



Spring 2016

THE VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program

The mission of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP) is to provide or assure access to the highest quality health care for all homeless men, women and children in the greater Boston area.

We Offer: Primary Care, Behavioral Health, Oral Health, Family Services, Case Management, Substance Use Disorders Services, Medical Respite Care, and Street Outreach

Where We Are:

Boston Medical Center · Bridge Home · Bridge Over Troubled Waters · Cardinal Medeiros Center · Casa Esperanza · Casa Nueva Vida · Crittenton Women's Shelter · Crossroads Family Day Center · Entre Familia · Families in Transition · Father Bill's Place · Friends of the Unborn · Hope House · Jean Yawkey Place · Kingston House · Kit Clark Adult Day Health · Lindemann Mental Health Center · Massachusetts General Hospital · Nazareth Residence · New England Center & Home for Veterans · Pilgrim Shelter · Pine Street Inn · Portis Family House · Project Hope · ReVision House · Rosie's Place · Safe Harbor · Salvation Army · Shepherd House · SOAR · Sojourner House · Southampton Street Shelter · St. Ambrose · St. Anthony Shrine · St. Francis House · St. Mary's Center for Women & Children · Temporary Home for Women & Children · The Night Center · Transitions · Women's Hope · Women's Lunch Place · Woods Mullen Shelter · Multiple hotels & motels

Connect With BHCHP Online

Read our patient stories and learn how to get involved at www.bhchp.org



In Life-Or-Death Situations, BHCHP is Up for the Challenge

A message from Chief Executive Officer, Barry Bock, and President, Dr. Jim O'Connell



In our collective 60+ years of caring for Boston's homeless individuals, we have never been faced with such urgent medical emergencies and potential health crises in the city.

Our experience has taught us that the core of good medicine is the **personal relationship**. Over 30+ years, we've built trusted relationships with our patients and partners from all corners of Boston—clinicians to legislators, social service agencies to donors—relationships that empower us to deliver consistent, compassionate, and expert health care to our vulnerable patients.

Those same strong relationships recently allowed us to [mobilize to vaccinate](#) 3,000+ patients and staff in just three weeks during a recent meningococcal (a

bacteria that can cause serious infection including meningitis) outbreak as well as to [create a safe space](#) to monitor individuals struggling with our city's opioid epidemic.

Every day we respond to Boston's healthcare emergencies with innovative and compassionate solutions that bring relief to our patients.

While these times can be challenging for our program and our patients, they are also very exciting times. We continue to improve needed patient services by expanding our integrated mental health program and substance use disorder treatments. We are thrilled with our vibrant [Emerging Leaders](#) board, enthusiastic young professionals eager to bring support and awareness of our program to the next generation. Our [Consumer Advisory Board](#), comprised of our dedicated patients, counsels us on best practices to help our patients survive and more importantly, thrive.

We could not deliver our *medicine that matters* without your help. Thank you for making this possible.

This issue

[02 BHCHP's Rapid Responses to Boston's Crises](#)

[03 CAB Member Makes Support Possible for BMH Patients](#)

[04 Emerging Leaders](#)

[back cover](#) [Therapy Dog Thursdays at BMH](#)

BHCHP's Rapid Responses to Boston's Crises

BHCHP strives to provide care when and where our patients need it most. That often means being flexible and using our 30+ years of experience to address any crisis as soon as possible.

BOSTON'S HEALTH CRISIS

BHCHP'S RESPONSE

Meningococcal Disease Outbreak Hits Homeless Population

In January, February, and March of 2016, the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) confirmed five serious cases of infectious meningococcal disease in the Boston adult homeless community, two cases resulting in death. The last three patients' illnesses were not related to the first two cases making this a serious outbreak, but thankfully not an epidemic.

BHCHP Mobilizes to Inoculate 3,000+ Patients

BHCHP, in coordination with the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), engaged in mass vaccination of all homeless guests and staff at city shelters. Since we already have BHCHP staff in place at our partner shelter clinics, we were able to immediately mobilize, distribute vaccines and offer a one-time dose vaccine to the shelters' guests and staff.

Within 5 days, our BHCHP nursing staff had administered 1,200+ vaccinations. As of March 15, 2016, 3,000+ patients had been vaccinated. Our staff also identified and located 291 close contacts of the five confirmed cases, screened for symptoms and provided antibiotics. In addition, we held educational forums for staff and guests and posted information in English and Spanish at our partner shelter sites throughout the city.

