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FREE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

## Aiming to keep patients out of the ER, new mobile unit will make Salem house calls

Salem residents who suspect they have COVID-19 now can get at-home help through a new mobile service that went from idea to done in two weeks.

By Saphara Harrell - Salem Reporter

April 13, 2020 at 1:00pm





***Lara Knudsen, left, and Dani Dupuis stand in front of the Alluvium Mobile Health Team vehicle on Friday, April 10. (Amanda Loman/Salem Reporter)***

***NOTE: Salem Reporter is providing free access to its content related to the coronavirus as a community service. Subscriptions are vital to continue this so please sign up today.***

It started with a text.

Lara Knudsen wanted to know if Dani Dupuis wanted to pool their limited resources to help keep people from overburdening Salem's only emergency room, and instead provide at-home follow ups for COVID-19 patients with mild symptoms.

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The pair had never worked together, but both own their own small clinics in Salem.

Knudsen is a doctor at Happy Doc Family Medicine and Dupuis is a nurse practitioner at Phoenix Rising Family

Medicine.

In just two weeks, they gathered a group of volunteers to spend time and resources to make the idea a reality.

They formed the nonprofit Alluvium and got support from government agencies around Marion County. The program rolled out Monday.

“We want to be here to support and educate our community to help optimize Salem’s health and wellness. We want to be effective as well,” Dupuis said. “It’s incredible when you have these like-minded people that want to go and do something good for the community.”

The aim of the program is to decrease hospital and emergency room admissions. On Friday, April 10, Salem Health had 24 patients in the hospital who tested positive for COVID-19.

The Salem Fire Department will facilitate the mobile visits from 911 calls they respond to. Firefighters will refer patients who aren’t critical enough to visit the emergency room and refuse a trip there but would like to learn more about the virus.

Clinicians will go to the patient’s home and have them come outside to the ambulance for an evaluation. From

there, they can tell them what warning signs to be mindful of or administer limited prescriptions, like for an inhaler.

“That way we’re just giving people a little TLC,” Dupuis said.

The referrals can also come from The Arches Project, a homeless service provider which is housing homeless people with coronavirus symptoms or those who are medically fragile into motels.

Outreach workers will contact Alluvium through a cell phone to place a referral and providers will go to the motels to attend people. ARCHES put \$7,000 toward the project.

Knudsen said they’re trying to reach segments of the population that would normally have difficulties getting care.

“We have a mobile unit that can provide this service for free,” she said.

Knudsen said she’s amazed that a group of small, individual medical practices were able to come together to provide something different for the community.

Salem Fire Department spokesman Gabe Benmoussa has been wanting to create a community paramedicine program for more than a year.

Alluvium will only address patients with COVID-19 symptoms, but the founders believe it could transform into something that addresses more needs within the community.

“It’s amazing what we have done in two weeks that some other entities have not done in years,” Benmoussa said.

He said there's a need for education around COVID-19 and to remind people to stay home.

"We will try to impact that even if it's with two people or three people," Benmoussa said.

Agencies from around Salem have pitched in to help. Falck Northwest, Salem's ambulance service provider, gave them a de-commissioned ambulance for \$1 a month, Salem Health Foundation donated \$18,000 and Salem Fire is providing personal protective equipment.

United Way donated \$10,000, gave them a cell phone for referrals and offered up two vans should they expand their provider capacity.

Alluvium is still looking for clinicians that are willing to volunteer their time to help. The clinic will run Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. More information is on the Alluvium [website](#).

Right now, there are five clinicians and three drivers.

K. Jones, an administrator at Happy Doc, said Alluvium provides help that makes Salem a better place to live.

"Not taking care of this costs our community. We are hoping that the cost will be shared by the systems that should be plugging into this," Jones said. "I would like to live in a place where people's basic health needs are met."

***Have a tip? Contact reporter Saphara Harrell at 503-549-6250, [saphara@salemreporter.com](mailto:saphara@salemreporter.com) or @daisysaphara.***

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FREE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

## PHOTOS: Alluvium to make house calls for COVID-19 patients

The nonprofit, which aims to keep patients out of hospitals and emergency rooms through house calls, started work on Monday, April 13.

By Amanda Loman - Salem Reporter

April 13, 2020 at 3:27pm





**K. Jones and Lara Knudsen unload gear from the Alluvium Mobile Health Team vehicle on Friday, April 10. (Amanda Loman/Salem Reporter)**

A new nonprofit that aims to keep people out of Salem's emergency room started running calls on Monday.

The Salem Fire Department is referring 911 callers who have mild symptoms and refuse an emergency room visit to a crew of two clinicians riding around in a decommissioned ambulance.

They arrive at patients' homes and ask them to come outside for an evaluation.

READ: [Aiming to keep patients out of the ER, new mobile unit will make Salem house calls](#)

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**Julia Marie Dupuis, 6, left, and sister Trinity, 9, check out the inside of the Alluvium Mobile Health Team vehicle on Friday, April 10. (Amanda Loman/Salem Reporter)**



**The Alluvium Mobile Health Team vehicle will follow up with COVID-19 patients. (Amanda Loman/Salem Reporter)**



**The inside of the Alluvium Mobile Health Team vehicle on Friday, April 10. (Amanda Loman/Salem Reporter)**



**Lara Knudsen, left, and Dani Dupuis stand in front of the Alluvium Mobile Health Team vehicle on Friday, April 10. (Amanda Loman/Salem Reporter)**