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Saint Agnes Medical Center
s AMC.com
While we live in uncertain times, there are a few things we can take to the bank. Birth rates are falling while our population is getting older. According to the U.S. Census, by 2030, the number of people over the age of 65 will overtake the number of people under the age of 18 for the first time in U.S. history. It's the responsibility of our aging population and their families to prepare for that. We examine ways that technology and a little foresight can help ensure seniors are safe and well cared for.

Hospital systems, health centers and other providers today are building the infrastructure to serve the patients of tomorrow, in a region where poverty is an almost-certain indicator of poor health-related outcomes. Hospitals are expanding, clinics are being built at a record clip and providers are partnering to expand their reach. We take a comprehensive look at those trends.

With an important presidential election coming up in 2020, the way we pay for our health care coverage is going to be a pivotal issue. On the left, there's a movement toward government shouldering all or more of the burden. On the right, there's a momentum to place those burdens increasingly in private hands. We all know our current system is unsustainable, so we explore the option of direct primary care for employers to cover their employees.

Thanks for reading, and we hope this publication offers a useful glimpse into one of the Valley's most important industries.
When the leadership at Richard Heath & Associates decided last year to expand their business to include aging-in-place modifications for seniors, the transition seemed a natural fit.

Since 1979, the Fresno firm has been connecting homeowners with Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and state agencies to bring low-income homes up to par with energy efficiency upgrades.

Similar to the individualized energy evaluations it’s done through four decades of business, Richard Heath & Associates has started training its associates to work with seniors to modify their homes with safety and technological upgrades to make retiring in their home a viable option as they grow older.

AARP found in a survey of people over the age 50 that 77% wanted to remain where they were or at least in the same community as they age. When it came to people 65 and older, that number increased to 86%.

“It continues to increase the more people age,” said Danielle Arigoni, director of communities for AARP.

Aging in place is not anything new. The desire to grow old somewhere comfortable and familiar may be more related to human nature, Arigoni said. But what may be new is our understanding of what it takes for people to successfully age in place.

Richard Heath & Associates will unveil their Remodeling for Healthy Aging initiative at the Fresno Home Remodeling and Decorating show at the Fresno Fairgrounds July 19-21, said Cynthia Bruno Rafferty, CEO of Richard Heath.

The company has four locations statewide with 225 employees. Of the 80 employees at their Fresno location, three are already certified to make assessments.
They consult with clients, recommending and making changes ranging from the modest — installing grab bars — to more extensive renovations such as lowering countertops and widening passageways to accommodate wheelchairs.

This is the first time the company will handle direct-to-consumer business. It is in the midst of “leveraging staff they already have” to be able to assess and make installations at homes, Bruno Rafferty said. One additional associate will come on board to help with evaluations.

Richard Heath & Associates already has a foot in the door with “hard-to-reach, disadvantaged and vulnerable populations,” through its work advising and connecting homeowners and business owners with contractors for energy efficiency.

“Through our work in low-income, a lot of who we reach are seniors,” Bruno Rafferty said. “In looking at where we’re headed as a society, looking at demographics, obviously we’re a population that as the baby boomers come of age, there’s going to be a lot of need with seniors.”

Beyond physical changes to the home, developments in technology over the past few years can help adult children monitor daily routines. Sensors alerting users if medicine cabinets have been opened can let one know if a parent has taken his or her medication. Sensors can also be placed beneath mattresses to make sure someone who got out of bed in the middle of the night without wearing a fall alert pendant has returned.

“It’s alerting me as to movements going on in the home where I’m not physically present,” Bruno Rafferty said.
Costs to upgrade a home can often pale in comparison to moving to a senior living facility. An AARP study puts the 2018 median annual cost of a private room in a California nursing home at $116,435, compared to $97,455 nationally. A shared room may cost $97,367 annually, according to the same study.

An initial consultation by Richard Heath & Associates costs $250. Upgrades can range anywhere from $500 for grab bars to $5,000 for more extensive work, according to Lisa Hernandez, an aging-in-place specialist at Richard Heath.

“An initial consultation by Richard Heath & Associates costs $250. Upgrades can range anywhere from $500 for grab bars to $5,000 for more extensive work, according to Lisa Hernandez, an aging-in-place specialist at Richard Heath.

“The target market for this initiative is actually seniors who have resources and want to leverage those resources to be able to stay in their home,” Bruno Rafferty said.

Despite a clear majority of seniors who want to remain in their homes, many housing developments weren’t designed that way, Arigoni said. A “wide oversupply of homes of three or more bedrooms” leaves many feeling like they have “too much house” down the road, she said.

