

Recuperation Care Program

Housing and healthcare for homeless patients post-hospitalization

The Recuperation Care Program (RCP) provides post-hospitalization care for low-income homeless patients who have received medical services but need continuing care in order to fully recuperate. It was started as a pilot project in July, 2005, in a partnership between Central City Concern (CCC) and Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU). Since inception, it has served over 190 clients and currently accepts referrals from the OHSU, Providence, Legacy, Portland Adventist, Kaiser and CareOregon healthcare systems.

Rather than maintaining patients in an inpatient setting beyond the acute period, or risk discharging them into adverse circumstances (such as into shelters or onto the street), participating hospitals refer patients to RCP. The program provides intensive case management, primary health care at CCC's Old Town Clinic (OTC), and safe, stable transitional housing to address long- and short-term healthcare issues until patients can stabilize. RCP relies on six staff positions: Corey Padrón (Manager, EMT-B), William Rios (Coordinator), Laurie Palmer (Housing Specialist), Mary Bruner (Case Manager, EMT-B), Roxana Puckett (Administrative Assistant), and Kathryn Leiher (Assistant and Jesuit Volunteer).



RCP staff

After an initial screening, clients are transported to designated RCP “beds” at CCC’s Henry building. Clients establish a medical home at OTC, have access to free and reduced price prescription drugs and to ancillary services including alcohol and drug treatment, employment assistance, and mental health services. RCP staff help participants stabilize in housing, serve nutritious meals daily, provide case management, help schedule follow up care, and provide transportation to appointments. Staff also works closely with other groups and programs to help clients find clothing, food and hygiene items, connect to permanent housing, access entitled benefits, and meet other basic needs. RCP not only meets the short term healthcare needs of these typically underserved individuals, it also helps lay the foundation for their improved health over the long term, and provides participants with the tools and support they need to permanently rejoin the social and economic mainstream.



The Henry building: home of RCP

Along with improving the lives of patients, RCP benefits the entire community. It provides an easily accessible and positive option for hospital discharge planners, improving hospital staff morale. Also, RCP staff works to re-educate patients on how to effectively use their new medical home (at OTC) for primary care. Lacking access to regular healthcare channels, many homeless and low income patients tend to utilize emergency services, often uncompensated, at local hospitals. This drives up healthcare costs for the entire community and limits hospital capacity to serve others in need. RCP gives participating hospitals another option – discharging homeless patients into medically monitored housing supported by the intensive case management of the RCP team. By reducing the length of stay of these often unfunded homeless patients (in some cases by weeks), RCP helps hospitals better allocate their resources

and frees capacity for other patients. RCP is one of the rare instances in which innovation, passion and commitment to the underserved have come together to solve a problem humanely AND cost effectively.

About the agency: Central City Concern is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to ending homelessness in Portland. RCP is a key component in CCC's continuum of housing and health and services targeting homeless and low income adults and families. For more information, visit www.centralcityconcern.org