

THE TICKER

NEWS ABOUT RCHC: CARING FOR THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY

Rowan University
SCHOOL OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

ROWAN
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTER
FALL 2021 EDITION



OUR VISION:

Osteopathic Medical
Students Providing
Comprehensive Health
Care for Those in Need.

OUR MISSION:

The Mission of the Rowan
Community Health Center
is to promote community
health initiatives in order
to provide, free, quality
comprehensive primary
care services and health
education to the
underserved communities
surrounding RowanSOM
while educating medical
students in performing
clinical exams, fostering
cultural competency,
and allowing for
inter-professional
communication and
humanism in medicine.

PROCEED WITH CAUTION: Post-COVID-19 Edition

written by Wali Kamran, OMS-III

We are still in a pandemic. To be rather blunt, I think it is important to state that outright, and that is what I hope to highlight with this piece.

There was, and still is, a big push to return to some sense of “normalcy.” As the vaccines have been administered and accessibility to the vaccine is less of an issue, more people have started to return to work in person and schools are starting to return back to normal student and staff occupancy. Let me be clear, it is definitely something that I personally have looked forward to for quite some time now, and hope that we continue to transition towards a more regular style of living and socializing.

Unfortunately, I do not believe this is cause for the general population to let their guard down - and that means you. Regardless of vaccination status, I truly believe there is still more that needs to be discovered about this virus and, as the title states, we must proceed with caution. Having started my clinical rotations, only a few short months ago, I am quickly starting to realize that COVID-19 is all but gone. Just recently, I was on a rotation where an occupational therapy student tested COVID positive, and was vaccinated. Fortunately, I did not come in contact with this individual or any sick patient, and the student went through a mild course of illness and was fine. It highlights the importance of vaccinations, albeit, some who may be reading may argue this. Make no mistake, vaccines work - not being vaccinated, in my opinion, is a civil injustice to those who have passed away from this terrible illness, and are at an increased risk of contracting, due to immunodeficiencies or other health concerns.

COVID-19 is still very much present, and it is

essential that we continue to practice self-awareness of this fact. I am aware how straining and mentally exhausting this time in our lives has been, as students, parents, teachers, and especially anyone who has lost or knows of someone who has lost a loved one during this tough time. In other words, this has been an all-inclusive struggle, and the best way to manage it is to develop a collective mindset of inclusion and well-being.

We are a lot more educated and prepared than we were at the beginning of the pandemic. There are steps that we can continue to take in order to stay safe, yet continue to exercise healthy habits geared towards nurturing our mental health. I still believe it is important to be cognizant of wearing masks and socially distancing. I understand that, with restrictions being increasingly lifted, that becomes harder. However I do believe it is worth practicing self-awareness, that we are exposed to more people than we think through interactions we have through public transport, at work, in the hospital, and vice versa. This is not the time to practice “ignorance is bliss;” rather, “proceed with caution.”

And my final word, for this piece: please get vaccinated, if you have not done so already! It is the most selfless and cost-efficient act that you can do to help save lives. Booster shots are almost here, but it's never too late to get your first dose. You don't need to be a doctor, nurse, physician assistant, or even remotely involved in the healthcare field to be able to save a life.

For more information on getting vaccinated, visit <https://www.vaccines.gov> or <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/reporting/vaccinefinder/about.html> to find where a vaccination center is near you and which vaccinations they have available.

HARM REDUCTION

written by Rosie Wenrich, OMS-III

Harm reduction is a public health effort that aims to reduce the negative effects of drug use without eliminating the behavior itself. Examples of harm reduction strategies include providing drug users, or those in close relation to drug users, with clean needles, fentanyl test strips, and overdose antidotes. The harm reduction strategy seeks to reduce the most severe consequences of drug use such as hepatitis, HIV, and overdose in those who do not wish to seek treatment and/or are unable to abstain from drug use. Implementing these efforts in student-run free health clinics can improve access to the population most in need of harm reduction materials and can educate student physicians on the benefits of incorporating harm reduction into their practice in order to show compassion and care for people who use drugs.



huge accomplishment for the harm reduction community, they are simultaneously battling the threatened closure of one of the four syringe exchange locations in the state. In states without these restrictions, there are syringe exchange programs in nearly every county, including North Carolina which currently has over 75 programs, including mobile units, to support people who use drugs in accessing clean needles. As a result of the limited access to clean needles in New Jersey, people travel from nearby areas to access the Oasis Syringe Exchange Center in Atlantic City. This has created a burden on the community that has been ignored by legislators, forcing the program to threaten to close its doors. It is imperative that New Jersey legislators continue to rectify the laws that limit harm reduction resources in the state so that more syringe exchange programs can open and the burden is not placed on a select few locations.

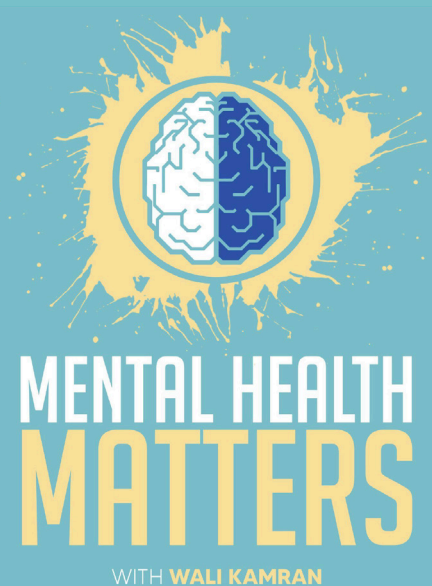
To help in this effort to expand harm reduction resources, you can write, email, or call your local legislators and Governor Murphy to urge them to sign the remainder of the Harm Reduction Package into law, including bill S3009/A4847. To stay up to date on harm reduction news and how you can help, follow @NJharmreduction on Instagram.

