

Hospital Council of Northern and Central California, Santa Clara Section

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Bridging the Gap: Care Transitions for Homeless Persons Leaving the Acute Care Hospital

A unique partnership between acute care hospitals, homeless healthcare teams, medical respite and intensive case management services developed through community concern about discharges to the streets.

- Acute care hospital partners in the community
- Emergency Housing Consortium-Safe place for homeless patients to recuperate in a medical respite program
- Valley Homeless Healthcare Program-Connection with a primary care home, social work, psychological and psychiatric services
- New Directions- intensive case management services providing “whatever it takes”
- Permanent supportive housing for most patients; financial and insurance benefits

Thoughts on the Medical Respite Program, by Cooper Stoughton former MRP client and current New Directions client

Last November, I was living under an overpass in Blossom Hill. It was raining a lot. I was soaked all the time with rain and got sick.

I was hospitalized because I couldn't breathe. So my buddy took me to the hospital and they treated me. I didn't expect any help, but was referred to the Medical Respite Program. I didn't know too much about the program but I was thinking, “I'm getting older, I'm not staying healthy”-so I decided to come, I had to do something. This place has restored my faith. It's sincere. Everyone here in the Respite Program puts forth their effort. People go the extra mile here, they put forth their effort to help me. One of my best Christmas's I've had was here.

Through the help of New Directions, intensive case management program, Cooper now has found an independent living home where he has his own room. His eligibility for SSI benefits has been established and he is receiving a check each month.

He says, “homeless people are used to loss. I'm a bit scared now because I don't want to lose the progress I have made. I'll always have homeless scars.”

Cooper has a much better chance to retain his gains with permanent housing, intensive case management and continued access to medical and mental health care and services.

He says, “When other people are kind and generous it makes me want to behave that way. Meeting some of these people makes me want to be a better person in life. The world's not all bad.” “The staff here is amazing. They're here because they want to help. You can't buy staff like that. You-all offered me hope, I have hope now.”

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