

# UCSD STUDENT-RUN FREE CLINIC PROJECT

*Turning the Tide: Returning to a New Normal*

## Vaccination Response



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Video by Sahit Menon (MS1), Sydney Dong (MS1), and Tevan Luong (volunteer) capturing Free Clinic's first vaccine event at Downtown Free Clinic site on April 12, 2021

## Annual Free Clinic Gala: *Healing Together*



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Video by Sahit Menon (MS1), Sydney Dong (MS1), and Tevan Luong (volunteer) capturing why the Free Clinic is so special. Thank you to those who attended the Annual Gala and celebrated with us!

## Return to In-Person Clinic

As of June 2021, the **UCSD Student-Run Free Dental Clinic** has returned in person at our **Pacific Beach, Veteran's Village, and Downtown** clinic sites!

**Specialty clinics currently on-site** include audiology, cardiology, ENT, dermatology, neurology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, physical therapy, podiatry, and pulmonology.

**Clinics that will continue virtually** include endocrine, hematology, nutrition, oncology, psychiatry, psychology, and renal.



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Video by Rita Shrestha (MS1) capturing a day in Downtown clinic with COVID-19 pandemic adaptations



Carol Eames on the day tablets arrived before an in-person learning session

## COVID-19 Vaccination Events

In partnership with UCSD Health, Free Clinic hosted **4 vaccination events** at our Downtown and Normal Heights clinic sites as of May 2021!

UCSD Health Systems provided **COVID-19 vaccinations**, vaccine supplies, and bilingual UCSD Health providers to register, schedule, and administer vaccines to our patients.

In total, **486 Free clinic patients**, their families, and community members were vaccinated! We're appreciative of all the support we received to be able to provide this event for our patients.

**We were able to care for 4 new patients this year - a Free Clinic milestone since 2018!**

## Telehealth Partnership

Thanks to the CARES Act, in collaboration with the Hispanic Center of Excellence, Free Clinic was able to purchase 30 Amazon Fire tablets to host in-person Zoom tutorial sessions. We empowered patients to have video visits for the first time!

With this collaborative partnership, we were also able to increase our telemedicine capabilities by helping patients with their phone minutes. Thank you, Carol and Jackie, for your dedication in hosting these sessions and in continuing to support Free Clinic's telehealth care services!

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# Workshops and Projects

## Vaccine Education Workshops



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Video by Sydney Dong (MS1) capturing Karoline Gutierrez (MS1)'s interview with Dr. Patricia Gonzalez-Zuniga, Dr. Eduardo Fricovsky, Isabel Dominguez, and Socorro Gonzalez about their COVID-19 vaccine experience

As a student-led initiative by Abyan Mama-Farah (MS1) and Karoline Gutierrez (MS1), the **vaccine education workshops** began as a collaboration between **Free Clinic patient navigators, promotoras, Dr. Natalie Rodriguez, Dr. Michelle Johnson, and Dr. Patricia Gonzalez-Zuniga.**

The vaccine education workshops aimed to **educate** Free Clinic's patient population about the **COVID-19 vaccines** and to **provide a space for them to discuss** their concerns, in hopes of encouraging them and their families to get vaccinated against COVID-19. These efforts were dedicated to **supporting our patients and improving the health outcomes of their communities.**

With this initiative, Abyan and Karoline hosted **weekly workshops** with Dr. Zuniga-Gonzalez that discussed the **vaccine options, side effects, safety, and eligibility.** The workshops also gave attendees an opportunity to **ask their questions and address their concerns.** All workshops were **hosted in Spanish** and during clinic times. As an internal project, a vaccination testimonial video was created to **share the experiences** of people our Free Clinic patients **know and trust.**



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Video by Sahit Menon (MS1), Sydney Dong (MS1), and Tevan Luong (volunteer) capturing the food and medicine delivery process from start to finish. The video received 1st Place for the UC Global Health Institute Creative Expression Contest

## Food Rx Project

Initiated in July 2016, the **Food Rx Project** has distributed food and medications to **over 545 Free Clinic patients.** With the support of community partners, pre-health volunteers, pharmacy and medical students, and administrative staff, the Food Rx Project has

