

Respite News

WELCOME to the second quarterly e-newsletter of the **Respite Care Providers' Network (RCPN)**, a national group of providers and administrators engaged in medical respite care for homeless individuals throughout the U.S. and Canada. The RCPN *defines medical respite care* as acute and post-acute medical care for homeless persons who are too ill or frail to recover from a physical illness or injury on the streets, but who are not ill enough to be in a hospital. The RCPN is a component of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, a membership organization that provides training and technical assistance to providers of respite care and other health services for homeless people through a Cooperative Agreement with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). This newsletter was created with support from HRSA; the opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of HRSA or its Bureau of Primary Health Care.

THIS ISSUE features:

- Samples from our new RCPN archive of respite in the media
- Information about research on medical respite care
- Respite Care Providers' Network activities and upcoming events.

HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PRACTICES AND HOMELESS RESPITE CARE IN THE MEDIA

The RCPN is currently in the process of collecting and archiving items from the media which focus on medical respite – and/or on the growing need to address this gap in service for homeless persons. Following is a sampling of some of what we have so far:

ON HOSPITAL DISCHARGING INCIDENTS WITH HOMELESS PERSONS

Denver, CO: The Denver channel 7 news channel had a story and showed videos of an incident: *Witnesses: Hospital Employees Dump Homeless Woman* on October 5, 2006
<http://www.thedenverchannel.com/7newsinvestigates/10011494/detail.html>

Cleveland, Ohio: A May 6, 2007 article by Diane Suchetka in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, entitled *A Safety Net Full of Holes: Ill Homeless Dumped on Shelters*

Boston, Massachusetts: September 19, 2007 article by Joseph Kahn on the front page of the Boston Globe, entitled “*Lessons in Humanity: Homeless man, care staff forge unexpected bonds*”
http://www.boston.com/yourlife/articles/2007/09/19/lessons_in_humanity/

Mr. Kahn received a deluge of mail in response to his article about Patrick, prompting a follow-up article which summarized some of those messages. *Hospital's help to dying man prompts flood of messages*
September 19, 2007

Los Angeles, California: November 17, 2006 article by the Associated Press, published in the New York Times: “*Hospital Charged With Dumping Homeless Patient*” (A video catching a man discharged from the hospital to Skid Row made the national news – see also NPR website and subsequent “60 Minutes” documentary)

‘Dumping’ of Homeless by Hospitals Stirs Debate
Randall Archibold (February 23, 2007)

Hospital accused of ‘dumping’ homeless patient
USATODAY.com (February 15, 2007)
http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-02-15-skid-row_x.htm

Portland, Oregon: *Homeless Infirmary Project Will Continue Helping Patients Recover* (March 13, 2006) Oregon Health and Science University news release

Brownsville, Texas: KGBT 4-TV (November 27, 2007)
Hospital's struggle to care for the homeless
<http://www.team4news.com/Global/story.asp?s=7411681>

Winston Salem, North Carolina: The Winston Salem Journal published a piece *Nowhere to Go. State Hospital Moving Patients into Area’s Homeless Shelters* (February 5, 2006)

Sacramento, California

California Health Care Foundation promoted a report on medical respite: *New Health Care Options for Homeless Patients in Sacramento*
The report highlights a collaborative approach to delivering care to patients discharged from hospitals (August 7, 2006)

Los Angeles, CA: Deborah Crowe from The Los Angeles Business Journal, reported on a hospital’s \$24,000 donation to a homeless services group to address the need for recuperative care. The article *Good Samaritan Takes a New Path for Homeless Patients* was published December 12, 2006

The following editorials and letters address the unique challenges associated with discharging homeless patients

“Discharge Planning and the Dilemma of Dealing with Homeless Patients.” *Hospital Case Management*, 14, 81-83, 2006

“Homeless Pose Unique Discharge Challenge”
Hospital Case Management, 15, 108-110, 2007

Discharge Planning Advisor: *Innovative Program Helps Homeless, Frees up Beds*, Hospital Peer Review, October 1, 2005

**ADD TO OUR ARCHIVE: SEND US MEDIA
COVERAGE ON THESE ISSUES FROM YOUR
STATE!**

RESEARCH ON RESPITE CARE

In October, 2007, the Department of Health and Human Services published a competitive task order (CTO) for a new study titled, “Medical Respite Care for Persons Experiencing Homelessness.” RCPN members provided background information for this study, and a great deal of encouragement for these research funds to be made available. The RCPN Steering Committee members will also serve as advisors on several phases of the project, which was awarded to Westat, a research corporation based in Rockville, MD, in November. (*continued, next page*)

Respite Study, continued

The three goals of this study are:

- 1) synthesize current research concerning respite care
- 2) using the research synthesis and expert panel input, obtain new or additional cost, quality and related information about medical respite care programs
- 3) present and discuss research findings to improve our understanding of the merits or outcomes of respite programs

UPCOMING RESPITE CARE PROVIDERS' NETWORK ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Our next annual Respite Pre-Conference Institute will be held Wednesday, June 11, 2008 in Phoenix, Arizona. The theme of this year's institute will be relationships between respite programs and hospitals. The Respite Care Providers' Network has also helped to develop six workshops on respite-related topics to be presented during the National HCH Conference (June 12-14). (Visit www.nhchc.org for information on registering for these events.)

The Respite Research Task Force will be conducting a national study of the relationships respite programs have with their local referring hospitals. The Task Force will compile the findings to present at the Pre-Conference Institute in June (see above). Please watch for our invitation to participate in the study in January 2008! (This will coincide with our annual call for updates to program descriptions for the Respite Program Directory.)

ASK THE EXPERT



This column addresses specific questions you have, or dilemmas you face. This will enable you to take advantage of the vast experience among our Steering Committee members and learn from their mistakes and missteps. Please submit questions to Suzanne Zerger at szerger@nhchc.org.

Q: Do you know of any programs that have developed mental health respite beds in a shelter setting?

- A. Seattle's largest downtown shelter, Downtown Emergency Shelter (www.desc.org/clinical.html), has a 20-bed Crisis Respite Program for those with decompensated mental health problems.
Leslie Enzian, MD Assistant Professor, University of Washington School of Medicine
- A. We do have mental health respite programs but they are managed by the Department of Mental Health in Boston. I would suggest contacting Sue Estes-Shaw who is the director of the homeless outreach team for DMH and she could probably tell you about admission criteria. (suzanne.estes@dmh.state.ma.us) *Sarah Ciambrone, Director, McInnis House, Boston MA*