



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
of St. Paul and Minneapolis

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Three Saint Paul Hospitals Partner with Catholic Charities to Provide Innovative Medical Respite Care as Part of New Vision for Dorothy Day Center

Unique Collaboration—Located in New Higher Ground Saint Paul Building—Will Help Homeless Recover After Hospital Stays and Avoid Costly Emergency Care

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Online Press Kit with additional information as well as downloadable images / renderings of Higher Ground Saint Paul and the medical respite unit: <https://dorothydaycampaign.org/press-kit/>

Saint Paul, Minn. (March 3, 2017)—Three major Saint Paul hospitals are joining together in a unique partnership with Catholic Charities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis to help those experiencing homelessness recover after hospital stays.

At an event announcing the collaboration today, United Hospital (Allina Health), Regions Hospital (HealthPartners), Saint Joseph's Hospital (HealthEast), and Catholic Charities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis introduced a 16-bed medical respite unit as part of the new vision for the Dorothy Day Center in Saint Paul. The unit provides care for medically and psychiatrically complex individuals experiencing homelessness who are too ill or frail to recover on the streets, but who do not require hospital-based care. Staff offer nurse care coordination, medication assistance, and behavioral health services to support clients as they stabilize their health.

“Our vision for the Dorothy Day Center is simple: by working together, we can better help those in need,” said Mary Brainerd, president and chief executive officer of HealthPartners and co-chair of the Capital Campaign for the Dorothy Day Center. “This partnership of three major hospitals and also other key partners represents the best in our community, offering those experiencing homelessness a place to recover and heal in dignity.”

The respite unit is based on an innovative model Catholic Charities piloted with North Memorial Health Care at its Exodus Residence in Minneapolis in 2012. Data showed a 67 percent reduction in re-hospitalization and a more than 50 percent reduction in emergency room visits one year pre-respite to one year post-respite.

The Higher Ground Saint Paul respite unit is staffed with nurses, a mental health worker, and a community health worker, with support from housing advocates. It is funded through the generous support of the three partner hospitals, Medica Foundation, and Blue Plus.

“Many individuals experiencing homelessness end up on the streets after receiving major medical or psychiatric care, with nowhere to safely recover and heal. The medical respite unit will offer a safe, peaceful, healing environment and ensure we are not discharging patients to the street,” said Kathryn Correia, president and chief executive officer of HealthEast. “We’re proud to be part of this innovative partnership.”



The unit is an integral part of the new vision for the Dorothy Day Center. More than 25 percent of the people who relied on the Dorothy Day Center were elderly and disabled men and women with extremely complex medical conditions. Without a safe, stable home, minor health problems can quickly become life threatening and require costly emergency care. Chronic medical conditions that require careful management—such as diabetes, asthma, cancer and arthritis—frequently spiral out of control for people experiencing homelessness. The results—both human and financial—can be catastrophic.

“If someone has a home, it is easier to recover after an illness,” said Diana Vance-Bryan, senior vice president of health services and chief administrative officer of Catholic Charities. “Things that seem simple—like getting plenty of rest, drinking plenty of fluids—are nearly impossible to achieve if you are homeless. People experiencing homelessness often lack support networks to help them recover.”

Based on proven results from the initial pilot in Minneapolis, the medical respite unit is expected to decrease emergency room visits and help prevent the need for higher-cost components of medical care. “This collaboration will make lives better for some of our most vulnerable neighbors. The respite unit will offer a dignified environment where they can fully recover from illness, lessening the need to return to the hospital with additional health complications,” said Penny Wheeler, M.D., president and chief executive officer of Allina Health. “It is an investment that will save lives.”

The medical respite unit is one of only a few known medical respite programs in Minnesota. It is particularly unique in that the program was co-designed—from start to finish—with the three hospital partners, with broad-based community input. In addition, the program is largely funded by participating hospitals.

“The medical respite unit represents the innovation, ingenuity, and integration that has defined Dorothy Day Place since its inception, and it is a concrete example of what can result when our public, private, and nonprofit sectors work together towards a common goal,” said Tim Marx, president and chief executive officer of Catholic Charities. “The medical respite unit is a smart and efficient model that will work hand-in-hand with the medical clinic and other resources that are part of the new Saint Paul Opportunity Center. Not only will this respite unit help people in need get back on their feet, it will be transformational for our entire community.”

Dorothy Day Place

The medical respite unit at Higher Ground Saint Paul is part of “Dorothy Day Place,” a \$100-million vision for the Dorothy Day Center in Saint Paul. The new vision is based on an innovative and proven model in Minneapolis which is also run by Catholic Charities. The first phase of the new vision—Higher Ground Saint Paul—opened in January 2017 and offers 473 people experiencing homelessness a place to sleep, including both dignified shelter and permanent housing. The second phase consists of a six-floor, 50,000-square-foot building to be built on the site of the current Dorothy Day Center. The building will include the Saint Paul Opportunity Center, an integrated, one-stop location connecting people to critical services to improve their health, income, housing stability, and well-being. Services will be provided by a variety of community partner organizations, including Catholic Charities, Ramsey County, the Veterans Administration, and health care providers. The building will also include the Dorothy Day Residence, 171 permanent housing units above the Opportunity Center. Catholic Charities hopes to complete construction on the Saint Paul Opportunity Center in late 2018. The project is the largest public-private partnership in state history in housing and social services, securing broad support and funding from both public and private sources.



History and Project Timeline

The Dorothy Day Center opened in 1981 as a drop-in center for meals. Over time, due to increasing homelessness, the center transitioned into an overnight shelter—something it was never designed or intended to do. More than 6,000 people relied on the Dorothy Day Center each year, including hundreds of people who slept on thin mats on the floor every night. In 2011, for the first time in its history, Catholic Charities was forced to turn people away from the Dorothy Day Center, leading people to camp in the surrounding area. This was a breaking point that launched a community response. In 2012, Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman convened a diverse task force of community leaders to assess the urgent situation of overcrowding at the Dorothy Day Center, and in 2013 the task force issued its recommendation for an innovative new vision to prevent and end homelessness.

For more information, including how to get involved, visit www.dorothydaycampaign.org.

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About Catholic Charities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis: *Catholic Charities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis serves those most in need. We are a leader at solving poverty, creating opportunity, and advocating for justice in the community. Our programs for children, families and adults annually help nearly 30,000 people, regardless of faith, background or circumstance. Through our advocacy efforts, Catholic Charities serves as a tireless voice for those who often go unheard. Our work would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers and donors.*