

## **Executive Summary**

The city of Columbus, Ohio, has seen an upsurge of immigrants. Columbus is currently home to the second largest Somalia refugee population in the United States and one of the fastest growing populations of Hispanics. Since 1886, Mount Carmel Hospital has been improving the health of Central Ohioans through innovative programs designed specifically to help the poor and underserved. One of these programs started in 1984 by the Sisters of the Holy Cross is the Community Outreach Program. The mission of this program is to provide free health care to those who are traditionally underserved. The program receives funding from the hospital and foundation supported grants, as well as, private donations. Recent immigrants have had difficulty traveling to the hospital, so the Community Outreach Program learned of the many apartment complexes housing the refugees and immigrants by providing their summer “door to door” immunization project throughout Columbus. Learning of the many cultural barriers, including language and transportation, the Outreach program included several of these sites for their Mobile Medical Coach program. The mobile care locations include shelters, rest homes, community centers, and neighborhoods where specific ethnic groups are prevalent. Various services are provided on the mobile coach, including medical care by physicians, nurses, and other medical staff, patient advocacy, and assistance from health caseworkers to help them access medical and social services available to each of them.

Organization Size: 1,000 beds

## **Program/Initiative Description**

Mount Carmel Outreach Program: An increase in immigration among a number of nationalities in the Columbus, Ohio, area, including Hispanics and Somalis, created serious health care access problems for these populations. The recent immigrants had difficulties traveling to the hospital, so the Outreach Mobile Coach Program went to them to provide free health services. The Outreach Program started initially as nursing assessment clinics in soup kitchens and shelters. The Mount Carmel Medical Center decided to expand its Outreach Program and, with community support and grants, purchased a mobile coach. The goal of this program is to create various locations for care instead of using an emergency room as a primary care facility. The mobile care locations include shelters, community centers, and neighborhoods where specific ethnic groups are prevalent. Various services are provided on the mobile coach, including medical care by physicians, medical residents, nurses, patient advocacy, and assistance from health caseworkers.

Incorporated into the Outreach Program is the “Help Me Grow” program, which is funded by the State of Ohio and administered through Jobs and Family

Services. This program was designed to locate and treat infants 0 to 3 months old who may have developmental delays or disabilities. Ten nurses, social workers, and caseworkers are dedicated to this project at the Outreach Program.

The Mount Carmel Chaplain Department conducts cultural sensitivity workshops to educate all hospital staff about ethnic groups, including but not limited to Jews, African Americans, and Native Americans. The Columbus metro area is the second largest city of Somali refugees in the country.

**Establishment of Program/Initiative:** 1984

**Racial or Ethnic Disparities Problem the Program/Initiative Was Designed to Address**

- Inadequate resources for specific groups to be treated by a physician, nurse practitioners, or other medical staff instead of in a clinic or emergency room
- Homeless, uninsured, or underinsured, including all ethnic groups within the area who lack resources to transport themselves to medical centers for health care treatment

**Major Objective:** Link those who need health care treatment with professionals who can provide the services and provide a medical home

**Significant Results**

- The number of patients who use the emergency room for primary care has decreased.
- The Mount Carmel Health System has been able to provide care by working with community groups.

**External Partners in the Program/Initiative**

- Board of Health
- Other area hospitals and clinics
- The Hispanic Coalition
- Somali community leaders

**Limitations or Problems Encountered:** Some community and county health organizations were wary about becoming involved with the Outreach Program. Once Mount Carmel demonstrated that it intended only to be an equal partner, local groups readily became involved.

**Estimated Cost of the Program, To Date:** Mobile Coach Program is estimated at \$600,000. Funding comes primarily from the Foundation who solicits donations and funding for this very important community program. The purchase of the Medical Coach came from the Mount Carmel Auxiliary through their gift shop proceeds and a private donor. Programs such as Help Me Grow, March of Dimes, are approximately \$1 million per year. Most recently, the Mount Carmel Outreach Program received a \$1.8 million grant for three years from the Bureau

of Primary Care to open a Federally Qualified Health Center in the heart of a Somalia neighborhood, which will provide a medical home to many Somalia, Hispanics, and low-income African Americans.

**Advice to Other Organizations That May Want to Start a Similar Program**

- Work with city and county health departments and organizations assisting in reaching those in need
- Create programs to address specific needs within the community
- Focus on outreach opportunities that will improve health care within budget confines

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