

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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Drugstore deal

What: Rite Aid will add three Lindora Health Clinics in the following drugstores: 211 East 17th St. in Costa Mesa, 16160 San Miguel Drive in Newport Beach and 30222 Crown Valley Parkway in Laguna Niguel.

Services: The clinics will offer a modified version of Lindora's supervised weight-loss program and vaccinations for flu, hepatitis, meningitis, pneumonia and chickenpox. Routine exams will also be offered. Average cost: \$59.

When: The Costa Mesa clinic will open Oct. 2 with the other two expected to launch in early 2007.

Information: www.lindora.com

Lindora, Rite Aid join forces

The Costa Mesa-based weight loss clinics will open inside three of the drugstore chain's O.C. locations.

By NANCY LUNA
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Lindora in Costa Mesa announced Tuesday that it has partnered with Rite Aid to launch its medically supervised weight loss clinics in three Orange County drugstores, with the first debuting next month.

The pilot clinics, staffed by certified nurse practitioners, will also offer vaccinations and treatment of nonemergency illnesses such as ear infections, skin rashes and strep throat, both companies said. Lindora staff will also

write prescriptions and be available for screening blood pressure and cholesterol. The cost for non-weight-loss services will range from \$25 to \$95.

The deal with Rite Aid, the No. 2 drugstore player in Los Angeles and Orange counties, is a coup for Lindora, as it could lead to a wider roll-out of its clinics in the region.

"If it's successful here, there will be interest on both sides to replicate that," said Lindora Chief Executive Cynthia Stamper Graff.

SEE CLINIC • PAGE 8



COURTESY OF LINDORA

PARTNERSHIP: Lindora is teaming up with Rite Aid to offer its medically supervised weight loss clinics inside the drugstore giant's locations. A pilot clinic will launch next month at a Rite Aid in Costa Mesa.

CLINIC: Modified version to be offered

FROM PAGE 1

The first Lindora Health Clinic will debut Oct. 2 at a Rite Aid in Costa Mesa. Two more, in Laguna Niguel and Newport Beach, will open in early 2007. Lindora operates 35 weight-loss clinics in Southern California that call for a low-carb diet and moderate exercise program supervised by medical professionals whom customers meet with five days a week.

The Rite Aid clinics will offer a modified version of the program, where dieters come in twice weekly, said Stamper Graff. Rite Aids with clinics will also stock Lindora products such as high-protein snack bars, shakes and a \$39.95 "diet-in-a-box" kit for consumers who want to shed pounds using the Lindora program at home.

The clinics "are for people who are very interested in convenience," said Stamper Graff, whose father, Dr. Marshall Stamper, founded Lindora in 1971.

Rite Aid officials say providing a weight management program inside its stores will help differentiate the 3,320-

unit chain from competitors who have also launched walk-in clinics in other markets.

"With Lindora's expertise in medically supervised weight management, we are taking in-store health care services to a new level," said Mark de Bruin, Rite Aid's executive vice president of pharmacy.

More pharmacy chains and big-box retailers such as Target, Wal-Mart and CVS Corp. are focusing on "walk-in" clinics as competition heats up in the \$174 billion market. On Monday, Target opened health care clinics at a handful of stores in Minneapolis.

Earlier this year, Rhode Island-based CVS - Orange County's No. 1 drugstore - purchased Minneapolis-based MinuteClinic. Those clinics will administer vaccinations and diagnosis, treat and write prescriptions for minor illnesses in some Ohio stores.

CVS spokeswoman Erin Pensa said the company has no plans to add weight management programs to those services. She also said there are no immediate plans to announce the expansion of MinuteClinics in other regions, including the

69 Orange County Sav-on stores that CVS acquired this year.

Still, she added: "There is no reason why we can't have a MinuteClinic in every market where we have CVS stores."

Industry experts say the climate is ripe for such services.

In a recent report, Citigroup analyst Deborah L. Weinswig said companies that are morphing toward a "drugstore of the future" by expanding their portfolio of health care products and health care services are most likely to be successful because it's easy and convenient.

"You can go in on a weight check-up, but if you've got a cold, or something, you can get that fixed, too," said Jim Hertel, an analyst at Willard Bishop market research firm. "I think you're going to see a lot more of this."

Register wire services contributed to this report.

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