

Western Sierra Medical Clinic to Honor Drs. Bill and Christine Newsom at Gala Event

Proceeds from Jan. 29 event will help cancer patients with their treatments

GRASS VALLEY— Western Sierra Medical Clinic will honor longtime physicians and community leaders Drs. Bill and Christine Newsom, who have been committed to making health care accessible and easier for local patients for more than three decades.

Colleagues, family and friends will honor the Newsoms for their efforts to improve health care in the region during Western Sierra Medical Clinic's *Celebrating Leadership in Health Care* gala 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 29, at Miners Foundry in Nevada City.

The gala is also a major fundraiser for the nonprofit health center, with proceeds to be used in part to help support the needs of cancer patients, such as for transportation and care services. Western Sierra Medical Clinic is selling tickets and seeking sponsors for the gala.

“The Newsoms have truly been dedicated to improving health care in the region, and their careers have touched so many lives,” said Scott McFarland, Chief Executive Officer of Western Sierra Medical Clinic. “We are looking forward to the gala and honoring them as physicians and community leaders, while raising funds to help those struggling with cancer in the region.”

Treating patients with cancer was the focus of Dr. Bill Newsom's 35-year career. Dr. Bill Newsom, a medical oncologist, founded the Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Comprehensive Community Cancer Center in Grass Valley. His never-ending commitment was to improve the lives of patients.

“Bill had a unique ability to connect with people. He could say things in an easy to understand way,” said Dr. David Campbell, who joined Dr. Bill Newsom's practice in 1994. “I learned a lot from him. Bill taught me how to be a doctor, more than all of the training I had.”

Dr. Christine Newsom, an internist, also played a critical role in the community—as a physician and mentor. She was one of the first female physicians in the community and opened a practice with her husband in 1981, after the couple moved from San Francisco.

“So many people have gone to them in times of huge need,” said Joanna Robinson, co-founder of Hospitality House. Dr. Christine Newsom is active at treating patients at the homeless shelter through Western Sierra's mobile clinic. “She is so committed and faithful. Who knows how many lives she has saved? The amount of suffering she alleviates is remarkable.”

The same could be said for her husband, Dr. Bill Newsom, who established an outpatient cancer center in the early 1990s.

The 20-year-old cancer center has allowed thousands of patients to get much-needed oncology treatment, including chemotherapy and radiation, in the community rather than driving to Roseville, Sacramento or Reno.

“Bill wanted to make sure that people did not leave the community to get cancer care,” said Dr. Campbell, Medical Director of the Community Cancer Center. “You have an older population in Nevada County, and it’s hard for them to travel in general and even harder when you are suffering from cancer.”

Dr. Brad Miller, a primary care physician for Veterans Affairs in Reno and former medical director of Hospice of the Foothills in Nevada County, agreed.

“Opening the cancer center was huge; it improved care and made it easier for those diagnosed with cancer to live with cancer,” Miller said.

The Newsoms, who have three children, have devoted their careers to patients.

“Christine is welcoming, engaging and kind, and makes someone feel as though it’s all about them, which makes for a great physician,” said Dr. Jill Fitzpatrick, Medical Director of Family Medicine for Dignity Health Medical Group and former co-owner of the Newsom Fitzpatrick Medical Group with Dr. Christine Newsom from November 2006 to February 2009. “Christine cared so much about patients that she would go to every length to make sure they were well taken care of.”

Dr. Christine Newsom helped Fitzpatrick learn how to take care of her patients—and her family. “I still remember that Christine reassured me that I didn’t have to do it all as a mom and a physician and that finding the right balance was most important.”

Despite a demanding career, including working many night and weekend shifts at the local hospital, and their three children, the Newsoms have also been longtime volunteers.

“Christine is a wonderful tutor and a lovely person,” said Judi Kreinick, co-president of Partners in English Language Learning. The nonprofit organization connects non-English speakers with local tutors, including Dr. Christine Newsom. “She has established a close relationship with her student. She is empathetic, patient, and kind. Christine has such a warm heart and a desire to help people.”

It’s a desire that has benefited the community.

“They are part of what this community is all about,” said Dr. Campbell.

Western Sierra Medical Clinic is seeking community sponsors for the gala, ranging from \$500 at the silver level to \$5,000 for a presenting sponsorship. To ensure your name is listed in appropriate promotional materials, sponsorship orders must be received by Dec. 10.

Tickets are now available for the gala. A table of eight is available for \$480. Individual tickets are also available for \$60.

For more information, become a sponsor or order tickets, please contact Cheryl Rubin at 530-802-2711 or cherylr@wsmcmed.org, or visit the Western Sierra Medical Clinic website at www.wsmcmed.org.

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.