



**Care Harbor Free Clinic
“Healthcare for the Unhoused”**

Los Angeles Trade Technical College
March 18-19, 2023

RESULTS & FINDINGS

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FOCUSED CARE PROGRAM

Care Harbor’s free mega-clinics have brought health and hope to more than thirty thousand of the community’s most vulnerable individuals and families – people without access to the healthcare they need. Care Harbor is now expanding its reach with the Focused Care Program, adding free clinics with the targeted care and resources to serve segments of the population facing special healthcare challenges. Healthcare for the Unhoused was the first of the free clinics planned for this Focused Care Program.

For clients living on the street, in shelters or in temporary housing, Healthcare for the Unhoused provided integrative medical, dental and vision care, prevention resources, health literacy education, mental health counseling and social services. The clinic benefitted not only the unhoused, but also the community at large, impacted by the homelessness crisis. The two day clinic was held at Los Angeles Trade Technical College on March 18-19, 2023.



Like all Care Harbor events, the clinic was the community coming together to help its own. Hundreds of healthcare professionals, leading hospital systems, healthcare organizations and lay people volunteered their services and resources. (Community partners are listed on page 16 of this report.)



Resources reflected the unique needs of the clients served. Medical specialties, preventive care, counseling and take home supplies were organized to help clients bridge the gaps in accessible care they will face after the clinic. Services were customized in a way not feasible in Care Harbor’s mega-clinics serving the general population. Future Focused Care clinics are being planned for veterans’ care and women’s health, building on the experience of this event.

CLINIC PROFILE

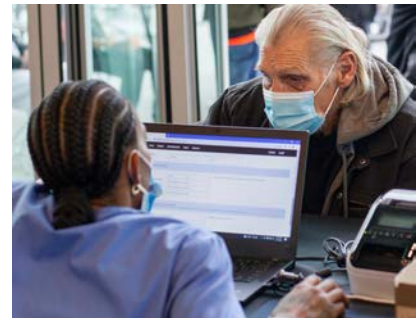
In addition to medical, dental, vision and preventive care, services included mental health and substance abuse counseling, coverage and assistance program enrollment, and other relevant social services. Intervention specialists were on site if needed for behavioral issues.

To transport clients to and from the clinic, Care Harbor chartered busses traveling full day routes between participating shelters and the venue. Unsheltered clients living on the street were directed or escorted to the clinic by UCLA, Care Harbor and County volunteers.

Focused Care clinics are planned for fewer attendees with more services provided to each individual. Clients can receive all medical, dental, vision, and other services in a single visit – an appropriate model for unhoused clients who have limited access to post event care. Final client numbers were less than capacity. 220 attended, fewer than the original commitments from local shelters and County agencies. Client outreach strategies are being revised for future unhoused clinics.

Registration and Triage

Clients were registered at 6 stations where their electronic health records (EHR) were established. Demographic and other data were recorded on the EHRs, along with medical and social histories, existing conditions, and responses to questions asked during the intake triage. As clients moved through the clinic, all services rendered were recorded on the EHRs. Anonymous data drawn from these records provide the statistical information for this report, along with provider logs, schedules and other records.

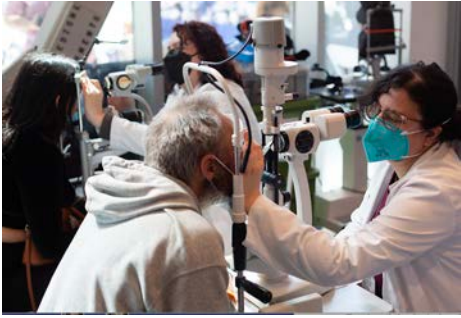


Medical Care

Clients received primary and specialty care with specialties on site to meet the most important needs of this client base. Medical services also included HIV/STD and other screenings, and immunizations for COVID-19, flu and MPox. Clients received take away COVID antigen test kits and other self-care supplies. Mental health counseling and referrals were provided, and two private consultation rooms were available for clients. **169 clients** received medical care.

