

Learning about Homelessness & Health in Your Community: *A Data Resource Guide*

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INTRODUCTION

This resource guide is intended to assist those who work to meet the health care needs of homeless people in their communities. It will be particularly useful to those who are preparing funding applications for the federal Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) or other Consolidated Health Center programs, but it will also be of interest to other advocates, researchers and service providers.

The resources cited in this document are available free-of-charge to the public on the Internet. Readers with limited Internet access may wish to contact the government agency or department directly for print publications.

Information about these two topics – homelessness and health – is plentiful. There is not much information about the intersection of the two, however, particularly at the local level, where services are designed and delivered. At best, this guide will point the reader to resources that may exist. The author welcomes suggestions from readers who wish to suggest improvements to this guide please contact her at council@nhchc.org. Readers can find the most recent version of this guide at <http://www.nhchc.org/Publications/CA08DataResourceGuide.pdf>.

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POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

This section includes sources of data about state and local conditions that may directly affect homelessness in your community, including statistics on poverty, employment patterns, and housing.

State and Local

- U.S. Census data on economic characteristics (poverty, income, employment, etc.), general population, housing occupancy and tenure, and social characteristics. Also known as the American FactFinder, this user-friendly site can be found at <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet> (Note: Census publications related to population can be accessed through <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/titles.html>, including several documents on poverty and health insurance coverage in the U.S. A comprehensive list of all U.S. Census resources can be found at http://library.wlu.edu/research/government/fed_census.asp)

County and City

- County and City Data Books are also available from the Census website. These include data on demographic characteristics, such as income, poverty, and information on crime, housing, health and vital statistics, labor force, environment, and government programs. To download the online version or order the publication, go to <http://www.census.gov/statab/www/ccdb.html>

HOMELESS POPULATIONS

This section describes methods (and related barriers) for counting homeless populations, as well as national data sources describing homeless populations. It also points to potential sources for state and local data.

Estimating the Homeless Population

- The Corporation for Supportive Housing has a guide entitled: “Estimating the Need: Projecting from Point-in-Time to Annual Estimates of the Number of Homeless People in a Community and Using this Information to Plan for Permanent Supportive Housing.” The authors suggest the guide is designed “to help communities that want or need to do three different but related things: 1) calculate an expected number of homeless people over a year’s time when you only have data from a point-in-time (PIT) count; 2) use both PIT information and projections to annual levels of homelessness to figure out how many chronically homeless people you are likely to have, now and in the future; and 3) plan and develop appropriate levels of permanent supportive housing...” This document can be found online at: <http://www.csh.org> (see “Resources”) along with other helpful resources.

Barriers to Counting Homeless Populations

People move in and out of homelessness, and homeless people often do not wish to be identified as homeless, so good data about homeless people as a group are hard to develop. These resources delineate many of the barriers confronting those interested in counting homeless populations.

- For a general overview of complications involved in counting homeless people, see the fact sheet of the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) “How Many People Experience Homelessness?” at <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/numbers.html>
- A publication that addresses both the definition of homelessness and enumeration of homeless people is: *Helping America's Homeless* (June, 2001), by Martha Burt, Laudan Y. Aron, and Edgar Lee, with Jesse Valente, available in paperback from the Urban Institute Press (6" x 9", 363 pages, ISBN 0-87766-701-2, \$29.50). To order, call (202) 261-5687 or toll-free 1-877-847-7377. The introductory chapter of this book is available online at: <http://www.urban.org/pubs/homeless/chapter1.html>. Chapter 2 addresses the question, "How many homeless people are there?" presenting a variety of estimates that are useful for different policy purposes.

National Data on Homeless Persons and Service Providers

These resources represent various efforts to describe homeless populations, and/or the people and programs who serve them, at the national level.

