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Fact Sheet: Doctors Without Walls – Santa Barbara Street Medicine (DWW-SBSM)

Quick DWW-SBSM Facts

- DWW-SBSM was founded in 2005
- DWW-SBSM sees roughly 1,296 individuals annually
- Over 93% of our funding goes to medical programs
- 79% of homeless in Santa Barbara have some disease that put them at risk of premature death
- DWW-SBSM is comprised of over 170 local, community volunteers.

Doctors Without Walls-Santa Barbara Street Medicine

(DWW-SBSM) is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to providing free, volunteer medical care for the most vulnerable of Santa Barbara County. The organization was created to meet local need for medical volunteerism in response to both acute disasters such as fires and earthquakes and chronic disasters such as poverty and homelessness. DWW-SBSM is composed of volunteer doctors, nurses, social workers, students and community members.

Wrap Around Care and Street Medicine

DWW-SBSM provides four different clinics in Santa Barbara County to best serve the diverse medical needs of the area: Pershing Park Clinic, Alameda Park Clinic, Isla Vista Clinic, and the Women's Free Homeless Clinic hosted at the Transition House. Volunteer medical teams provide hospitality items and medical care to the most vulnerable members of our community, many of whom are homeless. In order to ensure consistent care and build trust with those we are serving, the clinics are offered

year-round, rain or shine. In addition to the clinics in the park, small teams of medical volunteers walk the streets of Santa Barbara providing medical care directly to where it is needed.

Disaster Preparedness and Relief

DWW-SBSM works closely with the Santa Barbara County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) to aid in the education, training, and deployment of volunteers and resources in the event of a large-scale local emergency. DWW-SBSM also provides an Isla Vista Halloween Recovery Zone and First Aid Station, which offers triage and first aid care to the Isla Vista population during one of the nation's largest student street parties.

Education

DWW-SBSM is dedicated to motivating and developing the next generation of humanitarian medical professionals and community leaders. Students are interspersed throughout the organization, both in volunteer and leadership positions. Participating in a range of programs, students have opportunities to take part in the annual Underserved Medicine seminar at UCSB, to volunteer in clinical programs, to hold leadership roles through internships and to take part in the UCSB-affiliated group, Street Health Outreach (SHO).

Financial Accountability and Transparency

Crucial to DWW-SBSM's mission are the ideals of financial independence, accountability and transparency, which enable DWW-SBSM to respond to need without outside influence. Striving to operate efficiently, DWW-SBSM regularly allocates more than 90% of total expenditures to total program services. Low overhead and passionate volunteerism enable DWW-SBSM to provide patients with high-quality care at minimal cost.

DWW-SBSM Data¹:

- The most common ailments DWW-SBSM treats are respiratory problems such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which make up 25% of patients encounters.
- Other common complaints are skin (18%), infection (16%), muscles (12%), wounds (11%) and other miscellaneous pain (7%). The rest of the patient population experiences a range of other problems affecting teeth, cardiac, ears and pregnancy.
- Average age of patients is widely distributed, with more than half over the age of 50.

National Data:

- The average life expectancy for the homeless in the U.S.A. is between 42 and 52 years, despite an average life expectancy of almost 80 years in this country²
- Approximately 3.5 million people, 1.35 million of them children, are likely to experience homelessness in a given year³

Santa Barbara Common Ground results⁴:

- 57% of homeless have some form of mental illness
- Average length of homelessness is 1.8 years
- In Santa Barbara, the total reported annual Emergency Room visits of 326, and hospitalizations of 405, are estimated to cost the county almost \$3 million per year.

References

1. Doctors Without Walls- Santa Barbara Street Medicine, <http://santabarbarastreetmedicine.org/data/>
2. O'Connell JJ. *Premature Mortality in Homeless Populations: A Review of the Literature*, 19 pages. Nashville: National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Inc., 2005.
3. National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2007
4. Santa Barbara Common Ground Results, http://web.me.com/rsj_fredericks/