

Hospital Association Offers Homeless Patients a Place to Heal

LOS ANGELES - (BUSINESS WIRE) - Homeless patients discharged from Los Angeles-area hospitals will have a place to continue their recovery under a new recuperative care program launched by the Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC) and the National Health Foundation (NHF). The Los Angeles Recuperative Care Program is modeled after the successful Orange County Recuperative Care Program which has been serving homeless patients since January of this year.

Recognizing community resources for the homeless are scarce, HASC and the NHF sought and identified a partner to help fund a program which will expand services for patients no longer requiring continued hospitalization but who have continuing medical needs. West Coast University, one of the largest nursing educators in California, has agreed to donate \$50,000 to the new recuperative care effort in order to launch the LA area program.

"We are very enthusiastic about the recuperative care program in Los Angeles. Too often, homeless patients have no alternative other than to remain in an acute care hospital longer than is necessary," commented Jaime Garcia, Regional Vice President for HASC. "At the same time, many of these patients have ongoing needs and require assistance with pain management, wound care or recovery from surgery. Normally, patients would be discharged to home when they no longer need hospitalization, and then return to a clinic or physician office for their follow-up. Since homeless patients lack a permanent home, this program provides a temporary clean, safe setting where they can receive the care they need," Garcia said.

The Los Angeles Recuperative Care Program will be staffed by medical and social services personnel who will tend to patients in a residential setting located in mid-city Los Angeles. The program will focus on the patients' medical needs but will also link homeless patients to organizations which provide housing options. Similar to the Orange County program, NHF staff believe average patient stays will be less than 10 days, and patients will receive help locating longer term housing. In Orange County, 68 percent of patients have been successfully placed into housing upon discharge from the recuperative care program.

Kelly Bruno, Vice President of Programs for NHF remarked, "First, we are thrilled that West Coast University joined our effort to address the critical needs of the homeless in Los Angeles. Their generous donation will enable us to provide a number of hospitals with a free trial of the recuperative care program so they can gain confidence in it. We learned lessons from our initial attempt in the LA area, and have completely restructured the program using the model that has been successful in Orange County. We have no doubt this effort will be successful and will be sustainable," Bruno said.

In partnership with Illumination Foundation, a non-profit organization that addresses homelessness, the new LA program will feature:

- "Quick and easy" referral process with a single point of contact.

- A one-page electronic referral form.
- Four-hour notification to hospital from receipt of referral on patients' status of acceptance or denial into the program.
- Average length of stay of 10 days for most patients (additional days, if necessary, are approved by the hospital).
- Monthly electronic updates to hospitals.

"After the Hospital Association and the National Health Foundation educated us about their program to support homeless patients, the decision to support them was an easy one," remarked David A. Pyle, Executive Chairman of the Board of West Coast University. "We are health care educators and understand the importance of each and every patient receiving the care they need. Homeless patients, in particular, are vulnerable so we are especially pleased to help the Hospital Association and the National Health Foundation launch what is certain to be a successful program," Pyle concluded.

Hospital Association of Southern California

HASC is a not-for-profit regional trade association comprised of hospitals and health systems, related professional associations and associate members with a common interest in improving the operating environment for hospitals and improving the health status of the communities they serve. HASC represents 160 hospitals which operate a total of 41,000 beds in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Our mission is to serve the political, economic, informational and educational needs of hospitals in our regions, and improve the quality and accessibility of health care services and thereby improving the health status of communities.

West Coast University

West Coast University's mission is to provide an innovative and challenging learning environment. West Coast University is a private, post secondary institution approved to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. In October 2009, WCU achieved additional accreditation for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Additionally, WCU's Orange County Campus was recently awarded initial accreditation to offer the first and only Bachelor of Science Degree in Dental Hygiene in Orange County, making it one of only four in the state.

National Health Foundation

National Health Foundation is an independent, tax-exempt 501(c)3 public charity dedicated to improving and enhancing the healthcare of the underserved by developing and supporting innovative programs that 1) can become independently viable, 2) provide systematic solutions to gaps in healthcare access and delivery, and 3) have the potential to be replicated nationally. NHF's vision is that every individual, regardless of who they are or where they live, can achieve the highest level of health through a comprehensive and compassionate system of care.

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