

Southcoast's Community Wellness Program transitions to electric vehicles

Southcoast Health announced today plans to transition its mobile wellness services to use fully electric vehicles.

This change will support the Southcoast Community Wellness Program's longstanding work to improve health access and equity across the South Coast region, officials said.

"For more than 25 years, the Southcoast Wellness Van has played a critical role in breaking down barriers to care by bringing access to health education, vaccinations, and screenings to socially vulnerable populations in our community," said Rachel Davis, Director of Community Health and Wellness at Southcoast Health. "Our new electric vehicles will enable us to expand these valued services, with a more environmentally conscious and sustainable approach."

Transitioning from a single diesel-powered Southcoast Wellness Van, the Community Wellness Program will now use two 2022 Kia Niro electric vehicles that will reduce the program's carbon footprint while providing greater access to more patients and locations per day.

"It's difficult for many people in our community to access health services because of linguistic barriers or a lack of information and transportation," said Alison LeBert, Manager of Community Health and Wellness at Southcoast Health. "Starting with two vehicles and a specialized team, we will build on our existing community partnerships and develop new relationships in our ongoing efforts to reach more of those who need care."

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Southcoast's mobile health

services were invaluable, providing important education and resources to the community outside of clinical offices, Davis said.

“To date, more than 1,529 vaccines have been administered through our mobile outreach,” she said. “This accomplishment highlights the outstanding impact this grassroots approach has in our communities and the need to further expand this work in the future.”

The Community Wellness Program’s mobile outreach is part of a group of initiatives in Southcoast CARES that support ongoing population health initiatives and expand access to services, outreach, education and connection to basic health and social resources. Officially making this transition around Earth Day is also significant as it emphasizes Southcoast Health’s greater commitment to continue making sustainable advancements across the health system, officials said.

Working across various Southcoast departments and in partnership with community organizations, the Community Wellness Program provides preventive screenings and health education, immunizations, physician referrals, connection to social services, nutritional information and education, COVID-19 resources, and more.

To learn more about the Community Wellness program and Southcoast Cares, please visit Southcoast Health CARES – Southcoast Health.