The HealthCare Connection & Community Partners:
Providing trusted health care throughout northern Hamilton County and surrounding areas

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

www.healthcare-connection.org
FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

As I was thinking about 2015 and what notable activities and successes occurred during the year, I read the testimonials from some of our patients and had an epiphany. It isn’t about what happens in a given year, but the cumulative impact of a number of years. I am overwhelmed with the realization that so many people have entrusted us with their health care to which we owe a great deal of gratitude. It is comforting to know THCC is making a difference by helping individuals and families get the care they need when they need it. The road hasn’t been without challenges, but we have endured for 49 years and are looking forward to celebrating 50 years of service in 2017.

The U.S. health care delivery system has changed dramatically since 1967, and THCC led the way in forging community partnerships to help respond to these changes. Nurse practitioners and behavioral health professionals are now valuable members of the patient care team. We contracted with a long-time partner, Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCB), to provide behavioral health services at our two largest locations, Lincoln Heights and Mt. Healthy, thanks to a two-year $500,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). This grant has enabled us to integrate primary care and behavioral health services in one location continuing our triple aim of better access, better care, and better outcomes.

As the health care and school communities embraced the concept of providing care to students in schools, THCC eagerly jumped on board with Princeton. In 2015 with much fanfare, our Viking School-Based Health Center (VSBHC) moved from temporary space into the brand new Viking Village on the middle and high school campus at Princeton. Our main goal is to help parents, school nurses, faculty and everyone involved to keep kids healthy, in school, and ready to learn.

Finally, I extend my sincere gratitude to our dedicated board and wonderful staff that have stayed the course as we worked through many of the challenges that accompany change. Without these committed individuals, our success would not have been possible. I especially wish to thank you, our dear friends, for continuing to support us on this very worthwhile journey. I am proud that THCC is seen as a trusted health center organization by you, our patients, the community, and our community partners.

Sincerely,

Dolores J. Lindsay, MPA
President and CEO
The HealthCare Connection

GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

American Cancer Society CHANGE Grant
As a result of funding from the National Football League, the American Cancer Society awarded a $50,000 CHANGE grant (Community Health Advocates implementing Nationwide Grants for Empowerment) to The HealthCare Connection/Mt. Healthy Family Practice to increase breast cancer screening rates within Greater Cincinnati. The HealthCare Connection/Mt. Healthy Family Practice was one of 32 grant recipients nationwide to receive grant funding to implement strategies to address the unequal burden of breast cancer within communities across the country.

On Oct. 13, 2015, Mt. Healthy Family Practice and the American Cancer Society hosted “Crucial Catch Day” to provide women in Greater Cincinnati with breast cancer education and screenings in a convenient, family-friendly way. Out of 40 available appointments, 38 were filled by women who received mammograms in the Mercy Health mobile mammography van—taking a crucial first step toward breast cancer detection.

The grant also provides funding for a total of 100 free mammograms for women who do not have insurance coverage. THCC has partnered with Mercy Health Women’s Services to provide these mammograms on their vans and at the Jewish Hospital Women’s Center.

Interact for Health
In 2015, Interact for Health challenged THCC to raise funds for a one-to-one matching grant to support the Viking School-Based Health Centers at Princeton City Schools. Donations in 2015 raised $34,300 toward the challenge and provided students with access to health care that otherwise might not have been possible. Thanks to these donations, Interact for Health provided $34,300 in matching funds, for a total of $68,600 to keep kids healthy and in school.

Hispanics Avanzando/Hispanics (Cincy Cinco)
The Heritage Hill Elementary School-Based Health Center Improvement Grant provided funding for a bilingual support staff member.

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
The HealthCare Connection received a two-year, $500,000 grant from HRSA for a behavioral health integration project. The goal of this project is to add behavioral health services at practice sites to make them more accessible to thousands of current adolescent and adult patients, and to help THCC meet the expected increase in demand for coming years.
Dear Friends,

It is my absolute pleasure to serve on the board of The HealthCare Connection for over 20 years. During the last two years as board chair, I have worked with fellow board members who are energetic, knowledgeable, proficient, caring and loving.