- A report summarizing results from the Urban Institute’s National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients (NSHAPC) - “Homeless Programs and the People They Serve” - can be found at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/homeless/index.shtml>. This survey, conducted in 1996, includes the most recent national data on demographic characteristics, health status

and behaviors, and service needs of homeless people. (Other publications accessed from this site may also be of interest.) The technical report containing data on which the NSHAPC findings are based, is available at

http://www.huduser.org/publications/homeless/homeless_tech.html

- All Bureau of Primary Health Care-supported health services (including Health Care for the Homeless grantees) provide annual data using the Uniform Data System (UDS). State and regional “rollups” of UDS data are also available (see <http://bphc.hrsa.gov/uds/data.htm> to request them). A variety of demographic characteristics, selected diagnoses, staffing, and service utilization variables are collected from each site. Numbers on homeless users can be extracted and their characteristics cited as a national sample on such items as percent uninsured, poverty level, and housing status.
- The Conference of Mayor’s status report on homelessness and hunger, including results of their annual 27 city survey can be downloaded from their website (<http://www.usmayors.org>); it is titled “USCM/Sodexo Hunger and Homeless” and listed under the Reports and Publications section.
- Statistics on persons experiencing homelessness in America are also available on the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty website at <http://www.nlchp.org>.
- The Bureau of Primary Health Care has also completed a comprehensive “HCH User/Visit Survey” of homeless clients in randomly selected HCH grantees (and subcontractors); these data provide information on homeless clients’ health status and behavior as well as health service utilization and needs. At the time of this publication, this resources was not available online, but a link will be provided at the National HCH Council’s website (<http://www.nhchc.org>) once the findings are posted.

State and Local Data Sources on Homelessness

Many communities have developed estimates of the number of homeless people and have compiled some information about the characteristics and needs of homeless people in their area. Likely sources of local information include:

- The guidebook, *Making the Most of HMIS Data: A Guide to Understanding Homelessness and Improving Programs in Your Community (published July 2005)...* was developed to provide practical guidance on how communities and homeless assistance providers can use the data stored in HMIS [Homeless Management Information Systems] to improve homeless assistance programs and better serve homeless persons. The guidebook focuses on how to use the rich set of data stored in HMIS to learn about the homeless people in your community and thereby develop more effective policies and programs to meet their needs. ...the guidebook includes chapters on using HMIS to understand the characteristics and service needs of homeless people, analyze how homeless people use services, and evaluate program effectiveness and outcomes. The guidebook also provides an introduction to the techniques of unduplication and extrapolation for the purposes of analyzing HMIS data.”

(description taken verbatim from HMIS website) To access this and other technical assistance documents on HMIS data, visit the resource library through the website <http://www.hmis.info>.

- *Local Homeless Coalitions.* A directory of state and local (community or county) Homeless and Housing Advocacy coalitions is maintained by the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) at <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/state>.
- *Local Continua of Care.* Homeless services are frequently funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which requires a community planning process. (Contact your local HUD office for information; contact information for the location nearest you can be found in the directory at <http://www.hud.gov/localoffices.cfm>)
- *Local government.* Mayor's offices, health departments, city councils or county commissions, social services authorities or housing bodies have been known to conduct studies of homelessness in their communities. The National Association of Counties (NACo) collects information on counties, such as county officials, courthouse addresses, county seats, cities within a county as well as various statistical and geographical information. To see a listing of the counties for a state or search for a particular county, go to: <http://www.naco.org/>.
- *Local universities.* Academics at local universities may have collected local data on relevant topics and/or be aware of other community-level data resources.
- *Newspaper archives.* Newspapers maintain files on important issues, and may provide leads to information about homelessness.
- *Homeless persons.* Services should never be developed in isolation from those who will be served. Key informants can help define what data should be sought, and can help to evaluate the data that are found. (Note: Many communities have homeless-sponsored Street Newspapers, which can provide a sense of issues important to homeless individuals in your area. For a current directory of homeless street newspapers, see <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/streetnews>)
- *Homeless service providers.* See section on "Contact Information for Additional Resources."

HEALTH STATUS INDICATORS

This section includes health status indicators and data on risk factors at the national, state, and local levels. These can be helpful in identifying disparities in health and health services in your community which may have an impact on your homeless population.

