

OU-Tulsa community board addresses health-care issues

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University of Oklahoma-Tulsa recently formed a community board to increase the quality of health care in west Tulsa.

The OU-Tulsa Bedlam Alliance for Community Health held its first meeting last Wednesday at Mark Twain Elementary, 541 S. 43rd West Ave., to kick off the group's formation.

The purpose of the community board is to express opinions and ideas to the Bedlam Clinic managers and to encourage community participation, according to a media release.

"The goal is to provide input from the community as to what their needs are so that we are ensuring that the services that we provide are best suited to the community," said community liaison Cheryl Waldeck.

"It's a community voice taking care of the whole population."

Board members include OU-Tulsa officials, Mark Twain Principal Diane Hensley, parents, health-care professionals, and other members of the community.

While based at Mark Twain, the board serves four west side Bedlam Clinics, including others at Eugene Field Elementary, Sand Springs Public Schools and Sandy Park Public Housing, Waldeck said.

The Tulsa World previously reported that Mark Twain was the first school to

offer a Bedlam Clinic on the grounds.

The clinic is free for all students and members of their households in order to improve the health of the community.

At last week's meeting, the board focused on ways to increase family usage of the clinics.

One subject addressed was well-child exams.

"It's probably our highest no-show rate," medical director Janelle Whitt said. "Why go if he's not sick?"

Whitt created a flier to send home to parents emphasizing the importance of checkups. She recommends that school-age children have a checkup every year on or just after their birthdays.

The board also considered creating a magnetic calendar to send home to parents with a reminder to schedule a well-

child visit on their children's birthdays.

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cited major health status indicators evident in the west Tulsa population include delayed prenatal care, low birth weight, incomplete immunizations, teen pregnancy, diabetes, coronary heart disease, cancer, and underdiagnosed and untreated chronic conditions," a media release states.

Bedlam officials hope the board and the clinics can help address these problems by providing affordable, reliable health care to west Tulsa and the surrounding area.

John Gaudet, administrative director, said the Bedlam project will spread throughout Tulsa Public Schools.

The community board is looking for new members.

For more information, call Cheryl Waldeck at 660-3635.