

THE VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program / Summer/Fall 2013

This issue: A Message from Bob Taube p2 / Janey Scholars p3 / At the Threshold back cover www.bhchp.org

Our Mission: The mission of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP) is to provide or assure access to the highest quality health care for all homeless men, women and children in the greater Boston area.

We Offer: Primary Care, Behavioral Health, Oral Health, Family Services, Case Management, Medical Respite Care, and Outreach



We Are: Physicians, Dentists, Registered Nurses, Social Workers, Building & Maintenance Staff, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Administrative Staff, Psychiatrists, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counselors, Food Services Staff, Case Managers, and Dental Assistants

WHEN LOVING CARE IS MOST NEEDED: THE TOMMY MOLINARO PALLIATIVE CARE CART

Jorge, suffering from end-stage respiratory disease, came to the Barbara McInnis House (BMH) to spend the last few months of his life. BHCHP's medical respite facility, which offers short-term medical and recuperative services to individuals experiencing homelessness, is also a refuge for men and women who have no other place to receive stable and specialized end-of-life care. Jorge's condition was managed by a multidisciplinary team under the direction of a palliative care doctor who personalized his treatment to ensure his comfort and quality of life.

There has been an increasing need for palliative care—care that focuses on addressing the physical, emotional, spiritual, and social concerns that arise with a life-threatening illness. In our Summer 2012 newsletter, we offered our supporters a special opportunity to contribute to this meaningful and important work by sponsoring a palliative care cart named in memory of a beloved patient who spent his final days at BMH, Tommy Molinaro.

We were overwhelmed with gratitude when Karen Shafer of Dallas, Texas, came forward to make a gift of \$5,000 to help Barbara McInnis House staff purchase and stock the cart.

Although Karen is not a resident of the area, she became interested in our work while visiting her daughter and grandchildren who live nearby.

A passionate advocate for those experiencing homelessness, she was interested in learning more about BHCHP's work and asked to receive a tour of the Barbara McInnis House while visiting Boston. "I loved getting to spend a little time there, to see and meet some patients and staff," she reflected. "It is indeed a rare environment—it feels like a family of the very best and most loving kind."

Karen was so impressed and inspired by the staff and patients she met that she made a donation to the Program when she returned home to Texas.

Months later, as Karen read about Tommy Molinaro, a former jockey and stable hand at the Suffolk Downs Racetrack, she was quite moved to learn that the palliative care team had gone the extra mile to fulfill one of his final

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Tommy Molinaro visits with his favorite filly, Southern Advice, at Suffolk Downs Racetrack.

The View From the Bridge is a publication of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, bridging the gap between homelessness and health 24/7/365. For additional information please contact: Linda O'Connor, Director of Development, (loconnor@bhchp.org) at 857.654.1050 or Allison Whittier, Communications & Donor Relations Coordinator, (awhittier@bhchp.org) at 857.654.1044.

