

El Intercambio



Albuquerque
HEALTHCARE
for the homeless

Spring/Summer 2010

www.abqhch.org

Serving people experiencing homelessness in Albuquerque since 1985

(505)766-5197

Expanding Our Reach: Integration Meets More Need

Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless (AHCH) tries to find individuals without homes early in their experience and support them before things deteriorate. Thanks to funding from the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)**, and the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**, two programs - Increased Demand for Services (IDS) Outreach Team and the Re-Entry Collaborative are expanding our reach to those most in need.

IDS Outreach is a transdisciplinary team that includes a Medical Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, and for the first time, a Behavioral Health Provider. Like most HCH Outreach, they go to shelters, soup kitchens, motels, and other places people without homes congregate. "We are a constant presence at different organizations who serve people without homes. We've built really strong relationships with them, and by doing so, we are all more effective at serving people" says Amanda Wilder, the IDS Behaviorist.

Part of our mission is to be a leader in providing integrated and innovative service models, and the addition of a Behaviorist to outreach has quickly produced results. Amanda explains, "A lot of clients with mental issues can't manage the structure of appointments. I go out and see people on their terms." Her role is to listen to their immediate challenge that particular day, and try to talk them through it. In addition, as a behaviorist, she builds relationships with people, earns their trust, and invites them to see her again.

"Many of the people I see have never been to our clinic. Some just are not comfortable, others may be skeptical, but whatever the reason, we are often the first step for many individuals without homes to earn our trust." It is our hope that by connecting with new clients on outreach, they will decide to make their way to our clinic, engage in integrated care, and find their way out of homelessness.



Leanne Anthony, an AHCH Medical Assistant, reaches out to clients on outreach 5 days a week.

AHCH is also reaching more people experiencing homelessness through its Re-Entry Collaborative (REC). Now in its second year of operation, the REC program is designed to assist individuals who are opiate addicted, homeless, and recently released from incarceration. "Never before had we specifically reached out to previously incarcerated individuals. We want to help them get back into society." says

Terri Ellis, Social Services Manager.

Participants in the Re-Entry Collaborative receive medical care, including a prescription for buprenorphine, and supportive case management services to find housing, public benefits, and recovery from opiate addiction and the experience of homelessness.

Buprenorphine, also known as Suboxone®, is a highly effective medication for use in the treatment of opiate addiction to persons who are homeless. This medication, like methadone, is itself an opiate medication that is administered daily to individuals who are addicted to opiates such as heroin and opiate pain pills. Unlike methadone, buprenorphine does not cause treated individuals to feel intoxicated or sedated, and has virtually no potential for causing overdose death. "Suboxone is making a big impact, but the medication alone is not enough. The formula of including wrap-around social services is truly the key to the success of this program." says Ellis.

The Increased Demand for Services Outreach Team is expected to serve 300 unduplicated clients every year, and the Re-Entry Collaborative will enroll at least 100 individuals per year. **Together, through innovation and integration as best practices, AHCH is expanding its reach to help more than 400 people a year exit homelessness.**

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Contact Information *(all 505 area code)*

Administration: 766-5197
 Medical Clinic: 242-4644
 Dental Clinic: 242-8288
 ArtStreet: 248-0817
 Harm Reduction Outreach: 266-4188
 STARS (Advocacy & Case Mgt.): 843-7611
 Residential Recovery Programs
 Casa Los Arboles: 344-6738
 Villa de Paz: 254-0320
 Tierra del Sol: 831-7815

Our Mission is to provide caring and comprehensive health and integrated supportive services, linking people experiencing homelessness to individual and collective solutions, and to be a leader in implementing innovative service models and a catalyst for solutions to homelessness and uphold a commitment to diversity and equity.

AHCH, a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization governed by a community-based Board of Directors, receives funding from federal, state, county, city and private funding sources.

Calendar Items**Board Meeting Dates:**

The AHCH Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of every month at 5:15 p.m.

AHCH Project Tour Dates:

Community members are invited to a tour of the AHCH facility and programs on the third Tuesday of the month at 1 p.m.

