Arizona."

The public is invited to see Arizona Neurological Institute's new headquarters during the **Grand Opening/Open House on Thursday, October 28.**

We are proud of this tremendous advance in the establishment of a center for the diagnosis and treatment of all aspects of neurological disorders. Arizona Neurological Institute is also proud to be a member of the Sun Health Provider network and a participating provider group of Sun Health MediSunONE, a Medicare Advantage plan serving the Sun Cities area.

OVER

# Urgent care fills non-emergency gap

## Increasingly common facilities let ERs focus on saving life, limb

AMANDA MYERS  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A nagging cough. A swollen ankle. A dog bite. Chest pains.

Medical emergencies can happen at any time and don't always adhere to doctor's office hours.

So, how do you know when an ailment warrants a trip to the emergency room or when a visit to urgent care or a same-day clinic will suffice?

The emergency room, also referred to as the emergency department, is generally for life-threatening or limb-threatening illness or injuries, including stroke, heart attack or severe bleeding, said Jennifer Drago, vice president of administrative services with Boswell and Del E. Webb Memorial Hospitals.

"Urgent care is generally still medically necessary treatment but is usually not life or limb threatening," Drago said.

The difference lies in the severity of the ailment, which a patient should be able to determine on their own, she said. It's always good to

### ER visit reasons

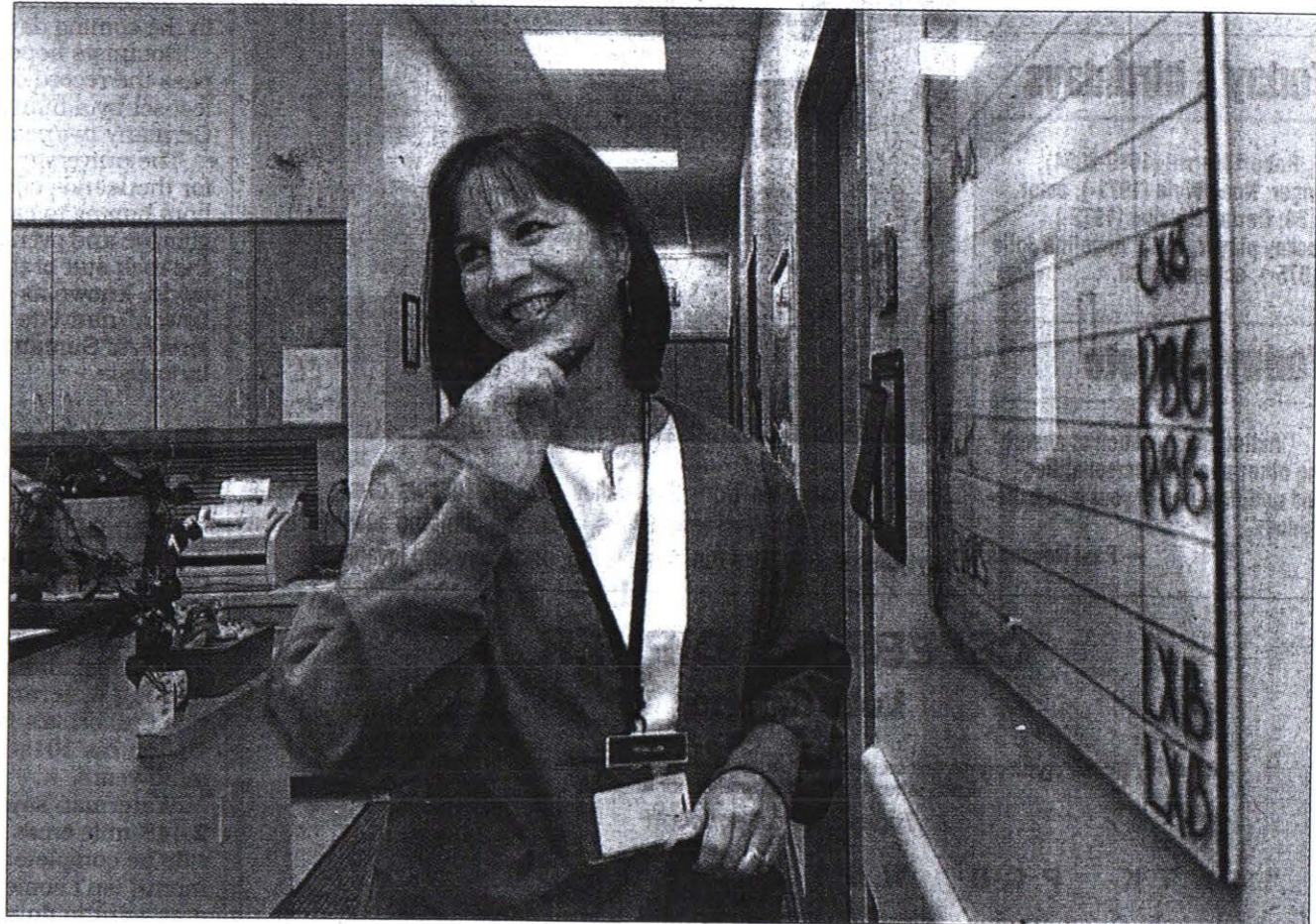
The Arizona Medical Clinic lists the following as symptoms that may warrant a trip to the Emergency Department.