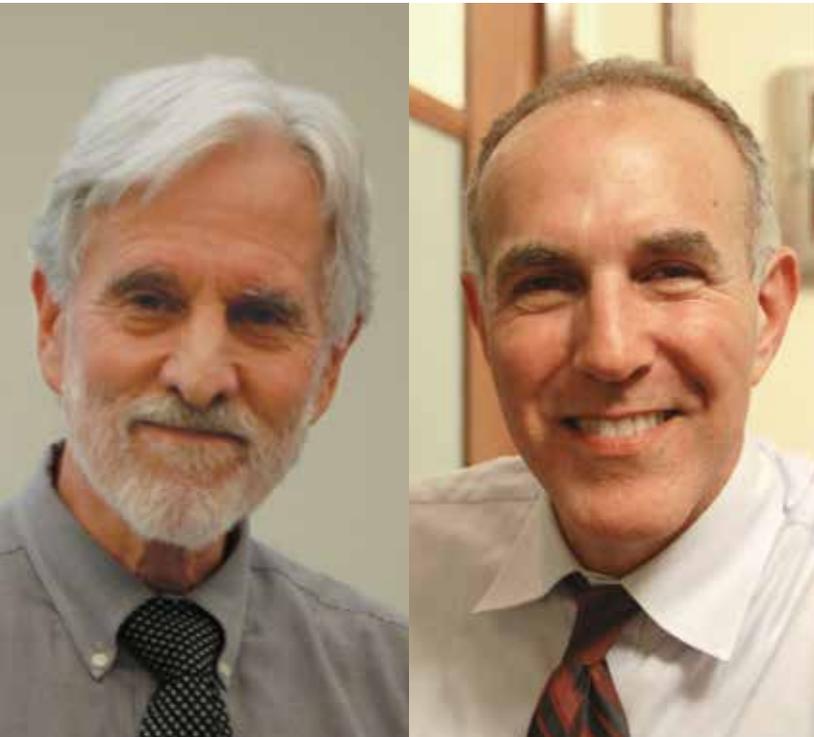


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MEDICINE THAT MATTERS



Left: Bob Taube; Right: Barry Bock

AT THE THRESHOLD: *TRANSITIONS IN LEADERSHIP*

By: Jim O'Connell, MD, President

The Roman god Janus has two faces, one looking to the future and one facing the past. Janus' mythical presence in ancient Rome was depicted by a plethora of symbols, including doors, gates, birth, time, passages and travel. As the god of beginnings and transitions, the first month of the calendar year was named in his honor.

I suspect Janus has a broad grin on both faces as our leadership at BHCHP undergoes a rare transition. In 1985, we dedicated ourselves to assuring that every poor and homeless man, woman, and child in Boston would have access to compassionate and comprehensive care delivered within a continuous network of accessible clinics in shelters, on the streets, in hospitals and in our medical respite program. That simple vision became our mission and has been our passion and obsession for 28 years, and we now serve more than 12,000 homeless persons each year with a staff that has grown from 8 to over 300 people.

Bob Taube came to us as in 1994 from the Harvard School of Public Health to help us understand "managed care" for homeless persons and to design and implement our behavioral health services. In addition to his MPH, Bob was armed with

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A MESSAGE FROM BOB TAUBE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1993-2013)



To our friends:

When I started my association with our program in 1993, I was drawn into compelling work in an inspiring setting. This summer, when I reach the (venerable) age of 66, I will wind down my work-

life and will leave a role that I have loved at BHCHP.

My current plan is to impersonate a retired person—to travel, to camp and to bicycle more. On some level I find the thought of organizing my days around something other than my work here as incomprehensible. Still, this continues to feel like the right time to make this change. In doing this, I know that I am incredibly fortunate. I found this program inspiring and vibrant when I came here in 1993. I will leave it this summer, twenty years later, still inspired by its work. I will comfortably re-entrust it to the strong and capable hands of others who care deeply about it.

There have been many gratifying and touching moments in my time here. I have loved watching our staff take patients into their hearts and treat them with the kindness and skill that I would wish for those I love. I have had the opportunity to interact with many of you—friends outside of our organization who have taken us and our work into your hearts. You have reached out in many different ways to help us. You have supported us as our volunteers, as our ambassadors, and as our donors. Gifts of communally collected socks, donations in memory of loved ones, major gifts to our capital campaign, checks at each year's end—all of these have turned into a steady stream of highly personal affirmation for our work and I have felt it personally. I have a friend who, each year during Lent, collects the money left in his pants pockets at the end of each day and faithfully—literally faithfully—delivers a box full of cash at the end of Lent. Another who has come here once a month—every month for many years—and led a knitting group for patients at our McInnis House bringing often isolated people into productive communal activity. I have had the good fortune to be in a role where I represent my colleagues and receive these highly

personal and earnest affirmations on behalf of their fine work and our patients' needs.

As witness to many such kindnesses through and on behalf of our program over the years, I have been touched and changed by the experience. I have been struck by the joy and the importance that these gifts hold for the giver—whether the giver is a nurse caring for a patient or a donor supporting this nurse's skill and kindness. I will leave here in June moved and changed by the kindness of our staff in interacting with our patients and by your generosity as our friend. I leave here aware of the unending need for compassionate service and community. I also leave more hopeful than when I arrived about the humanity that is in us and that surrounds us and that requires us to meet this need.

I thank you. ■

"I leave here aware of the unending need for compassionate service and community."