Please call 505-766-1178 to register.

Message from the ED

Jennifer L. Metzler, MPH
 Executive Director

In this economy, with a country engaged in often vociferous expression of strong opinions and feelings about our lot and next course(s) of action, who's right and who's wrong; with change within our organization and without and communities all around struggling to decide what's most important and how best to allocate shrinking resources in the face of daunting demands...it can get weird as ever on any given day.



As Hunter S. Thompson said, when the going gets weird, the weird turn pro.*

We at AHCH have always considered ourselves a little different. Maybe not weird per se, but distinct in our niche, serving competently and effectively a necessarily categorical and "special" population in need of care by virtue of their homelessness, its circumstances, and the subsequent deep isolation from community.

The risk for us as an organization is to become so specialized that we isolate ourselves, taking our clients with us as we become all things, creating a replica of a nurturing community that becomes in essence a bubble.

So even though our heads sometimes seem to spin in time with this fast-changing world, at AHCH we keep going at a clip, while making space to reflect. This way, we remain clear that how we do what we do, and where we go next is still up to us. It is still our obligation and our duty to make good and intentional choices, including the hardest of choices, for the community good. It is our duty to find calm and focus despite the dynamics surrounding us.

We did this through our strategic planning process last year. From August through December, we invested in a contract with the Center for Social Innovation to complete a comprehensive assessment and in-depth strategic planning process.

Now, everything follows strategy.

Changes to the organizational structure follow strategy

Annual participatory program planning by staff follows strategy

Budgeting – with or without funding cuts to contracts and grants -- follows strategy

Recruitment of new board members follows strategy

Investment in community partnerships follows strategy

Things we've yet to discover can and must follow strategy

New energy has already followed strategy

We have our map to guide us through uncertain times, on a known foundation that defines who we are and where we're going. We often quote our dear friend Parker Davidson, who taught us the concept of fidelity combined with organicity. We are accustomed to thinking of ourselves as committed to fidelity (being true to) proven models of care, while working our innovations around those models in organic ways. This Strategic Plan 2010-2013 provides the same framework for fidelity to identified strategic priorities, combined with creativity and responsiveness to environmental change. Organicity in this case includes staying open to the opportunities amidst what sometimes seems like chaos, or weirdness, so that our strategies continue to be vital and have high impact.

Thank you to Joan Mullen and Jeff Olivet of the Center for Social Innovation, and to the staff, board, consumers, community stakeholders who were a part of the process. The result is summarized in the document included here. We invite you to watch and join us as we continue to align with these 14 priorities over the next few years.

**I don't claim that Thompson's meaning out of context is entirely honored here, but please indulge me a point of departure for this letter.*

Client Expertise: Getting Serious about Inclusive Leadership

“Who better to give input than people who’ve experienced homelessness?” Says Kristin Leve, former client and current President of the Board of Directors.

AHCH Client Board Advisory Committee (CBAC) is a committee of the Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless Board of Directors. “CBAC is also a stepping stone that leads former clients to the Board of Directors,” says Leve. The committee began in 2007 and meets monthly to provide input on programs or policy to management and the AHCH Board of Directors. The group has a good pulse on the happenings on what the experience is like to be a client. “We do not make policies, but we give ideas to help improve systems and safety on campus” says Tony Pelletier. Consumer involvement in planning, implementation and evaluation of services creates effective outcomes for people without homes.

The group is making a positive impact. As a result of CBAC’s suggestions, new signage has been installed throughout the buildings and courtyard to assist clients about where the various programs are located and how to get there. Their voice was also an integral part in creating the “medline” – clients who come to AHCH in the morning simply to pick up their medications no longer have to wait, but can now use the express medline. With shorter lines and reduced waiting time, this has had a positive impact for all clients.

