Building Healthy Communities: The Role of Neighborhood Health Teams

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Kelly Toth, Hartford Healthcare Medical Group
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Neighborhood Health
Building Healthier Communities One Patient At A Time

2024 CCEH Annual Training Institute Workshop

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Mission

Improve lives by championing health equity and increasing accessibility to medical, behavioral and social services regardless of insurance, socioeconomic status, education, ability to pay, race, gender identity or sexual orientation through community outreach and neighborhood based clinics.

Approach

• Lessons learned throughout the pandemic lead to development of mobile testing and vaccines
• Expanding on those lessons learned, Neighborhood Health was formed to ensure the most at-risk community members have access to urgent and preventative care
• Deploy mobile care teams to trusted community locations, consisting of an advanced practitioner, RN, MA, care manager, registration staff and public safety officer
• Phased approach to expand clinical offerings and geographic footprint since August 16, 2021 inception

Goals

• Build trust within the communities in order to improve overall health and wellbeing by removing barriers to care
• Provide affordable, accessible, and equitable health care
• Collaborative approach with regional community health teams to establish locations in priority zip codes in support of the community health needs assessment findings
• Patient-centric and holistic care model with focus on social determinants of health
Neighborhood Health Expansion

**Phase 1**  
Aug 2021 – Mar 2022  
- **Footprint:** Hartford & Northwest Regions  
- **Services:** Glucose, urine dip, COVID-19 and urine pregnancy tests, and COVID-19 vaccine  
- **Team:** One Core Team

**Phase 2**  
Apr 2022 – Feb 2023  
- **Footprint:** East & Central Regions  
- **Services:** A1C, Cholesterol, Hepatitis C, Hemoglobin, HIV, Flu/RSV and Complete Metabolic Panel tests, Tdap, Gardasil, Pneumonia, Shingles, Hepatitis B, Meningitis and Flu vaccines

**Phase 3**  
Mar 2023 – Oct 2023  
- **Footprint:** Fairfield Region  
- **Services:** Polio and MMR vaccines, and Depo Provera  
- **Team:** Two Core Teams, per diem support and public safety officer  
- **NOVA:** Addition of outreach vehicle

**Phase 4**  
Nov 2023 – Present  
- **Footprint:** Street outreach  
  (Hartford/Central Region)  
- **Services:** Portable US and EKG; PPD placement for TB; Suboxone Induction  
- **Team:** Two Core Teams with PSO on each

- **Patient Visits:** 6,714
- **Clinics:** 657
- **Non-COVID Immunizations:** 3,360
- **COVID Immunizations:** 1,519
- **Rapid HIV tests:** 209
- **Rapid Hep C tests:** 211
- **Mobile Outreach Patient Volume (NOVA):** 898
Our CareVan Clinics Offer the Following Services:

Address Various Urgent Needs (not limited to):
- Common cold/flu
- Stomach aches
- Ear aches/infections and foreign body removal
- Abscess incision and drainage
- Minor burns, lacerations, sprains and small fractures
- Rashes and insect bites
- Corneal abrasions
- Family planning

Medical Screenings:
- Blood pressure, Blood sugar, Urinalysis, Urine pregnancy

Lab Tests:

Referrals and Follow-up Care:
- Social Services, Behavioral Health, Primary Care and Specialists

Immunizations:
- Tetanus (Tdap), Pneumonia, Shingles, Hepatitis B, Meningitis, Gardasil (HPV), Polio, MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella), Flu (Seasonal)
- COVID-19 Pfizer Vaccine (Ages 12+)

WALK-INS WELCOME
Open to all ages. Insurance accepted but not required.

Future Program Expansion

- Patient outreach vehicle in each region
- Expanded family planning: Nexplanon
- Addiction Medicine: Vivitrol injection
- Women’s Health: Pap smears
- Immunizations: RSV
- Expansion of street medicine program
- Strengthen partnerships with homeless advocacy groups and community leaders
“Nothing changes in the life of a homeless person unless you slow down and take time to earn trust and develop a lasting relationship. Consistency and presence are essential. Have coffee, play cards, share bits of yourself. Never judge.

Remember that people have lived through hell and listen carefully to their stories. With that as a bedrock, delivering health care might just be possible.”

James J O’Connell, MD

"I Am Not OK" Jelly Roll
The Stories Beyond Healthcare

Neighborhood Health offers a judgement free safe space filled with compassion, kindness, and respect for everyone that comes through the door. It often starts with a simple cup of coffee or a round of Bingo but slowly as trust is built Neighborhood Health becomes a positive source of human connection. We have bathed, clothed, fed, cut hair, listened, and most importantly, SEEN the people in our neighborhoods - Making a difference one patient at a time.

Shorty’s Story: Originally from Puerto Rico, she lived in an apartment with her significant other, Veronica, until the landlord stopped paying the mortgage and they became homeless. Shorty has been on the streets for nine years and struggling with SUD for four years. Sadly, Veronica died in April 2023 due to endocarditis. The Neighborhood Health team helped Shorty navigate her grief by providing a necklace urn to keep V’s ashes close to her heart.

Earl’s Story: He is currently a rough sleeper, not quite ready for assistance but remains an active community member singing in the “Music Moves Hartford” musical group. Despite his circumstances, Earl has a big heart and his smile lights up a room.

Their Stories Are Not Forgotten

Ahmad: died in June 2022
Jose: died in July 2022
Veronica: died in April 2023

The annual Hair & Healthcare event has provided over 500 haircuts as well as countless foot baths, showers, meals, hygiene products, clean socks, and new sneakers.

Hartford HealthCare
Neighborhood Health
Brainstorm Sessions

Three Groups, 5 Minutes Each Station, Let Those Ideas Flow....

Common Trends/Barriers

Define “Higher Level of Care”

Mitigation Strategies
Thank you for attending this workshop!

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