Consumers also may not take into consideration their needs for the future. “A lot of people think of their homes according to their lifestyle now, but don’t think about the attributes they may want for a home in the long term,” Arigoni said.

New doors often come with raised thresholds and buyers may dismiss the idea of wheelchair accessible thresholds until they need one.

But Richard Heath & Associates hopes to be able to help people anticipate their needs going into the future. “What one needs at 65,” Bruno Rafferty said, “is different from what one needs at 95.”
In Fresno, Kings, & Tulare Counties

FHCN believes everyone has the right to the highest quality health care and to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their ability to pay. Our mission is to provide quality health care to everyone in the communities we serve.

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821,825 Patient Encounters

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110,728 Pediatric Visits

111,536 Dental Visits

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Pediatrics
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Infectious Disease
Gastroenterology
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Rheumatology
Urology
Neurology

Orthopedics
Nutritional Counseling
Health Education
Case Management
Community Health & Outreach
Eligibility Assistance
Translation/Interpretation
Transportation
As the “Silver Tsunami,” the influx of baby boomers reaching retirement age, gets ever closer, not only will health care professionals be able to rely on the latest technology to help their ageing patients — patients will often be able to use it themselves for continued independence.

At Saint Agnes Medical Center, for example, senior citizens have benefited from the latest technology, resulting in lives that are not only potentially longer, but higher in quality. A special emphasis has also been placed on independence and preventing returns to the emergency room, saving these patients money.

One innovation to make its mark in the Fresno-based health care network has been Home Care Connect, a product of telehealth service Trinity Health at Home. It consists of a set of health monitors, including a scale, blood pressure cuff and pulse oximeter. It also comes with a tablet that connects to a staff of nurses that provide 24/7 counseling and advice.

According to Cynthia Gutierrez, Saint Agnes Home Health and Hospice administrator, approximately 1,600 units have been deployed to patients since the 2017 launch, with more than 150 distributed on any given day. For these patients, this means greater independence and more time with loved ones. This has also meant a decrease in the number of readmissions.

“Part of our mission statement is that we...”
want to help people in the place that they call home,” Gutierrez said. “And this allows them to do that — to be independent in their home and have say-so in their health care.”

Saint Agnes also has the distinction of introducing the world’s smallest pacemaker to the Valley. Starting in 2017, the Micra Transcatheter Pacemaker debuted in the region, bringing with it a less intrusive device and a safer means of implanting.

Unlike traditional pacemakers, which require surgery to install, the Micra can be inserted through an IV catheter. The pacemaker doesn’t stick out on the patient’s chest, and lasts longer than most pacemakers — 11 to 13 years. This is especially helpful to the elderly, who make up 80% of implantations, according to Medscape.com, a medical information site.

However, pacemakers and medical monitoring systems are not the only pieces of modern technology to find their way into the lives of the elderly. Ren Ramshaw, director of sales and marketing for the Fresno senior living center the Vineyards, said that in addition to the equipment one would regularly expect, modern devices their children and grandchildren use — like phones and tablets — are also finding their way into senior health.

Using these devices, Ramshaw explained that seniors are better able to stay on top of important matters concerning their wellbeing, such as reminders for medication schedules and exercise routines. They also have the benefit of taking care of health-related matters that go beyond simply...
the physical.

Using their smartphone and tablets, the elderly are able to share and receive photos of their children and grandchildren, listen to preferred music from their youth and stay connected with those they care about. For those living alone, this is especially beneficial to the mental and spiritual health.

“So for social communication, I think that’s one of the big reasons why technology is good for seniors,” Ramshaw said. “For safety, technology is really important.”

Ramshaw added that unlike previous generations, baby boomers are more readily accepting of using these devices in their day-to-day lives, though it’s not just them.

For instance, Ramshaw’s father is 88, and while he was initially reluctant to use his iPhone, now it’s a challenge to put it down. As an example, she held up her phone to show some of the pictures he’d taken and sent her. He’s also able to text back-and-forth and communicate with relatives in Michigan. To make it work, Ramshaw said it took patience, which is often the remedy to getting seniors acclimated.

“We all want to be relevant, we all want to be successful at what we’re doing,” Ramshaw said. “A lot of our seniors have had very successful and diverse adventures in their lives, so being humbled by, ‘I can’t even work my phone,’ that can be very distressing for someone who’s really independent and intelligent.”

Tech has become so prevalent that Ramshaw says Wi-Fi is one of the most asked about questions in the senior living community.

