



BOSTON HEALTH CARE *for*
the HOMELESS PROGRAM

THE VIEW

FROM THE BRIDGE

FALL 2019

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Cover photo: Dr. Jessie Gaeta, Chief Medical Officer with a patient seen on the CareZone van.

Jesse Costa, Photographer/Multi-Media Producer, WBUR

Providing or assuring access to the highest quality health care for all homeless individuals and families in the greater Boston area since 1985.

BEYOND HOSPITALS AND CLINICS: TAKING CARE TO THE STREETS

AN UPDATE ON THE CAREZONE MOBILE HEALTH CLINIC VAN

Last fall, we shared with you news of the CareZONE mobile health van, one of the latest programs we've developed in response to the unrelenting overdose epidemic. This mobile health initiative was spearheaded by the Kraft Center for Community Health through an innovative multi-sectoral partnership with the GE Foundation, Ford Motor Company, the Hearst Foundation, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, and AHOPE, a harm reduction and syringe service program of the Boston Public Health Commission. CareZONE is a clinic on wheels that delivers on-demand substance use disorder services and preventive care from BHCHP clinicians, paired with critical outreach services from staff at AHOPE. Together this team takes to the streets at Boston's overdose "hot spots," bringing care directly to

those who are at highest risk of overdose and who were—before the van—not accessing services in brick-and-mortar health care settings.

Since the van began offering services in January of 2018, the team has made significant progress building relationships, gaining trust, and treating those in need. Our work on this program has been lauded on *WBUR* and in *The Boston Globe*. As this project is well into its second year, we wanted to share with you, our steadfast supporters, an update on our work with this complex population and our promising plans for the future, including expanded hours and a new pilot to bring the CareZONE model to youth and young adults.

The van clinic operates four days a week in three Boston neighborhoods experiencing high rates of overdose, including Downtown, Roxbury, and Fenway. When the van parks, the team spreads out on foot to engage with potential patients nearby, offering new syringes and naloxone, discarding used syringes, and building relationships. Clinicians on the van are able to offer immediate access to medication for addiction treatment and referrals to treatment programs, as well as health screenings, immunizations, chronic disease management, and referrals to other health care services.

Dr. Jessie Gaeta, BHCHP's Chief Medical Officer who works on the van, puts the idea behind the van this way: **"Moving beyond hospital-based clinics and even shelter-based clinics, we need the ability to start treatment directly on the street. The aims are to cut waiting periods out of the equation, to remove every last barrier to getting help, and to bring state-of-the-art care directly to people who need it, where and when they need it."**

Dr. Gaeta and her team initially expected that people would be slow to trust the CareZONE team given that it was new and the target patient population has

"BY DELIVERING SERVICES TO PEOPLE RIGHT WHERE THEY ARE, WE WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR: NO MATTER WHERE YOU'RE AT, YOU HAVE WORTH. WHERE SOMEONE MIGHT SEE STRUGGLE, WE SEE RESILIENCE AND GREAT STRENGTH."

- Dr. Jessie Gaeta

been highly marginalized and has faced stigma in many health care settings. It's been a tremendous help that AHOPE already has an established outreach presence and they are well known among people actively using drugs. In this way, public health advocates from AHOPE have helped to broker trust between patients and clinicians. The team has been transparent and reliable, showing up at the same neighborhoods every week at the same times, regardless of the weather. Meeting people's material needs—for example, gloves in winter and bottled water in summer—has further brought them into relationship with van staff and opened the door to clinical engagement.

In this way, the van is helping BHCHP fulfill a cornerstone of our mission by reaching those who are most disconnected from care. One in three of the new patients on the van has gone on to receive services at a brick-and-mortar BHCHP site, indicating that the van is an effective tool for bridging people to other forms of critically important health care.

The van has also been an integral part of BHCHP's rapid, front-line response to treating newly detected cases of HIV and Hepatitis A among people who inject drugs. Because it was not tied to one location, the CareZONE team was able to quickly mobilize directly to places where new infections were found. Van staff worked to prevent the spread of infection by engaging in treatment those who were newly infected but not engaged in health

AS OF JUNE 2019, BHCHP STAFF PROVIDED VITAL MEDICAL CARE TO

228

UNIQUE PEOPLE AT HIGH RISK FOR LIFE-THREATENING, DRUG-RELATED COMPLICATIONS THROUGH THE CAREZONE INITIATIVE.

