

THE VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program / Fall/Winter 2012

This issue: Governor Deval Patrick Visits BHCHP back cover / New Outreach Team p2 / Well-Rounded Care p3 www.bhchp.org

Our Mission: 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, Medical Respite Care, and Outreach



We Are: Physicians, Dentists, Registered Nurses, Social Workers, Building & Maintenance Staff, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Administrative Staff, Psychiatrists, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counselors, Food Services Staff, Case Managers, and Dental Assistants

LEADING MEDICINE THAT MATTERS: BHCHP'S CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER GOES BACK TO SCHOOL TO BETTER SERVE HOMELESS PATIENTS

Because homeless men, women and children are living on the streets or in shelters, many of those who are managing a chronic disease or who suffer from severe illness are unable to get consistent treatment that could help save their lives.

To combat this issue, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program provides access to the highest quality care for the city's most vulnerable residents, relying on a team of creative and dedicated clinical leaders to direct our organization's programs and services.

Leaders like chief medical officer, Dr. Monica Bharel, who was one of five physicians selected to complete Harvard Medical School's highly competitive Mongan Commonwealth Fund Fellowship in Minority Health Policy last year.

The fellowship gives physicians academic and professional development training, focusing on how to implement system-based improvements to enhance health care access for those who are more likely to go without—or without enough—quality medical care because of their race, ethnicity, citizenship status or economic background.

Dr. Bharel credits her time as a fellow and public health student with giving her the tools to better navigate the intricacies of homeless health care and helping her to see how collaboration

between various sectors—like finance, government, and community advocacy—is critical to providing quality care.

"I got to learn from local, national and world [public health] leaders, and I was able to have one-on-one discussions with them," says Dr. Bharel, of her fellowship experience. "That helped me to see them as just people, trying to do good for other people."

It's a simple commitment; and the same one that brought Dr. Bharel to work for BHCHP almost a decade ago. In 2003, she came on staff as medical director for our Barbara McInnis House medical respite program after working at the St. Francis and Long Island Shelter clinics as a medical student. Within a couple of years, she was promoted to lead the medical arm of BHCHP'S entire network of more than 70 clinical sites.

continued inside on page 4

"My personal motto is that I always want [BHCHP] to be somewhere that I could send my family member and be confident that they're getting good care."

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: Linda O'Connor, Director of Development, (lconnor@bhchp.org) at 857.654.1050 or Alicia Lochar, Communications & Donor Relations Coordinator, (alochard@bhchp.org) at 857.654.1044

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK: NEW OUTREACH TEAM CARES FOR PATIENTS WHEREVER THEY ARE

Problem-solver. Advocate. Coach. Leader. Nicole Collymore is all of the above, and more.

Whether it's bringing a blender to a newly housed woman recovering from oral surgery who can't eat solid foods, attending a court hearing to help a patient on the brink of eviction advocate for himself, or simply calling to remind someone of an upcoming doctor's appointment, Nicole is there for her patients.

As one of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program's new community support workers, Nicole plays a critical role in BHCHP's goal of ending chronic homelessness. She teams up with a primary care provider to deliver in-home care to highly vulnerable, newly housed patients. The innovative home care team reaches out to patients experiencing crises related to medical, social, behavioral health and addiction problems that may otherwise endanger their tenancy and result in a return to homelessness.

Nicole's job is to help the homeless men and women she works with to minimize sources of stress that can become barriers

to receiving critical medical care. Her work, made possible by a generous grant from the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation, provides both currently and formerly homeless individuals with a constant link to health education and accessible medical services.

