

CONTRA COSTA HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

TO: Family and Human Services
Committee Members
Board of Supervisors

DATE: May 11th, 2016

FROM: Rachael Birch, Project Director
Health Care for the Homeless

SUBJECT: Health Care for the Homeless Annual Report

Recommendations

1. Accept this report from the Health Services Department; and
2. Forward this report to the Board of Supervisors for acceptance; and
3. Direct staff to continue to report on an annual basis to the FHS Committee regarding progress and status of the Health Care for the Homeless Program and to submit an additional written report to the Board of Supervisors, at six-month intervals.

Background

Since 1990, the Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) Program has provided health care services to the homeless population in Contra Costa County through mobile clinics, stationary health centers and the Concord Medical Respite facility. Health care services provided by the HCH team include routine physical assessments, basic treatment of primary health problems such as minor wounds and skin conditions, respiratory problems, TB screening, acute communicable disease screening, coordination and referrals for follow up treatment of identified health care needs, dental services, health education, behavioral health services and outreach and enrollment services. A significant portion of the homeless patients seen by the HCH team have chronic diseases, including asthma, hypertension, diabetes, and mental health/substance abuse issues. They also have disproportionately more dental, substance abuse and mental health needs than the general population.

The clinical team is comprised of a Medical Director, Family Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Community Health Workers, Dentist, Registered Dental Assistance, Mental Health Specialist, Substance Abuse Counselor, Health Educator and Eligibility Workers.

Homeless patients who receive care on one of the mobile clinics are referred into one of the CCHS ambulatory care health centers for primary and specialty care, into County mental health and substance abuse services, and to Contra Costa Regional Medical Center for emergency, inpatient hospital, outpatient surgeries, laboratory and radiology. There are four ambulatory care clinics, located in Antioch, San Pablo, Martinez and Concord, designated specifically for homeless patients to help them transition from the mobile clinic setting into the ambulatory care system. HCH staff members are present at each of these clinics. The HCH Program also has priority scheduling access for homeless patients in all of the CCHS Health Centers.

During 2015, CCHS treated 32,093 homeless patients who generated 166,589 visits.

Table 1 (below) indicates the Board of Supervisor's District where homeless patients reside. If no residential zip code data are available, the zip code where a patient received care is used.

Table 1: Percent of Homeless Patients by Supervisorial District

District	2015
I	30.1%
II	2.5%
III	36.9%
IV	19.4%
V	11.1%

The attached presentation contains additional demographic information on our Homeless population.

New Actions

The following activities and updates have occurred since the last briefing to the Board of Supervisors on HCH activities:

New Staff

Linae Young, MPH - Senior Health Education Specialist

Linae was added to our team in January 2016 to manage our expanding Health Education program. She is responsible for arranging education classes in our County-run shelters and other community agencies. So far she has implemented Expressive Art Therapy groups, and Diabetes, Substance Abuse, Stress Management and Health Care Maintenance classes at County shelters. Classes and groups have been well-attended and well-received.

New Funding Opportunities

The HCH Program received a Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) grant in March 2016 to develop a new program focusing on therapy and treatment for opiate addiction. The HCH Program is currently hiring four Nurses and four Mental Health Providers to provide these services in Antioch, West County and Concord. Services will include group counseling, medication treatment using buprenorphine and case management to assist patients transitioning off opiate drugs.

Narcan Kits

The HCH Program is now providing Narcan units and Narcan training to team members and to community organizations. Narcan is an opiate antidote and can save lives if administered to an overdosing individual.

HIV Testing

The HCH Program is now providing on-the-spot HIV testing in our mobile clinics. HIV testing technology now allows cheek swabs and 20 minute processing. The HCH Program has noticed a very low compliance rate for patients referred to the lab for HIV testing. Due to various barriers or personal reasons, homeless patients do not comply with referrals to obtain a blood test for HIV testing. Providing a simple test in the field, the HCH team hopes to increase HIV screening rates for our population.

Dental Program

The HCH Program has operated a Dental Clinic for almost one year now. Operating at 16 hours per week, the Respite Dental Clinic has been a much needed addition. Homeless people have disproportionately more dental problems than other populations and lack access to dental services. The HCH Program is working on expanding our dental program and recently applied for a funding opportunity to add mobile dental units. There is still a lot of work to be done to meet the large need for dental services among this population.