Subsequently, BHCHP is working directly with epidemiologists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help perform an evaluation of the 5 cases of meningococcal disease in our population. The CDC plans to administer surveys to a small group of homeless shelter guests in order to assess any risk factors that may have contributed to infection in the 5 cases.

Since our mobilization, there have been no further cases of meningococcal disease. We thank our nursing staff, our community partners, the BPHC, and the CDC for their tremendous efforts in thwarting this meningococcal outbreak.

Opioid-Related Deaths Increase in Massachusetts

In the past two years, suspected opioid-related deaths increased by 50% in Boston. A 2013 study published by BHCHP clinician-researcher Travis Baggett, MD, MPH et al. in *JAMA Internal Medicine* identified overdose, 80% of which is opioid-induced, as the leading cause of death among BHCHP patients. Currently, we are responding to two to five overdoses per week at our main site, Jean Yawkey Place at 780 Albany Street, where the lobby is often occupied by over-sedated people with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD).

BHCHP Opens SPOT Program at Epicenter of Opioid Crisis

BHCHP has created a safe space program called the Supportive Place for Observation and Treatment (SPOT) in an existing conference room to open in late April.

The SPOT will offer engagement, support and medical monitoring and will serve as an entry way to primary care and treatment on demand for 8 individuals at a time who are at high risk of overdose from the use of substances and who would otherwise be outside on a street corner, alleyway, or alone in a public bathroom.

We believe the SPOT could not be more timely as we all struggle to seek at least a partial solution to this crisis. Governor Charlie Baker, Mayor Marty Walsh, Senator Edward Markey, and other community officials are actively seeking relevant legislation. Our staff are the first responders in this fight to save lives, and we believe the implementation of the SPOT Center is a strong step. Over the past two years we have also markedly increased our ability to provide medication assisted treatment for patients with OUDs.

CAB Member Makes Support Possible for BMH Respite Patients



CAB member Andrew Maier (left) works with BHCHP Behavioral Health Clinician David Rachlin (right) to coordinate weekend AA and SMART Recovery commitment meetings for our respite care patients at the Barbara McInnis House.

BHCHP's Consumer Advisory Board (CAB), comprised of our patients, knows all too well the struggles of homelessness, and the support that is needed to cope with them. One of our CAB members, Andrew Maier, has taken on the task of making sure our Barbara McInnis House (BMH) respite patients don't miss a single day of support groups by coordinating additional weekend substance use disorder support meetings.

After BMH patients requested more weekend groups, therapist David Rachlin, LICSW, approached the CAB for their advice. Andrew readily volunteered to

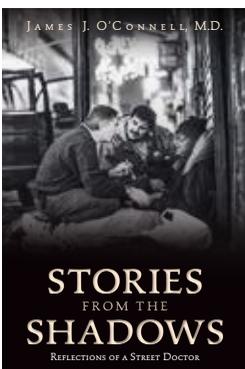
help. Since September 2015, Andrew has spent about 40 hours a month coordinating speakers for our Alcoholics Anonymous (a secular, abstinence-based program) and SMART Recovery (a non-secular, skill-based program) meetings, in addition to his attending monthly CAB meetings at BHCHP and St. Francis House. Thanks to Andrew, these groups of speakers from other support groups come to BMH on Saturdays and Sundays to share their stories and give hope to those in recovery in our respite program.

In addition to coordinating the speakers for these weekend meetings, Andrew sets up the BMH cafeteria with a podium, coffee, and chairs, meets and introduces the speakers, and personally reaches out to engage the BMH respite patients. **"I go from room to room and knock on every door," says Andrew. "I tell [the patients] what group is coming in and invite them to the meeting."** David says that because Andrew knows many of our patients, "he knows who would benefit from the meeting... and he'll try to encourage people to come when they might be a little reluctant or don't think it would work for them, so he's gotten to know folks on an individual basis."

Andrew feels that coordinating these meetings has helped him with his own recovery and self-confidence. "It has helped me with my recovery a lot," he says. "It gets me around positive people. It gets me to go to at least two meetings per week because I sit in on them. It also gets me to network a lot because I had a lot of trouble going up to people and talking to people and things like that. And in booking the commitments, that's one of the things you have to do. The first time I went with David I was real scared about going. I go by myself now."

Andrew has also identified other ways to improve needed support services by booking Spanish-speaking commitments and Narcotics Anonymous commitments, both of which are in high demand throughout the city.

