

CVS Health Zones Project

Clinica Sierra Vista
Bakersfield, California



Clinica Sierra Vista began in a small farming community in Kern County in 1971 to serve quality health care to migrant farmworkers who struggled to afford basic needs like food and shelter. Since that time, they have continued to serve the underserved and expanded to include support to patients in the inner city as well as rural and isolated areas. They currently serve about 200,000 people in Kern and Fresno, California.

With the CVS Health Zones grant award, Clinica Sierra focused on their street medicine program. Both of their mobile health units were out of commission and they needed an improved mobile clinic to serve their homeless population in Fresno County, a population with varied and complex needs.

For the first nine months of the grant, the team went through a detailed process of finding the right vendor. Next, they met with their internal teams to discuss the many challenges street doctors face and how the mobile unit's interior and exterior could be improved to accommodate their needs.

A large priority was ensuring that the unit could reach homeless patients right where they are – rather than parking the unit close by and doctors walking the rest of the way to treat patients. One major consideration was making sure the underside of the unit could get wet when it had to travel through riverbeds. The team was also thoughtful and intentional about every detail - from including Wi-Fi and IT capabilities, to choosing the color of the exterior of the vehicle, to the messaging on the outside of the vehicle to help get the word out - to ensure the unit will help build trusting relationships and consistency with the patients.

The mobile unit should be completed by the end of the year. Once completed, they must apply for a license, a process that takes a few months. By early 2023, they hope to serve 100 homeless patients in the first six months of use.

Improving
the way
street
medicine is
delivered
with a
thoughtfully
designed
mobile
health unit.

2021 Health Center Data

- 125,373 total patients
- 88.20% racial and ethnic minority patients
- 45.28% of patients best served in a language other than English
- 17.45% of patients are uninsured
- 65.70% patients have Medicaid/CHIP insurance
- Special populations served: people experiencing homelessness, migrant and agricultural workers