

Austine Clark, SRFC outreach coordinator and MN student, and Nicholas Kucher, SRFC volunteer coordinator and medical student, collaborate on clinical care during a clinic pilot session.



Student-Run Free Clinic Brings Care to the Underserved

Nursing and Medical Students Collaborate to Create and Run Innovative Clinic

Some people come for physicals for work or school. Some come for screening for sexually transmitted infections. Others come for wound treatment. Whatever their reason, Cleveland’s underserved population can get the health care and counseling they need at the CWRU Student-Run Free Clinic (SRFC). And nursing students and medical students gain invaluable first-hand practice experience with patients while acquiring critical skills for collaborating on clinical care and managing a clinic.

The SRFC is a student organization founded and operated by FPB nursing students and CWRU medical students. The organization operates a free, acute-care medical clinic staffed entirely by graduate students and volunteer practitioners. The clinic is open two Saturdays a month at the facilities of the Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland. The Free Medical Clinic is not open on Saturdays, so the SRFC essentially expands the clinic’s hours to reach more of the underserved.

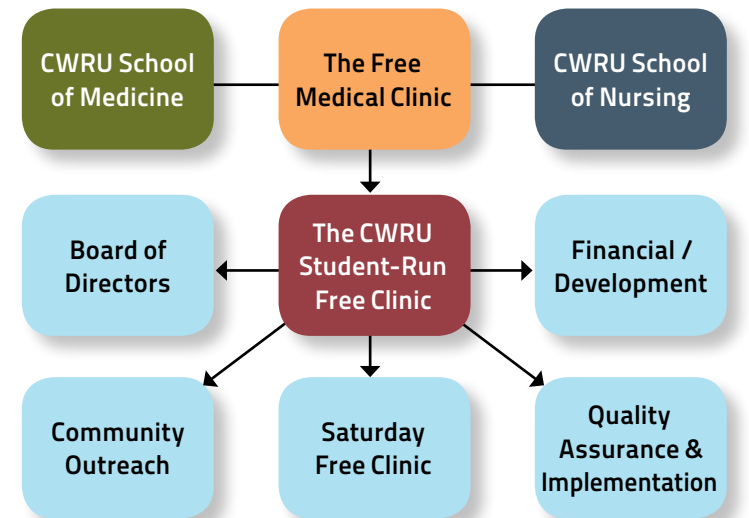
“The SRFC offers another place in the Cleveland area that provides free medical service to the uninsured. There are also few walk-in medical clinics open on Saturdays, so our clinic provides a place for people to come and be seen on a day that might be more convenient for them,” said Erin Stein, SRFC clinical coordinator and second-year MN student.

The SRFC is the first completely interprofessional student-run clinic of its kind. It is supported by the Interprofessional Learning Exchange and Development (I-LEAD) grant from the Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation, and by donor support. It is one component of a larger I-LEAD initiative designed to bring together nursing and medical students through experience-based components.

Serving the Community

With Cleveland above the national average for uninsured residents, the clinic helps fill a great need for the community and exposes students to a variety of patients. “Part of

How is the Clinic Organized?



nursing is understanding how to adapt the care you provide to best suit patients and ultimately improve their overall outcome,” said Ms. Stein. “The only way to learn how to adapt your practice is to work with individuals from different populations and backgrounds, and the SRFC has certainly helped me better care for people from all backgrounds.”

The Clinic’s Mission

The Student-Run Free Clinic (SRFC) has three founding goals:

1. To provide high quality, compassionate health care to underserved populations in the Greater Cleveland community.
2. To provide health professions students unique clinical practice and mentorship opportunities at the earliest stages of their careers.
3. To foster and encourage a unique environment for interprofessional collaboration between future health-care professionals.

“We get to learn from them and they get to learn from us. We get to use our strengths and address our challenges.”

When patients enter the SRFC, they are first triaged for their acute-care complaint. Each patient then meets with a case manager, a student who takes vitals, reviews intake forms, and orients the patient to the unique aspects of a student-run clinic. A nursing student and medical student are paired as a team to provide patient care. They perform patient histories and physical exams, and present the findings to their preceptor, who is an attending

physician or nurse practitioner. The preceptor then works with the assessment team to confirm the findings and present the patient with a plan for treatment and further care.

