

**ELGIN HEALTH DISTRICT, PO Box 983, Elgin, OR 97827**

**To: Sen. Girod, Co-Chair, Sen. Courtney, Sen. Devlin  
Rep. Read, Co-Chair, Rep. Hoyle, Rep. Huffman, Rep. Kotek  
Rep. Smith**

**Date: May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Re: "Good Health, Strong Community" Capital Campaign:**

**\$1,250,000 Request to State of Oregon: Joint Committee On Ways  
and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction**

**Who We Are:** A non-profit special district approved by the voters of Elgin, Oregon, in November of 2008. Managed by an elected Board of Directors, we currently host medical, dental and very limited behavioral health services within our Elgin Health District. We have procured property and initiated a capital campaign to replace our old and undersized community facility with a proposed Health Center to meet the total rural health needs of our citizens, including pharmacy and physical therapy.

**Mission:** EHD Board is comprised of elected citizens who work to ensure supportive and sustainable quality access and delivery of healthcare for all citizens within the Elgin Health District and surrounding area.

**Vision:** We will be the resource for any community member from the surrounding area, regardless of their ability to pay, who is in need of medical, dental, mental or social assistance.

**Project Scope:** To respond to EHD Mission by building a purpose driven Health Clinic to meet the growing demands for rural health services within the Elgin Health District.

**The "Good Health, Strong Community Campaign":** Elgin Health District (EHD), currently providing community medical services from an existing 1,900 square foot facility, is proposing to build an 8,000 square foot clinic that will house: A total of 5 operatories with a dental lab and sterilization room for our two dentists and hygienist ( EHD currently has 2 operatories and a small sterilization area now); a total of 6 exam rooms plus a procedure room with a

medical lab and sterilization room for our medical providers (EHD currently has 1 exam room and a small procedure room now); a new large room for physical therapy; a new room with a drive through window for a pharmacy; a new room dedicated to mental/behavior health (currently utilizing the dentist's office now after hours); an area for x-ray work; plus a larger waiting area with a place for children, added office space for medical assistants and billing, and increased storage area.

**The Challenge:** EHD is currently handling 4,000 patient visits per year with our limited space for dental and medical offerings only but see the need for overall future health visits at 12,000 to 15,000 per year as explained here. Our medical wait time for new patients is currently at 4 months and it is at 8 months for OHP dental patients. EHD is rated 3rd poorest out of the 104 Oregon rural health clinics by the office of Oregon Rural Health (see the ORH 2014 report) in un-met health care needs in our area. By adding physical therapy, pharmacy, and a dedicated mental health area to the expanded areas for dental and medical services our projections exceed 12, 000 patient visits per year that already need addressed. For physical therapy and/or pharmacy needs our EHD patrons currently have to travel to at least LaGrande, a 40 mile round trip. Some patrons cannot afford this trip so do without the therapy or their prescriptions. This is not acceptable.

**The Solution:** To construct a new rural health clinic that will support the current and growing demand for overall rural health care needs that are currently unmet by the Elgin Health District. A new pharmacy will replace the old Elgin pharmacy that closed (retirement) over 10 years ago.

**Status:** The EHD is currently planning with due diligence the most effective response to medical service delivery in a rural healthcare setting. We have secured and paid for a new local property site and combined with total pledge and in-kind support services EHD has raised over \$500,000. We are currently engaged in feasibility philanthropic outreach to the local Union County area as well as local and regional foundations. Our request to the State of Oregon is for \$1,250,000. We have confidence in current feasibility as well as prior support from major local and regional foundations that combined will match the current state of Oregon request. We will not be able to successfully complete our \$2.5 million capital campaign without investment of public funding. Our intent is to break ground mid-year of 2016.

## **SALEM HEARING – Melissa Coe**

**Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Read, and Members of the Committee:**

- **I am Melissa Coe, elected board member and appointed secretary for the Elgin Health District (EHD). We appreciate you scheduling us early today.**
- **Elgin is a town of 1,700 people in the northeast corner of our state, about 350 miles from here and 20 miles north of LaGrande where the closest hospital and pharmacies are located.**
- **The EHD is a special district approved by the voters of the Elgin area in 2008 to provide stability to the Elgin rural health clinic's operations.**
- **The EHD board is charged with providing complete rural health care for our nearly 3,000 patrons rather than just medical only services.**
- **Over the last two years we were able to add dental and limited mental health offerings at our clinic but have had to steal rooms from our medical provider to do so.**
- **We now want to add a pharmacy, physical therapy, and more comprehensive mental health services as we have providers eager to offer these expanded services but simply have no place at all to put them.**
- **The last pharmacy in Elgin closed over 10 years ago. This has made it difficult for patients to be able to fill their necessary prescriptions as they have to travel to LaGrande to do so. Can you image having to travel 20 miles to a pharmacy and then once your prescriptions are filled travel the 20 miles back home? This is a burden on most and in some cases has led to patrons that do not get their medications since they have no way of getting to the pharmacy.**
- **Our need is a larger clinic with adequate space to expand our medical, dental, and limited mental health offerings as-well-as to add the new physical therapy and pharmacy offerings. To this end we have purchased an approx. 1 acre building site using District funds but we are not able to build the new rural health clinic without financial assistance. Ongoing maintenance of a new facility could be handled with District funding as it is now with our existing clinic building.**
- **We sincerely thank-you for your consideration of our urgent request for one million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars of public support for our much needed project.**

## SALEM HEARINGS – Dr. Kim Montee

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Read, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

My name is Kim Montee and I am a Family Doctor. I grew up in Madras, Oregon where my family doctor delivered babies, cared for families through old age, covered in the emergency room and double checked on my wellbeing during church the next day. This is the model that I try to emulate in my practice. I am called to serving patients in the rural setting and on the front lines.