News



Jessie M. Gaeta, MD, medical director of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, addressed the graduating

class at the 2013 School of Medicine Convocation during Boston University's 140th Commencement. Dr. Gaeta recounted her experiences working with marginalized populations and encouraged the graduates to think of their future clinical or scientific work in terms of larger public health concerns. "Bear witness to injustices that result in poor health, and work to remove those injustices and build health equity," she said. "This is what healers owe society. And this is what our society desperately needs at this moment in time."

► **Karen Friedman, FNP-BC**, was honored by the March of Dimes with their Nurse of the Year award in December of 2012. Each year, nurses with various specialties are nominated by colleagues and families alike. A prestigious group of healthcare professionals review applications and make award selections in a number of categories. As a nurse practitioner on our Family Team, Karen provides outreach services to homeless families in Boston area family shelters, motels, and domestic violence shelters.

► Our **BMC Clinic** has been awarded recognition by the NCQA (National Committee for Quality Assurance) as an official Patient-Centered Medical Home. The Patient-Centered medical home is a model of care emphasizing care coordination and communication to transform primary care into "what patients want it to be." To receive recognition, BHCHP's case managers,

providers, front desk staff, nurses, medical assistants, behavioral health team members, and community support workers worked to ensure that the care our patients receive is responsive, evidence-based, and appropriate for their needs. For more on what it means to be a Patient-Centered Medical Home, watch out for our Fall/Winter 2013 newsletter!

► **Pat and her family**, featured in the November 2012 letter, are now in housing! Not long ago, the family of five was one of 1,800 homeless families currently living in motels—the overflow system for family shelters—across Massachusetts. After sixteen months of sharing two beds and one bathroom, they have moved into an apartment just outside of Boston. Although the path to housing was not an easy one, with multiple, complex health issues plaguing the family, Pat is hopeful that this transition will offer the family increased stability.

JANEY SCHOLARS: THE GIFT OF A SUMMER

Each summer Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program welcomes a new crop of college interns, who come in each day with lots of energy and a commitment to working with our patients. We wouldn't be able to accomplish all that we do without them.

Last summer, BHCHP was especially lucky to have the help of **Armani White**, a junior studying anthropology at Wesleyan University. Just a week into his internship, however, he was mugged and had to have his jaw wired shut for six of the eight weeks that he would be working with us. His commitment to our patients wouldn't allow him to quit.

"Coming here gave me a purpose; I was useful," said Armani, who grew up in Boston's Jamaica Plain neighborhood. He found comfort in coming to work at the Barbara McInnis House as an intern providing direct patient support on the case management team in the weeks following the incident. He believes that his injuries allowed him to connect to his patients in a more profound way.

"I could still do my job; I could still talk to patients. Some of them have bigger problems—they might even be at the end of their life—and they were worried about me," he said

Armani was able to make a difference in the lives of the patients he worked

with in just two months. One patient was even moved to tears after Armani accompanied him to a support group meeting for people living with HIV; it was the first time he had felt welcome in a place despite his disease.

"It's been a great experience since the first day. I've had the opportunity to get guidance from people you wouldn't expect to get guidance from. I'd love to keep in contact with this place."

Armani isn't the first of our interns to consider working for BHCHP after graduation. **Emely Santiago**, another Boston native who interned at BHCHP while on summer break from Brown University, is now employed by us as a full-time research assistant. Both Armani and Emely came to BHCHP through internships funded by the Janey Scholars program, which helps low-income, high-achieving students pursue meaningful careers.

"I met a lot of people who were going on the right path and just one wrong turn or just one mistake or one mishap and they ended up on the streets," she said, of the patients that she worked with while assisting the case management and behavioral health teams with patient evaluations during her internship. "That could easily be any of us."

As an intern, Emely was impressed by the level of collaboration between

staff members at BHCHP and the empathy that the clinicians showed their patients. She credits the positive work environment and high quality care with aiding her in her decision to work for the organization after graduation.

"I am where I am today due to the help I received from my family, my teachers, my mentors, all the individuals who gave me a hand in any way they possibly could because they believed in me," said Emely. "I feel it's the same with the homeless population...they might be one helping hand away from being back on the right track." ■



Top: Emely working with a patient at a Family Team health fair; Bottom: Armani (bottom center) posing with the summer 2012 interns.