General Health Status Indicators, Insurance, and Health Service Use

- The Kaiser Foundation website maintains a searchable database of “State Health Facts” which include national comparison data at <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. A wide variety of variables are categorized into the following general areas: Demographics and the Economy, Health Status, Health Coverage and Uninsured, Medicaid and SCHIP, Medicare, Health Costs and Budgets, Managed Care and Health Insurance, Providers and Service Use, Minority Health, Women’s Health, and HIV/AIDS.
- The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provides reports of a wide variety of health status indicators for every county in the nation. Existing data resources are used, primarily from the CDC, NCHS, U.S. Bureau of the Census, EPA, HRSA’s Area Resource File, HRSA’s Bureau of Primary Health Care, and SAMHSA. Titled the Community Health Status Indicators Project, these data can be ordered through the Public Health Foundation website at <http://www.phf.org/data-infra.htm>.
- The census County and City Data Books mentioned in the previous section also include data on a variety of health indicators and vital statistics. (<http://www.census.gov/statab/www/ccdb.html>)

Children and Families

- The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Department of Maternal and Child Health website (<http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/data>) includes data and publications on indicators of maternal and child health. For example, “Women’s Health USA” includes current and historical data on some of the most pressing health challenges facing women and their families. Data on health and health-related indicators are organized into three categories: population characteristics, health status and health services utilization. In “Child Health USA” one can find population characteristics, health status of infants, children and adolescents, health services utilization, state and city-level data, and maternal and child health measures and goals.
- The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) website includes statistics, data, research and publications on children and families, including child abuse statistics, adoption statistics, child welfare data, welfare caseload data, and TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) data and reports. Go to <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/index.html> for these and other resources from the ACF.

- KIDS COUNT is a national and state-by-state statistical effort to track the status of children in the United States sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Go to <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/> to see the latest KIDS COUNT Data Book and Online Database. State-level data for over 75 measures of child well-being are available at <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/>
- The National Center on Family Homelessness (formerly the Better Homes Fund) has prepared a series of fact sheets about the issues facing homeless children and families at <http://www.familyhomelessness.org/facts.html>

Behavioral Risk Factors

- The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conduct an annual survey of behavioral risk factors in the United States. Their searchable database of results from the *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System* is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss>. Data by county on health risk factors such as use of tobacco and alcohol, hypertension, cholesterol levels, diabetes, physical fitness, (for women) breast exams, mammograms and pap smears, and (for seniors) immunizations for influenza and pneumonia. The System also includes data on health care access and utilization.

Vital Statistics

- For national and state data on vital statistics, including birth, mortality, fetal deaths, marriages and divorces, visit the National Vital Statistics System website at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss.htm>. You can also learn whom to contact in your state to obtain Vital Records.
- The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) contains data on specific diseases as reported by state and territorial health departments and reports on infectious and chronic diseases, environmental hazards, natural or human-generated disasters, occupational diseases and injuries, and intentional and unintentional injuries. Also included are reports on topics of international interest and notices of events of interest to the public health community. These reports are available at http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/mmwr_wk.html.

Substance Abuse

- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Office of Applied Studies provides recent national data on 1) alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drug abuse; 2) drug related Emergency Department episodes and medical examiner cases; and 3) the national's substance abuse treatment system. (<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov>)
- The Join Together organization has compiled a handbook entitled "How Do We Know We Are Making A Difference? A Community Substance Abuse Indicators Handbook." They describe the document as a "handbook...to assist community coalitions and other groups working to reduce substance abuse. It is presented as a guide to help communities develop indicators, information collected by an organization and other local data that describe the

scope and nature of local substance abuse problems. These indicators can be powerful tools for local community efforts by helping them describe and monitor community change.” To obtain a copy, e-mail the organization at publications@jointogether.org.

- The most recent national data on the prevalence of alcohol, drug, and mental health (ADM) problems among homeless people are from the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients (NSHAPC), conducted in 1996 and published in 1999 by Martha R. Burt, et al., of the Urban Institute – *Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve* (<http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=310291> Chapter 3: Service Needs, Stresses, and Vulnerabilities); technical report: http://www.huduser.org/publications/homeless/homeless_tech.html).
- The National Health Care for the Homeless Council published a review of the literature on substance abuse treatment for homeless people in 2002 that summarizes ADM data from the NSHAPC report and other studies: *Substance Abuse Treatment: What Works for Homeless Individuals* (<http://www.nhchc.org/Publications/SubstanceAbuseTreatmentLitReview.pdf>).

