



The Student Outreach Clinic acts as a point of entry to healthcare services for underserved people by providing exams, preventative health education and referrals to other community services. Pictured here are University of Nevada School of Medicine students and faculty that served in the clinic in spring 2008.

Photo courtesy of the School of Medicine.

Student-run outreach clinic offers community care and educational opportunity

By Ken Kempcke

The University of Nevada School of Medicine operates a student-run, free medical clinic. The Student Outreach Clinic was founded by students in 1996 and continues to be operated by students under the guidance of licensed physicians.

“Even though faculty preceptors and advisers are necessary, this clinic would not be possible without driven students wanting the clinic to be an excellent asset to the community,” says Daniel Spogen, chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine and medical director of the clinic.

The clinic is operated in cooperation with the Family Medicine Center and made possible by faculty and community physicians who donate their time to oversee the clinic. The clinic is funded entirely by donations and grants.

The purpose of the clinic is to provide free health care to underserved populations who would otherwise not receive the care they need. The benefit to students is that they receive hands-on experience in treating patients from the very first day of medical school.

Under the direct supervision of licensed faculty physicians, medical students offer

monthly clinics that provide free general, children’s and women’s care. No insurance or appointment is necessary for clinic patients, who are seen on a first-come, first-served basis.

Each clinic offers complete physical examinations and referral services. The children’s clinic provides school physicals and physicals for the Head Start program, as well as immunizations. The women’s clinic provides free pap smears, pregnancy testing and sexually transmitted disease counseling.

Services offered by the clinic continue to evolve and grow. “Within a month’s time, which includes one general, one pediatric and one women’s clinic, the clinic cares for approximately 100 patients,” Derek Covington, second-year medical student and public relations chair for the clinic, says. “This past May, the clinic partnered with the Family Medical Interest Group at the School of Medicine to provide free sport physicals to 56 Hug High School students.”

The clinic has grown considerably since the project began more than 10 years ago, Kelsey Worthington, board chair of the clinic, also in her second year of medical school, adds. “The clinic continues to expand with regard to the number of patients seen, student education

and services offered. We hope to carry on the clinic’s progression in the spirit of our mission, which is to reach medically underserved populations in the area.

“Students have a great opportunity to gain experience with patient interaction as well as in learning how to manage the operational aspect of a medical clinic,” Kelsey says. “I think the patients that we see really appreciate our efforts. It is extremely rewarding to be able to expand my medical education, while volunteering my time toward a community service that I believe to be very beneficial.”

The important community health care services provided by the clinic would not be possible without significant grants and support from private donors. Last year, the Nell J. Redfield Foundation presented the clinic a \$25,000 gift to support clinic operations.

All monthly clinics are held at University Health System’s Family Medicine Center, located on the University of Nevada, Reno campus just north of Mackay Stadium, off North Virginia Street. For information, directions, or questions, please phone the Student Outreach Clinic at (775) 682-8646 or email soc@unr.edu.