After a successful career as a computer programmer and manager, I returned to pursue my dream. I have lived in northeast Oregon for the last 10 years and worked for our Union Health District for the last 6 years. We expanded services to include Elgin 3 years ago. I am also active in Oregon Rural Health organizations and serve on our local Eastern Oregon CCO community advisory community.

Both Elgin and Union have a disproportionate number of Medicare and Medicaid patients. With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), there has been an 18 percent increase in patients who now have insurance and are seeking care. Often, they are addressing long ignored health needs. Many of these seniors and new patients are unable to drive to La Grande or further to receive medical care. Jamie and I are committed to meeting their needs in their own communities but at present we lack sufficient space in Elgin to do the job we so want to do for them. We simply do not have the capacity to meet this need in a timely manner. A new patient may wait up to 4 months to see me. It may even take a month to see Jamie. Sadly, our biggest failing is same day urgent slots. We simply don't have enough rooms to accommodate the drop in patient.

To address this shortfall we envision a new comprehensive medical hub that can provide expanded rural health care to patients. Between dental and medical, we are currently serving about 4,000 patient visits per year. With all the services, adding physical therapy, mental health and pharmacy, we predict this could rise to 15,000 patient visits per year.

As evidenced by the support letters and resolutions in your packets, we have partnered with our local hospital, our Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization, the other local elected governments, and the Elgin School District in our campaign to build a new clinic in Elgin. We also have the support of essentially all of the local businesses and patrons of the Elgin Health District and surrounding area.

Our dentist, Dr. Eli Mayes, could not be here today. He grew up in the town of Union. After training and working in the rural Alaskan Bush, he returned to NE Oregon to take care of our communities. As another local boy, he has been well received. While his primary office is in La Grande, he had desired to open a satellite office in Elgin. This came about after participating in the "Give a Kid a Smile" campaign that Kristi will describe in a minute. As providence would have it, the Elgin Board had just converted medical space into a 2 operatory clinic and was

trying to attract a dentist. Since opening the dental side, he has nearly filled up in less than a year. This is well beyond initial projections.

In exchange for no rent, Eli agreed to open his Elgin practice to Oregon Health Plan patients and was immediately overwhelmed by the pent up demand in this coverage area. He was initially assigned over 600 patients from the Elgin area and has since been asked to accept over 200 additional patients from neighboring Wallowa County. Dr. Kali Gray, another local young lady, has come home to join Dr. Mayes to help address this backlog. However, limited space and only having 2 chairs prevents both dentists from working at the same time. As a result, OHP patient lead times are at 6 to 8 months out and they are not able to reduce these wait times. OHP patients present a money losing scenario to a dentist, so to be successful, Eli needs to see a good balance of private insurance as well as OHP and cash pay. While Eli is fully committed to meeting the needs of all patients, the only way to be successful in this is to provide him with sufficient rooms and equipment.

## SALEM HEARINGS – Kristi Williamson

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Read, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kristi Williamson. I am the dental hygienist for the rural health district of Elgin. I am speaking on behalf of Dr. Eli Mayes, who expresses his sincere apologies for not being able to be here today.

As you are aware, rural health care continues to be a rising concern in northeast Oregon. Specifically, the need for oral health care is great in Elgin and the surrounding area. Elgin is one of the most impoverished towns in Union County. Parents in our community often do not have the financial or physical resources to travel 20 miles for appointments with the dentist in La Grande, therefore children's dental care is neglected.

I returned to Elgin to work as a dental hygienist because I am passionate about children receiving oral health care at a young age and I wanted to make a difference in my community. Elgin is my home and we have not had a dentist for over 25 years. Now we have a committed and caring dentist, but we do not have a facility in Elgin that supports the needs of the community.

We recently hosted a "Give a Kid a Smile" event in LaGrande. Dentists and hygienists from the area donate their time and supplies for free. We had 100 children from Elgin that were screened and eligible to receive this free oral health care but we only had 2 % show up due to the lack of transportation.

At our small clinic we have adopted a working model that addresses our over 600 Oregon Health Plan patients as well as the other private members of the community. However, the lack of space does not allow us to adequately serve those in need of our services. Our current floor plan only has room for 2 patient chairs, one for each of us. In return we have an 8 month waiting period for new OHP patients. This is not a sustainable model in our environment. It seems inhumane and unacceptable to turn away a child because we simply do not have the space.

I am a dental hygienist working with a great dentist that shares the same story of wanting to live and work in the place we were raised. We want to raise our families here and are invested in the community. I am not leaving nor is Dr. Mayes. But at the end of the day, we want to do more. We want to provide services to those that cannot currently access oral health care without sacrifices.

I really believe we can address the needs of our community, we are looking to the future and with an adequate sized facility we know we will succeed.

In closing let me introduce you to my sister, Jamie Jo, who has also returned home to raise our 5<sup>th</sup> generation in Union County.