"..ketamine, given intravenously, might be the most important breakthrough in antidepressant treatment in decades."
National Institute of Mental Health
CONSTRUCTION ROUNDUP

Hospitals, care providers gearing up for future patient demand
BY DAVID CASTELLON

From construction of a five-story Clovis medical tower to making a Selma emergency room entrance easier for patients to find, Valley hospitals and care providers will have a busy year building.

Much of the construction is meant to accommodate the growing number of people in the Valley accessing health services. Here are the recently completed construction projects locally and those planned to start or be completed in the coming year:

Community Behavioral Health Center, Fresno
In March, the center began making use of added space with a $3.5 million expansion that will add a dozen much-needed mental health patient beds.

Clovis Community Medical Center
Work is underway on a $390 million expansion that includes a five-story tower with 144 private rooms, with 24 beds for intensive-care patients. Work has begun on the building’s foundation. When completed in 2022, Clovis Community will have 352 private beds.

The project also will include:
• A 15,000-square-foot addition to the emergency department
• Six additional operating rooms
• Expansion of the imaging department, pharmacy and laboratory support office.
• Expansion of kitchen and dining areas.

Training physicians in the Valley for the Valley.
The two-story, 60,000-square-foot building is scheduled to open early next year.

Across Herndon Avenue, a skilled nursing facility, also part of Community Medical Centers, is expected to break ground this summer.

The 97,000-square-foot facility, scheduled to open in the fall of 2021, will have 150 patient beds and is designed to provide short- and long-term patients a unique, home-like environment.

The building’s exterior will integrate with the Clovis Community campus, but the design is intended to be a vast departure from traditional hospital or skilled-nursing environments, officials said.

The building will include multiple rehabilitation spaces, including a small pool for aquatic therapy, as well as a salon, café and several outdoor courtyards and sitting areas.

Kaiser Permanente Fresno Medical Center
A new modular medical office building will be constructed at the medical center later this year to accommodate patient growth in the local service area. The building, expected to open some time in 2020, will go between two existing parking lots and will match the existing hospital’s exterior. Plans are for it to house adult outpatient services.

An expansion of the mental health offices at Kaiser’s 4785 N. First Street Medical Office in Fresno began last year and involves moving that department from the fourth floor to the first floor, making the space more easily accessible to patients.

The project, expected to be complete this summer, will include more mental health provider offices and group therapy space. There will also be additional reception and waiting spaces designed with patient comfort and privacy in mind.

Sierra View Medical Center, Porterville
Construction and installation to replace two computed tomography (CT) scanners and an advanced magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanner will begin this year.

The first installation of one of the new CT scanners in a medical office building is set to start at the end of 2019.

Installation of the second scanner in the main hospital is expected to be finished in early 2020. The new MRI machine will be installed in the main hospital, but Sierra View officials didn’t provide a timeframe for when that may happen.
Valley Children’s Healthcare, Madera

Construction is underway on a six-bed epilepsy-monitoring unit to provide around-the-clock, centralized monitoring of patients.

Valley Children’s Healthcare has the only level-four epilepsy center in the region, and the new unit, scheduled to open in December, is expected to provide better care for children with epilepsy. Valley Children’s Pelandale Specialty Care Center, a 40,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art children’s outpatient center, opened in February in Modesto.

Valley Children’s Healthcare also has specialty care centers in Bakersfield, Fresno, Merced and Visalia, with the newest one, in partnership with Adventist Health, opened June 3 in Fowler.

The $34 million, 46,000-square-foot facility is serving both adult and minor patients, offering services that include primary and specialty care, along with maternal-fetal care, a dental laboratory and pharmacy services.

It also includes an open-air life center, an indoor play area and a 4.5-acre public community park.

Plans are underway to begin construction on a new outpatient specialty care center in Merced some time in the summer of 2020.

Plans are less far along on building a mixed pediatric and administrative office in north Fresno and a pediatric specialty care center on land now in escrow just southwest of Visalia, a larger, new facility to replace the Valley Children’s Healthcare specialty care center already in that city.

Kaweah Delta Medical Center, Visalia

Last winter, construction began on a $32.8 million expansion of the hospital’s emergency department.

Kaweah Delta has one of the busiest emergency departments in California, and the changes, expected to be completed in the fall of 2020, will add room for 41 more emergency patient beds and a fast-track area to provide emergency care for patients with minor illnesses and injuries.

Other portions of the department expansion include adding to the registration and triage areas.

