

## Chamber meeting spotlights rural health care



ALPINE ---- The primary rural health care provider in the San Diego region is working harder to help clients, including those who can't afford to pay for services. Dr. Rafael Rosado, chief medical officer of Mountain Health & Community Services, Inc., outlined the nonprofit organization's community efforts on June 8 at the monthly Hot Topics Business Networking Breakfast of the Alpine

Mountain Empire Chamber of Commerce.

"We are a team of professionals," Dr. Rosado said. "We serve San Diego's most underserved."

A delicious breakfast and good chatter in the comfortable Mike's Place restaurant at the Alpine Fitness Club, Inc., 1620 Alpine Blvd., Ste. 101, in Alpine provided great atmosphere for learning more about everything the area health care provider offers.

Host Mike Douglass, former San Diego Chargers and Green Bay Packers player still in great shape at age 55, got into the spirit of the friendly event as he talked about the restaurant's cooking classes and other activities. "The test was to see if you guys could make it up the stairs today," Douglass quipped.



As Dr. Rosado later pointed out, maintaining good health and preventing illness is as important as treating health problems at the six facilities of Mountain Health & Community Services, Inc. "We're here to help maintain the health of the whole person," the doctor said. "We work on customer satisfaction. Our primary focus is family care services, primary care services, but there's more."

### Long history

Mountain Health & Community Services has provided primary care, health education, behavioral health, preventive care and social services to San Diego County's beautiful rural backcountry and some urban areas since 1975. The health care provider offers a full scope of family medical care, including urgent care and a psychiatrist for children and adolescents. Dr. Rosado cited the volunteer service, home visits to the sick and elderly and delivery of meals to homebound patients among community services

provided. Uninsured patients are offered a sliding fee scale, based on their ability to pay. "Some of our patients have no funding sources at all, but our mission is to help them," Dr. Rosado said. Pene Manale of Manale Media sparked a thoughtful discussion when she asked how bad the situation is with children who don't have health insurance.

"A lot of kids are not insured," Dr. Rosado replied.

### **Insurance issues**

Judith Shaplin, chief executive officer of Mountain Health & Community Services, said the state is having economic problems and there are a lot of political issues involved in health insurance. The state Healthy Families program, made possible with federal tax money, may be eliminated even though "they make money on the program," Shaplin said. She said in Alpine probably a good 10 percent of the population, about 1,800 people, can't get into the Healthy Families program. "In Alpine we've seen a huge increase in uninsured children," said Shaplin. "We're running campaigns for donations, especially for the children. The donations are tax deductible."

In addition to Alpine Family Medicine at 1620 Alpine Blvd., Ste. 119, in Alpine, Mountain Health & Community Services also has High Desert Family Medicine in Jacumba and two Campo locations, Mountain Empire Family Medicine and the Mountain Empire Community Center. A new location in Campo will have even more services, including dentistry and a long-awaited pharmacy. Other Mountain Health & Community Services sites are 25th Street Family Medicine in San Diego and Escondido Family Medicine in Escondido in North County. To provide more service to the communities, hours have been extended at the Alpine and Escondido facilities to include Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The other locations are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

### **Members spotlighted**

As usual, Chamber members took advantage of the meeting's opportunity to give brief verbal "snapshots" of their businesses, agencies and organizations. Don Parent of the San Diego Gas & Electric Co. reminded people that there were 30 more days for comment about the proposed Sunrise Powerlink Project, which will be placed underground through Alpine. An update on the war in Afghanistan and potential difficulty in passing a national budget or immigration legislation were presented by Rick Terrazas, district director for Congressman Duncan Hunter.

For more information about Mountain Health & Community Services, phone (619) 445-6200 or visit their website at [www.mtnhealth.org](http://www.mtnhealth.org). Call (619) 445-2722 or visit [www.alpinechamber.com](http://www.alpinechamber.com) for more information about the

Alpine Mountain Empire Chamber of Commerce and its membership benefits, activities and opportunities.