

# THE UNION

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Stephen Roberson  
[sroberson@theunion.com](mailto:sroberson@theunion.com)

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## Penn Valley welcomes new Western Sierra Medical Clinic



Laura Elliott/Imahaffy@theunion.com | The Union

From left, Penn Valley Area Chamber of Commerce President Mike Mastrodonato, Western Sierra Chief Medical Officer Dr. Heather Lucas-Ross and Nevada County Fourth District Supervisor Hank Weston toured Western Sierra Medical Clinic's new Penn Valley office on Thursday. The clinic, the first in Penn Valley, will open on Tuesday.



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One of three dental stations in Western Sierra Medical Clinic's new facility in Penn Valley.



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The medical check-out desk in Western Sierra Medical Clinic's new facility in Penn Valley.



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Dr. Heather Lucas-Ross shows Nevada County Supervisor Hank Weston how the computers in the exam rooms can be used to help patients understand different medical procedures, issues and anatomy at Western Sierra Medical Clinic's new facility in Penn Valley.



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Main reception and check-in area at Western Sierra Medical Clinic's new facility in Penn Valley.



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Western Sierra Medical Clinic is opening a facility in Penn Valley.



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Western Sierra Medical Clinic has five medical exam rooms in their new facility in Penn Valley.

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Health care is finally coming to Penn Valley.

Western Sierra Medical Clinic will open an office on Tuesday offering dental care Mondays through Wednesdays and medical care on Wednesdays only from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a goal of extending their services as word spreads and demand increases.

The clinic, Western Sierra's fifth, will open with one medical provider, one dentist, one registered dental assistant, one medical assistant and a receptionist.

"That's just the tip of the iceberg," said Dr. Heather Lucas-Ross, the clinic's chief medical officer who currently spends most of her time in Grass Valley.

Nevada County Fourth District Supervisor Hank Weston, a champion of the project, emphasized the importance of Western Sierra's accessibility, noting any insured patient can access services.

“This is a full-service clinic,” he said. “It’s not geared toward Medicare, private insurance, vets. Anything works here.”

The clinic anticipates serving 1,500 Penn Valley area residents who already use Western Sierra’s Grass Valley office and will be available to serve as many as 10,000 residents.

“It’s very well-placed,” Weston said. “Eight years we’ve wanted something like this here, and it will only get better ... It’s been in the doldrums too long. This is a major area within this county and it doesn’t get much play.”

## 21st CENTURY MEDICINE

Weston, Lucas-Ross, Penn Valley Area Chamber of Commerce President Mike Mastrodonato and Western Sierra Chief Development and Communications Officer Cheryl Rubin toured the new facility Thursday. They showed off some of its medical features such as a TV in the waiting area with a loop of medical and nutritional information, a refrigerator for vaccination drugs, an automated exam table that eases use for those challenged physically and exam room interactive monitors and doctor-access computers.

“We like to offer high-quality information that has been vetted,” Lucas-Ross said of the interactive monitors, which allow patients to access information while they wait. “People can go on social media or do internet searches for health information, but we want to offer to patients what they can actually use and have good conversations with their provider about it.”

The clinic will serve Penn Valley’s large aging population but also expects to serve a lot of pediatric patients.

“I pride our clinic on having full-spectrum family practice services, so grandma can bring her grandchild and they can both be treated at the same time,” Lucas-Ross said.

## LOCAL IMPACT

Construction on the project started in July 2016, and the work was done entirely by local workforce, about 20 people total.

The 3,650-square-foot building at 10544 Spenceville Road is a renovation of three former condominium offices across from the fire station and near restaurants and shopping. Weston expects the clinic to have a financial impact on Penn Valley.

“It becomes a major cornerstone of what you need for an active community,” he said. “Medical, restaurants and other things. Our hope is when you see Penn Valley has a full

medical clinic now, and it's going to expand, more businesses see this is a good place to invest."

Mastrodonato said that while there are plenty of local businesses with a long history in Penn Valley, there's still a need for growth.

"The fact is we have to run up the hill for major shopping, and not just up the hill but out of the area," he said. "That's something we've been trying to address at the local level and county level for a long, long time. The more dollars we keep in our community the better it is for everybody."

To contact Staff Writer Stephen Roberson, email [sroberson@theunion.com](mailto:sroberson@theunion.com) or call 530-477-4236.