



Executive Summary

Baylor University Medical Center has implemented a comprehensive program to address the needs of the elderly population in the community, with programs specifically targeting the economically disadvantaged areas where the population is primarily African American and Hispanic senior citizens with limited access to health care services. The medical center began by opening full-service geriatric clinics throughout the community. The geriatric clinics are staffed by internists as well as weekly rotations of specialists, and refer many of the patients to medical sub-specialties located at the medical center. Baylor University Medical Center has also established a geriatric chaplaincy program and a house call program that sends geriatricians, social workers, and chaplains to a patient's residence, rather than requiring the patient to come to a local center.

In addition to these geriatric care services, Baylor University Medical Center has formed the Memory Alliance with the Alzheimer's Association. The Memory Alliance strives to ensure that senior citizens in the community receive a correct and accurate diagnosis for the disease, and that those who suffer from Alzheimer's receive the care they need, from nutrition to spiritual support to health care services. The medical center has also recently initiated a volunteer and scholarship program targeted toward the minority youth in the economically disadvantaged areas of the city. The high school students will volunteer at the new geriatric clinic in the area to learn about the various health care professions, and can then apply for scholarships to pay for their education while they attend the local junior college working toward a health care career.

Organization Size: 1,029 beds

Program/Initiative Description

- **Geriatric Clinics:** Baylor University Medical Center recognized the need to reach out to the elderly population in the community, and so began building community geriatric clinics in 1993. Each clinic includes two or three internists and a pharmacist, health educator, x-ray and lab facility, and weekly rotations by specialists. The medical center has established clinics covering three local counties, but had struggled opening a clinic in the economically disadvantaged area of Dallas due to physical problems with the land and building of the clinic. A temporary clinic was established at the medical center for this area, with transportation for the elderly citizens of the community. Baylor University Medical Center has currently finished this building, and the clinic opened in February 2004. The clinic in this area will provide care and services targeted toward the African American and Hispanic populations in the area.

- **Geriatric Chaplaincy Program:** The medical center established a geriatric chaplaincy program designed to serve the spiritual and emotional needs of the community's geriatric patients. The program is funded through private donations to the Foundation, and has established one full-time chaplain and two part-time chaplains. The chaplains visit the community's geriatric clinics as well as individuals' homes. The chaplain program's services combined with chaplains' ability to travel to the individuals in need have made a tremendous impact on the economically disadvantaged population of the community, which is composed primarily of African American and Hispanic individuals.
- **House Call Program:** Elderly patients in the community can call the medical center to receive a house call when they are in need of medical services. Many of the patients are hindered by their lack of transportation or ability to travel, and bringing the services to them is the only method by which they can receive care. The program sends a certified geriatrician, social worker, or chaplain, depending on each individual's needs. Providers are usually reimbursed through Medicare and/or Medicaid.
- **Memory Alliance:** The medical center has formed a loose alliance with the Alzheimer's Association to assist patients in the community in receiving the correct diagnosis and care for Alzheimer's disease. The Alliance is a collaboration among 10 counties, and it funnels new patients to the correct sources to receive a comprehensive geriatric assessment. The Alliance strives to meet patients' total needs, including nutrition, social support, spiritual counseling, and health care services.
- **Scholarship Program:** As part of the medical center's goal to serve the entire community through education and community service, Baylor University Medical Center created a volunteer program for high school students to gain exposure and experience to the health care field. The program is targeted toward the African American and Hispanic populations living around the new clinic opening in the economically disadvantaged area. Students will volunteer at the new clinic to learn about the various health care fields, and can then apply for scholarships that pay tuition for their education in a variety of health care professions at the local community college. Once their education is complete, Baylor University Medical Center will attempt to hire the new graduates.

Establishment of Program/Initiative

- **Memory Alliance:** 2000
- **House Call Program:** 1998
- **New Clinic in Economically Disadvantaged Area:** Functional since 1995, but has been located near the hospital using Handi-Rides to get the senior citizens to and from the clinic. The complete new clinic opened February 19, 2004.
- **Scholarship Program:** Began developing in 1999, but could not be implemented until the new clinic was built. The program began this year after the clinic opened in February.

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

- Large proportion of elderly individuals not receiving the care and/or the diagnoses they needed, especially in the economically disadvantaged areas of the city where the population is primarily African American and Hispanic
- Lack of career and educational opportunities for the younger generations in the economically disadvantaged areas

Major Objectives

- Fulfill the hospital's mission of providing care for those in need
- Provide quality, comprehensive care to all elderly patients in need of care, especially those in the economically disadvantaged areas
- Create a volunteer program to provide high school students an introduction to the health care field and provide learning and scholarship opportunities for those interested in health care careers

Significant Results

- The community clinics and comprehensive geriatric care system provide a significant revenue and patient base that the hospital would not otherwise have received. Last year, over 10,000 referrals were made to medical and surgical sub-specialists at the medical center from the geriatric clinics, and the number of referrals is growing each year.
- House Call Program: Between 300 and 500 patients currently participate in this program, and satisfaction surveys report over 99 percent satisfaction rates from the patients and their families.
- Community Geriatric Clinics: The first clinic was opened in 1993, and although the hospital didn't advertise the opening, its open house created a line of senior citizens that wrapped around the block. Police directed traffic for the day as over 1,700 people came to the open house, and the clinic made over 80 appointments. The hospital has now built 12 more clinics, although some have been combined. The clinics serve three counties in the Dallas area, and see an average of 16,000-20,000 people every year with over 100,000 visits.
- Geriatric Chaplaincy Program: Last year the three chaplains combined made over 1,500 patient visits.

External Partners in the Program/Initiative

- Local community organizations, such as the chamber of commerce, local churches, and local businesses
- Local community college and high schools
- Alzheimer's Association
- Other major hospitals in the area

Limitations or Problems Encountered

- Addressing the Alzheimer's issues in the community was difficult because of the large proportion of patients that were either not diagnosed or misdiagnosed.
- Building the new clinic in the economically disadvantaged area was complex because of downstream soil pollution problems.

Estimated Cost of the Program, To Date

- The geriatric clinics strive to cover their own direct costs, although in some clinics the hospital assists financially when necessary.
- The scholarship and chaplaincy fund has raised over \$300,000 so far.

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

Hospitals must work with their communities to find a way to meet the exponential growth and health care needs of the senior population.

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