

The Start of a Journey...Unity Health Care 1st Decade (1985 - 1995)

- 1985** Unity Health Care, Inc. *formerly* Health Care for the Homeless Project (HCHP), received a commitment of about \$1.2 million in operating funds from the Robert Wood Johnson and Pew Foundations. **Opening Day February 26, 1985** – Unity opened its first clinic in the former coatroom of the District’s Pierce Street Shelter – the late Dr. Jesse B. Barber, Jr. was named Chairman of the Board of Directors and activist Phyllis Wolfe became the first executive director. On opening day, Co-Founder Dr. Janelle Goetcheus and her staff of eight saved the lives of two homeless men, one a relative of Mary McLeod Bethune, DC civil right activist, was treated for tuberculosis.
- 1986** The Homeless Entitlement Liaison Project (HELP) was established within Unity *formerly* HCHP. The project assisted patients to assemble Medicaid, Medicare or SSI and other application to overcome lengthy delays and appeals. Second initiative, the Mobile Outreach Van was launched to circulate in the downtown area assisting homeless people living on the streets. Received about \$100,000 a year in support from Comic Relief a national HBO fundraiser spearheaded by famous comedians Whoopi Goldberg, Robin Williams, and Billy Crystal.
- 1988** Unity Health Care, Inc. *formerly* Health Care for the Homeless Project won its first grant under Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The staff roster grew to more than 50 with 25 volunteers. Health Care for Homeless families was delivered through health stations in three emergency family shelters: Capital City Motel, Pitts Hotel, and the General Scott Motel. Mrs. Dorothy Kidder donated a trailer to use as a self-contained clinic at one of the family sites.
- 1990** Vincent A. Keane took over the job of Executive Director.
- 1991** In response to growing HIV/AIDS epidemic, a primary health care service for patients opened with specialty clinics at three sites, a “Day Center” and a respite care center at Central Union Mission; all funded by the federal Ryan White Act funds.
- 1992** The late Dr. Jesse B. Barber, Jr., stepped down as Chairman and Dr. Frederick Green took over the role for two years.
- 1994** Dr. Walter Faggett assumed the role of Chairman - Unity Health Care, Inc. *formerly* Health Care for the Homeless Project became a partner with Pfizer Pharmaceutical Group in its national “Sharing the Care” project – the project assured patient access to key prescription medicines – Opening of Woodland Terrace clinic in Ward 8 to serve families at risk of homelessness.
- 1995** Unity Health Care, Inc. *formerly* Health Care for the Homeless Project officially operated in all eight wards of the District of Columbia with 12 health stations and a mobile outreach van. Annual budget grew from \$1 million to nearly \$4 million.

Continuing the Journey...Unity Health Care – 2nd Decade (1996 – 2009)

- 1996** Upon the Federal Government's request - the Health Care for the Homeless Project became the emergency grantee for the Community Health Center Program (Section 330(3)) in The District of Columbia and became a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). As an established and recognized (FQHC) Unity Health Care receives cost-based reimbursement from Medicare and other programs, drug discounts, and the ability to recruit providers from the National Health Service Corp, among other benefits.
- 1997** HCHP formally changed its name to Unity Health Care, Inc. to foster a more community inclusive public image and to remove the stigma attached to the health centers that had previously been associated with caring only for the homeless population
- 2001** Unity Health Care joined the DC Health Care Alliance - a collaborative of a variety of local health care providers that provide wrap-around services to those most in need in the District of Columbia.
- 2005** Unity celebrated its 20th anniversary: "Touching the Heart of Every Neighborhood"
- 2006** Unity Health Care accepted the challenge to work with the District of Columbia's Department of Corrections in implementing its community based model of health care to provide health care services to the incarcerated population. Under the partnership, Unity Health Care began to provide care to inmates in a jail-based health center. In and arrange for specialty care and hospitalization of inmates, through HealthRight, Inc. (a local HMO) thus enhancing their continuity of care. Unity Health Care opened a site for accessible, convenient medical and social services at the New York Avenue Homeless Assistance Center, a 360-bed shelter for homeless men. The center's primary focus is to respond to the health care needs of the homeless population in Washington, DC. At full capacity, Unity's Health Center at New York Avenue can provide comprehensive health care services for 1,250 homeless men each year through programs that are accessible, of high quality, culturally appropriate, and responsive to the needs of our clients.
- 2007** Unity Health Care opened a new health center on the campus of Saint Elizabeth Hospital to provide accessible, convenient medical and social services to DC homeless residents currently living at the 801 East Shelter which is managed by Catholic Charities. The 801 East Shelter routinely provides room and board to more than 300 homeless and now provides a tailored approach to the provision of quality health care and supportive services for transitional and homeless populations.
- Unity Health Care established the Unity Health Care Foundation, a separate fundraising entity of Unity Health Care, Inc. whose primary purposes is to cultivate financial resources that support mission-driven programming within Unity Health Care, Inc. The Foundation focuses on the development of essential relationships through a Partners in Caring Campaign which engages corporations, philanthropist, foundations and volunteers in the direct support of the various programs and services Unity Health Care, Inc. provides throughout the District of Columbia.
- 2008** Unity Health Care opened a fully-comprehensive dental suite within its health center located at the Federal City Homeless Assistance Center, thanks, in part, to the generosity and support from Unity's Partners in Caring at CareFirst BlueCross Blue Shield (CareFirst). The facility is one of the first of its kind in the nation, providing the District's homeless with comprehensive Oral Health services.
- 2009** First Lady Michelle Obama visited Unity's Upper Cardozo Health Center (The Center) to announce the Obama Administration's support for the renovation and modernization of "The Center". This funding is provided through the American Recovery and Re-Investment Act (ARRA), also known as the "Recovery Act" as part of the National initiative to invest in Community Health Centers (CHC) as a critical access point for serving the uninsured. Stimulus funding through the "Recovery Act" allocated \$600 million nationwide to construct or renovate CHC's in Urban and Rural areas. Unity became one of 85 awardees nationwide to receive \$12 million through the Recovery Act. Unity Health Care fully implemented the EHR system as well as a Practice Management (PM) system at all 29 of our health centers sites as an innovative way to reach the marginalized communities we serve. The implementation of EHR will improve effectiveness, efficiency, safety, and quality of care as well as greatly enhance our capacity to collect, monitor and use data, particularly for quality assurance and quality improvement activities.