

MMC-Preble Street Learning Collaborative

Addressing the Needs and Care of Homeless People through Education

In collaboration with Preble Street and additional community partners, MMC has developed the MMC – Preble Street Learning Collaborative to bridge identified gaps in health care services for Portland’s homeless population. MMC is committed to caring for vulnerable populations and to learning from that experience through the education of our future health care providers.

PURPOSE

- **Improve the care of homeless and at-risk clients, while learning about their health needs and how best to deliver their care.**
- **Demonstrate and evaluate the effectiveness of a population-focused approach to health care and medical education.**
- **Design a culturally sensitive educational curriculum based on the understanding of health disparities, population health and care of underserved and at-risk individuals.**

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Provide Safe, Patient-Centered Care for Portland’s Homeless and At-risk, Underserved Populations

This program is intended and designed to increase access to safe patient-centered care: the right care at the right time and in the most culturally appropriate manner. The intent of the Learning Collaborative is to enroll and engage vulnerable and homeless clients in an established patient-centered medical home. Improving communication and care-coordination between community agencies, social service and health care providers will help achieve that goal.

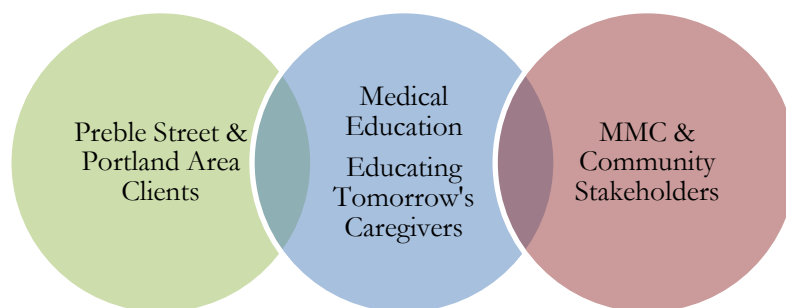
Health Services Research: Build a Health Disparities Evidence Base Through Outcomes Measurement

Health disparities are evident in our local community; research initiatives will focus on identifying the drivers of disparities among our local population. Working with social service and health care resources, we will identify and test strategies to address disparities and improve access to care within a medical home.

Address Population Health Needs by Educating the Future Clinical Workforce

This program is an excellent opportunity to equip the next generation of health-care providers by introducing and integrating population health, social determinants, and health disparities into health-professions curricula, including but not limited to undergraduate and graduate physicians in training. The Learning Collaborative also provides an excellent opportunity for interprofessional education (IPE) and collaboration of health professionals - e.g., nursing, social services, mental health, pharmacy and pharmacology, and public health professionals.

THE EDUCATIONAL MODEL



Increase Our Understanding of Health Disparities
Provide Learner Education of the Needs and Care of Homeless People
Facilitate Client Access to Existing Providers and Established Medical Homes

PROGRAM IN BRIEF

The Learning Collaborative facility is strategically located within a one-or two-block radius of many of the community services focusing on low-income and homeless populations, including the adult and teen day shelters, emergency night shelters, and the city's assistance program office. This fixed location serves as the "hook and hub" for low-barrier, barrier free access to health services, care-coordination services and education. This systems-based, community-led approach will create a new point of entry to the health system.

Limited clinical services, for example, triage/urgent/follow-up and wound care will be provided by an onsite nurse practitioner in coordination with Preble Street staff. MMC's successful Homeless Health Partners (HHP) case management team will be co-located at the Learning Collaborative site. HHP is a pilot program employing social workers to assist people who are homeless or at risk for homelessness, utilizing resources at the Preble Street Resource Center. This is a low-barrier eligibility program for all patients offering short-term case management and providing access to primary care, and other medical needs providers. The goal of the program is to identify and engage high-risk patients – in the hospital prior to discharge, in the emergency department when they arrive, or in the community post-discharge – and communicate with medical center colleagues to coordinate care to address urgent issues before they become emergent and require an extended hospitalization.

The Learning Collaborative will create an atmosphere of trust and understanding to enhance the client's engagement with health care services to address the multiple and complex needs of this vulnerable population. The Learning Collaborative has adopted a low-barrier, walk-in open access model to engage clients. This approach will drive participation, allow for relationship building with clients and foster creation of innovative processes that serve the target population.

Learners rotating through the Learning Collaborative will include MMC physicians in training from the program areas of Psychiatry, Internal Medicine, Family Medicine and Medicine-Pediatrics, medical students from the Tufts University School of Medicine Maine Medical Center Program *Maine Track*, nursing, pharmacy and social work students. Learning opportunities will be experiential in nature; for example, meeting clients at the soup kitchen and accompanying them to the Learning Collaborative site to meet with a case manager or nurse practitioner to assess their needs or accompanying the case management team on their daily respite bed rounds.

On her first day at Preble Street, a third year medical student worked with the case manager to help a client with his prescription refills. The client speaks Spanish, but cannot read or write. The student was quick to point out that the client had been prescribed the same medication twice – one generic, the other not – which looked to the patient like two very different medicines. With the student's help, the case manager called the pharmacy to get the duplicate medication reconciled and to add an alert about the client's literacy limitations to the system.

OTHER PARTNERING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

InterMed

Mercy Hospital

The Portland Public Health Division

Greater Portland Health (GPH, Portland based FQHC)

University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine

VA Maine Healthcare System