

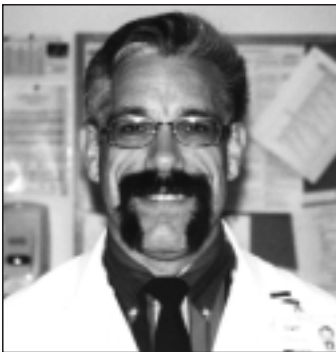
HEALING HANDS



Vol. 6, No. 7 ■ December 2002

The HCH Clinicians' Network: Eight Years and Counting

In May 1994, a dedicated group of clinicians from multiple disciplines joined hands to improve health care for homeless people, lend professional support to each other, and promote public policies to ameliorate and end homelessness. The Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) Clinicians' Network resulted from this collaborative effort. At year's end, we pause to take stock of the Network's growth since then, its recent accomplishments, and its promise for the future.



Dear Members:

It is an honor and a privilege to serve as Chairperson of the HCH Clinicians' Network, a dynamic group of practitioners who provide quality health care to America's most vulnerable populations. Individually and collectively, we have accomplished much in the last eight years, and have many exciting plans for 2003.

When I began providing health care to homeless people 17 years ago, there was no one to answer questions, no professional support group for this special work. Eventually, a colleague put me in touch with the Network, where I found hundreds of other clinicians who understand the challenges I face. Now I find myself leading this remarkable group, which is one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

The energy and creativity of our members and their governing body, the Steering Committee, have stimulated a flow of ideas so productive that the Bureau of Primary Health Care sends one of its program directors to each of our meetings. Why? Because the BPHC understands that frontline clinicians know the issues and have practical solutions to a myriad of challenges.

Please help us continue to meet the needs of our clients and peers in homeless health care by getting involved with the HCH Clinicians' Network. As members, keep your Steering Committee informed about your thoughts and concerns. Let us continue to support each other as we strive to combat homelessness!

Sincerely,

Aaron J. Strehlow, PhD, RN
Family and Neuropsychiatric Nurse Practitioner

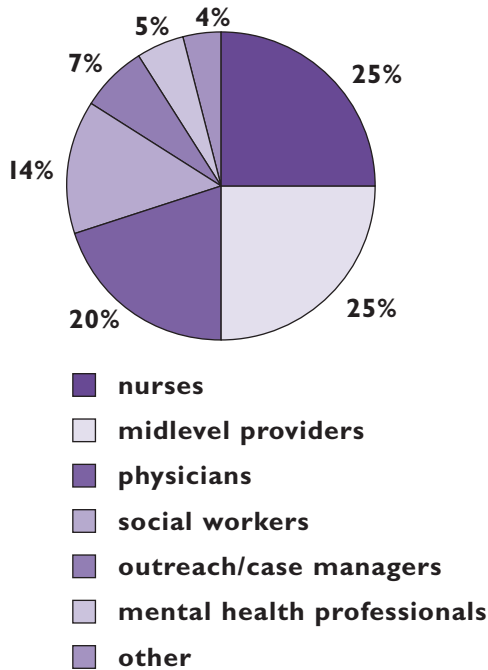
Growing numbers of homeless people and shifting political, social and financial priorities at all levels of government present special challenges and opportunities for HCH clinicians in FY 2003. A new federal initiative to end chronic homelessness through targeted and mainstream services once again places homeless health care higher on the public agenda. For the foreseeable future, HCH clinicians will continue to provide the "safety net for the safety net" in the United States. Although this may seem a daunting task from the perspective of individual practitioners, it becomes more manageable when undertaken with the support of diverse professionals nationwide, doing similar work. In this challenging environment, the HCH Clinicians' Network provides such support.

NETWORK GOALS

- Enhance the quality of health care for homeless people;
- Promote clinical research related to homeless health care;
- Educate others about the causes and consequences of homelessness;
- Advocate for policies and practices to ameliorate and end homelessness;
- Collaborate with other organizations working with homeless people.

MEMBERSHIP Network members now serve homeless individuals in all 50 States plus Canada and Ireland. Membership is open to all clinicians, broadly defined, who provide direct, health-related services to homeless people. Current members include nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and physicians; social workers, outreach workers and case managers; substance abuse counselors and mental health professionals; pharmacists, dentists, health educators and students in these various professions. Network members are automatically members of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, the Network's umbrella organization, and are eligible to serve on Council and Network committees.