Dental Care

Accessible oral health is a major concern for the unhoused and client needs were extensive. Individual treatment times were extended, exceeding those at typical Care Harbor events. Services included dental hygiene and deep cleanings, fillings, and extractions. **102 clients** received dental care.



Vision Care

The transient nature of the client base made post-event manufacture and shipping of eyeglasses by an off-site optical lab problematic. Clients were able to choose their eyeglass frames on site and eyeglasses were made at the clinic, provided to clients before they left the venue. **175 eyeglasses** were made on site. **30 vouchers**, redeemable for free eyeglasses at local opticians, were given to clients with extreme corrections beyond clinic fabricating capabilities. Clients needing bifocals received two pair of eyeglasses - one for near vision and one for distance.

Health Literacy

Individual health education was provided to all clients, with separate stations at medical, dental and vision discharge areas. Registered nurses and final year nursing students met one on one with each client, reviewed their charts and answered any questions about their conditions, clinician instructions or aftercare. Anatomical models, illustrations and other educational materials were on hand to enhance this education and motivate compliance. Information and self care recommendations were tailored to the realities of the unhoused population being served.

Counseling and Resources

Clients received employment counseling, coverage and assistance program counseling and enrollment, substance abuse education, recovery support services, and first aid training including hands-only CPR. Resources and counselors were provided by Los Angeles Departments of Public Health, Public Social Services, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control, Community Field Services and others.

Self-Care Supplies

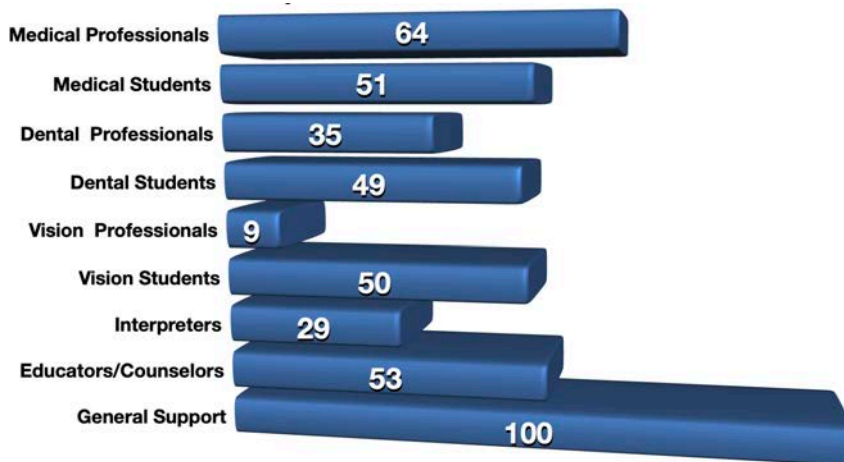
Clients received take away supplies including snacks, blankets, socks, underwear, water bottles, oral hygiene kits, hand sanitizers, a first aid kit including two NARCAN nasal sprays for drug overdose, and 2 rapid response fentanyl test strips. Clients received lunch at the clinic.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Professional and lay volunteers registered for the clinic on Care Harbor’s online system. Professional licenses were vetted, and liability coverage provided for professionals whose malpractice coverage did not extend to the event. Volunteers received orientation emails, clinic protocols, and a scannable QR code to speed sign in for i.d. badges at the event.

440 Volunteer professionals and lay persons took part at the clinic



Medical professionals included physicians, nurses, PAs and others. Dental professionals include general dentists, oral surgeons and hygienists. Vision professionals included ophthalmologists, optometrists, and opticians. Medical, dental and optometry students were under the direction of their school supervisors and Care Harbor department leads. Volunteers served full day and half day shifts.

