



SPIRIT Program Volunteer Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the SPIRIT Program?

Sacramento Physicians Initiatives to Reach Out and Teach (SPIRIT), is a program of the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society (SSVMS). **SPIRIT** is a collaboration between SSVMS and Dignity Health, Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Health, the UC Davis Health System, and the County of Sacramento. Working together with partner physicians that donate their time and medical services, we provide uninsured people in the Sacramento region the care that helps them lead healthier, more productive lives.

2. Who does the SPIRIT Program serve?

The SPIRIT Program serves patients in the Sacramento region who are uninsured and are below the federal poverty line. SPIRIT patients have limited scope and duration of specialty need and must be referred to the program by their medical home, such as a community clinic or the Sacramento County Primary Care Clinic. Before a clinic forwards a SPIRIT referral, the clinic confirms that the patient meets the SPIRIT eligibility requirements.

3. What kind of volunteer opportunities are available through SPIRIT?

Volunteers can donate their time at one of the following sites and can determine how frequently they will volunteer and, what days and times:

- Specialty consults at the Sacramento County Primary Care Clinic
 - Between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday
- Specialty consults at a community clinic between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday
- Specialty consults at the volunteer's private practice
- Outpatient surgical services at participating SPIRIT ambulatory surgery centers.

"I've been enriched by volunteering with SPIRIT, providing care...Because it feeds my spirit and fuels my passion as a physician."

-Ruth Haskins, MD, President, California Medical Association and SPIRIT Volunteer



4. **Does SPIRIT take referrals directly from patients?**

No. Patients must be referred to SPIRIT from their medical home, such as a county or community clinic. We do not accept self-referrals.

5. **What happens if the patient presents a new problem or need services beyond what I agree to donate?**

The SPIRIT Program is designed for patients with limited scope and duration of specialty need. If providing specialty care within your office, the patients are typically seen for one visit and then are returned to their medical home at the referring clinic.

6. **Is there a minimum amount of time I will be required to volunteer?**

No. There is no minimum or maximum number of volunteer hours. You decide when and where you would like to volunteer. Whether it's volunteering 2 to 4 hours a month at the Primary Care Clinic or providing two surgical procedures a year, your services are needed and greatly appreciated!

7. **Does the SPIRIT Program assist me with scheduling patients?**

Yes. **When volunteering in a clinic setting**, we work with you to find a date and time that you can volunteer. The clinic will contact you in advance to confirm your equipment needs and scheduling preference. You do not have to coordinate scheduling. **When providing consults at your office or donating a surgical service**, the SPIRIT staff will work with your practice for appointment times, contact the patient to schedule appointments and/or procedures, ensure that all the necessary medical records are received by the treating physicians and coordinate the return of the patient to his/her medical home.

8. **Do I need special malpractice insurance to participate?**

In most cases, your existing medical liability insurance provides coverage for services provided on a volunteer basis. Please contact your individual insurance provider for more details if necessary. **For physicians providing services in a county or community clinic, the SPIRIT Program has worked with these clinics to ensure that their liability covers you** when are providing medical services to their patients.

*"I felt hopeless, I was my own doctor. I had not been to a doctor since I was 18.
Words cannot express how thankful I am for all this wonderful care."*

-Salvador, SPIRIT Patient



9. **Do I need to be a member of the Medical Society to volunteer?**
No. The SPIRIT Program welcomes both Medical Society members and non-member physicians to volunteer.
10. **Can I still volunteer if I'm retired?**
Yes. Retired physicians who retain an active California medical license are welcome to participate in our program.
11. **Does SPIRIT place non-physician volunteers?**
Unfortunately, no. Currently our program is only able to accommodate physician volunteers who can provide specialty consults or out-patient general surgeries.
12. **Is there recognition for my services?**
We value SPIRIT Program volunteers and the time and care they donate to the community. Volunteers are recognized throughout the duration of their commitment. Examples of way volunteers are recognized range from identification in the SSVMS Annual Report, postings on the SSVMS social media sites and at SSVMS membership events.
13. **What is the next step to volunteering?**
Complete a Volunteer Interest Form found at:
<http://www.ssvms.org/Programs/SupportOurPrograms/Volunteer.aspx>. Once completed you can send to the attention of Janice Emerson, SPIRIT Program Manager, at jemerson@ssvms.org or fax to (916) 453-0256. You will then be forwarded a short, volunteer application to complete.
14. **Questions?**
Contact Janice Emerson, SPIRIT Program Manager, at (916) 453-0254 or jemerson@ssvms.org.

"SPIRIT gives me an opportunity to help our community...the patients are so grateful, the staff is a pleasure to work with, the cases are interesting, and I enjoy my work and caring for patients."

-Mary Ann Johnson, MD, Mercy Medical Group and SPIRIT Volunteer