Disease-Specific

- See the HCH Clinicians’ Network’s Adapting Your Practice series for information about a number of health problems commonly experienced by homeless people, including diabetes, asthma, chlamydial and gonococcal infections (STDs), otitis media, HIV/AIDS, and cardiovascular diseases (hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and heart failure). See the introduction and reference sections of each adapted clinical guideline for prevalence data in surveyed homeless populations. (<http://www.nhchc.org/clinicalpracticeguidelines.html>)
- See also *The Health Care of Homeless Persons: A Manual of Communicable Diseases & Common Problems in Shelters & on the Street*, 2nd Edition (<http://www.nhchc.org/manual.html>), published by the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council in June 2004. This publication contains a wealth of information (including some prevalence data) about a variety of diseases for which homeless individuals are at disproportionately high risk.
- *HIV/AIDS*: (<http://www.hab.hrsa.gov>). The Ryan White CARE Act provides resources to states, high impact localities, and agencies to improve care for low-income, uninsured, and underinsured individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS. The Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) HIV/AIDS Bureau website has various reports and studies of interest, and visitors may search for client, provider, and service data by state as well. Homeless-specific data are referenced in two publications by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council: *Treatment and Recommendations for the Care of Homeless Patients with HIV/AIDS*, May 2003 (<http://www.nhchc.org/Publications/HIVguide52703.pdf>) and *HIV/AIDS & Homelessness: Recommendations for Clinical Practice & Public Policy*, November 1999 (<http://www.nhchc.org/Publications/HIV.pdf>).

- *Tuberculosis*: TB Surveillance data and statistics are available at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/surv/surv.htm> (Note: TB data are available by homeless status.)
- *STDs*: The Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance report, which includes national profiles as well as state and area statistics, can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats>. (A complete listing of data and statistics available from the CDC can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/scientific.htm>) See also Treatment and Recommendations for Homeless Patients with Chlamydial or Gonococcal Infections by the HCH Clinicians' Network (March, 2003). Data about homeless people with STDs are cited in the Introduction and Bibliography. (<http://www.nhchc.org/Publications/STDs.pdf>)

American Indian Health

- The Indian Health Service contains a variety of information and statistics on American Indian health. See the publications page for a listing of current resources, including statistics on regional differences in Indian Health and a publication tracking trends in Indian Health at <http://www.ihs.gov/PublicInfo/Publications/index.asp>
- Health Care for Homeless Native Americans, published by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council in February, 2004, contains information about factors that contribute to health disparities and homelessness among Native Americans. (<http://www.nhchc.org/Publications/FINALHnNativeHealth.pdf>)

Homelessness and Health

As mentioned in the introduction of this Guide, few national or state-level data sets are available on the health status of homeless populations. Most available health data are derived from research studies of local homeless populations. A few of the exceptions, mentioned in previous sections, include:

- TB Surveillance (cited in the preceding section) is one of the few sources that provide consistent health data on homeless populations nationwide.
- The HCH Uniform Data System's regional and national data provide some general health status indicators specifically for clients served by HCH grantees (<http://bphc.hrsa.gov/uds/data.htm>).
- The Bureau of Primary Health Care has also completed a comprehensive "HCH User/Visit Survey" of homeless clients in randomly selected HCH grantees (and subcontractors); these data provide information on homeless clients' health status and behavior as well as health service utilization and needs. At the time of this publication, this resource was not available online, but a link will be provided at the National HCH Council's website (<http://www.nhchc.org>) once the findings are posted.

- See also the following publications on the linkage between health status and homelessness by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council:

General Recommendations for the Care of Homeless Patients (2004), Introduction:
(<http://www.nhchc.org/Publications/6.1.04GenHomelessRecsFINAL.pdf>)

Chronic Medical Illness and Homeless Individuals. A Preliminary Review of the Literature,
April 2002 (http://www.nhchc.org/Publications/literaturereview_chronicillness.pdf)

HEALTH PROVIDERS AND SERVICES

National Surveys

- Visit the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) website at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs> to access data sets and publications from the national surveys they conduct; many of the data are available at state and/or regional levels. The National Health Care Survey includes information from a variety of health care provider surveys about the facilities that supply health care, the services rendered, and characteristics of the patients served. (Components of the National Health Care Survey include the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey, the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey, the National Survey of Ambulatory Surgery, the National Hospital Discharge Survey, the National Nursing Home Survey, the National Home and Hospice Care Survey, the National Employer Health Insurance Survey, and the National Health Provider Inventory.) Other National Surveys conducted through the NCHS include the National Health Interview, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, the National Survey of Family Growth, and the National Immunization Survey.

