

# Providing Care off the Beaten Path: Adventures at Pajarito Mesa

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## INTRODUCTION:

New Mexico is a large, rural and ethnically diverse border state. Ethnic minorities are generally widely accepted and compose more than half the population, however, there is often a negative stigma surrounding those who are undocumented inhabitants of the state. Our project focuses on providing healthcare to a community of mostly undocumented families living near Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.

The community of Pajarito Mesa is located six miles south of Albuquerque. It is a non-border "colonia" composed of 22,000 acres of unincorporated land, which is home to approximately 400 families. Colonias are rural communities located along the US-Mexican border, and often lack basic necessities. Most living at Pajarito Mesa are undocumented Spanish speakers. Despite this, most pay property taxes and live without running water, paved roads and electricity.

## OBJECTIVES:

- Establish trust with the community through respect and listening
- Determine community needs
- Provide expertise and resources accordingly



## COMMUNITY NEEDS:

- Clean water
- Electricity
- Better roads
- Medical care

## WHAT WE HAVE DONE:

- Using a mobile clinic van, UNM Family Medicine physicians visit the community monthly and provide care to those in need on a walk-in basis.
- Medical care is free of charge and services include health screening, acute care, women's health and health education.
- We refer every patient for follow-up at a close-by clinic so they establish a medical home.
- Helped establish source of clean water on the Mesa.



## CONCLUSIONS:

Many of New Mexico's undocumented face financial and political barriers to basic services enjoyed by citizens. One of these services is non-emergent healthcare. The establishment of monthly mobile clinic visits is one way we have found to address this barrier in Pajarito Mesa.