## SALEM HEARINGS – Jamie Jo Haddock

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Read, and Members of the Committee:

I am Jamie Jo Haddock, the family nurse practitioner at the Elgin Rural Health Clinic. The building we currently practice in is actually a small house built in the early 1950s and was later remodeled to serve as a medical clinic. It is about 1800 sf and sits on a lot that is about 4000sf. The medical service uses approximately 400 sf for 2 exam rooms and dental occupies close to 300 sf for 2 chairs. Our combined waiting room only allows for 6 chairs that are shared by medical and dental patients and their respective families.

AS mentioned by Elgin Health District Board Member Melissa Coe, we are using our limited space as wisely as possible but we lack additional health care services and adequate parking, ADA provisions, privacy, and even sufficient room for ongoing operations to be timely and efficient.

I am a recipient of the Oregon Health Authority Medicaid Primary care Loan Repayment Program. I want to personally thank Senator Hansel for supporting young health professionals like myself to get their education and return home to a rural setting to practice healthcare. The Program supports the Affordable Care Act and Oregon's health system transformation efforts to ensure an adequate supply of primary care providers in areas of need.

The Office of Rural Health has just released its 2014 study of the 104 rural health clinics in Oregon. Our Elgin clinic is ranked third from the BOTTOM in meeting the overall health needs of our patrons. A significant reason for this poor ranking is attributable to insufficient space to provide for PT, Pharmacy, and mental health. We have providers eager to offer these expanded services but simply have no place to put them.

There is comfort in knowing that you are building a relationship with your provider and that they want to live, stay, and raise their children in your community. I am excited to start this in Elgin. I have a strong and supportive board, wonderful mentor and role model in Dr. Montee, and a community and board that strive to take care of itself and its constituents.

I don't want you to walk away shaking your head about how dated the rural clinic is in Elgin, because it looks pretty rough on paper and from the pictures. We as providers do great things daily in our practices. But we can do more and we can do it better. It starts with a building that allows us to practice to the maximum and give our patients every advantage we can.

We sincerely thank you for your consideration of our urgent need and request of 1.25 M of public funding for our much needed project.

CITY OF ELGIN, OREGON RESOLUTION 1355 (2015)

A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT ENDORSING THE PLAN OF THE ELGIN HEATH DISTRICTs NEW HEALTH CLINIC IN ELGIN

**WHEREAS:** The Elgin City Council considers the mental and physical health of the citizens of Elgin and surrounding areas to be one of its top priorities; AND

**WHEREAS:** The City of Elgin, through the existence of the Elgin Health District, has consistently offered expanding types and availability of medical services via an estimated 4,000 patient visits annually; AND

**WHEREAS:** The Elgin Health Clinic is the single largest point of health contact for citizens in the vicinity of Elgin, and is therefore a major factor in the provision of health care delivery for citizens in a two-county area; AND

**WHEREAS:** The City of Elgin and the Elgin Health District has documented a need for expanding the existing scope of services of the Elgin Health Clinic to addresses increasing demand for medical and dental services and to add physical therapy, pharmacy, and more comprehensive mental health offerings, with the total potential level for all such services estimated at 12,000 to 15,000 patient visits annually; AND

**WHEREAS:** The Elgin Health District has already purchased the land to be the future site of the Elgin Health Clinic; AND

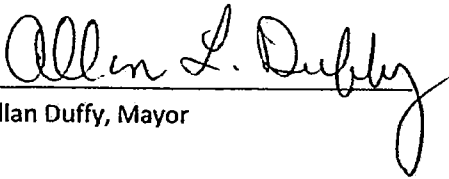
**WHEREAS:** This increased capacity can be accomplished through cooperative funding among residents, local governments, private foundations, and the Oregon State legislature;

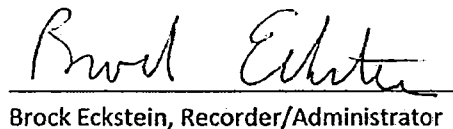
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** Appropriation of capital funds for the Elgin Health District is being considered by the Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislature, and the Elgin City Council respectfully urges passage of such appropriation as a crucial fiscal step in the creation of a new Elgin Health Clinic.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** this 28<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2015.

With   7   Ayes,   0   Nays,   0   Abstentions,   0   Absent

Signed;

  
Allan Duffy, Mayor

  
Brock Eckstein, Recorder/Administrator

Council Votes as Follows:

Allan Duffy, Mayor	<u>  AYE  </u>	Michelle Miles, Councilor	<u>  AYE  </u>
Rocky Burgess, Councilor	<u>  AYE  </u>	Kathy Warren, Councilor	<u>  AYE  </u>
Teresa Shaffer, Councilor	<u>  AYE  </u>	Jeremy Richards, Councilor	<u>  AYE  </u>
Brent Linville, Councilor	<u>  AYE  </u>		



BE IT REMEMBERED, that at a regular term of the Board of Commissioners of the State of Oregon, for the County of Union, sitting for the transaction of County business, begun and held at the Joseph Building Annex in the City of La Grande, in said County and State when were present:

The Honorable Mark D. Davidson Chairman

Steve McClure Commissioner

Jack Howard Commissioner

WHEN, on Wednesday, the 15th day of April, 2015, among others the following proceedings were had to-wit:

