

SHAC Clinic volunteer roles

A quick summary

Position Types

Staff position – A role for which a core group of volunteers are selected to serve for a one-year term. Staff positions usually require an individual to work at SHAC several times per month, but scheduling is left up to the members of the group. Staff positions usually require greater training and detailed understanding of how SHAC operates. Using a consistent pool of highly-trained staff allows for higher-quality service.

Volunteer position – A role which is managed by one or a few coordinators, but primarily operates using volunteers that sign up for a single clinic night. Volunteers may return as little or often as they like, but coordinators are staff as described above. Most volunteer positions require significant skill and responsibility but usually require less knowledge of the institutional policies of SHAC.

Roles

Front Desk

Who: Any health-professions student, undergraduate students during summer months.

The public face of the SHAC clinic, Front/Back staff manage the patient intake and waiting area, and collect demographic information on SHAC patients. Volunteers open the clinic doors at 5:30pm, check patients in who have already made appointments, and manage a waiting list for patients seeking walk-in appointments. Front desk is a volunteer position.

Triage

Who: Medical students (MS2 and older), Nurse Practitioner students (any year).

Triage volunteers have two principal functions. During clinic nights, they screen walk-in patients and, in consultation with the Clinic Co-Directors and attending physicians, determine what services the patients require and how urgently. A small number of patients (usually less than six) are prioritized for immediate attention; the remainder receives appointments for subsequent weeks. During the week, Triage volunteers respond to phone and email messages from members of the community seeking appointments at, or information from, the SHAC clinic. As such, the Triage staff is responsible for the bulk of appointment-scheduling for the SHAC clinic. Because a large proportion of SHAC's patients are Spanish-speakers, Triage volunteers should have at least intermediate Spanish skills. Triage is a staff position.

Operations (formerly “Flow”)

Who: Any health-professions student (including social work and public health)

Operations volunteers are the hub of the SHAC clinic. They manage the flow of clinic activity by routing patients to available rooms, and assigning care teams to patients in a timely and efficient manner. In addition, Operations volunteers are responsible for cleaning exam rooms between patients and before the clinic closes, answering questions from other volunteers, and collecting the “encounter forms” used for coding and record-keeping. Operations is a staff position.

Vitals

Who: Any medical or nursing student.

These volunteers take and record vital signs for SHAC patients, and explain the basic flow of the clinic to patients. Automated DynaMap blood-pressure cuffs speed the process along. Because the role of explaining how the clinic runs and what a patient should expect at SHAC is very important, vitals was made a staff position to improve the consistency of the introduction.

Pharmacy

Who: Pharmacy students, any year.

The role of pharmacy students in the SHAC clinic extends far beyond simply dispensing drugs. After a patient has been assigned to an exam room, a Pharmacy volunteer accompanies the MTS/MTJ into the exam room in order to collect a chief complaint and a detailed medication history. Treatment decisions are made after consultation with Pharmacy volunteers, who then write the prescription and provide medication counseling to patients. A formulary of frequently-prescribed drugs is available for immediate dispensing under the supervision of an attending pharmacist and senior pharmacy student. Some other drugs may be provided free of charge from Sutton’s Pharmacy or Carrboro Family Pharmacy through SHAC’s medication assistance program. Pharmacy is a volunteer position.

Medical Team (MTS/MTJ)

Who: MTJ –second semester MS1 and any MS2; MTS – MS3 and MS4.

One junior medical student (Med Team Junior, MTJ) and one senior medical student (Med Team Senior, MTS) constitute a Medical Team. Using information already collected by Triage, the Medical Team takes a history and performs a physical exam; then recesses to the break room to discuss the case with other

members of the care team, assemble a differential diagnosis, and formulate a treatment plan. The medical team presents the case to one of the attending physicians, who may or may not choose to see the patient personally, and together the team and the attending agree on a diagnosis and treatment plan. Medical teams are free to work as they see fit, although MTJs are encouraged to be the leading member of the team and MTSs to support their MTJ partners and act as preceptors. MTJ/MTS is a volunteer position.

