



UC Davis Medical Students Run Five Inner-City Clinics

By Charles Casey, UC Davis Health System, Office of Public Affairs

There's always a need for physician volunteers to lend a hand.

BY THE COURTYARD OF a downtown Sacramento mosque, where children are laughing and playing on an early Sunday morning, patients trickle into the small waiting room of a converted apartment building.

It's the start of typical weekend day for UC Davis' Shifa Clinic, established in 1994 as a way to provide health care for the Muslim community and others facing language and related cultural barriers to needed medical services.

The clinic is able to provide Urdu, Arabic, Farsi and Punjabi interpreters, and its volunteers are dedicated to meeting not only patient needs, but also religious and cultural preferences.

It is just one of five community clinics sponsored by UC Davis School of Medicine and run entirely by its medical students and undergraduates...with help, of course, from physician volunteers.



Patient Care, Physician Training

For more than 30 years, UC Davis has been operating clinics like Shifa in the inner city neighborhoods of Sacramento, providing free care to uninsured and low-income patients.

Students and physicians like Sacramento vascular surgeon Dr. Ronald Jan volunteer their time to help those who don't have access to regular medical care.

During the past decade for example, Dr. Jan has spent his Saturdays helping "serve the underserved" as he calls it, while also playing a key role in helping train students who are on their way to becoming practicing physicians.

"It's a wonderful atmosphere for patients, medical students and doctors alike," says Dr. Jan. "These clinics embody all the reasons for which we go into medicine."

The clinics annually offer thousands of people with what is often their only access to health care. The program gives medical students and undergraduates hands-on experience and allows them to take part in the challenges and rewards of patient care and community medicine.

As an integral part of their first two years of medical school, many students say it is this unique opportunity to work directly with patients that attracted them to UC Davis in the first place.

Undergraduates also volunteer in the clinic program and can gain invaluable skills. Those with plans for careers in health care often volunteer by serving as interpreters, patient

advocates, receptionists and lab workers.

Volunteer licensed physicians like Dr. Jan supervise the students and assist with patient care at each clinic.

Four Other Clinics

In addition to the Shifa Clinic, there are four other clinics run by UC Davis students. Each offers a unique contribution to the health of Sacramento residents.

For the Asian-Pacific Islander community, the **Paul Hom Asian Clinic** provides primary and acute care services to elderly Asians and recent immigrants. Founded in 1972, it is the oldest Asian health clinic in the United States. More than 50 medical and undergraduate students and more than 40 physicians, led by Dr. Ron Jan, volunteer on an annual basis.

Clinica Tepati got its start in 1974, with a focus on serving downtown Sacramento's Hispanic population. Its Spanish translation services allow volunteers to communicate effectively and help care for more than a thousand uninsured patients of all ages each year.

Working with some of the community's most troubled residents, the **Joan Viteri Memorial Clinic** delivers care, health information and compassion to a patient population composed mainly of drug users and prostitutes.

The **Imani Clinic** was established in Sacramento's Oak Park neighborhood in 1994 to help address the persistent morbidity and mortality rates from hypertension, heart disease, cancer and inadequate prenatal care among African Americans. Volunteers emphasize health education and awareness with each patient, and the clinic operates as a 'weekend extension' of the Sacramento County primary care facility in the neighborhood.

These unique clinics are always in need of more physicians to help precept medical students. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Amy Jouan at (916) 734-4106 or amy.jouan@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu. You can also find out more about each clinic by visiting www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/medschool/clinics/.

For more information about being a physician volunteer in one of the UC Davis clinics, feel free to contact Dr. Ron Jan at ronjanfacs@yahoo.com or by phone at (916) 207-6898.

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