IN THE MATTER OF A RESOLUTION )  
SUPPORTING THE CREATION ) RESOLUTION  
OF A NEW ELGIN HEALTH CLINIC ) 2015-06

Whereas, the City of Elgin, through the existence of the Elgin Health District, has consistently offered expanding types and availability of medical services via an estimated 4,000 patient visits annually; AND

Whereas the Elgin Health Clinic is the single largest point of health contact for citizens in the vicinity of Elgin, and is therefore a major factor in the provision of health care delivery for citizens in a two-county area; AND

Whereas, the City of Elgin and the Elgin Health District has documented a need for expanding the existing scope of services of the Elgin Health Clinic to address increasing demand for medical and dental services and to add physical therapy, pharmacy, and more comprehensive mental health offerings, with the total potential level for all such services estimated at 12,000 to 15,000 patient visits annually; AND

Whereas the Elgin Health District has already purchased the land to be the future site of the Elgin Health Clinic; AND

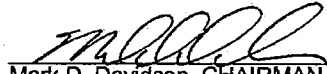
Whereas this increased capacity can be accomplished through cooperative funding among residents, local governments, private foundations, and the Oregon State legislature;

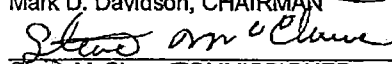
THEREFORE, be it resolved THAT,

The Board of Commissioners of Union County, sitting in La Grande, Oregon this 15th day of April, 2015, does hereby resolve and find that,

Appropriation of capital funds for the Elgin Health District is being considered by the Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislature, and that the Board of Commissioners respectfully urges passage of such appropriation as a crucial fiscal step in the creation of a new Elgin Health Clinic.

Dated this 15th day of April, 2015.

  
Mark D. Davidson, CHAIRMAN

  
Steve McClure, COMMISSIONER

  
Jack Howard, COMMISSIONER



## GRANDE RONDE HOSPITAL

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James A. Mattes, President/CEO

April 21, 2015

Betty Lou Martin, Board Chair  
Elgin Family Health Clinic  
1400 Division  
Elgin, Or. 97827

Re: Letter of Support for New Elgin Clinic

Dear Ms. Martin:

On behalf of Grande Ronde Hospital, Inc. (the "Hospital"), I am pleased to offer this letter as support for funds needed to build a new medical clinic in Elgin, Oregon. The current clinic building is a converted home that was built more than half a century ago and is undersized and ill-suited for a modern day medical practice. Recruitment and retention of providers and community access to needed medical services is compromised by the inadequacies of the clinic.

GRH is partnering with Elgin to develop and expand primary care medical services, including additional provider support and upgraded medical equipment that depend upon adequate space. In addition, GRH will be providing in-kind, pre-design clinic architectural support to the community of Elgin.

Please feel free to use this letter in your efforts to secure funding for a new clinic.

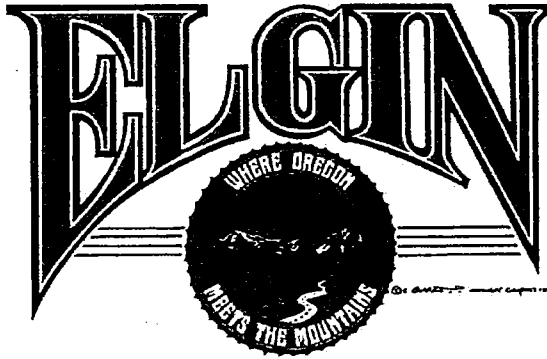
Sincerely,

James A. Mattes  
President/CEO

900 Sunset Drive  
PO Box 3290  
La Grande, OR 97850-3290

[Jim.Mattes@grh.org](mailto:Jim.Mattes@grh.org)  
Phone: 541-963-1454  
Fax: 541-962-2501

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ELGIN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 23  
1400 BIRCH STREET  
P.O. BOX 68  
ELGIN, OREGON 97827  
(541) 437-1211  
FAX: (541) 437-5611

April 29, 2015

RE: Written Testimony in favor of funding for the Elgin Health District

For the record, I am Wayne Herron Superintendent of the Elgin School District. I am submitting this written testimony in support of funding for the Elgin Health District. Funding for a new building will help ensure that needed health services will be available to the citizens in our community. More specifically, it will help ensure that services are available to the children in our community, which research says in many ways is vital for their success in a school environment.

It was recently brought to my attention the fact that the current building used to provide health services is tremendously undersized. Due to the inadequate building space, many citizens in our community are not able to access our local care providers in a timely manner. Elgin community members are then placed in a situation where they must travel to La Grande to have access to medical care. Transportation can become a severe limiting factor to many individuals and families in our community.

Being a member of the Blue Mountain Early Learning HUB Governing Board, I have come to realize the significance of proper pre-natal care and of good oral health for our young children. School attendance can be negatively affected when children that need health care do not have ready access to that health care. Poor attendance often results in children falling behind in their education. Research says that reading at grade level in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is a determining factor in the future success of a child. By making available more adequate health care for the children in our community, we will be increasing their chances of future success.

I would encourage you to strongly consider listing the Elgin Health District as a top priority for funding. The benefits in our community will be long lasting.

Sincerely,

Wayne Herron  
Superintendent  
Elgin School District

# THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1895

# C

## OUR VIEW

# Elgin needs new clinic

It's time for the Elgin community to rally around the building of a new 8,000-square foot health clinic.

