

UNITED HOMELESS HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

STRATEGIC PLAN 2007 – 2009

INTRODUCTION

United Homeless Healthcare Partners (UHHP) is a collaborative of organizations dedicated to addressing the critical issues surrounding the provision of healthcare services to the homeless residents of Los Angeles County. The County Departments of Health Services and Public Health established UHHP in November 2005 to address policy issues and planning for service improvements.

The goals of UHHP are to:

- Advocate for policies that support both the homeless healthcare providers' ability to provide services and the homeless individuals' ability to receive these services;
- Serve as a strong and unified voice within Los Angeles County to expand the dollars solicited and spent for homeless healthcare in this region; and
- Support and expand countywide efforts to provide comprehensive and integrated healthcare for homeless individuals and families.

BACKGROUND

A broad understanding of the health profile of the homeless population in Los Angeles County is important to realize the impact that current healthcare policies have on the homeless residents of Los Angeles County and those that serve them. While many of these policies may be designed to improve efficiency and effectiveness in serving the general population, they have negative consequences for the homeless and providers of homeless healthcare services

According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority 2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, there are approximately 82,000 homeless individuals every night in Los Angeles County.¹ During any given year, more than 250,000 individuals are homeless in this region. The following chart shows the distribution of this population within the county's Service Planning Areas (SPAs)² and underscores the fact that geography is another element that must be considered in addressing homeless healthcare.

¹ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, *2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count*. (January 12, 2006).

² Los Angeles County is divided into eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs) for the purpose of delivering healthcare and healthcare planning. The Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council designed the SPAs, and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved the regional map in November 1993, creating the eight SPAs.

Table 1
Distribution of Homeless within County of Los Angeles Service Planning Areas

Service Planning Area	Homeless Estimate
SPA 1 – Antelope Valley	3,544
SPA 2 – San Fernando Valley	11,275 (3 rd)
SPA 3 – San Gabriel Valley	9,254
SPA 4 – Metro Los Angeles	20,023 (1 st)
SPA 5 – West Los Angeles	6,860
SPA 6 – South Los Angeles	16,787 (2 nd)
SPA 7 – East Los Angeles	7,178
SPA 8 – South Bay	7,369
TOTAL LOS ANGELES COUNTY	82,291

Source: Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, *2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count*. (January 12, 2006).

A sampling of participants in the homeless count reported on various aspects of their lives and health. They indicated:

- 35% use drugs
- 40% use alcohol
- 25% use both drugs and alcohol
- 34% report mental illness
- 16 % have a dual diagnosis
- 35% are physically disabled
- 34% report domestic violence³

In response to a question about how many disabilities they lived with, the participants reported:

- 20% reported one disability
- 25% reported two disabilities
- 20% reported three disabilities
- 35% reported four or more disabilities⁴

When asked the source of medical attention they received in the past year, they indicated:

- 32% stated that primary healthcare is hospital ER -
 - 54% had been to the ER at least once in the previous 12 months
- 22% receive healthcare at free or community clinic
- 18% receive care at a public health clinic
- 25% report being unable to receive needed medical attention⁵

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Given this profile, it is apparent that a significant portion of the homeless population presents very complex medical and psychosocial issues. In the U.S. today, it is a challenge to provide any kind of healthcare services. These challenges are intensely magnified when serving the homeless with their multiple medical issues, lack of “medical homes,” and absence of a fixed address to contact them for follow-up services. These factors are compounded by public policies that negatively impact both the homeless healthcare providers’ ability to provide services and the homeless individuals’ ability to receive these services. Further, the large geographic area and diversity of Los Angeles County have made it difficult for homeless healthcare providers to address the issues that have limited their ability to provide comprehensive and integrated healthcare for homeless individuals and families.

UHHP Vision

The vision of United Homeless Healthcare Partners is to solve the homeless healthcare crisis in Los Angeles County by:

- Supporting the providers of healthcare services throughout the region in building stronger networks, leveraging resources, and ensuring that healthcare services are accessible to the homeless residents of Los Angeles County.
- Advocating for policies that support both the homeless healthcare providers’ ability to provide services and the homeless individuals’ ability to receive these services.

UHHP Mission

The mission of United Homeless Healthcare Partners is to serve as a strong and unified voice for Los Angeles to:

- Expand the dollars solicited and spent for homeless healthcare in Los Angeles County.
- Advocate for policies at all levels of government that support improved health outcomes in the Los Angeles homeless population.
- Support and expand countywide efforts to provide comprehensive and integrated healthcare for homeless residents.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To make a major impact on the homeless healthcare crisis in Los Angeles County, UHHP will focus on three specific areas:

1. Advocating for policies that support both the homeless healthcare providers’ ability to provide services and the homeless individuals’ ability to receive these services, and
2. Supporting the providers of healthcare services throughout the region to build stronger networks, leverage resources, and ensure that healthcare services are accessible to homeless residents of Los Angeles County.
3. Developing UHHP as a sustainable and financially stable organization to promote and continue these efforts.