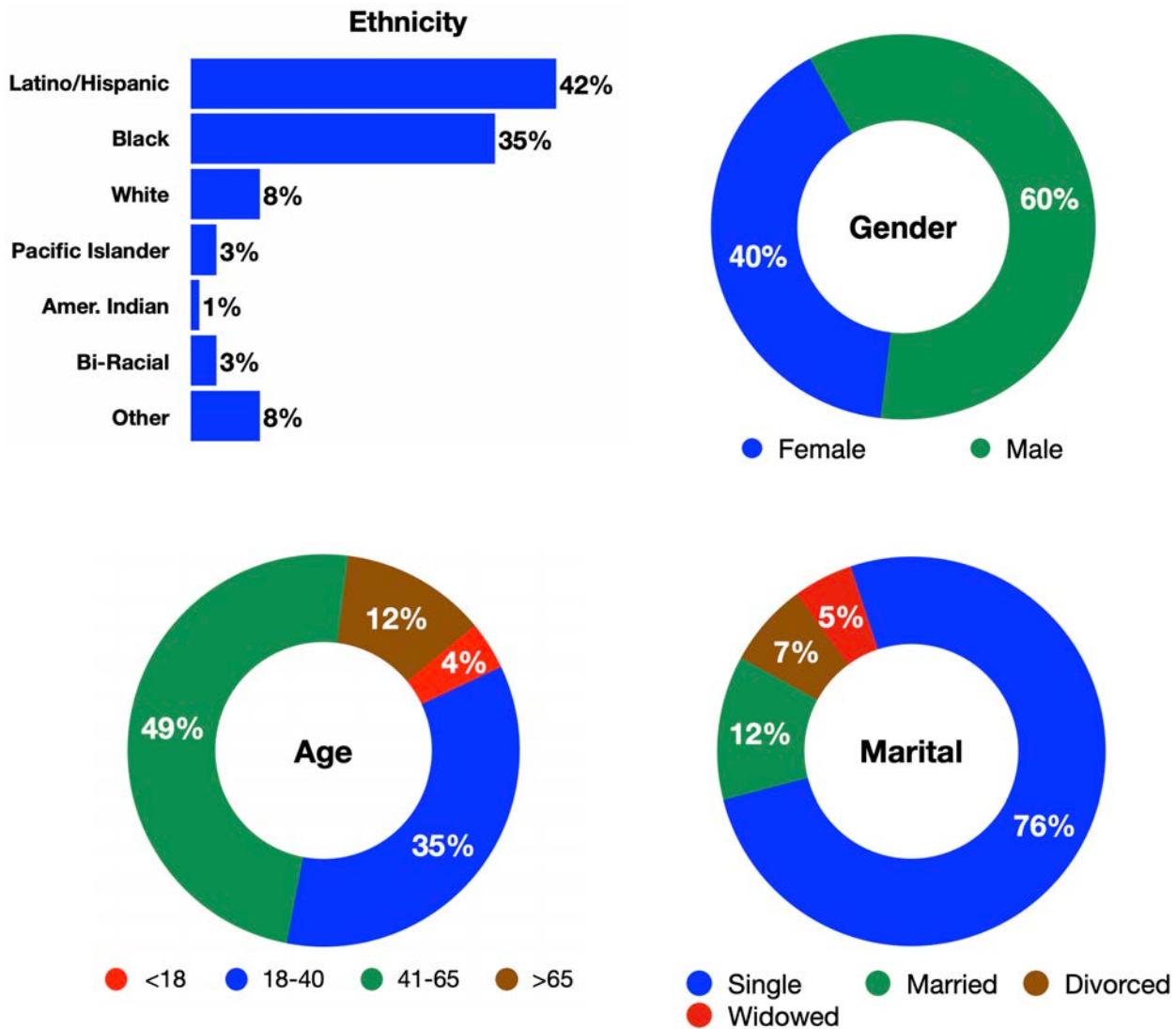
Local hospitals, healthcare organizations, schools and County agencies volunteered their services, resources and personnel. The majority of volunteers have participated in previous Care Harbor free clinics. Care Harbor events have been added to the curricula of many professional schools. Seventeen schools provided volunteers for this event. The Focused Care clinics, produced with greater frequency than the mega-clinic events, will offer more opportunities for schools to participate.