Attending physicians

Who: Faculty and residents of the UNC departments of Family Medicine and Internal Medicine.

One faculty volunteer and at least one resident supervise medical care at SHAC each clinic night. Medical Teams operate on the license of these attending physicians. Although not “attending physicians” in the normal sense, residents function as attendings at SHAC, seeing patients independently and signing their own charts and prescriptions.

Physical Therapy

Who: Physical therapy students, any year.

A Physical Therapy team, consisting of two physical therapy students and one supervising faculty member, is currently available at SHAC from 7pm to 9pm. Patients may request physical therapy services directly or may be referred there by the Medical Team. The Physical Therapy team assesses patients with musculoskeletal complaints; provides rehabilitation exercises and occasionally assistive devices; and counsels on reasonable exercise strategies and goals even for patients without specific complaints. Physical Therapy is a volunteer position.

Social Work

Who: Students in the School of Social Work.

Social Work volunteers provide brief (usually 5-15 minutes) counseling sessions regarding psychosocial aspects of health: employment, housing, relationships, and parenthood, among others. They direct patients to relevant community resources, particularly social services and pregnancy and prenatal care. All patients who request a pregnancy test are offered pre- and post-test counseling by a Social Work volunteer. Because SHAC’s patient population is, by many measures, socially and economically vulnerable, Social Work volunteers have an important role in the clinic efforts to provide whole-person care. Social Work is a volunteer position.

Public Health

Who: Students in the School of Public Health.

Public Health volunteers provide brief (usually 5-15 minutes) counseling sessions regarding relevant topics in health, wellness, and disease-prevention: nutrition, exercise, smoking cessation, vaccinations, communicable diseases (including sexually-transmitted infections) and age-related cancer screening, among others. SHAC's patients are often members of high-risk groups – whether for STIs or chronic diseases – with tenuous access to care, making prevention and health-promotion an important part of SHAC's mission. Public Health is a volunteer position.

XYZ/HIV

Who: Any health-professions student.

XYZ is the internal alias for SHAC's HIV-testing service. Trained counselors offer free, confidential rapid HIV testing; provide pre- and post-test counseling; distribute condoms; and provide counseling regarding sexual and reproductive health. Many XYZ patients come to SHAC only for these services, so XYZ is semi-independent of other clinic groups, and manages its own patient queue. However, if additional medical needs are discovered (e.g. testing for other sexually-transmitted infections), patients are referred to medical teams and lab staff. XYZ is a volunteer position.

Lab

Who: Medical or nursing students.

Lab staff collect and process samples for both point-of-care tests – dipstick urinalysis; fingerstick serum glucose and HbA1c; and fingerstick hemoglobin – and off-site laboratory services. They transmit orders for off-site tests to LabCorp using an online portal, but are not responsible for notifying patients of results. Lab volunteers also administer vaccines to patients eligible under the North Carolina Vaccines for Children program. Lab is a staff position.

Continuity & Coordination of Care (CCC)

Who: Any health-professions student.

Because a different group of volunteers populates the clinic every week, CCC volunteers are a critical link between one week's activity and the next. During the week they process referrals to outside providers, call patients to notify them of lab results, schedule follow-up appointments, and handle record requests. During clinic CCC volunteers review lab results which have arrived during the week and

present the associated cases to attending physicians in order to determine appropriate next steps in care. CCC is a staff position.

SALSA

Who: Any UNC student who passes a written and oral language assessment.

SALSA is SHAC's Spanish-language interpreter service. Patients who require an interpreter are assigned a SALSA volunteer who, in most cases, remains with them for the duration of their visit. An additional SALSA volunteer is usually dedicated to the Front/Back team during the early hours of clinic assist Spanish-speaking patients during the intake process. SALSA is a volunteer position.