WHEN LOVING CARE...

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(L-R) Arnaud, Yaw, Rose, and Karen; Mandy, Cora, Louis, and Anna pictured vacationing on Cape Cod.

wishes: to return to the racetrack and spend the day with his favorite filly. Having grown up loving horses herself, Karen recognized the difference that such as gesture would have made to Tommy at the end of his life, though she never had the opportunity to meet him. She was thrilled to be able to make her gift in memory of Tommy, as well as in honor of her daughters, Mandy and Rose, and their families.

Because of Karen's generosity, the Tommy Molinaro Palliative Care Cart is now filled with the most common non-medical necessities patients at the end of their lives need in order to be as comfortable as possible. The convenience of the cart enables nursing

staff to save time that would otherwise be spent tracking down items like skin lotion, eye drops, and heel protecting booties.

"It's a gift to me and my family to be able to be useful to such a giving group of people as those at BHCHP—people who are so good to folks who've endured a great deal, at times and in situations when loving care is most needed."

As always, we encourage supporters of our mission to visit us and meet our staff and patients. If you would like the opportunity to see BHCHP's work firsthand, please contact Carrie Eldridge-Dickson at 857.654.1048 or celdridge-dickson@bhchp.com for more information. ■

AT THE THRESHOLD...

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a doctorate in psychology and years of experience at the Columbia Point Health Center as a clinical psychologist and as the center's executive director. In 1998, during a poignant and pivotal time in our program's history, Bob was the overwhelming choice to be our executive director. For these past fifteen years, the wisdom of that decision has become legendary as Bob has been at the helm of our remarkable voyage, guiding and inspiring us with wisdom, wit and compassion. Bob leads gently, calling each of us to be our very best, and never veers from the North Star of our mission to bring the best of care to our poor and homeless neighbors.

Over the past months we have laughed and cried through festive galas, celebratory gatherings, Habitat for Humanity Saturdays, and raucous flash mobs to honor Bob, ease our collective sadness and say our private goodbyes to this extraordinary man. This summer Bob retired. His pitching contract with the Red Sox notwithstanding, he and Sharon will take their camper to national parks across America. For fifteen years, he was our determined and tenacious David, fearless against many Goliaths who doubted the audacity and plausibility of our plans and dreams. Some call Bob's personal and professional ethos "social justice," but Bob would simply say he was trying to do the right things for the right reasons.

We are doubly blessed to have **Barry Bock** as our new CEO. Fortunately for us—and for all who believe in us, including our nonprofit partners, our elected officials, our generous donors and volunteers, and our patients—we have always operated as a team. In Bob's precious baseball lingo, BHCHP has incredible "bench strength" to sustain us for a busy and bold future. Barry joined us in 1989 after serving as the director of the nurses' clinics at Pine Street Inn and was the architect and original director of our Barbara McInnis House in Jamaica Plain. Barbara adored Barry for his humor and his ferocious dedication to our mission of serving the poor and disenfranchised. More than anyone else in our program,

Barry tirelessly and humbly works deep in the trenches and has overseen all of our clinical programs for these past two decades as our chief operating officer. He has earned the love and respect of staff and patients as well as our city, state, and national partners.

Janus was said to see the past through the future, and our transition in leadership has been truly seamless. The sadness over Bob's departure eases in the excitement that Barry now brings to our lives. The hard work of our program continues each day and we have been proud to operate in the black, year after year. Many challenges lie ahead, and we know that we must continue to innovate as we keep our mission afloat through the inevitable sea changes ahead in health care delivery and financing. We remain firmly dedicated to excellence in the care of homeless persons while fully cognizant of the most entrenched roadblocks to affordable, accessible health care for all of our citizens.

At a recent event, Bob noted humbly and eloquently that he cherished his years at BHCHP and was grateful for the opportunity to have a small part in repairing what's broken in this world. All of us at BHCHP feel this way. We know we can't do this alone and we remain grateful to you, our supporters, for helping us live our mission. ■



Dr. Jim O'Connell

"BHCHP has incredible 'bench strength' to sustain us for a busy and bold future."