The cost is high. But so are the rewards of seeing this dream become a reality.

The current clinic is simply too small to meet the demands for health care in the north county. People need to get treatment in a timely manner and not be put on waiting lists. Emergency care needs to be readily available.

The current clinic is housed in well, a house, and lacks adequate parking. Medical staff are doing a good job working in what some would call substandard conditions to minister to the health care needs of the community.

The new clinic won't come cheap. It would cost approximately \$2.5 million to build. That price tag may seem daunting, especially in these times as we slowly, inexorably emerge from the Great Recession, but consider what it would buy: five exam rooms, five operating rooms, a dental and a medical lab, a large physical therapy room, a pharmacy with a drive-thru, X-ray capabilities and a large area to treat mental health patients.

Officials hope that about half of the cost of building the new clinic would come from the state. State Sen. Bill Hansell and state Rep. Greg Barreto are on board with their support to lobby for state funding and see the project through to fruition.

The local community would have to raise about \$700,000 to make the project a reality. Officials such as Union County Commissioner Steve McClure, who was raised in Elgin, believe the community is up for the task. He said the community has rallied together many times in the past for causes that benefit everyone in the area, with major projects involving the community center, police station, Elgin Opera House and railroad depot. It's time to rally once again for this all-important project that will contribute to a healthier, happier, more full-service community.

No doubt there is plenty of demand for a modern, efficient, full-service clinic that can help not only returning patients but new patients.

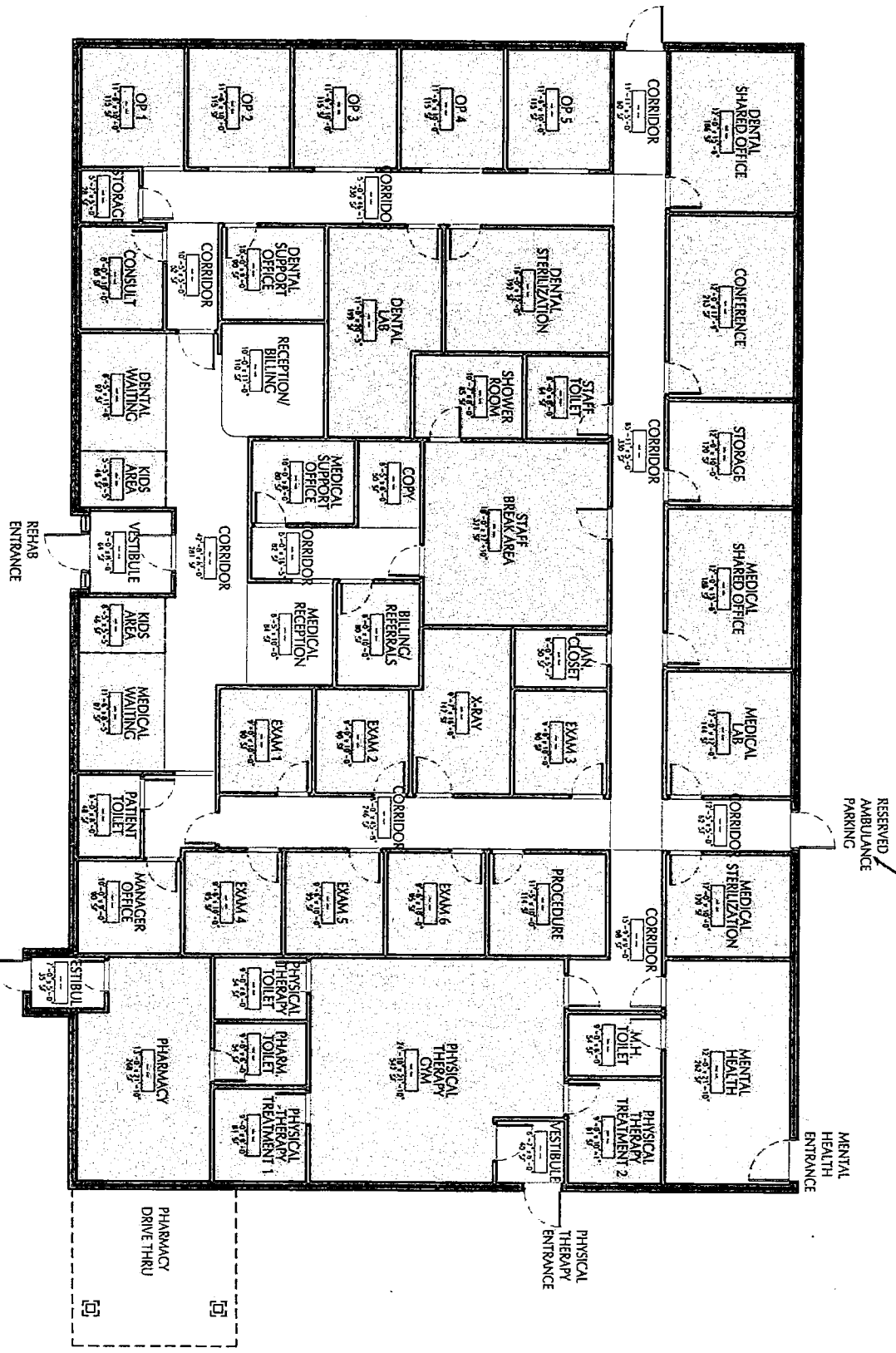
Currently, the health clinic has 4,000 patient visits a year. It employs two dentists, two hygienists, a doctor who is there once a week, a family nurse practitioner and several medical assistants. These people work hard to meet the needs of the community but at present can't keep up with demand.

