

South Bay Family Health Care Clinic receives unexpected \$100K grant

By Melissa Evans Staff Writer

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The summer is usually rough for health clinics and others that depend on funding from the state.

With legislators in the midst of another budget impasse - they failed again to pass a budget by the July 1 deadline - officials at South Bay Family Health Care clinic were elated to receive an unexpected, \$100,000 cash donation from Centinela Hospital Medical Center this week.

"This is huge," said John Merryman, spokesman for the clinic. "This will help us a lot. Our cash flow gets really low in the summer. Sometimes we have difficulty paying our employees."

The check from Centinela will primarily go toward supporting the Dr. Claudia Hampton Clinic near the hospital in Inglewood. South Bay Family Health Care also has clinics in Redondo Beach, Gardena and a school-based clinic in Carson.

The clinics provide primary care for low-income adults and children, along with dental services and some psychological counseling. Demand has

increased rapidly with the ranks of uninsured growing, officials said.

Most of the patients are covered by Medi-Cal, but the state insurance program has undergone severe cuts over the last two years as a result of California's fiscal crisis.

Centinela is owned by Prime Healthcare Services, which bought the struggling hospital nearly three years ago. In the last year alone, the hospital has provided \$115 million in charitable care services for the community, company officials said.

"Centinela

Hospital takes its responsibility of providing excellent quality health care to the public very seriously," Dr. Paryus Patel, chief medical officer, said in a statement.

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