Care Harbor events provide students with clinical experience valuable to their education. Their exposure to vulnerable populations may also lead to a lifelong commitment to help meet the healthcare needs of the underserved.



CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

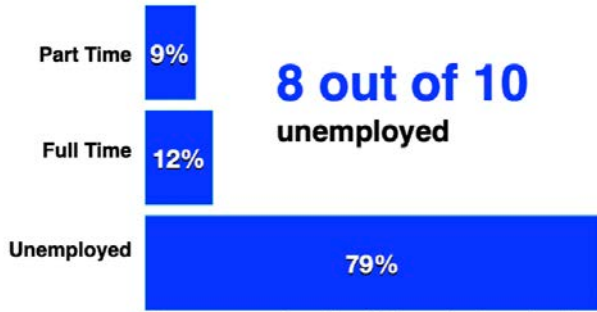
Care Harbor's EHRs provide the demographic data for attending clients.



For comparison, Latino/Hispanic has been by far the dominant ethnicity at the Care Harbor mega-clinics – 72% at our last event, with Black at 11% and White at 3%

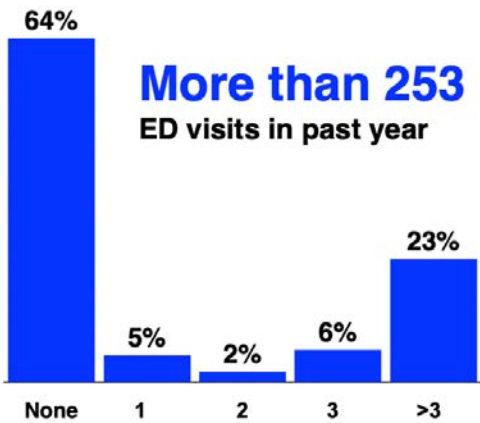
During registration, clients were asked questions about their life situation and access to care. Responses were optional but almost all participated. Answers help align services with needs.

Employed?



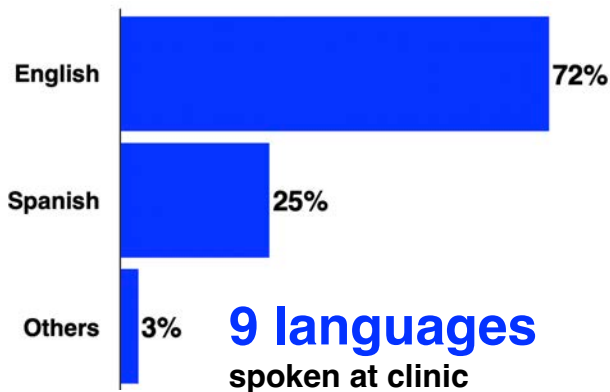
Percentages are based on a 91% sample. Clients who chose not to answer and those under 18 are excluded. Employment does not guarantee employer insurance, so the percentage of uninsured may be higher than the percentage of unemployed.

ED visits in past year?



Many clients said they had emergency department visits in the past year. A total of 29% said they had 3 or more visits. Based on these responses, a minimum of 253 ED visits were made in the past year. A United Healthcare study puts the average cost of a 2022 California ED visit at \$2,960, placing the cost of ED visits by Care Harbor clients at \$748,880. If visits were for routine or preventable medical needs, potential savings are significant.

Preferred language?



Clients at the clinic spoke a total of 9 languages. English and Spanish were the most prevalent. Interpreters are a vital component of care at Care Harbor, not only helping to ensure accurate client/clinician communication but also helping to bridge cultural gaps that can become barriers to care among underserved populations.