HCH Clinicians' Network Members, 2002



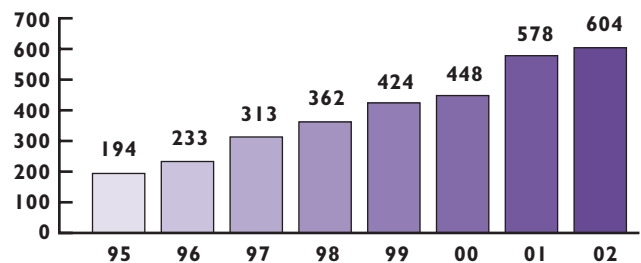
The Network's membership has grown from 194 in 1995 to over 600 in 2002. The Steering Committee, the organization's governing body, has set a goal of 750 members by 2005. Members meet annually in conjunction with the National Health Care for the Homeless Conference, sponsored by the Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC). The next conference will be held May 29–31, 2003, at the Hyatt Regency Washington, near Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

AWARDS Each year, the Network honors a clinician who has made a major contribution to ending homelessness with its Award for Outstanding Service — the only national recognition for clinicians

working in health care for the homeless, which comes with an honorarium. Any Network member may nominate a colleague for this award; the individual must have worked with homeless people for at least three years. Submissions must include a brief description of the nominee's work and a letter of support from a client, and should emphasize the clinician's perseverance, tenacity, creativity and lasting impact on the health and quality of life of homeless people.

The Call for Nominations goes out in January, the winner is determined in March, and the Award is presented during the Network's annual membership meeting. For more information about the 2003 awards program or to submit a nomination, visit the Network's website at www.nhchc.org/Network/aboutnetwork.htm or contact **Brenda Proffitt**, Director, at bproffitt@nhchc.org or 505 872-1151. The 2003 deadline for nominations is March 15.

Network Membership Growth: 1995-2002



FUNDING A cooperative agreement between the BPHC and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council provides primary financial support for Network activities. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the HIV/AIDS Bureau, and membership dues provide additional support. ■

Network Membership: What Are the Benefits?

Benefits accruing to Network members include opportunities for continuing education with HCH clinicians from many disciplines and jurisdictions, communication with peers, involvement in quality improvement initiatives, research and advocacy.

CONTINUING EDUCATION Each year, the Network's Education Committee plans and oversees an orientation for HCH project staff, volunteers and board/advisory committee members new to homeless health care, known as **HCH 101**. Offered nationally and regionally, this workshop provides a comprehensive overview of the causes of homeless-

ness and the HCH philosophy of care. About 200 clinicians attended the day-long HCH 101 sessions prior to the National HCH Conference in June 2002, according to training specialist **Jen Holzwarth**, MPH. A full-day pre-conference institute will again be held in May 2003. Persons wishing to attend may register for HCH 101 and the National HCH Conference at the same time.

The morning plenary session will focus on HCH program history, the realities of homelessness in the United States and service delivery models, among other topics. Afternoon sessions will feature separate workshops for

clinicians, advocates and administrators. The curriculum includes case studies illustrating typical HCH challenges and small-group problem-solving activities on such topics as empowering clients, preventing burn-out, and effective advocacy techniques. Abbreviated, 90-minute versions of these workshops are planned for three regional HCH and primary care conferences in 2003.

"Train the Trainer" sessions and outreach workshops conducted by clinician specialist **Ken Kraybill**, MSW, are available for HCH outreach workers at selected project sites and at regional and national conferences through-

out the year. Topics include the purpose and principles of outreach, "nuts and bolts" of the work, the relational and engagement model, engagement and retention strategies, enhancing motivation, cultural competence, worker safety, personal and organizational wellness, ethical guidelines, advocacy, working in the community and more. Video presentations, reader's theater, role-playing and small group discussions are among the creative techniques employed in these highly interactive training sessions.

Training online Additional resources are available on our website in the Training and Education section (www.nhchc.org/Training) where publications, videos and other materials produced by the Council and the Network can be ordered or downloaded. These include a new Curriculum for Training HCH Outreach Workers (www.nhchc.org/Curriculum/index.htm).

Click on "Homelessness Links" from our home page or go directly to the HCH Information Resource Center's website (www.hchirc.bphc.hrsa.gov) to find more educational resources — a video library, clinical practice tools, and a comprehensive database of annotated bibliographies.

