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*The proposal outlines a specific health care program serving homeless adults.*

## **PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

### **NEED STATEMENT**

St. Francis Center is the primary daytime gathering place for people who are homeless. Each day, between 400 and 500 men and women visit St. Francis Center seeking shelter, showers, employment services and counseling. The shelter also provides a health clinic for basic needs, mental health case management and counseling, and substance abuse counseling.

#### The Issues and Substantiating Research

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council, in its 1997 report, "Increased Demand and Decreased Capacity" found that federally-funded Health Care for the Homeless projects nationally reported increases of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, chronic mental illnesses, substance abuse, diabetes, and hypertension (O'Connell, J., Lozier, J., and Gingles, K., 1997). These programs experienced a 30 percent increase in the numbers of homeless individuals seeking care (Oakley and Dennis, 1996, "Responding to the Needs of Homeless People with Alcohol, Drug, and/or Mental Disorders,"). Approximately 22% of Health Care for the Homeless clients were diagnosed as suffering from substance abuse disorders (Bureau of Primary Health Care, 1995).

The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH), in a review of research data, found that both chronic and acute health problems are extremely high among the homeless population, and that people who are homeless are far more likely to suffer from every category of chronic health problem with the exception of obesity, strokes, and cancer. NCH cites the high rate of frostbite, leg ulcers and upper respiratory infections as frequently being the direct result of homelessness. NCH also found that homeless people are also at greater risk of trauma resulting from muggings, beatings, and rape. In addition, NCH identified that some homeless people suffering from mental illness may use drugs or alcohol to self-medicate, and those with addiction disorders are also

often at risk of HIV and other communicable diseases (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1998). Homelessness also often precludes good nutrition, good personal hygiene, and basic first aid.

### The Local Need

Over ten years ago, staff from Stout Street Clinic, the leading provider of comprehensive health services for the homeless in Denver, recognized the need to provide basic and preventative health care for the homeless at a location where they were gathering, and helped launch the clinic at St. Francis Center. Today St. Francis Center operates its clinic independently of Stout Street, but coordinates closely to meet the health care needs of the homeless.

Stout Street Clinic typically requires appointments for its health services, and drop-in patients with non-severe health care needs sometimes must wait hours to receive care. St. Francis Center does not intend to provide the comprehensive level of services offered by Stout Street Clinic, but it developed a program model that helps men and women with non-severe healthcare needs receive help immediately.

**Need 1:** St. Francis Center helps relieve the overflow demand at Stout Street by providing wound care, wellness assessments, cold care, preliminary diagnosis of disease, screenings, respiratory care, and relief for colds, sores, blisters, headache, and digestion problems. Because a large volume of homeless men and women come to St. Francis Center, the shelter is an ideal location for distributing personal care items, condoms, hygienic materials, flu vaccines, and for providing education on health and mental health. In 1997, St. Francis Center's clinic provided 8,100 units of service with one full time nurse, three volunteer nurses, and a budget of \$47,000. However, the quantity of supplies necessary to meet the demand at the shelter is very high, and additional funds are needed to provide this level of care.

**Need 2:** People who are homeless have difficulty paying for even the most basic health care costs. With little or no income, costs for eye exams, a physical (required before a person can enroll in substance abuse treatment services), and transportation to medical services are often out of reach. When clinic patients are immediately referred to the Denver Medical Health Center or another medical care provider, they frequently do not have money to pay for taxi or bus transportation.

**Need 3:** St. Francis Center has seen increased demand for substance abuse counseling and treatment services. An Alcoholics Anonymous group was formed in 1996, and the staff nurse uses her extensive background in substance abuse programs to help guide people who are addicted into treatment programs. However, there is a tremendous need for follow-up for people who are going through a treatment program and are still homeless. The pressures of being homeless combined with a tendency to associate with peers who are still engaged in substance abuse may lead a person to relapse. St. Francis Center would like to design a program to help people stay on track during their substance abuse treatment and recovery.

## PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: The project goal is to encourage the maintenance of good health through health promotion, screening, and prevention of illness.

Objective: The project objective is to offer 8000 units of wellness health care services to homeless men and women, and providing monthly education programs promoting health and mental health.

## PROGRAM DESIGN

St. Francis Center's clinic services include drug and alcohol counseling and referral, basic medical treatment, and mental health counseling. Three volunteer nurses from Health SET assist Joan Spero, the St. Francis Center full time staff nurse, in providing care. The health clinic is open six days a week, and help from the volunteer nurses ensures that Joan can meet with patients on a one to one basis, provide health promotion activities, and assist with the payee program. She spends many hours with patients providing health education one-on-one.

St. Francis Center has established a payee program to manage Social Security Income checks for individuals with substance abuse addictions or mental illness, and helps them access health care, treatment programs and housing. The Denver Health Medical Center's mobile unit tests and treats patients for tuberculosis, the flu, STDs, and other communicable diseases. A caseworker from the Mental Health Corporation of Denver provides case management and referrals.

We are seeking funding for from Health One for the following purposes:

### 1) Basic Wound Care

Homeless adults face constant exposure to the elements. A majority of those seeking clinic services have not had a recent tetanus shot. Without preventative care, a minor cut can turn into an acute problem and require immediate emergency room care. Stout Street Clinic often refers follow-up patients to St. Francis Center for regular wound care and dressing treatment. We are committed to providing basic wound care, and request funding for the following items to do so:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Monthly quantity</u>	<u>Annual quantity</u>	<u>Unit Cost</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Cost</u>				
2 x 2 sponges	5 boxes	60 boxes	2.37/box	\$142.20
4 x 4 sponges	5 boxes	60 boxes	3.12/box	\$187.20
TelfaPads	3 boxes	36 boxes	4.35/box	\$156.60
Conforming rolls of gauze	20 rolls	240 rolls	1.10/each * 25	\$ 27.50
Surgical tape	3 boxes	36 boxes	8.55/box	\$307.80
Hydrogen Peroxide	5 bottles	5 cases of 12 bottles	5 cases @ \$1	\$ 5.00
Normal Saline	3 bottles	3 cases of 12 bottles	\$3.50/case	\$ 10.50
Sterile Applicators	2/3 box	8 boxes	\$3.20/box	\$ 25.60
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$862.40</b>

## 2) HIV/AIDS Prevention

Research has found that homeless men and women are likelier to engage in high risk behaviors which can lead to HIV/AIDS (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1997). To address this risk, St. Francis Center plans to provide education on HIV/AIDS and distribute condoms to shelter guests (until recently, Denver Health provided condoms for distribution at the shelter). St. Francis Center is determined to break down negative attitudes toward condoms and educate shelter guests about the risks of HIV/AIDS. St. Francis Center projects the following quantities and costs.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Annual Quantity</u>	<u>Unit Cost</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
Condoms	165 boxes	\$8.65/box	\$1427.25

SUBTOTAL \$1427.25

## 3) Podiatric Care

Many men and women who come to St. Francis Center walk long distances, even in bad weather. Their feet often suffer from untreated blisters, athlete's foot, corns and fungus. St. Francis Center plans to provide inner soles, foot powder, anti-fungal powder, corn pads and socks to relieve foot pain, and a schedule of quantities and costs is outlined below.

<u>Foot Care Item</u>	<u>Annual Quantity</u>	<u>Unit Cost</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
Inner soles	200	\$1.19 each	\$238.00
Foot powder	40	\$2.00 each	\$ 80.00
Antifungal preparation	50	\$3.29 each	\$164.50
Corn pads	100	\$1.15 each	\$115.00