

The Community Health Centers Newsletter

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Fiscal Year 2024 Highlights



164,895
patient visits



520
patients received
treatment for
opioid addiction



2,968
dental patients
were treated for
emergent needs



1,722
individuals
experiencing
homelessness
received no-cost
health care



\$626,450
was subsidized
through the
Sliding-Fee Scale
Financial
Assistance Program

The Community Health Centers of Burlington (CHC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and Federally Qualified Health Center funded in part through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and generous community support. CHC is a Health Center Program grantee under 42 U.S.C. 254b, and a deemed Public Health Service employee under 42 U.S.C. 233(g)-(n). All CHC programs and services are accessible to people with disabilities. This newsletter is available in alternative formats upon request.

Notice of Privacy: The Community Health Centers protect the health information of our patients and gift information of our donors in all of our activities including our fundraising work. If you no longer wish to receive newsletters, fundraising appeals, or event invitations from us, please contact the CR&D Department at 87 Main Street, Essex Jct., VT 05452, marketing@chcb.org, or call (802) 264-8193.

A New Access Point for Mental Health Care



Partner agencies at the Mental Health Urgent Care hard hat facility tour, set to open October, 2024.

“Many people in mental health crisis also have unmet physical health needs, so the idea of partnering with CHC and Pathways was to create a **single point of care** for people to get as many needs met as possible.”

-Charlotte McCorkel, LICSW, Howard Center

■ Almost all of us, at some point in our lives, have felt anxious, afraid, angry, guilty, vulnerable, hopeless or helpless. This internal experience is confusing, and it sometimes reaches a level of great concern, especially if we don't know when or where to reach out for help. For many years, leaders throughout the local mental health and medical sectors have noted the need for an access point to help people in mental health distress that could serve as an alternative to the emergency department (ED). Although our area has 24/7 crisis hot/warm lines and mobile crisis response, a walk-in support service has yet to exist – until now. Starting at the end of October, community members will be able to walk in at 1 South Prospect Street in Burlington to the newly created Mental Health Urgent Care (MHUC).

MHUC will be led and operated by the Howard Center and will partner

with Pathways to provide peer support services and Community Health Centers to provide onsite nursing, telehealth, and follow-up medical assessment/care when needed. The University of Vermont Medical Center and Vermont Department of Mental Health funded this pilot project for three years. “Our community is best served when service providers work collaboratively,” said Charlotte McCorkel, LICSW, who is the Senior Director of Client Services at Howard Center and the project's co-lead. “Many people in mental health crisis also have unmet physical health needs, so the idea of partnering with CHC and Pathways was to create a single point of care for people to get as many needs met as possible,” she continued.

The clinic will be open Monday-Friday, 9am to 5pm. We know individuals also need mental health support outside of business hours,

but due to staffing challenges, this is where this pilot project must start. McCorkel explained, “This program will be making referrals and helping guests access other services in our community, but we know services are stretched, waitlists can be long at times and housing continues to be a serious concern.”

The MHUC project aims to ease the overburdened ED and direct people to the right care at the right place. Adding a resource like this was incredibly motivating for the partners involved. As McCorkel noted, “Early on we created a shared values statement so we had a north star, and it was so easy for us to be on the same page about valuing a high-quality experience for all who access the program and the potential positive outcome it will have for the community.”

A Note from Jeff

"Through it all, and at the core of each of these projects, is you: our patients, community partners and generous supporters." -Jeff McKee, PsyD, CHC CEO

■ Fall is right around the corner, which for many is a season to slow down and nestle in during the colder months for which Vermont is known. For CHC, it is a time for us to reflect on the amazing accomplishments that 2024 has brought so far, and to continue our planning for the future. Of note, the CHC - Pharmacy is fully open and operational, the former Vermont Dental Care is now an established part of CHC and has blended well into our organization, and our laboratory at CHC - Riverside had a successful expansion and is processing more tests in-house

with a new analyzer. I am so pleased to see these projects, that were once only visions, come to life and broaden the scope of the ways in which we meet the needs of the community.

Through it all, and at the core of each of these projects, is you: our patients, community partners and generous supporters. Every dollar donated to CHC enables us to expand our reach, innovate our services and pursue new opportunities to ensure that no one is left without the care they deserve. With your support, we can



continue to build a healthier and stronger community. Thank you for standing with us in our mission in providing care for ALL.