COMMUNICATION The Network communicates regularly with its members through the following print and electronic media:

- **Membership Directory:** enables members to locate peers quickly by professional discipline or state; distributed annually.
- **Healing Hands:** produced bimonthly by health writer **Kenneth Townsend**, MDiv, and editor **Pat Post**, MPA, in consultation with the Network's Communications Committee. To read back issues, go to: www.nhchc.org/Network/HealingHands/index.htm.
- **HCH Research Update:** recent research abstracts related to homelessness, compiled quarterly since April 2000 by research specialist **Suzanne Zenger**, MA; archived at: www.nhchc.org/Research/ResearchUpdates/index.htm.
- **Healing Kids:** an electronic news bulletin devoted to issues related to homeless children and youth (www.nhchc.org/Pediatrics/index.htm).
These electronic newsletters are available to members with an e-mail address. To subscribe to either or both, contact Network

secretary **Pat Petty** at: network@nhchc.org.

- **E-Newsletter:** an e-mail forum for members wishing to pose questions to other HCH clinicians which reaches more than 80 percent of the membership. Send questions to the editor (bproffitt@nhchc.org) with your e-mail address and telephone number to receive responses from other clinicians.
- **Interactive website:** The Network shares a website with the National Health Care for the Homeless Council (www.nhchc.org). Current information about Network activities, publications and links to other clinical information are regularly updated and archived in the Clinical Resources section (www.nhchc.org/Network).

HOW TO ASK THE EXPERT

1. Go to the Network's homepage at www.nhchc.org and click on the icon for "Ask the Expert," which takes you to that site; OR
Go there directly by typing www.nhchc.org/Publication/AskTheExpert.htm in your browser window.
2. Scroll down the page and read the question and answer posted.
3. To ask a new question, click on the picture of the magnifying glass at the top of the page; an email form will pop up automatically. Send your query to network@nhchc.org.

A new interactive section of the website, **Ask the Expert**, features clinical topics covered in recent issues of *Healing Hands* and adapted clinical practice guidelines for HCH providers. Experienced HCH clinicians selected by the Communications Committee will answer questions submitted on six topics each year. (Volunteers are encouraged!) New queries will be posted online weekly, and topics archived for quick reference. The initial installment features questions and answers on the care and management of diabetes mellitus in homeless patients. Our expert in homeless health care is **Theresa Brehove**, MD, a family practice physician at the Venice Family Clinic in California. Future topics will include physical and cogni-

tive disabilities, pediatric care and HIV/AIDS.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT The HCH Clinicians' Network is one of three clinical networks serving as national partners in the **Health Disparities Collaboratives**. The goal of this HRSA initiative is to eliminate health disparities and improve functional and clinical outcomes for minorities and people living in poverty, who are at much higher risk for chronic disease and death than other Americans.

All HCH projects are urged to participate in the Collaboratives, which have focused thus far on improving treatment and self-management of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, asthma and depression. (See the October 2002 issue of *Healing Hands* for more details: www.nhchc.org/Network/HealingHands/2002/September2000HealingHands.pdf.)

HCH Collaboratives Coordinator **Laura Gillis**, MS, RN, encourages all health centers to identify and track their homeless clients using a free electronic registry provided to Collaboratives participants. The hope is that the registry will enable clinicians to monitor health outcomes and demonstrate quality improvements that result from changes in health care delivery.

Adapted Clinical Guidelines: HCH clinicians routinely adapt their medical practices to improve health outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness. Standard clinical practice guidelines often fail to take into account conditions associated with homelessness that may affect the patient's ability to adhere to a plan of care. Recognizing this discrepancy, the Network Steering Committee has made the adaptation of clinical practice guidelines for homeless patients one of its top priorities.

In 2002, the Network published adapted clinical guidelines for homeless patients with diabetes (www.nhchc.org/Publications/clinical_guidelines_dm.pdf). These recommendations were developed by a national group of experienced HCH clinicians including Network members. The Network will publish five additional sets of adapted clinical guidelines in 2003 on asthma, chlamydial and gonococcal infections, otitis media, reproductive health care, and HIV/AIDS.

RESEARCH Under the guidance of research specialist **Suzanne Zenger**, MA, and the Research Coordinating Committee (RCC), Network members have the opportunity to participate in clinical research. Current projects include:

- **Determining the prevalence of hepatitis C among HCH clients:** In partnership with researchers at UCLA and the Public Health Institute in Berkeley, CA, HCH project sites are identifying predictors of HCV infection, and assessing current practices of HCH medical providers and treatment utilization by homeless clients with hepatitis B or C.
- **Social Supports for Homeless Mothers:** Qualitative research for this project was completed in March by the National Center on Family Homelessness. A Network task force helped to coordinate this study. Results will be published in 2003.