This summer, construction of two new obstetrics operating rooms is scheduled to finish. The $6.5 million project will allow the hospital to take in more expecting mothers in need of or scheduled for C-section surgeries.

The hospital delivers about 4,800 babies a year, and hospital officials say that number is rising.

Work began in December 2018 to finish interior construction on the fifth and sixth floors of the hospital’s Acequia Wing, which was built onto the hospital in 2009 but never fully completed inside the

Continued | 12
Continued from 11

top two floors.

When the $22 million project is done, the fifth floor will house 24 intermediate critical-care beds that will allow some patients to be directed out of the Emergency Department, while the sixth floor will house the new 23-bed Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, six times larger than the current NICU.

Also this summer, construction of a new, hospital-run urgent care center is expected to be completed.

The $4 million facility will house 14 exam rooms, onsite radiology and a lab.

Open seven days a week, this will be Kaweah Delta’s second urgent care in Visalia, both of which are intended to take in patients not suffering from critical ailments and injuries, in turn reducing patient traffic at the hospital’s emergency room.

Adventist Health Hanford

The hospital opened its second Rapid Care medical office June 10 in Hanford’s Fargo Crossing Shopping Center, following a $464,642 conversion of the 1,500-square-foot former retail space.

Adventist Health Tulare

After just shy of a year shut down due to issues with its prior management, Tulare Regional Medical Center reopened with Adventist Health taking over its operations. In April of this year, the hospital took on Adventist Health’s name.

Adventist has announced plans to commit $10 million over two years to upgrade the hospital, which will include renovating the obstetrics department and installing a state-of-the-art infant security system designed to monitor new moms and their babies in real time and from multiple locations.

Details of planned construction-related improvements weren’t provided.

Adventist Health Selma

The hospital’s renovated emergency department lobby was put back online in December 2018.

The remodel was intended to provide a brighter, more spacious and comfortable experience for patients awaiting treatment. Changes included relocating the entrance so it now faces the parking lot, making it easier for patients to find.

United Health Centers

UHC has a laundry list of construction projects recently completed or in the works for the coming year that will involve construction or renovations to 14 buildings, resulting in new or added spaces for the medical provider totaling 203,200 square feet. Among those projects is construction completed in April on
The projected total annual economic impact for the medical school alone when fully-operational, will be greater than $56 million in direct, indirect and induced impacts and bring 446 jobs in the region.

While advancing their mission, California Health Sciences University (CHSU) in Clovis has made a substantial impact in bringing more jobs, educational opportunities, and health care providers to the Valley.

The initial development of the University and its Colleges have already had an important economic impact on the local economy, with over 91 employees hired to date, many of which are highly trained professionals with advanced degrees. The University plans to hire at least 100 additional employees over the next three years.

Most importantly, the development of the medical school will have the most impact on the local economy. The projected total economic impact during startup (2017-19) is $69.4 million and will create 551+ new jobs. The projected total annual economic impact when fully-operational will be greater than $56 million in direct, indirect and induced impacts, and bring 446 jobs in the region.

Their College of Pharmacy recently celebrated its second graduating class of pharmacists and now has 116 alumni. Over 60% of their pharmacy students are from the Valley and the majority of graduates are now serving our community.

The successful launch of their College of Osteopathic Medicine means that local students will have an opportunity to remain in the Valley to earn their medical degree. Applications for admissions are now being accepted for the first class of 75 students which will enroll in July 2020.

The University is critically needed in this region to address workforce needs by expanding numbers of highly qualified graduates in the health professions who have regional connections and interests. Graduate medical education programs have proven to be important drivers of health care quality, access, and economic development.

Construction is now well underway on their new campus located at 2500 Alluvial Avenue in Clovis. At full build out, the new campus will include labs, classrooms, a student center, a library, and an auditorium, along with support buildings.

Development of the new campus will occur in multiple phases as each new health science related college is established. The timing and specific discipline for each new school will be determined based on the need and opportunity for job placement within the region. CHSU plans to open up to 10 post-graduate colleges to train health care professionals in the upcoming years.

For more information about California Health Sciences University, visit chsu.edu.
resources and other services.

The rest of the construction projects involve clinics, with three being built from the ground up in Fresno, Reedley and Dinuba. The rest involve renovations to existing structures, including the conversion of a classroom at Crescent View Charter School, inside Fresno's Manchester Center, into a school-based healthcare center. The center, expected to be completed in July, would provide easy access to medical care for students, their parents and faculty, as well as the public.

