

7: HCH and You

In the first six models you have learned much about homelessness and the Health Care for the Homeless model of care for people experiencing homelessness. You have heard the importance of staying connected to other members of the HCH community not only to share information and support, but also to work together to end the need for Homeless Health Care as we see it today.

In Module Seven, you will explore more about how to stay connected to other HCH providers across the nation in different ways: as an organization through membership in the National HCH Council, or as an individual in the Clinicians' Network, the Respite Care Providers' Network, or the National Consumer Advisory Board.

Benefits of Membership

- Technical assistance
- Practical information
- Personal support
- Advocacy opportunities
- Leadership development
- Delivery design
- Publications access
- Learning opportunities



Photos by Ansell Horn

Whether an organizational member, individual member, or both, joining others in the HCH community through has many advantages.

[appear] Technical assistance and practical information from professional staff and peers in the field so no one has to re-invent the wheel when trying new programs or facing new challenges

Personal support for workers who face difficult, sometimes isolating circumstances

Advocacy opportunities for a progressive policy agenda that seeks equal access to quality health care for all persons.

Leadership development opportunities through the many committees and workgroups that achieve the day-to-day work of a unique national organization

A place to critique and improve the delivery of health care to people experiencing homelessness.

Notification of available publications and newsletters detailing national movements, models, and events relevant to HCH care and advocacy

Accredited learning opportunities like the course you are taking, and other opportunities online, in print, and in person, all designed and delivered by HCH practitioners

As you move through this module, you will learn more about how to get involved in both organizational and individual memberships of the National HCH Council.

Organizational Membership

- The National HCH Council:
 - HRSA grant recipient
 - 501(c)(3) organization
 - 111 organizational members
 - Federal HCH grantees and subcontractors
 - Other health care providers
 - Other advocacy organizations



Who is the National HCH Council?

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council is a home for those who work to improve the health of homeless people and who seek housing, health care, and adequate incomes for everyone. In the National HCH Council, agencies and individuals, clinicians and advocates, homeless people and housed people come together for mutual support and learning opportunities, and to advance the cause of human rights.

As described in Module 3, “Evolution of the HCH Program,” the National Health Care for the Homeless Council began as an element of the 19-project HCH demonstration program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Pew Memorial Trust.

The National Council receives a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration and other public funding to support its training, technical assistance, research and peer support efforts. The Council is a 501(c)(3) organization, and relies upon private donations to support its critical advocacy work.

The Council now has over 100 Organizational Members, including grantees and subcontractors of the federal Health Care for the Homeless funding stream, other health care providers, and advocacy organizations.

What is the Council's mission?

Statement of Principles

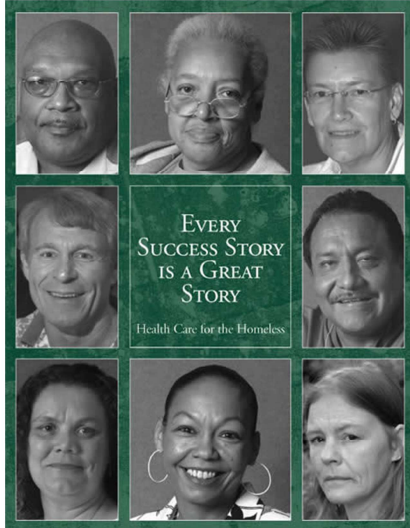
- Homelessness is unacceptable.
- Every person has the right to adequate food, housing, clothing and health care.
- All people have the right to participate in the decisions affecting their lives.
- Contemporary homelessness is the product of conscious social and economic policy decisions that have retreated from a commitment to insuring basic life necessities for all people.
- The struggle to end homelessness and alleviate its consequences takes many forms, including efforts to insure adequate housing, health care, and access to meaningful work.

The mission of the National HCH Council is to help bring about reform of the health care system to best serve the needs of people who are homeless, to work in alliance with others whose broader purpose is to eliminate homelessness, and to provide support to Council members.