Geographic Distribution (zip codes)

75% sample. Records without a client response or missing integers are excluded. This data may have limited research and planning value because of the transient status and temporary housing of the majority of clients, but may help inform outreach and routing of charter buses at future unhoused clinics in the central city. 64 zip codes were represented at the clinic.

85365	1	90043	1	90755	1
88809	1	90044	10	90802	1
90001	2	90047	6	90805	2
90003	8	90057	3	90806	2
90004	2	90061	1	90810	1
90006	3	90062	3	90813	1
90007	5	90063	2	91101	1
90008	3	90066	2	91325	1
90010	3	90201	3	91606	1
90011	4	90221	3	91702	1
90012	7	90222	1	91711	1
90013	13	90230	1	91723	1
90014	5	90248	1	91767	1
90015	7	90250	1	92553	1
90016	2	90255	2	95370	1
90017	5	90266	1	55555*	1
90018	3	90291	5	*Minnesota zip code - unverified	
90021	1	90301	2		
90024	2	90303	1		
90025	1	90304	1		
90027	1	90640	1		
90033	1	90732	1		
90034	2	90744	6		
90037	6	90746	1		

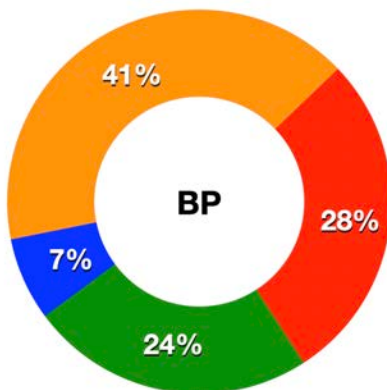
INTAKE TRIAGE FINDINGS

At triage, vital signs, health and social histories were taken at 14 nursing stations. If clients presented urgent medical symptoms at triage, they were escorted to the medical area for evaluation before receiving additional services. An EMT crew remained on site for all operating hours of the clinic to respond to any emergencies. Clients were also asked screening questions to help identify mental health issues, and counselors were on site to assist. All clients were given triage exams and interviews and most received multiple services at the clinic – medical, dental, vision, mental health and preventive care.

Hypertension

Normal	Elevated	Stage 1	Stage 2
<120 AND <80	120-129 AND <80	130-139 OR 80-89	>140 OR >90

Source: Mayo Clinic

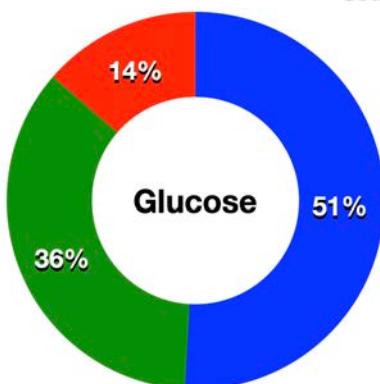


76% of clients had elevated blood pressure or stage 1 or stage 2 hypertension. Clients with severe hypertension were escorted to medical before receiving dental or other services.

Blood Glucose

Normal	Prediabetes	Diabetes
< 100	100-125	>125

Source: American Diabetes Association

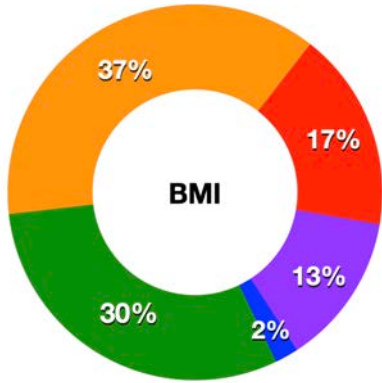


Glucose levels are for general reference and not diagnostic. Clinicians interpreted qualifying factors such as fasting or postprandial status, age and others to help identify pre-diabetic and diabetic clients. These clients were evaluated by primary care physicians and specialists, and received counseling from dietitians.

