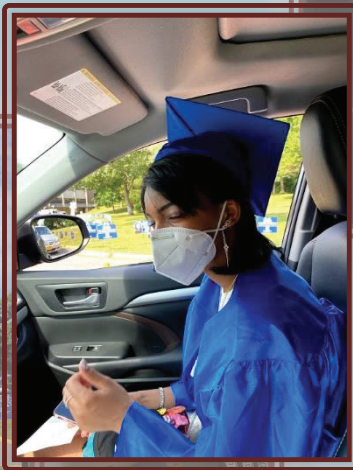
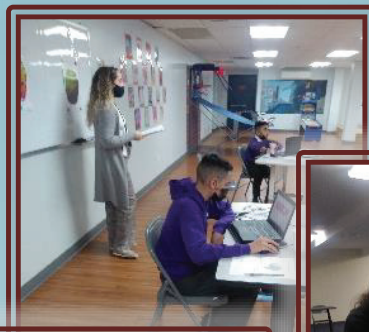
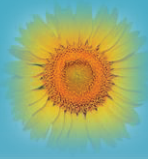


HISPANIC COUNSELING CENTER INC.



2020 ANNUAL REPORT





HISPANIC COUNSELING CENTER

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Hispanic Counseling Center is to enhance the strengths of Long Island's families and children through bilingual, bicultural counseling, prevention, vocational, and educational services to enrich their lives, foster economic independence, and nurture dreams for the generations to come.



ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

The Hispanic Counseling Center (HCC) promotes family and community wellness with a fully bilingual/bicultural staff and a network of interrelated services including licensed behavioral health treatment. HCC supports the recovery of the individual, and the entire family system, in a single point of entry. The agency locations in Hempstead and Bay Shore provide treatment and prevention for chemical dependency, mental health, and youth and family programs and in 2020 served more than 1,700 clients a month. HCC is the only agency in Nassau County licensed by the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) and the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) to provide these services in a fully bilingual, bicultural setting for families and individuals who are working toward a constructive, self-sustaining way of life. Services are available to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, or ability to pay.

HCC was originally established in 1977 by the Nassau County Department of Drug and Alcohol Addiction Services and the Nassau County Youth Board to provide substance abuse treatment services and services for children and adolescents in response to the county's growing Hispanic population. Since its inception, HCC has been a beacon of hope for many immigrants and their families who have come to Long Island seeking to make a better life.

The agency has grown from one program and four staff in a 600 square foot rented office in 1977, to ownership of a 38,000 square foot modern facility with multiple programs and services in 2020. HCC is proactive in developing programs that respond to the most urgent needs of the community and through individual, group, and family counseling, educational workshops, case management, support groups, family activities, after-school tutoring and enrichment, summer camp, crisis intervention, and prevention programs for at-risk youth, clients are able to receive multiple services in one setting.



HISTORY OF THE HISPANIC COUNSELING CENTER INC.

- 1977** The Hispanic Counseling Center established by the Nassau County Department of Drug and Alcohol Addiction to provide substance abuse treatment services to growing Hispanic population in Nassau County
- 1979** Nassau County Youth Board awards funding for prevention, education, and counseling services to limited English speaking youth and families
- 1986** HCC licensed by New York State to become first bilingual, bicultural alcohol and drug rehabilitation clinic in Nassau County
- 1987** Summer Program begins for children ages 7-12
- 1989** After school homework help and tutoring sessions are available to all school age children.
- 1992** HCC awarded license from New York State for mental health outpatient clinic
- 1993** Supported Housing Program inaugurated for mentally ill clients in need of housing
- 1994** English as a Second Language Program available to all HCC clients
- 1995** Respite Program established to provide information, counseling, support, and respite services for families with children having serious emotional problems
- 1996** Domestic Violence Program created to fill a gap in services for victims and perpetrators
- 1998** HCBS Waiver Program established to provide in-home services to developmentally disabled adults and children
- 1998** Literacy Program instituted to teach adults how to read and write in Spanish
- 1998** Early intervention Program created for children ages 0-3 and families to provide social work services at HCC and in the home
- 1999** Medicaid Service Coordination Program begins for developmentally disabled adults and children to provide case management to live at home rather than an institutional setting
- 2001** Ryan White Mental Health Program begins for People with HIV/AIDS



HISTORY OF THE HISPANIC COUNSELING CENTER INC.

- 2003** HCC moves to 344 Fulton Avenue Hempstead, the new building owned by the agency
- 2003** Teen Drop-In Center begins
- 2008** HCC purchases 336 Fulton Ave Hempstead to expand the Mental Health program
- 2011** Kinship program begins to provide support to grandparents/caregivers of children whose parents are incarcerated, deported or hospitalized
- 2012** Project Hope starts after Super Storm Sandy to provide crisis counseling
- 2014** Super Storm Sandy Program provides multiservice support to storm victims
- 2017** Care Coordination to provide case management
- 2017** Mental Health Clinic Crisis Stabilization Services begins, to provide intensive services
- 2017** Empire State After-School Program begins, to provide after school and Saturday academic and counseling support to youth and their parents
- 2017** Partners in Prevention begins, to provide evidence based drug prevention services
- 2018** Community Health Connections Program begins, for residents of the Village of Hempstead
- 2019** Partnerships established with LI Cares Kids Cafe and Hofstra University STEM Program
- 2020** HCC Suffolk County Mental Health Clinic re-opens in Bay Shore
- 2020** Regional Prevention and Support Services in partnership with Northwell Health begins, to provide intensive case management to decrease the risk of HIV infection
- 2020** Project Hope begins, to provide COVID-19 related crisis counseling and referrals
- 2020** Nassau Mental Health Clinic expands services for children affected by domestic violence with funding from Mother Cabrini Health Foundation



HISPANIC COUNSELING CENTER



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Friends of the Hispanic Counseling Center:

The year 2020 at the Hispanic Counseling Center began with the same enthusiasm from all staff who were eager to continue providing the wide range of HCC services to the Long Island community. Everyone was renewed after the holidays with good memories of time spent with families and friends.

Because I watch the morning news, I noticed that there was a report of a virus that was taking lives named the Corona Virus. As always I thought, “well it is going to be controlled soon and this virus is not going to affect us at all.” I planned my vacation overseas, and even though there were increasing new reports about the virus, again I thought that everything was going to be under control. Nonetheless, I decided to accelerate my return to the US, still thinking that everything was going to be fine.

By March the news became more concerning in terms of the risk of the virus coming to the United States. On March 11th the World Health Organization declared that the COVID Virus was a pandemic, and on March 13th it was declared a national emergency in the United States. I immediately convened emergency meetings with HCC teams- first with all Program Coordinators, then with the secretaries and finally with all the staff. At this time all staff were maintaining social distance and using PPE.

Gradually we learned that several staff members had contracted the virus so we closed the doors of the HCC to disinfect the two buildings and start the process of working from home, shift all services and programs to off-site remote operation. We immediately decided that the new normal was going to be working remotely, and instituted the use of phones, ZOOM and Telehealth as methods to continue providing services to clients and to maintain staff communication. Staff were provided with the necessary equipment to replicate their offices off-site and to ensure that clients would continue to receive the needed services with no break in operation. There were numerous challenges as we began this process and it was necessary to educate clients regarding the new service delivery modalities.

