

Next Level Urgent Care nearly doubling number of clinics in first expansion beyond Houston

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Houston-based Next Level Urgent Care LLC will add 20 more clinics by the end of 2022 — nearly doubling its total number of clinics.

The urgent care provider will open six more clinics in the Houston area, seven in Austin and seven in San Antonio, said Dr. Juliet Breeze, Next Level Urgent Care founder and CEO. This will be the first time Next Level Urgent Care expands outside of the Houston area.



NEXT LEVEL URGENT CARE

Dr. Juliet Breeze, Next Level Urgent Care founder and CEO

The first round of new clinics will open in July, and then more will open monthly. All are expected to open by the end of October so parents and students can have clinics available around the beginning of the school year, Breeze said.

Several of the clinics are in the construction phase, but Breeze said she is still getting permits for many of the clinics. The company targets locations in retail spaces, surrounded by other businesses. For all of the clinics, Next Level Urgent Care uses Houston-based Browne McGregor Architects, with which the company has had a longtime relationship. For the Houston-based clinics, Next Level Urgent Care has used and will continue to use Houston-based Mission Constructors for the next six builds.

Next Level Urgent Care currently has 24 clinics in the Houston area with seven additional on-site clinics owned by other organizations that Next Level Urgent Care manages. Breeze founded the company in 2013 when she had an emergency room bill that cost her thousands of dollars and realized the need for affordable health care.

"Our growth mirrors the need for an affordable alternative for convenient care," Breeze said. "This is a starting place for us. We intend to learn all the lessons about how to grow outside of the region. We are really pleased with the success we've had in Houston, but we want to be able to bring that out to other regions and make sure that we are not just a Houston phenomenon, but a company that is really offering something special in health care that others recognize as well."

The company originally planned to expand in 2020, but the plans were halted because of the pandemic, Breeze said. Even before the pandemic, Next Level Urgent Care had been seeing steady growth of 26% year over year, but the company's "growth during Covid was as was really exponential," Breeze said.

"We have always had a vision for growing into a larger company with a statewide, and maybe someday soon a national, presence," Breeze said. "So we've always had that in our growth plans, but certainly we got thrown a curveball in the last couple of years, as many businesses have, and we're now ready to get back on the horse."

The company's new membership model spurred a lot of the growth, Breeze said. The membership model is the new line of service that provides primary care, urgent care, telemedicine and lab tests to patients who are members through their employers. The employers, which Breeze said range from restaurants to county governments to construction companies, pay a monthly membership fee. Some of the employers are based in Austin and San Antonio, hence the expansion to those metros.

Next Level Urgent Care has over 500 employees, and Breeze expects to have over 800 by the end of this year after opening the new clinics. Currently, its workforce makeup is diverse, much like community the company serves, with 35% Hispanic, 21.6% Black and 31% white employees.

"We are very interested in providing a health care solution that is equitable," Breeze said. "The fact that we are open late hours and weekends also provides a little more in terms of reducing obstacles that many lower-wage earners might find when they're trying to access care."

Shafaq Patel

Reporter

Houston Business Journal

