

CONTRA COSTA HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

TO: Family and Human Services **DATE:** June 17, 2022
 Committee Members
 Board of Supervisors

FROM: Heather Cedermaz, MSN, FNP-c
 Medical Director, Health Care for the Homeless

 Mia Fairbanks MSN, RN, PHN
 Public Health Nurse Program Manager

SUBJECT: Health Care for the Homeless Annual Update

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 Family and Human Services Committee regarding health status of the homeless population in Contra Costa County by the Health Care for the Homeless Program.

Background

Since 1990, the Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) Program has provided health care services to people experiencing homelessness (PEH) in Contra Costa County through regular mobile clinics, street medicine outreach, Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) ambulatory clinics at the Concord shelter with a Medical Respite facility, as well as mobile and ambulatory dental clinics.

The program is funded through a federal grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and successfully completed a site review in July 2021 with no findings. The program is governed by the Health Care for the Homeless Governing Board, which consists of homeless consumers and homeless service providers and advocates from throughout the County.

The HCH program serves over 1,500 unique patients annually, completing over 6,000 appointments across all service sites. Health care services provided by the HCH team focus on primary prevention and harm reduction services with every encounter and includes assessment, triage and treatment of urgent medical and

mental health concerns and management of chronic conditions in partnership with primary care and Behavioral Health.

Harm reduction services include substance use disorder assessment as well as point of care testing for infectious disease with treatment available same day and facilitation of treatment for conditions such as Hepatitis C. Referrals to establish with primary and specialty care, dental services, health education, behavioral health services, medication assisted treatment for opioid addiction, and outreach and enrollment services are available. A significant portion of PEH have chronic diseases, including congestive heart failure, hypertension, diabetes, and mental health/substance abuse disorders with life expectancy of PEH far below the average for housed individuals of the same demographic.

HCH operates the 26 bed Phillip Dorn Medical Respite Center for homeless adults who are discharging from local hospitals and require medical stabilization services. Respite care refers to recuperative services for those homeless persons who may not meet medical criteria for hospitalization, but who are too sick or medically vulnerable to reside in an emergency shelter and cannot be returned to the streets. This program is a joint effort between Health Care for the Homeless and the Division of Health, Housing & Homeless Services. Additionally, HCH has received Substance Abuse Expansion funding to develop a Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program since 2015. This program provides buprenorphine treatment and substance abuse case management services to homeless patients at five health center locations. The program has received national attention for its innovative approach to treating Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) using Buprenorphine combined with nursing and behavioral care management support. The program also includes Public Health Nurses and Mental Health Clinicians dedicated to managing OUD patients in homeless encampments with the street medicine team. CCHS has presented on these services at the National Health Care for the Homeless Conference and the National Street Medicine Conference in 2019.

The HCH team is comprised of over 30 FTE of clinical and non-clinical staff, including medical, dental and behavioral providers, and enabling staff. In 2021, the HCH program hired two new leadership staff, Medical Director, Heather Cedermaz, and Nurse Program Manager, Mia Fairbanks. Heather joined the Contra Costa Public Health Clinic Services team in 2001 and has been dedicated to our mission of improving the health of the most vulnerable as a primary care provider, specialty services in breast health and oncology and in population-based care with CommunityConnect and HCH. In addition to her role as a provider, Heather is the Nurse Practitioner Division Head. Mia Fairbanks came to us from Emergency Medical Services where she dedicated her time for 10 years as the coordinator of the Stroke and STEMI systems of care and previous 17 years working as a nurse in the emergency department. Most recently with CCHS Public Health, she has been managing the COVID vaccination and testing mobile team.

Since last year, HCH has added a health clinic at the new Delta Landing site in Pittsburg in collaboration with the Health, Housing and Homeless (H3) Division and Bay Area Community Services (BACS). As of March 2022, HCH has also begun providing mobile dental services at this site. Additionally, HCH teams continue to provide COVID-19 testing, surveillance, and vaccinations for Contra Costa homeless populations. As of June 2021, over 4,800 persons experiencing homelessness have been fully vaccinated and nearly 10,000 tests have been performed. The HCH program also provides onsite services for individuals housed at the county's hotel isolation site for persons experiencing homelessness or otherwise unable to isolate or quarantine. In 2022 hotel placements peaked in January during the Omicron surge with an average daily occupancy rate of 60 individuals. While demand has decreased during the year the site continues to house an average of 20 individuals a day.

This year, the program formally adopted a new three-year strategic plan, outlining program priorities and quality improvement focus areas. Plan goals and objectives are divided across key domains including 1) clinical services & quality improvement, 2) partnerships & communications, 3) planning & oversight, and 4) program finances & staffing. Clinical focus areas align with national quality metrics reported annually to HRSA. In 2021 HCH reported improvements in most clinical measures, signaling a return to pre-pandemic rates following 2020 declines. Promising improvements included a 15% increase in colorectal cancer screening, 6% increase in breast cancer screening, and 20% increase in depression screening with documentation of a follow up plan for individuals screening positive. Additional strategic plan priorities include continued expansion of direct Medication Assisted Treatment services, developing new workflows to support the aging homeless population, and increasing awareness, transparency, and access to program services through collaborations with stakeholder groups.