

## Providing for the medically underserved

Written by Rachelle Nones Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 11 February 2022 05:34

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### Gallup Clinic boosts specialty care access in the Four Corners

The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center opened a multi-specialty medical clinic at 205 E. Nizhoni Ave. last March. The clinic, which serves both adult and pediatric patients, provides specialty care services such as gynecology oncology, maternal fetal medicine, women's ultrasound, dermatology, pediatric cardiology, urogynecology, vascular, and genetic testing, and counseling services. There is also a COVID testing center for pre-procedure or surgical patients. However, the center is not offering COVID vaccines or COVID testing for the general population at this time.

"In our state, in general, there's a high prevalence of skin cancer," UNM Specialty Care Clinic Maternal Fetal Medicine, Women's Outreach, and Women's Ultrasound Unit Director Kathryn Hellberg said. "We are beginning to see more patients."

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Patients from Apache, Cibola, McKinley, and San Juan counties have visited the clinic since it opened last spring. Prior to the clinic's debut, there were many community members with limited access to specialty care due to a lack of transportation. Nonexistent or spotty broadband service in rural areas and tribal lands ruled out access to telemedicine sessions.

Gallup residents and residents throughout the Four Corners communities often had to travel to Albuquerque to receive specialty healthcare services.

"Part of our purpose of being out there is to provide scarce resources that are not available in the local community or the surrounding area," Hellberg said.

The majority of staff members employed at the UNM Gallup clinic are Native American.

"They are very in tune and very familiar with the culture in the community and in the surrounding community, too, which is amazing," Hellberg said. "They can understand and they are able to teach those of us who are not as familiar, on how to interact and how we can assist them with their care—being culturally literate in that respect."

Adult cardiology, adult nephrology, pediatric hematology, and oncology services will be added to the clinic's offerings this spring, providing access to a greater number of specialty care options for the medically underserved communities within the Four Corners Region.

Rachelle Nones  
Sun Correspondent