Alliance CARES backpack project addresses homelessness

Alliance employees and area first responders in April assembled 1,000 backpack kits containing essential supplies to distribute to people experiencing homelessness.

Each kit included a blanket and a backpack containing dental and hair care products, a variety of personal care items, a water bottle, insect repellent, and sunscreen. Some of the kits also included feminine hygiene products.

The backpack kits were distributed to law enforcement officers and EMTs who have received Alliance Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training, who will hand them out to people in homeless situations across the Alliance region. CIT training teaches police and other emergency responders the skills to recognize and respond appropriately to individuals in behavioral health crisis.

The assembly event was attended by Betsy Tilson, the State Health Director and Chief Medical Officer for the NC Department of Health and Human Services, who later tweeted “What an incredible project, but more importantly-what an incredible cross-sector collaboration that meets people where they are (literally and figuratively), engages and empowers with compassion, and facilitates connections to improve holistic health. Go team!”

Many first responders showed up to assemble the kits, including representatives of the Durham, Duke University and NC Central University police departments, the Durham County Sheriff’s Office, and Durham County EMS. Kit recipient organizations also include Johnston County CIT, Cumberland County CIT, Wake County Sheriff’s Office, and the Raleigh Police Department.

The project was part of Alliance CARES (Community Awareness Resource and Education), a campaign to engage Alliance employees around the social determinants of health – the circumstances in which people are born, grow, work, live and age and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. Alliance CARES features learning and volunteer opportunities around topics such as social isolation, food insecurity, homelessness, literacy and early childhood development and education.
Alliance Behavioral Healthcare’s Transitions to Community Living Initiative (TCLI) recently completed its 100th move of FY2018. This milestone significantly exceeds the state annual performance target for Alliance of 88 individuals transitioned into supportive housing as required by the 2012 Olmstead Settlement Agreement between the United States and North Carolina.

The Olmstead agreement mandates that the state provide community-based supported housing to people who currently reside in, or are at risk of entry into, adult care homes. It also ensures that thousands of people with mental illness have access to critical community-based mental health services and expands their employment opportunities by providing supported employment services.

Alliance is the agency charged with implementing the settlement agreement provisions in Durham, Wake, Johnston, and Cumberland counties. Over the past year Alliance has strengthened its efforts to exceed program goals by adding new employees specifically for the program and securing additional housing inventory to meet demand.

“We are focused on getting as many people into housing as we possibly can,” said Alliance Olmstead Settlement Project manager Larry Swabe. “Our mission in doing this is to make sure that individuals with severe and persistent mental illness have the same opportunities to live a life just like you and I do.”

For the people served by TCLI, the transition from restrictive institutional settings, where life is regulated and residents do very little for themselves, can be transforming. “This program opens a whole new life to these folks – one many of them never dreamed was possible.” said TJ Hayes, an Alliance transition supervisor.

“Going through the process makes me feel a sense of accomplishment. I am proud of myself and there’s still so much more I want do in my life,” said Rakshanda (who asked to be identified by first name only), a community member who transitioned into her own apartment in 2016. “Having this apartment is a major stepping stone.”

Alliance’s TCLI efforts are aligned with the organization’s commitment to housing as a healthcare strategy. “We believe that housing is a platform that improves an individual’s quality of life, allows them to pursue their own goals and dreams, and serves as a foundation for their recovery,” said Ann Oshel, senior vice president of community relations at Alliance.

“On multiple levels, this is the right thing to do for these individuals,” said Alliance CEO Rob Robinson. “We shouldn’t underestimate the value this initiative provides to help us meet our goals as a managed care organization – to tangibly improve the quality of life of the people we serve, and in the process to make more efficient use of the public funds we are entrusted with.”
**Complete Care** is Alliance’s agency-wide initiative to shift how we offer support and care to the individuals we serve toward a population health management approach.

**What is a population health management approach?**
It is a cutting-edge approach built on the principles of population health, or working to improve the health of entire groups of people, or “populations.” The population health concept represents a change in the focus from the individual-level to a focus on addressing a broader range of factors shown to impact the health of different populations.

The goal of population health is to reduce health inequities or disparities among different population groups due to, among other things, the social determinants of health. These are all the factors – social, environmental, cultural and physical – that different populations are born into and grow up and function with throughout their lifetimes, which potentially have a measurable impact on the health of those groups of people.