OVER THE FIRST 180 CLINIC DAYS,

55%

OF THE VAN'S PATIENTS WERE COMPLETELY NEW TO BHCHP SERVICES. OF THESE, 30% WENT ON TO RECEIVE BHCHP SERVICES AT OTHER SITES.

care services. The team also provided testing for others at risk, education about ways to decrease transmission of infection, and vaccinations.

Based on the success so far and in response to patient demand, the van is now beginning to scale up. Starting this fall, the van will offer two more clinical sessions per week for adults, in the West End and Roxbury. Additionally, BHCHP and The Kraft Center will be partnering with The Grayken Center for Addiction Medicine at Boston Medical Center and Bridge Over Troubled Waters to bring the van's model to youth and young adults. This new expansion of the *CareZONE* initiative will be a 12-month pilot program, starting with a 3-month needs assessment to determine the locations and hours where youth and young adults could benefit most.

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- Dr. Jessie Gaeta

The van has highlighted the stark material, health care, and substance use service needs of people who inject drugs in Boston. *CareZONE's* success in engaging and treating this high-risk population demonstrates the promise of low-threshold, mobile addiction and preventive care services. BHCHP's Director of Research, Dr. Travis Baggett is leading a talented research team who will evaluate the van's next phase, an effort that will inform the van's development moving forward and seek to maximize its impact. As Dr. Gaeta says, "By delivering services to people right where they are, we want to make it clear: No matter where you're at, you have worth. Where someone might see struggle, we see resilience and great strength."



Gala co-chairs Dan Koh and Amy Sennett with Honorees Paul English and Mayor Marty Walsh

WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM A LARGE, DIVERSE, AND ENTHUSIASTIC AUDIENCE, OVER \$1 MILLION WAS RAISED—CRITICAL FUNDS THAT POWER THE EXTENSIVE AND COMPLEX ARRAY OF SERVICES OFFERED TO OVER 11,000 PATIENTS A YEAR.

2019 BHCHP GALA OFFERS LESSONS IN HUMANITY, HUMILITY...AND HOPE

OVER 650 GUESTS COME TOGETHER TO HONOR MAYOR MARTY WALSH AND TECHNOLOGY ENTREPRENEUR PAUL ENGLISH; OVER \$1 MILLION RAISED!

At BHCHP's 2019 Spring **"Medicine that Matters" Gala**, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Jessie Gaeta spoke urgently about the pressing and complex health care needs of Boston's most marginalized citizens...and passionately about the comprehensive and compassionate health care delivery system BHCHP offers them. She spoke of BHCHP's belief in the capacity for all people "to begin anew, to fight back against the odds: It's not only what gives our patients their humanity...it's what gives us ours."

With that belief put into practice every day and night of the year by the staff of BHCHP, she—along with some of Boston's most dedicated corporate, medical, and political leaders—came to honor two of Boston's most dedicated champions for the human right of access to world-class health care and tireless advocates for Boston's homeless community:

Mayor Marty Walsh and technology entrepreneur Paul English. The event was co-chaired by Amy Sennett, Head of Legal at Catalant Technologies and Dan Koh, Partner at HqO. Karen Holmes Ward, Director of Public Affairs at WCVB-TV, graciously served as the event's host.

Governor Charlie Baker presented Mayor Walsh with the **Dr. Jim O'Connell Award**. Governor Baker cited Mayor Walsh's adult life as a dedicated public servant, finding greatest personal fulfillment when out working for and with "his people"... all citizens of Boston, but especially for the poorest and most fragile among us. Where BHCHP's clinicians serve day-in/day-out—on the streets, in the dark shadows, in its 30 sites throughout the city, there too is Marty Walsh—united and committed practitioners of advocacy and action. Humanity at its best.



From top left: WCVB-TV's Karen Holmes Ward, BHCHP CEO Barry Bock, Stephanie Maneikis of the Boston Red Sox, and Erin Bradley, wife of Red Sox outfielder Jackie Bradley Jr. and Gala Committee member. Eileen and Jack Connors, Honorary Gala Co-Chairs. Claudia Arrigg, MD, Katie Koh, MD/BHCHP Street Team, Howard Koh, MD/MPH, Jim O'Connell, MD and Jill Roncarati, PhD.