It's important that Elgin offers a clinic. People should not have to drive 20 miles to La Grande, especially in winter when roads can be dangerously icy or snow-covered, to seek medical care.

And in some medical emergencies, time is of the essence. Every minute counts. Elgin needs a health clinic that provides these services to everyone who comes to the door.

Currently, the floor plans are being designed, but the clinic has a long way to go before it can become a reality. People in the community need to get behind this worthy project.

Conceptual - Preliminary

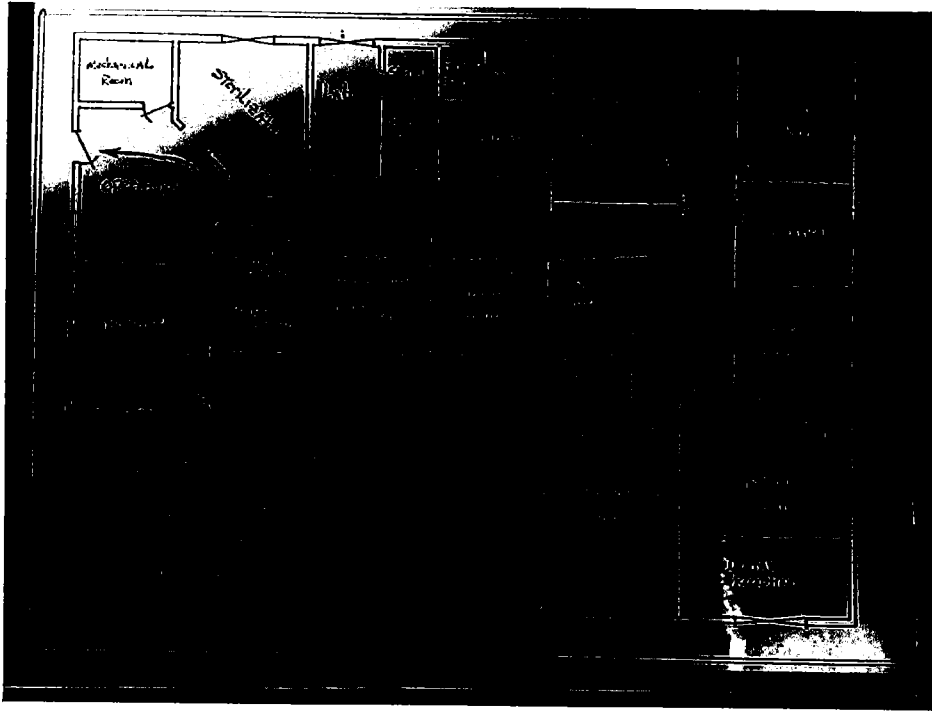


# RURAL HEALTH CLINIC DISTRICT

SCHEMATIC FLOOR PLAN 8,004 s.f.

