CSUSB Street Medicine program selected as partner for new mobile medical clinic

PALM DESERT, Calif. – The Street Medicine program at Cal State San Bernardino’s Palm Desert Campus has been providing free healthcare services for homeless and unsheltered people in the Coachella Valley for the past three years.

Now, thanks to a new mobile medical clinic, they will be able to increase their service capacity to serve more people in the Coachella Valley.

On May 25, The Desert Healthcare District and Foundation Board of Directors unanimously approved the purchase of a nearly $340,000 mobile medical clinic, which will be used to address health needs in underserved areas of the Coachella Valley. CSUSB’s Street Medicine program has been selected as one of six community partners who will have the opportunity to utilize the mobile unit for medical and educational purposes.

“We are so grateful to be included, and excited about the ongoing partnerships with several of the organizations,” said Diane Vines, the CSUSB nursing faculty member who created and runs the university’s Street Medicine program. “The van will allow us to conduct street medicine nursing clinics in the field and provide mental health and substance abuse services.”
Vines says that she hopes to incorporate telehealth services so a psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner could assess people and order medications virtually, and CSUSB nursing faculty and students could administer the medications in the field.

“The goal is to take the healthcare to the people rather than having the people come to us,” Vines said. “We hope there will be regular sites we could go to so the homeless and other underserved people can count on the van being there on a scheduled basis.”

The Desert Healthcare District and Foundation says that the mobile unit will be a commercial, heavy-duty, straight-frame Ford F-650, and it will be equipped with tools you’d find inside a health facility. Amenities include two examination rooms with beds, a restroom, diagnostic kits, and cabinets for storage and supplies. The vehicle also will have air conditioning, an awning that can extend several feet to provide shade, and a generator and solar panels for electricity. It will take about six months before the unit is completely built and can start driving around the Coachella Valley.

“Connecting Coachella Valley residents to health and wellness services and programs has long been at the core of the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation’s work,” said CEO Conrado Bárzaga. “Purchasing this mobile unit is another important step in helping residents gain direct access to the great aid that community partners like California State University, San Bernardino’s nursing program provide, especially for the traditionally underserved communities in the District’s newly annexed areas in Eastern Coachella Valley.”

The Street Medicine program is a collaborative partnership between the CSUSB Department of Nursing at the Palm Desert Campus, the University of California, Riverside School of Medicine, Desert Regional Medical Center, Well in the Desert and the Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine.

The program has received funding from the Caldwell-Weiss Trust, the Verizon Foundation, Bank of America, Regional Access Project Foundation and the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation.

For more information about the CSUSB Street Medicine program, contact Diane Vines at Diane.Vines@csusb.edu.

For more information about the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation, visit https://www.dhcd.org.

The CSUSB Palm Desert Campus offers bachelor’s and master’s degrees, a doctorate in educational leadership, and teaching credentials and certificates. With more than 1,600 students, it is the Coachella Valley’s four-year public university and plays a vital role in educating and training the region’s growing population.
For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the Office of Strategic Communication at msinger@csusb.edu or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the PDC website at www.csusb.edu/pdc.

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