



## The Shifa Student Clinic

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WHEN I STARTED MEDICAL SCHOOL at UC Davis, I already knew that I wanted to be involved with the student-run clinics. It is a rare opportunity that first-year medical students get to see patients, practice procedures, and learn under the attention of seasoned practitioners so early in their careers, and I jumped at the offer. What I found, though, was much more than I could ever have asked for - a chance to be involved in a deep and committed community effort to provide care to the underserved.

Shifa Community Clinic is one of the student-run clinics affiliated with the UC Davis School of Medicine. It is open every Sunday and generally sees between 12 and 20 uninsured patients each Sunday. Many of Shifa's patients are immigrants with limited English proficiency, and most patients belong to Middle Eastern or East Asian communities.

Shifa works to provide culturally sensitive care in many ways. Translation services are available for Punjabi, Hindi, Farsi, Arabic, Urdu, and other languages.

Health education is tailored to the population. For example, diabetics get special information to assist them during fasting for Ramadan, and dedicated undergraduate volunteers create language-specific health education materials on a variety of topics.

Special chronic care clinics on the first Saturday of each month allow extra time for patients with more complicated chronic diseases. The second Sunday of each month is women's clinic - female preceptors and medical students ensure women get the culturally sensitive care they need.

Shifa continually strives to meet the needs of its community through outreach, research, and commitment to patient care, none of which would be possible without the generosity of local physicians.

For example, Shifa has held bi-annual retinopathy screening clinics in which our diabetic patients have the opportunity to be seen by local ophthalmologists. This summer, patients will have the chance to be screened for colon cancer with a free flexible sigmoidoscopy clinic at Kaiser in Sacramento.

All of the seven UCD SOM student-run clinics rely on the selfless support of volunteer physician preceptors, who assist medical students in directing patient care, writing prescriptions, collecting lab specimens, and doing procedures.

They are valuable teachers and role models who demonstrate their caring for both patients and students by donating their time and knowledge - on weekends, no less!

As I look back on my first year of medical school, I feel infinitely blessed to have such incredible clinical experiences so early in my career. The opportunity to be a part of such a dedicated community health team is invigorating. They are teaching me not only how to be a physician, but what kind of physician I want to be.

The Shifa Clinic hours are Sundays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at 419 V Street, Suite A, Sacramento, CA 95818. For more information, contact the clinic at 916/441-6008 or [www.shifaclinic.org](http://www.shifaclinic.org). Physician volunteers are needed and are very greatly appreciated.

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*The author grew up and went to high school in Davis, and received a B.A. in psychology and anthropology from Oberlin College in Oberlin, OH.*

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