

August 2022 | Oregon

Connections

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Energy Trust of Oregon





La Clinica takes health services on the road

Tara Kirk said her favorite patient stories begin something like this: you saw me, you stopped and talked to me, you really listened to me.

Kirk, who's the chief operations officer for La Clinica in Medford, Oregon, said most of La Clinica's patients come from the most vulnerable populations, and many are not used to being recognized as individuals. La Clinica recently received some funding from the Avista Foundation and some of it may go toward the operation of its mobile health center.

"It's basically a big RV with a couple of exam rooms and space enough for our staff," Kirk said. "We are hoping we can get a new one within the next year, but like everyone else we have had delays ordering things."

La Clinica's mobile health center is one of just a few of its kind in southern Oregon. Kirk said the clinic has a steady route and goes to the same locations very consistently.

"We found that is the best way to reach people," Kirk said. "We work with many who are unhoused, and they really need services. We try to connect them with the services they need."

La Clinica has eight brick and mortar locations and a couple of school-based locations, too, and offers basic medical services, dental care, and behavioral and mental health services.

It's dental program, Happy Smiles, covers 27 area schools.

La Clinica's mobile health center takes its services to urban campgrounds, churches and other community gathering spots. It doesn't matter if one has insurance or not. A community center or a church that hosts a weekly meal is the perfect partner.

"We show up every week, and after one or two weeks people will come and talk to us," Kirk said. "Our goal is to build trust in the community, slowly and over time. That's the best outreach we do." To learn more about La Clinica's mobile health coach visit laclinicahealth.org/services/mobile-health/.



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