



St. John's Well Child and Family Center

Community Health Center, South Los Angeles

St. John's Well Child and Family Center is a community health center serving South Los Angeles, a region of high poverty and substantial unmet health needs. St. John's has been an innovator in providing the right care for the hardest to serve, in making improved community health part of its model of care, and in developing quality healthcare jobs. The need for financial investment for St. John's to sustain its expansive vision was an important inspiration to Vital Healthcare Capital's (V-Cap) planning and development.

St. John's growing network of federally qualified health centers provides a full spectrum of medical, dental, and mental health care; chronic disease management, health education and social support.

St. John's focus goes beyond the doctor's visit, and includes preventing disease and intervening around health risks in the community. For example, 80 percent of families in South LA live in substandard housing so St. John's launched *Healthy Homes, Healthy Kids* to address high rates of lead poisoning and other environmental conditions that diminish health. St. John's deploys community health workers to do in-home assessments to identify what housing conditions are making children sick to empower families to alleviate slum-housing conditions, force landlords to make repairs and improve health status. This prevents families from needing to access health care in hospital emergency rooms. These community health workers, or *promotores*, live in the neighborhood and educate parents about simple steps to address health risks such as roach and mold infestation.

"We look for root causes for what is making the population sick and try to engage in policy and system change," says CEO Jim Mangia. "We work with people who have complex medical problems and complicated social challenges. We take those on and come up with creative solutions," he says.

South Los Angeles has the highest rate of diagnosed diabetes in Los Angeles County and the highest rate of deaths due to diabetes in California. St. John's has responded to this problem with a comprehensive chronic disease management and treatment program that includes podiatry and eye exams, patient education and case management, exercise and fitness classes, and healthy cooking training. All of these have produced remarkable improvements in patients' health.



“We need financial partners who are committed to our mission, and able to help us serve more needs in more creative ways,” said Mangia. “We’re excited to have V-Cap as a new source of investment in improving the health of our community.”

St. John’s understands that the poverty in its community is a cause of poor health, and so views providing good jobs for its workforce as an essential part of its mission. In 2015, St. John’s became the first community health center in the nation to raise the minimum wage of their workforce to a \$15 minimum hourly wage for any job. St. John’s has been a pioneer in developing and training health outreach workers, home health aides, social workers, and medical assistants to play important roles in patient care, health education, and the prevention and management of disease.

St. John’s has shown a bold commitment to provide care to those who are hardest to serve.

- **Homeless adults and children.** St. John’s has a focused program to provide health care to the homeless, which includes a mobile health clinic that is connected to South LA schools to identify children who are homeless so they can get immediate health care and be linked to a medical home.
- **Transgender individuals.** St. John’s is the only community health center in South LA that provides comprehensive medical care to people who are transgender, offering hormone therapy, assistance with name and gender-marker changes, mental health treatment, and case management. St. John’s is the first organization in South Los Angeles to develop a transgender health program. In its first year of operation more than 500 individuals received transgender health services.
- **Unaccompanied immigrant children.** Last year, St. John’s spearheaded efforts to bring together experts in the fields of law, housing, and health to make sure unaccompanied immigrant children fleeing violence and brutality in Central America got medical and dental care and other support services they needed.

“St. John’s has long been one of our inspirations because of its commitment to good jobs and in finding innovative ways to care for vulnerable populations, and exemplifies the kind of work V-Cap financing will support,” said Vital Healthcare Capital CEO Steve Weingarten.