- **Substance Abuse Treatment Best Practices:** The Translating Research Into Practice (TRIP) subcommittee charged staff members **Zenger**, **Kraybill** and **Townsend** with identifying and describing principles and practices that make substance abuse treatment effective in homeless health care. Case studies of six model HCH substance abuse treatment programs will be included in a monograph on that topic, to be published this spring. This project is based on a review of the literature on homelessness and substance abuse, completed in 2002 by Zenger in collaboration with the TRIP Subcommittee. The literature review is available at: www.nhchc.org/Publications/SubstanceAbuseTreatmentLitReview.pdf.

ADVOCACY Clinicians make powerful and persuasive advocates for their clients, locally

and nationally. Network members have the opportunity to participate in drafting and reviewing policy statements developed by the National Council's Policy and Medicaid Reform Committees. (Our 2002 policy positions are posted at www.nhchc.org/Advocacy/Policy.)

HOW TO JOIN Joining the HCH Clinicians' Network is as easy as 1 – 2 – 3:

- 1) Fill out a membership application form. Request one from Network secretary **Pat Petty** (network@nhchc.org; 615 226-2292), or print one out from the Network website (www.nhchc.org/Network/network_join.htm), or use the form in the Membership Directory.
- 2) Mail the completed application form to: HCH Clinicians' Network, P.O. Box 60427, Nashville TN 37206-0427.
- 3) Remember to enclose your annual membership dues: \$25 for practicing clinicians, \$15 for students. ■

Network Activities: How You Can Participate

Serving on a committee, work group or task force provides opportunities to learn and grow, network with others, shape the organization's direction, and respond to other members' needs. Committee work is almost exclusively accomplished via teleconference and e-mail. Following is a list of committees, their leadership and activities. The Network is always looking for help with committee projects. To explore current opportunities for participation, call **Brenda Proffitt** at 505 872-1151.

STEERING COMMITTEE: *Aaron Strehlow, Chair* The Network's governing body, the Steering Committee, determines strategic directions, establishes policy and oversees major projects. During the last strategic planning session, the Committee recognized the need to adapt established clinical practice guidelines for the HCH practice setting. The Committee helped secure funding to launch this project, and most of its work since July 2002 has focused on developing these guidelines.

Each Steering Committee member must actively participate in at least one working committee and attend three meetings annually. The Nominating Committee selects Steering Committee members from the membership, considering the organization's diversity and long-term needs. During its annual meeting, the membership elects Steering Committee members, who are eligible to serve two, three-year terms, and the Steering Committee elects officers — a chair, chair-elect, secretary and treasurer. Besides serving on the Steering Committee, the chair and chair-elect represent the Network on the National Council's Board of Directors.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: *Aaron Strehlow, Chair; Susan Kline, Chair-elect* Standing and working committees have representation on

2002-03 NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Aaron Strehlow, PhD, RN, FNP-C, Chair, Los Angeles, CA: astrehlo@ucla.edu
Susan Kline, MN, PNP, ARNP, Chair-elect, Seattle, WA: susan.kline@metrokc.gov
Sharon Brammer, FNP, HE, Secretary, Mobile, AL: sbrammer@mobilecan.org
Betty Schulz, CPNP, RN, Treasurer, Baltimore, MD: bschulz@hcmt.com
Peter Sherman, MD, 2001 Chair, New York, NY: ps Sherman@montefiore.org
Edward Bonin, MN, FNP-C, RN, New Orleans, LA: ebonin@tulane.edu
Abby Hale, PA-C, Burlington, VT: ahale@chcb.org
Lorna Hines, CMA, Des Moines, IA: lhines@phcinc.net
Mary Ann Kopydlowski, BSN, RN, Boston, MA: mkopydlowski@jgc.org
Mike Misgen, MA, LPC, Denver, CO: mmisgen@coloradocoalition.org
Maria Elisa Obias, MSN, CNS, RN, Cleveland, OH: medical@carealliance.org
Jeffrey Olivet, MA, Albuquerque, NM: jeffreyo@sjhs.org
Adele O'Sullivan, MD, Phoenix, AZ: adeleosullivan@mail.maricopa.gov
Mark Rabiner, MD, New York, NY: apemper@nyc.rr.com
Christine Reller, MSN, RN, Minneapolis, MN: christine.reller@co.hennepin.mn.us
Jeff Yungman, MSW, MPH, Charleston, SC: jjungman@crisis-ministries.org