- Distributed **121,016 lbs of food**, averaging **8,344 lbs/month**, since 2016
- Distributed **39,312 lbs of food** since January 2021
- Delivered **2,161 Food Rx deliveries**, with an average of **37.26 deliveries/week**, to patient homes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020
- Partnered with **Feeding San Diego** for fresh produce and shelf-stable foods
- Partnered with **Kitchen for Good and Christ Ministry** for healthy frozen meals
- Amassed a team of **23 Food Rx Project pre-health volunteers** and **159 total volunteer delivery partners** to pack foods and deliver to our patients



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UCSD Skagg School of Pharmacy students and pre-pharmacy volunteers also created fundraising initiatives to supplement these deliveries with fresh produce, eggs, and PPE supplies for Free Clinic patients. Love Made Virtual (Love Made Audible) 2021, featuring the Serotones at UCSD Skaggs, raised over \$2,000 in donations!

## Mental Health Fireside Chats

Focusing on how patients' mental health is affecting them versus labeling or diagnosing.

"How have you been feeling lately?"

"How is your family doing? How has work been?"

Work & family often intertwine with patients' wellbeing. Hardships faced by family at home or in Mexico can cause patients to suffer, worry, or maybe seek medical help.

With guidance and in collaboration with Dr. Celia Falicov, Ph.D., the Director of Mental Health Services, Dr. Alba Niño, Ph.D., Sol D'urso, LMFT, and Jacqueline McClish, project leads Kiley Rucker (MS2), Alec Terrana (MS2), Leah Howitt (MS1), and Alan Aung (MS1) host the Fireside Chats.

The Fireside Chats are intended to provide an interdisciplinary educational space for medical students and trainees to learn how to most effectively partner to provide culturally sensitive mental health care to the clinic's primarily Latinx population. This education occurs within the context of didactic sessions delivered by members of the Free Clinic mental health team and through students and interpreters sharing their experiences and stories involving how these topics inform their delivery of mental healthcare. This initiative has grown beyond education and has created a space to foster a sense of community among mental health professionals, interpreters, and students.

Fireside Chats have been convening monthly since November 2020. During this time, we have covered how to skillfully approach topics such as suicidality, intimate partner violence, resilience, idioms of distress, and psychological trauma, as well as the importance of self-care and maintaining a support network when navigating these emotionally fraught areas. Key lessons have also been synthesized into a reference resource (Guide for Students to Provide Access to Mental Health Care in a Culturally Sensitive Manner), which is available to all students and interpreters volunteering at Free Clinic and will soon be shared with other institutions' free clinics across the country.

## FREE CLINIC SPOTLIGHT

Name: Santiago Chavez

Title: Lead Spanish Interpreter - Downtown Clinic



What is your role?

- As lead Spanish interpreter, I oversee 22 interpreters for the Downtown site, and serve as a bridge between the staff and interpreters. I train new interpreters on effective communication during clinical interactions, and help coordinate the pairing of medical students with an interpreter. I also interpret for patients, doctors, medical students and staff, schedule patients for specialty clinics, help patients fill out forms and surveys, as well as translate after visit summaries.

What is your next step?

- Start the UCSD Pre-Medical Post Baccalaureate Program then apply to medical school

What does Free Clinic mean to you?

- Free Clinic is a place where individuals come to be of service to some of the most vulnerable populations. It is a place where we foster empowerment of one's health and where we learn from our patients. The free clinic inspires me to do more for others and seek different ways to help my community. I aspire to devote myself to underserved communities as a future physician, and empower patients to make future health decisions through education and open dialogue. I have met incredible, devoted, and inspiring individuals at the free clinic; we have grown to see each other as more than just our roles, but as members of a family.



## FREE CLINIC SPOTLIGHT

Name: Neda Ghassemi

Title: UCSD MS4

Role(s): Women's Clinic PB Manager (as an MS1/MS2), Primary Care Core Clerkship (MS3), Underserved Medicine Rotation (MS4)



What is your next step?

*I'll be doing a preliminary internal medicine year at Kaiser Los Angeles, followed by diagnostic radiology residency at UCSF.*

What does Free Clinic mean to you? OR Most memorable moment you've had at Free Clinic?

