

Health Screening Day: Improving Healthcare Access for Fort Worth Patients Experiencing Homelessness

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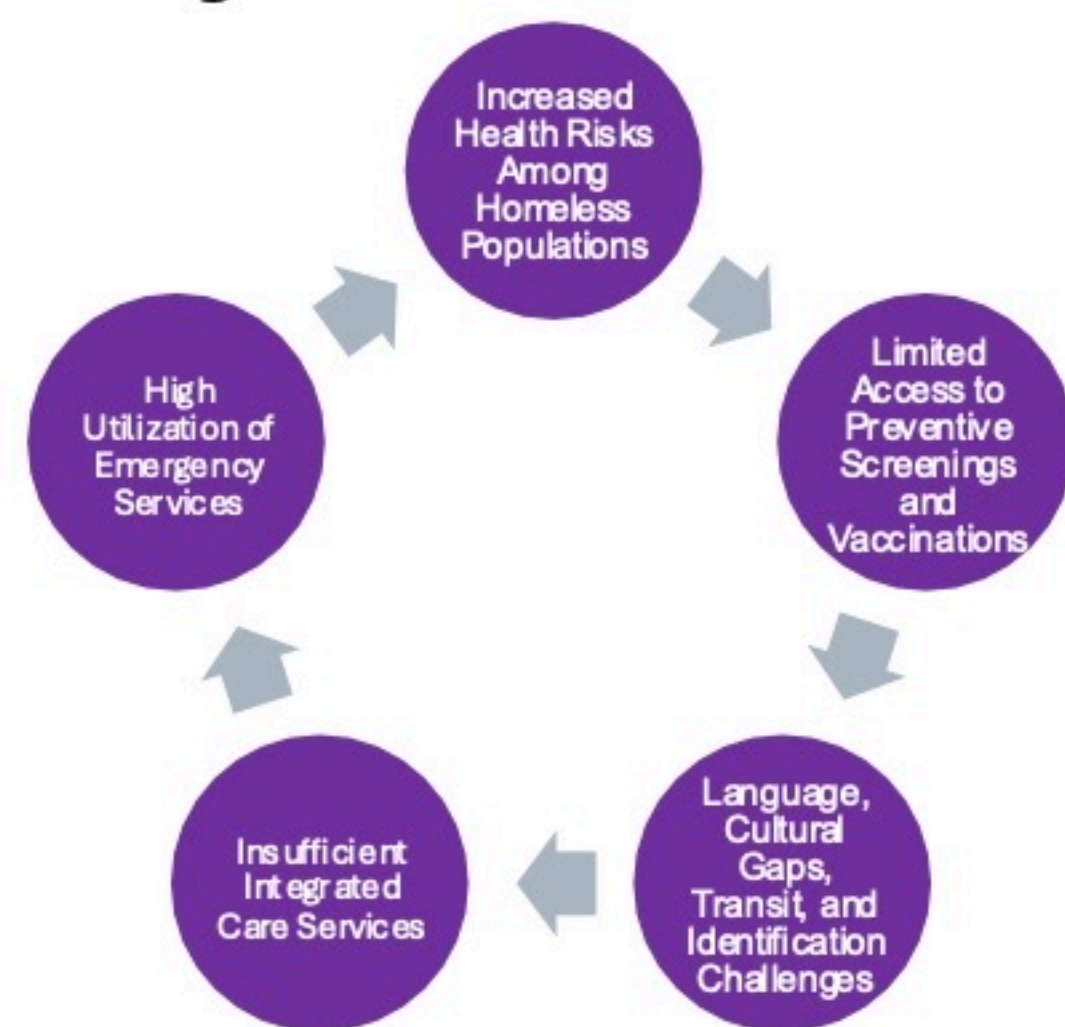
Introduction

Beautiful Feet Clinic, founded by Dr. David Capper, offers free medical, dental, and holistic care to individuals experiencing homelessness in Southside Fort Worth. Many patients face barriers to preventive care, prioritizing basic survival over health maintenance. Consequently, they often experience delayed diagnoses and poor management of chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and cancer.

Our initiative aims to provide flu vaccinations, health screenings, and health education to address these challenges.

Furthermore, we recognize the language barriers that exist in the clinic. To improve access and communication for Spanish-speaking patients, we implemented Spanish-language support through translated forms and student interpreters.

Challenges to Homeless Healthcare



Barriers to Preventive Care

Health Risks Among Homeless Populations

- Higher rates of vaccine-preventable diseases due to lower vaccination coverage
- 2 to 4 times more likely to have hypertension and cardiovascular conditions
- Increased likelihood of poorly managed diabetes compared to housed individuals



Barriers to Preventive Care

- Limited access to vaccinations, blood pressure and cholesterol screenings.
- Challenges in making healthy dietary choices and accessing essential medications like insulin.
- Preventive care often deprioritized due to immediate survival needs.



Communication & Access Barriers

- Language differences and cultural misunderstandings hinder effective communication, especially for non-English-speaking patients.
- Lack of transportation and ID limits access to consistent care.
- These barriers delay care and worsen health outcomes.



High Utilization of Emergency Services

- Lack of regular preventive care leads many homeless individuals to rely on emergency departments.
- Conditions treated in the ER could often be managed or prevented with earlier intervention.
- This pattern strains hospital resources.

Project Description

To address these needs, we collaborated to launch the following initiatives:

(1) Community Health Screening Day (March 29, 2025):

- Administered flu vaccinations
- Provided basic health screenings, including blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol, hearing and vision checks
- Delivered nutrition education and guidance on self-breast and skin cancer exams using accessible, easy-to-understand pamphlets tailored to patients' available resources
- Partnered with My Health My Resources of Tarrant County to offer harm reduction resources and referrals to mental health, medical, and community services.

(2) Language Accessibility Initiative:

- Translated intake forms into Spanish
- Created a phone-based list of Spanish-speaking medical students for interpretation assistance
- Provided nutrition and self-cancer screening materials in Spanish for the unhoused population
- Improved access and communication for non-English-speaking patients

Conclusion

- This initiative promotes early detection, empowers patients with preventive knowledge, and strengthens community-based, student-led healthcare outreach.

Accomplishments

- 22 flu shots administered to reduce risk of seasonal illness
- 55 patients received free health screenings and education
- Improved nutrition literacy through tailored health education pamphlets
- Strengthened student involvement in community-based, culturally responsive care
- Enhanced communication with Spanish-speaking patients through translation and interpretation services

Future Directions

- Continue hosting quarterly health outreach events
- Partner with Moncrief Cancer Institute to offer mobile cancer screenings in summer 2025
- Expand educational materials on nutrition, chronic diseases, and cancer prevention
- Formalize partnerships with MHMR and Moncrief
- Recruit and train more bilingual student volunteers
- Create a sustainable pipeline for student-clinic collaborations

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