the Executive Committee, which acts on behalf of the Steering Committee when it is not in session. Its primary responsibility is to provide assistance with decision-making by reviewing issues proposed for Steering Committee consideration and making recommendations to focus attention on issues critical to the Network's strategic goals and mission. The Executive Committee is comprised of the four elected officers and three additional members appointed by the Chair. The committee is also responsible for fiscal planning and oversight, and recently developed a plan and guidelines for Network expenditures.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: *Peter Sherman, Chair; Edward Bonin, Co-Chair* This standing committee fills Steering Committee vacancies and works to ensure that the governing body is representative of the Network membership. The Nominating Committee hosts an orientation for new Network leaders and prepares the slate of officers to be elected at the annual Steering Committee meeting. During the past six months, this committee's work has focused on developing position descriptions for Network officers. In January 2003, members will receive a call for nominations of new Steering Committee members.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE: *Adele O'Sullivan, Chair; Abby Hale, Co-Chair* To facilitate communication among Network members and others involved in homeless health care, this committee:

- identifies issues of interest/concern to HCH clinicians and selects topics covered in *Healing Hands*;
- contributes information for *Opening Doors*, the BPHC newsletter for HCH grantees; and
- monitors the Council/Network website to assure its value and relevance to HCH clinicians.

The committee contributed to seven issues of *Healing Hands* in 2002: on cultural competence, clinician resiliency, electronic information systems, Health Disparities Collaboratives, transgender health, physical impairments, and the Network. Upcoming issues will focus on outreach and case management for homeless people with cognitive impairments (February), homeless children and youth (April), and service gaps in homeless health care (June). Readers are invited to e-mail letters to the editor at network@nhhc.org. Recently the committee developed the Ask the Expert feature on the website.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: *Chris Reller, Chair; Eddie Bonin, Co-Chair* In 2002, the Education Committee:

- revised all-staff and clinical sessions of HCH 101 to include workshops on pediatric and adolescent health issues;
- developed workshops on innovative approaches to outreach and engagement, harm reduction and motivational interviewing, clinical issues for homeless children ages 0–4, practical and ethical dilemmas in outreach, and PTSD screening and treatment;
- sponsored four clinical round table discussion groups at the National HCH Conference on adolescent health, pediatric health, outreach and networking for new HCH clinicians;
- proposed two cultural competence projects: a workshop on improving interpretation skills of HCH staff and a three-hour cultural competence workshop focused on Spanish speakers; and
- prepared workshop descriptions on topics planned for future HCH conferences, including clinical guidelines on asthma and STDs, and case management for pregnant women with addictions.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: *Mary Ann Kopydlowski, Chair; Sharon Brammer Co-Chair* This committee works to recruit and retain Network members by creating a sense of community and a “professional home” for those working in health care for the homeless. The committee manages the Network awards program, plans the annual membership meeting, and generates revenue by selling consumer art-

work and items with the Network logo. In 2002, the committee conducted a member satisfaction survey and focused its new member campaign on HCH grantees without a Network member on their staff. This fall and winter, the committee sent representatives to six state and regional meetings in an effort to increase awareness of the Network and its activities.

HEALTH DISPARITIES COLLABORATIVES WORK GROUP: *Mary Jo Bloominger, PA-C, Community Health Care, Inc., Davenport IA (Midwest representative); Paula Gonzalez, MSN, CRNP, Birmingham Health Care for the Homeless Coalition, Inc., Birmingham AL (Southeast); Diana Hobden, MS, RNPP, RN-C, Thundermist Health Associates, Inc., Woonsocket RI (Northeast); Lisa Abbott, MS, APRN-RX, Kalihi-Palama HCH, Honolulu, HI (Pacific West); Darcie Meierbachtol, MS, ANP, FNP, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Denver CO (West Central)*

These clinicians provide services to homeless clients and are actively involved in the Health Disparities Collaboratives. Their role is to share their knowledge and expertise as Health Care for the Homeless providers with other clinicians serving on the Collaboratives' Cluster Steering Committees. The Network convened this work group to help assure that the Collaboratives address the special needs of homeless people. To learn more about the role of the Network as a national partner in the Collaboratives, visit www.nhhc.org/Collaboratives.