Serving as the board chair has been a rewarding experience. However, working with an amazing CEO makes the chair’s job easier. Dolores Lindsay, our passionate CEO, constantly seeks new opportunities, brings new ideas to the board and engages board members in community outreach programs and events. We started almost 50 years ago in a four bedroom apartment, and have grown to 10 sites. THCC now has three main health centers, two school-based health centers, and provides primary care at five behavioral health co-locations.

I have first-hand experience with THCC. It is my personal, trusted medical home, and I proudly refer friends and family because I know they will receive the best care. As The HealthCare Connection continues to grow, it is important for us to make sure we are on track with the mission of the organization and keep the vision alive. I strongly believe that everyone deserves quality health care and a trusted medical home. Therefore, it is necessary for us to continue seeking and serving individuals who are medically underserved, underinsured and uninsured.

Although much has been done, there is still much to do as we meet the challenges of today’s changing health care landscape. I’m excited about the plans to build a new health center in Mt. Healthy, partnering with new organizations, and expanding services to other communities.

Special thanks to The HealthCare Connection staff, partners, the communities we serve, GE and their volunteers, patients, contributors, the board and everyone involved in our organization for what you do to keep us vibrant!

With deepest appreciation,

Linda Childs-Jeter
Board Chair
The HealthCare Connection
I became a patient at the Lincoln Heights Health Center at a very young age. My earliest memory began with my former pediatrician, Dr. Sadiya Asif, who is still practicing with The Healthcare Connection (THCC) today. I remember her as always being extremely friendly and vested in not only promoting good health, but also how I was doing in school and my plans for the future.

My most memorable moments are my visits with her after graduating high school, and then seeing her again after college graduation. She was extremely proud and smiled ear to ear.

I remember her [Dr. Asif] as always being extremely friendly and vested in not only promoting good health, but also how I was doing in school and my plans for the future.

While away at college at Ohio University in the rural Appalachian region of Athens, Ohio, my eyes were opened to at-risk populations. I became involved in different nonprofits there. I was able to reflect on the similarities and differences in urban and rural disparities for the underserved. As a young adult, this helped me to better understand the mission and vision of THCC, and how vital it is to our community.

It led me to pursue an opportunity back home with the Village of Lincoln Heights as a public affairs intern. This ultimately led to me serving on a scholarship board formed specifically for the Lincoln Heights community.

I did not want my involvement to end there, however; I wanted to give back to the community that gave to me. I was fortunate enough to be asked to join the Board of Trustees at THCC in August 2015. I have since traveled alongside our CEO, Dolores Lindsay, to the National Association of Community Health Center’s Policy and Issues Forum in Washington, D.C., to advocate on the Hill for the advancement of THCC and other community health centers throughout the country.

Serving on the board has expanded my global knowledge of Federally Qualified Health Centers and specifically THCC, which continues to grow and render trusted services throughout the county.
MT. HEALTHY FAMILY PRACTICE

Mom says attentive THCC doctor prescribed lab tests that saved her daughter’s life

For years Melissa H. has trusted the health care providers at THCC’s Mt. Healthy Family Practice on Hamilton Avenue. “I’ve been coming here since my son was six months old, and now he’s 21,” says Melissa. “The doctors have always provided exceptional care,” she adds, as her thoughts gravitate to one particular experience.

Melissa’s youngest daughter, 9 years old at the time, was having persistent sore throats with symptoms similar to mononucleosis. Melissa took her to Mt. Healthy Family Practice where the doctor initially was leaning toward a diagnosis of thyroid problems. But after listening to Melissa give additional details about her daughter’s symptoms and family history, and after Melissa asked additional questions about her glucose levels, the physician also wrote lab tests for hemoglobin to determine if it could be diabetes.