I want to emphasize how admirably the staff of HCC reacted to this crisis. Everybody began working from home and in complete compliance with the new regulations. We continued to maintain weekly Coordinators’ meetings and monthly meetings with all staff. The clients quickly understood the new normal of telehealth. The preferred choice for telehealth was WhatsApp since this platform is used by many clients to communicate with family overseas. Some clients needed more education to be prepared for their sessions and to maintain consistency.

All conferences and meetings with County and State departments were via Zoom. HCC became very involved with food distribution for the great number of families in need and the agency participated in three food drives in Hempstead. FEMA offered a grant to HCC to begin an outreach program to provide short term counseling and educate the community and make referrals for needed services. Many emergency grants became available to assist with the unexpected and



HISPANIC COUNSELING CENTER

unbudgeted expenses that we incurred to shift to offsite operations, to conduct the necessary disinfecting, and to provide appropriate PPE once we began to work on site in small and staggered cohorts, still providing services to clients remotely.

At the outset, I never thought that this crisis would extend for more than a year. During 2020 the vaccines were not yet ready so it was impossible to think about returning to our offices since the number of people affected with COVID continued to increase.

Yet HCC was able to end the year in positive ways. I'm pleased to announce that during 2020 the HCC Suffolk County Mental Health Clinic was reopened in Bay Shore. At present there are more than 250 clients being served in Suffolk and as of July 2, 2021, the new satellite will begin in person services.

With support from a 2020 PPP grant, and a successful application for a second PPP grant in 2021, HCC was able to recoup numerous expenses and also recoup a portion of income which was lost during the crisis.

There are staff members and friends of HCC who experienced losses due to COVID and I extend my sincere condolences.

In closing, I would like to give thanks to all of my staff for their enthusiastic willingness to overcome the crisis, and continue to provide the same level, and greater, of services to the community. I very much appreciate that the Board of Directors continued their support via Zoom meetings, and that our funding sources and donors were ever present with help and support.

I extend many thanks to everybody in the County and the State, and to all the funding sources and our donors who consistently support HCC. Finally, my deep appreciation to the current, and past, HCC Board of Directors who for many years have supported HCC under my leadership.

This will be my last report since I will retire from HCC after 40 years of service to HCC and the community and I extend sincere congratulations to Associate Director Claudia Boyle as my successor on her appointment by the HCC Board of Directors as CEO of HCC.

Gladys Serrano LCSW
CEO



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear Friends of HCC:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire HCC staff, I am proud to present the 2020 Annual Report. The year 2020 was far different than any of us have experienced in our lifetime. During the year the Hispanic Counseling Center (HCC) had to adapt rapidly to find ways to safely serve clients' needs in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

The staff of HCC accomplished a lot amid great challenges and uncertainty, and, without fail, rose to the occasion under the leadership of CEO, Gladys Serrano. Despite facing numerous variables every day, HCC did an outstanding job responding to the challenges of the COVID-19.

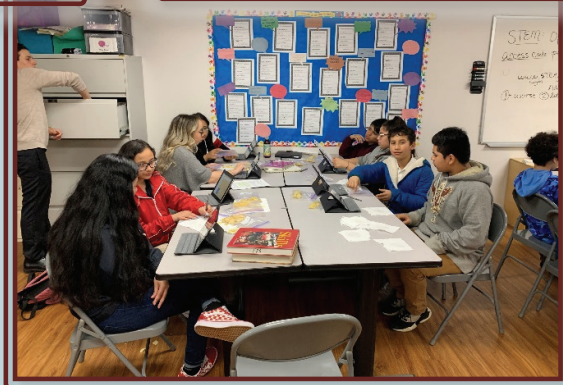
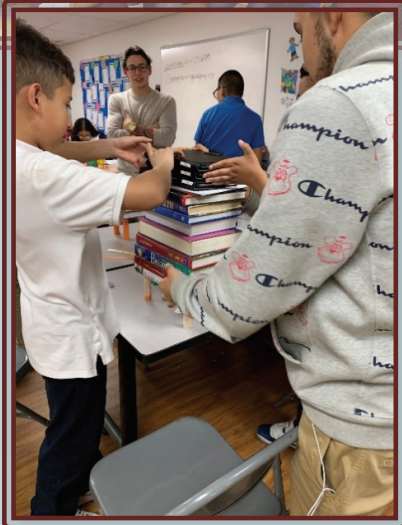
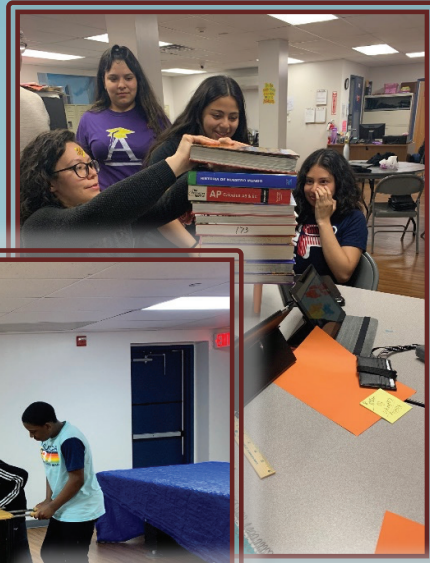
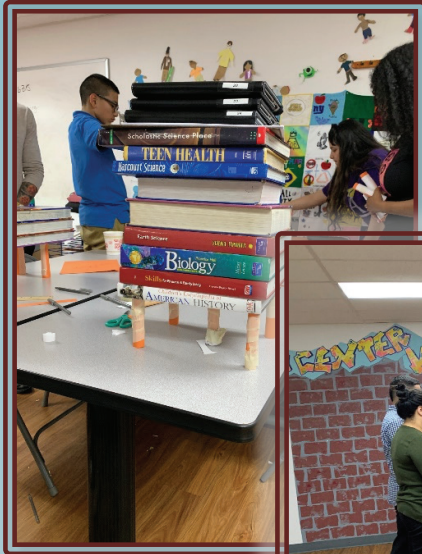
I would like to extend our genuine gratitude to the many public and private supporters who so generously provided funding for much needed and vital HCC programs and services during 2020. We look forward to a brighter 2021 and being able to foster continued partnerships with you, our respected community partners. We are most grateful for your continued support of HCC. We would not be able to provide the services we offer, the hope we give, and the peace of mind we bestow on our clients if not for your commitment.

The Board of Directors would like to sincerely recognize and express our deep appreciation of CEO, Gladys Serrano. We hold Gladys in the highest regard for her 40 years of dedication to the Hispanic Counseling Center. Although Gladys will be retiring at the end of June 2021, her legacy will live on forever.

We would also like to recognize the HCC staff. Our success comes from their commitment to do whatever it takes to serve the HCC clients. We are proud of the many contributions that HCC staff make every day. I also would like to acknowledge the Hispanic Counseling Center's Board of Directors for their commitment of time, leadership, and generous support.