The related strategic objectives for 2007 – 2009 are:

1. By the end of 2009, establish and implement a robust homeless healthcare policy development, advocacy, and research program for United Homeless Healthcare Partners.
2. By the end of 2009, dramatically improve delivery of health services to homeless individuals so that 25%⁶ of the homeless residents of Los Angeles County have a medical home providing quality service.⁷
3. By the end of 2007, ensure that United Homeless Healthcare Partners is an on-going, financially stable organization.

⁶ Measurement methods to be determined. A “medical home” is defined as a primary care facility that the patient identifies as the place where he/she receives care.

⁷ As defined by the Skid Row Homeless Healthcare Initiative.

ACTION PLAN – POLICY DEVELOPMENT, ADVOCACY, & RESEARCH

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: By the end of 2009, establish and implement a robust homeless healthcare policy development, advocacy, and research program for United Homeless Healthcare Partners.

Making policy changes is critical to the provision of healthcare for the homeless. According to the National Health Care for the Homeless Council 2006 Policy Statements, current Medicaid policies exclude most homeless people and most people experiencing homelessness do not qualify for Medicaid under current policy, regardless of their degree of impoverishment or medical need. Like all states, California has designed its Medicaid reimbursement policies to address the unique needs of its citizens within the guidelines established by the Federal government. Those policies have not always considered the impact on the homeless population.

UHHP has identified policy, advocacy and research as among the most important levers to address the needs of the homeless residents of Los Angeles County, and recognizes that the membership of Los Angeles Health Action (LAHA) can be an important voice and sounding board for policy proposals. LAHA was established to expand access to health coverage and care to all Los Angeles County residents through policy and advocacy, coalition building, and linking existing resources. LAHA is an active member of UHHP and has been instrumental in shaping the work of the Policy and Research Work Group. This action plan details the steps required to identify key public policy issues and to develop an annual platform of policy and legislation that will impact homeless healthcare funding and availability.

UHHP will be successful in our advocacy efforts if:

- We develop policy statements that are adopted by UHHP membership.
- We develop a united legislative platform that advocates for policies that support both the homeless healthcare providers' ability to provide services and the homeless individuals' ability to receive these services
- At least 70% of UHHP members are advocating within, and when possible outside of their organizations for these policy changes.
- All UHHP members have received technical support to engage in advocacy as appropriate to their positions.
- 25% of our members and staff participate in a planned schedule of advocacy activities before other policy advocacy groups and decision-makers such as city councils, County Supervisors, and State and Federal administrative and legislative bodies.

<i>Strategy Area – Policy Development, Advocacy, & Program</i>	
Policy Objective 1	Develop and implement a process for the on-going identification of key issues that affect homeless healthcare.
Policy Objective 2	Develop, implement, and evaluate a process for establishing a policy platform for United Homeless Healthcare Partners that links to and supports other regional and national advocacy efforts.

ACTION STEPS		LEAD	PARTNERS/OTHER ASSISTANCE	TIMING
Develop and implement a process for the on-going identification of key issues that affect homeless healthcare.				
1.	Assess the activities of the Policy Development & Research Work Group to date and identify what worked well.			

ACTION STEPS		LEAD	PARTNERS/OTHER ASSISTANCE	TIMING
2.	Develop an approach that builds on those strengths and includes a method for UHHP members to provide input into the policy discussion through recommendations and participation.			
3.	Determine the relationship between policy development and research and the resources to be devoted to each.			
Develop, implement, and evaluate a process for establishing a policy platform for United Homeless Healthcare Partners.				
4.	Determine criteria for prioritizing issues for inclusion in the platform, including assessment of impact and ability of UHHP to impact the decision makers.			
5.	Develop and implement a strategy for identifying, prioritizing and addressing policies for advocacy that identifies the federal, state, and local policies that negatively impact both the homeless healthcare providers' ability to provide services, and the homeless individuals' ability to receive the services so that advocacy efforts can be targeted to the highest need in the community.			
6.	Provide education to UHHP members on strategy methods, as well as a working knowledge of each element of the policy platform.			
7.	Coordinate the advocacy efforts of UHHP members and other regional and national efforts to maximize the impact on policy makers.			
8.	Evaluate impact of advocacy efforts on administrative and legislative actions over the year.			

ACTION PLAN – SERVICE DELIVERY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: By the end of 2009, dramatically improve delivery of health services to homeless individuals so that 25%⁸ of the homeless residents of Los Angeles County have a medical home providing quality service.⁹

UHHP, in recognition of the extraordinary diversity within Los Angeles County, intends to develop and assess service delivery models that can be considered and introduced in different areas within the County. The guiding principle in this work is that the providers in the geographic area will develop a new or adapt an existing model to implement and that the roles of UHHP will be those of convener, facilitator, and information source.

Strategy Area – Service Delivery	
Service Delivery Objective 1	Develop and implement a plan to assist each Service Planning Area and/or community in a way that meets the needs of the homeless residents and homeless healthcare providers in that SPA.
Service Delivery Objective 2	Develop a clearinghouse of service delivery models and criteria for successful application available to coalitions of homeless healthcare providers.
Service Delivery Objective 3	Establish an on-going dialog and network with and among homeless healthcare providers throughout Los Angeles County.

