

Julie Chugh

What is your role on the leadership team?

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I'm the student liaison for all of 2021. So essentially, that means that I'm responsible for connecting our clinic personnel, our volunteers, especially to our doctors, to the community, to our partners, I kind of manage communication in and out of the clinic. So that's kind of my main role. I communicate most closely with Dr. Prabhu and Dr. Bennett because they are medical directors here.

What types of patients do you serve here?

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We serve patients who are strictly uninsured. So no Medicare, no Medicaid, they're adults 19 to 64. And I've heard we serve patients up to like at least a three hour radius around Lubbock. So it's a big resource out here in West Texas to serve a lot of patients that can't get medical care otherwise. So we bring them in, we talk to them, and we do what we can to get them free or discounted medications, that I think it's been a really helpful resource to the community.

Why was it important for the free clinic to continue during the pandemic?

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Yeah, I mean, just because COVID hit doesn't mean that there's no more medical needs for the community. So I think it's amazing that through COVID, we were able to continue to see patients, obviously, it looks a lot different than it did. But with telemedicine, you know, we're still able to provide so many of the same services that we were prior to COVID physical examinations, and things, of course, are a little bit more challenging. We do the best that we can through video. But I just think that the fact that we can still connect with our patients and follow up with them regularly is huge. And I know a lot of clinics have struggled through that.

How did you serve patients without internet access?

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We serve patients who are uninsured so often they come from, you know more challenging socio economic background. So a lot of don't even have access to internet or stable internet, or they don't have a smartphone or a tablet or a laptop. So that can definitely be a barrier to their health care. But we actually were able to secure some tablets here, through donations from the community. And so if patients don't have access to stable internet or don't have a smart device, they can come on site, and we put them up in a room upstairs with and we set them up with one of our tablets, we have a whole disinfection protocol for before they arrive and after they leave. But I think that's been super helpful for a lot of our patients who would otherwise be unable to receive care, because there are so many clinics that are closed.

What else do you want people to know about the free clinic?

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As far as, for the foreseeable future, we are still open for telemedicine and we want our patients to know that because we know there are patients that need those medication refills, or that haven't been

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seen by a doctor since COVID started over a year ago. So we just want them to know that we are still here to serve them as best we can given you know the new regulations that we have.