



At Premier Primary Care, El Paso patients find a clinic that feels like home

Founded in 2019 by an El Paso native, the bilingual practice runs on a simple promise: patients are people, not numbers.

BY STAFF WRITER



Members of the Premier Primary Care Clinic team gather in a clinic lobby in El Paso.

EL PASO, Texas — Beatriz Fitzmaurice did not expect a trip to the doctor to feel personal. Then she walked into Premier Primary Care Clinic.

"It's a personal service," she wrote in Spanish in a review posted on the clinic's website. "I feel like they treat me super special. I'm not a number or an insurance policy."

That feeling — of being seen as a person rather than a chart — runs through dozens of patient reviews of the El Paso practice, and it sits at the center of how the clinic describes its mission. Since opening in 2019, Premier has grown into a bilingual practice with locations on the city's East and West sides, a clinic dedicated to El Paso Independent School District employees and a care team that patients say makes them feel at home.

A NATIVE'S VISION

The clinic was founded by Karina Mendoza, an El Paso native and nurse practitioner who holds a doctorate of nursing practice. She serves as both founder and provider, seeing patients for primary care, family care and medical aesthetics. She chose to build it in her hometown, serving the same community she comes from.

According to the clinic, its philosophy centers on "caring for the whole person: your physical health, emotional well-being, daily life, and the goals that matter to you." In practice, that means providers listen first, work to understand a patient's full circumstances and then build a plan of care together with the patient rather than handing one down.

In a border city where many families move easily between English and Spanish, and where relatives often come along to appointments, that approach carries particular weight. Premier offers care in both languages, and a large share of its online reviews are written in Spanish.

"The medical provider listened and explained my medical conditions in a friendly way," a patient identified as Patricia wrote. Another patient, Veronica Mendez, put it more simply: "She knows how to care for her patients!!"

What makes a clinic feel like home is rarely one thing. In reviews, patients point to a mix of small details: a friendly front desk, providers who speak the language they speak at the kitchen table, explanations given without hurry and a wait that is measured in minutes rather than hours.

"I'm not a number or an insurance policy."

BEATRIZ FITZMAURICE, PATIENT
(TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH)

A TEAM THAT KNOWS THE COMMUNITY

Mendoza is joined by Jose Ruiz and Cynthia Nayely Martinez Torres, both board-certified family nurse practitioners.

Ruiz brings a background in microbiology, intensive care and hospice nursing, experience that spans some of medicine's most technical and most tender moments. Patients often mention him by name. Cecy Edens wrote that she and her son saw Ruiz, calling him an "excellent FNP-C" and adding, "Highly recommend him for your medical needs!!!"

Martinez Torres came to the practice with critical care and travel nursing experience and, according to the clinic, emphasizes culturally responsive care — treatment that takes into account a patient's language, background and family life.

Behind the providers is a support team that includes office manager Ivan Castañeda, a registered nurse; team leads Teresa Mendoza and Victoria Gomez; and medical assistants, billing and administrative staff. Reviewers often credit the front desk as much as the exam room.

"I really liked this place," Beebee Heath wrote. "The staff were very nice and the Dr. was very professional and friendly."

Hector Lopez called the staff "very friendly and professional," while Robert Aguilar wrote that he was "very impressed with the professionalism and quality care."

Returning patients describe a consistency that turns a medical office into a familiar place. Daniel Falcon wrote that he "always" receives great service from the office staff. First-time visitors say they feel welcome, too. "Excellent service," a patient named Vivian wrote. "First time, and was a great experience."

CARE WITHOUT THE LONG WAIT

Feeling at home in a clinic starts with not feeling forgotten in the waiting room, and several patients single out short waits.

"I am amazed by how fast you get called," a patient named Jasmin wrote, adding that she sat for about five minutes before she was called in.

Roberto Araujo agreed. "Wait time was short and very good service," he wrote. "Employees very professional and courteous."

Cleanliness and a calm atmosphere come up again and again in Spanish-language reviews, which praise the friendliness of the staff and the care patients receive from the reception desk to the exam room.

MORE THAN A CHECKUP

Primary care remains the foundation of the practice: preventive visits, treatment for acute illness and long-term management of chronic conditions. But Premier has widened its services to meet patients where they are.

The clinic offers urgent care for minor emergencies, behavioral health services by telehealth, medically supervised weight-loss programs using semaglutide and tirzepatide, hormone replacement therapy for men and women, IV and vitamin therapy, and medical aesthetics.

The clinic ties that range of services to a single goal stated on its website: care "designed to support your health, confidence, and overall well-being."

Offering behavioral health visits by telehealth also means some patients can talk with a provider

from their own living room, a literal version of the at-home comfort the clinic works to create in its exam rooms.

Premier accepts major insurance plans, including Medicare, Medicaid, Blue Cross, UnitedHealthcare and Aetna, and offers financing through CareCredit, Affirm and other options for services insurance does not cover.

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE STUDENTS

One of Premier's most visible community commitments is its partnership with EPISD. The clinic runs a Central location at 1014 N. Stanton St. exclusively for district employees, where walk-ins are always accepted.

Active EPISD employees, and dependents enrolled in the district's health plan, can be seen there or at the East and West clinics for minor emergencies, respiratory infections, colds and flu, urinary tract infections, sports physicals and Department of Transportation exams. Beginning in January 2027, visits will carry a \$10 copay, with low-cost add-ons such as \$15 flu and COVID-19 tests. District staff also receive 10% off the clinic's cash-based services.

For teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers and other school employees who cannot easily step away from a classroom or a route, a nearby clinic that takes walk-ins can mean the difference between getting care and going without.

WHY IT MATTERS

At a time when many patients describe primary care as rushed and impersonal, Premier's reviews tell a different story — one of providers who take the time to explain, staff members who greet patients warmly and a practice where El Paso families say they feel at home.

For Fitzmaurice, the difference comes down to a single idea. At Premier, she wrote, she is not a number. She is a patient who is treated like someone special. ■

IF YOU GO

East: 1387 George Dieter Drive, Building D-103 • 915-320-7707

West: 121 Paragon Lane, Building B-2 • 915-503-2878

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays; East also 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday

Languages: English and Spanish •

Online: premierclinic.us