While there's never a typical day for Nicole, here's a snapshot of the kind of work she does:

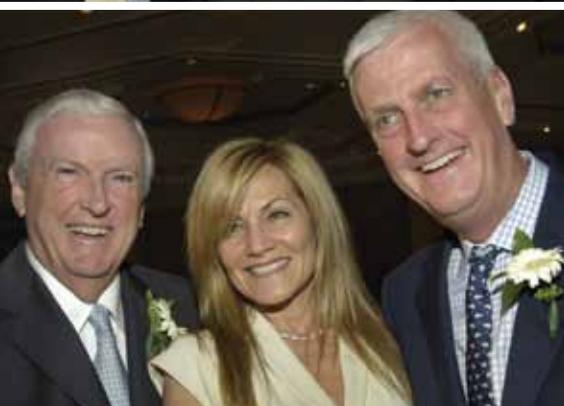
5AM Nicole stands in line at a hospital's methadone clinic with Nick,* a patient who is struggling with heroin withdrawal. The patient is visibly upset when they find out that there are no appointment slots left for the day. But, Nicole helps him to stay calm and contacts a provider from BHCHP's suboxone program, an office-based opioid treatment alternative to methadone, to see if he can get an appointment later in the day.

7AM Nicole grabs a quick cup of coffee and heads to her office at Jean Yawkey Place to catch up on her paperwork, reviewing the appointment notes of the three team members she supervises, who manage caseloads of 25 patients each.

11:15AM At one of her first visits, Nicole travels to Lynn and checks in on Michelle, a patient living with HIV, who has missed a few appointments. The patient is excited to welcome Nicole and Carole Hohl, the physician's assistant she regularly partners with, into her home and show them around. After Carole examines her, she determines that the patient needs a more thorough evaluation at a local hospital; and Nicole helps her patient make arrangements to get there.

4:45PM Before heading home after a long day of home visits, Nicole reconnects with Nick at BHCHP's outpatient clinic. Because he was identified as one of our highest need patients by his primary care team, he was fast-tracked to receive a same-day consultation with a clinician from the suboxone program. ■

* Patients' names have been changed.



BHCHP'S BIG NIGHT WAS AN OVERWHELMING SUCCESS!

Thank you to everyone who helped make our 2012 "Medicine that Matters" Gala a tremendous success! Our third annual gala raised **more than \$485,000** in financial gifts supporting our mission to provide the homeless men, women and children of Boston with the highest quality health care. Our patients and caregivers offer their sincere gratitude to Gala Chair Charlie Baker of General Catalyst Partners, the Gala Committee and all of our guests for their overwhelming generosity.

It takes a very large family to make BHCHP's work possible. From our 250 medical staff and administrators, to our volunteers and donors, we come together to support the proposition of this basic human right: access to high quality health care. We would not have been able to put on such a fabulous event were it not for the kindness of our presenting sponsor, **The Shields Family**, and the partnership of our other event sponsors whose generosity helped to make the night so special.

Top: (L-R) Gala presenting sponsor Tom Shields, honoree Dr. Troy Brennan of CVS Caremark and BHCHP's president, Dr. Jim O'Connell; Bottom: Tim Russert Award honorees, (L-R) Hill Holliday's Jack Connors, Karen Kaplan and Mike Sheehan

BARBARA MCINNIS HOUSE PROVIDES WELL-ROUNDED CARE EVEN AFTER PATIENTS LEAVE

What happens to our patients once they leave the Barbara McInnis House?

Well, if he or she is lucky, they'll end up like Luis Rodriguez.

Since leaving our care, his job, housing and health are all stable. A long way away from where he was when he was he came to us last year at the age of just 21. He'd relocated from Puerto Rico to Boston to be closer to medical treatment after the most recent relapse in his 10-year battle with leukemia, but shortly after found himself sleeping on the streets.

Luis left an abusive home life, and moved into a shelter after a few scary days of sleeping on the streets. He stayed there until his doctor—concerned that shelter living could be unhealthy for his already weakened immune system—referred him to Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program.

Luis was admitted to our Barbara McInnis House, a 104-bed medical respite home for Boston's homeless men and women whose illness may not be severe enough to require hospital admission, but for whom returning to life on the streets or in shelter would put their health at serious risk. McInnis House provides its patients with three healthy meals each day and 24/7 medical care. Patients stay at McInnis House for about 2-3 weeks on average,

and receive behavioral health and case management services to complement their health care as they recover.