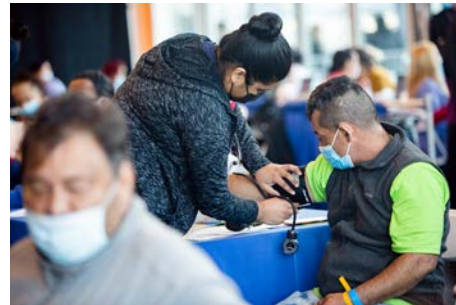
Body Mass Index

Underweight	Normal	Overweight	Obese	Severely Obese
< 18.5	18,5 - 24.9	25 - 29.9	30 -34.9	35+

Source: CDC

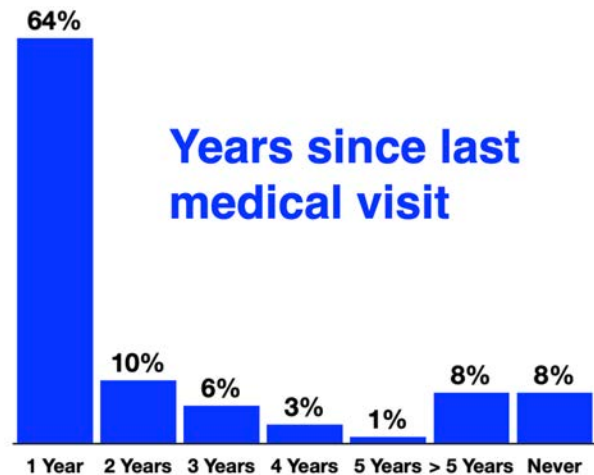
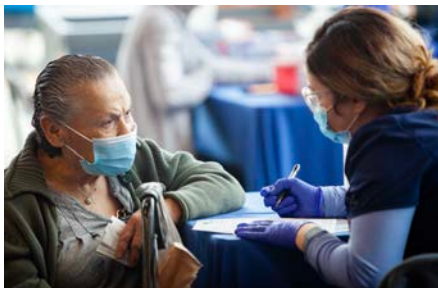


68% of clients were overweight or clinically obese. In addition to their medical evaluations, clients received nutrition counseling, mindful of the economic and lifestyle limitations they faced. BMI may vary significantly among ethnicities. Ethnic breakdowns of BMI are available from Care Harbor's EHR database.



MEDICAL SERVICES

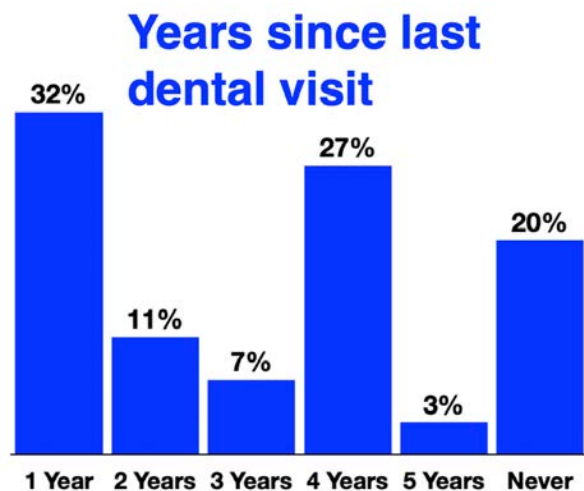
Clients received primary and specialty care in 8 exam rooms. Specialties on site were those most important to the client base. They included family practice, internal medicine, podiatry, sports medicine and emergency medicine. Diagnostic equipment included echocardiogram, ECG, abdominal ultrasound, an onsite medical lab and an offsite pathology lab. An onsite dispensary filled client prescriptions. 54 medical professionals volunteered for the two day clinic. 51 medical and nursing students also participated. Volunteers had the option of full day or half day shifts. Interpreters and general volunteers supported the professionals. In addition to vaccines administered on site, clients received take home antigen COVID test kits, fentanyl test strips and NARCAN nasal spray for drug overdose, with instructions for their use. Hands-on CPR training was also offered.