Another project in the works will convert the vacated administrative space at the former Parlier headquarters into medical space to enlarge UHC’s adjoining health center. The project in Fowler will involve expanding and renovating the existing health center there, while seven other projects in Fresno, Corcoran, Selma and Huron will involve renovating or outright gutting buildings to convert them into health centers.

All of the projects are scheduled to be completed this year and next year.

Family Healthcare Network
Over the last 14 months, the Visalia-based medical provider opened an annex to its downtown administration office as well as nine clinics, which included expansions beyond Tulare and Kings counties into Fresno County.

The latest, the FHCN Downtown Porterville Health Center, opened in April. The 17,000-square-foot facility offers family medicine, pediatric, obstetric, gynecological, dental, optometry and pharmacy services.

The next site scheduled to open is the FHCN Selma Health Center in July. It will offer family practice and industrial health services.

The site is expected to undergo renovation to expand its patient care space over the next year.

The FHCN Fresno Illinois Health Center and the FHCN Disease Management Health Center both are scheduled to open in November, the latter in the same campus as the network’s Ambulatory Care Center and its Surgical Services Center in Fresno. The Disease Management Health Center will offer chronic care management services for patients living with severe chronic care illnesses.

The Fresno Illinois site will offer pediatric services and will include nine exam rooms.

FHCN officials report that plans are in development to relocate the site to a larger space in Fresno some time in the next year.

With the new sites close to opening, FHCN has 33 medical sites, and the company is working on developing eight more in the three counties.

Continued from 12

the company’s new 53,000-square-foot headquarters in north Fresno. Company staff relocated there in April from the health provider’s prior headquarters in Parlier.

The new building houses all of UHC’s executive offices, as well as its telephone call center, specialty referral services, patient financial services, information technology division, finance office, human
Direct Primary Care could fill employee treatment needs

BY DONALD A. PROMNITZ

James “JR” Richardson is doing everything he can to bring a direct primary care (DPC) center to Fresno — in fact, with decades of experience in health care administration, he’s convinced that it’s one of the best solutions out there for smaller companies looking to get affordable health coverage for their employees.

Direct care involves companies providing health benefits to employees by paying providers directly, instead of through an insurance company. In the typical DPC model, a clinic provides primary care services for the employee, along with lab work and prescription medications. To make this model work, the average DPC clinic would service multiple small companies.

With deductibles of $4,000 to $5,000 not uncommon in the current health insurance market, Richardson said this model is gaining great

What all the medical studies have shown is that when you spend time like that, the relationship with the doctor allows behavioral change, which means you really work with people.

James “JR” Richardson

Continued | 16
appeal and has tested well in focus groups, especially in the restaurant business where turnover rates are high and part-time employment is common. Industries with high amounts of independent contractors, such as real estate, are also ideal candidates.

“We were doing research with employers to find out what their reaction would be,” Richardson said. “And it was overwhelmingly positive. We met with a number of groups, ranging from very small employers — maybe five employees — up to groups that had 100 or 200 employees.”

In the right setting and under the proper circumstances, this model has the added benefit of drastically cutting down on wait times for a patient to see a doctor.

When thinking about insurance-based care, Richardson talks about the “50-to-5” rule, — patients waiting upwards of 45 or 50 minutes for an appointment that only lasts five minutes. A shorter wait and longer appointment is not only less frustrating, he said, but also results in a more thorough and informative session, one that lets the patient better understand what they need to do to maintain their health and prevent trips to the emergency room.

“What all the medical studies have shown is that when you spend time like that, the relationship with the doctor allows behavioral change, which means you really work with people,” Richardson said. “That’s when people stop smoking, they exercise more, they eat better and they become more compliant with their medication.”

Dr. Michael Stubblefield served as the medical director for the Employee Health Center for Tulare County, which operated a DPC model under Wellness for Life from Terre Haute, Indiana. He pointed to another benefit of the model. Since services were already paid for without the middleman work of the insurance company, patients would have constant access to the doctor, even to resolve a minor issue by phone.

“You’ve already been paid for their services, so you don’t have to worry about getting paid. The insurance company would never pay me to do that,” Stubblefield said. “So the patient would have to come in, no matter how minor the problem, and my motivation would be: ‘Yeah, you’ve got to come in. Otherwise, I’m not going to get paid.’

It can also serve to benefit doctors by cutting back on physician burnout, a costly issue that contributes $5 billion to health care spending annually in the U.S., according to a recent study published in the academic journal ‘Annals of Internal Medicine’ in May. Paperwork — a particular bane for physicians — is also cut down.

