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## Health care 'close to home' is just what the doctor ordered

by Judith Lee



Ian Gleadle/staff photo

Drs. Suzan and Brad Grimm of Duvall Advanced Family Eye Care have invested in new diagnostic technology such as digital retinal imaging (left, on the computer) to monitor patients for eye disease and evaluate treatment.

### *Busy practices expanding to meet demand*

In little more than five years, Duvall has gone from a town short of convenient health care to a town with not one, but two state-of-the-art health care facilities: Duvall Advanced Family

Eye Care and Evergreen Medical Group. And both practices have recently expanded, indicating their commitment to patients here, and confidence in long-term growth.

"Thanks to the warm welcome we've received, we have nearly doubled in size," said Dr. Suzan Grimm, O.D. who founded Duvall Advanced Family Eye Care with her husband, Dr. Brad Grimm, in 2002. "The community is quite diverse, but everyone here seems to appreciate our advanced eye care – without having to drive all the way into Seattle."

Evergreen Medical Group, located right next door, is expanding from 3,100 square feet to 5,000 square feet, said Clinic Manager Debra McManus: "We couldn't grow any more in the space we were in!"

Both practices note that much of their growth has originated not with new residents, but with current residents who are only too happy to give up drives of 35 minutes to an hour to see qualified doctors.

### Mutual admiration

Like any successful match, the relationship between these health care providers and Duvall is characterized by mutual admiration.

"Suzan and I had been practicing in Seattle since 1994. Our personal interests are white water

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13342 NE 175th St.  
P.O. Box 587  
Woodinville, WA  
98072  
Ph: 425-483-0606  
Fax: 425-486-7593

Hours: Mon-Fri  
8:00am-5:00pm

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rafting and kayaking, so the beauty of the Snoqualmie River Valley was an important draw. We wanted to practice in Duvall because the folks here appreciate the outdoors, and have a strong sense of family and community," said Dr. Brad Grimm.



Lisa Allen/staff photo  
Dr. Yu Wang (l), Dr. Sherman Lee (both family practitioners) and Kyle Krekow, a PA-C (Physician's Assistant - Certified), are staff members at Evergreen Medical Clinic in Duvall.

clinic in Duvall.

Duvall residents have been rewarded for their support of both practices. Duvall Advanced Family Eye Care provides comprehensive eye services and treatment of eye disease for infants, toddlers, school-age children, adults and seniors, as well as the latest eyeglasses, sunglasses and contact lenses. Evergreen Medical Group is a family practice, also offering "cradle to grave" care.

### Technology

To provide these services, both practices have invested in technology that patients might expect to see only at larger facilities closer to Seattle. For instance, the Drs. Grimm use digital retinal imaging and scanning laser imaging to monitor patients for early signs of eye disease, evaluate treatment of eye conditions, and manage serious diseases such as glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.

They are equipped to remove foreign bodies or treat urgent eye problems such as "pink eye" (conjunctivitis). Patients with healthy eyes have their vision measured with automated equipment, and learn how to protect eyes from injury and maintain eye health.

"Many of our patients are high-tech workers who love our advanced technology and seem to really appreciate our thorough exams, the expertise of our opticians and the quality of the eyewear," noted Dr. Suzan Grimm.

At Evergreen Medical Group, doctors, nurses and staff members use hand-held computers directly linked to electronic medical records; there are no paper charts and no dictation, minimizing the chance for human error. While not a hospital, the clinic has a well-equipped procedure room that is useful for urgent care such as sutures, fractures and chest pain.

"In our procedure room, we have treated a man who was having a heart attack, stabilizing him until the paramedics could transport him to the ER," said McManus.

### Eye to the future

It's clear that more folks live in and around Duvall, resulting in increased need for services. Duvall has grown by 15 percent since 2000, according to Doreen Booth, Duvall economic development director, and the practices draw from the surrounding area.

"The health care practices likely draw not only from Duvall (pop. 5,828) but from the unincorporated King County areas to the east, including Lake Margaret, Lake Joy and Lake Marcel, as well as Carnation. Duvall's 2005 Economic Development Plan puts our 'area of interest' at about 14,000 people, with 29,617 people living within a five-mile radius of the city center," said Booth.

She also noted that area residents, many of whom commute 30 minutes or more to work, are looking for services closer to Duvall: "I think this is especially true for families with children.

Since the children are here in the daytime hours, it makes sense to have their services here. I also think people want to have local connections to service providers. As for doctors, if you are sick, you want to see a doctor as soon as possible, so having a local physician makes sense."

In order to provide high quality care to the growing population, both Duvall Advanced Family Eye Care and Evergreen Medical group have increased professional and support staff.

Back in 2002, Dr. Suzan and Dr. Brad each worked part-time in the practice, and they had two employees. Now they both work full-time, and there are seven to eight individuals on staff: two opticians, two optometric technicians, an office manager, receptionists and billing department. Five of these folks were hired from the Duvall population area.

"The technicians, a receptionist, and billing person along with one of the opticians are all local, so they know everyone in town and often greet patients by name when they come in," noted Dr. Brad.

Evergreen Medical Group has two physicians, Dr. Wang and Dr. Lee, and a Physician Assistant-Certified, Kyle Krekow. Seven staff members support them, and Evergreen intends to add another doctor or PA-C in 2008.

"We have a vision of six to seven providers here, and now we'll have the room for that," noted McManus.

A priority for both practices is to get the word out to Duvall residents that they are here and ready to serve patients of all ages.

"There are still a lot of people who live in the Valley who don't know we are here. I hear this several times a week from people coming in for the first time," observed McManus.

Booth believes that word is spreading among area residents that these "close to home" practices are providing top-quality care.

"I think that many residents are deciding that the quality of health care services in Duvall and the convenience of those services is such that they are choosing to utilize them," she said.

Dr. Suzan Grimm says Duvall Advanced Family Eye Care has the same vision today that it had when she and her husband opened the doors five years ago: "To use our advanced training, state-of-the art technology, and experience along with genuine concern and caring to enhance our patients' quality of life through better vision."

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