

For Immediate Release

Cheryl Reiss

(415) 640-5431

Ritter Center Deploys Mobile Medical Van Into The Community *Van Brings Primary Medical Care Services Countywide to Unsheltered*

SAN RAFAEL - September 8, 2021 – Ritter Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center, launched a mobile medical van into the community intended to provide primary care medical services to people countywide who are unsheltered and do not have access to a medical provider. A minimum of 170 individuals will be served who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness in Marin County. The mobile medical van will be staffed by a Medical Outreach Team providing Street Medicine services.

The mobile medical van is designed to reach individuals who are often hardest to connect with and are less likely to be accessing Marin County's health care entities for COVID-19 testing and primary medical care. The van will be operated by Ritter Center's Advance Practice Practitioner and Care Coordinator to provide urgent primary medical care services, and preventive care, while also connecting patients with behavioral health support, shelter and housing resources, medical insurance registration, and access to food and income.

"This is a natural extension of Ritter's mission to treat the whole person. We can create opportunities for those who have historically been underserved or unserved by our safety net system. Ritter Center is able to provide a robust range of services to people experiencing homelessness, such as the COVID-19 vaccine or treatment for Hepatitis C," said Mark Shotwell, Executive Director of Ritter Center. "We can drive this van within a block or two of where someone is sleeping or if they are housed, we can still close that gap and offer direct services. The impact on each person's long term health and the entire health care system is significant because fewer hospitalizations save money. Mobile medical services simultaneously address issues of health education, access and impact to make significant inroads into the community and bring benefits to the entire population."

Project goals for the medical van effort include rapid COVID-19 testing and follow-up to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission; trauma-informed primary care prevention and treatment; and coordination with other Marin County service providers to allow for a range of social support offerings. These services are designed to serve people experiencing homelessness, people disconnected from Primary Care services, people exiting institutions who were homeless upon entry, youth, people fleeing domestic violence, populations who are uninsured or not easily insured, as well as people who are at risk of homelessness.

Ritter will provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services and will ensure that both the Nurse Practitioner and Medical Assistant staff are bilingual English and Spanish speakers. Ritter

Center will also partner with Community Action Marin, Downtown Streets Team, New Beginnings and the West Marin Food Pantry.

The Ritter Center Street Medicine Team is supported through funding from Marin County, Kaiser Permanente and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

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[Ritter Center](#)

Ritter Center's mission is to prevent and resolve homelessness and improve the health and well-being of people living in poverty in Marin by providing culturally sensitive, easily accessible, high-quality medical care and social services. People in need can visit our Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and receive high-quality medical and mental health care regardless of their ability to pay. Ritter Center's highly trained team combines national clinical best practices with a whole-person care approach to solving each person's health, food, and housing needs. With over 40 years of experience, we have built industry-leading knowledge and collaborative partnerships with county agencies, health partners, and like-minded organizations to help people overcome barriers to aid and create complete support solutions that sustainably improve people's liv