# SVS Foundation Awards $80,000 to Expand Vascular Care in Underserved Communities

*Four Vascular Care for the Underserved grants support innovative approaches to PAD detection, treatment and limb preservation*

ROSEMONT, IL, UNITED STATES, September 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS) Foundation has awarded four Vascular Care for the Underserved (VC4U) Project Grants, providing $20,000 each to projects designed to improve access to vascular care for underserved communities.

The 2026 recipients will address critical gaps in peripheral artery disease (PAD) care through initiatives that bring education and screening into primary care and dialysis settings, accelerate access to limb-preserving treatment and ensure patients identified through community screening are successfully connected with follow-up care.

“Too often, where a patient lives, the resources available in their community or their ability to navigate the health care system can determine how early vascular disease is diagnosed and treated,” said Keith Calligaro, MD, Chair of the SVS Foundation. “These four projects take practical, community-based approaches to closing those gaps. Through the VC4U program, the Foundation is investing in solutions that have the potential not only to improve care in these communities today, but also to create models that can be adapted and expanded to reach more patients in the future.”

Improving PAD Education and Treatment in Primary Care Settings, Katharine McGinigle, MD, MPH, University of North Carolina Medical Center

McGinigle’s project “Improving Peripheral Artery Disease Education and Treatment in Primary Care Settings” will focus on improving PAD education and treatment in primary care settings, particularly in underserved areas of North Carolina. Her work builds on established partnerships with primary care providers and statewide health care quality and education networks, including the NC Surgical Collaborative and the Carolinas Vascular Quality Initiative.

As Director of the Multidisciplinary Limb Preservation Program at UNC Health, McGinigle has championed coordinated, team-based vascular care. The project is designed to extend that expertise beyond the academic medical center and into community settings where most patients receive their care. Initial work will involve primary care providers in two of the most underserved

areas within the UNC Health system, with existing statewide networks providing opportunities for broader implementation.

The Dialysis Chair as a Vascular Clinic , Adam Tanious, MD, MBA, MMSc, FSVS, FACS, Medical University of South Carolina

Tanious' project, "The Dialysis Chair as a Vascular Clinic: A Multidisciplinary Program to Detect PAD and Preserve Vascular Access in Underserved Populations with ESRD," seeks to make vascular care more accessible to patients receiving dialysis by embedding screening and education into a setting they already visit regularly.

The project grew from Tanious' experience caring for dialysis patients in South Carolina, where transportation and other barriers can prevent patients from reaching appointments that could preserve their dialysis access. The program is intended to create a sustainable model, with screening incorporated into dialysis facility workflows, equipment permanently located at participating facilities and education delivered by facility staff.

PAD Limb Preservation Hotline, Rafael Santini-Dominguez, MD, Ponce, Puerto Rico

Santini-Dominguez's "Peripheral Arterial Disease Limb Preservation Hotline: Early Intervention to Help Avoid Amputations" will establish a pathway for rapid triage, coordinated referral and timely vascular specialist evaluation for patients at risk of limb loss.

The initiative responds to significant barriers to vascular care in Puerto Rico, including delayed referrals, transportation and insurance challenges and shortages of specialists, which can result in patients presenting with advanced disease. Santini-Dominguez is a founder of a vascular acute care surgery transfer center that manages approximately 300 transfers annually, providing a foundation for a hotline model centered on getting high-risk patients to appropriate care sooner. The proposed hotline will similarly emphasize rapid triage and coordinated referral to help patients receive limb-preserving care before amputation becomes necessary.

Closing the Loop After PAD Screening, Misty D. Humphries, MD, MAS, RPVI, DFSVS, FACS, University of California, Davis Health

Humphries' project, "Closing the Loop After PAD Screening: Confirmed Linkage-to-Care in Vascular Deserts," tackles an important challenge in community PAD screening: ensuring that patients identified as being at risk actually receive appropriate follow-up care.

The project builds on the Comprehensive Health and Multidisciplinary Limb Preservation Outreach Network (CHAMPIONS), which has screened more than 800 individuals and expanded to nine academic sites. Humphries previously developed a "vascular desert" framework to identify communities with limited access to vascular care and joined CHAMPIONS to help target outreach to those areas.

Rather than creating another screening program, the VC4U project will focus on what happens after screening by measuring and strengthening linkage to care. That work will help establish baseline data needed to understand where patients are lost to follow-up and support the development of larger-scale interventions.

Bringing Vascular Care Closer to Patients

Together, the four projects reflect the SVS Foundation's commitment to addressing disparities in vascular care through solutions rooted in the communities they are intended to serve. From primary care offices and dialysis facilities to community screening events and a dedicated limb preservation hotline, each project seeks to reach patients earlier and create clearer pathways to appropriate vascular care.

These grants were made possible through the generosity of SVS members and participants in the SVS Foundation's Vascular Health Step Challenge, whose support is helping turn promising ideas into meaningful solutions for patients and communities.

You can help make more projects like these possible. A gift to the SVS Foundation Annual Fund provides critical support for programs that advance vascular care, fuel innovation and expand the Foundation's ability to invest in solutions where they can make the greatest difference.

Support what comes next. Make a gift to the SVS Foundation Annual Fund.

About Vascular Care for the Underserved (VC4U) Project Grants

The Vascular Care for the Underserved Project Grant supports initiatives that address unmet vascular health needs in underserved communities and develop approaches that can inform future efforts to improve access, early intervention and patient outcomes.

About the SVS Foundation

The SVS Foundation advances the care of patients with vascular disease by supporting research and innovation, developing the next generation of vascular surgeons and expanding education and community initiatives that improve vascular health.

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