Social determinants of health include housing, transportation, food security, education, social connections and economic stability.

Recent studies have shown that while clinical care interventions are essential, 80 percent of what determines health outcomes are related to the physical environment, personal behaviors, or socioeconomic factors. So to help people to get better at managing their conditions, we have to support the whole person in multiple aspects of their lives, including stable and safe housing, transportation, nutrition, medical needs and economic stability.

**How does the Complete Care approach work?**
Care Coordinators are using a care management system that incorporates assessment tools to quickly identify individuals who have physical health needs or needs associated with factors such as housing, transportation, and food insecurity.

Interventions are used based on behavioral health, physical health, social determinants, and long-term support needs of the individual with a recovery and self-determination focus.

Care coordination is being restructured to create multidisciplinary care teams, with each team responsible for a population of individuals. Team members bring expertise from pharmacy and nursing, provider services, housing, community systems and resources, and health literacy and engagement. Their job is to support and work closely with providers and community supporters who directly care for and support the individual.

The focus is on engaging members, removing barriers to quality treatment, and supporting providers with data, resource information, and sharing care plans.

**Provider and program outcomes are collected and communicated to providers to create more effective services and supports.**

Care coordination is focused on promoting and enhancing the relationship between individuals and providers through collaboration.

**There are so many people who need help, how does Alliance know where to focus so they can make a difference?**

- Using data analytics, Alliance can proactively identify members’ needs for care coordination and match level of need to the intensity of care coordination and intervention.
- Predictive analytics help us identify individuals within population groups who are at high risk for outcomes we want to avoid – like admission to inpatient psychiatric settings or other out-of-home settings for youth. When we can identify individuals at risk, then we can intervene earlier, potentially preventing these outcomes and improving access to community-based care when it is most likely to be effective.
Alliance grants target social determinants of health

Through special one-time grants, Alliance Behavioral Healthcare has been able support organizations that address the social determinants of health, which are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. Studies have shown that while clinical care interventions are essential, a broad range of social, economic, and environmental factors affect individuals’ opportunities to receive care and engage in healthy behaviors.

One grant recipient, the Lighthouse Foundation of Wake County (LFWC), serves low-income, adult residents who are navigating a significant chronic or mental health crisis. LFWC’s mission is to promote the overall wellness of underserved people by assisting with such things as housing, basic daily needs, transportation, healthcare appointments and the like.

Recipients of LFWC’s assistance include Garfield, a 59-year-old man living with Stage 3 colon cancer. Despite his fragile health condition, Garfield continues to work a full time job to make ends meet. However, his primary medical diagnosis was not the issue that brought him to the Lighthouse Foundation of Wake County.

“I needed glasses real bad and could not see real good,” Garfield said. “This stopped me from driving and getting to work or my appointments. I don’t make much and can’t afford glasses. Lighthouse helped me get an exam and new glasses right away so now I can see and drive again. They were very quick in helping me get an appointment and I am happy my social worker reached out to them for me”.

Another person served by LFWC is Ella, 42, who suffers from brittle diabetes and hypertension. The conditions have created hardships that have had major implications in her daily life and overall wellness. Like Garfield, Ella has received temporary relief and compassionate support from LFWC as she works toward medical stability.

“The Lighthouse Foundation has helped me immensely by covering my doctor appointments at the Open Door Clinic while I am out of work,” Ella said. “I am actively looking for a job, but my diabetes has been out of control and requires me to go back for frequent follow-up appointments to avoid going to the ER. Covering my co-pays helps me see my doctor and get my diabetes back on track.”

The Alliance grant funds support LFWC’s Closing the Gap for the Underserved and Food & Fuel Assistance programs. The Closing the Gap program helps cover co-pays for doctor visits and necessary prescription medications and/or medical supplies for chronically and mentally ill clients. The Food & Fuel Assistance provides LFCW clients with additional food supplements and fuel for transportation to and from medical appointments.

“I am both touched and grateful of this wonderful designation of funds to help out our Food & Fuel and Closing the Gap programs,” said Lighthouse Executive Director Regina Heroux. “It is a pleasure to work with outstanding agencies like Alliance Behavioral Healthcare, who are so committed to the care of those who are sick and less fortunate. Our work is a reflection of great partnerships (which we value and appreciate) that collectively makes an impact in our community.”

