

The Consumer Voice

Volume 3: Medical Respite

Spring 2019



WELCOME

Good day to all my Consumer Voices out there on mother earth. In this issue we have articles on Medical Respite, Willie Mackey and the Respite Care Providers' Network (RCPN), and the Boston Consumer Advisory Board. Our fine members of NCAB have wrote some excellent stories for your enjoyment and educational needs this issue.

Summer Solstice will be recognized on Friday, June 21st, 2019. This is a time for organizations to recognize the folks they serve and staff for the great achievements they accomplished over the year. At Central City Concern in Portland Oregon, we have a ceremony for folks who return to school to recognize our personal academic achievement. You are given a certificate and a gold tassel to be honored. Hope to see you at the conference in Washington D.C. May 22-25.

Letter from the Chair



Council News: Willie J Mackey



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Photo by Deidre Young

Council News

Willie J Mackey

Willie J Mackey was one of our greatest teachers.

Willie J Mackey made a lasting impact on the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, and everyone he met. After experiencing homelessness for several years, Willie became the first patient at the Santa Clara County Medical Respite program in San Jose, California in 2008. During his recovery, Willie became engaged with the Homeless Healthcare Advisory Board where he began his advocacy for people experiencing homelessness. Willie's mission was to include people with the lived experience, often reminding peers to "include us in the decisions that affect us." He spread that mission when he joined the Respite Care Providers Network (RCPN), always sharing the importance of the consumer voice with these new programs. His friends in Santa Clara emphasize that "Willie believed in community, in taking care of each other, and in recognizing our similarities, not our differences. He believed in making connections, whether it be people, organizations, ideas or hearts." Willie was a mentor not only to RCPN members, but to all consumers. He formed a monthly support group for Respite Graduates and provided support to consumers at the Medical Respite weekly meeting. As a Regional Representative with NCAB, he helped support and develop new consumer leaders. Three current Steering Committee members credit Willie with helping them engage on the national level. Willie felt a responsibility to advocate that homeless healthcare decisions must be reached through the inclusion and advice of consumers. We honor his memory by continuing that advocacy in Medical Respite.



Medical Respite Care
improves health
outcomes and housing
stability



Education

Medical Respite

By Keith Belton

Medical Respite allows people experiencing homelessness the opportunity to rest in a safe environment while accessing medical care and other supportive services. These programs take in homeless people who are getting released from the hospital but are too ill or frail to recover from their illness on the streets or in a shelter. They give them a safe place to heal. They have great medical care and nurses, but also case managers and mental health staff. I believe these programs benefit people. In Chicago, our Medical Respite has helped people that are homeless and sleeping in the doorway of the hospital, and helped them get stable and move into a shelter.

Homelessness exacerbates health problems, complicates treatment, and disrupts the continuity of care. Medical Respite is an essential component within the continuum of care needed to serve individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness: Medical Respite provides short-term residential care that allows homeless individuals to rest while receiving medical care for acute illness or injury. Medical Respite programs offer hospitals an alternative to discharging patients to the streets while ensuring that the medical care received in a hospital or clinic setting is not compromised due to unstable living situations.



Combined with housing placement services and effective case management, Medical Respite allows individuals with complex medical and psycho-social needs to recover from an acute medical condition in a stable environment. Medical Respite improves health outcomes and housing stability.



CAB Spotlight: Boston

By David Peery

The CAB Spotlight looks at Consumer Advisory Boards around the nation. In this Spotlight we look at the nation's first CAB, the Consumer Advisory Board of the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program.

“We’re looking to make a difference in people’s lives,” says Joanne Guarino, a CAB member of the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP). As the nation’s first Consumer Advisory Board, the Boston CAB sets a national standard for consumer involvement in the governance of health care for the homeless clinics. Established more than 20 years ago to give consumer input into BHCHP’s medical respite program, the Boston CAB has grown to also influence policy and services at the affiliated health care for the homeless clinic. The Boston CAB consists of ten members, four of whom sit on the Board of Directors of the BHCHP. According to longtime CAB Member Derek Winbush, the clinic’s management values CAB’s feedback on how the clinic operates. “The CEO and management look up to us, and they believe our point of view is important.” The Boston CAB impacts consumer lives by sponsoring or assisting in a variety of activities such as:

- **Health Fairs.** The CAB assists the clinic in putting on two or three major health fairs each year. Consumers receive screenings for issues such as high blood pressure, learn about the clinic’s services, and can make appointments for primary care services.
- **Voters Registration.** At various time throughout the year, CAB members staff a table to provide registration materials for consumers to vote in upcoming elections.
- **Christmas Gifts.** CAB schedules annual Christmas visits to local homeless shelters in the Boston area and offers gifts to families experiencing homelessness.

Among its accomplishments, the Boston CAB was influential in renaming the clinic in order to avoid the perceived stigmas of homelessness. “We advised the clinic to eliminate ‘homeless’ from its name, and we’re now known as the McGinnis Health Group,” says Derek. One of the biggest challenges that the Boston CAB faces is the ongoing recruitment of members. “When people stop becoming homeless, they often stop being active CAB members,” says Derek. “We’re looking specifically to recruit Spanish-speaking members because our Hispanic population needs representation.” Joanne explains why she values her membership on the CAB: “It’s important to me because I’m part of an organization that improves the lives of others,” says Joanne. “And it’s improved my life as well.”



National Consumer Advisory Board



National Health Care for the Homeless Council



		Chair	Regional Representatives	
Art Rios:		Chair	Derek Winbush	1 & 2
Deidre Young:		Co-Chair	David Peery	3 & 4
T. Sukari Finley:		Co-Chair	Oliver Coleman	6 & 8
Valarie Dowell:	Peer Advocate		Keith Belton	5 & 7
Joanne Guarino:	Member at Large		Paul Tunison	9 & 10
Carmon Ryals:	Member at Large		Joseph Benson	Honorary
Amy Grassetto	Honorary			

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