Our country and the states in which our health system operates are suffering from an epidemic of homelessness. It has continued to be an extremely challenging and ever more pressing issue for communities as numbers continue to rise. In response to the growing crisis in California which saw the 2019 Point in Time counts rise significantly across many counties, Governor Gavin Newsom formed the Homeless and Supportive Housing Advisory Task Force to develop comprehensive recommendations based on best practices observed and input from local governments and constituents.

Dignity Health has shared the concern with our communities across California about the care and shelter of our vulnerable homeless population and know that connecting patients to adequate supportive services upon hospital discharge is a challenge experienced by hospitals nationwide. We face this challenge on a daily basis and work hard to assist any patient in need when medically cleared to leave the hospital, which may include food, clothing, transportation, and lodging options, and needed follow-up medical care.

Our mission is to provide basic human care to any patient that walks through our doors.

Guiding Principles

- Recognize that the lack of stable and affordable housing negatively impacts health and that supporting individuals to exit from homelessness is a positive investment in health.
- Address the disproportionate health needs of people who are homeless.
- Emphasize prevention, including activities that address the social determinants of health – food security, transportation, child care, as well as housing.
- Provide innovative solutions to address the problem, including the use of new technologies and strategies.
- Serve as a catalyst for building capacity to address the need.
- Create lasting impact through long-term community sustainability and collaboration.
- Advance transformation of the healthcare system and of communities.

In 2019, CommonSpirit Health was formed by the alignment of Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) and Dignity Health. As part of this alignment, CommonSpirit leadership and Dignity Health facilities in California launched the Homeless Health Initiative (HHI) to create a statewide strategy addressing the need to co-locate, coordinate and integrate health, behavioral health, safety and wellness services with housing and other social services, and help providers to connect individuals experiencing homelessness with these resources.

Want to learn more?
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Homeless Health Initiative – Housing for Humankindness

Over the next five years, CommonSpirit Health, Dignity Health hospitals will be working closely with local community partners including the homeless continuum of care, homeless service providers, government agencies, and others to identify opportunities to improve coordination of care and the health of those experiencing housing insecurity.

**Purpose:** Transform health and our communities by strengthening the continuum of care for those experiencing homelessness at all levels.

**Goal:** Transform health and our communities by strengthening the continuum of care and building capacity while also measuring the impact of housing on an individual's overall health and well-being.

Identified projects will be focused on enhancing the continuum of care and the health of those experiencing housing insecurities.

- **Technology and Innovation**
  - Ongoing collaboration with community and statewide organizations to collaborate and add additional resources.
  - Investment may include
    - Homeless Prevention
    - Permanent Affordable Housing
    - Bridge and Interim Housing
    - Emergency Housing
    - Medical Respite/Recovery care
    - Navigation
    - Participation in workgroups

In addition to the work at the local community level, the HHI director hosted meetings with national and statewide stakeholders to collaborate and add additional resources.

**Innovations and outcomes**

- **February 2019 – Launch of Homeless Health Initiative**
- **Development multi-stakeholder strategy workgroup**
- **Established CommonSpirit Health Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness**
- **Identified priority regions**
- **FY 20**
  - Technology and Innovation
  - Navigation
  - Medical Respite/Recuperative care
- **FY 21**
  - Emergency Housing
  - Bridge and Interim Housing
  - Permanent and Affordable Housing
  - Homeless Prevention
- **FY 22**
  - **Technology and Innovation**
    - Ongoing collaboration with community and statewide organizations to collaborate and add additional resources.
    - Investment may include
      - Homeless Prevention
      - Permanent Affordable Housing
      - Bridge and Interim Housing
      - Emergency Housing
      - Medical Respite/Recovery care
      - Navigation
      - Participation in workgroups

Investments may include but are not limited to:

- Homeless Prevention
- Permanent Affordable Housing
- Bridge and Interim Housing
- Emergency Housing
- Medical Respite/Recovery care
- Navigation
- Technology and Innovation

**Hospital Grants and Services**

Through the Community Grants, California hospitals awarded 30 collaborative projects focused on improving conditions of care for individuals and families experiencing homelessness by:

- Building partnerships between hospital and community service providers,
- Enhancing referral processes
- Expanding access to services including outpatient healthcare services (primary care, behavioral health and substance use)
- Incorporating navigation to increase barriers and addressing additional social determinants of health.

In addition to grants, hospitals donated to community organizations focused on increasing capacity for available services.

**FY 2019 Accomplishments, cont’d.**

- **Social Innovation** $315K
- **Hospital Based** $1.5M
- **Programs** Total $4.1M
- **HHI Operations** $38K
- **Program Investments** Total  $2.5M
- **Tipping Point** Partner

**FY 2020 Progress**

- Identified community champions and projects to support in both Merced and San Bernardino focused on increasing capacity for medical respite and bridge housing.
- Additional local and statewide projects have been recognized that address prevention, education, permanent housing, medical respite services and navigation.
- Convened multiple meetings with key external and internal stakeholders to strengthen collaboration and recognize areas of greatest need.
- Aligned of efforts with established best practices such as Flexible Housing
- Subsidy Pool in Los Angeles and scattered site permanent housing in rural hospitals.
- **FGO Community Investment Loan (through August 30th):**
  - The Homelessness Services Center is renovating a residential property efficiently located adjacent from the current campus into six permanent housing rental units to assist chronically homeless individuals who have transitioned from the RPHC Center (RCRC) out of homelessness.
- **The Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation will be acquiring and rehabilitating 86 units located in a historic building in San Francisco, providing certain upgrades to the existing units and to help stabilize rents of current occupants and working with the City’s agencies to maintain the rental stability of the building while converting 24 units to affordable rental units accommodating previously homeless individuals and families.