Memorandum

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Date: August 7, 2014

To: Honorable Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa
and members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor

Subject: Mobile Medical Outreach Teams

During a discussion at the February 10, 2014, Health and Social Services Committee meeting regarding the "Sunset Review of Boards" submitted by the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust (Homeless Trust), Commissioner Javier Souto requested that the Homeless Trust consider the implementation of mobile medical outreach teams to assist in the engagement of homeless persons into the system of care. Homeless Trust staff present at the meeting briefly detailed the current mobile healthcare and homeless outreach efforts they oversee. Homeless Trust staff was asked to speak with the Public Health Trust about potential partnerships. Subsequent to the meeting, on March 10, 2014, Homeless Trust staff and staff from one of the Homeless Trust's contracted outreach providers (City of Miami Homeless Assistance Program) met with Commissioner Souto to further discuss his request.

Current mobile health care outreach

Since 2006, the Homeless Trust has provided federal pass through funds to Camillus Health Concern to provide healthcare services to homeless individuals. In addition to providing a full range of medical services from its facility located at 336 NW 5th Street (just west of I-95 in Downtown Miami), as well as at its sister agency location (Camillus House, 1603 NW 7th Ave), Camillus Health Concern also provides mobile healthcare services during evening hours at various sites frequented by persons experiencing homelessness, on average twelve hours per week. These sites include areas in Downtown Miami, as well as Miami Beach, Coral Gables, South Dade, and wherever else it may be required or requested. The mobile health outreach team is staffed by a Nurse Practitioner and a Medical Assistant. Services include treatment for acute illnesses (gastrointestinal illnesses, upper respiratory infections, minor trauma, rashes, etc.); wound care; limited psychiatric medications; vision screening treatment for skin infestations, such as lice and scabies; and screening and initial treatment for chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and hypertension. All patients reached through the mobile healthcare outreach component are referred for full primary care services, including oral health, behavioral health and case management, through Camillus Health Concern's main site. In addition, transportation services are provided to patients, as needed. The program model is based on the National Healthcare for the Homeless model for street healthcare outreach. Over the past two years, Camillus Health Concern's mobile health outreach team has reached approximately 1,800 patients. Of those patients, an estimated 35% have accessed services at the main site.

Current homeless (street) outreach programs

The Camillus Health Concern mobile health outreach team works closely with Homeless Trust-contracted street outreach teams that canvass the community to engage individuals into the system of care. The homeless continuum of care offers a broad range of housing and services to meet the individual needs of homeless persons, and better assist them in transitioning out of homelessness and into permanent housing (supportive or in the community). The County's homeless outreach programs is a best-practice model for homeless engagement, with mobile outreach teams that respond to calls for assistance, as well as proactively engage individuals, including the hard-to-serve chronic homeless. Their efforts to engage and place the chronic homeless are further supported by specialized outreach teams also funded by the Homeless Trust, that include clinical staff experienced in motivational interviewing and other unique engagement methods. This combined approach has proven successful in placing the chronic homeless, who are especially difficult to engage, and who most often generate the most quality of life complaints.

The mobile health teams and homeless outreach teams have historically worked together to address specific areas, such as encampments that may develop in particular areas. Their longstanding working relationship allows for the health teams to respond to requests for outreach staff, and vice versa, and to schedule coordinated outreach efforts throughout the month. The mobile healthcare and street outreach teams met again in early March to discuss their schedule for joint outreach moving forward.

Public Health Trust mobile health clinics

At the request of Commissioner Souto, Homeless Trust Staff contacted the Public Health Trust (PHT) regarding their mobile health clinic programs and capacity. It was determined in speaking with their staff that, due to budgetary constraints, the PHT no longer provides mobile health units on a scheduled, regular basis. The PHT is able and willing to participate in supporting event-specific outreach programs, but is not able at this time to staff a mobile unit to provide the type of mobile healthcare services currently being provided by Camillus Health Concern.

As the Homeless Trust works with the mobile health care outreach program and the street outreach program to coordinate their services with areas of the community that can most benefit from the joint engagement, Commissioners offices should contact the Homeless Trust office directly with any recommendations of areas in your districts that might benefit from this effort.

If additional information is required, please contact Victoria Mallette O'Bryan, Executive Director at (305) 375-1490.

C: Robert A. Cuevas, County Attorney
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