



Rehoboth McKinley Christian Hospital sponsors health fair at Rio West Mall

It was a healthy day May 4 at the Rio West Mall as Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services sponsored the 2019 Community Health Fair.

The event was free and open to everyone with numerous activities such as live entertainment and door prizes, with all of them promoting health and wellness.

Over 75 health- related agencies were set up along the food court, as well as the middle area of the mall. Each vendor brought samples of their agency's offerings.

According to David Conejo, CEO of RMCHCS, the fair proved to be a huge success. He was particularly pleased about having all the agencies at a single location, making it easy to get a variety of health questions answered in one place.

"What is so exciting about this event and we do it annually, is there are so many agencies in town that are working continually year-round to get their information out," he said. "Like the Alzheimer's disease, the Boys and Girls Club, and other organizations. This health fair gives us possibly the greatest opportunities to give out our information where people can just come by and get a blood test, get counseling on patient care, and it's all really exciting."

Conejo spoke briefly on the impact of the Boys and Girls Club on how it helps keep the youth out of trouble by having activities for them.

"The sponsors that work with the kids, bring ideas that help lead to a healthier life," Conejo said. "They help in getting the youth on a healthy path, as well as mentally fit path."

"Sometimes you may have a youth that has emotional problems, mental problems, and could be hanging out with the wrong crowd that could lead to alcohol and drugs. It's one way of keeping them off the streets and out of trouble," Conejo said.

Conejo hoped that the biggest thing that participants would take home from the event is the resources that were handed out. Lists of providers were handed out with their locations. Conejo added that with more agencies bringing in more resources, this means more jobs. Having these agencies close by means clients won't have to travel far to see their providers.

Juliana Dooley, behavioral health collaborative coordinator, was quite pleased about the turnout. She said an increase from last year might have been due simply to word of mouth. Preparations began in January. That's also when this year's theme was decided.

"We do all the marketing, organizing, a lot of work goes into it, I think it's a great attraction," she said. " We have live entertainment and it's all for the community. We hope they took home some good information, vital information, that is all related to health. Plus, having it here at the mall made it comfortable and more at ease for those dreading to visit health providers."

A first-time agency to the event was UNM Health Sciences from Albuquerque, sharing information about Native American Health Services.

Erin Coeeyate, community liaison, spoke about the singularity of their agency.

"This is the only hospital that is geared to Native American patients," she said. "The reason being is that the main campus UNM is built on Native American land. The Governors of the 19 Southern Pueblos all decided to give it to Bernalillo County in exchange to build a hospital for the uninsured, but mainly for Native Americans. It's just like Indian Health Services. You don't have to pay. If you are seen through UNM and you get a prescription through a UNM provider, you can actually get that filled free at any of our pharmacies."

Coeeyate added UNM Health Sciences does a lot of advocating for Native Americans.

By Dee Velasco
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