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### New home lets T.O. free clinic offer more care

#### Doctors, services added after program changes churches

By Daniel Miller, [dmiller@VenturaCountyStar.com](mailto:dmiller@VenturaCountyStar.com)

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The Westminster Free Clinic has come a long way from the days when it operated out of a custodian's closet in the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Westlake Village.

Having recently moved into several rooms at the United Methodist Church of Thousand Oaks, the clinic now sees about 60 patients each Wednesday night — a hefty increase from the days when the clinic's lone doctor saw about three patients in the "broom closet," said Cindy Vinson, the clinic's co-founder.

On Feb. 22, the clinic, which was started 10 years ago, relocated to the Methodist church after three years at the New Life Mission Church in Thousand Oaks. According to Lisa Safaeinili, the clinic's executive director, the move to the Methodist church allows the clinic to double in size.

"Now we have five doctors seeing patients at one time, and we have room for nutrition education," said Safaeinili, who added that at the New Life Mission Church, only three doctors and a chiropractor could work at once. "The space allows for more services than the previous site. We can also have a dentist, counselor, lawyer and a chiropractor. It's one-stop shopping."

The clinic provides free medical care to the community's homeless, working poor and uninsured. There are two other clinics in the area, the Conejo Free Clinic and the Free Clinic of Simi Valley, Vinson said.

Safaeinili said the clinic had to change locations because the New Life Mission Church plans to tear down its building to erect a new church.

Vinson said members of the Methodist church's administration have been very supportive of the clinic.

"We are ecstatic about the move because it is a larger site and the people at the congregation have been so wonderful to us, providing our volunteers with food," said Vinson, who is also on the clinic's board of directors. "Most of our volunteers come straight from work or school, and they get cranky at about midnight, so it's nice that they make us food."

When it is in operation, the clinic uses several meeting rooms, offices and a hall at the church.

"We are really excited to have the clinic here at our church," said Julia Snyder, an office administrator at the Methodist church. "It's a much-needed program for the working people who don't have a means for health insurance. We feel that we are contributing to the community in this endeavor by making our church available."

In addition to a quarterly free vaccination service, the clinic offers other special programs like the recently started "H.E.A.L." outreach program, which partners the clinic's teen interns with nurses, Safaeinili said.

As part of the program, interns assist nurses in giving healthcare to area workers without health insurance.

"H.E.A.L. stands for 'Healthy Eating, Active Living,'" Safaeinili said. "It's kind of a different approach — we are always trying new things."

The United Methodist Church of Thousand Oaks is at 1000 E. Janss Road. For more information on the clinic, which is open from 5 to 10 p.m. on Wednesday nights at the church, visit <http://www.wfc-online.org/>.