



Project Snapshot

Heartland Health Outreach (HHO) is a Healthcare for the Homeless agency and the leading healthcare provider for the homeless, poorest, and sickest people in Chicago. They provide healthcare services to tenants of Pathways Home where they offer residents a safe environment to receive supportive services, build skills and plan their path to recovery.

Owner, Developer, Property Manager and Service Provider:

Heartland Health Outreach is a member of the Heartland Alliance. Their sister agency, Heartland Housing Inc., developed and manages the building in which Pathways Home is located.

Tenant Profile:

Pathways Home serves people experiencing homelessness who are struggling with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues.

Service Approach:

Pathways Housing services are based on the philosophy of harm reduction, helping participants identify and decrease their high-risk behaviors while increasing healthy behaviors. Abstinence from alcohol and other drugs is not required in order to be eligible for housing and services. Outcomes for residential services confirm their effectiveness: 97 percent of residents adhere to their psychiatric medications and 100 percent of those recently discharged remained housed 60 days later.

Community Highlight Pathways Home Chicago, IL

Located in the Uptown Neighborhood of Chicago, Pathways Home provides supportive housing. While they don't specifically serve an aging population, they serve many aged 50 or older. They have found in working with this population that the foundation of their services (harm reduction, strengths based, diversity, culture and human rights) has remained central, but they have had to add some new areas including end of life care and memory care.

End of Life Care: When working with tenants with terminal illnesses, staff partner with family, friends and their cultural or religious community to ensure they die with loved ones around them. Staff has leveraged Medicaid to get in-home Hospice at Pathways Home. For one tenant, they connected to the Native American community to arrange the culturally appropriate death ritual.

Dementia: Diagnosis can be complicated when working with people with serious mental illness. In one instance, staff had to work for a year to find someone in the Medicaid system that could help them navigate getting a person with no social security number, a false name, and no documentation the care they needed. Medicaid was the only way the individual could access the services as her dementia progressed and she required 24 hour care in a skilled nursing facility. When working with tenants in the early stages of Dementia, they negotiate a contingency plan with the tenant similar to an advanced directive.

Lessons Learned Providing Services to Tenants Aging in Place

- Relationships are the key to success.
- Understand people's preferred method of communication, regardless of age.
- Philosophy of care remains the same, but new services may need to be added to support tenants staying housed.
- Staff needs to understand Medicare and Medicaid and how tenant's insurance will determine their access to services and supports that HHO can't provide.