Along with two other CAB members, Andrew plans on attending the 2016 National Health Care for the Homeless Conference in May. We are so grateful to Andrew for his commitment to BHCHP. David speaks for all of BHCHP when he says, "It's really great to have the CAB involved. They do so many great things [for our program]."



Stories from the Shadows Receives Wide Acclaim

Dr. O'Connell's book, *Stories from the Shadows: Reflections of a Street Doctor* continues to be a very popular read

all over the country. This poignant and transformative collection of stories and essays, penned during 30 years of caring for homeless persons in Boston, gently illuminates the humanity and raw courage of those who struggle to survive and find meaning and hope while living on the streets.

Since its publication, *Stories from the Shadows* has received wide acclaim from the Boston Globe, Fresh Air with Terry Gross, National Public Radio, and many more outlets, resulting in

standing room-only book readings by Dr. O'Connell.

"It's beautifully written. He captures these characters with the same delicacy of touch that I imagine he uses in his practice." - James Parker, editor of *The Atlantic* and *The Pilgrim*

Book Club BINGO: Are you part of a book club? Many book clubs have been reading Dr. O'Connell's book and telling us it's a wonderful book to discuss. Some book clubs are going one step further and coming for a tour of our program at Jean Yawkey Place and following it up with a volunteer activity. If you have a book club, we'd love to invite you and your group to read *Stories from the Shadows* then come down to Jean Yawkey Place for a tour of our bustling clinic, followed by a game of bingo with our respite care

 **1,000+**

the number of shelter beds within walking distance of our main clinic at Jean Yawkey Place

patients. At a recent visit, one reader had a particularly moving experience:

"After reading *Stories from the Shadows* together, my friends and I recently visited Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, where I met Michael, age 57, who only has 11 months to live. Looking into his face, and listening, I realized that he was just like any of us and we were able to share joy in the middle of difficult circumstances." - Mary I.

For more information on book signings and readings or to purchase the book, please visit our website here: bit.ly/StoriesShadows or contact Sara Pacelle at spacelle@bhchp.org or 857.654.1052.

Sox for Socks Season is Here!



Last year, our generous Sox for Socks weekend donors, community groups, corporate drives, and individual collections collected over 24,000 pairs of socks for our patients!

Each year, dedicated community groups, corporate partners, and individuals collect thousands of socks for our patients—in 2015 alone, over 24,000 pairs of socks were collected. Why are socks so important? Many homeless men and women spend their days outside in all kinds of weather and have limited access to shoes and socks. Wearing damp socks for days or weeks at a time increases the risk of skin infections and frostbite which can

lead to more serious health problems. Keeping feet clean and dry is the best way to prevent such conditions.

The Red Sox Foundation and NESN will team up with Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program for the 11th year to collect new white athletic socks from fans attending the Red Sox vs. Toronto Blue Jays games at Fenway Park from **June 3rd to 5th, 2016**. The games are great fun, with thousands of socks collected and distributed each year. If you are attending the games that weekend, please consider bringing socks with you! We will have collection tables just inside each of the entrances.

Don't have tickets to the games? Participate in **Sox for Socks** by coordinating your own sock drive. Join over 100 groups, including our largest sock drive supporter, the **Boston Red Sox**, in a seasonal drive to collect new socks for men and women living in shelters and on the streets. Hosting a sock drive at your company, with a

 **80%**

the percentage of cases of homeless individuals admitted to the ER that can be managed within our clinics

school group, or on your own is a simple, fun way to make a difference. No sizes to worry about. No colors to choose between. Just new white socks.

To coordinate your sock drive, please register online at bit.ly/SoxforSocks and join the momentum of Sox for Socks anytime during the Red Sox season! Thank you!

For more information about the drive or to request collection materials contact: Alyssa Brassil at abrassil@bhchp.org or 857.654.1046. For corporate drives, please contact Denise Comeau at dcomeau@bhchp.org or 857.654.1053.

Emerging Leaders' Success



Our Emerging Leaders Board's first annual event in November, *Toasting for Turkeys*, raised over \$6,000 for BHCHP!

BHCHP's Emerging Leaders group hit the ground running in 2016, organizing networking, fundraising and educational programs to engage Boston's young professionals. We are looking forward to another exciting year ahead.