## RURAL HEALTH CLINIC

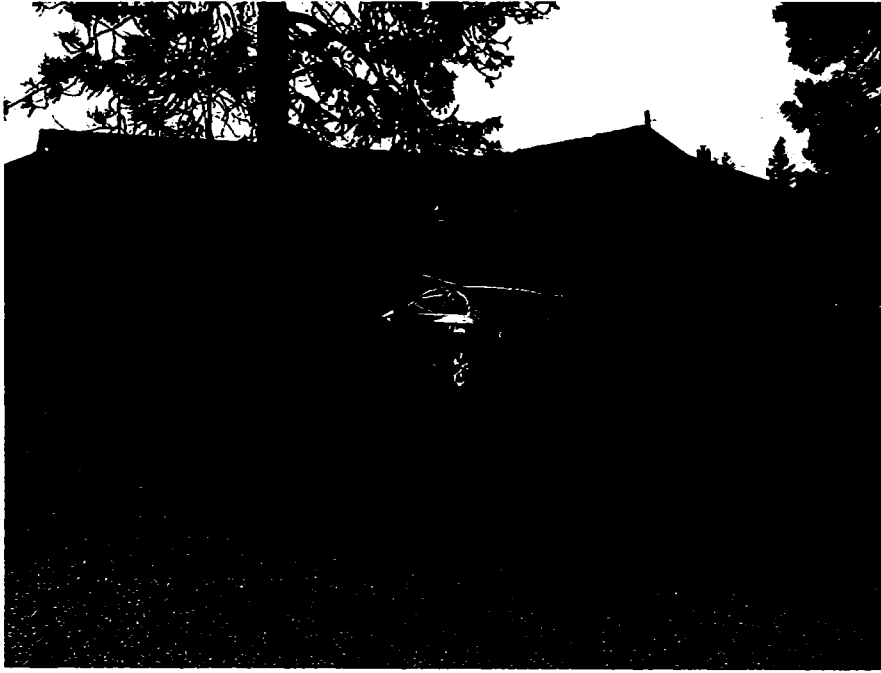




Above: clinic floorplan

Below: Main entrance to medical and dental clinic



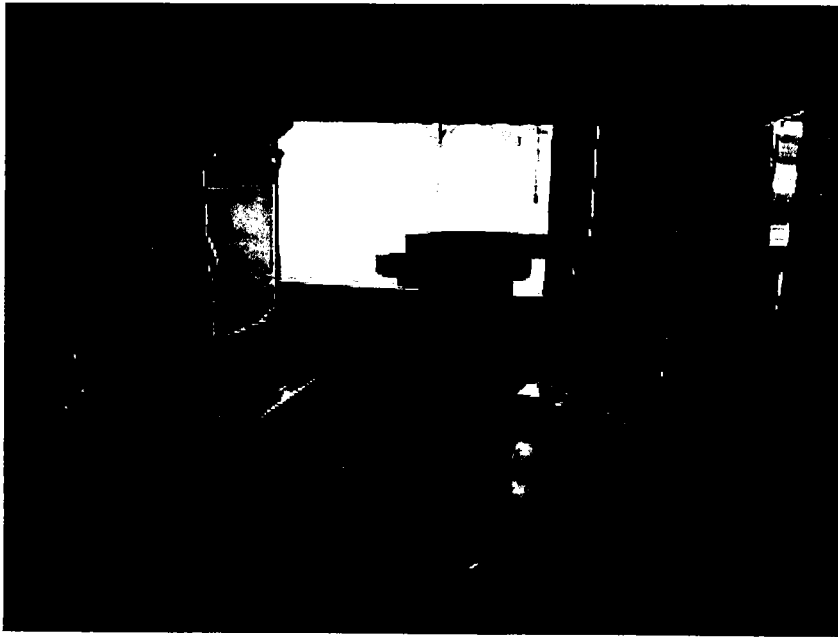


Above: Parking for clinic and handicap entrance. 1 handicap space and 4 car parking.

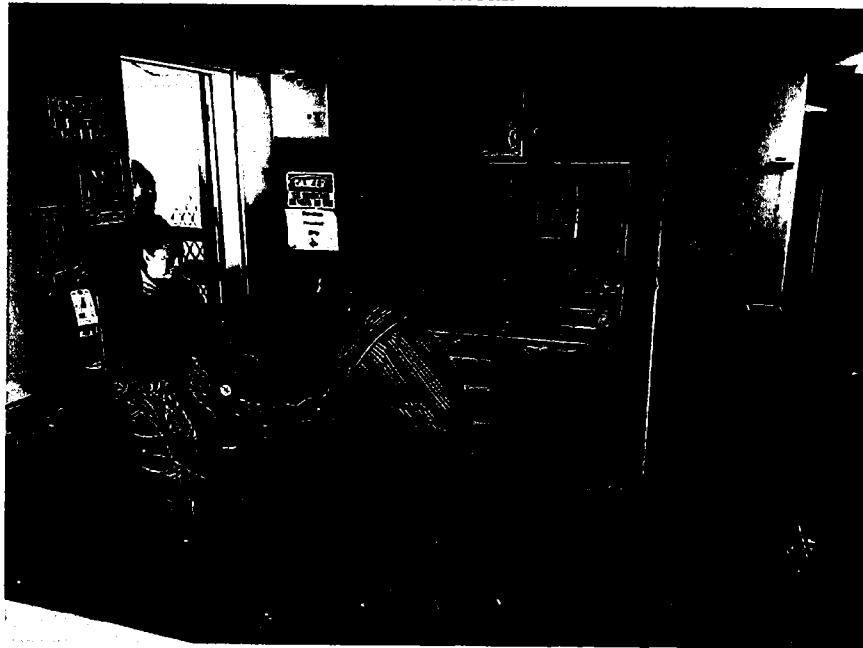
Below: Handicap parking, ramp, and entrance. This door enters through one of the exam rooms for medical. Serves all patients regardless of specialty they are seeing.



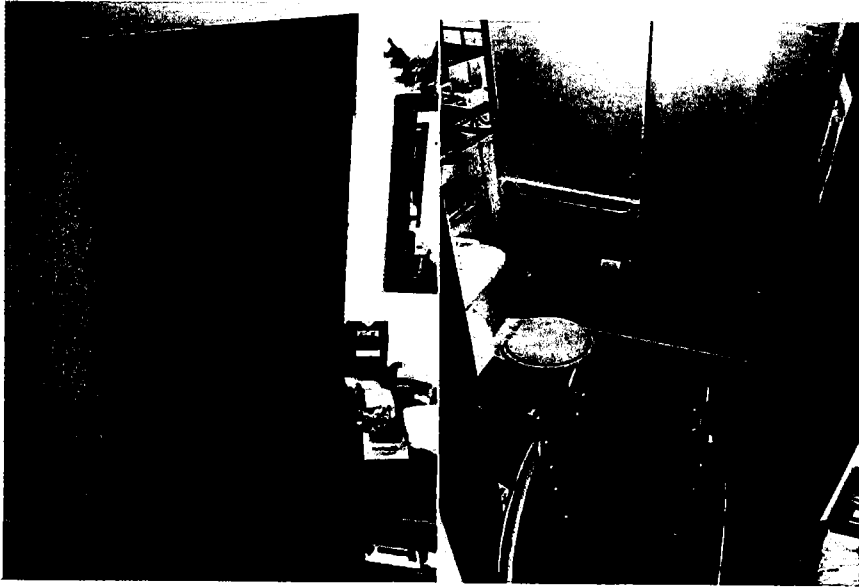




**Above: Washer/Dryer, refrigerator for vaccines and refrigerated medical supplies, CT scanner for dental, Blood and lab draw station for medical.**

