



1. Susan Post, executive director, guides the direction of Esperanza's three locations in North Philadelphia.

2. Wiljen Serrano Jr., 16, and Sydney Jackson, 13, get hands-on nutrition instruction from Christe Lee, Esperanza's cafe and exercise programs manager.

3 & 4. The new health and wellness facility has plenty of room for exercise, one part of a holistic approach to wellness.



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for wellness in their neighborhoods. For only \$25, participants complete 50 hours of training in how to engage neighbors in health and fitness activities. Post is proud of the 150 health promoters Esperanza has trained thus far. Instead of waiting for a health crisis to happen, she says, these residents are taking charge, doing something proactive to build health and combat hopelessness. It's a holistic, integrated approach that could serve as a model for clinics in other cities.

Challenge: Multiple, complex, and untreated health issues

Residents of Esperanza's communities often arrive at the clinics with many problems. Although a patient might come in because of severe back pain, for example, he or she could also present with uncontrolled high blood pressure and any of the myriad social problems that affect the poor.

Solution: Treating the whole person (and sometimes the whole family)

Post and her staff look at the whole patient, their emotional and spiritual health as well as physical symptoms, offering multiple services at a single

appointment. For example, if a patient comes in with an eye problem but seems depressed, the staff will offer a behavioral health consult the same day. "Talking to someone right away can get treatment started sooner," says Post. In addition, Post and her staff have learned that a patient's family offers many clues to his or her health. Getting to know a patient's spouse, parents, children, and siblings can help build family wellness. Similarly, what patients learn at Esperanza about important health practices often trickles down to their families.

»» The Clinic PHOENIXVILLE

About The Clinic: Since 2001, The Clinic has served uninsured residents of Phoenixville and the surrounding community. Today, patients log more than 11,000 visits a year and are cared for by 11 paid staff members, including

two physicians and three nurses. The Clinic's typical client is middle-aged and formerly middle class, and has recently lost a job. Patients are asked to make a donation for all visits based on what they can afford. The Clinic also offers a food pantry and used-clothing donations on site for patients to use as the need arises. "We're here to help in any way we can," says Executive Director Tom Burd. "Our system is built on mutual trust.

"Without The Clinic, many of the residents we serve would end up in the ER," says Burd. "They would go into more debt and experience more stress. They would get sicker, and many would not survive. The Clinic is a lifesaving operation."

Adds Medical Director Dr. Lorna Stuart (who founded The Clinic with Reverend Marie Swayze), "We have prevented diabetic comas, hypertensive crises, heart attacks, and more. We treat

both acute and chronic conditions for which our patients would have no other place to go. Many times, I have heard, 'I don't know what I would do if you weren't here.' We are a medical home for thousands of uninsured people."

Challenge: An outdated facility with insufficient space

The Clinic is housed in an old building that it rents from neighboring St. Peter's Episcopal Church for \$1 a year. Although the building has served patients here for more than 10 years, says Burd, it offers only six exam rooms where 10 or 12 are needed.

Solution: Creating a strategic plan and seeing patients remotely

Burd, his board of directors, and his staff will be developing a strategic plan that will focus on finding new donor sources to fund a possible future expansion. The Clinic will also be exploring strategies for moving forward under the ACA. "It is expected that 30 million Americans will still be without insurance in spite of health care reform," he says. "There will be people who will not know what to do, where to go, and how to navigate the new system."

In addition, The Clinic is conducting a feasibility study on providing some services, such as substance abuse counseling, via Skype. This practice not only helps patients who have no transportation; it also frees up much-needed examination space. If the results are positive, Skype could become a conduit for other types of counseling as well.

Challenge: Expensive lab work and medication

The Clinic's patients often come for their first visits with untreated diseases, including diabetes and cancers,

often with comorbidities. Treatment requires costly diagnostic testing and pharmaceuticals.

Solution: Community involvement from hospitals and pharmaceutical companies

Over the years, The Clinic has forged strong relationships with local hospitals. Paoli Hospital performs MRIs, CAT scans, mammograms, ultrasounds, and other tests at little or no cost. Phoenixville Hospital provides a \$10,000 pharmaceutical stipend per year to pay for The Clinic's medicines. "We're very linked in to our community partners," says Burd. "We couldn't do what we do without their help." ■



- 1. Dispensing medication at the end of clinic visits ensures patient will be able to follow through with their wellness plans.
- 2 & 3. Patients, no matter their ages, receive the care they need from staff physicians Dr. Ned Kienzle (left) and Dr. Steven Mark (right).
- 4. Dr. Lorna Stuart, medical director and cofounder, and Tom Burd, executive director, are working with the board of directors to develop a strategic plan for moving forward.