



A Publication of the Council of Community Clinics

COUNCIL CONNECTIONS GROUP PURCHASING

The More You Buy, The More You Save

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COUNCIL CONNECTIONS

■ With 20 years of experience providing significant savings through the power of volume purchasing, the Council of Community Clinics Service Corp. (CCCSC) is heading into the 21st century with a new name and a renewed commitment to further member savings and enhance customer service.

Council Connections is the new name selected for the CCCSC Group Purchasing Organization. This organization serves more than 350 community clinics and nonprofit organizations in the Western United States, providing access to the direct purchase of office supplies, laboratory services, pharmaceuticals and medical/surgical supplies at negotiated discounted rates.

Along with the new name, some new benefits will be introduced to members in the coming months. Details will be mailed directly to current members. Council Connections membership benefits include:

- **Low prices.** Members receive discounted prices for the items used most often by clinics and nonprofit organizations. These prices are negotiated and contracted through Council Connections. To expedite ordering and fulfillment, purchases are made directly with the vendor(s).
- **Experienced group purchasing sales staff** who negotiate cost-saving discounts on the items used most often by community clinics and nonprofit organizations, and who are accessible and supportive liaisons between customers and vendors.
- **Reduced service fees.** Members utilizing two or more product lines may be eligible for a reduction in their service fees based on the total combined volume of purchases.

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CEO CORNER

Savings Add Up with Group Purchasing

By Mike Sullivan
Chief Executive Officer
Golden Valley Health Center

Golden Valley Health Center has 14 medical and five dental FQHC sites serving a primarily farm worker population in Merced and Stanislaus Counties in California's Central Valley. The health centers serve 50,000 patients annually, representing 170,000 patient visits. As Council Connections announces its new name and membership benefit program, we thought it would be appropriate to ask one of our newest members to write about what drew them into the group purchasing organization.

■ Most community clinics and nonprofit organizations pride themselves, as we did, on working diligently to control costs by watching expenses and shopping for the best prices. When we recently asked the Council of Community Clinics Group Purchasing Organization (now known as Council Connections) to provide a cost comparison between our existing contract for laboratory services with their negotiated contract, we were very curious to see the results. Would the comparison show opportunities for further savings, especially since Unilab is the provider in both instances?

The answer was "Yes!" We learned that, simply by joining Council Connections, we could save almost 10% on our laboratory services and continue using exactly the same vendor. It doesn't get any easier than that to start saving and

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Office Depot BSD GROWS

E-Commerce Update: Office Depot's BSD (Business Services Division) program is growing! As a client of BSD, you can place orders directly with us on our award-winning Internet site. The site tracks your orders, shows available stock, lists your Council Connections contract price and shows pictures of stocked items.

When purchasing office supplies electronically, most Office Depot customers are reporting purchase order cost savings of up to 70% per order! (Analysts estimate the average cost to place and receive a paper-based order at \$100- \$175.)

Set up and access are **free**. No Internet access? No problem. Office Depot will give you a browser program to get you to their site. All you need is a computer and modem. Call Keith White at Office Depot, 800-696-9599, ext. 7755, or his sales team, 800-696-9599, ext. 7778, to find out how to get started.

Specialty Printing Available: Did you know Office Depot BSD can handle all your printing needs? Forms, brochures, cards, announcements. Would you like your clinic name and space to enter patient information on medical record files? We do that all the time. Specialty ad items like embroidered or silkscreened shirts, hats and other items are available at contract prices. Contact Rae Martinez, 619-552-7791, to discuss your needs.

CEO CORNER: Savings Add Up *(continued from page 1)*

realizing the value of buying in volume, which is the basic concept of group purchasing organizations.

The Council Connections Difference

We have used other group purchasing associations before. What attracted us to the San Diego-based Council Connections was its proven track record of serving community clinics and nonprofit organizations. The staff showed a willingness to be creative in order to get new business. For example, half of our low management fee goes directly to our Central Valley Health Network (CVHN) association of 11 FQHC health centers. This funding will enhance the value of shared resources so important to CVHN members.

Because the Council Connections staff understands our unique needs and concerns, they look for savings opportunities that mean the most to community health centers and nonprofit organizations alike.

We have learned that the right group purchasing organization can save you more than money. Council Connections provides the experienced staff who negotiate low contract prices for the items used most often by clinics and nonprofit entities. This

saves our staff time, which is an often overlooked byproduct of group purchasing. With Council Connections, we have augmented our own expert purchasing staff with a group that is knowledgeable and responsive to our needs. This extends our power even more.

If your clinic or nonprofit organization is ready to explore the savings and other benefits of group purchasing, we suggest these tips to get started:

- Analyze your purchasing system. Measure how much time is spent making purchasing decisions, researching and negotiating prices, and selecting appropriate vendors.
- Request a cost comparison from Council Connections. They will analyze your current prices and compare them with the prices available through their negotiated contracts. You'll get a report that shows exactly where you can save.

We're convinced that Council Connections helps us save. We have contracted for more savings through the Council Connections Office Depot contract and we intend to explore savings on pharmaceuticals and medical/surgical supplies as well.

For additional information, please contact Mike Sullivan, (209) 383-1848.

Office Depot's New NATIONAL CONTRACT

*By Myhraliza Aala
Marketing & Customer Service
Representative
Council Connections*



The need for savings and customer service has always been a recurring theme among community clinics and nonprofit organizations alike. We met the demand for lower prices in office supplies by establishing the Office Depot program in April 1998. Already, over 80 nonprofit organizations participate in the Council Connections' Office Depot program.

Due to the high response to this service, we established a national account on June 1 with Office Depot, who is eager to meet the needs of this growing entity of Council Connections. As a national account, the Council Connections' staff will continue to serve our customers alongside the regional Office Depot sales representatives in addition to developing new working relationships with representatives in other regions. This will increase the customer service responsiveness to an even higher level and maintain the assurance of customer needs. A national account gives nonprofit organizations outside of California the opportunity to share in the savings through Council Connections. We currently serve Office Depot customers in Hawaii, Oregon and Utah as well as in California.

Council Connections supports the need for nonprofit organizations to be cost-effective. By extending this opportunity with Office Depot to all nonprofit organizations, we can provide more leverage to increase the Council Connections purchasing power and create opportunities for even further savings.

Brenda Spratt, Executive Director of the Camp Pendleton YMCA, agrees and says, "Having worked in community clinics in San Diego for the past few years, I came to rely on the Councils' low prices for

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