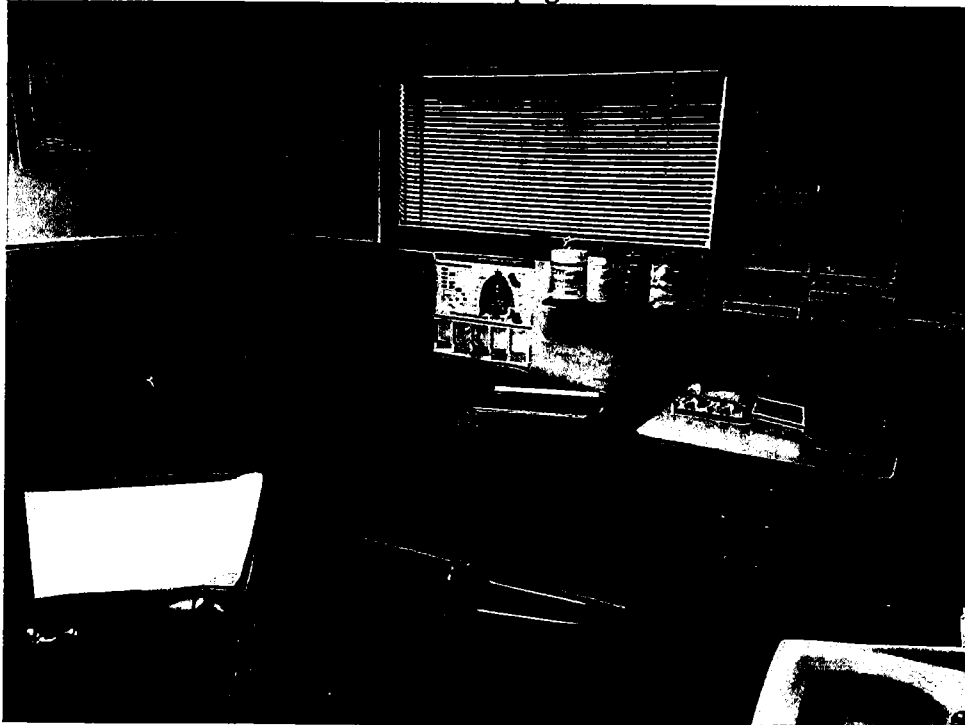


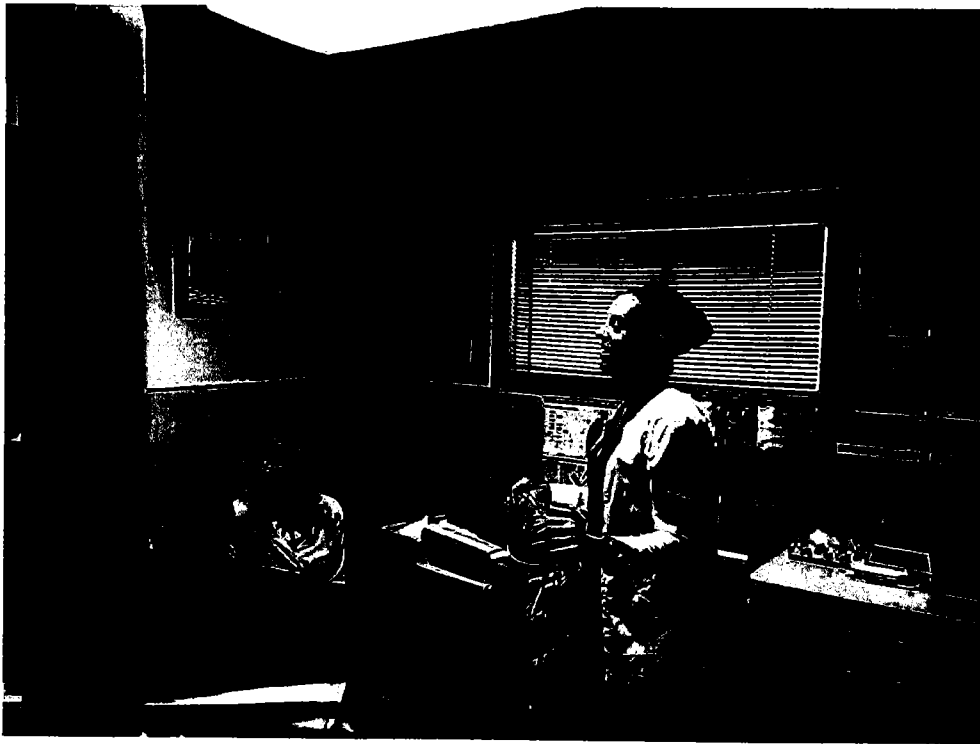
**Above: Handicap entrance to clinic that enters through one of the two medical exam rooms, is used by all medical or dental patients. Parking allows 4-5 spaces but we serve 8-10 patients any one time between dental and medical.**



**Above: Patient bathroom on left and right. Right demonstrating how difficult it is to have a patient with a disability use the restroom. Most are unable to use.**

**Below: Exam room 1, appears large but when you have a patient, equipment, family, and a provider in room you are unable to move, see next page for room in use.**





**Above: Exam room 1 with a patient requiring an EKG, as family members are watching on.**