

Cibola Medical Foundation endows nursing scholarships at UNM-Gallup

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Students in the UNM-Gallup branch campus nursing program will soon benefit from scholarships endowed by the Cibola Medical Foundation.

Dr. Phil Kamps, president of the Cibola Medical Foundation, recently presented UNM-Gallup with a check in the amount of \$100,000 to establish an endowment that will continue in perpetuity to defray the costs of tuition, books, fees and all other educational expenses required for graduation from the nursing program.

The Cibola Medical Foundation Nursing Scholarship Fund was established as a means of recognizing and supporting students who come through the UNM-Gallup nursing program and stay within the community to serve patients of the area.

The impetus for the donation was the passing of Gallup resident Virginia Nuanez, who graduated from the UNM-Gallup program and worked as a registered nurse in the obstetrics department for over 20 years at Rehoboth McKinley Christian Hospital.

"While in her 40s, Virginia took advantage of the UNM-Gallup branch to enter her second career after her first career of raising her family," Kamps said. "If the UNM-Gallup program hadn't been here, she probably never would have received that education."

The Cibola Medical Foundation wishes to help others, like Nuanez, who want to receive their nursing degrees and stay in the community.

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"The nursing program is one of the best things Gallup has," Kamps said. "This program is extremely valuable to our community."

In 1972, the Cibola Medical Foundation became the administrative arm of the private medical group Christian Medical Associates. Its founding members were Dr. Phil Kamps, Dr. Richard Stam, Dr. Al Diddams and Dr. Jack Kamps.

"All employees other than physicians were part of the Cibola Medical Foundation and handled all the business needs," Kamps said. "As physicians, we were able to practice medicine while the Foundation ran the clinics."

In 1995, the physicians rejoined the hospital system and the work of the Cibola Medical Foundation temporarily ceased. After the board of directors realized there were some resources still remaining within the Foundation, they extended their philanthropic efforts by supporting the local hospital and missionary activities.

Kamps practiced medicine in Gallup from 1973-2018. In his obstetrics practice, he delivered over 7,000 babies, many of whom he still sees within the community. Upon his retirement, Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services dedicated the Phillip Kamps, M.D. Women's Health and Birthing Center on the second floor of the hospital. Kamps is now enjoying retirement with his wife, Betty, with whom he raised four children.

Sabrina Ezzell, UNM-Gallup nursing program director, is extremely grateful for the establishment of the endowment.

"Dr. Kamps' generosity will help many future nursing students realize their dream of becoming a nurse, ultimately contributing to the health of their families and their community," she said.

Dr. James Malm, UNM-Gallup chief executive officer, recognizes the importance of this substantial contribution.

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“Graduates of the UNM-Gallup nursing program, like Virginia Nuanez, fill a very critical need within our community,” Malm said. “What the donation from the Cibola Medical Foundation will do is help remove barriers that keep students from pursuing their interest in nursing. Students will be able to complete their education while staying within their home community knowing that financial roadblocks will not hold them back. In turn, they can graduate from our program and give back as successful healthcare providers.”