ACTION STEPS		LEAD	PARTNERS/OTHER ASSISTANCE	TIMING
Develop and implement a plan to assist each Service Planning Area in a way that meets the needs of the homeless residents and homeless healthcare providers in that SPA.				
1.	Consult with homeless healthcare providers and coalitions in each Service Planning Area and/or community to identify needs and to determine the role UHHP can best play in each SPA.			Done
2.	Design and implement a homeless healthcare conference for Los Angeles County that addresses the needs of the entire region and exposes homeless healthcare providers to ‘best practices’ in local and other jurisdictions.			
3.	Assist each SPA and/or community develop and implement a plan to build or enhance a network that results in improved health outcomes for homeless residents and increased number of homeless with “medical goals.”			
4.	Provide on-going technical assistance to SPA and/or community groups.			

⁸ Measurement methods to be determined. A “medical home” is defined as a primary care facility that the patient identifies as the place where he/she receives care.

⁹ As defined by the Skid Row Homeless Healthcare Initiative.

ACTION STEPS		LEAD	PARTNERS/OTHER ASSISTANCE	TIMING
Develop a clearinghouse of service delivery models and criteria for successful application available to coalitions of homeless healthcare providers.				
5.	Gather and disseminate information about successful programs currently being implemented among healthcare providers in all SPAs.			
6.	Gather and provide access to information about successful programs and approaches being implemented to address homeless healthcare issues around the world. This may utilize a web site.			
Establish an on-going dialog and network with and among homeless healthcare providers in Los Angeles County.				
8.	Ensure that UHHP meets the needs of homeless healthcare providers in all areas of the County by convening participants in a variety of ways to advance the overall goals of UHHP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Policy development & advocacy ➤ Strong and unified voice for funding expansion & solicitations ➤ Comprehensive & integrated healthcare for homeless individuals & families 			

ACTION PLAN – ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: By the end of 2007, ensure that United Homeless Healthcare Partners is an on-going, financially stable organization.

Beginning in November 2005, UHHP has been bringing together the major stakeholders in Los Angeles who are concerned with healthcare for the homeless.

For UHHP to achieve the overarching goals of:

- Advocating for policies that support improved health outcomes for the homeless residents of Los Angeles County;
- Serving as a strong and unified voice within Los Angeles County to expand the dollars solicited and spent for homeless healthcare in this region; and
- Supporting and expanding countywide efforts to provide comprehensive and integrated healthcare for homeless individuals and families.

UHHP needs to continue as an organized, collaborative structure that can be sustained through a strong membership base, a professional staff, and a sound financial structure.

Strategy Area – Organization Development	
Organization Development Objective 1	By the end of 2007, seek and obtain funding for 3 to 5 years for United Homeless Healthcare Partners.
Organization Development Objective 2	By the end of 2007, develop the protocols and operating agreements for the United Homeless Healthcare Partners organization.
Organization Development Objective 3	By the end of 2007, develop the staffing structure necessary to support implementation of the strategic plan.
Organization Development Objective 4	By the end of 2007, establish, recruit, and retain a minimum base of active members who can support policy development, service delivery, and governance functions to the level necessary to accomplish this plan.

ACTION STEPS		LEAD	PARTNERS/OTHER ASSISTANCE	TIMING
By the end of 2007, seek and obtain funding for 3 to 5 years for United Homeless Healthcare Partners.				
1.	By April 30, 2007, establish an operating budget for UHHP.			
2.	By the end of 2007, secure operating funds for two years based on the approved UHHP budget.			
3.	Determine organizationally where the finance function should be placed and establish a committee or subcommittee.			
4.	Develop and implement a plan for solicitation of funding to support annual budget.			
By the end of 2007, develop the protocols and operating agreements for the United Homeless Healthcare Partners organization.				
5.	Develop protocols for UHHP regarding adoption of policy positions, establishment of priorities, and other governance issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Decision-making ➤ Organizational structure ➤ Voting / Proxy ➤ By-laws ➤ Charter ➤ Regular meeting dates 			

ACTION STEPS		LEAD	PARTNERS/OTHER ASSISTANCE	TIMING
6.	With the assistance of the fiscal sponsor, evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of informal and formal structures, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ establishment of separate 501 (c) (3) organization, ➤ more formally aligning with other organizations, ➤ continuing as an informal committee structure with permanent and ad-hoc sub committees, or ➤ combinations of the above. 			
7.	Develop and implement a long-term plan for organizational structure and governance based on decisions reached in #1 and #2 above.			
By the end of 2007, develop the staffing structure necessary to support implementation of the strategic plan.				
8.	Review and agree on proposed job descriptions for staff.			
9.	Recruit and hire executive director.			
10.	Determine hiring procedures for other staff positions.			
11.	Fill other staff positions.			
By the end of 2007, establish, recruit, and retain a minimum base of active members who can support policy development, service delivery, and governance functions to the level necessary to accomplish this plan.				
12.	Working in coordination with the Service Delivery Committee's outreach efforts, develop and implement a plan to engage additional homeless healthcare providers and advocates in the work of UHHP.			
13.	Develop and implement annual work plans that provide roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities for all members so that they remain engaged in the work.			