

Florida State students provide health screenings in Immokalee



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By [Alexi Cardona](#) of the Naples Daily News

Some students spend their spring break tanning, boozing and nursing a hangover. Others spend their week doing community service, nursing others.

About a dozen medical and nursing students from Florida State University spent Sunday providing medical screenings to Immokalee residents at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church. After Sunday Mass, hundreds of people sought screenings for diabetes, high blood pressure and vision problems.

Beatriz Castillo had been to the university's screenings a couple of times before. The first time she went, she found out she had high blood sugar and was referred to the clinic at FSU's College of Medicine in Immokalee. During another visit, she found out her son had high blood pressure.

"It's a tremendous help," Castillo said. "When we don't have money to go to the doctor, we know we can

come here for help and not have to worry about money."

The students conducting screenings are members of FSUCares, a student-run medical organization that provides services in underserved populations locally and internationally. They also provide information about the Zika virus, personal hygiene and the importance of wearing sunscreen.

"I wanted to know how seeking care works outside of a big city," said Adhish Singh, a first-year medical student and vice president of FSUCares. "It must be hard to look after your health when you're a migrant worker or undocumented. When someone comes to you for help and they realize they're OK, it's heartwarming to see them happy because they are healthy."

Shanique Wilson, a third-year medical student, is interested in internal medicine and cardiology. She hopes to work in a rural area with a nearby hospital to help underserved populations and reduce the amount of time it takes for someone to be treated, particularly for cardiovascular conditions.

"A lot of people aren't insured, they don't have access to computers or phones to get insured. These screenings are important. There are so many people that fall through the cracks," Wilson said. "We're trying to round them up."

Javier Rosado, director of clinical training at the FSU College of Medicine, said a lot of people are referred to the clinic for high blood sugar, hypertension and vision problems resulting from working in fields.

The College of Medicine in Immokalee partners with the Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida to regularly provide screenings and do health-oriented community outreach.

Rosado, a psychologist, began as a fellow at the FSU College of Medicine in Immokalee in 2008 and ended up staying.

"There's definitely a need here. It's difficult to get professionals to choose Immokalee over a less stressful practice," Rosado said. "It takes a toll on you to work with a population with so many needs. But it's so much more rewarding because people are grateful. When you go into a profession with the intention of helping people, somewhere down the line you get caught up in having an amazing career, but you can't forget what you came for to begin with."



About Alexi Cardona

Alexi C. Cardona is a reporter at the Naples Daily News. She covers local news and community events.