“In reflection of the Alliance Complete Care model, Community Relations is thrilled to have an opportunity to support the wonderful work of partners throughout our catchment area that embrace the social determinants of health,” said James Osborn, Alliance’s Director of Community Outreach and Engagement. “The Lighthouse Foundation of Wake County, along with all SDOH funding recipients, inspire us by addressing issues of food security, housing, transportation, and healthcare funding assistance that directly impact and benefit a person’s overall health and wellness.”

Other recipients of Alliance SDOH grants are:

- Alms House
- Bethany United Methodist Church
- Durham County Library
- Fayetteville Urban Ministries
- Fayetteville Urban Ministries
- Inter-Faith-Food Shuttle
- Johnston County Public School
- Raleigh Dream Center
- The NC Agricultural Foundation
- Urban Ministries of Durham
Alliance will partner with the Wake County Sheriff’s Office to give Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to all 520 of its detention officers and nurses.

Alliance’s eight-hour MHFA course teaches a five-step action plan that guides trainees through the process of reaching out and offering appropriate support to a person in need until professional treatment is secured or the crisis resolves. Just as CPR helps people without clinical training assist someone in cardiac arrest, MHFA prepares people to interact with a person experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

The partnership with the Wake County Sheriff’s Office is a continuation of Alliance’s commitment to increase the safety of both citizens and first responders by providing either MHFA or Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. CIT training teaches police and other emergency how to recognize and respond appropriately to individuals in behavioral health crisis so that they may de-escalate dangerous situations and refer individuals, when appropriate, to treatment instead of emergency departments or jail. In 2017, Alliance worked with the Raleigh Police Department to train every employee – officers as well as non-sworn employees – in one of the two trainings.

“As part of our CIT partnerships, which we’ve been doing now for 10 years, our goal has been to get 20 percent of patrol officers in each district and each municipality certified in CIT,” said Ann Oshel, head of Community Relations for Alliance. “We have achieved that goal, including EMS and campus police from our community colleges and universities, bringing a lot of different agencies into the fold of CIT.”

Oshel said that the training is essential in a detention setting, which can be stressful by nature. “If you’re already off your meds, and you’re already pretty agitated and escalated, then it’s just prime time to completely go into crisis. And even if you don’t already have a mental illness, just the nature of being in jail and what you’re being charged with can be enough to bring on some symptoms.”

The training will take place in July and August and will require three Alliance staff members training detention employees four days a week for four weeks.
Talking Points

What is Food Insecurity?

“This quarter, Alliance CARES is focusing activities on food insecurity. What exactly does that mean?

“Food-secure” means that all members of a household can easily get enough healthy and nutritious food to support an active and healthy lifestyle. Food-insecure households often must make tough choices about the amount and quality of food they are able to provide their families, and households with very low food security often miss meals.

★ About 16.5% of people in North Carolina are food insecure. The average in Alliance’s service area of Durham, Cumberland, Johnston and Wake counties is 17.5%.

★ Food insecurity does not affect everyone equally. According to NC Policy Watch:

• Households with children are more likely to have trouble putting enough nutritious food on the table. Nationally, 16.6% of homes with children are food insecure, compared to only 10.9% of homes without children.

• Single-parent households face different rates of food insecurity based on the gender of the parent. 9.4% of households led by single mothers experience very low food security compared to 8.2% of households with single fathers.

★ Food insecurity is often associated with physical health conditions, such as hypertension and diabetes, but it can also impact mental health. Studies have shown a connection between food insecurity a higher risk of depression and suicide.

Poster campaign wins prestigious national award

Alliance employees exemplify the values that drive us to provide to provide outstanding care and value to the people we serve: compassion, innovation, collaboration, integrity, dedication, flexibility, empowerment, commitment, accountability and wellness. Our Powered By People poster campaign, designed to celebrate, motivate and engage staff around our goals, recently won a prestigious gold Aster Award.

The national Aster Awards competition is dedicated to recognizing the most talented healthcare marketing professionals for outstanding excellence in advertising, marketing and communications. We are gratified that this national attention recognizes what we already knew - that Alliance is Powered by People!
May was Mental Health Awareness month and Alliance was abuzz with activities:

- Our Durham office held a “Making a Difference” breakfast recognizing outstanding System of Care partners. Ben Rose, Director of the Durham County Department Of Social Services, gave an address titled “Partnering For Help And Hope,” Alliance Senior Vice President Community Relations Ann Oshel presented Awards, and connected member Vernelle Massey gave closing remarks.

