

# New facility hoping to heal all wounds

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by **Jim Skeen**

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LANCASTER -- Antelope Valley Hospital celebrated the opening of its new Comprehensive Wound Healing Center, a facility that will help patients with wound healing problems.

Hospital officials and civic and business leaders gathered Tuesday night to hold an official grand opening ceremony for the facility. The center has been open two months and is already seeing about 30 patients a week.

Dr. Gary Boghossian, who is leading the center, said it is a valuable service being offered to the community. Preventing limb loss is vital because nearly 50% of patients who lose a limb die within three to four years.

"It's very important for a hospital to take the effort and extend themselves to open a facility like this," Boghossian said. "We are a limb salvage center."

Examples of the types of wounds treated at the center include second- and third-degree burns, chron-

ic non-healing wounds, radiation injuries, diabetic wounds and foot ulcers, lumphedema, and traumatic wounds with significant tissue loss.

Boghossian, who has 11 years of experience treating wounds, said the center takes a global approach, or a multi-specialty approach, to care. Options for care might include surgery, bio skin substitute, compression stockings, physical therapy, nutrition management, diabetic reduction, and pain management. Boghossian, a graduate of Des Moines University of Podiatric medicine and surgery, has treated an average of 3,000 wound visits a year.

Also working at the center is Dr. Nilesh Hingarh, a wound care specialist.

The staff is lead by registered nurse Sharon Hauck.

Boghossian said the establishment of the center came from conversations with Ed Mirzabegian, the hospital's chief executive officer. Boghossian said that while working at a center in Sherman Oaks, they kept seeing patients

from the Antelope Valley, signaling a need for such a center.

The center covers roughly 4,000 square feet and has five exam rooms.

Plans call for adding hyperbaric chambers, which are used to treat patients with a variety of wound healing problems including certain chronic bone infections and acute infections.

With the chambers, total cost to outfit the center is about \$500,000 Mirzabegian said.

"Our goal is to have every program here in the community to keep people in the community," Mirzabegian said.

"When your patients have to go outside the area they lose the whole day. Being treated in the Antelope Valley allows them to get on with their day," Mirzabegian said.

In honor of the opening, presentations were made from representatives of Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon, Assemblyman Steve Knight, state Sen. Sharon Runner, the city

of Lancaster, and the Rosamond and Lancaster chambers.

"You have a vision and you act and make it a reality," Lancaster Councilwoman Sandra Johnson told hospital officials.

"This is what we need to show the community we truly care."

With 2,500 employees, 450 physicians, and 400 volunteers, the hospital is Antelope Valley's sixth-largest employer, with a \$330-million annual operating budget and \$120 million in employee salaries.

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