RESEARCH COORDINATING COMMITTEE (RCC): *Susan Kline, Chair; Elizabeth Marlow, Translating Research into Practice (TRIP) Subcommittee Chair; Karen Rotondo, Social Supports Project Task Force Chair; Aaron Strehlow, Hepatitis C Project Task Force Chair*

In addition to overseeing all research activities, this year the committee:

- designed a workshop on opiate dependency and produced and distributed a brochure on planning poster sessions for the National HCH Conference;
- distributed *HCH Research Updates* and conducted a survey on the publication's effectiveness; and
- served as *ad hoc* consultants to the BPHC's Data Work Group.

For a summary of current research studies, see page 4 and visit www.nhhc.org/Research. The RCC is presently developing a homelessness and health care research agenda.

PEDIATRIC WORK GROUP: *Betty Schulz, Chair; Peter Sherman, Co-Chair* This work group was established two years ago to improve the health and lives of children and adolescents experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Earlier this year, the group:

- collaborated with Catherine Karr, MD, on “Homeless Children: What Every Provider Should Know,” a PowerPoint presentation that is available online at www.nhhc.org/Children;
- developed a listserv to improve communications among clinicians interested in homeless children and youth; and
- secured funding to develop an intensive pediatric mini-track for the 2003 National HCH Conference.

Since then, the workgroup has developed this pediatric mini-track for the HCH Conference in collaboration with the Education Committee. Their intent is to educate clinicians about the health

care needs of children and adolescents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and to promote an interdisciplinary approach to care. The group will collaborate with the Communications Committee in planning a spring issue of *Healing Hands* that will reflect some of the topics discussed in these workshops.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS ON COUNCIL COMMITTEES:

Finance and Personnel Committee – *Betty Schulz*
 Membership Committee – *Sharon Brammer*
 Planning Committee – *Peter Sherman*
 Policy Committee – *Mary Ann Kopydlowski, Betty Schulz*
 Research Coordinating Committee – *Susan Kline, Elizabeth Marlow, Karen Rotondo, Aaron Strehlow* ■

STAFF INVOLVED IN NETWORK ACTIVITIES

Brenda Proffitt, MHA, Network Director – coordinates Network activities; primarily responsible for member recruitment and retention, leadership development; staffs Pediatric Work Group: 505 872-1151; bproffitt@nhchc.org

Laura Gillis, MS, RN, Collaboratives Coordinator – provides technical assistance to HCH projects that participate in Health Disparities Collaboratives sponsored by the BPHC/HRSA: 410 426-2475; lgillis@nhchc.org

Jen Holzwarth, MPH, Training Specialist – coordinates planning for HCH 101 and particular National HCH Conference workshops, and development of training materials for direct service providers; staffs Education Committee: 505 872-1141; jholzwarth@nhchc.org

Ken Kraybill, MSW, Clinician Specialist – conducts training for outreach workers using a curriculum he developed; facilitates workshops and works on development of “best practices for homeless health care”: 206 296-4493; kkraybill@nhchc.org

Al Lucero, Information Specialist – designed and maintains the

Council/Network website and a Respite Care database for evaluation of the HCH Respite Pilot Project: 505 242-4253; alucero@nhchc.org

Pat Petty, Secretary – provides operations support and maintains Network databases; distributes *Healing Hands*; contact for Network applications and information: 615 226-2292; network@nhchc.org

Pat Post, MPA, Communications Manager/Policy Analyst – edits *Healing Hands*, adapted clinical practice guidelines and other publications; writes clinical articles and policy papers; staffs Communications Committee: 615 226-2292; ppost@nhchc.org

Kenneth Townsend, MDiv, Health Writer – principal writer for *Healing Hands* and other Network-related publications including a monograph on Native Americans and Homelessness, to be published in 2003: 615 226-2292; ktownsend@nhchc.org

Suzanne Zerger, MA, Research Specialist – coordinates Network research activities; staffs Research Coordinating Committee, TRIP subcommittee, and Hepatitis C and Social Supports project task forces: 505 281-2770; szerger@nhchc.org

Communications Committee

Adele O'Sullivan, MD (Chair); Judith Allen, DMD; Jan Caughlan, LCSW-C; Lisa Cunningham Roberts, MA, NCC; Abby Hale, PA-C; Lorna Hines, CMA; Maggie Hobbs, MSW; Karen Holman, MD, MPH; Scott Orman; Pat Post, MPA (Editor); Kenneth Townsend, MDiv (Health Writer)

Healing Hands is a publication of Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians' Network, National Health Care for the Homeless Council.
 P.O. Box 60427, Nashville, Tennessee 37206-0427 ~ For membership information, call (615) 226-2292 or visit www.nhchc.org.



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