- Altered level or loss of consciousness.
- Chest pain or pressure
- Significant breathing difficulty.
- Severe abdominal pain.
- Severe vomiting or diarrhea.
- Uncontrolled or heavy bleeding.
- Motor vehicle accident injuries.
- Head or neck injuries.
- Sudden severe headache, paralysis, seizure or stroke symptoms.

have a relationship with a primary care physician to be able to call with questions, she added.

However, a primary care physician isn't available all hours of the day, which is why places like urgent care and same-day clinics are becoming more prevalent, Drago said. Sun Health will open up its

See URGENT, A5



Trish Barnes works on the chart showing the location of patients inside the Arizona Medical Clinic Same Day Clinic in Sun City West Friday.

JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

OVER

# URGENT: Many clinics rely on physician's assistants for care

## Urgent Care and Emergency Rooms

### Same Day Care and Urgent Care Clinics

● Arizona Medical Clinic Same Day Care. Del E. Webb Medical Office Building, 14416 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City West. Phone: 583-5100

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Closed on legal holidays.

● West Valley Urgent Care  
7200 W. Bell Road, Suite A2, Glendale  
Phone: 334-8670

● West Valley Urgent Care, 12133 W. Bell Road, Suite 101, Surprise  
Phone: 815-9073

● Nextcare Urgent Care, 18589 N. 59th Ave., Glendale.  
Phone: 602-889-1609.

8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

● Nextcare Urgent Care, 20470 N. Lake Pleasant Road, Suite 102, Peoria.  
480-924-8382

8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday  
8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

### Emergency Departments

Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

● Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. 14502 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City West.  
Phone: 214-4000

● Boswell Memorial Hospital. 10401 W. Thunderbird Blvd., Sun City  
Phone: 977-7211.

### From A1

first free-standing urgent care clinic in Surprise Center near Bullard Avenue and Greenway Road later this year.

Jim Stelzer is the chief operating officer of the Arizona Medical Clinic, which has a same-day clinic in Sun City West. He said though the names are different, a same-day clinic and an urgent care clinic serve the same type of patients.

"We're very similar to an urgent care," Stelzer said.

The care at his clinic is typically categorized as "immediate, but non-emergency medical need."

As with most urgent care clinics, Stelzer said the same-day clinic requires no appointment, and new patients of any age are welcome. Most insurance plans are accepted, and the co-pay is typically similar to the rate of a physician's visit.

Stelzer said patients who show up at the same-day clinic, but who should

actually be in an emergency room, are stabilized and then transferred to a nearby emergency department. Things like chest pains, difficulty breathing and heavy bleeding are emergencies, not same-day care conditions, he said.

Drago said that both Boswell and Del Webb emergency departments can receive patients from urgent care and same-day care facilities that require a higher level of care.

Another difference between hospitals and some urgent care clinics is staffing, Drago said. Instead of doctors, some urgent care clinics are staffed with physician's assistants, qualified medical personnel that can diagnose and treat anything from the common cold to more severe ailments. Some patients are more inclined to visit an emergency department because they only want to be treated by a medical doctor, Drago said.

"Both can manage the care appropriately," she said. "Not everybody understands what

they (physician assistants) do."

However, over-assessing a need for care has several repercussions, she said. Most insurance companies charge co-pays for visiting an emergency department that are significantly higher than the cost of visiting an urgent care or same-day care clinic.

"It could be a difference of \$50 or \$75," Drago said.

While there is always a wait at emergency departments and clinics, Drago said emergency departments must follow strict federal regulations to prioritize patients.

More severely injured or sick patients are always seen first. Patients with less severe cases may find themselves waiting much longer in an emergency department than they would in a clinic.

"They won't be delaying care for others," Drago said of patients who visit emergency rooms with non-life threatening injuries. "But they may be delaying care for themselves."

# County cites federal law in Sun City pot case

CAPITOL MEDIA SERVICES

PHOENIX - Using a proposed medical marijuana facility in Sun City as a test case, prosecutors are urging a judge to declare pot dispensaries illegal under federal law.

Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery said it's clear that marijuana remains illegal under federal law, and he told Judge Michael Gordon Oct. 19 that Congress classifies marijuana as a Schedule 1 drug for which there is no legitimate medical use.

What that means, Montgomery argued, is the state cannot do anything that ultimately results in issuing a license to someone to sell marijuana.

If nothing else, he said the requirements of state laws and regulations put public employees in a position where they are taking official action to "aid and abet" others to violate federal law. And that makes them liable for prosecution.

But attorney Zeke Edwards, representing people who want to open the dispensary in Sun City, said there's no basis for that fear.

He pointed out that when Dennis Burke was the U.S. Attorney for Arizona he wrote a letter to state health officials spelling out that compliance with state medical marijuana laws provides no shield from prosecution under the federal Controlled Substances Act. But Edwards said Burke, in listing who might face liability, did not include public employees for processing papers.