Toasting for Turkeys, the Emerging Leaders' inaugural event in November, was a huge success! More than 100 attendees joined us for this night of fundraising and networking at Central Wharf Co., and raised over \$6,000 to benefit BHCHP. The group also recently

hosted a kickoff event for our annual Sox for Socks community sock drive at Champions Sports Bar in Copley Square and ignited a healthy competition among local companies to raise the most socks for the homeless men and women we serve. Be on the lookout for details regarding upcoming events, including our first annual Emerging Leaders Gala to be held in September, which will include awards to honor companies, community members and young professionals who have made a difference in the lives of homeless men, women and children in Boston, as well as our second annual *Toasting for Turkeys* event in November 2016!

"I was thrilled by the chance to get involved with BHCHP's Emerging Leaders Board. BHCHP staff and leadership keep us up-to-date about the great work BHCHP is doing in the Boston area and new projects and needs on the horizon. I've really enjoyed working with other young professionals to raise awareness of BHCHP, and I'm looking forward to finding new ways for the EL Board to support BHCHP!" - Board Vice Chair, Rachel Irving Pitts

To learn more about Emerging Leaders or to get involved, please visit bit.ly/BHCHPEL or contact Alyssa Brassil at abrassil@bhchp.org.

We at BHCHP are thrilled and grateful to have the following Board Members leading the Emerging Leaders program:

CHAIR:	Elizabeth Kidder, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
VICE CHAIR:	Shadi Kourosh, MD, Massachusetts General Hospital
SECRETARY:	Elizabeth Mahoney, Leaders For Today, LLC
Scott Cronin, Aerva	Stephanie Maneikis, Boston Red Sox
Rachel Irving Pitts, Mintz Levin	Catherine Meyer, Deloitte Consulting
Laura Ricci, EBSCO	Catherine Minahan, Acquia
Heather Fisher, McLean Hospital	Justin Prettyman, Red Sox Foundation
Katherine Foley, The Grommet	Nicholas Somerville, MD, MPH
Raymond Gomez, Atrius Health	Benjamin Tillson, The Boston Company Asset Management, LLC
Pierre-Jean Hanard, SharePA	Daniel Wandell, Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.
Erin Harmon, Putnam Investments	
John Heilbron, Harvard Business School	
Gregory Hendrickson, Aetna	
Anubhav Kaul, MD, Lahey Hospital and Medical Center	

OUR STORY

When you support BHCHP you reach children and adults throughout greater Boston's entire safety net community when they are not only homeless but also sick.

Founded in 1985, BHCHP employs the professional medical staff that manages the clinics and delivers the comprehensive health care at most of greater Boston's adult, family and domestic violence shelters (Pine Street Inn, The New England Center and Home for Veterans, St. Francis House, and more than 60 others). BHCHP represents the hands and face of health care for over 12,000 homeless adults and children each year at sites as diverse as Crittenton Women's Union and the crawl space under the Longfellow Bridge. BHCHP has operated in-the-black while delivering medicine that matters to Boston's most vulnerable population for 30+ years.

In addition, BHCHP staffs, manages and delivers comprehensive health

care at 2 hospital-based clinics on the campuses of Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Medical Center. BHCHP also staffs, manages and operates our own Barbara McInnis House at Jean Yawkey Place, a 104-bed medical respite facility for homeless adults with complex conditions like cancer, heart disease, pneumonia and diabetes who are too sick to live in a shelter or on the street and would otherwise require prolonged and costly hospitalization in the acute care rooms of Boston's hospitals.

When you support BHCHP you reach children and adults throughout greater Boston's entire safety net community when they are not only homeless but also sick.

Your support will bring...

- ❖ the **Healing** comfort of a respite bed for a woman with severe skin abscesses with no other place to recuperate.
- ❖ the **Dignity** of a talking glucometer for a newly blind young man enabling him to independently manage his diabetes.
- ❖ the **Trust** developed between a nurse practitioner and her Transgender patients who feel disconnected from mainstream health care.
- ❖ the **Hope** that a behavioral health clinician can instill in a patient who is struggling with addiction, and getting treatment at our suboxone clinic.

Donate now at
www.bhchp.org



SEE THE WIDE SCOPE OF OUR PROGRAM

Time after time our visitors tell us they are amazed at the care we provide our patients here at our 77,000 square foot clinical and respite facility at Jean Yawkey Place.

"We want to thank you for an excellent tour. It was an informative look at a place that I had heard and read much about, but could not visualize until now. It is important to us to know that the organization is achieving results and reaching an underserved population. Having the opportunity to tour the clinics brought everything into sharper focus."