If medication is prescribed, patients can receive it at no cost. The clinic purchases the medication from a partner pharmacy, picks it up, and delivers it to the patient before their visit is over. The SRFC currently treats

just acute-care patients, but student leaders hope to expand services to also provide chronic care. Patients who come to the clinic with more urgent care needs are sent to the emergency room.

Joint Learning

Half of the 30 student volunteers at the clinic each semester are nursing students and half are medical students. “It’s great to work with medical students in the clinic setting to address as many of our patient needs as we can. Nursing students learn more about differential diagnosis and problem solving as diagnosticians, medical students get hands-on patient experience, and we both work on our assessment skills,” said Alyssa Wagner, SRFC clinical director and second-year MN student. “We get to learn from them and they get to learn from us. We get to use our strengths and address our challenges.”

The collaboration continues outside of clinic sessions with nursing and medical students working side-by-side to perform administrative duties for the clinic. The clinic’s board of directors includes four nursing students and eight medical students. The students also collaborate on community outreach projects, for example, conducting a foot-care clinic at a homeless shelter, providing heart-health screening at a local farmer’s market, and more.

The SRFC officially opened on October 22 after running several pilot sessions beginning in February. Students saw more than 100 patients during the pilot sessions, which helped them fine tune the flow of the clinic and learn more about what to expect on a typical day.

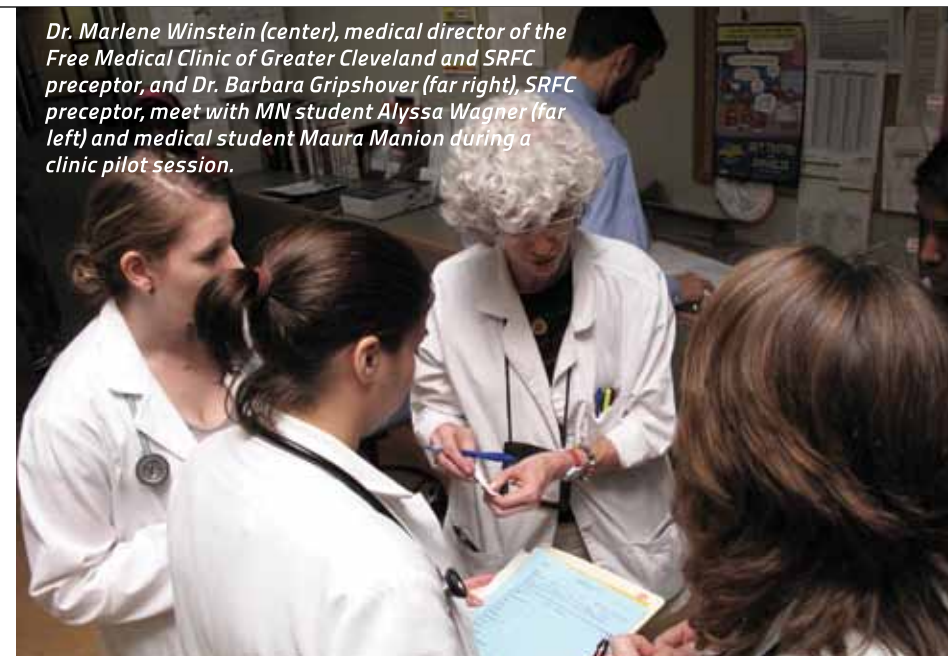
Off to a Strong Start

Because the clinic is entirely student run, Ms. Wagner and other SRFC administrators initially had to knock on

many doors to recruit volunteers to staff the clinic. Since then, they have had no trouble recruiting volunteers, with 130 applications for 30 spots. “Nobody is here because they have to be, everybody is here because they want to be,” explained Ms. Wagner. “There has actually been so much interest, that we’ve had to tell students we have a limited number of spots.”

Associate Professor and Director of the MSN Program Carol Savrin, DNP ‘01, CPNP, FNP, BC, FAANP, is the FPB faculty advisor for the clinic. She said the students have done a “phenomenal job on the clinic.” She added, “They have worked very hard to develop a business plan and collaborate with the Free Clinic to work out the details, and they have really benefitted from the experience. This is a wonderful service to the community and a unique learning experience for students.”