Melissa took her daughter directly to the on-site lab, where blood was drawn. Within minutes she was told her daughter’s blood sugar results were off the charts, and she was in danger of going into a diabetic coma. They rushed her to Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center where doctors awaited their arrival. Thankfully, they were able to get her blood sugar levels under control. “They told us that gone undiagnosed, she could have died within a week,” says Melissa, who credits the THCC doctor with saving her daughter’s life. “You don’t get many doctors like that in your lifetime,” she adds. “I will never forget it.”

In addition to this lifesaving act, Melissa says the caring physicians and staff have always been there for her family over the years. “That’s why we’ve been going there for the past 20 years, and now my grandkids are going there as well,”—thus beginning a new generation in the trusted care of The HealthCare Connection.

FOREST PARK HEALTH CENTER

Luz Zepeda: Grateful for access to good pediatric health care — and helpful translation services

Access to good health care for her four children is why Luz Zepeda comes to Forest Park Health Center on Waycross Road. “Everyone here is very nice, and I love the way they treat the children,” says Zepeda.

After coming to the United States from Mexico in 1993, the Zepeda family originally went to Lincoln Heights Health Center for their health care needs. When asked how she heard about the Center, Zepeda says “everyone knows about Lincoln Heights Health Center.”

Now Zepeda takes the children (ages 6-17) to Forest Park Health Center. In addition to the accommodating staff, she is grateful for the interpreter services, and likes that there is never a long wait.

On this particular day, Zepeda brought 6-year-old Israel to see the doctor about refilling his medication. She communicated via medical assistant/Spanish interpreter, Sandra Morillo, who also took Israel’s vitals.

Israel’s teacher at school noticed he struggled to stay focused and wasn’t grasping what she was teaching. She suggested he see a pediatrician.

Since taking his medication, Israel’s world has brightened. “It helps me learn stuff and do my work,” says Israel proudly. “My teacher gets surprised and happy that I can do it!” he adds.

Israel’s mother agrees. “He’s doing so much better in school. Before the medication, he didn’t even want to try to learn, and now he’s learning a lot,” she says—her wide smile a true indication of how happy she is for Israel’s accomplishments.

Quality health services are critical to success in school for children like Israel.
PATIENTS SHARE THEIR STORIES...

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS
Victor graduates: A very special advocate and Viking School-Based Health Centers help student succeed

For Victor Miguel-Ramos, who recently turned 18 years old, assuming the role of adult is nothing new. He has been taking on adult responsibilities since early childhood.

Victor arrived in the U.S. from Guatemala with his parents at age 3. When he entered school and learned English, he became the sole interpreter as they struggled to make ends meet for their growing family, now including five children.

Victor has a heart condition that needs regular medical attention. At a very young age, his uncle or a neighbor would drive him to Lincoln Heights Health Center for medical treatment when needed.

When Victor was in the sixth grade, his father abandoned the family, taking with him all their belongings. Victor’s role now expanded to man of the house.

Enter Susan Wyder. Wyder had been Victor’s fourth grade teacher at Sharonville Elementary School. Known in the Princeton community for her resourcefulness, Wyder was asked by the school principal to help Victor and his family re-establish their household. When she heard the story and learned about Victor’s ever-increasing family responsibilities, she quickly stepped in to help.

Over time, Wyder became Victor’s medical power of attorney, overseeing his health care needs. In 2013 when Victor was in high school, The HealthCare Connection partnered with Princeton City School District to open the first school-based health center in the school district. “It just made our lives so much easier having access to the center,” says Wyder. “If the school nurse felt he needed to be seen further, he would go to the center,” she adds. “It has had such a positive impact not only on Victor’s health, but also on his alertness and achievement in school.”

Wyder also takes Victor, his mother and siblings to the Lincoln Heights Health and Dental Centers when they are in need of care.

Fast forward to 2016. Wyder is now President of the Princeton Board of Education. She was on the stage when Victor received his diploma on May 15. “I was able to give him a hug and congratulate him,” says Wyder. “Victor is one of the best kids ever. He has worked so hard at school, and holds two jobs to help support his family,” she adds. She knows first-hand how valuable the school-based health centers are to the community.