*Free Clinic has been one of my most meaningful experiences of medical school. I joined Free Clinic because I wanted to give back to others, but I never expected everything it would give me. I remember as a first-year student feeling so inspired by how well Dr. Rodriguez, Dr. Johnson, and Dr. Smith knew their patients at clinic; they quickly became role models to me of the kind of physician I hoped to be. During my pre-clinical years of med school, I found that when things felt stressful, my experiences at Free Clinic were a constant reminder of why I decided to pursue medicine in the first place, putting everything into perspective and allowing me to apply what I was learning in the classroom. As a third-year, I was grateful to complete my primary care clerkship with Dr. Rodriguez, who helped me to truly grow and allowed me to provide continuity of care for patients throughout the year. This was a really special experience because it is not too often that a medical student has the opportunity to follow patients over time and to be able to build deeper connections with them and their families.*

*Our patients at Free Clinic are some of the most grateful patients I have ever had the privilege to get to know. When the start of the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, I witnessed how Dr. Johnson and Dr. Rodriguez never let clinic close for even a day, and our whole free clinic team worked together to come up with a plan for how to keep our clinic running in a safe, effective manner virtually. It has truly been an honor getting to know all of the Free Clinic staff over the years. A very special big shout out to Esmeralda, Jackie, Carol, Isabel, and many more, without whom Free Clinic really wouldn't run. I am very sad to be leaving. Everyone at clinic holds a special place in my heart, and they honestly feel like family to me. Thank you to everyone for all of the lessons and the continual inspiration you have given me over the years. I hope in my career to one day provide medical care for individuals who otherwise wouldn't have access to it, following the model of our physicians, staff, and students at clinic who all provide services with true care, compassion, selflessness, and hope for each patient.*

**Thank you for your support!**  
**CONNECT WITH US!**  
**Instagram @ucsdrc**

**Contact us!**  
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## Society of Student-Run Free Clinics Annual Conference

*By Santiago Chavez and Jacqueline McClish*

On March 7, 2021, the Society of Student-Run Free Clinics held its annual conference virtually. The highlights of the conference included many opportunities to learn about how student-run free clinics, such as the UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic Project, have adapted to the challenges of a year of providing care during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many UCSD medical students, staff, and volunteers of the clinic offered important presentations and participated in panel discussions that highlighted our work during the past year.

A variety of poster sessions were presented by people affiliated with the UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic Project. Specialty clinic managers offered their perspectives on their roles during the pandemic: Dale Norton Bongbong presented "Considerations in Operating a Virtual and In-Person Orthopaedics Student-Run Free Clinic During the COVID-19 Pandemic," Divya Prajapati and Dulshan Jayasekera presented "Impact of Transition to Telemedicine on Attendance to Nephrology Free Clinic Visits," and Carol Girgiss presented "Urology Free Clinic at UC San Diego Student Run Free Clinic during COVID-19 Pandemic." Medical students Kiley Rucker and Alec Terrana and interpreters Jacqueline McClish and Diana Alvarado Salceda presented "Development of a Guide for Students to Provide Access to Mental Health Care in a Culturally Sensitive Manner." Medical students Diana Smith, Martina Penalosa, and Allison Zhong and Community Health Program Specialist Kalodiah Toma presented "Implementation of a Delivery System for Food and Medications during the COVID-19 Pandemic."

During the panel sessions, Santiago represented the UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic Project in a session "Covid Response and Telehealth" which brought together representatives of various student-run free clinics across the country. Santiago was able to highlight specific innovations that made the UCSD Free Clinic's transition to telehealth especially effective, such as the participation of medical students and interpreters on the "Zoom Task Force."

The event was an opportunity for UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic Project to highlight and share our innovations this year with colleagues in other clinics.

Students, volunteers, and staff at the UCSD Free Clinic were able to share various innovations, such as the food delivery system and the work of interpreters, students, and providers to improve the delivery of mental health services in a culturally sensitive way. Suggestions from attendees helped indicate directions for future improvements and the responses of providers and volunteers at other clinics indicates that the UCSD Free Clinic's response to Covid-19 has been creative and very successful. UCSD students, volunteers and providers had a chance to learn the many adaptations that student-run free clinics around the country have made and to brainstorm and bounce ideas for future innovations in the post-pandemic environment.