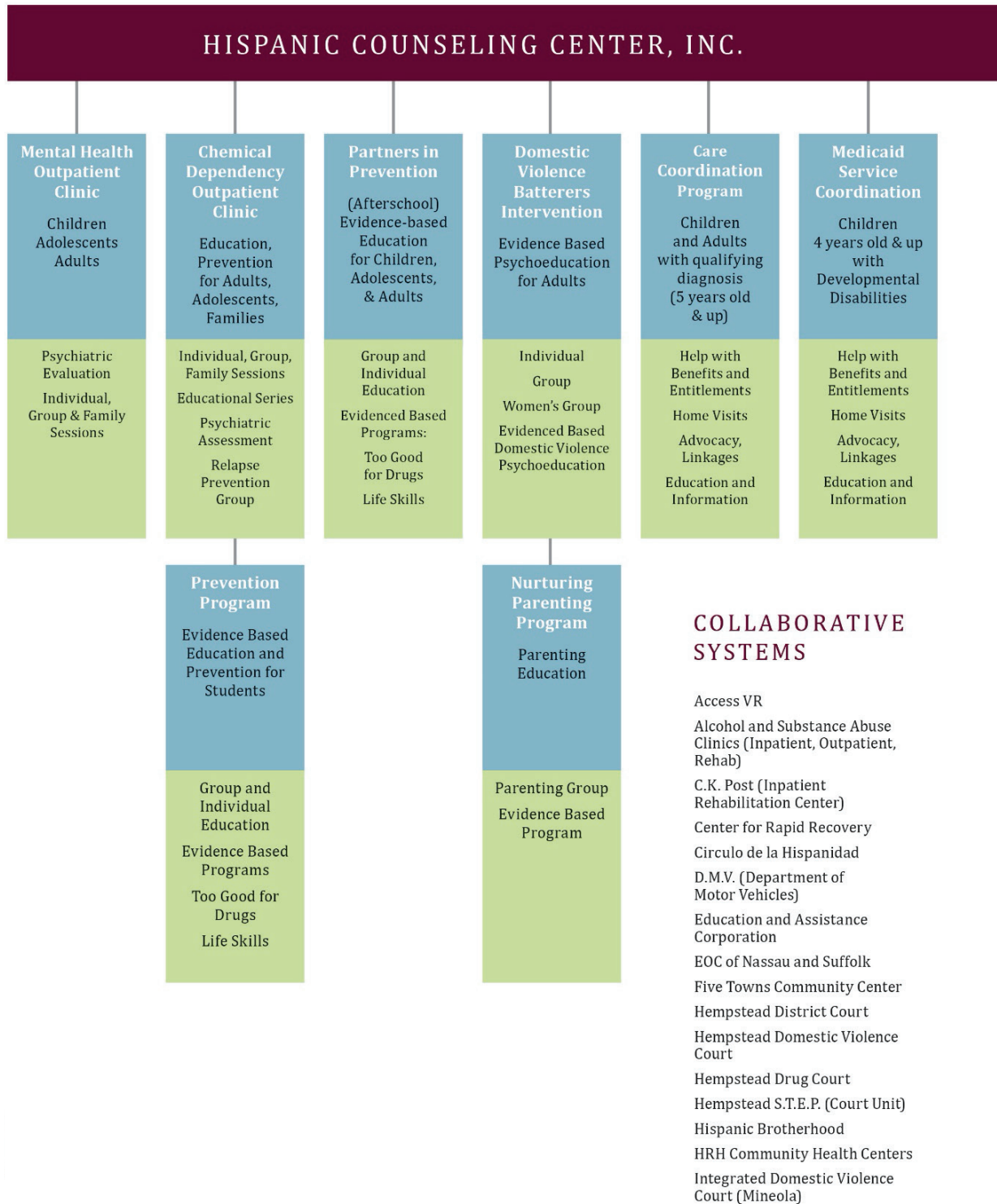
I invite you to learn more about HCC and its programs and services which have so successfully changed lives and improved futures for residents of Long Island since 1977.

Nanette Malebranche
President





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Empire After School Program Newly Arrived High School Students and Parents	ESPRI Community Health Connections Program Residents Village of Hemstead	Family & Children Program Respite Family Peer Support	Ryan White Part A/MAI Mental Health Services for HIV/AIDS Adult Clients (Nassau/Suffolk)	Supported Housing Permanent Housing 18 years & up for the mentally ill (SPMI)	Youth & Family Program Children & Families
ESL, Math and Literacy Education and Information	Outreach Linkages Education Referrals	Individual (Home) Group (Agency) Parent Advocacy Parent Education Homework Help Socialization Skills Supportive Services for Parents	Individual, Group & Family Mental Health Services Concrete Services Advocacy	Permanent Housing Home Visits Life Skills Advocacy	Teen Drop-in Center After School

Kingsborough Addictions Center (Inpatient Rehabilitation Center)
 LGBT Network
 LIISA – Long Island
 Local Government Units
 Local Primary Care Physicians and Pediatricians
 Local State and Private Colleges and Universities
 Long Island Association for AIDS Care (LIAAC)
 Long Island County on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (LICADD)
 Long Island Jewish Women Coalition – Peninsula chapter
 Mental Health Association of Nassau County
 Mineola Felony Court
 MTA and Able Ride
 Nassau and Suffolk County Adult Protective Services
 Nassau and Suffolk County Child Protective Services
 Nassau and Suffolk County Churches and Places of Worship
 Nassau and Suffolk County Department of Social Services

Nassau and Suffolk County Health Home Case Management
 Nassau and Suffolk County Hospitals
 Nassau and Suffolk County Shelters
 Nassau and Suffolk County Social Security Administration
 Nassau and Suffolk Foster Care Attorneys
 Nassau County Adolescent Diversion Program
 Nassau County and Suffolk County School Districts
 Nassau County Department of Mental Health, Chemical Dependency and Developmental Disabilities
 Nassau County District Attorney's Office
 Nassau County Family Court
 Nassau County Group Homes
 Nassau County Office of Youth Services
 Nassau County Youth and Safety Coalition
 Nassau County P.I.N.S. (Person in Need of Supervision) Diversion Program
 Nassau County Parole Department

Nassau County Police Department
 Nassau County Probation Department
 Nassau Suffolk Law Services
 Nassau University Medical Center (Detox program)
 Nassau University Medical Center (LIFQHC)
 Neurologists
 NUHEALTH Centers
 NYS Department of Health
 NYS Office of Mental Health
 NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services
 NYS Office of People with Developmental Disabilities
 NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)
 NYS Office of Parks and Recreation
 Options for Community Living
 Personalized Recovery Oriented Services Program (PROS)
 Planned Parenthood
 Private Psychiatrists
 SALVA-Domestic Violence Program
 Suffolk Project for AIDS Resource Coordination (SPARC)
 The Safe Center of LI

Homework Help
 Socialization Skills
 Gang Prevention Activities
 Life Skills
 Parent Workshops
 School Support
 Mentoring
 Crisis Intervention
 Summer Camp



HCC MEETS THE CHALLENGE OF THE COVID HEALTH CRISIS ON LONG ISLAND IN 2020

COVID-19 created extraordinary needs for HCC's clients, the majority of whom are employed in service occupations which closed abruptly at the onset of the pandemic, placing already fragile individuals and families at great risk. In addition to increased unemployment and food insecurity in the nine high needs Nassau County communities in which HCC clients reside, each of these communities were "hot spots" for the spread of COVID-19, with Hempstead where the greatest number of clients reside, having the highest number of COVID-19 cases in Nassau County.

