

The story of Ukiah Valley Street Medicine is one of collaboration and volunteerism, reflecting the beauty and strength of our community.

In the winter of 2015, Gwen Matthews RN, CEO of Ukiah Valley Medical Center (UVMC – soon to be known as Adventist Health Ukiah Valley, AHUV) called hospital leaders together to explore how we could extend our reach beyond the walls of the hospital and clinics to “go to the people”. Leanna Sweet, RN and Mimi Doohan, MD were ready to find pathways through which this could be done, especially through Street Medicine. Dr. Doohan focused on applying for grants to help fund the program startup, while Leanna began a pilot program outreach to those who came to Plowshares for hot meals, with a focus on developing relationships and providing nursing care for people experiencing homelessness. At UVMC, Leanna leads a team doing intensive outpatient case management for medically vulnerable patients. Dr. Doohan serves as the Program Director for the development of a new family medicine residency program. Given her experience starting street medicine in other cities, theirs was a natural partnership. Dr. Doohan reached out to her friend and colleague Dr. Jim Withers, an internationally renowned Street Medicine leader, to come to Ukiah for our first in a series of “Street Retreats,” hosting educational forums for the community.

In the winter of 2016, the grant application to Partnership Health Plan California (PHC) came true. PHC funded a two-year, \$394,000 grant focused on the social determinants of health to UVMC, through a Street Medicine Outreach Program. This grant includes funding for a full time program manager and a half-time nurse case manager, and technical assistance from the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers out of New Jersey. Kael Loftus was recruited to move to Ukiah to take the role of program manager, and development further accelerated when Jackie Ramirez, LVN joined the team as case manager.

The Street Medicine program is creating a “classroom without walls” where UC Davis 3<sup>rd</sup> year medical students (starting Fall 2017) and Ukiah Valley Family Medicine resident physicians (starting July 2019) will learn to care for people in our rural community with complex social and medical needs. The Camden Coalition has been guiding the program to evolve in response to data about the community being served, while strengthening our street medicine teamwork. Over the past year, we’ve had two more “Street Retreats” with experts from outside our community, and included local community partners: one with the Camden Coalition, and one with street medicine leaders from Santa Barbara, with visiting guests from Coachella Valley and West Sonoma County.

Street Medicine programs generally start small and grow over time. Following the initial phase of the program in which Leanna and health coach Michelle Flowers provided outreach at Plowshares, the second phase expanded to the Inland Valley Winter Shelter in 2015, with a team including volunteer doctors on Wednesday nights. This routine continued with free clinics moving to the Lake Mendocino Campgrounds when the winter shelter closed, then back to Plowshares, alternating with the 2016 Winter Shelter when it opened in December. The program that has emerged from this second phase, called the Ukiah Valley Street Medicine Free Clinic, has taken on a life of its own. Wednesday nights are Street Medicine Free Clinic nights, and host a bustle of activity with street medicine personnel, including devoted volunteers, doing case management, providing nursing care, and offering medical triage and over the counter medications.

The third phase of the program expansion, Ukiah Valley Street Medicine Rounds, involves backpack-based urgent care teams with walking rounds to where the unsheltered reside, and is in development.

All of the phases of Street Medicine rely on volunteers with the provision of no-cost services to the recipient. Volunteerism that has built the program has been remarkable: over 30 community volunteers and 5 medical providers have participated over 59 consecutive weeks of clinics, representing 527 hours of donated time. Volunteers from the Ukiah United Methodist Church, numbering a dozen, deserve special mention for their help with clinics at both Plowshares and the 2016 Winter Shelter.

Based on the success of the program thus far, UVMC has pledged to continue the program even after the grant funding runs out.

To strengthen the base of support for those who seek lifestyle change, UVMC is launching the LiveWell program this Spring in the Rural Health Center. This program, modeled after the one developed in Saint Helena Clearlake Hospital, will provide a broad array of services including behavioral health, addiction treatment, health coaching, and a complex care clinic which will be readily accessible to all who seek health, wholeness, and hope.

Cities and some States across the country have realized that shelter and housing are basic underpinnings of effectively resolving homelessness. In the fall of 2016, our own Street Medicine program director Kael Loftus joined other community leaders to ensure frail homeless would be sheltered through the inclement winter months. In close collaboration with others in the Homeless Services Action Group, the 2016 Inland Valley Winter Shelter opened the winter shelter and the Street Medicine team held weekly free clinics each week. Unexpected attention focused a spotlight on their work when Congressman Jared Huffman made this his Ukiah stop on Friday February 21<sup>st</sup>. Acknowledging the contribution that the Ukiah Valley Street Medicine program has made to the community, through volunteerism and response to the crisis of winter shelter needs, Congressman Huffman and his wife joined our team and volunteers in street medicine support and tour of the winter shelter. This visit brought together the community around the mission of our program: serving the most vulnerable in order to increase the health of all.

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