

Presentation:

HOLISTIC HEALTHCARE SERVICES RESPONSIVE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY: COLLABORATION ON A SHOE STRING

Organizing Organization: Herban Health, founded in 2004 by local community members to provide and promote community based holistic healthcare to the medically underserved in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Website: <http://www.herbanhealthepa.org>

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Description of Project: Five community based organizations (CBO's) in a medically underserved community collaborated to provide a mobile, bilingual, holistic health care center (HHCC) providing acupuncture and health education driven by clients needs. Free services for people in drug and alcohol recovery, residents of homeless shelters, medically underserved and diverse low-income residents are provided through donation of space, supplies, professional volunteers and complimentary services by each organization. Herban Health is one of the collaborating CBO's and the organization providing the professional volunteers. Using the definition of holistic healthcare as the treatment of the whole person: mind, body and spirit, Herban Health focuses on the health of the individual as well as the individual's connection to his/her environment, including working with western medical providers.

Challenges and Successes: The challenges have been: resource scarcity; lack of knowledge in the community about acupuncture and holistic health care and its positive impact on quality of life; and already over extended CBO's. Started in 2004, our HHCC now operates at 4 different locations, and serves 250 clients each month. Key elements for this successful community partnership have been: CBO leaders and volunteers willing to commit to the project; in kind contributions from all parties, including space, materials and professional knowledge; services responding to the needs of the clients; a coordinator who knew and understood the needs of the community; and multiple locations in different CBO's which have both increased the treatment opportunities for clients and introduced them to the services of the other CBO's.

Purpose of Project: To provide free, client driven, holistic healthcare services to people with very limited resources

Our Model: To use CBO's as centers for HH and volunteer practitioners as providers of HH

How We Do It:

Lead Coordinator

§Passionate about community health

§Understands the struggle and plight of medically underserved people

§Familiar with or connects with community organizations

Community Based Organizations (CBO)

§Local (non-profit) organizations serving the needs of low income or under-privileged people e.g. family health centers, addiction recovery services, homeless shelters.

§Community gathering centers e.g. senior centers, churches, temples

§CEO/ED/Staff who understands HH and is committed to seeing it in the CBO.

CBO's we work with:

- Ravenswood Family Health Center
- Ecumenical Hunger Program
- InnVision Homeless Shelter
- Free At Last

Who We Are: Volunteers

§Holistic health practitioners: acupuncturists, herbalists, massage therapists, yoga and meditation instructors, nutritionists

§Community members: patients and families, community organizers, CBO Staff

§Western medical providers: doctors, nurses, physical therapists

What We Do: Free Holistic Health Services

§Traditional Chinese medicine based clinic services: group and ear acupuncture, community style one-on-one acupuncture, Chinese herbs

§Health education classes e.g. nutrition, meditation, yoga, disease-specific classes

§Massages

§Economic, culture, and language sensitive

§Driven by patient needs

We currently serve a total of 60-90 patients at the 7 different clinics on a weekly basis.

For whom

Patients

§homeless

§in drug and alcohol recovery

§low income, with no/poor medical insurance coverage

§recipients or staff of the participating CBO's

§Minority and immigrant families

Almost 70% first time participants come back for follow up treatments

How We Do It

Funding

§Financial: patient donations, patient-driven fund raising activities e.g. garage sales; grants, individual gifts; Government stimulus money

§In-kind donations e.g. patients volunteering their services, practitioners getting exposure to their services

§Some supplies and herbs donated by vendors

Our Budget:

- 1st year: \$1500^{a,b}
- 2nd-5th year: \$3000-6000^{a,b,c}
- 6th year: \$30,000^{b,c,d}

^a in kind contributions; ^b patient donations

^c individual gifts; ^d grants

Questions and Answers: If You Want To Do It

Q. How do you get organizations to participate?

A. Through building trust with the organization and following through with commitments. Finding key employees within the CBO who are interested and supportive, and begin developing a relationship by making presentations, support their work, and always do what you say you are going to do. Make a presentation to the board of directors of the CBO with materials which explain what you do and how they are protected legally as well as benefited by the work you do.

Q. How do you get patients to come to the clinics?

A. By explaining the usefulness of holistic health care, allowing staff to experience it, and listening to what the healthcare needs are of the organization. Set dates for clinics and then provide them whether people show up or not. Work with staff members in showing them how particular clients could benefit, offering to talk with the client to tell them about how it could help them. Attend events offered by the organization and volunteer to help.

Q. What about liability?

A. Most professional healthcare providers carry malpractice insurance. CBO's can be included as "also insureds" on that insurance for a minimal fee. Have property insurance also covering organizations where clinics are being offered. Make sure that organizations get copies of insurance policies that relate to them so that boards of directors feel comfortable .

Q. How is this different from sliding scale community acupuncture?

A. Our services are focused on very low income people and are provided at no charge. Anyone who is able may donate to our work. Part of our model does build upon the work of the Community Acupuncture model and we are very grateful for the work that they do. Our model has us providing similar service, but using movable zero gravity chairs that are brought into community based organizations, both providing easier access for the patients that we choose to treat, as well as removing rent expense