Primary Care Clinic for Homeless Patients: Patient and Provider Perspectives

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Funded by CHW under the Health Scholars Program

Introduction
• It is particularly difficult for people experiencing homelessness or housing instability to access healthcare
• Many homeless individuals over-utilize emergency departments (ED) and under-utilize primary care, leading to poor outcomes and high costs
• Bellevue Hospital’s Primary Care Safety Net (PCSN) Clinic provides interdisciplinary, wrap-around care to many of these patients

Objective of QI Initiative
This quality improvement initiative used interviews to capture the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the PCSN Clinic to determine whether it should be continued, how it can be improved, and whether it should be expanded to other hospital sites.

Methods
• I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with nine patients, five physicians, and one social worker associated with the PCSN clinic
• Interviews with providers were audio-recorded and transcribed, while only notes were taken during interviews with patients
• I then conducted systematic analysis of the transcripts and notes using MAXQDA software to create a S.W.O.T. analysis

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths of the clinic</th>
<th>Weaknesses of the clinic</th>
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Opportunities for the clinic
1. Strengthen and spread model to other public hospitals and expand at Bellevue
2. Provide outreach and community-based services for patients who can not be reached in the clinic
3. Engage in housing advocacy
4. Develop a checklist to ensure all patients receive minimum number of services
5. Share success stories with key stakeholders
6. Focus on small, day-to-day issues before the big picture
7. Ability to innovate and experiment with new set ups as a new program

Threats to the clinic
1. The healthcare system, including insurance companies
2. Insufficient permanent housing in NYC
3. Patient complexity
4. Limited resources at Bellevue and New York City Health + Hospitals

Discussion
• There are many more strengths and opportunities associated with the PCSN clinic than weaknesses or threats
• This research demonstrates the benefits of the PCSN for patients and providers alike
• The PCSN clinic should be expanded within Bellevue and implemented in other hospital sites
• Wrap-around, interdisciplinary primary care may have significant benefits in engaging homeless patients in primary care and reducing ED utilization

Further Questions
• How might homeless patients in the ED or inpatient settings feel about the care they receive? How can the benefits of the PCSN clinic model be incorporated into those settings?
• How might the benefits of the PCSN model for providers also be incorporated into other settings?

Acknowledgements
I owe my deepest gratitude to Janine Knudsen and Anne Marie Young, who provided me with wisdom and guidance throughout this project, along with the entire team at the Office of Population Health and Bellevue Hospital’s PCSN Clinic. Thank you to CHW’s Health Scholars Program for providing me with the funding to carry out this project, and to Yi-Ching Ong for introducing me to the Office of Population Health.

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