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Founded in 1985, BHCHP employs the professional medical staff that **manages** the clinics and **delivers** the comprehensive health care at most of greater Boston's adult, family and domestic violence shelters (Pine Street Inn, The New England Center for Homeless Veterans, St. Francis House and more than 80 others)* BHCHP is the hands and face of health care for over 12,000 homeless adults and children each year at sites as diverse as Horizons for Homeless Children and the crawl space under the Longfellow Bridge. BHCHP has operated in-the-black while delivering medicine that matters to Boston's most vulnerable population for over 28 years.

In addition, BHCHP staffs, manages and delivers comprehensive health care at 2 hospital-based clinics on the campuses of Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Medical Center and at a clinic on the backstretch at Suffolk Downs Racetrack. BHCHP also staffs, manages and operates our own Barbara McInnis House at Jean Yawkey Place, a 104-bed medical respite facility for homeless

adults with complex conditions like cancer, heart disease, pneumonia and diabetes who are too sick to live in a shelter or on the street and would otherwise require prolonged and costly hospitalization in the acute care rooms of Boston's hospitals.

When you support BHCHP you reach children and adults throughout greater Boston's entire safety net community when they are not only homeless but also sick. ■

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* **A partial list of BHCHP's partners includes:** Above & Beyond/Brookview, Anchor Inn, Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Boston Family Shelter, Boston Living Center, Boston Medical Center, Bridge to Recovery, Brookview House, Cardinal Medeiros Center, Carolina Hills Shelter, Casa Esperanza, Casa Nueva Vida, Church of the Advent, Crittenton Women's Union, Crossroads, DOVE, Entre Familia, Families in Transition, Father Bill's & Mainspring, Finex House, Hildebrand Family Shelter, hopeFound, Horizons for Homeless Children, Housing Families, Inc., Joelyn's Family Home, Kingston House, Latinas & Ninos, Lindemann Center, Long Island Shelter, Margaret's House, Mass General Hospital, Massachusetts Mental Health Center, Millenium House, Nazareth Residence, New England Center for Homeless Veterans, Paul Sullivan Housing, Pilgrim Shelter, Pine Street Inn, Portis Family House, Project Hope, Queen of Peace Shelter, Renewal House, Revision House, Rosie's Place, Safe Harbor, Project SOAR, Sojourner House, South End Community Health Center, St. Francis House, St. Mary's Women's & Infant Center, St. Ambrose, The Eighth Pole at Suffolk Downs, The Women's Lunch Place, Woods-Mullen Shelter

Donate

You can make a big difference in the health and comfort of a homeless man, woman or child with a small gift. You can't imagine how much these items help our caregivers establish and maintain contact and you can't imagine how much our patients appreciate your kindness.

We can never have too many of these items:

- new white socks
- new underwear (men's and women's)
- diapers
- new sneakers
- new flip flops
- sunscreen
- gift cards:
 - CVS (\$5 and up)
 - Dunkin' Donuts (\$5 and up)
 - McDonald's (\$5 and up)
 - Stop & Shop (\$20 and up)
 - Target (\$20 and up)

Why Socks? Access to socks is often limited for homeless men and women living in shelters and on the streets. Common infections such as athlete's foot thrive when damp socks are worn for days at a time. Frostbite is common in colder months, sometimes resulting in toe amputations. The best way to prevent such conditions is to keep feet clean and dry—very difficult if you spend your days outside. That's why BHCHP has a daily foot clinic at St. Francis House and regularly scheduled foot clinics at other primary care sites.

Contact volunteer@bhchp.org or call Alyssa Brassil at **857.654.1046** for more information, to find out about other small gift needs or to make arrangements for delivery.

YOUR SUPPORT WILL BRING...

the **Healing** comfort of a family physician's visit to a mother and her 2 children coping with their transition into homelessness.

the **Dignity** of dentures for a 42-year-old man who had forgotten what a difference a smile can make.

the **Trust** that a therapist can bring to a deeply depressed 46-year-old man who cries at each of his medical visits to our Pine Street Inn clinic.

the **Hope** of a respite bed at Barbara McInnis house for a 56-year-old woman experiencing the pain of chronic arthritis and the exhausting side effects of the only medicine that will keep her out of a wheel chair.

Donate Now

www.bhchp.org