The HCC teams reacted to and responded to this crisis without a break in service by immediately and successfully shifting to remote agency operations, utilizing smart phones, Zoom, and telehealth as methods to conduct services to clients. It was necessary for HCC to close its doors to the public for the first time in its history, yet every client received the same level of service as when in the agency. Though there were challenges, clients quickly responded to virtual programs and telehealth. HCC also developed and implemented additional supports to ensure that clients were well prepared to manage the impact of the pandemic. The following highlights are a sample of HCC's successful shift to remote services and are further described in program reports:

- Current and former clients were provided information and education about COVID-19 and received CDC information in English and Spanish.
- The agency created a COVID-19 YouTube video with information about food resources, emergency phone numbers, COVID-19 testing sites and other resources.
- HCC augmented program services by assisting clients and community residents with critical resources and referrals such as food pantries and rent support.
- Food pantries in Nassau and Suffolk and partnerships with organizations such as Hope for the Future Pantry and the Salvation Army resulted in access to food and food deliveries. A partnership with United Way resulted in food gift cards and PPE.
- The Teen Drop In Center instituted remote tutoring, prevention workshops, and educational workshops to include COVID-19 and the impact on adolescents. When the Hempstead School District began remote instruction in March, HCC advocated on behalf of students in need of district provided technology. Prevention educators continued to provide prevention workshops during the summer.
- Parents of youth in the after school program were provided services that included referral to the HCC Mental Health Clinic and support from the student advocate.
- From July to August a free daily Virtual Summer Program was instituted for 30 children and youth ages 8 to 15. Workshops and activities included Cornell Cooperative 4H Sampler, Jr. Coding, STEM, Yoga, Robotics, arts & crafts, boxing, and interactive educational games.
- Therapists in the Mental Health and Chemical Dependency Clinics initially worked with clients by telephone, and gradually shifted to audio/video sessions, including sessions via facetime and Zoom which proved to be very effective for the therapists, the psychiatrists, and the clients.



THE IMPACT OF THE HISPANIC COUNSELING CENTER EXPRESSED IN THE WORDS OF HCC PROGRAM CLIENTS

In the words of a Chemical Dependency Client:

"If the court didn't mandate me to complete this treatment I would have missed out on knowledge I did not have before starting treatment here. I was ignorant and unaware of the consequences just one drink can have, I thought because I've seen peers drink and drive and not get caught I can get away with it, but I had to pay the price. Because of HCC therapist I was able to learn about the severe sickness alcohol can cause and how it psychologically affects me as a person and my family. I was able to grow as a person not just in remaining abstinent but in my communication skills, enhance my knowledge and motivate myself to be better. Thank you." – O.A.

In the words of a Mental Health Client:

"Two years ago, after having suffered through a traumatic experience, I crawled into my therapist's office after being released from Southside Hospital. I had been admitted for what the ER doctor diagnosed as Acute Stress Disorder... My therapist helped me identify destructive personality traits and patterns of behavior within myself and those close to me. She taught me how to set boundaries with people, how it is ok to say no to people, and to put yourself first. I learned to let go and trust that people are capable of taking care of themselves... Two years later and I look back and can't even recognize the girl that first walked into that office. I now have the proper tools to face my anxiety and depression head on. I have regained my independence, I have conquered all of my fears. I am no longer looking to other people as my safety net or my lifeline. I look to myself. I am so grateful to my Therapist Paula, my Psychiatrist Dr. Alvarez, and to the entire team at Hispanic Counseling Center for helping me get my life back." Y. L.

Mental Health Case:

C. A. started treatment after her husband threatened her with a knife which affected her well-being tremendously. During treatment, client was able to understand that she suffered from psychological abuse for many years but before never saw as a form of abuse. Client was very overwhelmed, guilty, and depressed when she started treatment. Client has been in treatment for three months and has made significant improvement and has learned how to respect and value herself. Client has been able to socialize more and has been able to realize how much she limited herself while she was with her husband. Client is currently ingesting medication for her depression, and has been very engaged in treatment. Client is receptive to all suggestions and often follows up with recommendations. Client is a very dedicated mother who enjoys her time with her son who has a very close bond with her. Client has been able to plan for her future and seems committed to continue working on her recovery and would like to be able to help other women who are victims of abuse.

In the words of a Care Coordination Client:

"I am thankful for my care coordinator because she has helped me with many things. One of the many things I am grateful for is that Jessica constantly links me to food pantries around my area. Jessica has also linked me to get the COVID-19 vaccine (Moderna) in a time where it was very hard to obtain. She made the two appointments, sent me the times and dates of the appointments in writing so that I won't forget and she also filled out the vaccine paperwork for me. She also helped me make a COVID-19 vaccine appointment for my longtime friend, which I appreciated very much. That was not something her job entails and she went out of her way to help me with that. Jessica constantly calls me to ask how I am doing. At 64 years old, someone calling to check in on me is not something that happens often. When I tell her I feel stressed she calms me down by reassuring me that everything will be okay and she has also taught me breathing exercises that I did not know existed. These are just a few of the things that Jessica helps me with. I always tell Jessica that God will repay her for how attentive she is to me and my health." J. F.

