

## Telehealth: Keeping Patients Connected to Care



### Telehealth by the Numbers

Since March 15, 2020, the majority of our patient appointments have been conducted via telehealth technology.

Medical: 12,086

Counseling & Psychiatry: 7,335

Total Telehealth Visits: 19,421

**“The added flexibility this iPad provided to our program is very helpful and we are incredibly grateful to CHCB.”**

-Katie Forleo, Director of Operations at Lund, which provides family-centered and integrated adoption, treatment, and child and family services.

■ For 49 years now, the Community Health Centers of Burlington has strived to “meet patients where they’re at” – simply meaning that we will work to provide quality care, no matter the circumstance. But in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, this idea has taken on a whole new meaning!

Telehealth was introduced to CHCB in 2019, and tele-psychiatry and tele-therapy appointments were made available to homebound individuals. At the beginning of this year, broader telehealth services were launched at our Pearl Street Youth Health Center with the hopes of later introducing it at other sites. This soft introduction to telehealth enabled our IT team to quickly respond to the immediacy of

COVID-19. By mid-May, nearly 85% of CHCB’s total scheduled visits were via telehealth. This enhanced use of modern technology has been critical to both CHCB patients and staff to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, but has also allowed CHCB staff to break down barriers faced by patients with limited transportation, or those experiencing homelessness.

In addition to these new services, CHCB also received funding from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) COVID-19 Telehealth Program which made it possible to purchase technology to continue the expansion of our telehealth services. We have been able to purchase several core infrastructure devices and applications

that create a stable, secure, and versatile platform to support the continued delivery of high quality Medical, Behavioral Health and Psychiatry services.

In addition, the FCC funding has allowed us to work with various community partners, including Lund (quoted above), to provide onsite iPads which ensure secure, high-quality appointments via Zoom. This equipment has given CHCB the flexibility to meet the demands of some of our most vulnerable patients. No matter the location, these services are critical, and we feel fortunate to continue our mission of accessible health care and human services now and into the future.

## A Note from Jeff

**"...CHCB staff have responded with extraordinary community leadership, tireless flexibility, and tremendous personal courage."** - Jeffrey McKee, PsyD, CEO

■ Since joining CHCB in early July as CEO, it has truly been a pleasure to get to know all the staff and programs of such a deeply mission-driven organization. And while the COVID-19 epidemic has tested our commitment perhaps like no other time in our history, CHCB staff have responded with extraordinary community leadership, tireless flexibility, and tremendous personal courage – I could not possibly be more proud to be a part of any team!

Our first concern always is the health and welfare of our patients. We have ensured safe access to care by

implementing telehealth services, hiring additional staff, investing in technology and adapting workflows across all programs. We continue to partner with the State and other health care agencies to ensure access to testing, bring mobile health care into the community, outreach to the homeless, and advocate for health equity. And, of course, we continue to provide outstanding primary care, dental and behavioral health services to ALL. The mission lives strong!

The road ahead, however, is uncertain. We are re-envisioning



both how we deliver care and how we adapt to the financial pressures of this “new normal.” Like most businesses, we have seen our costs for care delivery rise substantially, while the number of patients we can safely serve has been reduced; however, I am certain that CHCB will emerge strong. Through ongoing partnership with our community, I am also confident that our many small but extremely important programs will continue to be supported as well.

— *Jeff*

## CHCB's Outreach Team Keeps On Rolling Through the Pandemic

■ The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a multitude of challenges for everyone in our community, but none so uniquely as those experiencing homelessness. Thanks to our dedicated Outreach Team, CHCB has been able to continuously and safely provide services to this vulnerable patient population.

CHCB was asked by the VT Department of Health to host a testing site at our Champlain Islands Health Center. This led to an “outreach” subset of this site to serve patients living in congregate living situations such as shelters and group homes. Our friends at Champlain Housing Trust graciously purchased a van and loaned it to our Homeless Healthcare Program (HHP) to support this effort.



Care Coordinator at CHCB's Safe Harbor Health Center, Anna Lisa Reynolds, RN, worked with Lincoln Heath, MD, and Clodagh Coghlan, NP, to conduct outreach testing services, while also coordinating with our Development Team to receive and distribute donations made specifically for homeless patients. Many of these needs, such as camping gear and

tablets for telehealth visits, were communicated by Outreach and Case Workers John Fealy and Marcus Chiaretto.

“John and Marcus have been doing so much to help folks meet their basic needs, get connected to resources and remain connected to CHCB. They have been delivering food, clothing, and other supplies to many of our patients, helping them access resources at the local and state level, and also working to ensure that individuals actually get the federal stimulus funds they are entitled to receive,” says HHP Supervisor Leighton Johnson. “It's not just what John and Marcus do that is impressive, but how they do it: safely, effectively, and with authenticity and compassion.”

# Wish List

Your donations go straight to work with these specifically-needed items. Any amount helps!

## Somali Translation of CHCB Pregnancy Guide

**\$2,000**

Did you know Somali is our patients' second-most spoken language after Nepali? While we have a Nepali version of our comprehensive pregnancy guide for expecting parents, we'd like to produce a Somali version for this valued patient population.

## Newborn Needs

**\$1,000**

Our OB Team provides numerous support services to new mothers, and have an ongoing need for supplies such as lanolin cream and infant vitamin D drops. A donation towards these items can also help send newborn babies home in style with CHCB-branded onesies and hats!

## Can You Hear Us Now?

**\$5,500**

Audiometers are important screening tools that help our providers evaluate if a patient is experiencing hearing loss. Our South End Health Center is requesting a new audiometer as an update to their current model, and our Champlain Islands Health Center is also in need of an audiometer designed specifically for pediatric patients.

## High-Use Dental Hand Pieces for Healthy Smiles

**\$5,000**

Our Dental Center is always in need of preventative items, specifically hand pieces that play a critical role in keeping our dental patients proud of their pearly whites.



CHCB has been successfully weathering the storm caused by COVID-19 so far, in large part thanks to the generosity of individual donors, community partners and government support. We are so immensely grateful to those who have helped contribute to our ongoing needs for clinically-approved Personal Protective Gear; preventive supplies such as masks, face shields, hand sanitizer; and monetary donations to help fill in the gaps left by the decrease in patient visit revenue. Thank you!

To make a donation or learn more, please contact Kim at [kanderson@chcb.org](mailto:kanderson@chcb.org) or (802) 264-8193.



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## Fiscal Year 2020 Highlights



**128,332**

patient visits



**587**

patients received  
treatment for  
opioid addiction



**500**

children received  
dental care  
at CHCB's  
School-Based  
Dental Center



**12,177**

visits assisted  
by interpreters  
to ensure  
culturally  
competent care



**\$529,889**

was subsidized  
through the  
Sliding-Fee Scale  
Financial  
Assistance Program

The Community Health Centers of Burlington is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and Federally Qualified Health Center funded in part through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and generous community support. CHCB is a Health Center Program grantee under 42 U.S.C. 254b, and a deemed Public Health Service employee under 42 U.S.C. 233(g)-(n).

All CHCB programs and services are accessible to people with disabilities. This newsletter is available in alternative formats upon request.

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