

## The Stephen Klein Wellness Center as a Community-Centered Health Home – a partnership between Jefferson and Project HOME

The mission of the Project HOME community is to *empower adults, children, and families to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty, to alleviate the underlying causes of poverty, and to enable all of us to attain our fullest potential as individuals and as members of the broader society. We strive to create a safe and respectful environment where we support each other in our struggles for self-esteem, recovery, and the confidence to move toward self-actualization.* Health and Recovery Services are an integral component of Project HOME's work to achieve this mission.

For the past 23 Years, Jefferson faculty, residents and students have partnered with Project HOME to provide primary care for people experiencing homelessness in safe havens such as the St. Elizabeth Wellness Center. The Center is located within a former church rectory in a medically underserved area of North Philadelphia. The service area is considered a high poverty area, with 43% of people living below 100% of the federal poverty level.

Project HOME's long-standing partnership with Thomas Jefferson University and Hospital is part of a growing trend among academic health centers that consider community-university partnerships a strategic imperative to achieve the Triple Aim of increased quality, decreased cost of care and improved patient experiences.

The Wellness Center's target population is characterized as experiencing very poor health and health care access relative to the general population with markedly high diabetes and cardiovascular disease

prevalence, age-adjusted all-cause mortality, tobacco use, low birth weight, obesity among children, experiences of major depression, and poor utilization of oral health care.

In 2014, with New Access Point Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) funding to support a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), health services transitioned from a free clinic model under Jefferson to a free-standing health center that is governed, owned and operated by Project HOME, with contracted physician services through Jefferson. The goal was to bring healthcare services under the governance, fiscal and operational control of Project HOME, without disrupting the patient-provider relationships that many patients had developed with their Jefferson physicians over the years. The Center is directed by a Community Board.

Project HOME's FQHC service delivery model recognizes the complex needs of people who are homeless. The model incorporates several best practices and approaches, including; comprehensive services spanning multiple service sites that are accessible to the homeless population; a multi-lateral approach to achieving the highest insurance enrollment rates possible; a person-centered "patient flow" from front desk to service provider(s) to follow-up; a staffing plan that emphasizes team-based care including the full integration of primary care with behavioral health services; a sliding fee discount scale that recognizes the very limited financial resources of the population served and has been implemented in such a way as to not "screen" out patients based on income; and a dedication to continuous quality improvement.

In December 2014, Project HOME moved out of St. Elizabeth's Wellness Center to the newly built, 28,000 sq. ft. Stephen Klein Wellness Center (the Center) at 22nd Street and Cecil B. Moore Avenue. The Center continues its commitment to address the health and wellness needs of people who are currently homeless, formerly homeless, and people living in the surrounding North Philadelphia community. The Center offers primary medical care, psychiatric services, nurse care management, individual, couples and group counseling, peer-led outreach and care coordination, healing touch, on-site legal counseling, housing counseling, health education, assistance with applying for health insurance benefits, a food pantry, laundry and shower facilities, and a fitness center and babysitting service managed by the Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA. A dental practice and pharmacy are planned to open there this summer.

The Center is a partnership between Project HOME, Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals, Inc.(TJUH), Sidney Kimmel Medical College's Department of Family and Community Medicine, the Middleton Partnership and Stephen Klein, its lead funder, and longstanding champion of this project. TJUH has shown its support with a \$1 million gift to the project.

The partnership between Project HOME, Jefferson, and the Center is an excellent example of the Community-Centered Health Home (CCHH). According to the Prevention Institute, *"the community-centered health home provides high quality health care services while also applying diagnostic and critical thinking skills to the underlying factors that shape patterns*

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*of injury and illness. By strategically engaging in efforts to improve community environments, CCHHs can improve the health and safety of their patient population, improve health equity, and reduce the need for medical treatment. The CCHH model advances a number of existing health care delivery models and practices, including the patient-centered medical home, as defined by the Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaborative, and the health home, as defined in the ACA.”<sup>1</sup>*

In addition to high quality medical services, the CCHH adds a community dimension by collecting data on social, economic, and community conditions; aggregating health and safety data; systematically reviewing health and safety trends; identifying priorities

and strategies with community partners; coordinating activity with community partners; acting as community health advocates; mobilizing patient populations; strengthening partnerships with local health care organizations, and establishing model organizational practices. The Project HOME-Jefferson partnership at the Center provides a unique opportunity to implement and evaluate the concept of the CCHH.

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## REFERENCE

1. Prevention Institute at the Center of Community Well Being. Community-Centered Health Homes: Bridging the gap between health services and community prevention. February 2011. <http://www.preventioninstitute.org/component/jlibrary/article/id-298/127.html> Accessed June 7, 2015.