64% of clients said they had seen a doctor within the past year, equivalent to responses by the general population at Care Harbor clinics. 26% had not seen a doctor for more than 3 years. Most of the attendees were from shelters and primary medical care was available to them. But County wait times to see a specialist can be long – often 3 months or more. The Care Harbor clinic provided both primary and specialty care in one visit. (Percentages above are of the clients who responded – 86% of clients.)

DENTAL SERVICES

Dental care was provided with 12 dental chairs and operatories, 2 X-ray rooms, instrument cleaning and sterilization equipment, and supplies. 21 general dentists, along with hygienists and dental students provided care. Oral health is a critical need among the client population served. Dental problems are not only a potentially painful disability, they can also significantly impact overall health, contributing to diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions. The clinic provided cleanings, fillings, extractions and preventive oral health. Individual education sessions empowered clients to maintain their oral health post clinic.

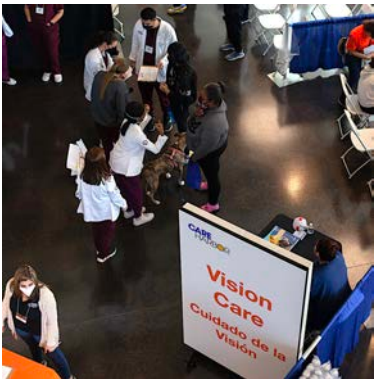


50% of attendees said they had not seen a dentist for 4 years or more. The unhoused population has a much higher rate of dental issues than the general population. Apart from leading to other significant health problems, visible dental issues can have severe social and emotional impacts, and make it more difficult for those experiencing homelessness to find employment or access other services. (76% of clients responded.)

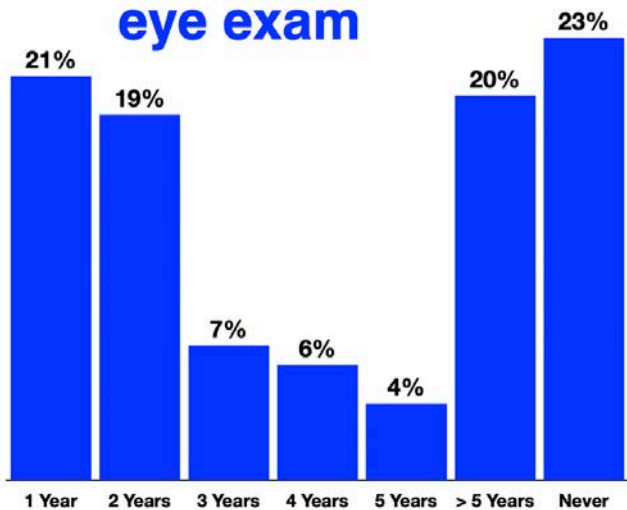
In previous Care Harbor clinics, clients chose between dental and vision care (all could receive medical care) to allow as many as possible to receive the help they needed most. At Healthcare for the Unhoused, the protocol was changed. Both dental and vision care were provided to all clients because of the critical need and because oral and vision health can increase employability, self-worth, and opportunities to find a path out of homelessness.

VISION SERVICES

9 optometrists, assisted by 50 optometry students and general volunteers provided vision care in 7 vision lanes with phoropters. Exam stations also included multiple slit lamps, auto refractors, lensometers, tonometers and other equipment. 3 optical lens edgers were operated on site. Clients chose their frames and received their prescription eyeglasses before leaving the clinic. Most prescription glasses were ready before the client completed his or her clinic services. This service was essential because of the transient nature of the client population, making post-event manufacturing and shipping an impracticable solution. For extreme corrections that could not be fabricated on site, clients received prescriptions and vouchers for free eyeglasses which they could redeem at local retail optical companies, at locations and times of their own choosing. 83% of prescriptions were fulfilled on site.



