

What medical services are provided by the Dr. Otto Rodriguez Polyclinic II?

Marty Casado Tue, Sep 8, 2015 [Emergency Contacts](#), [Health](#) 0 13668

The Dr. Otto Rodriguez San Pedro Polyclinic II is equipped with a great array of services for the general public. Currently, the medical facility offers over a dozen services and is open 12 hours a day with 24/7 emergency service as well. The medical facility is committed to maintaining the health of the people of San Pedro Town.

According to Dr. Nidia Larrinaga, the clinic has an out-patient service which covers different branches in the primary health care area. “Presently, we offer maternal and child health services, in which we deliver immunization, health education in schools, pre and post natal care, vitamins/mineral supplements, pap smears, breast examinations and family spacing programs,” stated Larrinaga. These services are available Monday to Friday 8AM to 5PM. The clinic is still open for emergencies after working hours and on weekends. To access the emergency room, patients are directed to follow signs at the left side of the building. “The clinic also specializes in detecting and monitoring patients with communicable and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. We also do referral services to secondary and tertiary care.”

The clinic also offers HIV counseling, testing, care and treatment, along with the normal general consultations. “We have a lab where we do the basic blood tests such as blood levels and cholesterol, including HIV. But on different days, we tend to different aspects. For example on Monday to Saturday 8am to noon, we tend to all acute illnesses like flu, fever etc... And Mondays to Fridays noon to 8pm, all chronic illnesses such as hypertension, asthma and heart diseases. Of course we are always open to any emergencies,” said Larrinaga. Thursday and Friday evenings is usually for refilling medications and medical checkups.

Another major service is dentistry, which is available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8am to 5pm. There will be a dental health week which will take place from the 19th to the 23rd of October at the clinic. According to Dr. Irma Zuniga and Carmen Medina from the dental department, on the last day there will be a dental health fair. That week, all activities will start at 9AM. During the event, there will be a poster competition, in which primary and high school students are invited to participate. Entry date and rules will be announced at a later date.

Besides offering the support services of pharmaceuticals, x-ray, psychiatry and

gynecology twice a month, there are intentions to have a pediatrician come from the mainland at least twice a month as well. Nevertheless, Larrinaga stated that there are certain things the clinic is not yet prepared to do. “We do not provide the service of delivering babies. We always suggest to expecting mothers that when they have 35 to 36 weeks of pregnancy, to move to the mainland where they can be better assisted when it comes to laboring,” explained Larrinaga.

Administrator Owen Vellos indicated that they are currently working on a system to better assist everyone who visits the clinic. “We are in the process of establishing a program whereby we will divide patients according to a color code (green, yellow, red) which will indicate how long it will take for them to see a doctor. In this way, we will be giving service to those patients that really need immediate attention. The clinic is here to assist everyone who is ill, however we need to set a system so everyone can get the adequate attention in a timely manner,” stated Vellos. He commented that sometimes people might complain about the clinic’s services, but there is a reason for this. “We have a total of six doctors at the clinic, which is not enough with the demand we have nowadays. The doctors are being overworked, and when people come to the clinic, everybody wants to see the doctor. Sometimes they get angry when they don’t, but what we want them to understand is that a doctor is scheduled to see a patient for an average of 20 minutes per person. That is like 15 patients in the morning and 15 in the evening. However, that number is always passed,” said Vellos. As such, the moment a doctor surpasses his patient quota, the quality of service to each person is affected. “We could be tending to everyone who comes to the clinic seeking medical attention and keep everyone happy. For the community it may look like we are doing great, but for the ministry it is not a good situation. The more patients the doctors see, the less time they spend with them, thus, a proper assessment cannot be delivered,” ended Vellos.

The clinic also counts with a public health inspector who is available from 8AM to 4:30PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, to tend to any public health issues. One of the services that the clinic is looking forward to providing is a blood bank; however, there are certain protocols that need to be followed in order to establish the service. However, it is expected that with the collaboration of the San Pedro Red Cross, it can be possible.

Dr. Otto Rodriguez Polyclinic II is located on Manta Ray Street in San Pedro Town Ambergris Caye. The clinic can also be reached at 226-2536.

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