

SIUE WE CARE Clinic Introduces Mobile Health Unit during Health Fair, Co-Hosted with East St. Louis Kappa Alpha Psi Alumni

by Patricia Merritt
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EDWARDSVILLE - Showroom ready, designed with wellness in mind and manufactured to take fitness on the road, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Nursing's (SON) WE CARE Clinic in East St. Louis displayed its new mobile health unit during a recent health fair.

The Clinic teamed with Kappa Alpha Psi, East St. Louis Alumni to present their first joint health fair on Saturday, March 9 on the Wyvetter H. Younge Higher Education Campus in East St. Louis. More than 30 vendors from the Greater St. Louis and Metro East areas took part in the event which included such suppliers as Chestnut Narcan Distribution, Hospice of Southern Illinois, East Side Health District, Washington University School of Medicine, Coordinated Youth and Human Services and Gateway Pet Guardians. On-site physician counseling was available at the health fair.

"The mission of the WE CARE Clinic is to advance health equity through access to care, patient-provider concordance and student readiness to practice," said Jerrica Ampadu, PhD, RN, CCP, associate professor in the SON and Clinic director. "In 2022, the clinic was awarded a \$4 million grant from the Health Resources Service Administration to establish a mobile health unit." The \$270,000 mobile health unit is called WE CARE Clinic REACH, which stands for Responding, Educating, Advocating for Community Health.

"It is beneficial for us to partner with Dr. Ampadu and her mission for the Clinic of treating patients regardless of their ability to pay," said Russell McElveen, DO, cardiac surgeon with Southern Illinois Health in Belleville and member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. "We know that lack of resources and ability to pay for medical care affects a lot of minority patients. We want to help. We want to increase awareness of healthcare services available in the area, including the SIUE WE CARE Clinic in East St. Louis."

Many people are aware about the opioid epidemic, but not how they can help, according to Violette Book, community health specialist with Overdose Education and Nalaxone Distribution in Granite City and Belleville. Among Book's supplies and literature were free kits of Narcan.

"Using Narcan can help reverse an opioid overdose," said Book. "It's nasal spray for the nose. What you're trying to do is to help someone start breathing again and keep them alive until emergency help can get there. I made 50 kits, and I've gone through about 35 in the first hour. But I have supplies to make more. I'll just keep making the kits until I run out."

“Opioid overdose education is extremely important,” said teenager Johana McDonald, of Granite City, who has plans to become a registered nurse. “This health fair has been very helpful, because I have received a lot of medical information.”

For example, those who stopped by the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Center’s table learned that people are able to drop in The Center from 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. Monday-Friday at 505 S. Eighth St. in East St. Louis and take a shower, wash their clothes, watch television and get something to eat – all for free. “More people are finding out about us, and we’re glad,” said Rachel Linzy, crisis counseling manager.

“Having such a variety of vendors together in one place where people can access all of this information is just phenomenal,” said SON Dean Judy Liesveld, PhD, RN, PPCNP-BC, CNE, FAAN. “Also, our We Care mobile health unit will provide so many opportunities for outreach, screening, education and more. The School of Nursing is extremely proud of the WE CARE Clinic. It is one of the very few nurse-managed clinics in the nation. Dr. Ampadu and her team do a tremendous job in serving the community.”

[The WE CARE Clinic](#) provides primary patient care at 601 James R. Thompson Blvd. on the Wyvetter H. Younge Higher Education Campus in Building D. The Clinic staff includes four advanced Nurse Practitioners, a collaborating physician, a clinical social worker, certified health coaches, nursing faculty, and a doctorally prepared pharmacist. All providers offer comprehensive services to diverse clients who reside in the Metro East and surrounding communities.

The [SIUE School of Nursing’s](#) programs are committed to creating excellence in nursing leadership through innovative teaching, evidence-based practice, quality research, patient advocacy and community service. Enrolling nearly 1,900 students in its baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral programs, the School develops leaders in pursuit of shaping the nursing profession and impacting the health care environment. SIUE’s undergraduate nursing programs help to solve the region’s shortage of baccalaureate-prepared nurses and enhance the quality of nursing practice within all patient service venues. The School’s graduate programs prepare nurses for advanced roles in clinical practice, administration and education.

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high-quality education that powerfully transforms the lives of all individuals who seek something greater. A premier metropolitan university, SIUE is creating social and economic mobility for individuals while also powering the workforce of the future. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Home

to a diverse student body, SIUE is situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River’s rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis.

