

Health Care for the Homeless looks to expand convalescent program

By [Sarah Gantz](#)



Photo credit: Jaclyn Borowski

Dianna Brown, 53, talks from her bed at Healthcare for the Homeless.

For [Dianna Brown](#), a bed on the third floor of a Baltimore homeless shelter means she doesn't have to fight to stay warm on the city's streets while fighting for her health.

The shelter's third floor is home to Health Care for the Homeless' convalescent care program, a sort of home care for people who have nowhere to live. The program is one that Baltimore nonprofit hopes to grow under Maryland's new hospital payment system.

The new system will push hospitals to forge stronger ties with rehabilitation centers, private doctors and clinics, like the one run by Health Care for the Homeless. CEO [Kevin Lindamood](#) is hopeful that as hospitals put more resources to making sure patients receive appropriate follow-up care after leaving the hospital, they'll [take an interest in programs](#) like the convalescent care program.

The program has 25 beds and on any given day, between 12 and 15 of them are taken by convalescent care program patients. At the end of the day, the shelter fills any the remaining beds with people looking for a place to sleep. With support from the hospital, Health Care for the Homeless could better catch the people who would benefit from the program and possibly expand it.

The program provides nursing staff to help clients organize their medications and remember to take the right pills at the right time. Staff can help schedule doctors appointments and arrange transportation to get there.

“It’s all there in the box,” said Brown, 53, who has been in the program since late December. “Ain’t got to worry about taking it.”

Brown has struggled with a serious of health issues — breast cancer, a complication with a medication port, a heart valve replacement and most recently numbness in her foot — all complicated by the fact that she is homeless.

“You can’t really recover from an illness on the street,” said [Chauna Brocht](#), who leads the program.

That’s why perhaps the most important aspect of the program is that clients can stay in their beds all day. The rest of the homeless shelter’s clients are shuffled out the door at 5 a.m.

Instead, Brown will be resting on her bed, reading her beat up copy of Shutter Island or working on a word search until she’s feeling better.

Retrieved from <http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/news/2014/02/04/health-care-for-the-homeless-looks-to.html?page=all>