Jack Connors, Jr., presented Paul English with the **Tim Russert Award**—given to Paul for his dedication to both raising public consciousness and actively engaging in the delivery of services that address the pressing and causal issues of health and homelessness. Jack and award-winning author Tracy Kidder noted Paul's "authenticity and integrity", speaking of his capacity to offer both large and small acts of kindness to strangers in need. Through his own street work serving the poor and by partnering with the staff of BHCHP, Paul has mobilized "best practices"—and some of the most capable and caring people—uniting smart philanthropy and best-in-class health and social service care. Again, humanity at its best.

With generous support from a large, diverse, and enthusiastic audience, over \$1 million was raised—critical funds that power the extensive and complex array of services offered to over 11,000 patients a year. We take particular note of generous sponsors including our Presenting Sponsors: Bank of America and Jean Tempel and our Dignity & Respect Providers: Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA, Brigham Health, Massachusetts General Hospital, & Partners HealthCare, Consilgli Construction Co., CVS Health, Kevin Leary & Mary Kelleher and VPNE, Select Demo Services, LLC, and Suzy & Jack Welch.

And to everyone who joined us that night and showed such commitment to and support of our mission and work: We thank you! We could not be more grateful—you, members of the BHCHP family!

FOUR ATTRIBUTES DEFINE OUR CARE AT BHCHP:



Our patients face many challenges and indignities each day. We care for them with **DIGNITY**, respect, and admiration for their courage and resiliency.



Our highly competent caregivers deliver the most **EFFECTIVE** care to our patients, whose medical and behavioral health conditions are profound and complex.



Our staff's deep **COMPASSION** for our patients fuels our work. Healing starts with a trusting relationship between our staff and patients.



The needs of our patients are constantly changing as they live with instability, trauma, and illness. We work hard to **INNOVATE** to address their complex and changing needs.



Vivian presenting her hand-made origami cranes to Gov. Charlie Baker and Mayor Marty Walsh

A PATIENT'S THANKS FOR MEDICAL RESPITE

VIVIAN WENT FROM PATIENT TO VOLUNTEER

Vivian was working as a housekeeper for a number of years in Boston and living alone in a modest apartment, when a pain in her chest became so bad that she missed weeks of work—resulting in significant financial hardship. She didn't know it yet, but it was a tumor. Vivian was confused by the health care system and fearful of accessing it. Eventually the pain became too much and she thankfully went to the emergency room at Boston Medical Center (BMC).

"I DON'T WANT TO COME BACK AS A PATIENT; I WANT TO COME BACK AS A VOLUNTEER."

- Vivian

The team at the ER was able to address Vivian's immediate pain with the tumor, but she had lost her housing as a result of the ensuing financial struggles from loss of income and her inability to pay rent. Vivian needed chemotherapy and radiation, and somewhere to recover comfortably and safely for the duration of the aggressive treatments that her illness required.

That's where BHCHP's medical respite program came in.

When Vivian first came to BHCHP, she was severely underweight and had what one of our nurses called one of the worst cases of breast cancer she had ever seen. BHCHP's Barbara McInnis House is a 104-bed medical respite facility right across the street from Boston Medical Center. Vivian was able to get her outpatient treatments at BMC while recuperating at McInnis House where our staff managed her pain, performed the dressing changes, calmed her fears, made her feel comfortable and loved, and eventually taught her how to properly change her dressings to prevent infection. Vivian shared with us that, "If they didn't have Barbara McInnis House, I wouldn't be here."

If you've ever met our patient Vivian before, she'll greet you with a warm smile and likely a big hug. She might be wearing a pair of beaded earrings that she made herself. If you're not careful, she might even try to play cupid and match you up with one of her many other friends.

As Vivian's health improved and she was able to become more independent, she moved from our McInnis House to our Stacy Kirkpatrick House. Kirkpatrick House is a 20-bed stepdown medical respite facility in Jamaica Plain for patients who don't require around-the-clock nursing care, but still need somewhere other than the street or shelter to recover from their ailments.

Many patients love Kirkpatrick House's calm, quiet pace away from the hustle and bustle of Boston, and Vivian was no exception. As she gained her strength and started to feel better at Kirkpatrick House, Vivian's go-getter attitude became apparent. Soon, she started teaching origami to other patients, and even made an origami dove to go on top of the Christmas tree in the common area for the holidays.

"I CAN SURVIVE LIKE THIS BECAUSE OF BHCHP. IT'S IMPORTANT NOT ONLY FOR ME, BUT FOR EVERYBODY."