- Ellen and John O'Connor

Please RSVP for a tour at your convenience by contacting Sara Pacelle at spacelle@bhchp.org or 857.654.1052. We await your visit!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: Brett Painchaud
Vice Chair: Barbara Blakeney, RN, MS
Treasurer: Steve Tringale
Larry Adams*
Sarah Anderson, Esq.
Joseph C. Avellone, MD
Tom Dehner
Joanne Guarino*
Christopher Lathan, MD, MS, MPH
Kevin Leary
Steven Lipiner
Sara Reid*
Lisa S. Rubinstein, MD
Leonard Simons, Esq.
Brian J. Swann, DDS, MPH
Jean C. Tempel
Steve Walsh
Derek Winbush*

*Member of BHCHP's Consumer Advisory Board

PHILANTHROPIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

Cary W. Akins, MD
James Brett
James Champy
Eileen and Jack Connors
Jennifer & Dennis Eckersley
Margaret Boles Fitzgerald
Robyn Glaser
Richard Grande
Joanne Jaxtimer
Rick Lord
Daniel P. McQuade
Jan Miller
Alfred Minahan
Edmund F. Murphy III
Thomas P. O'Neill III
Scott Rabschnuk
Susan G. Reilly
Stephen Rosenfeld, Esq.
Paul Saperstein
Peter Smyth
John D. Spooner
Kirk A. Sykes
Suzy Welch
Benaree Wiley

CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARD

Chair: Larry Adams*
Co-Chair: Caroline Smith
Raphael Garcia
Joanne Guarino*
Richard Guido
Warren Magee Jr.
Andrew Maier
Shawnette Reed
Sara Reid*
Derek Winbush*

*Member of BHCHP's Board of Directors

The View From the Bridge is a publication of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, bridging the gap between homelessness and health 24/7/365.

For additional information please contact: Carrie Eldridge-Dickson, Manager of Leadership Giving & Communications, (celdridge-dickson@bhchp.org) at 857.654.1048 or Catie Colliton, Communications Coordinator, (ccolliton@bhchp.org) at 857.654.1044.

Connect With BHCHP Online

Read our patient stories and learn how to get involved at www.bhchp.org



2,125
the number of visits our
Family Team makes in one year
to children under the age of 4

Therapy Dog Thursdays at BHCHP's Barbara McInnis House



Riley and Maestro of BMC's Healing Paws program bring joy and smiles to our respite care patients on their weekly Thursday visits.

Every Thursday morning in our atrium at Jean Yawkey Place, shrieks of delight and laughter can be heard coming from our Barbara McInnis House patients who are spending quality time petting and playing with our special guests: Charlie, a feisty and adorable Boston terrier, and Rylie and Maestro, loving and mellow black and yellow labs. All three are smart, sweet therapy dogs, trained at local correctional facilities as part of the

successful NEADS program which allows model inmates to train puppies for life as working dogs. Rylie, Maestro, and Charlie are part of the 11-dog Boston Medical Center (BMC) *Healing Paws* program, which brings comfort to patients and families at BMC and BHCHP.

With the advocacy of Nurse Practitioner Heidi Groff, Volunteer Coordinator Allison Seitz and AmeriCorps Member Lynn Zhao created the partnership with BMC's *Healing Paws* in November 2015 for our McInnis House patients who are here recovering from an acute issue. The most amazing part of the dogs' presence, Allison says, is the "ability for the dogs to bring sheer joy to people. Folks laughing, talking about their childhoods—not from a place of pain or trauma but remembering fondly."

The dogs' handlers, Kathy Harkins, Sheryl Katzanek, and Suzanne Woolston Bossert, are amazed at how quickly the dogs have become part of the fabric of BHCHP. "It's very humbling," says

Sheryl. "The dogs connect on a different level than we're able to." Sheryl, BMC's Director of Patient Advocacy and creator of *Healing Paws*, notes that the dogs are benefitting both BHCHP patients and staff by bringing joy and alleviating stress. BHCHP staff often stop by on Thursdays and are delighted to see the smiles on their patients' faces.

After a recent visit with the dogs, McInnis House patient Bryan says, "It just made me feel like I have another chance. They can recognize your pain and suffering. Now I feel so happy. I wish I could see them every day."

Besides brightening up our patients' days, Allison says the dogs give our patients hope. "Some patients can recognize that maybe their current situation doesn't lend itself well to pet ownership, but there's that hope that not only could they find a stable space, but a stable space to take care of someone else."