

Do you provide medical aid to those who are homeless?

What kind of medical needs are you seeing when you do outreach?

Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 4.26.24

What are we seeing?

- See a lot of folks who don't know who primary care provider is. Most primary care clinics aren't receiving new patients, so if they have an urgent issue, they end up in the ER.
- See dental problems, skin infections, injuries.
- Many folks need foot care. See folks who are relatively young and losing feet to diabetes. Another person lost foot in a fire.
- Extremities are always an impact - feet, hands, teeth, especially in extreme weather.
- Recently took a young man to a clinic with multiple needs, but only one thing was addressed. It was too short of a visit. He ended up needing surgery.
- Free clinics are reporting increasing numbers of people who are unhoused.
- "As a community member living on eastside near Salishan the violence I see towards homeless folks is terrible. I offer what I can to provide some support when altercations happen."
- People in the hot weather without sunscreen and sunglasses—simple but try to give out sunscreen and sunglasses also providing dry socks for their feet.

Barriers to care

- See many people having a difficult time ambulating due to lost limbs.
- Substance use disorder and mental health issues also impact ability to seek care.
- Inability to maintain hygiene also contributes to illness - infections. Need more mobile showers with medical care. Need rest stops all over the county for folks with bathrooms, trash.
- Important to acknowledge the problems with pets that may require some care that people can't afford.
- Need better awareness of the services that currently exist.

Misc. observations

- During winter, presence of the needle exchange and MRC on G street is essential.
- Work with folks planning education which is hard to do if unhoused...
- Having people on the street in wheelchairs and missing limbs sleeping outside in these devices demonstrates evidence of the morbidity. All of this can bring despair at being able to respond positively.
- Have found that joining a church working on assisting homeless folks brings sense of common effort.
- How do we determine coalition support for broader, long-term solutions re: healthcare and medical debt, namely single-payer healthcare?

Notes and Resources List

New and Notable

www.youknowmenow.com is a local podcast profiling homeless people's struggles directed by Tomasz Biernacki and Facing Homelessness founder Rex Hohlbein.

Thiago Cross can wash and dry stuff if you do outreach. Feel free to reach out to me to deliver your donations. Located at Aspen Court on Hosmer. (253) 262-8631

Northwest Justice Project helps low-income folks dealing with medical debt should be referred to for assistance. <https://nwjustice.org/home>

City of Tacoma's Participatory Budgeting: Please submit your million-dollar ideas. COT Participatory Budgeting District 2 | Social Pinpoint (mysocialpinpoint.com)

Healthcare Resources

Washington Healthcare Access Alliance: <https://www.wahealthcareaccessalliance.org>

2021 Washington State Primary Care Needs Assessment:

https://www.wahealthcareaccessalliance.org/files/pdfs/Annual%20Reports/PCNA_WA_2021.pdf

Free Clinic Resources: <https://www.wahealthcareaccessalliance.org/clinic-resources>

Volunteer and Retired Providers Program: <https://www.wahealthcareaccessalliance.org/vrp-program>

Track work on single payer healthcare (Medicare for All WA State, SB 5335 at www.wholewashington.org)

Screening of UNZIPPED: An Autopsy of American Inequality. May 8 at the Grand Cinema. We will have the Director there to talk about the film. The tickets are \$10 but let me know if someone might need financial assistance Amanda@tpcahc.org

<https://www.affordablehousingconsortium.org/events/unzipped-an-autopsy-of-american-inequality-film-premiere-director-discussion-1>

Community Spotlight Opportunity: Please send suggestions for all partner spotlights to Theresa at tpdrutis@nctacoma.org

Common Good Supply Station @ FUMCOT, First United Methodist Church of Tacoma. Open Tuesday's Noon to 2PM, 621 Tacoma Ave S, Tacoma, WA 98402. Go to the back alley and come to the door between the 2 garages. Call Theresa at 253.617.1405 when you are at the door. The number above is a Line2 number; those who have my personal cell # are welcome to use that instead. Both numbers will ring through.

Ongoing Resources and Needs

Sign up to receive Action Alerts: <https://secure.everyaction.com/-gZPY8k0qkaHQyrUqmpC5g2>

One pager on Housing Alliance priorities: <https://www.wliha.org/advocacy/2024-public-policy-priorities>

SVdP is willing to store any items for sharing. Outreach workers can pick up supplies every day between 10am-5pm. Just text Dionne. 253-355-5868

Link for the Coalition's cold weather resources page: www.craft.me/s/f0GVFmAubX8YUg

To be added to the monthly Public Health email newsletter, please share your email here OR email me at: jschoeppe@tpchd.org

Outreach and Supply Need/Share Form:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Kh2OBOLT-SXN8cq7L7Z1Bb04iXxCf6Nfv_RBP-F0SZk/edit?usp=sharing

TPCHD has a webpage for homeless service providers and advocates

<https://tpchd.org/healthy-people/provider-resources/homelessness-providers-toolkit/>

If you are an agency or org that needs COVID test kit support, we still have kits to distribute. Please reach out directly to our testing team at: epitesting@tpchd.org

Free wound care clinic every Friday afternoon, TNE clinic at the STD room at T-PCHD on S 37th & Pacific. Spread the word.

Safe Sites

<https://ss4a.pchomeless.org>

Outreach Supply Need and Share form: <https://forms.gle/2zfK8Y5JvC1K5eXLA>

Please sign up to the inclement weather listserv at

<https://www.pchomeless.org/Home/Listserv>

Narcan Resources:

<https://www.tacomaneedleexchange.org/naloxone> WA DOH Free Mail Order Naloxone

Free Narcan Vending Machines: Tacoma Public Library Moore Branch (regular library hours), First United Methodist Church of Tacoma, Recovery Café Orting Valley

WA DOH Free Mail Order Narcan/Naloxone:<https://phra.org/naloxone>