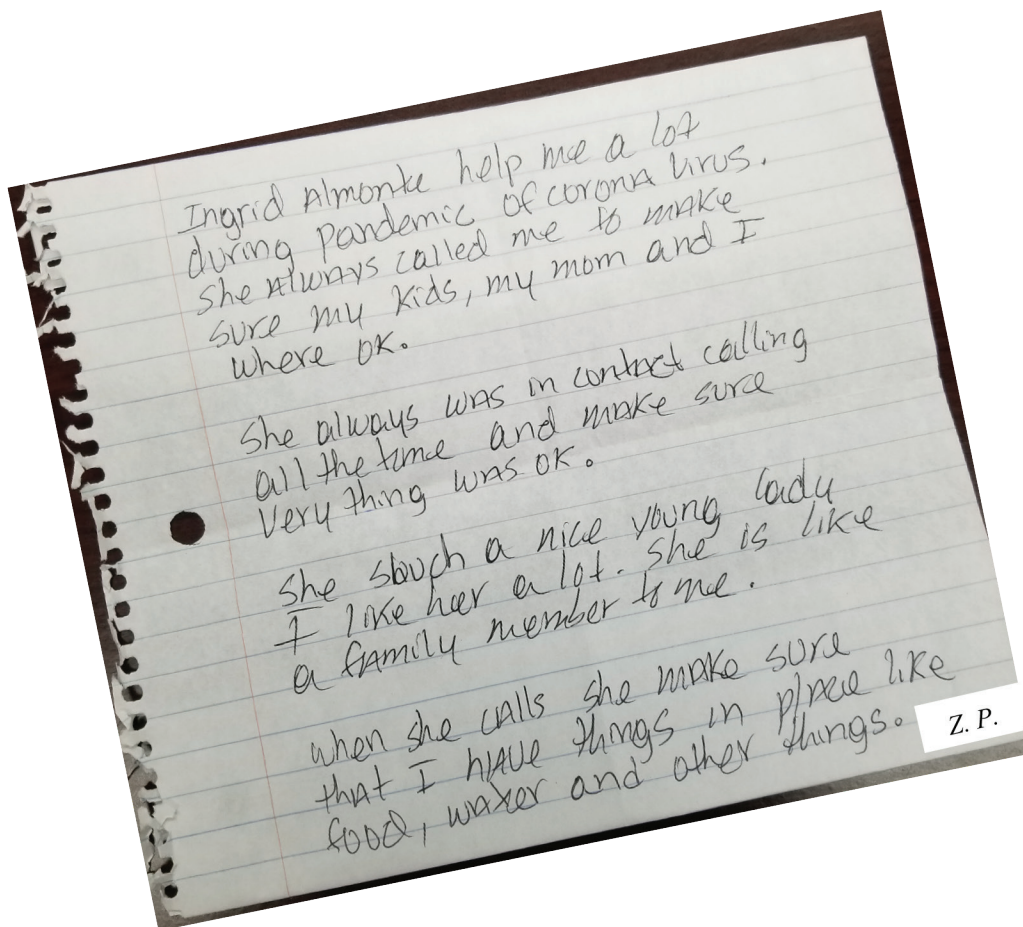


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In the words of Supported Housing Clients:

"Thanks to the Hispanic Counseling Center and yourself for allowing me to have an apartment I can call my home" T. C.

"I feel compelled to speak about the organization whom help me through a time in my life when I was in disparity for housing and also my mental health, this program was the best thing that happened to me .while I may share similar stories, everyone has different strengths to pull them self-up. But my support came from Ingrid Almonte whom push me to go back to school to finish my college degree. I thank you guys so much for you care and support" J. T.





CARE COORDINATION

HCC Care Coordination is a partnership with Northwell Health and has been in operation since 2017. The focus of Care Coordination is to assist individuals in monitoring their health, both behavioral and physical, to ensure that they remain healthy. Each client is assigned a Care Coordinator who assists the client to obtain medical and behavioral health providers in the community of their choice. Clients are assisted by linkages to appropriate medical providers and or community health organizations.

Care Coordination provides services to individuals age 18 or older, however 90 percent of the HCC care coordination client base is senior citizen, male and female, and predominantly Hispanic. The program seeks to provide enhanced services to the client and each care coordinator develops a six month care plan and identifies strengths and barriers with the client. Interim target dates are set as well as assessments to ensure better quality of health.

At the outset of the pandemic, the Care Coordination team, as all agency teams, was well equipped to work from home with laptop computers, an online system that corresponded to the system in the HCC building and phones to enhance the technology. These resources insured that program operations were not interrupted. The Care Coordination team continued to provide case management support services and assisted clients with filing for unemployment, DSS SNAP benefits, Metro Cards, food pantries and medical appointments. The care coordination team is committed to continuing to provide services during these turbulent times by working closely with other HCC programs and partners at Northwell Health and other organizations.

Despite the pandemic Care Coordination did not stop providing any services to the clients. Staff ensured that client appointments were cancelled or re-directed and medications were delivered to the home. When in need of food, this was also delivered to the home. The program partnered with local churches and food banks to create a mobile food pantry. Since the majority of clients are seniors, disabled and without access to transportation, the staff ensured that home deliveries of any type were fulfilled.

Care Coordination partnered with HCC Supportive Housing to ensure mutual clients were safe. During the Christmas holidays Care Coordination staff worked with the HCC Teen Drop In Center to ensure that children of mutual clients received gifts during the holidays. Care coordination partnered with CASA to assist with naturalization applications and renewals of residency cards and with the United Way to provide clients with free metro cards. The Village of Hempstead CDA provided gift cards for clients and local churches and the Salvation Army provided food pantries to those most in need. Care Coordination collaborated with the HCC vaccine campaign to ensure that every client had the opportunity to get vaccinated. At present, 50 percent of the Care Coordination clients have been fully vaccinated, the majority as part of the HCC vaccine partnerships with Northwell and OMH/Pilgrim State Hospital.



CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY OUTPATIENT PROGRAM

When programs began remote operations, all staff and clients of programs in the CD Clinic received training and support on all platforms and apps used for telehealth. All programs shifted successfully to remote operations in less than a week and staff adjusted their schedules to be available for clients when needed, especially in emergency situations. In addition to the platforms and apps, the CD educational series is now online and accessible to all clients. As a result, there were no gaps in service or delays for clients. All clients- current clients, former clients, and the community received COVID-19 communication and education on staying healthy and staying safe during the health crisis and ways to access the vaccine. As needed, referrals were made for concrete services such as food distribution and housing/rent assistance. All clients know that they can count on the CD Clinic for any needed help or support.

Numerous employees contracted COVID-19 and the CD program lost a team member but the resilience of the CD therapists, coupled with their training, ensured that all services continued without interruption via telehealth. With time and support, clients successfully made the change to telehealth to continue therapy.

On the recent OASAS survey for all CD Clinic programs, 100% of those surveyed reported satisfaction with the overall effectiveness of treatment services.

Chemical Dependency Program

The goal of the Chemical Dependency (CD) Program is to assist individuals who abuse substances to achieve sobriety and to live a substance free lifestyle. The program serves men, women and adolescents, predominantly of Hispanic origin, who, as a result of alcohol/drug use have experienced negative impact in their lives, and in some cases, negative impact on the lives of their loved ones. A self-help philosophy serves as the basis of the program to maintain abstinence and achieve sobriety and clients receive educational and prevention services regarding the cycle of addiction. A treatment plan is developed for each client with scheduled weekly group sessions, weekly educational series, and biweekly or weekly (as needed) individual sessions, and if there is need, a relapse group. Individual, group and/or psycho education is also available to the family or significant other affected by a loved one abuse of drugs or alcohol.

Services are delivered in an atmosphere of cultural understanding which recognizes the importance of family involvement and families receive services to meet the individual treatment needs of the entire family. One hundred percent of the program staff is fully bilingual and bicultural and as needed clients can be referred to other services within HCC for comprehensive treatment, and CD prevention services are available to all HCC clients. Program services are designed in a flexible manner and consider time and employment constraints of clients, with sessions available in the morning and in the evening. Staff receive training in Evidence Based Treatment modalities such as the Duluth Model for Domestic Violence and Nurturing Parenting Skills, to enhance the quality of treatment.

During 2020 the CD program received referrals from Nassau and Suffolk District Courts, Felony Treatment Drug Court, Family Court, probation officers, social service agencies and community



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attorneys; individuals struggling with addiction and explosive behavior were referred from the Domestic Violence Court. There continued to be an increase in referrals for domestic violence treatment as a result of the strong correlation between the use of alcohol/drugs and domestic violence. Possibly due to the strict lockdown during 2020, there was also an increase in referrals for the CD/Domestic Violence program towards women and children. The results of the pandemic exacerbated the use of alcohol and other substances and relapses were more evident.

Although regular programming was abruptly altered in March 2020 when the agency began remote and virtual services, the CD program delivered nearly 10,000 individual and group counseling sessions during 2020. On a weekly basis, the program offered seven chemical dependency groups, two chemical dependency/domestic violence groups, one chemical dependency/women's group, one chemical dependency/adolescents group, one relapse group, and three educational series groups.

PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Prevention Program serves children and youth who present with at-risk behavior, or who were exposed to risk factors which could lead to substance use, violence, truancy, gang involvement, or the use of gateway drugs, and with the added challenge that all instruction in the Hempstead School district shifted to remote teaching after March 2020. The Prevention team served as a strong asset and supported students remotely with tutoring and prevention workshops including remote after-school activities such as creative arts, computer skills, and tutoring and various gymnastics projects via Zoom. Prevention workers continued to present workshops on topics such as drug abuse, self-esteem, and creative expression. The Prevention Program continued to provide a series of workshops to middle school students designed to reduce the risk of gang involvement, violence, the use of alcohol and other drugs and other high-risk behaviors, as well as life skills needed for success.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BATTERERS ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM

This 26 week psycho-educational program designed to educate individuals who are referred by courts and child welfare agencies due to charges stemming from domestic violence and child abuse continued via telehealth beginning March 2020. The goal of the program is to offer individuals an opportunity to change learned behaviors through education to take control and responsibility for their actions and the impact of their actions on victims, and to reduce the potential for family violence.

NURTURING PARENTING SKILLS PROGRAM

This 16 week psycho-educational program designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child-rearing practices was conducted via telehealth beginning March 2020 and experienced an increase in referrals from the Mental Health Program, CPS, and Family Court among others, as a result of the urgent need for these services in the community resulting from the pandemic.



EMPIRE STATE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Empire State After-School Program (ESAP) in collaboration with the Hempstead School District assists newly arrived Hempstead High School students in grades 9 to 12 and their families by providing academic and informal counseling support. The program develops solutions to the challenges faced by newcomer students and encourages collaborative planning to help students succeed. Parents are offered educational workshops, parent support groups, and ENL classes to continue supporting their children.

ESAP offers support to children who arrive in the United States from other countries, newcomers, who represent a variety of educational and linguistic backgrounds and different social and emotional needs. In recent years, the majority of newcomer students are unaccompanied youth from Central America. In 2020 the program supported 100 students and families in the Hempstead School District.

Students participate in structured and supervised educational services after school hours such as tutoring, youth development, and school resources to help them meet learning standards and be successful in school. Program teachers design effective lesson plans to assist students in academic subjects, ENL (English as a New Language) and provide students who may have interrupted / inconsistent formal education with reading and writing in the native language. The program also provides social and emotional support for students.

The COVID-19 pandemic created stress, fear, and anxiety for individuals acclimating to a new culture and without a strong support structure. ESAP preserved the essential elements of the program by offering services online, by phone and via other platforms. In addition to continued academic support for students and families, vital COVID-19 related information and resources were provided frequently and in the native language.

Ten students passed January 2020 Regents exams and five students graduated based on successful course work. During March through June the program utilized virtual modalities and technology. With education completely transformed due to the risk of infection, limits were imposed on classroom instruction, and the relationship between educators and their students was profoundly altered. ESAP relied on technological innovations to be able to continue to support students using virtual learning tools such as smart phones, tablets, laptops, and/or computers. Videoconferencing platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams facilitated private and secure communication with students and families.

ESAP students who experience trauma and emotional stress acclimating to a new culture, or prior in the country of origin or on the journey to the US, are referred to the HCC Mental Health and/or Chemical Dependency Clinics, and other children and family support services. During the pandemic crisis the program referred and provided information to more than 100 students and their families to service providers such as the Nassau County Office of Hispanic Affairs, Island Harvest, the Salvation Army and other agencies which offered help to the Hempstead community.



FAMILY PEER SUPPORT SERVICES (FPSS) AND RESPITE PROGRAM

The intent of the program is to provide respite and family peer support services for families raising a child ages 6 through 21. An eligible child exhibits deficit functioning in one or more of the following areas: self-care, educational achievement, family interactions, socialization, self-control, self-direction, etc. or experiences social, emotional, developmental, and / or behavioral challenges in the home, school, placement, and /or community. The primary objective of the Children and Family Peer Support Services Program is to reduce family stress, reduce the incidence of hospitalization or re-hospitalization, and decrease the risk of child abuse.

The program serves 48 children, adolescents, and their families as well as 25 additional families through the Family Peer Support Program. Program structure includes group activities Monday thru Thursday and Fridays as needed. The program works with NYS OMH Long Island Field office on an array of services for children and families through the program. The program had a successful audit and continues to be well reviewed by clients who complete evaluations and surveys concerning program services and ways to improve the program.

The Family Peer Support Services and Respite program shifted services to remote operations in March 2020, serving current clients and accepting new clients via telehealth (phone or video). Program adaptations were instituted to work with families in physically distance outdoor settings such as parks, outdoor malls, and family yards. The program continues to provide group and individual sessions through applications such as: Zoom, WhatsApp video, WhatsApp message, Facetime, and I message, when it is not possible to meet outdoors.

Children and their families have been connected to food and health resources, SSI, DSS, and educational services and self-care through webinars, Zoom meetings, and weekly contacts. Referrals are made to other HCC programs and the program collaborates with other agencies as needed. The program teaches and reinforces everyday preventive actions, helps children stay active, and helps families stay connected and cope with stress.



HEMPSTEAD COMMUNITY HEALTH CONNECTIONS PROGRAM (HCHC)

The Hempstead Community Health Connections Program goal sought to reduce the gap between community residents and the systems of care in the Village of Hempstead. Program staffing included a full-time Community Health Worker and a part-time program coordinator who attended community events to conduct program outreach with educational workshops on Kids Nutrition, obesity, diabetes, and women's health. Recruitment occurred mainly during community events, by interoffice, internal agency referrals, and by word of mouth from participants to their friends and family.

During 2020, the program served 78 clients 18 years old and older; 55 female, 23 male. The majority (N=71) were Hispanic and the balance (N=7), African American. Since the program design was based on workshops and in person events, working remotely shifted the focus to assisting clients via telephone and assistance continued to be provided remotely to assist residents of Hempstead with their health care needs. In March and April 2020, a total of 323 Hempstead residents received informational calls regarding CDC and NYSDOH guidelines, provided hotline contacts and other pertinent information.

Requests were made for a wide range of assistance including health-related concerns, lack of health insurance, affordable housing, benefits eligibility, immigration, and housing. Clients were assisted by HCC and/or referred to other agencies for additional resources. Appointments were scheduled for health screenings and physicals, and provided emergency fiscal assistance for nine families for bill payment, food, and clothing. Staff translated during phone calls to other service providers and assisted with medications and pharmacies. Residents in crisis or mental health trauma were screened and referred to HCC's Mental Health Clinic or Project Hope Crisis Counseling. As pandemic issues intensified, the program became an information hub for the residents of Hempstead assisting with resources and information; linkages for food, housing and medical care, and dissemination of Metro Cards.

The program collaborated with external agencies/organizations to help clients with additional resources in the community such as English classes; Village of Hempstead Community Development Agency for community resources; CARECEN for citizenship counseling; NUMC and Northwell Health for diagnostic services; FQHC/Hempstead for medical services; Community Empowerment Resource Center for an educational nutrition and health package; Salvation Army for a popup food pantry; Nassau Law Services; Long Island Cares Freeport food pantry; C-Town Supermarket for food; Hope for the Future Pantry for food for homebound; Island Harvest for food distribution; and the NYS Vaccine Site at Jones Beach.

