



# National Health Center Week

## I Value My Community Health Center Because:



August 4 -10 is National Health Center Week (NHCW), a time to recognize and celebrate the tremendous contribution community health centers make in delivering health care services to people most in need. This includes about 295 federally qualified health center providers delivering services to over 890,00 unstably housed consumers annually.

In New York City, Care for the Homeless (CFH) is the oldest and largest provider of health care services exclusively to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Since 1985, CFH has provided high-quality, client-centered health care services to our city's most vulnerable population, regardless of insurance coverage, ability to pay or immigration status. Today our 24 Federally Qualified and state licensed Health Centers in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens serve over 7,000 individuals – 85% of them with incomes below the poverty threshold - in about 36,000 medical encounters annually.

We know homeless is both a cause and an aggravating factor for many diseases and medical and mental conditions. The accompanying exposure to weather and violence, the risk of communicable diseases and the stress of homelessness are all barriers to good health.

We believe health care is a basic human right and we are dedicated to providing high-quality medical and mental health care. During NHCW we recognize and celebrate the life-changing, and sometimes life-saving, work our physicians, nurse practitioners, medical assistants, social workers, and health educators do every day. We also advocate for continued support from Congress for the Community Health Center Fund that is set to expire on September 30th. Without the funding, the incredible work that our services providers do would not be possible. To find out how you can help please visit the Health Center Advocacy Network [here](#).

## “Homelessness Started in 2016”

In recent interviews, President Trump discusses homelessness as a phenomenon that started a mere two years ago in major metropolitan areas. These types of misinformed and inaccurate statements are common in the current administration. As advocates, we must work to inform the public on the real causes of homelessness to avoid stigmatizing individuals and families experiencing homelessness due to factors far beyond their control.

Homelessness is a nationwide problem that is caused by systemic factors such as the ever-decreasing availability of truly affordable housing, stagnant wages, discrimination, poverty system

failures and much more. It did not suddenly appear, rather it has been a growing concern and will continue to increase if we do not pursue better policies to prevent and end it.



Source: <https://aapci.org/site/homeless-stats-in-america/>

## “Homelessness started in 2016” cont`d ...

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) releases a report every year that highlights barriers to reducing homelessness, [Out of Reach \(2019\)](#) and [The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes 2019](#). The reports examine the availability of affordable homes in America for our nation’s extremely low-income (ELI) renters and the reality of affording rent at current wages.

In *The Gap*, the supply of affordable homes is shown to be completely inadequate to meet the needs of ELI citizens whose household incomes are at or below the poverty guideline or 30% of their area median income (\$32,010 for a family of four). No state or major metropolitan area is found to have an adequate supply of affordable housing. For example, New York state only has 37 affordable and available rental homes per 100 ELI renter households.

*Out of Reach* focuses on the hourly wage a worker employed full time and their ability to rent a modest home without spending more than 30% of income on housing at fair market rent. In New York City a household must earn \$30.76 an hour to afford a 2-bedroom apartment or work 111 hours a week at minimum wage. These reports show that the availability and affordability of homes nationwide is a growing problem, and one of the biggest drivers of homelessness.

There are no easy answers to the problems of homelessness, but adequate and affordable housing is a vital step towards solving the problem. Stigmatizing vulnerable people and offering nothing in the way of viable solutions is a dangerous tactic that fuels misinformation and can have long term consequences on the small victories homeless advocates have sustained through the years. In NYC we will continue advocating for the House Our Future New York campaign asking Mayor Bill de Blasio to increase the availability of affordable housing units for people experiencing homelessness to 30,000, with 24,000 of those being new construction. If we want to make a decisive impact on the rising numbers of homelessness, truly affordable housing units are an integral part of that equation.

## The Trauma of Homelessness



Photo Credit: Alonzo Maciel

Join Care For the Homeless as we kick off our Policy Seminar Series on **Tuesday, October 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at 26 Federal Plaza, 6th floor Conference Room Center**. The topic will be the “Trauma of Homelessness”. The panel will be moderated by CFH Executive Director, George Nashak. The panelists are **Michael Austin** (CFH Client Advocate), **Scott Auwarter** (BronxWorks Assistant Executive Director), **Dr. Andrea Littleton** (BronxWorks Medical Director and CFH Physician), **Dr. Regina Olatin** (CFH Chief Medical Officer), and **Frances Pierre** (Suffolk County Department of Social Services Commissioner).

There is comprehensive research and data available that explains the systemic causes of homelessness, which helps inform policies

aimed at mitigating its effects. Less explored are the long-term consequences that the trauma of experiencing homelessness has on individuals, on families and on society. In this seminar we want to bring together a diverse panel to discuss how current programs/services look to address the effects of trauma and identify any service gaps in NYC. Join us at this Seminar to contribute to the conversation about the “trauma of homelessness” to develop new ideas that could improve outcomes for New Yorkers experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. You can register [here](#).

## The Busy Advocate’s August Calendar

**Sun. – Sat., Aug. 4th - 10th, National Community Health Center Week**, recognizing the vital work healthcare providers, like those at Care for the Homeless, do every day! Find more information [here](#).

**Wed., Aug. 7th, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., CFH Voter Registration Drive at Broadway Presbyterian**, 601 W 114th St, New York, NY 10025.

**Tues., Aug. 13th, All Day, Health Care for the Homeless Day**, this day celebrates health centers that work to meet the basic health care needs of people without homes, eliminate health disparities, and end homelessness. Care for the Homeless and the NYC Providers of Health Care for the Homeless will honor a number of Health Care Heroes, including CFH’s Dentist Dr. Mark Makiling, and the work our health care providers do everyday.

**Wed., Aug. 14th, 1:30 p.m., NY City Council Meeting**, City Hall Council Chambers, New York, NY, 10007.

**Wed., Aug. 28th, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m., CFH Consumer Advisory Board Annual Picnic**, Riverbank State Park.