Montgomery conceded under questioning that there

**SEE LAW, A3**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MARICOPA COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

# LAW

FROM A1

have been no prosecutions in Arizona. But he said that is irrelevant, saying while this administration may be uninterested in prosecuting public employees who help set up dispensaries, there may be a different administration with different priorities three months from now.

"State employees and county employees should not have to watch debates and follow the course of any particular election to learn whether or not their conduct is going to be prosecuted," he said.

Most immediately, Montgomery wants Gordon to block a bid by the owners of White Mountain Health Center to open a dispensary in Sun City. But he ultimately hopes to get an appellate level ruling that any action by any government official that paves the way to a dispensary is illegal, effectively banning not only the shops that will sell the drug but the facilities to grow it legally.

In fact, Montgomery ultimately wants courts to say it is illegal for the state Department of Health Services to even issue identification cards to those who have a doctor's recommendation to use the drug.

That, however, is not the position of the state.

Assistant Attorney General Charles Grubbe agreed that the state cannot authorize someone to sell or grow marijuana commercially, which is what a dispensary permit would do.

But Grubbe said all the ID cards do is identify those with specific medical conditions for which a doctor believes marijuana would be helpful.

More to the point, the cards can be used by state and local police to show that person should not be charged under state law with illegal drug possession. And that, he said, makes them legal despite federal law.

The fight is over the 2010 law which says those with specific listed medical conditions and a doctor's recommendation can get a card from the state entitling them to obtain up to 2.5 ounces of marijuana every two weeks. The

plan envisions a network of about 125 state-regulated not-for-profit dispensaries to grow and sell the drug to cardholders.

The specific issue before Gordon stems from a requirement that anyone seeking a state dispensary permit must provide documentation to the Department of Health Services that the site is properly zoned.

In this case, Maricopa County officials, acting under Montgomery's advice, refused to provide the necessary letter. The county is involved because Sun City is an unincorporated area.

Dispensary owners sued, asking Gordon to order the county to issue the letter.

Montgomery told the judge he can't do that.

"If we were to provide that information ... it will lead to the establishing in Maricopa County of a Schedule I distribution facility," he said.

Gordon noted, though, that nothing requires Arizona to have any laws making possession, sale or transportation of marijuana a crime. In fact, he said - and Montgomery agreed - the state could decriminalize marijuana entirely.

"Since you can back out of the whole thing, why can't you just back out of part of it," the judge asked, allowing some people to sell and use marijuana.

Montgomery responded that the Arizona Medical Marijuana Act does not just decriminalize marijuana but actually regulates it. And that, he said, puts it in direct conflict with federal law.

"There is a way to do it," Montgomery said of decriminalization. "This is not it."

Gordon called that the "ultimate irony."

"So maybe the lesson to be learned is that the voters ought not to have been so directed in telling the state how to enforce its statutes," he said, simply decriminalizing the drug for some without state oversight and regulation.

But Edwards said it should not be necessary for the state to choose between total regulation or total deregulation.

"Arizona has the right to decriminalize some medical marijuana activity," he said.

Gordon could sidestep at least part of the dispute if he decides he does not want to order the county to provide the necessary zoning certification. Instead, he could declare the requirement for the letter legally unnecessary.

# Health names new Chief Clinical Officer

## Dr. Bessel to succeed retiring Dr. Hensing

Banner Health officials announced Jan. 31 that Marjorie Bessel, MD, will serve as Banner's next chief clinical officer



Marjorie Bessel, MD

and as part of the organization's senior leadership team. Her appointment follows the retirement of long-time chief clinical officer John Hensing, MD.

Dr. Bessel also joins a very small group of women who are providing executive leadership as chief clinical officers in health systems across the country.

"I believe Dr. Bessel's proven track record and ability to influence, lead and collaborate to deliver results makes her an ideal fit for our chief clinical officer," Peter S. Fine, Banner president and CEO, stated in a news release. "She will bring a great balance of strategy and execution to this role."

Dr. Bessel joined Banner 12 years ago and has served in progressive physician leadership positions. She initially served as chief medical officer for a variety of Banner hospitals in the Phoenix metro area, followed by a role as chief medical officer for the Arizona Division. She has also held the roles of vice president for Continuum Management and later

» See Officer on page 7

VF SC Medical Centers

## Officer

» From page 6

vice president for Clinical Integration. She most recently served as vice president/chief medical officer for Community Delivery, including hospital and ambulatory operations in six states.

She is experienced in a variety of areas of strategic im-

### SUN CITY LOCATIONS

Banner Boswell Medical Center:  
10401 W Thunderbird Blvd.  
Banner Olive Branch Senior Center:  
11250 N 107th Ave.

portance to the organization and health care industry, including hospital operations, medical group operations, emergency operations, post-acute services, ambulatory

services and physician leadership development. She has a personal passion for empowering patients through information transparency. She is also leading work at Banner to address concerns surrounding physician burn-out.

Dr. Bessel began her career as a practicing, board-certified internist. She completed her residen-

cy at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago and attended medical school at Rush Medical College.

Dr. Hensing was named a senior vice president in 1995 and later executive vice president and chief medical officer for Banner. After serving as Banner's top physician for many years, he announced his intention to retire last year.