

Adena's Oak Hill Center off to rousing start; New facility in IronOak Center has had 400 patient visits since January opening



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In less than 3 months, the new Adena Health Center in Oak Hill has established itself as an excellent first line of medical care. Since opening its doors on January 5, the staff has seen to patient needs in nearly 400 visits.

The Center is housed in the IronOak Center, the handsome single-story brick building that was home to countless women as the Davis Home. After it closed, the building sat vacant until Pat and Melissa Ball purchased it to bring vibrant new life to the place that provided such comfort to so many over the years. The Center is the first tenant, with ample room for other **businesses**.

To reach the Center, patients drive past the main entrance at 315 Washington Street and turn left into the driveway. There is plenty of parking. The handsome glass doorway at the corner of the building opens into a small but comfortably-appointed waiting room.

Medical Receptionist Christi Kiser cheerfully greets patients as they enter. An Oak Hill resident, Christi is very happy to be working at the Center. She has been there since inception and helped prepare the Center to welcome patients. She is thrilled by the growth.

"People are excited to see this building used," Christi told The Telegram. They find the location "really convenient" and "don't want us to leave." In talking with patients, Christi believes those who have come through the door find the Center a great stepping stone. If the problem is a minor illness, a prescription can be written and filled at a nearby pharmacy. The Center is great for wellness issues. Getting immediate care when you don't feel well, without having a long drive, is important to the patients Christi has met.

The Center is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. While staff is glad to handle walk-ins, they prefer appointments. If you call 395-8080 during regular hours, Christi will answer the line. At other hours, call 395-8090 and your call will be handled in the Jackson office.

There is ample room in the Center for Nurse Practitioner Alicia Kammler and Medical Assistant Trish Reno to see to patient needs. There are four patient exam rooms. They are large enough for wheelchairs, painted a calming neutral shade, and have enough seating for parents or guardians to accompany a patient. There is a nurse's station, a room for medical records, an area where Trish can draw blood for lab work and do other testing. The Center can do EKG, pulse oximetry, nebulizer/breathing treatments, blood

sugar checks, and take weight, height, and blood pressure measurements. Other cultures are taken to Jackson's lab for testing.

Trish, who hails from Scioto County, echoes Christi's enthusiasm for her job. She feels the level of service is personal and has observed that patients are happy with the Center's location. Patients come not just from Oak Hill but the surrounding area that includes northern Gallia and Lawrence counties.

Alicia Parker Kammler is an Oak Hill native and delighted to have the opportunity to give back to her community. She is the daughter of Teresa Parker and the late Steve Parker. Alicia's brother, Steve, lives in Oak Hill and is a contractor. Alicia's grandmother Martha Parker and grandfather Robert Kuhn are also Oak Hill residents.

Alicia was Valedictorian of her 1996 Oak Hill High graduating class. While a Junior, Alicia was proud to serve as Apple Festival Queen. She carries many lovely memories of the experience.

Alicia attended the University of Rio Grande on a scholarship. She earned her BS in Nursing at Rio. Then this RN, who was already working, enrolled at Wright State University. The school had pioneered the concept of nurse practitioners and worked the political ropes to win legal status for them. It was this commitment to the concept that made Alicia eager to learn from these professors. She earned her Masters degree in 2004.

During her schooling, Alicia worked for a Portsmouth cardiologist and at Southern Ohio Medical Center where she met Dr. Kevin Kammler, an Internist. They married and merged their families with five children, from ages 8 to 18, between them. The blended family lives in South Webster which evens out the commute for both.

When Alicia first heard about the possibility of the Center opening in Oak Hill, she leapt at the chance to return to her hometown and make a contribution to the community that gave her such a splendid start.

"Oak Hill," Alicia said, "will always be my home." In high school, her peers felt that, in order to succeed, they had to leave the area. "That's not the case," Alicia grinned as she surveys the modern, clean facility where she is providing care close to home.

There have been no negative comments from patients that Kammler has seen. She extends thanks to everyone who is supportive of the Center. She's got a "mother's perspective" on health care and is pleased that parents have nearby access to medicine. When a child is sick, parents want care now and they don't want to have to bundle a child in a vehicle and drive many miles to get that care. If folks show up in house slippers and pajamas, that's just fine at the Center.

Alicia believes there are many older adults for whom the trip to Jackson for medical care is difficult. The road is not easy driving, so there is a safety factor involved. Some have to rely on others to drive them for medical care. With primary care in Oak Hill, these folks are not so shy about asking for a ride. Business people can get in for care without losing a day's work.

If the needed care is beyond the scope of what Alicia can provide, there is an entire Adena Health System network to which can she refer patients. Dr. Stephen Owen, DO, comes to the Oak Hill Center each Wednesday morning. Pediatrician Dr. Jill Neff arrives the first Tuesday morning of the month which works wonderfully for regular wellness checks.

To best serve patients, Adena has asked each to fill out a survey. The results are overwhelmingly positive. "Thank You" is the most consistent comment. Patients remark about the clean surroundings, friendly staff, convenient location, short waiting time, and excellent care. "It's a big help to the community," one respondent wrote. Another plans to "recommend the Center to friends and family."