

WESTERN SIERRA MEDICAL CLINIC ADDS OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY SERVICES; HIRES DR. SCOTT MACK TO ESTABLISH PRACTICE

GRASS VALLEY – Western Sierra Medical Clinic has established an obstetrics and gynecology practice, hiring a longtime physician to start the much-needed service in the region.

Dr. Scott Mack — a 27-year obstetrician and gynecologist (OB/GYN), most recently with Kaiser Permanente Medical Group in Roseville — is the first physician to join the Maternal Health Unit at Western Sierra. The community has a critical shortage of OB/GYNs, forcing many women to seek the specialty service in other communities.

“Access to women’s health services is very important,” said Dr. Mack, who has already been meeting with patients during the past several days at Western Sierra in Grass Valley, and coordinating with other OB/GYNs to help continue to improve access to care for mothers and their still-developing babies.

Western Sierra CEO Scott McFarland agrees, adding the nonprofit health center began focusing on the community’s critical shortage of OB/GYNs a few years ago and is committed to developing a first-rate, high-quality practice. The center has about 20 patients every month who deliver a baby, further indicating the need for an OB/GYN practice at Western Sierra. The center provides comprehensive medical, dental and behavioral health care in Nevada, Sierra and Yuba counties.

“It’s a critical component for a healthy community,” said McFarland, who added the health center is currently looking for a second OB/GYN to join Dr. Mack. “There is definitely a need, and we want to help meet it.”

Dr. Glenn Thiel, Chief Medical Officer of Western Sierra, knows firsthand the demand for women’s health specialists in Nevada, Sierra and Yuba counties.

“Women’s health is the foundation for healthy babies, children and families,” Thiel said. “Prenatal care is so important; it plays a major role in a child’s health early on, but also for a lifetime.”

Better health care through every stage of life is the mission of Western Sierra. The center’s far-reaching goal of a one-stop health facility is the future of health care, said Dr. Mack.

“Our entire medical system will be turning to this team approach,” said Mack, who applauds the forward-looking effort by Western Sierra. “If you need to go to the lab or see another physician, it’s right down the hall.”

Western Sierra already had maternity services, including a midwife, but not an OB/GYN until Dr. Mack joined the practice this month.

“I have worked with many midwives and non-physician providers,” Dr. Mack said. “It’s all really part of a team effort. I’m the captain of the ship, but everyone is rowing the boat.”

Dr. Mack went to medical school at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine and completed his residency in obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Dr. Mack, whose father was a pediatrician and his daughter is a pathologist, has delivered almost 4,000 babies during his career.

“I wasn’t sure, but at the end of the year, I clicked with OB/GYN,” Dr. Mack said of his experience with numerous areas of medicine during medical school before choosing his specialty. “We kind of do everything for women — and deliveries are fun. Delivering a baby never gets old.”

But delivering babies is just part of obstetrics and gynecology. Dr. Mack will handle many other medical issues, from helping women determine the most appropriate birth control to performing hysterectomies.

“The field has changed a lot during the last 20 years or so, it’s a lot less invasive,” said Mack, who has physician privileges at Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital. He is also part of the on-call rotation at the local hospital. “We have a lot of non-surgical methods, and many more non-invasive surgeries.”

Dr. Mack has been practicing medicine since 1987, when he was in private practice in Mobile, Ala. He moved to the Bay Area and became a physician for the Kaiser Permanente Medical Group in 1993 and returned to private practice five years later in Fremont.

Then, he joined Kaiser Permanente Medical Group in Roseville in 2011, but bought a home in Grass Valley and commuted at least 90 minutes round-trip every workday.

“In December, I drove by the building, and thought it looked very nice,” Dr. Mack said of the new Western Sierra Medical Clinic that opened on Old Tunnel Road in late 2014. The new facility is a few minutes from his home in Grass Valley. “I had minimal contact with the health care community, but I wanted to learn more about Western Sierra.”

Dr. Mack’s interest in the fast-growing health clinic was near-perfect timing for Western Sierra, McFarland said.

“With the new building we have a lot more space and we continue to look at bringing on additional specialties and expanding services,” McFarland said. “We’re very glad to have Dr. Mack, and help many of our patients get the health services they need.”

Dr. Mack joined the health center at the beginning of the month and has been busy buying equipment, including an ultrasound machine, to meet the needs of patients.

"I'm here now, and we are committed to continuing to build a women's health department," said Dr. Mack, who is married and has three children. "If (women) want an experienced OB/GYN who is up to date and cares about his patients, they will be very happy here."

About Western Sierra Medical Clinic

Western Sierra Medical Clinic provides comprehensive medical, dental and behavioral health care in Nevada, Sierra and Yuba counties. Founded in 1975, Western Sierra emphasizes preventive care, education and empowering patients to make informed decisions. Western Sierra provides services for the HMO and private markets, and to low-income and senior citizens. Western Sierra is the largest outpatient health care provider in Nevada County, where a new full-service health clinic meets the growing demands in the community. You can learn more about Western Sierra Medical Clinic at www.wsmcmed.org and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WesternSierraMedicalClinic.