“The Viking School-Based Health Center has helped me with my health issues — asthma, lactose intolerance, and many sinus infections — by making sure I was okay,” says Victor. “The VSBHC will continue to bring help to Princeton,” he adds.

It has been a long, bumpy road, but Victor’s future is bright with potential because of help from people like Susan Wyder, as well as Princeton School District, the health care services at the school-based health center and Lincoln Heights Health Center.
Q: How did the primary care/behavioral health co-location model begin?

A: The Consumer Wellness Program (CWP) was created after a community need was identified for providing primary health care services at community behavioral health agencies in Hamilton County. The formation of the CWP was launched with financial support from Interact for Health and a large hospital-affiliated primary care physician practice.

Sustainable financial growth was needed to continue the CWP, and under THCC, the likelihood of this happening was more likely because of the availability of cost-based Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement. THCC was asked to take over the program in 2007. Since then THCC has been providing services at four co-locations with these organizations: Talbert House, Central Community Health Board (CCHB), and Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCB). (Recently, in April 2016, a fifth co-location was added with GCB in Amelia, Clermont County.)

Q: What percentage of the population is affected by behavioral health issues?

A: According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, nearly one in 17 adults in America lives with serious mental illness. One hundred percent of the persons served by THCC in our behavioral health/primary care co-locations have been diagnosed with serious mental illness, a population whose mortality rate is two to three times higher than the general population largely due to inadequately treated physical illness. THCC’s behavioral health partnerships improve that statistic.

Q: Why is it important to provide primary care and behavioral health services at the same site?

A: Integrated care means that no door is a wrong door. It is important to both the behavioral health agencies and THCC that patients’ needs are met regardless of where they come and when they come. The accessibility of primary care and behavioral health services under one roof makes it not only convenient, but also benefits those patients with limited funds, resources for transportation, and issues of trust. It becomes the patient’s health home where they are comfortable, and can receive the best care—both physical and behavioral.

Q: What is the most satisfying part of your job?

A: It’s knowing that we’re making a difference, providing continuity and consistency in health care to this population who commonly face challenges and life disruptions not faced by others. After 30 years in the practice of medicine in both office and home-based settings, I have seen the shortcomings of the traditional models. I am personally convinced this collaborative model is superior for effective health care delivery to those with serious mental illness.
2015 BY THE NUMBERS

**PATIENT TOTALS***

**MEDICAL**
17,084

**DENTAL**
3,235

*Some patients are counted for both medical and dental services

**TOTAL REVENUE:**
$8,174,706

- **67.8%** Patient Services
- **30.7%** Grants
- **1.5%** Other

**TOTAL EXPENSES:**
$7,822,095

- **76.3%** Program Expenses
- **17.1%** Support Services
- **5.3%** Other
- **1.3%** Fundraising Expenses

**PATIENTS BY INSURANCE STATUS (%)**

- Medicaid: 74.3%
- Uninsured/Sliding Fees: 9.8%
- Medicare: 6.0%
- Private Insurance: 9.9%

**HOUSEHOLD INCOME BREAKDOWN BY FEDERAL POVERTY LEVELS (%)**

- 100% and below: 71.7%
- 101-200%: 14.6%
- More than 200%: 2.9%
- Unknown: 10.8%

**Total number of visits: 45,870**
October 8, 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of The HealthCare Connection. What began in a four-bedroom apartment serving low-income families with volunteer doctors, nurses and dentists has grown to an organization with numerous community partners and 10 locations including primary care, pediatric, school-based health centers and behavioral health sites serving more than 18,000 patients annually.

Dr. Jessica Enriquez attends to a patient at the Lincoln Heights Health Center in the 1980s.

Looking Ahead
Proudly celebrating 50 years in 2017

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The mission of The HealthCare Connection is to provide quality, culturally sensitive and accessible primary health care services focusing on the medically underserved, underinsured, and uninsured residing in northern Hamilton County and surrounding areas.