Overwhelmingly, the greatest number of referrals was made for food, health care, and community resources. Significant program impact was reported in the number of individuals who increased health knowledge (N=233) and the number of individuals who accessed community resource referrals (N=233).



MENTAL HEALTH OUTPATIENT PROGRAM

The HCC Mental Health Clinic (MHC) is the only fully bilingual, bicultural mental health program in the region licensed by the New York State Office of Mental Health to provide mental health treatment for children, adolescents, adults, seniors and families in a bilingual, bicultural setting. The goal of the clinic is to enable individuals who have chronic mental illness, or who are suffering emotional distress, to reach the highest level of functioning possible, and to live productive lives within their families and in the community. Individual therapy, family therapy, group therapy, and couples counseling are provided, as well as crisis intervention for those in need. The MHC staff includes two bilingual psychiatrists on staff, one of whom is specialized in child psychiatry. Therapists participate in training on risk assessment, co-occurring disorders, evidenced-based practices, HIPPA, sexual harassment and corporate compliance regulations, and other topics.

In 2020, there were 1,564 applications and screenings for treatment in the Mental Health Program. The total number of clients served in 2020 was 1,714 individuals. The total number of units of service billed was 23,838. Despite challenges, and possibly as a result of concerns resulting from the pandemic, the MHC experienced an increase in weekly units of service per therapist, from 35 to 50 units a week, with an increase in staff meet the need for services.

The clinic accepts referrals from the Department of Probation and Children's Protective Services, schools, hospitals, immigration detention centers, among others, and works in partnership with the Northwell ER for referrals in need of urgent attention. The MHC and other HCC programs cross refer clients as necessary for optimum client outcomes and as needed, clients are referred to community services and resources such as food distribution centers, housing/rental assistance and school services for children.

Comprehensive assessment, including psychiatric evaluation, determines the client's needs and clients are involved in the treatment plan by identifying situations they wish to change and developing realistic plans for change. Therapists employ interventions which are evidenced-based, such as SBIRT (Brief Screening, Intervention, Referral and Treatment) empowering the individual or family to use their strengths to achieve their goals.

The MHC successfully manages the number of high risk incidents among clients using a comprehensive risk assessment procedure comprised of suicide and violence risk assessment tools and interventions and safety planning. Suicide threats, cutting behaviors, explosive outbursts, aggression, mood swings, defiance, antisocial conduct, severe phobias are among many of the safety concerns of the clinic. Upon discharge and if necessary, referrals are made to other programs or self-help groups.

HCC participates as a field placement site for university social work and mental health counseling students from college and university social work and mental health counseling programs including Adelphi University, Baruch College, LIU, Molloy College, and Stony Brook University. Field



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placement students in the MHC, under the guidance and supervision of agency social workers, gain skills while providing clinical services and expand the number of clients HCC is able to treat.

Therapists quickly adapted to the COVID-19 quarantine and successfully transitioned to telemental health services without interruption of client care. Therapists provide individual, family and group therapy via telemental health platforms including Facetime, WhatsApp and Zoom as well as via telephone. The resilient MHC team has been diligent to ensure that clients receive appropriate treatment in the face of extraordinary circumstances presented by the pandemic.

Working remotely created challenges for clients, notably to engage in a new treatment modality. Strong engagement skills of the therapy team guided clients unfamiliar with and hesitant about the telehealth platforms or with technical limitations and/or lack of access to smart phones. An initially high rate of cancellation and missed appointments was reduced as a result of this support. Therapists also engaged all clients regarding COVID-19 guidelines and vaccine information, referral, and scheduling assistance.

In 2020, the MHC also grew in several ways. HCC reopened the Suffolk Mental Health Clinic and this second location in Bay Shore will allow HCC to serve an expanding population in need of service. Through a generous grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, a much needed program received funding to expand services to meet the special mental health needs of bilingual children and family members who have been exposed to domestic violence.

Annually the MHC conducts a telephone client satisfaction survey regarding client-perceived outcomes of therapy. Surveys are conducted with a sample of clients by agency staff other than MHC therapists to increase response. Findings from two hundred and sixteen (216) completed surveys indicate that forty three percent (43%) of clients reported gaining control over their presenting psychiatric symptoms and/or depression. Sixty six percent (66%) reported improved family relationships and a decrease in familial domestic violence/disturbances. Finally, the rate of re-hospitalization remained low with only six percent (6%) of the sample re-hospitalized during the first year of treatment in the MHC.



PROJECT HOPE CRISIS COUNSELING

NY Project Hope: Coping with COVID Crisis Counseling Program is a federally funded, supplemental program administrated by the US Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA is authorized to fund mental health assistance and training activities in areas that have been declared a major disaster and the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) works with FEMA through an interagency agreement to provide technical assistance, consultation, grant administration, program oversight and training for state mental health authorities in implementing this program.

NY Project Hope: Coping with COVID is an outreach based crisis counseling program designed to assist individuals and communities who are directly impacted by COVID-19, COVID-19 survivors, individuals who lost a family member due to COVID-19, and individuals who lost their homes, jobs, and property due to COVID-19. The program supports short-term interventions that involve assisting disaster survivors to understand the crisis, in this case, COVID-19 and reaction to the crisis. In addition crisis counseling seeks to mitigate stress, develop coping strategies, provide emotional support, and encourage linkages with other individuals and agencies that help survivors in the recovery process.

Program staffing includes a Coordinator, two team leaders and eleven crisis counselors. All counselors were mandated to complete four FEMA approved trainings. The trainings include Just in Time, Mobile App, Adult Assessment and Referral Tool, and Basic Forms for basic crisis counseling techniques and data submission using the SAMSHA database.

A needs assessment was conducted to determine the most productive strategy to reach the target population. Using US census data and NY State Education Department website, staff identified the towns and villages with the highest population of Hispanic/ Latinos in Nassau and Suffolk counties. This information provided the basis for in-person and virtual outreach to inform the community of program services and identify clients. A primary challenge was to stay safe and avoid risk of infection while conducting community outreach. Virtual outreach limited the ability to connect directly with survivors resulted in a shift in focus to establish partnerships with other non-profit and social service organizations to broaden the base of potential individuals in need.

All organizational structures and hires were completed in the fourth quarter of 2020, with clients to be seen starting in January 2021.



RYAN WHITE PART A/MAI MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH HIV/AIDS

Ryan White Mental Health Part A/MAI (Ryan White) is a federally funded program which provides care and treatment services to people living with HIV who are uninsured or underinsured. The Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI), a part of Ryan White, addresses the needs of minority communities disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS. The HCC Ryan White outpatient comprehensive mental health services program at HCC is conducted by bilingual and bicultural staff which includes a psychiatrist and licensed clinical social workers. The program has been in operation since 2001 with the goal to assist the most vulnerable who are ineligible for any entitlements and who reside in Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

During 2020, the Ryan White program served 53 clients and provided a wide range of services including psychosocial evaluation, psychiatric evaluation, individual, family, couples, and group therapy, counseling groups, psychotropic, crisis intervention, home and/or hospital visits, information on other eligible services, and referrals.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and mandated quarantine the Ryan White program provided telehealth mental health treatment utilizing telephone and/or video conferencing. Staff modified schedules and were flexible in scheduling to accommodate clients who lacked privacy for telehealth visits. Many clients experienced severe financial hardship and lost employment or were furloughed for the long term. One third of program clients contracted the coronavirus. There were challenges for some clients to utilize the technology which were resolved with staff support and assistance. Clients used the Ryan White Hotline for support communicating with medical providers and others. Additional program services were limited and occasional home visits were made to secure required signatures and greet new clients.

