

MEDICAL RESPITE CARE: DEMONSTRATED COST SAVINGS

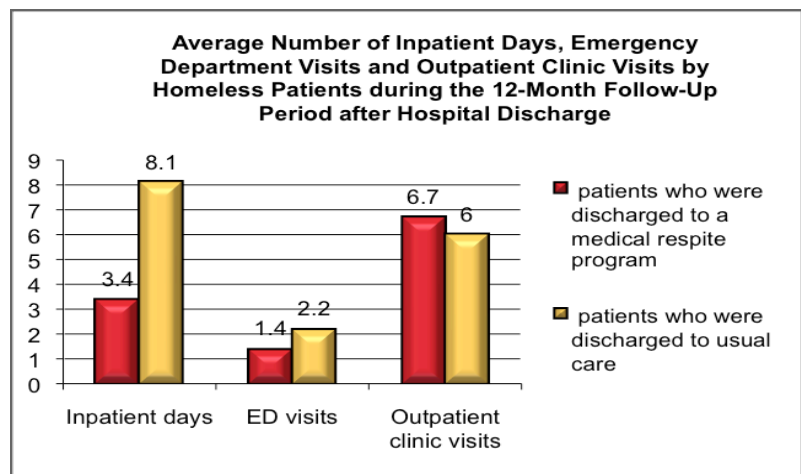
FACT SHEET

FEBRUARY 2010

What is medical respite care?

Medical respite care is acute and post-acute medical care for homeless persons who are too ill or frail to recover from a physical illness or injury on the streets but who are not ill enough to be hospitalized. Unlike “respite” for caregivers, “medical respite” is short-term residential care that allows homeless individuals the opportunity to rest in a safe environment while accessing medical care and other supportive services. These programs are housed in a variety of settings including freestanding facilities, homeless shelters, nursing homes, and transitional housing. Medical respite care meets the post-hospital recuperative care needs for people who are homeless while reducing public costs associated with frequent hospital utilization.

Homeless patients who are discharged to a medical respite program experience 50 percent fewer hospital readmissions within 90 days of being discharged than patients who are discharged to their own care.¹



Source: Buchanan, D., Doblin, B., Sai, T., & Garcia, P. (2006). The effects of respite care for homeless patients: A cohort study. *American Journal of Public Health, 96*(7), 1278–1281.

Demonstrated cost savings from medical respite programs

- Los Angeles, CA \$3 million total annual savings for hospitals²
- Portland, OR \$3.5 million total savings over three years for one hospital³
- Cincinnati, OH \$6.2 million total annual savings for three hospitals and the community⁴

REFERENCES

1. Kertesz, S. G., Posner, M. A., O’Connell, J. J., Swain, S., Mullins, A. N., Shwartz, M., & Ash, A. S. (2009). Post-hospital medical respite care and hospital readmission of homeless persons. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community, 37*(2), 129–142.
2. JWCH Institute, Inc. | www.jwchinstitute.org | Contact: Chief Medical Officer Paul Gregerson, MD
3. Portland’s post-hospital care for homeless falls short of meeting needs. (2009, March 23). *The Oregonian*.
4. Center for Respite Care | www.homelessrespite.org | Contact: Executive Director Mary Beth Meyer

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