"The food was great, the bed was comfortable and I met good friends," Luis says of his one-month stay while recuperating from a bone marrow transplant.

His case manager, Carolyn Matheson, worked hard to get him connected to benefits and services, ultimately helping him find temporary housing in a supportive residential facility for homeless youth. Once Luis was able to get housing of his own, he returned to the facility as a staff member, assisting with client intakes.

But, just as Luis was learning to survive on his own and taking college biology and calculus courses to pursue his dream of becoming a doctor, he became the legal guardian of three of his younger siblings. His two brothers and sister—ages 8, 13 and 16—moved into his small Charlestown apartment. When another brother—Carlos, 22—who had also been homeless moved in, Luis put his education goals on hold while he worked to support all of them.

"I don't ever, ever want them to be homeless," Luis says of his difficult decision to leave school to help his siblings.

"He's the kind of person who would've stayed homeless his whole life, he would just accept it," he says of his brother Carlos, who recently began attending a full-time chef training program.

"I just want to focus on helping him get through school."

Just because Luis is no longer in respite care, doesn't mean we've stopped caring about what happens to him. Carolyn, who sat in on his interview for this story, persistently reminds him that college application season is approaching and offers to help him with his essay.

For now though, his priority is still his family first. Until Carlos finishes his training program, Luis plans to work as an assistant in a dental clinic to support his family. ■

Luis's story is just one example of the resilience and courage that we see in so many of the homeless men, women and children we serve each day. Your generous support of our work allows us to sustain the programs and staffing we need in order to help our patients strengthen their minds and bodies, so that they can begin the journey of rebuilding their lives.



Luis Rodriguez

GOVERNOR DEVAL PATRICK VISITS BHCHP

continued from back page

increase the depth and breadth of its services and meet the evolving needs of the homeless population. We continue to develop programs that are innovative, cost-saving models of care that reduce high rates of unnecessary hospitalizations and emergency room usage.

We were so grateful to have the opportunity to thank Gov. Patrick personally for his commitment to health care, and thrilled that he could see for himself why BHCHP has been recognized nationally as a model for

outstanding health care delivery to an extremely vulnerable population. He was genuinely impressed by BHCHP's work and commended our staff for their commitment to providing our patients with compassionate and empathetic care—a critical component of our work that we are proud to share with all who come through our doors. ■

If you haven't had the opportunity to see our work at Jean Yawkey Place yet, we invite you to come for your own tour. Please contact Linda O'Connor, Director of Development at 857.654.1050 for more information.

"We continue to develop programs that are innovative, cost-saving models of care that reduce high rates of unnecessary hospitalizations and emergency room usage."

LEADING MEDICINE...

continued from front page

Since returning to BHCHP after completing the fellowship, she's switched her focus from the day-to-day details of running our clinical sites to developing and implementing macro-level improvements that will help deliver care to her patients in the most effective way possible.

"My personal motto is that I always want [BHCHP] to be somewhere that I could send my family member and be confident that they're getting good care," says Dr. Bharel.

"I really want us to strive for giving the best quality of care we can. And it's not just about having people work harder, because the staff is already so dedicated and so hard working," she continues. "We're thinking about how to improve our processes and work smarter."

Dr. Bharel graduated from Harvard School of Public Health last May with a Masters in Public Health, focusing on Health Policy and Management. Still, with everything else on her plate, she most values time spent caring for her patients.

"When I interact with patients it reminds me of why I'm working toward system-based improvements," says Dr. Bharel. "I get incredible energy from taking care of them, because they're so resilient and so hopeful." ■

Upon graduation from the Harvard School of Public Health, Dr. Bharel was honored with the Albert Schweitzer Award, which is given to a graduating HSPH student whose work is characterized by a "reverence for life" and who has sought, as expressed by Dr. Schweitzer, to "make my life my argument." Congratulations, Monica!



Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Monica Bharel, examines a patient at Barbara McInnis House

Donate

You can make a big difference in the health and comfort of a homeless man, woman or child with a small gift. You can't imagine how much these items help our caregivers to establish and maintain contact and you can't imagine how much our patients appreciate your kindness.

We can never have too many of these items:

- new white socks
- new underwear (men's and women's)
- diapers
- new sneakers
- new flip flops
- gift cards:
 - CVS (\$5 and up)
 - Dunkin' Donuts (\$5 and up)
 - McDonald's (\$5 and up)
 - Stop & Shop (\$20 and up)
 - Target (\$20 and up)

Why Socks? Access to socks is often limited for homeless men and women living in shelters and on the streets. Common infections such as athlete's foot thrive when damp socks are worn for days at a time. Frostbite is common in colder months, sometimes resulting in toe amputations. The best way to prevent such conditions is to keep feet clean and dry—very difficult if you spend your days outside. That's why BHCHP has a daily foot clinic at St. Francis House and regularly scheduled foot clinics at other primary care sites.

Contact volunteer@bhchp.org or call Alyssa Brassil at **857.654.1046** for more information, to find out about other small gift needs or to make arrangements for delivery.

Board of Directors

Chair: Brett Painchaud
Vice Chair: Barbara Blakeney, RN, MS
Treasurer: Steve Tringale
Larry Adams*
Sarah Anderson, Esq.
Bruce Bullen
Tom Dehner
John Griffin*
Joanne Guarino*
Christopher Lathan, MD, MS, MPH
Kevin Leary
Steven Lipiner
Louise Mercurio*
Peter C. Pedro, Jr.
Hap Redgate
Michael Reynolds*
Leonard Simons, Esq.
Derek Winbush*

* Member of BHCHP's Consumer Advisory Board

Philanthropic Advisory Council

Cary W. Akins, MD
James Brett
James Champy
Eileen and Jack Connors
George Donnelly
Jennifer & Dennis Eckersley
Robyn Glaser
Richard Grande
Julie Henry
Joanne Jaxtiner
Rick Lord
Daniel P. McQuade
Jan Miller
Alfred Minahan
Thomas P. O'Neill III
Mitchell T. Rabkin, MD
Scott Rabschnuk
Susan G. Reilly
Stephen Rosenfeld, Esq.
Paul Saperstein
Jack Shaughnessy, Sr.
Peter Smyth
John D. Spooner
Kirk A. Sykes
Suzy Welch
Benaree Wiley

Community Outreach Board

Chair: Scott Cronin
Aimee Cronin
Mike Fenton
Stephanie Gallegos
Raymond Gómez
Carey Haglund
Michael Metivier
Michael Pratt
Krissy Talevi

Consumer Advisory Board

Chair: Derek Winbush*
Co-Chair: Larry Adams*
Randy Fisher
John Griffin*
Joanne Guarino*
Cassie Hubbs
Louise Mercurio*
Shawnette Reed
Michael Reynolds*
Caroline Smith
Jay Tankanow
Rafael Tejada

* Member of BHCHP's Board of Directors

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 for Homeless Veterans, St. Francis House and more than 80 others)* BHCHP is the hands and face of health care for over 12,000 homeless adults and children each year at sites as diverse as Horizons for Homeless Children 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 over 27 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 and at a clinic on the backstretch at Suffolk Downs Racetrack. 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. ■

“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.”