However, Stubblefield did caution that conditions have to be right for the DPC to work properly. In the ideal DPC model, the clinic is set up to allow the doctors to more or less run the operation. If it’s set up under an insurance company, however, there is a greater likelihood that doctors will receive less payment and the number of direct services they supply could be diminished.

The right technology must also be installed to keep practitioners and their patients connected.

Right now, Richardson is working to bring a clinic to Fresno and is in the Process of trying to recruit a doctor to work in the DPC setting. It’s his hope that a Center will be available for companies and their employees sometime next year.

Healthy communities start at home.

Children who witness domestic violence are more likely to have trouble in school, abuse drugs or alcohol, commit crimes, experience depression, attempt suicide, and repeat the cycle of violence. For 40 years Marjaree Mason Center has strived to prevent and end the cycle of violence through education and advocacy. Please partner with us by donating at mmcenter.org.

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mmcenter.org
When five women from the Valley started collecting money in 1949 for a children’s hospital in the region, they likely had no idea what their project would grow into.

The fundraising efforts of Carolyn Peck, Gail Goodwin, Helen Maupin, Agnes Crockett and Patty Randall paid off on Oct. 26, 1952 with the opening of Valley Children’s Hospital. Peck, the last surviving founder of the hospital, passed away in February, but lived to see Valley Children’s spread from Bakersfield to Sacramento, providing everything from neonatal to cancer care, providing assistance to families and parents as their children undergo treatment.

Valley Children’s has opened several clinics in the past year: Last July, they cut the ribbon on Magnolia Pediatrics primary care center in Clovis, followed by the Peladale Specialty Care Center in Modesto. Most recently, they cut the ribbon on a center in Fowler on May 30, which they did in collaboration with Adventist Health.

Located off of Highway 99 near Merced Street, Adventist Health Medical Office- Fowler has a patient capacity of up to 300 patients.

At a cost of $34 million, the 46,000-square-foot facility was completed after two years of construction. Valley Children’s will be able to provide pediatric care in 13 different medical areas at the site, while Adventist Health will take care of all adult patients.

Meanwhile, further plans are underway to replace existing outpatient centers in Merced and Visalia, and to open a new clinic in north Fresno. It all comes as part of the network’s goal for a Valley Children’s site to be within 30 miles or 30 minutes of any family in the San Joaquin Valley.

According to Todd Suntrapak, president and CEO of Valley Children’s Healthcare, growth is not only a point of pride, but also a validation of their work.

“Our mission commands that we focus on continuously improving the health and well-being of kids,” Suntrapak said. “And so all of the infrastructure we’re creating is designed to do exactly that.”

Valley Children’s hasn’t had a hard time finding sponsors and supporters for their efforts. Annual events such as The Fresno Bee’s “Kid’s Day” come to mind. This year the event raised more than $634,000, and nearly $10 million since it began. Oakland Raiders quarterback and former Fresno State football standout Derek Carr, whose son Dallas was treated at the hospital, has also been a high-profile spokesperson.

Valley Children’s Healthcare also started a major partnership with The Big Fresno Fair with the launch of “Fill the Need” admission tickets, with half of the proceeds going to the hospital and its efforts to expand the level of treatment and care.

“Whether it’s the Carr brothers, whether it’s The Big Fresno Fair, wherever you turn, everyone has a story about Valley Children’s,” Suntrapak said. “We’re so thankful about that because what it really means is that we’re trusted by the communities we serve to take care of the part of their family that’s the most precious — and that’s their children.”

Dr. Devonna Kaji, president of the Valley Children’s Specialty Medical Group Central California, Inc., confirmed Suntrapak’s statements at the Fowler ribbon cutting. She added that their partnerships in the region have made this goal that much easier.

“Sometimes it requires putting up new clinics, and other times like this, it’s great that you can partner with an organization that’s already been in the community, that knows them, that serves them, and that... we can partner with their family practitioners,” Kaji said.

According to Suntrapak, Valley Children’s Healthcare has almost achieved its 30 miles/30 minutes goal for families in the region. He says that Coalinga is the one spot left on the map that needs assistance, and there are plans for a clinic to fill the gap.
For the fourth year in a row, Valley Children’s is recognized as one of the best children’s hospitals in the nation by U.S. News & World Report, ranking in Diabetes & Endocrinology, Gastroenterology & GI Surgery, Neonatology, Orthopedics and Urology.

We are proud of this national recognition and honored by the trust families have placed in us for nearly seven decades.

valleychildrens.org/usnews