- Vivian

Thanks to a new clinical trial, Vivian is feeling stronger and healthier, and her hair is growing back in, long enough to be held in a neat ponytail with butterfly clips. Although she now lives in a quiet apartment where she looks forward to watching the sunset out her window every night, Vivian is a weekly fixture at our Kirkpatrick House on Wednesdays, where she gardens and waters the plants. As Vivian had once told Barbara Cocci, the Director of Kirkpatrick House, "I don't want to come back as a patient; I want to come back as a volunteer."

When Vivian decided to have her story shared at our annual Gala, she eagerly offered to show her appreciation to donors by making over 350 origami doves that graced the dinner tables. She saw it as her way of thanking all our supporters for making her care possible.

An engineer and a university-level lecturer in her home country, Vivian misses teaching, but is happy to be getting back in the classroom, this time as a student—even if it's her second time going to high school. A lifelong learner, she's working to expand her vocabulary in English by reading SAT and GMAT books.

Vivian says, "I can survive like this because of BHCHP. It's important not only for me, but for everybody. So I come back again to say thank you."



Yolanda Starling, RN, providing hope and dignity.

PROVIDING OUR PATIENTS WITH ENDURING SUPPORT: BHCHP'S HOPE & DIGNITY SOCIETY

Without the loyal support of our community, BHCHP would not be able to provide our patients with the high-quality health care that they deserve.

The members of our Hope & Dignity Society play an important role in this support system by making monthly contributions to our program.

Recurring donations not only help by providing scheduled, reliable support for our program, but they also make giving easier for the donor. After joining our Hope & Dignity Society, your donations will automatically be deposited each month. If you ever need to change your payment information, or stop giving, all you have to do is contact us.

Just like the rest of the BHCHP community, members of our Hope & Dignity Society are committed to ensuring that everyone has access to critical, life-saving health care. In the words of one member of the Hope & Dignity Society:

"In giving to BHCHP, we want to support the tremendous leaders who lift up those often forgotten or overlooked, and who recognize that everyone, no matter their circumstance, is capable of connection, resilience, and love. It is an honor to be able to be a small part of what our family believes is life's most important work: never looking away, but instead seeking the darkest corners, and letting in a bit of light."

Please consider joining the Hope & Dignity Society today and help us to let a bit of light into our patients' lives.



If you are interested in becoming a monthly donor, please contact Kira Venturini at kventurini@bhchp.org.



"HONORED TO HEAR THEIR STORIES"

Andrew Grant

HOW VOLUNTEERING AT BHCHP OPENED UP ONE MEDICAL STUDENT TO A NEW PERSPECTIVE

By Andrew Grant

Volunteering as a Recovery Group Coordinator at BHCHP for the past year has been one of the most important and eye-opening experiences of my life.

Before volunteering at the Barbara McInnis House medical respite facility, where I worked alongside BHCHP Consumer Advisory Board Member Andy Maier, I didn't have a fully formed idea about what it meant to be homeless. I have been fortunate enough to never

have experienced homelessness myself, and I have had only fleeting interactions with people who have been homeless themselves, so my understanding was limited at best.

Growing up, I always assumed that people who were homeless and/or addicted to drugs were in that situation solely because of poor choices they had made. It was easy to write them off as "bad" or "selfish" people who had somehow wronged their family or chosen drugs over relationships and careers. After hearing many of the stories of patients' past experiences—how they became homeless or how their addiction started—I have come to realize that my way of thinking was wrong and unfair.

Homelessness is not a choice, and, more often than not, it is caused by a series of adverse events that may not have even involved a true decision at all. Some homeless people became disabled and lost their jobs, some are at the mercy of the disease that is addiction, but none of

them chose to be homeless out of laziness or a lack of desire to be a good person.

At every recovery group meeting that I helped organize or attend, I was in awe of how much the patients at BHCHP had gone through. They had lost parents, children, friends, houses, jobs—even themselves, but they kept fighting their addiction because they wanted to do right by the people that love and care about them. The adversity that BHCHP's patients face is unparalleled and I have so much respect for them and how hard they have worked to overcome it.

I feel honored to have been able to hear their stories, and I will carry this new perspective into my career as a physician. I hope that someday soon, the rest of our community can open their minds and find a way to better understand homelessness and addiction and familiarize themselves with the people these issues affect.

Andrew Grant is a former BHCHP volunteer and a current medical student at New York Medical College.



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