



A USC Street Medicine team provides care to the homeless on the streets of Los Angeles

Philanthropic Impact Report

Street Medicine Program

Keck Medicine
of **USC**

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Brett Feldman, MSPAS, PA-C

SERVING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Thanks to your generous support, the Keck School of Medicine of USC Street Medicine program, led by Brett Feldman, MSPAS, PA-C, has helped some of the 59,000 homeless on the streets of Los Angeles. In just three years, the program has achieved a growing number of “firsts” for the nation and for street medicine. We are pleased to present you with this report highlighting what your philanthropy has helped make possible.

NEW PARTNERSHIP, NEW TEAM

Our new partnership with the City of Los Angeles enabled us to add another street medicine team, which includes a physician, physician assistant, nurse, and two community health workers to assist individuals living on the street. The new team—our second—provides care in previously uncovered areas of northeast, south, and downtown Los Angeles. With two teams, we also expanded our services, which included vaccinating all of our patients against COVID-19.

The teams provide far more than medical care; they help house individuals. Before COVID-19, **the team found housing for 42 percent of the people they saw**. During the pandemic, the numbers skyrocketed as team members drove around Los Angeles picking up unsheltered people and taking them to hotels for free rooms, as part of Project Roomkey. The project was so effective that, for a time, there were only a handful of patients still on the streets. With the project winding down and fewer hotels offering rooms, numbers on the street are unfortunately increasing again.

In a pioneering effort, our teams provide HIV consultation services. When someone is homeless and has HIV, if they are seen at LA County+USC Medical Center, our team follows up with them on the street anywhere in the county. We are the only HIV program in the U.S. where everything is done on the street. Other centers across the country are following our lead and replicating our HIV street program—just one example of our leadership in the street medicine field.

THE USC STREET MEDICINE
TEAM CONDUCTS

1,600

PATIENT VISITS EACH YEAR

THE USC STREET MEDICINE
TEAM INCREASED ACCESS TO
CARE

300%

COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL
MEDICAL APPROACHES

THE USC STREET MEDICINE
TEAM'S CONSULTATION
PROGRAM DECREASED
HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS BY

70%

AND REDUCED THE AVERAGE
LENGTH OF HOSPITAL STAY BY

2 DAYS

TRAINING OTHERS TO HELP THE HOMELESS

Given the increasing number of homeless on the streets of Los Angeles, we are training and equipping others to provide care on the streets to meet the growing demand, including:

- We continue to collaborate with the Keck School of Medicine of USC's Physician Assistant Program, where our team sends physician assistant students to four other centers across Los Angeles to learn to do street medicine.
- Beginning in July 2021, **we began offering the only street medicine track in a family residency program in the country**, which is training six residents.
- For the third year, in association with the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, **we are training one occupational doctoral fellow in street medicine—the only program of its kind in the country.**
- We are **the first program to offer full time street medicine occupational therapists in the country.**
- In another first, the team offers a Continuing Medical Education course on Underserved Primary Care Education, which focuses on how an individual's environment is integrated with health issues and how to treat conditions, such as hypertension, on the street.

Beyond USC, Brett Feldman and his team are a national leader in establishing street medicine programs. This past year, they worked with their first set of six federally qualified health centers—four in Los Angeles, one in Bakersfield, and one in San Diego—to train them in providing street medicine following the Keck School of Medicine's Street Medicine Program model. They are also helping start a street medicine program at Martin Luther King, Jr, Community Hospital in South LA.

ADVOCATING FOR THE HOMELESS

About 150,000 people living on the streets of California are eligible for a new program called CalAim, which provides health care to the homeless. Unfortunately, there is little to no focus on actually providing access to such

care. The street is not recognized as a legitimate place to deliver health care, so street medicine teams, including ours, are not reimbursed for their services. The California Assembly and Senate unanimously passed a bill to make such care reimbursable, but the governor vetoed the bill. Brett and his team are working with the Governor's Office to make street medicine reimbursable and bridge the gap between the thousands of people who are eligible for health care and the few who are actually getting such care.



Brett Feldman, left, talks with a homeless patient as Sandra Valencia administers him a COVID-19 shot in April 2021. (USC Photo/Gus Ruelas)

SHARING RESEARCH AND EXPERTISE

We are just getting started with research in this new area of medicine. All street medicine programs have to fight to exist and to survive, and we help provide the critical data to support the creation and existence of such programs across the country. **We are fortunate to be part of USC; USC took a risk on the program—only the third one in the country.** Now, we provide the data so others are willing to start street medicine programs.

The team published a seminal article on our innovative street medicine consultation service—an area that had not been mentioned in the medical literature before. The homeless face high morbidity and mortality. The best

way to find such individuals is in a hospital, which is when our street medicine consultation service starts, by seeing people in the hospital and then following up with them on the street. The program has been incredibly effective at reducing hospital admissions and the length of hospital stays.

THE TROJAN TRAINER PROGRAM

In our Trojan Trainer Program, homeless individuals teach USC students about the health care challenges faced by the unsheltered. One of the trainers, Bart, who spent 20 years on the street, is a stellar example of the impact our program has on students.

I have been exposed to priceless clinical experiences as a student in the Trojan Trainer Program. I am so grateful for this opportunity to learn outside of textbooks, learn the reality and struggles that patients face, and learn how to serve in complete love and humility. I feel as though I was able to really advocate with the unsheltered community, rather than just for the community, by working with Bart and facing the challenges he faced alongside him.

Sarah Hludzinski, PA-S

My most formative experiences on the team relate to one patient, Bart. He showed me how focusing on a person's individual interests is imperative to building strong relationships. Bart trusted our team to support him in some of his most medically compromised situations. The emotional and cognitive support the team provides Bart have supported him in his time on the street and in his transition to assisted living. I am so thankful for this program as it has taught me so much about caring for our unhoused neighbors and has given me the background to continue to work in street-based care settings.

Rachel Kent, OTD

THANK YOU

Philanthropy means everything to our street medicine program. Thanks to the support from people like you, we are establishing a new field, not just a new program, and your generosity is critical to this lifesaving endeavor. You empower the program to pilot new initiatives, gather data, prove concepts, and use that information to attract grants and further support,

helping create new street medicine programs across the country. With your compassionate support, the Keck School of Medicine's Street Medicine program is making a growing number of firsts in the field to help the unsheltered homeless population. On behalf of all those who have benefited from your generosity, thank you.

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