- In Cumberland County, Alliance held the annual “It Takes a Community” luncheon honoring community partners who serve on our care review teams and recognizing our Community Collaborative. The program also featured two youth speakers, one from the Find a Friend program and one from the Adolescent Parenting program, and remarks from Alliance Board Member and Deputy County Manager for Cumberland County Duane Holder and Alliance Board Member and Cumberland County Commissioner Glenn Adams.

- In Wake County, Alliance partnered with Wake System of Care and the Wake County Community Collaborative for Children and Families for the 3rd annual “Mental WELLness Matters” dinner.

- In Johnston County, all four of our System of Care communities came together to present a one day training on the continuing journey of “Raise the Age” in North Carolina. Chief court counselors from Durham, Cumberland, Johnston and Wake counties discussed outcomes and how to collaborate to benefit young people.
Alliance supports i2i Center for Integrative Health

Alliance is proud to be a high-level Champion Supporter of the i2i Center for Integrative Health. The i2i Center is a convener organization for healthcare leaders to work together to solve the most important issues affecting behavioral, intellectual and developmental disabilities and primary healthcare and support service systems within a comprehensive system of whole person care in North Carolina.

Alliance’s support of i2i is aligned with our Complete Care model, which is built on the principles of population health, or working to improve the health of entire groups of people. The model’s priority in achieving the aim of population health is reducing health inequities or disparities among different population groups due to, among other things, the social determinants of health. This is being borne-out in numerous initiatives including Alliance’s rapidly expanding housing program and its innovative work to combat the epidemic of opioid misuse.

“The mission of i2i is in close alignment with Alliance’s vision to be a leader in transforming the delivery of whole person care in North Carolina’s public sector,” said Alliance CEO Rob Robinson. “We welcome the opportunity to come to the table to help ensure that the unique expertise and experience of the LME/MCOs continues to be a strong and viable component of our state’s Medicaid transformation.”

Learn more about i2i at i2icenter.org.

LiveWell Yoga pilot promotes wellness, fitness

The “Live Well” initiative launched a two-month workplace yoga pilot in the Home and Wake offices during April and May. Yoga has physical and mental benefits, and is helpful in releasing tension and increasing strength, flexibility and focus while reducing stress.

Sessions were designed for all skill levels, and attracted many beginners as well as experienced practitioners.

“Yoga is a brand new experience for me,” said Lynn McKoy, a power analyst in the Compliance department. “It has reawakened my energy and is literally helping me physically and emotionally master the art of balance.”

Click to see the CBS17 news story featuring Vaughn Crawford on Facebook.

CBS17 report features Alliance’s Vaughn Crawford

CBS17 reporter Kelly Kennedy interviewed Alliance Director of System Engagement Vaughn Crawford in May about the popular Netflix series “13 Reasons Why.” Wake County Public School System issued a warning to parents about the series, which depicts the fictional suicide of a teen girl.

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide you can call or text Hope Line’s Suicide Hotline at 919-231-4525 or toll free at 877-235-4525.

Click to see Dr. Vera Reinstein’s appearance on In Touch with Durham County on YouTube.

Dr. Vera Reinstein featured on Durham County TV program

Alliance Clinical Pharmacist Dr. Vera Reinstein, was a guest on the April episode of In Touch with Durham County. Dr. Reinstein and Durham County Public Health Medical Director Dr. Arlene Seña discussed efforts by Durham County and Alliance to stem the tide of the opioid epidemic.
Save The Dates
Alliance Community Events

June 2018

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Durham
June 16: Driver Open Street Festival, 10:30 am – 1:30 pm
Driver Street between Taylor and Hart streets. Rain or shine.
For more information visit durhamcommunityengagement.org/driver_open_street_festival

Cumberland
June 22: Customer Service from Emotional Intelligence Perspective, 9 am – 2 pm
Salvation Army, 220 E. Russell St. Fayetteville, NC 28301.

Durham
June 27: Let’s Talk: A Community Conversation with JCPC, 5 – 8 PM,
Hayti Heritage Center, 804 Fayetteville St., Durham, NC 27701.