Health Workforce

- The National Center for Health Workforce provides the Area Resource File (ARF), available at <http://www.bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/data/arf.htm>. This is a comprehensive county-specific health resources information system containing information on health facilities, health professions, measures of resource scarcity, health status, economic activity, health training programs, and socioeconomic and environmental characteristics. The basic file contains more than 7,000 variables for each of the nation's counties. All information contained in the file is derived from existing data sources and is designed to be used by those interested in the nation's health care delivery system and in factors that may impact health status and health care in the U.S. (Note: The website includes information about how to access this database, not the database itself.)

Health Professional Shortage Areas (and MUA/MUP)

- To search databases on Health Professional Shortage Areas at state and county levels, including databases on Medically Underserved Areas (MUA) and Medically Underserved Populations (MUP), go to <http://www.bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/index.htm>.

Primary Care Service Area Project

- The goal of the Primary Care Service Area (PCSA) Project is to provide information about primary care resources and populations within small standardized areas that reflect patients' utilization patterns. (<http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/pcsa.htm>)

HOUSING

Wages and Rents

- Search for Fair Market Rent (FMR) data in your state or county at <http://www.huduser.org/datasets/fmr.html>. FMRs determine the eligibility of rental housing units for the Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments program. Along the left column of this web page is an index which can direct you to other HUD sources, such as publications and additional datasets.
- *Out of Reach* is a side-by-side comparison of wages and rents in every county, Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), combined nonmetropolitan area and state in the United States, available at http://www.nlihc.org/oor_current. For each jurisdiction, the report calculates the amount of money a household must earn in order to afford to a rental unit of a range of sizes (0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedrooms) at the area's Fair Market Rent (FMR), based on the generally accepted affordability standard of paying no more than 30% of income for housing costs. From these calculations, the hourly wage a worker must earn to afford the FMR for a two-bedroom home is derived. This figure is the Housing Wage. (description verbatim from website)
- Determine your state and/or city's universal living wage at the following website: <http://www.universallivingwage.org> - go to the ULW: State/City button in the sidebar menu.
- View the Section 8 Income Limits set by HUD each year at <http://www.huduser.org/datasets/il.html>.

Subsidized Households

- This website describes nearly five million subsidized households across the United States. It includes, at the state and national level: Totals; Indian Housing; Public Housing; Section 8 Certificates and Vouchers; Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation; Section 8 New and Substantial Rehabilitation; Section 236; Other HUD subsidies; and Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Go to <http://www.huduser.org/datasets/assthsg/statedata98>

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HEALTH

State Health Departments

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials website provides links to your state health department and other health-related websites within your state; the site also includes statewide strategic plans. Connect to these resources by going to <http://www.astho.org> and selecting “state links” on the sidebar menu.

Medicare and Medicaid Services

Search for contact information on Medicare and Medicaid services, as well as other health and human services organizations, in your state at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/contacts>.

Boards of Nursing

Find contact information for your state’s Board of Nursing through the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc. website (<http://www.ncsbn.org>)

Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities

Locate substance abuse treatment facilities by going to <http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov/facilitylocator.doc.htm>

Indian Health Service

The Indian Health Service website includes a comprehensive Indian Health Service Directory at <http://www.ihs.gov/PublicInfo/Publications/index.asp>

Primary Care for Underserved Populations

To locate contact information and descriptions of service delivery sites of the Bureau of Primary Health Care which are providing primary care to underserved populations – including HCH clinics, community health centers, migrant health centers, as well as enabling services – in your town go to the following address <http://www.ask.hrsa.gov/pc>

See also a directory listing Health Care for the Homeless clinics and their subcontractors across the United States at <http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov/hchirc/directory/default.htm>

HOUSING

Section 8 Properties

Search for Section 8 properties by state/city at <http://www.hud.gov/apps/section8/index.cfm>

Public Housing Agencies

For local public housing agency contact information, go to <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/index.cfm>

Advocacy Coalitions

A directory of state and local Homeless and Housing Advocacy coalitions is maintained by the National Coalition on Homelessness at <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/state>.