Years since last eye exam



23% of clients said they never had an eye exam. An additional 24% said it had been 5 years or more. As with dental care, lack of access to vision care creates a range of issues impacting individuals trying to get out of homelessness. Vision challenges make filling out an application or performing a job even more difficult. Without eye exams, chronic diseases may be overlooked. For clients with diabetes, more common among the unhoused, eye exams are critical to the early detection of glaucoma and other vision threatening diseases.

HEALTH LITERACY PROGRAM

Care Harbor introduced its Health Literacy Program in 2017, developed and implemented by faculty RN's and final year students from the School of Nursing at California State. The program has been expanded at each event since then. At the Healthcare for the Unhoused event, it took on a new importance and impact, helping clients understand their health conditions, clinician instructions, and their own role in safeguarding their health. For clients who may have limited access to care following the event, this one-on-one education can promote compliance and improve outcomes.

Following medical, dental or vision exams and treatments, clients were directed to separate stations where registered nurses and final year nursing students reviewed their charts, answered their questions, explained medication instructions, and ensured that clients fully understood what clinicians had told them. The relaxed, informal discussion at these post-exam sessions reduced anxiety and encouraged clients to become active partners in their own care.



Visual aids including anatomical models and take away materials, printed in English and Spanish, were available to help clients fully understand their conditions and care. If other healthcare resources were available at the clinic and of value, clients were directed or escorted to those stations.

MENTAL HEALTH

Care Harbor has a dual objective in expanding mental health resources at its free clinics. First is to make this critical component of care accessible to the underserved who may be experiencing high levels of stress, depression or other conditions. The second goal is to eliminate the stigma often attached to mental health issues, especially by some of the ethnicities Care Harbor serves. Both goals can be accomplished by making mental health a prominent part of every Care Harbor event, as visible and acceptable as medical, dental and oral health.

Working with the L.A. County Department of Mental Health, Care Harbor provided mental health care on several fronts. Screening questions were included in the initial triage sessions to help identify a need and alert clients to the availability of care. A station on the clinic floor was staffed by DMH personnel to provide information and referrals to County programs. Two private consultation rooms were also constructed on site to enable clients to receive personal counseling and referrals from DMH professionals.



Intervention specialists were on site to respond to any behavioral need. In one situation a counselor escorted a bus transport as a precaution but no incidents were reported.

Care Harbor plans to expand mental health resources and accessibility at future clinics, in both the Focused Care and mega-clinic programs.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

L.A. County agencies staffed exhibit and education stations, providing information and services important to unhoused clients.

Department of Public Health

Vaccination Team provided COVID-19, flu and Mpox immunizations, COVID antigen test kits, and vaccine education. 150 client contacts were reported.

Division of HIV & STD Programs provided HIV/STD lab-based testing, HIV/STD health education, service referrals, and distributed condoms. 19 clients received on-site testing.

Substance Abuse Prevention Control offered education, treatment options and other resources, information on no-cost substance abuse treatment centers, recovery support services, and free mobile app. Contacts with all clients were reported.

Community Field Services conducted hands-only CPR training, emergency preparedness resources and incentives. 65 clients were trained in hands-only CPR.

Department of Public Social Services provided information and enrollment for Medical, CalFresh, CalWORKs, and other relief programs. 165 clients received consultation.

Department of Human Resources presented information and contacts for employment and internship programs, student worker program, temporary service opportunities, and employment counseling. 78 clients were assisted.

Department of Mental Health provided counselors and information on mental health services. (Data to come)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



These community partners made the Healthcare for the Unhoused free clinic possible.

Presenting Sponsors

Good Hope Medical Foundation
UCLA Health

Gold Community Partners

Western University of Health Sciences
Cedars-Sinai
Kaiser Permanente
L.A. Care Health Plan
QueensCare
Healing California

Silver Community Partners

Power of Sight
El Pollo Loco
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Shields Group
Patterson Dental

Bronze Community Partners

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