As always in our Fall Newsletter, we have put together a list of items identified by our staff that are needed to improve patient care and broaden our reach.

- Jeff

Survival Fund: An Immediate Impact

■ When was the last time you took a moment to appreciate the soap in your shower? Or the coat in your closet? What about the ID card in your wallet, or maybe even the reading glasses perched on your forehead? So often we take for granted the convenience of these seemingly miscellaneous items, but now think about not having access to these things; life would be much less comfortable and much more difficult. Unfortunately, life without these items is the reality for many of our patients. That is why in 2014, we created what is called the "Survival Fund." The Survival Fund is exactly what it sounds like: funds specifically set aside for everyday items like soap, warm clothing, identification cards and glasses, that are truly essential to one's livelihood and often, one's survival.

Leighton Johnson, CHC's Homeless Healthcare Program Supervisor, is one of the liaisons between these funds and the patients utilizing them and has experienced firsthand how impactful the funds have been over the years. "The Survival Fund provides critical support for some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community," Johnson said. "For example, it is impossible for an individual experiencing homelessness to pursue housing without proper identification, and for folks who are without an income, paying for an ID is often an insurmountable barrier. Having the ability to remove this barrier is just one of the many reasons the Survival Fund is so powerful."

The first step towards lifting oneself into a life of safety and security

is access to basic, yet essential, items for hygiene, confidence, comfort and overall health. We have learned from this funding that even the smallest item can make the largest difference in one's life. Any donation restricted to this fund goes directly towards the patient, and directly towards what CHC set out to do more than 50 years ago: provide care to those who need it most.



WISH LIST

Lab Upgrades

Mobile Centrifuge (\$1,000) A mobile centrifuge for our outreach van will enable our Homeless Healthcare Program team to collect and preserve specimens while they're on the road. This piece of equipment would have a direct impact on delivering quality care to a vulnerable, and sometimes hard to reach, population.

Mobile Phlebotomy Arm Rests (\$125 each) We would like 10-15 mobile arm rests to help eliminate one of the biggest challenges to drawing patients' blood in exam rooms and make the procedure a safer and more comfortable experience.

Incubators (\$750 each) Our lab is in need of two reliable incubators to aid in the diagnosis of bacterial infections. Timely diagnosis helps patients get the treatment they need faster and helps contribute to good antibiotic stewardship. Without reliable incubators, specimens can become ruined and delay patient care.

New Lab Coats (\$40 each) Our laboratory technicians need updated lab coats. Twenty-five new lab coats would help protect against the hazards of handling hundreds of patient specimens each day.

Keeping Smiles Bright

Dental Endodontic Activator (\$2,000) This device is used during a root canal procedure to activate the medicament used to clean the canal(s) of the tooth being treated. Use of this machine would help to make the procedure more comfortable for patients.

Dental Hand Instruments (\$2,000) Our Dental Center is always in need of preventative items, specifically hand pieces that play a critical role in keeping our dental patients proud of their pearly whites.

Intraoral X-Ray Unit (\$4,700) This device is used to capture 2D images of teeth. This helps our dental staff assess and diagnose accurately, and plan for any necessary next steps in a patient's oral health treatment plan.

Patient Lending Programs

EMDR Tappers (\$150 each) EMDR tappers (also known as pulsators or buzzers) are devices that use tactile bilateral stimulation to activate both hemispheres of the brain. We would like to have a supply of five tappers available that we can loan to patients engaging in EMDR via telehealth.

Lending Library (\$1,800) CHC's Behavioral Health Program would like to create a lending library where patients can borrow materials that can aid in their treatment. Examples include *Say Goodnight to Insomnia* by Gregg Jacobs or *The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook: A Proven Way to Accept Yourself, Build Inner Strength, and Thrive* by Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer.

Notebooks (\$200) We would like to have a supply of notebooks available for therapy patients to journal progress and track symptoms during their treatment.

Honoring our Past

History Video (\$5,000) We would like to honor CHC's history with a professional video that portrays our service to the community over the past five decades. Not only would this be a great way for community partners and patients to learn about all of our programs and services at a glance, but it would also serve as an inviting way for current and future CHC staff to connect with us on a deeper level and celebrate our accomplishments since 1971.

To make a donation or learn more, please contact Kim at kanderson@chcb.org or (802) 264-8193.