With health-care reform, there will be more focus on primary care. The student clinic offers a real-world model of how health professions students



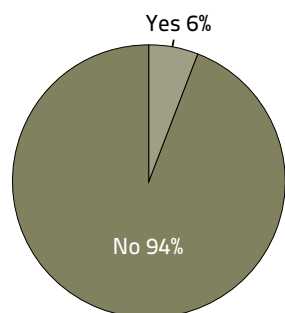
Dr. Marlene Winstein (center), medical director of the Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland and SRFC preceptor, and Dr. Barbara Gripshover (far right), SRFC preceptor, meet with MN student Alyssa Wagner (far left) and medical student Maura Manion during a clinic pilot session.

can deliver patient care in an interdisciplinary setting. “The entire basis of the clinic is shaped around nursing and medical students practicing interprofessionally to provide care to the patients. The SRFC has helped all of those involved realize that people come from different backgrounds and always have something to offer regardless of

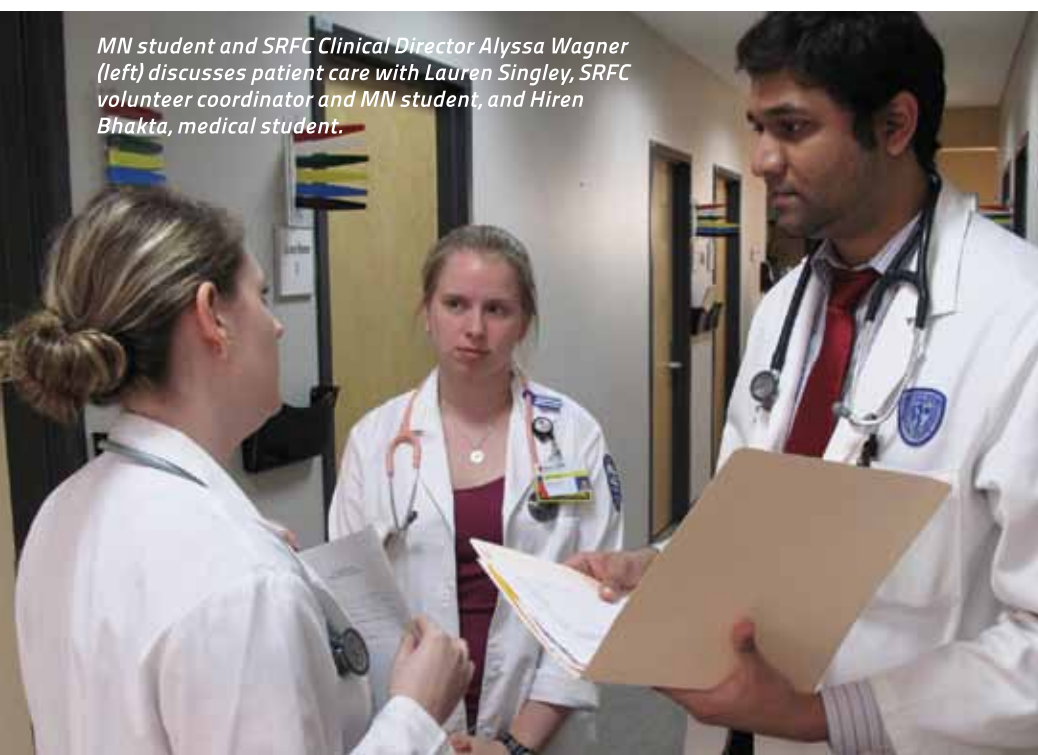
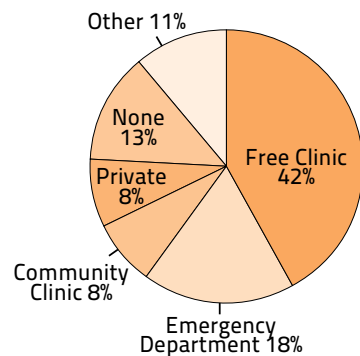
their educational background,” said Ms. Stein. “The SRFC forces nursing and medical students to work interprofessionally, influencing the way we will practice in the future and the care we will provide to our patients.”

Saturday Clinic Pilot Outcomes - Patient demographic data:

Do you have a primary care physician?



Where do you usually receive care?



MN student and SRFC Clinical Director Alyssa Wagner (left) discusses patient care with Lauren Singley, SRFC volunteer coordinator and MN student, and Hiren Bhakta, medical student.

Saturday Clinic Patient Flow

