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Project to Expand Clínica Cariño

CLÍNICA CARIÑO

Assessment of the Need and Feasibility of Expansion

v2.0



Negin Agange
Caren Armstrong
JB Fenix
Adam Francis
Jared Garrison
Samia Ghaffar

Christina Hamilton
Victoria Huang
Scott Kendall
Abid Mogannam
Esmeralda Moran
Sean Rodriguez

Kelly Trangsrud
Jesus Ulloa
Erika Vargas
George Wang

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary 1

2. Overview of Clínica Cariño 3

 2.1 History of Clínica Cariño 3

 2.2 Current Activities of Clínica Cariño 4

3. Unmet Need in Santa Ana 5

 3.1 Characteristics of Need in Santa Ana 5

 3.1.1 Social Characteristics of Santa Ana 5

 3.1.2 Health Care Characteristics of Santa Ana 6

 3.1.3 Summary of Health Care Need in Santa Ana 7

 3.2 Council of Community Clinics Data 9

 3.2.1 The Coalition of Community Clinics 9

 3.2.2 Levels of Unmet Need 9

 3.2.3 Barriers to Accessing Services 11

 3.2.4 Scope of Medical Services Available 13

 3.2.5 Clínica Cariño Patient Population: 13

 3.2.6 Assessment of Existing Clinics 15

4. Nature of the Solution 16

5. Legal and Financial Feasibility 16

 5.1 UC Affiliation Agreement 16

 5.2 Free Clinics Federal Tort Claims Act 18

 5.3 Risk of Malpractice 19

 5.4 Liability for Physicians and Students 19

 5.5 Financial Feasibility 20

 5.5.1 Funding Sources for Clínica Cariño 20

 5.5.2 Potential Savings for the UCI Medical Center 21

6. Summary 23

7. Appendix 25

 7.1 Clínica 1998 Proposal 25

 7.2 Clínica 1998 Manual and Bylaws 42

 7.3 Clínica 1999 Proposal 46

 7.4 UC Affiliation Agreements 53

 7.4.1 UCSD Outpatient Model 53

 7.4.2 UC Davis Shifa Clinic Affiliation Agreement 66

 7.5 UC Davis Shifa Volunteer Faculty Paperwork 82

 7.6 Santa Ana Community Profile 95

 7.7 Clinic Visit Questionnaire 100

8. References 102

1. Executive Summary

This document is the first systematic effort on behalf of a concerned group of students to discuss and assess the feasibility of expanding the services of UC Irvine's only student-run free clinic. It has been created following numerous discussions with key individuals and represents the first phase in a larger project to expand the services offered at Clínica Cariño. The document seeks to demonstrate that:

- (1) significant unmet medical need exists in the Santa Ana community;
- (2) a student-run free medical clinic *that provides medical care* is an appropriate response given the resources available and the institutions involved, and
- (3) such a response is feasible both legally and financially.

The process leading to the creation of this document has been thorough, and has included conversations with: UC Irvine Chancellor, Michael Drake; CEO of the Orange County Coalition of Community Clinics, Dr. Fred Richmond; UC Irvine School of Medicine Deans, Drs. Alberto Manetta, Michael Prislin, Lloyd Rucker, and Gerald Maguire; Share Ourselves Clinic Medical Director, Dr Margarita Pereyda; UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic Medical Director, Dr Ellen Beck; UC Irvine faculty members, Drs. Vega and Bartolomé; Clínica Cariño faculty advisor, Camille Fitzpatrick NP; previous Clínica Cariño student boards; regular physician volunteers at Clínica Cariño, Drs. Alexandra Duke and Jorge Galdamez; various administrators of Santa Ana community clinics; several patrons that currently utilize Clínica Cariño referral services, and a broad group of UC Irvine medical students.

The document begins with a brief history of Clínica Cariño starting from 1996 and a review of its current status (Section 2). In Section 3.1, data is assessed from both national and county level organizations demonstrating sociodemographic and healthcare utilization characteristics of Santa Ana that increase the risk of vulnerable populations to medical underservice and the subsequent negative health consequences. Section 3.2 uses data from the Orange County Health Needs Assessment (OCHNA) and from clinic assessments carried out by medical students to argue that, while existing community clinics attempt to provide care to vulnerable populations, gaps in care exist for a significant portion of the Santa Ana population – adult undocumented immigrants living below the poverty line. Section 4 discusses why a student-run free medical clinic *that provides medical care* is an appropriate response given the primary resource available is student energy and the main institution involved is UC Irvine and its medical center. Section 5.1 discusses the legal feasibility of expanding Clínica to provide

actual medical services through the UC Affiliation Agreement, which is the preferred option, having been tried and proven at other UC medical schools. Section 5.2 discusses alternative legal underpinnings for a student clinic aside from a UC Affiliation Agreement including the Federal Claims Tort Act. Finally, Section 5.5 argues that there are no insurmountable financial barriers to expanding Clínica Cariño to provide actual care, and existing evidence suggests that such a project may likely ease the current burden on the UCI Medical Center.

This document is the first step in a larger project cycle which includes: (1) Needs and Feasibility Assessment; (2) Project Design; (3) Project Implementation, and (4) Project Evaluation. Upon completion of this phase of the project cycle it is hoped that Project Design, or the institutional design of an expanded Clínica Cariño will ensue. Project Design should be a thorough process and include numerous opportunities for participation from both students and administrators. After much discussion and reflection it is suggested that the Project Design phase of an expanded Clínica Cariño begin by considering four especially important institutional structures:

- (1) the legal establishment of a future clinic through the UC Affiliation Agreement as has been done at UCSD and UC Davis;
- (2) an integrated practice management curriculum available to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students interested in running Clínica Cariño;
- (3) the *additional* administrative support of a volunteer Medical Director for the clinic;
- (4) the implementation of student driven fund raising through such mechanisms as grant writing and a Patient Assistance Program to ensure that UC Irvine and its medical center do not incur any financial burden.

These four elements are mere starting points for a future discussion and debate.