Program clients received additional support from the CARES Act Emergency Financial Assistance and Food Bank which provided PPE masks and gloves, gift cards for food and cleaning and sanitation items, and assistance for mobile phone services to ensure uninterrupted telehealth treatment.

Regional Prevention and Support Services (RPSSI)

In partnership with Northwell Health and the North Shore University Center for AIDS Research and Treatment (CART) HCC is implementing the RPSSI program to 1) provide intensive case management to decrease the risk of new HIV infections in people at risk of contracting HIV, Hepatitis C, and Sexual Transmitted infections and 2) expand access to and awareness of PEP and PrEP for individuals at risk.



SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

The Supportive Housing Program (SHP) provides permanent housing to eligible adults with a serious mental illness diagnosis and is the only program in Nassau County in which clients reside in individual apartments and have access to secure, safe housing within their means. During 2020 the Supportive Housing program served 10 males and 19 female clients, of whom 18 are 55 years of age or older. The population is diverse and is a mini-United Nations with one Iranian, six white, six African American, and 16 Hispanic participants. The agency secured a residence for three new clients who would otherwise have been placed in a shelter.

The SHP goal is to help clients maintain housing and assist with additional community resources to help clients achieve fully independent lives. When HCC shifted to remote operations there was continuity of service for clients via FaceTime, Zoom and telephone. Assistance was provided for clients unfamiliar with technology and for high risk clients in need of food delivery, and general COVID-19 education and awareness was provided for all clients. All clients received a phone call followed by a letter and CDC information with COVID-19 guidance, and links to the HCC YouTube COVID-19 informational video.

Clients received regular and frequent updates regarding the COVID-19 vaccines with CDC fact sheets from the CDC, and clients have been compliant in pursuing vaccination. The early COVID-19 information campaign contributed to a low infection rate among clients: only three clients of the total (30) developed coronavirus.

The SH program intensified efforts to ensure that during the pandemic all clients maintained fully independent lives through the provision of such additional resources as: referrals to HCC Care Coordination and the Mental Health Clinic and other agencies for needed services; food and food deliveries by Island Harvest, Long island Cares, Nassau County Meals on Wheels, and the Salvation Army; medical equipment and support regarding weather emergencies; support in census and election participation; and facilitation of client concerns regarding leases and other landlord/tenant issues.

In 2020 the SHP collaborated with the following external agencies/organizations for assistance to help clients become more independent in the community in the face of the pandemic: Nassau Mental Health Association for financial management guidance, Federation of Organizations and Central Nassau Guidance MRS teams for medication management, United Way and Stop and Shop for food gift cards.

Clients reported positive feedback regarding all aspects of typical and special COVID-19 related support, especially food pantries, testing sites, and CDC guidelines and coronavirus education.



YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAM

The Youth and Family Program supports newly arrived families with limited English skills to become integrated members of the community and to gain knowledge of the culture of the United States and the local community. The program encourages continued education, helps build self-esteem, and identifies leadership capabilities. It also promotes achievement, helps prevent school dropout, and provides education on drug and alcohol prevention, and teen pregnancy. The program partners with the Hempstead School District and Hands Across Hempstead interagency meetings to keep updated on the resources available during the pandemic.

In 2020, the program continued to bridge the generation and culture gap that exist in immigrant families and provided services to 300 youth and their families. Participants engaged in a variety of scheduled programs through individual, family and group counseling activities. On average, 32 students enrolled; due to the pandemic daily attendance was reduced 20 students. The demands of the COVID-19 quarantine required that the Teen Drop In Center (TCIC) after school program operate remotely, and staff have met each of the many challenges with enthusiasm. All students did not possess adequate technology to access Zoom for virtual workshops and tutoring sessions. HCC worked with parents and the school district to ensure that all students received district-distributed Chromebooks. A WhatsApp chat was created for students and parents to quickly communicate with HCC regarding important program updates.

Parent Zoom meetings are challenging, but parents are more engaged in meetings in Spanish which provide guidance regarding the pandemic and information on food distribution as food insecurity rapidly increased for many of the families. Ten parents were referred to the HCC Mental Health Program, the Chemical Dependency Program, the Supportive Housing Program, and Project Hope during the pandemic as the need for these services also increased rapidly. The CW Post LIU Partnership Center provides virtual parent and student workshops on Google Drive, Google Meet, Schoology and Power school to give parents and students the tools they need to succeed in life. While the 2020 Children's Annual Christmas Party was cancelled, donations of more than 200 gifts were received at HCC, a number greater than prior years. Significant donors included Help Mrs. Claus, The Giving Tree, and St. Anselm Parish. Recipients submitted wish lists of five items and every child's dream was fulfilled. DC students helped wrap gifts which were delivered to families observing all precautions. The joy that HCC's Christmas brings to parents and students is always impressive; in 2020 recipients were delighted to receive the generous gifts from Santa Claus bringing some to tears.

The in-person Summer Camp was cancelled and youth were offered a free virtual summer program for 20 children ages 8-15. The program included arts and crafts with materials, and snacks and PPE delivered to enrollee's homes. Cornell Cooperative Extension provided STEM workshops and Jr. Coding, Springboard Incubators provided Robotics workshops, and a Yoga and Boxing lessons were also conducted virtually.



OUR SUPPORTERS

In addition to support in 2020 from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), other support resulted in several innovative programs in 2020. In partnership with Northwell Health, HCC began RPSSI, a five year NYS DOH grant to expand HIV/AIDS prevention and education. FEMA Project Hope was funded to provide COVID-19 related counseling and referrals. A grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation expanded the mental health program for children affected by domestic violence. In 2020 planning was completed for a collaborative partnership grant with the Advanced Health Network (AHN) and other agencies for a multi-year program to begin in 2021 to increase awareness of the opioid and substance abuse problem on Long Island.

The Hispanic Counseling Center is grateful to these funders and to all others for supporting agency-wide programs and services during 2020:

PUBLIC SUPPORT

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources Services Administration
- United States Small Business Administration
- NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports
- NYS Office of Children and Family Services
- NYS Department of Health
- NYS Office of Mental Health
- NYS Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene
- Nassau County Community Development Agency
- Nassau County Department of Human Services
- Nassau County District Attorney's Office
- Nassau County Office of Youth Services
- Village of Hempstead Community Development Agency
- Hempstead Union Free School District

CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

- AARP Foundation
- FedEx Express
- Fidelis Care
- Greentree Foundation
- Henry Schein Inc.
- Hispanic Federation
- Hofstra University
- Mother Cabrini Health Foundation
- National Council for Behavioral Health
- Newsday Charities
- Northwell Health
- People's United Bank
- United Way of Long Island

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