

Temecula Murrieta mission trying to heal the sick



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By JOHN F. HILL
The Press-Enterprise

Seife Abate stood in the rapidly chilling air of the parking lot, waiting to be seen for high blood pressure and cholesterol.

Abate, 54, of Murrieta, lost his health insurance when he lost his job selling auto parts in February -- a fact that wasn't helping the blood pressure.

"The tension of being unemployed, wondering how to make ends meet, you don't know where the (blood pressure) numbers are," Abate said.

He was one of dozens of people who received free medical care at a first-come, first-served health clinic in Temecula, run by the Temecula Murrieta Rescue Mission.

Every Wednesday, the mission holds a clinic out of a 40-foot trailer parked on the grounds of the Rancho Community Church, just off the Temecula Parkway. The clinic offers poor families without health insurance a place to get care for chronic illnesses, like diabetes and high blood pressure, or colds, flu and other ailments. It also has an on-site pharmacy.

Doctors, nurses, even a chiropractor have volunteered their services, said mission director David Jones.



Silvia Flores / The Press-Enterprise

Jones said the clinic can see just 24 patients a night -- one every 15 minutes for three hours in each of two exam rooms.

On Wednesday, in its fourth week since opening, the clinic looked like it would reach its quota after less than two hours.

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Chiropractor Murray Galbraith, one of the health care providers who donates his services, does an adjustment on Connie Fox, of Wildomar.

"There's such a huge need; we're just scratching the surface," Jones said.

The group plans to expand the clinic to other nights of the week as soon as more doctors and nurses are on board.

On Wednesday, Paris Melchor, 37, sat with his wife and 5-year-old daughter, waiting to be seen for back problems and high blood pressure. He's been without health insurance since tripping on a broom while working, injuring his ankle and losing his job in the process.

His wife, Iris Melchor, said without the free clinic the couple might have tried to visit an inexpensive clinic across the border in Mexico, or maybe a local clinic if they had to.

"But that's expensive; we just don't have a lot of money right now," Iris Melchor said.

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MEDICAL CLINIC

A free medical clinic serving the impoverished in southwest Riverside County is being run by the Temecula Murrieta Rescue Mission. Patients must be under the federal poverty line and have no health insurance.

WHEN: 6 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays

WHERE: A 40-foot trailer at Rancho Community Church, 31300 Rancho Community Way, Temecula.

QUESTIONS AND DONATIONS: 951-526-1200 or www.rescuemissiontm.org