



PRESS RELEASE

Contact Person: Renee E. Sally,
Marketing and Development Specialist
Unity Health Care, Inc.
3020 14th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: (202) 612-3126 - Fax: (202) 462-6128
Email: rsally@unityhealthcare.org

UNITY HEALTH CARE TO OPEN A HEALTH CENTER AT NEW YORK AVENUE HOMELESS ASSISTANCE CENTER

To continue to respond to the health care needs of the homeless population in Washington, DC, Unity Health Care, Inc. (Unity) will open a satellite site for accessible, convenient medical and social services at the New York Avenue Homeless Assistance Center, a 360-bed shelter for homeless men by December 2005.

As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and a current grantee of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services through its Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Unity will receive an additional \$205,492 to operate this service under President Bush's Initiative for expansion of community health centers. The money will be available in December 2005. In the interim, Unity will continue to provide medical and social services to this population from its Homeless Outreach Van every Thursday night.

"The District's homeless population suffers from various health problems such as heart disease; diabetes; infectious diseases such as tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS; mental illness; and substance abuse disorders," said Dr. Janelle Goetcheus, Chief Medical Officer of Unity and a long time advocate of the medical needs of the District's homeless population. "We believe that offering health services on-site at the New York Avenue location will positively impact homeless health," Dr. Goetcheus added.

At full capacity, New York Avenue will serve 1,250 unduplicated homeless users annually. Unity expects to provide an additional 4,375 encounters a year from this population.

"We are presently coordinating details of our service there with Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Washington DC the organization that runs the shelter and the D.C. Department of Human Services representatives," said Vincent A. Keane, Unity's Chief Executive Officer. "We want the health center at the New York Avenue shelter to be open five days a week, in the afternoons and evenings," added Keane. These new resources will allow Unity to provide comprehensive health care services for this population.

Early plans include a staff of approximately 4, including a medical provider. Among the services Unity is planning to provide are adult well-care, HIV/AIDS primary care, TB screening and treatment, outreach and health screening, and social services. Mental health, substance abuse, oral health care, and specialty services will be available by referral at other Unity sites throughout the District of Columbia. "Our institutional approach, which will guide the services and operations of the New York Avenue clinic, focuses on ensuring that our programs are accessible, of high quality, culturally appropriate, and responsive to the needs of our clients," said Keane.

Unity Health Care provides health care services to uninsured, underinsured and homeless men, women, and children in the District of Columbia. Last year it provided care to more than 57,000 people. It is the fourth largest community health center in the nation, offering a full range of health care services regardless of patient's ability to pay. Unity Health Care's 24 neighborhood facilities and two mobile outreach vans reach every ward of the city. It is a 501(c)(3) organization funded by the Bureau of Primary Health Care through HRSA, private and local grants, and corporate and individual contributions.