Occupational Health Has New Clinic, More Services

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University of Arizona employees whose jobs present potential health risks can now benefit from expanded services offered at the new Occupational Health Clinic.

The clinic, housed in the Babcock complex on East Speedway Boulevard west of North Campbell Avenue, is more centrally located – it had been in Highland Commons – and will be offering more services within the clinic.

"The new location brings together services that include baseline evaluations, hearing conservation, respiratory fit testing, work-specific immunizations, and chemical, biological and radiation medical surveillance," says Ken Kerns, Research Laboratory Safety Services senior director, who oversees the clinic.

The University's senior leaders identified the need for a more comprehensive occupational health program several years ago and worked together to implement a plan that would better meet employee health and compliance needs, Kerns said.

Steve Holland, the UA's chief risk officer, played a key role in the planning.

"By identifying and mitigating potential health threats in the workplace, insurance costs are reduced, compliance levels are increased, and the University sends an important message to employees at every level: Your safety and health in the workplace is a key institutional priority that benefits everyone involved," Holland said. "This concept fits perfectly into the UA's enterprise risk management effort, which seeks to identify and mitigate institutional risks across the spectrum that, if not managed appropriately, can interfere with the success of the UA's strategic plan."

Since the clinic opened in January, staff members have been able to spend more time with patients, enhancing the effectiveness of patient education and overall care.

"Our patients tell us that our proximity to laboratories has definitely made a difference," says Dr. Heather Walsh, the clinic's medical director.

Jim Metras, the clinic's program manager, agrees.

"It's been nothing but positive," he said. "We're not a comprehensive clinic yet – although that is a long-term goal – but offering more services in one place makes it much more convenient for employees to come in and get the services they need."

Currently, the clinic provides services to employees who are potentially exposed to occupational hazards. For workplace injuries, the existing triage process operating under the auspices of Risk Management remains in place.

With an eye toward further enhancing employee services, working groups comprising staff from the new clinic, Research Laboratory Safety Services and Risk Management are discussing how to boost laboratory inspection and audit efficiency, improve employee training, optimize space and ensure the best organizational structure.

For more information on occupational health services, visit occhealth.arizona.edu/home [1] or call 520-621-5643. For information on the workplace injury triage process, visit risk.arizona.edu [2].

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