Wake
June 8: Cross Agency Orientation, 1:30 – 4:30 pm
Featuring the movie Resilience and panel discussion, Five Points Center for Active Adults, 2000 Noble Rd, Raleigh, NC 27608,

Wake
June 9: Guatemala Day Celebration, 3 – 6 pm
Featuring featuring food, music, local artists. Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC, 1924 Capital Blvd. Raleigh, NC 27604

Cumberland
June 15: Human Trafficking Level II Training 5:30 – 7:30 pm
Manna Church, 5117 Cliffdale Fayetteville NC 28314

Cumberland
June 28: Cumberland County Foster Parent Training, 6 – 7:30 pm
5504 McPhail St., Hope Mills, NC

Our schedule of board meetings and provider events can be found online at www.alliancebhc.org/calendar

The 2017 Alliance annual report titled “Inspired people, Innovative Solutions is now available for download. Click here to get yours.
Benefits fairs highlight employee options

Alliance offers many optional health and financial benefits to employees, all of which were highlighted at benefits fairs in the home and Cumberland County offices. The events included informational displays, training sessions on how to register and enroll in through the company’s new benefits portal, raffle prizes and a lecture on occupational sleep awareness.

Stop Hitting Snooze on the Importance of Sleep
It’s likely that over 30% of your workforce is currently affected by poor sleep. So it might not be a surprise to learn that sleep deprived employees are impacting your productivity
Read more at BCBSNC.org.

What is Effective Communication?
Communication is about more than just exchanging information. It’s about understanding the emotion and intentions behind the information.
Effective communication is a two-way street. It’s not only how you convey a message so that it is received and understood by someone in the way you intended, it’s also how you listen to gain the full meaning of what is said and to make the other person feel heard and understood.
Continuous and clear communication allows both employees and management to achieve business strategies. Feedback is critical to improving performance and achieving organizational goals.

Grow your career at Alliance

The Opportunity.
At Alliance Behavioral Healthcare our mission is to improve the health and well-being of the people we serve by ensuring highly effective, community-based support and care. Our work is driven by dedication and an understanding of the importance of community in each of our lives. We actively seek meaningful and diverse partnerships to improve services and systems. Valuing communication and cooperation between team members and departments ensures the delivery of needed services and support.
As we move forward in growth to serve our community, we seek out candidates who are dedicated and aligned with our core values: accountability, integrity, collaboration, compassion, dignity, respect, and innovation.
People who come to work for Alliance become part of an outstanding team of innovative and caring professionals dedicated to the principles of recovery and self-determination, a team committed to enhancing the quality of life for the thousands who benefit from the behavioral health services we manage.
Come join us in our vision to be a service leader and an employer of choice in transforming the delivery of whole person care in the public sector.

Here’s Why.
• Rich benefits (medical, dental, vision, disability, LGERS and 401(k), Competitive vacation package, holiday and sick leave)
• Direct industry experience & presence
• Internal growth & development opportunities/training
• Employee appreciation & recognition
• Opportunity to work with committed professionals

For a complete list of our job opportunities, please visit our careers page at https://www.alliancebhc.org/about-alliance/careers/. Launch our online Candidate Portal by clicking inside the box and search for jobs.
Internal applicants are encouraged to apply via the Intranet under Departments > HR > Working at Alliance-Internal.
Cumberland staff volunteers
The Cumberland Community Office participated in their first Alliance CARES volunteer event for this quarter’s social determinant: food insecurity.
Cumberland site staff assisted with packing the lunches for HOPE Christian Center. Helping Other People Endure (HOPE) is a non-profit outreach organization that aims to eliminate food insecurity for all. Their work includes feeding adults, children, and people experiencing homelessness, and providing employment and community service hours as needed. HOPE currently provides nutritional meals and snacks to the local YMCA, Alpha Academy, and New Life Christian Academy.

Alliance Resources

Alliance InTouch is a newsletter for the employees and community of Alliance Behavioral Healthcare. Please send comments and suggestions about this publication and its contents to Lisa Brockmeier: lbrockmeier@alliancebhc.org.

Discover Recovery University, the online training gateway that allows users to register for all Alliance trainings (online and in-person), including Mental Health First Aid.

The It’s Time to Re-Think campaign aims to debunk the common myths and misconceptions about people with mental illness, substance use disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities that create stigma and keep them from getting the help they need.

Alliance InTouch

Click an Icon to Find Us on Social Media

Alliance

24-Hour Access And Information Line

Never miss an issue! Click here to subscribe to this newsletter.

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