Homeless and Emergency Services

A variety of information on housing and homelessness services and resources in your state and community can be located via the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) website. Visit <http://www.hud.gov/local/index.cfm>, select your state, then select “homeless” on the sidebar menu. Typical information includes contact information for shelters and emergency housing, rental assistance programs, food and clothing resources, health care (e.g. hospitals, affordable health care, detox centers), jobs and training, and legal assistance services.

Find out how much has been spent in your state or county by emergency food and shelter programs funded through the United Way at: <http://www.efsp.unitedway.org>.

HOMELESSNESS AND HEALTH

National Organizations

- *National Health Care for the Homeless Council*: This website includes a wide range of resources (many free of charge) – publications, newsletters, videos, research, training curricula and opportunities, policy and advocacy materials, etc. – relevant to work and advocacy in the field of homelessness and health care. Applications for joining the Council as an organization or as an individual are also available on the website (<http://www.nhchc.org>).
- *Health Care for the Homeless Information Resource Center*: This center, funded by the Bureau of Primary Health Care, provides numerous resources specific to homelessness and health, including a video library, research database, newsletters and publications. Also available on this site is the Directory of HCH Grantee Profiles, a document published annually which includes descriptions as well as contact information for each of the programs. (<http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov/hchirc>)
- *National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty*: This legal resource center’s website includes information about income, housing, homelessness and poverty in America. (<http://www.nlchp.org/Pubs/index.cfm>)
- *National Resource Center on Homelessness & Mental Illness*: Resources include publications, annotated bibliographies, and information on issues related to homelessness and mental illness. (<http://www.nrchmi.com/>)

National Provider Networks

Both of these national networks maintain home pages on the National Health Care for the Homeless Council website - <http://www.nhchc.org>.

- *Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians' Network:* The nation's leading organization connecting hands-on providers from many disciplines who are committed to improving the health and quality of life of our homeless neighbors. The Network fosters networking and professional growth among a diverse membership of more than 700 individuals, and provides a forum for its members to share the latest information and research, review and make recommendations about clinical practice, and network with peers. To learn more about this Network, please contact Director Brenda Proffitt by e-mail at bproffitt@nhchc.org or by telephone at 505-872-1151.
- *Respite Care Providers Network:* This Network seeks to improve the health status of individuals who are homeless by supporting programs that provide medical respite and related services. The homepage for this Network includes descriptions of respite models and a national directory of respite care providers and organizations. For additional information about this Network, please contact Kathy Hearne by e-mail at khearne@nhchc.org or by contacting the National HCH Council by telephone at 615-226-2292.

Homeless Policy

- HRSA's Homeless Policy Academies: Technical Assistance Publications (including several by the National Council) can be found on HRSA's Homeless Policy Academies website: http://www.hrsa.gov/homeless/main_pages/ta.htm

Current Research

Numerous research studies are being conducted in the field of health care and homelessness, and can provide useful contextual information. Some sources of this published research include:

- The Policy Research Associates, Inc. Homeless Information Center website (<http://bphc.hrsa.gov/hchirc>) provides a searchable database of research on homelessness and health issues. Customized literature searches can also be done upon request.
- Research abstracts from published research on a wide variety of health issues and homeless populations can be found in the HCH Research Updates available on the National Health Care for the Homeless Council's website (<http://www.nhchc.org>). Notify the Council (e-mail: council@nhchc.org; phone: 615-226-2292) to subscribe to the free e-mail version of his quarterly newsletter.

ACRONYMS

ACF	Administration for Children and Families
BPHC	Bureau of Primary Health Care
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
HAB	HIV/AIDS Bureau
HCH	Health Care for the Homeless
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
NCH	National Coalition for the Homeless
NHCHC	National Health Care for the Homeless Council
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration