

Maria College, Albany Medical Center opening clinic for 'complex' patients

Goal is to reduce hospital readmissions for patients with complex medical and social needs

By [Kathleen Moore](#), Staff Writer
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Maria College nursing students Brittany Farrell, left, and Monique Davis feel the belly of the pregnant simMom in 2019. For more advanced students, the college is now partnering with Albany Medical Center Hospital to run an outpatient clinic with real patients.

Phoebe Sheehan/Times Union

ALBANY — Maria College nursing students will soon staff an outpatient clinic for Albany Medical Center Hospital patients who don't have a primary care physician.

The goal is to provide timely follow-up care to patients after they are discharged from the Emergency Department or the hospital, with a particular focus on patients with complex medical and social needs, the organizers said Friday. Hospital officials hope the clinic will reduce hospital readmissions.

It will also provide needed experience for Maria's nursing students. They may later expand to mental health counseling and occupational therapy as well, said college President Lynn Ortale.

“It’s truly a win-win-win for the community, our students, and our health care partner,” she said.

Students will work alongside Albany Medical College’s medical residents.

The clinic is also partnering with Trinity Alliance to help patients with stable housing, food and other needs. The experience will give nursing students a glimpse of the reality of health care.

“They (will) gain a deeper understanding of the challenges underserved patients face and how social factors like housing, nutrition, and access to medications directly affect health,” said Dr. Jessica McNally, chair of nursing and director of clinical experiences for the Andrea Lewis Siek School of Nursing at Maria College.

The clinic will open soon, with evening hours, on the first floor of the James J. Barba Physicians Pavilion. Patients must have a referral for the site.