Harm reduction resources are extremely limited in New Jersey due to stringent laws that have, for decades, imposed limitations on the amount and forms of Naloxone, the opioid overdose reversal agent, that can be distributed and the number of safe needle exchange locations that can be opened. In July 2021, Governor Murphy signed into law bill A-5457/S-3491 which will allow pharmacies to distribute all FDA-approved forms of Naloxone through an unlimited standing order. While this was a

MENTAL HEALTH PODCAST

written by Wali Kamran, OMS-III

Tune in to "Mental Health Matters with Wali Kamran," where Wali gets a chance to talk about mental health afflictions, in the field of medicine, as a student, and in life. Make sure to subscribe to stay up to date on the latest podcasts, and follow on Instagram!



FOLLOWING COVID-19: Reopening the Rowan Community Health Center

written by Shelly Sharma, OMS-IV

This past year changed healthcare in numerous aspects. The Rowan Community Health Center, following the COVID crisis, had to make many changes to its operations. We no longer allowed walk-ins, only one patient was scheduled per hour time slot, and all patients had to wait in their car rather than in our waiting room. During these times, we had to adapt to a new standard of healthcare that had many constraints. However, now that over 70% of all New Jersey residents have obtained at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine we are slowly implementing closer-to-normal operating procedures.

CHANGES FOLLOWING COVID-19

From this summer onward, we are scheduling 2 patients per hour as opposed to 1 patient per hour. We will also have two more rooms prepared to accommodate walk-ins. By adjusting our schedule to see more patients every time we are open, we hope to address the medical needs of our South Jersey community. At RCHC, we can provide care for acute medical problems, annual physicals, for adults and children, and have the ability to be your Primary Care office if you are searching for one. As we expand, we still want to maintain a safe environment for our patients and staff and request that all individuals that enter our premises wear a facemask regardless of vaccination status.

RESEARCH UPDATES

A wonderful aspect about RCHC is that we have many different departments that help us better understand healthcare from all aspects. The Research department is one such department that has grown and flourished over the last few years. Any individual that visits the clinic will be asked to participate in a variety of research studies we have set up. All research studies are completely voluntary, but ultimately meant to better help us understand our community and where we, as a clinic, can better implement tools and resources to holistically help improve healthcare in South Jersey.

CONTINUOUS CARE- RCHC CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Rowan Community Health Center prides itself on not only providing great medical care, but also recognizing that there is more to healthcare than just physical wellbeing. Our Special Projects team has implemented a case management program that regularly checks in with patients. A large goal of this program is to connect patients with resources they may need, whether it be for food, utilities, transportation, or shelter,

all areas that can affect one's health. We would like to give a high shout out to our Outreach Department that helped us put together a list of resources for the community and connect with great partners! More information can be provided about the case management program during one's appointment.

EYE EXAMS

Working with the ophthalmology club at Rowan University SOM, we are now offering free eye exams to patients that are interested. All testing is done by Rowan SOM medical students. The basic eye exam will let the patient know how their vision is at a baseline without glasses and if glasses can potentially help with any visual deficits. Part of the eye exam also consists of some specialized testing that helps to look at the back of the eye and peripheral vision. Based on these results, patients may be encouraged to follow up with a retinal specialist for further testing.

COVID-19 VACCINES

Even though the community is starting to build itself back up from COVID, it has not completely gone away. Although we are not providing COVID vaccines at our office, we encourage all of our patients and community members to get the vaccine. Our physicians and medical students are open to sharing their experiences with the vaccine and answer any questions you may have about it. There are many sites throughout the South Jersey area that are providing the vaccine, including Rowan Medicine in Stratford, NJ.

If you are interested in learning more about the Rowan Community Health Center, please visit <https://som.rowan.edu/oursom/community/rchc.html> and call 856-874-6688 to make an appointment



ROWAN SOM COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINIC 2021: Recap

written by Wali Kamran, OMS-III

In 2019, The Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine was fortunate enough to play host to one of the original mega vaccination sites in New Jersey, from the initiation of the vaccine being rolled out across the U.S. On behalf of the New Jersey Department of Health, Rebecca Werbel commended the efforts of our vaccination clinic as, “the only place in the state that has been guaranteed vaccine allocation, that is a non-large hospital/health system.”

The vaccination clinic, better known colloquially around campus as “Operation Save Lives,” was open for 6 months, in which

over 50,000 vaccines were administered. This clinic was entirely student run, with administrative supervision, and could not have been possible without the over 500 unique volunteers, collectively across the classes of 2021-2024. Overall, this accounted for over 20,000 hours of volunteering, to staff the clinic!

A special thank you and well-deserved congratulations to Anjani Patel, Raza Husain, Nida Ansari, Natalie Calderon, and the ENTIRE Vaccination team, on a job well done! The time and dedication displayed by the team are unparalleled and worthy of recognition.

RCHC HEALTH FAIR

written by Mark Conforti, OMS-II

On July 24th, 2021, the Rowan Community Health Center organized a Health Fair on-site at Commitment Community Church right in Lindenwold. In addition to our regular Saturday clinic days, Commitment Community Church and student organizations from RowanSOM welcomed community members to stop by for some drinks, food, and various tips about their health. Various student clubs set up tables with informative poster displays, with activities facilitated by medical student volunteers. Activities included some CPR demonstrations, tips to integrate healthier options in one's diet, and various other pieces of information about one's health and resources offered by Rowan and the surrounding community. During our clinic days on Saturdays, we offer health services to people in our community through the help of RowanSOM physicians and students. It was a wonderful experience to open the space up to more people as we continue to grow and develop as a clinic.



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