* **A partial list of BHCHP's partners includes:** Above & Beyond/Brookview, Anchor Inn, Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Boston Family Shelter, Boston Living Center, Boston Medical Center, Bridge to Recovery, Brookview House, Cardinal Medeiros Center, Carolina Hills Shelter, Casa Esperanza, Casa Nueva Vida, Church of the Advent, Crittenton Women's Union, Crossroads, DOVE, Entre Familia, Families in Transition, Father Bill's & Mainspring, Finex House, Hildebrand Family Shelter, hopeFound, Horizons for Homeless Children, Housing Families, Inc., Joelyn's Family Home, Kingston House, Latinas & Ninos, Lindemann Center, Long Island Shelter, Margaret's House, Mass General Hospital, Massachusetts Mental Health Center, Millenium House, Nazareth Residence, New England Center for Homeless Veterans, Paul Sullivan Housing, Pilgrim Shelter, Pine Street Inn, Portis Family House, Project Hope, Queen of Peace Shelter, Renewal House, Revision House, Rosie's Place, Safe Harbor, Project SOAR, Sojourner House, South End Community Health Center, St. Francis House, St. Mary's Women's & Infant Center, St. Ambrose, The Eighth Pole at Suffolk Downs, Women's Lunch Place, Woods-Mullen Shelter

News

- ▶ With the help of **The Red Sox Foundation and NESN**, Red Sox fans brought new white athletic socks to our 7th Annual Sox for Socks event at Fenway Park in August. We collected 5,000 pairs of socks for our patients and \$1,000 in cash donations to support our work, bringing our seven year total up to more than 85,000 pairs of socks collected and \$10,000 donated! Our sincere thanks to everyone who helped to make this year's event a grand slam!
- ▶ BHCHP's founder and president, **James O'Connell, MD** is the 2012 recipient of the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism. The Schweitzer Prize recognizes an individual whose life example has significantly improved the health of people in the United States and/or abroad, and whose commitment to service influences and inspires others.
- ▶ The *Boston Business Journal* recognized **Robert Taube, Ph.D., MPH**, BHCHP's executive director, with a Lifetime Achievement Award at their 2012 Champions in Health Care Event in August. The award honors those who have made an indelible contribution to health care in Massachusetts.
- ▶ **Catherine "Cam" McDonough, RN** received the 2012 Community Partnership Award for her work with Casa Esperanza. Cam was recognized for her excellent clinical skills, strong team work and communication and for going above and beyond to support clients on their road to recovery.



Red Sox Third baseman, Will Middlebrooks, collects sock donations with Sox for Socks volunteers

YOUR SUPPORT WILL BRING...

the **Healing** comfort of a family physician's visit to a mother and her 2 children coping with their transition into homelessness.

the **Dignity** of dentures for a 42-year-old man who had forgotten what a difference a smile can make.

the **Trust** that a therapist can bring to a deeply depressed 46-year-old man who cries at each of his medical visits to our Pine Street Inn clinic.

the **Hope** of a respite bed at Barbara McInnis house for a 56-year-old woman experiencing the pain of chronic arthritis and the exhausting side effects of the only medicine that will keep her out of a wheel chair.

Donate Now

www.bhchp.org

MEDICINE THAT MATTERS



Top: Gov. Patrick with BHCHP staff; **Bottom left:** A patient gives Gov. Patrick a tour of her room at Barbara McInnis House; **Bottom right:** Gov. Patrick visited with patients at Barbara McInnis House, BHCHP's medical respite facility

GOVERNOR DEVAL PATRICK VISITS BHCHP

A message from BHCHP's Executive Director, Bob Taube, PhD, MPH and President, Jim O'Connell, MD

Last month, we were pleased to welcome Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick to visit to our headquarters in the South End. It was our hope that Gov. Patrick would leave his visit with a sense of pride in all that his administration has done to promote access to quality health care in Massachusetts. He did just that after meeting with our patients and caregivers at Jean Yawkey Place, the first facility of its kind in the nation to unite primary care, behavioral health, oral health, and respite care all under one roof.

Gov. Patrick toured our Barbara McInnis House, where he had an opportunity to hear directly from patients that receiving care at the medical respite facility had saved their lives—removing them from the chaos and instability of life in shelters or on the streets and allowing them to get well in a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment.

We are fortunate to live in Massachusetts, where all levels of government are committed to providing universal access to healthcare for all residents of the Commonwealth—including those who are homeless. Because of this, BHCHP is able to use public and private partnerships and funding in order to...

continued inside on page 3