The National Council recognizes and believes that:

- Homelessness is unacceptable.
- Every person has the right to adequate food, housing, clothing and health care.
- All people have the right to participate in the decisions affecting their lives.
- Contemporary homelessness is the product of conscious social and economic policy decisions that have retreated from a commitment to insuring basic life necessities for all people.
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The National HCH Council's Work



- Advocate
- Research
- Train & organize
- Publish
- Collaborate

Through its organizational and individual membership groups, staff and volunteer leaders of the National HCH Council:

- Advocate for universal health care and for the improvement of current systems intended to serve people who are poor and homeless;
- Research critical issues;
- Train and organizes health care providers, service agencies, and homeless people themselves to improve care;
- Publish newsletters, monographs, action alerts, policy statements, training videos and books; and
- Collaborate with a broad range of public and private entities interested in the problems of health care and homelessness.

Agencies that share the National Council's mission may apply for Organizational Membership. Modest annual dues are assessed on a sliding scale based on the amount of the agency's HCH or Respite Care budget, or are determined on an individual basis for other types of organizations. For new Organizational Members, an introductory rate of \$500 is charged for the first year. Organizational Members appoint a Representative to take part in two annual Membership meetings and to participate in the Council's active Committee structure. Joining is easy via an on-line application at www.nhchc.org

Individual Membership: Clinicians' Network

The Clinicians' Network

- Individuals providing hands-on care
- Diverse membership
- 700+ members
- *Healing Hands*
- *HCH Research Update*



www.nhchc.org/network_join.html

Individuals providing hands-on care to homeless persons are invited to join the HCH Clinicians' Network. The Clinicians' Network is the nation's leading organization connecting hands-on providers from many disciplines who are committed to improving the health and quality of life of our homeless neighbors.

The Network fosters networking and professional growth among a diverse membership comprised of nurses, physicians, social workers, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, outreach workers, case managers, substance abuse counselors, mental health therapists, dentists, pharmacists, psychologists and students.

Drawing from the strengths of more than 700 individuals, the Network provides a forum for its members to share the latest information and research, review and make recommendations about clinical practice, and network with peers. Annual membership entitles you to free subscriptions to the highly respected publications "Healing Hands" and the "HCH Research Update."

For more information about the Clinicians' Network or to join immediately, visit www.nhchc.org/network_join.html to complete the online form.

Individual Membership: RCPN

Respite Care Providers' Network (RCPN)

- Diversity of providers nationwide
- *Respite Program Directory*
- Free membership
- *Respite News*
- Elect RCPN leaders



www.nhchc.org/Respite/joinus.html

You learned in Module 4 about medical respite care, a way of providing temporary housing and cost-effective medical care for homeless people who are too ill to remain on the streets, but not ill enough to be in a hospital.

Medical respite providers from all over the nation offer services in many ways, and they all share at least one commonality: a passionate commitment to meeting the needs of homeless people who are ill.

The Respite Care Providers network is a place for these diverse providers to gather and share information. The RCPN publishes an annual *Respite Program Directory*, and invites programs providing medical respite to homeless people to list their organization in this publication.

RCPN Membership is free, and RCPN members want you to join. Members receive the quarterly respite e-newsletter, "Respite News" and elect RCPN leadership. To learn more about RCPN, to submit your program for inclusion in the *Respite Program Directory*, or to join as an individual member, visit www.nhchc.org/Respite/joinus.html now to complete the online form.

Individual Membership: NCAB

National Consumer Advisory Board

- Homeless and formerly homeless persons using/have used HCH
- Represented on the Council's Board of Directors
- Advise on national issues & local CABs
- Free membership



National Consumer Advisory Board

www.nhchc.org/ncab_join.html

The National Consumer Advisory Board (NCAB) is made up of homeless and formerly homeless persons who have been clients of Health Care for the Homeless projects across the country and who are involved in the governance of those HCH projects. As with the Clinicians' Network and the Respite Care Providers' Network, the elected Chairperson of NCAB sits on the National Council's Board of Directors.

NCAB's mission is to be the vehicle for consumers of Health Care for the Homeless Projects, and to present a collaborative voice on national issues. The group holds central the priority of assisting consumers in the development of by-laws and/or guidelines for local CAB's and serving as a clearing house of information and assistance to consumers.

Homeless and formerly homeless persons who have received services from an HCH project are encouraged to become members of the National Consumer Advisory Board. No dues are required to be part of NCAB's membership. To join NCAB, visit www.nhchc.org/ncab_join.html to complete the online form. If you know someone not taking the course who would like to be a member of the National Consumer Advisory Board, please print this mailable form and take it to them.