



Clínica Tepati: a Student-run Clinic for Indigent Latinos



By Ryan McMahan, Executive Administrator, Clínica Tepati

The author is a pre-med student at UC Davis.

Founded in 1974 as a response to the indigent Latino community of Sacramento County lacking basic health services, Clínica Tepati is devoted to providing basic primary care and knowledge to help patients make informed choices to improve their own lives and those around them. As an advocate for this ill-provided community, Clínica Tepati continually searches for resources to help its efforts to decrease health disparities.



Jesus Perez MSIII goes over his plan for a patient with undergraduate student Carissa Lopez at the clinic.

In addition, physician volunteers provide clinical exposure, hands on experience, education and mentorship that nurture and motivate students to achieve their personal best, and encourage them to continue their professional work with the Latino community and other underserved populations.

Clínica Tepati operates under a three-part mission of health services, education and advocacy. The clinic provides basic health care services and health education to over 1,000 patients annually, the majority from the

underserved Latino community of Sacramento. Undergraduate and medical students - there are now 60-70 volunteers - learn from first-hand clinical experience in a respectful environment that fosters educational exchange and helps each student become a conscientious, compassionate individual.

Additionally, Clínica Tepati provides both students and patients with positive role models and mentors working as healthcare professionals. Volunteers go beyond providing standard care to become advocates for recent immigrant patients by serving as both linguistic and cultural interpreters and providing a voice for these individuals.

In recent years Clínica Tepati's quiet tradition of providing free, culturally competent care has been increasingly threatened. The loss of our pharmaceutical budget has caused hardship for our vulnerable patients and our clinic. We are struggling to find other ways to cover their medications.

Unlike other student-run clinics, Clínica Tepati has no permanent home and operates solely out of the generosity of the Capital Health Center. As Sacramento's budget crisis continues to ravage primary care services, our patients' medical home is uncertain. Despite these and other obstacles, Clínica Tepati has kept its doors open every Saturday to

make our patients healthier and happier.



Five undergraduates working in the clinic meet in the lab area. From the left are Fatima Zelada, Betzabel Ortiz, Norma Monico, Kaylan Christianer, and Ryan McMahan.

We simply could not keep our doors open without the continued support and enthusiasm of our dedicated physicians, who come in to teach students and care for about two dozen grateful patients each Saturday. As physician volunteers, our preceptors oversee and teach medical students throughout the patient's visit, and get the rewarding opportunity to work with the underserved.



Dr. Andrew Burt, a volunteer community physician, listens to Elisheva Danon, MSIV, present patient information.

Clínica Tepati, located at 1500 C Street in Sacramento, is open Saturdays from 9 am to 4 pm. For more information on how you can become one of our preceptors, please contact Ryan McMahan at the email address below.

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