

But even employed people with insurance can go years without knowing they are diabetic, and feeling pretty good, too.

Carlos Saenz, 53, was a stone mason and had Kaiser Permanente coverage for 25 years until he could no longer afford it.

"Four and a half years ago I came here," Saenz said one day in the St. Francis clinic. "And it was discovered I had diabetes." He had a blood sugar reading of 400 that game-changing day, astonished that Kaiser hadn't found his condition. Now he's adept at testing,



Eric Davis, homeless and couch surfing, was diagnosed 15 years ago after taking a physical exam for a job and the results "blew me away." He has "maxed out" on pills and is on insulin, feeling "awesome" from doing 100 push-ups daily.

keeping a log, taking insulin, and talks easily about it. He attributes his attitude to the staff at the well-run clinic that makes him feel good about himself.

The diabetes clinic has a growing array of programs — from "at risk" to parent and walking groups, to yoga and high-tech services available during routine visits. The typical visit includes laboratory and medication updates,

blood sugar, blood pressure, temperature and weight checks, a turn at the retinopathy machine that shows the diabetic a picture of his or her eye and any damage, a one-to-one "tele-pharmacy" visit with a pharmacist via Skype, finishing with a printout of the patient's record and what he or she needs.

A month diabetics share

NOVEMBER is American Diabetes month and the St. Anthony Health Clinic is holding its sixth annual Diabetes Day open house Nov. 14, 2:30-5 p.m. featuring free diabetes screening, flu shots, body-mass checks to determine patients at-risk, music and prizes. Last year 300 attended.

The American Diabetes Association is also posting a feature on Facebook called "The True Picture of A Day in the Life of Diabetes," a plea for diabetics to share their thoughts about the disease along with a picture. For every picture clicked on in the mosaic that's created, CVS/pharmacy kicks in \$1 to the association.

One woman wrote that her father died of a diabetic seizure and that the family takes a long annual walk together in his memory. Another praised her 11-year-old, steadfast-

ly positive son who has had Type I since age 6, sometimes giving himself six insulin shots a day. One other reminded that cats and dogs can have diabetes, too.

This is Sare Wise's comment from the Website:

"This is not every day but it is these days that get me down and that I have to work through. I've had T1D for almost 28 years and I have yet to get used to the bruises that accompany the pokes. Most days I don't think about it but it is a very SILENT chronic disease. We put on a happy face for others when at times we are so tired and worn out and yet the happy face we put on for others always helps us get through and brings us joy. WE ARE STRONG SURVIVORS and will continue to be!"

— Tom Carter

Patients can expect these conveniences of modern medicine and sometimes a little more. The day Saenz was there, Lien Gnoc Tran, a Chinese American, was doing the routine, her blood sugar running a bit high at 331, and being advised to drink water to get it down. She moved through the checks accompanied by Victor Duong, interpreting for her when needed. Tran's surprise came at the tele-pharmacy screen when the pharmacist spoke her native Cantonese.

Among the clinic's education programs is the Big Blue Test that dramatically demonstrates the power of exercise. In June, St. Anthony Medical Clinic was awarded \$10,000 from the Diabetes Hands Association, recognizing the test St. Anthony's administered a year ago with "uninsured and under-insured diabetics in the Tenderloin." Participants test their blood sugar, then

exercise — in this case they danced for 14 minutes — then retest. Blood sugar numbers dropped an average of 20%.

Valdes is joined by others when she

says the greatest need is to change the community through education about the good and bad social determinants and how to make the switches.

"It may take years, sadly," she says. "The Tenderloin has many pressing issues."

But there are baby steps being made through the clinics, the eat-healthy gardens growing in public spaces and on SRO roofs, the rising consciousness about exercise, the expansion of the farmers' market, the continuing demand for a supermarket, to mention a few.

"Our patients are more informed now," Hill says, "and fewer are unchecked diabetics. But we're seeing younger patients now that are obese. They come here for the problem and find, 'By the way, you're diabetic.' Someone in the family had it."

A problem: Glide doesn't have night classes and some of the young diabetics work day jobs.

"And for poor people, and the overwhelming conditions facing the poor and homeless, they're surrounded by cheap, empty food," Hill says, "and they aren't that sophisticated about health care."

Not yet. ■

DEATH IN THE TENDERLOIN

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Department of the Environment

Don't Forget to Bring Your Own Bag!

San Francisco's expanded checkout bag ordinance is in effect and all retailers are now required to charge \$.10 for each checkout bag they give out. Single-use plastic bags are no longer permitted. Save some money by bringing your own bag when you shop. To find out more about the ordinance and how to get a FREE reusable bag, please visit SFEnvironment.org/checkoutbag

Airport Commission

The Airport Commission has commenced two Request for Proposal (RFP) processes. The first RFP is for the Airport Security Checkpoint Mail Service Lease. The proposed minimum financial offer is \$5,000 with a term of three years with two one-year options, at Airport's sole discretion. Annual Rent shall be the higher of the Minimum Annual Guarantee or 10% of gross revenues. The proposal due date is January 9, 2013. The Informational Conference is on October 30, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. at San Francisco International Airport, SFO Business Center, 575 N. McDonnell Road, 2nd Floor, Accounting Conference Room. For additional information call Ron Gonzales at Airport's Revenue Development and Management Dept., (650) 821-4500.

The second RFP process is for the Cellular Phone Rental Kiosk Lease. The proposed minimum financial offer is \$60,000 with a term of seven years. Annual Rent shall be the higher of the Minimum Annual Guarantee or 12% of gross revenues. The proposal due date is January 17, 2013. The Informational Conference is on November 08, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. at San Francisco International Airport, SFO Business Center, 575 N. McDonnell Road, 2nd Floor, Accounting Conference Room. For additional information call Sam El Gord at Airport's Revenue Development and Management Dept., (650) 821-4500. Please see <http://www.flysfo.com/web/page/about/b2b/conces/> for additional information on both RFP's.

Alert SF

Alert SF is a free system that allows users to sign up to receive text and/or email alerts from the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) during an emergency in San Francisco. Topics include: major traffic disruptions, watches and warnings for tsunamis and flooding, post-disaster information, and other alerts. To sign up, go to: <https://www.alertsf.org/>.

2012 BOARD of SUPERVISORS Regularly Scheduled Board Meetings

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – Come see your San Francisco government in action. Tuesdays, 2:00pm, City Hall Chamber, Room 250.

November 6, 20
December 4, 11

INFORMATION ABOUT BOARD of SUPERVISORS COMMITTEES

All meetings are held at City Hall in the Chamber (Room 250) or Room 263. Please check the website for further details, including agendas and minutes: <http://www.sfbos.org/index.aspx?page=193>

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CNS#2397180