AHCH is not meant to be permanent health care for anyone. Because the goal of individuals should be to move on to sustained housing and

health care homes, CBAC members, based on their own experience, are designing “Transitioning out of HCH.” Both a class and a manual for clients who are moving out of AHCH’s services and onto other services, it includes: Finding a Primary Care Physician, Finding a Dentist, Getting Social Security, Housing Issues, and more. Staff members are supporting its design and implementation, but the resource is essentially meant for peer-to-peer use. Leve explains, “Ensuring the transition of care is a high priority in AHCH’s current strategic plan, and this effort is going to be an important part of it.” Another project the group is developing is called “Homelessness 101.” It’s a curriculum developed by people in Nashville for law enforcement and others on how to work with people without homes in our community. CBAC is working on adapting it to the Albuquerque community and making it available toward year-end for a variety of groups who interact with people on the streets daily.

CBAC members, based on their own experience, are designing “Transitioning out of HCH.”

As their successes grow, the group is not without their challenges. “Recruiting and retaining CBAC members are a constant challenge, we are always looking to involve more clients. Our goal is to have a client from each of AHCH’s services. It’s difficult because some may not stick around or be stable enough to participate. Others simply



President of the Board of Directors, Kristin Leve, speaking in front of the Memorial Wall at AHCH

want to move forward.” says Tony Pelletier.

For those who are involved, the experience has been very meaningful. Joseph Klein, Co-Chair, explains why volunteering for the organization in this manner is so important to him. “I’ve used every program here. If it wasn’t for this agency, I’d be lost. My success transitioning to housing is a result of the loving kindness and generosity of all the staff at AHCH.”

Critical Needs List

In addition to cash contributions, AHCH is also in need of the following items on our In-Kind Critical Needs List:

Socks (new)
Toiletries (full or travel-size)
Lip Balm
Sunscreen

Support ArtStreet This Summer!

This summer, ArtStreet will have selling tables at the **Downtown Growers and Arts & Crafts Market** located in Robinson Park (8th Street and Central). ArtStreet artists, known for their recycled art, will have small items for sale the first and third Saturday of the month from June 5th thru October 30th.

ArtStreet is a community-based project and collective open studio space where art is used as the connection for community-building for those without and those with homes. Art therapists also facilitate group closed studio sessions for client sub-groups.

If you would like to purchase art, and cannot attend the Growers Market, please call ArtStreet at (505)248-0817. All proceeds from the sale of ArtStreet art go directly to the artist(s) who created the piece. www.abqhch.org/artstreet



Untitled, Terry Begay,
Watercolor, 8x10 - \$20.00

In Memoriam

The AHCH community was saddened in April by the loss of Board Member, Anna Hayden. We miss the insightful perspective and tenacity that Anna brought to our work during her years of tenure on the Board, her endless heart and compassion for others, and her deep commitment to those who are disenfranchised and most vulnerable. The Board will hold a celebration of her life in a community gathering in late June. Please contact Jenny Metzler, 766-5197 for details.

Board Updates

AHCH sincerely thanks outgoing Board Members David K. Anderson and J.E. Jamal Martin, PhD, MPH for their volunteer service.

Recently elected Board Members:

Monica Corica, Attorney, Pegasus Legal Services for Children
Mary Ellen Gonzalez, Social Worker/Case Manager, UNM Hospital
Ruben Leyva, Program Director, YDI Gang Intervention Program.
Leslie Oakes, Associate Professor, Anderson Schools of Management
Richard Padilla, Attorney, O'Brien & Ulibarri PC
Alex Wilcox, Director of Operations, Medical Group, Presbyterian Healthcare

How You Can Help

Turn your next social event into a fundraiser for Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless! One of the greatest ways our supporters help make a difference for people without homes is by hosting private parties as fundraising event. Let your guests know ahead of time that they will be invited to make a donation to AHCH. "Pass the Hat!"

Thank you for supporting Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless' mission. Monetary contributions to fund both clinic-based and outreach programs are welcome year-round. To give a gift, please call (505) 766-5197 or visit our website at www.abqhch.org and click the "Donate Now" button for a quick, secure, and paperless way to support us.

Online giving is easy!

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Albuquerque
HEALTHCARE
 for the homeless

**Our Vision: To live in a world that is just
 and without homelessness.**