



Western  
University  
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

# News

Contact: Rodney Tanaka

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Office: (909) 469-5402

Nov. 9, 2017

E-mail: [rtanaka@westernu.edu](mailto:rtanaka@westernu.edu)

## **WesternU to play key role in Care Harbor LA, one of the largest free clinics in the country**

**POMONA, Calif.** – Care Harbor Los Angeles is returning Nov. 17-19, 2017, providing free medical, dental, vision and preventative care to thousands of Southern California residents who could not otherwise afford these services.

Western University of Health Sciences will once again play a key role in delivering services to those patients. Students and faculty members from the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific (COMP), College of Podiatric Medicine, College of Optometry and College of Allied Health will provide care and leadership.

The previous clinic, held Jan. 20-22, 2017 at The REEF Exposition Hall, 1933 South Broadway, Los Angeles, Calif. 90007, attracted more than 2,100 patients who received more than 16,000 essential health care services, according to Care Harbor's Report on Results. Nearly 2,600 volunteers contributed their services. The value of care delivered was estimated at about \$1.9 million based on Medicare reimbursement or mean regional costs.

Care Harbor is working closely with Los Angeles County to reach out to homeless shelters and homeless patients, hopefully to provide services for 150-300 homeless patients over the 3-day event, said COMP Assistant Dean of Clinical Education, Natalie A. Nevins, DO, MSHPE, who serves as Care Harbor LA's medical director.



“We want to make sure patients who have not previously utilized Care Harbor services will have access,” Nevins said.

Care Harbor emphasizes continuity of care. Certified insurance navigators provided by L.A. County help educate and enroll patients into the coverage programs available to them. In January 2017, 312 patients were connected to clinics with locations and capabilities more suited to their needs, according to Care Harbor.

“If they have any type of medical problem and do not have a primary care doctor, they are assigned a medical home before they leave the event,” Nevins said.

WesternU’s College of Optometry will be co-leading Care Harbor’s vision section with UCLA’s Jules Stein Eye Institute faculty, and more than 40 WesternU optometry students are signed up to volunteer. WesternU and UCLA will provide comprehensive eye exams to patients.

“It’s excellent experience to work together,” said College of Optometry Director of Community Outreach Kristy Remick-Waltman, OD, FCOVD. “This is an interprofessional experience. They see the patient as a whole person and they get total care.”

VSP is donating frames and will fill prescriptions along with K-Mars Optical. Patients who need glasses will receive free prescription glasses, which they can pick up three weeks after the clinic.

The College of Optometry encourages students to volunteer for philanthropic reasons and to gain experience, said College of Optometry Manager of Clinical Education Programs Kelee Visconti.

“For us it’s really good experience. We emphasize lifelong volunteering,” Visconti said. “Also, our students need volume. They are going to see a lot of patients at Care Harbor.”

###

About Western University of Health Sciences

Western University of Health Sciences ([www.westernu.edu](http://www.westernu.edu)), located in Pomona, Calif. and Lebanon, Ore., is an independent nonprofit health professions university, conferring degrees



in biomedical sciences, dental medicine, health sciences, medical sciences, nursing, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant studies, podiatric medicine and veterinary medicine. WesternU is home to the [Patient Care Center](#), where the best in collaborative health care services is offered. The Chronicle of Higher Education named WesternU a Great College to Work For in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017.