

Improving Health Through Stable Housing



The Oregon Health and Housing Learning Collaborative

A growing body of research has shown that quality, affordable housing has significant health benefits for vulnerable populations, and that providing coordinated health services in an affordable housing setting can both reduce costs and improve health outcomes for the most at-risk and hard to reach individuals. Despite the evidence, there are still few replicable models for how these types of coordinated partnerships can be effectively designed and operated.

Enterprise Community Partners is addressing this gap by supporting innovative housing and health-care partnerships through its national Health and Housing initiative. Under this initiative, Enterprise has established *The Oregon Health and Housing Learning Collaborative* (OHHLC). This Collaborative brings together and supports nonprofit affordable housing providers and their service partners so that all parties can meet their common goals: saving public costs while improving health outcomes for low-income and vulnerable individuals and families. Oregon presents an ideal testing ground for these new partnerships, thanks to federal changes to Medicaid and state-driven health-care reform, which has introduced a new coordinated care model to the region.

This brief highlights the Housing with Services, LLC initiative, led by OHHLC member Cedar Sinai Park (CSP) in Portland, Ore.

Developing the Idea

Housing with Services, LLC is one of the first examples of housing providers, health insurers and service providers joining formally to create affordable housing with integrated health services. The project is spearheaded by CSP, which provides residential living options and services for seniors and adults with special needs.

In 2007 and 2012, CSP acquired four Section 8 buildings in downtown Portland, and began searching for ways to intentionally integrate health-care services in order to help residents improve their health and age at home. This effort sparked a three-year planning and discussion process involving more than 20 stakeholders, and eventually led to the creation of Housing with Services, LLC in May 2014.

The newly launched limited liability corporation includes nine partners serving 1,408 residents in eleven buildings. Together, the partners streamline the way residents access and receive care. Designated “Health Navigators” from CareOregon – the insurance payer – engage residents and assess their needs, then discuss the findings with the resident and present a number of care options. The Navigators support all aspects of health management, from getting residents to fitness class to picking up healthy food, to getting residents medications and making doctor’s appointments. This approach – focused on the core values of site-based care, increased transparency, individual choice and ongoing support – is both an innovative model of delivering health care and in line with CSP’s mission and values.



Jeffery, resident at the 1200 Building. Photo courtesy of Housing with Services.

Housing with Services, LLC

Neighborhood	Downtown Portland
Launched	July 2014
Units	1,410 in 11 buildings
Partners	<i>Housing:</i> Cedar Sinai Park, Home Forward, REACH Community Development. <i>Insurance:</i> CareOregon. <i>LLC Service Providers:</i> Asian Health & Service Center, Cascadia Behavioral Health-care, Jewish Family and Child Service, Lifeworks Northwest, Sinai Family Home Services. <i>Non-LLC Service Providers:</i> Providence Eldercare PACE, APS Healthcare, Harsch Property Management, Hollywood Senior Center, Metropolitan Family Service, Multnomah County ADS.
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Creating the LLC Model

In 2010, CSP initiated a 20-stakeholder “Planning Group,” which met regularly to discuss an integrated service model. With sub-committees on tenant involvement and services integration, the group’s mission was to convene necessary partners and define each provider’s specific role.

Typically, a cooperative agreement between health and housing organizations is outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), forming a contractual but not legally binding partnership. However, a MOU did not seem sufficient to manage the proposed model’s complexity, especially the thorny questions of risk assessment and payment introduced by including an insurance payer. Instead, the group decided to structure their partnership as a limited liability corporation, which allowed members to clearly define terms for a range of risks – such as financial responsibilities, service liability protection, governance structures and intellectual property protection. An Inter-agency Agreement, which includes both LLC partners and additional care providers, specifies exactly how the group will coordinate service delivery, identifies single points of contact and sets cross-referral processes so that providers can work together more efficiently. The process has resulted in a number of lessons learned, including:

- Creating an LLC takes time. All parties need to agree on the project’s mission and values before the first document is drafted, and must be prepared for both multiple drafts and significant legal expenses.
- Come with a vision. A significant amount of discussion focused on intellectual property protection, and each member’s rights to their ideas or service models. This requires foresight from the partner organizations, but also vision for the LLC.
- The legal structure is worth the extra effort. The discipline needed to form the LLC means each member is more committed to the project, resulting in a more sustainable program.

Measuring Results

The LLC launched in July 2014, and is serving approximately 250 residents as of December. Health Navigators are engaging residents about their care options, and service providers are onsite. The program will be expanding as they recruit other insurance payers, add culturally-specific services and partner with local pharmacies to provide direct delivery medications.

Over time, researchers from Portland State University’s Institute on Aging will evaluate the model’s impact on resident quality of life, access to services and hospital use. The evaluators will also measure program costs, along with resident and staff satisfaction, and produce a case study to share learnings from the CSP experience. While the long-term evaluation is ongoing, Housing with Services released an initial evaluation of the partnership process, along with a baseline study of resident health, and is sharing lessons learned with peers through Enterprise’s Learning Collaborative.

Enterprise Community Partners

Enterprise works with partners nationwide to build opportunity by creating and advocating for affordable homes in thriving communities. Over more than 30 years, Enterprise has created nearly 320,000 homes, invested \$16 billion and touched millions of lives. The Enterprise Health and Housing initiative works to improve the link between quality, stable housing and good health-care outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations.

For more information about Enterprise’s work in Oregon, contact:

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Making it Possible: The Affordable Care Act

Housing with Services, LLC would not have been possible without the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in Oregon, which gave health-care providers greater flexibility in coordinating care for Medicare and Medicaid patients. The ACA allows providers (such as hospitals, service providers and doctors) to voluntarily coordinate services by forming Coordinated Care Organizations* (CCOs) and share any cost savings they achieve.

These changes allow CareOregon, an insurer, to serve its members more flexibly and provide a greater variety of services to affordable housing residents. Under the new policy, CareOregon was also able to have a direct equity buy-in to the LLC. The LLC itself is supported by the ACA through a State Innovation Model grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

*Called Accountable Care Organizations in other states