



# Incorporating Community Health Paramedics into Your Homeless Healthcare Program

Angela Brubaker, FNP, CommUnityCare (CUC)

Mike Sasser, Paramedic, ATCEMS

“Here’s the story of an Austin clinic. . . .”  
and the development of an unusual partnership

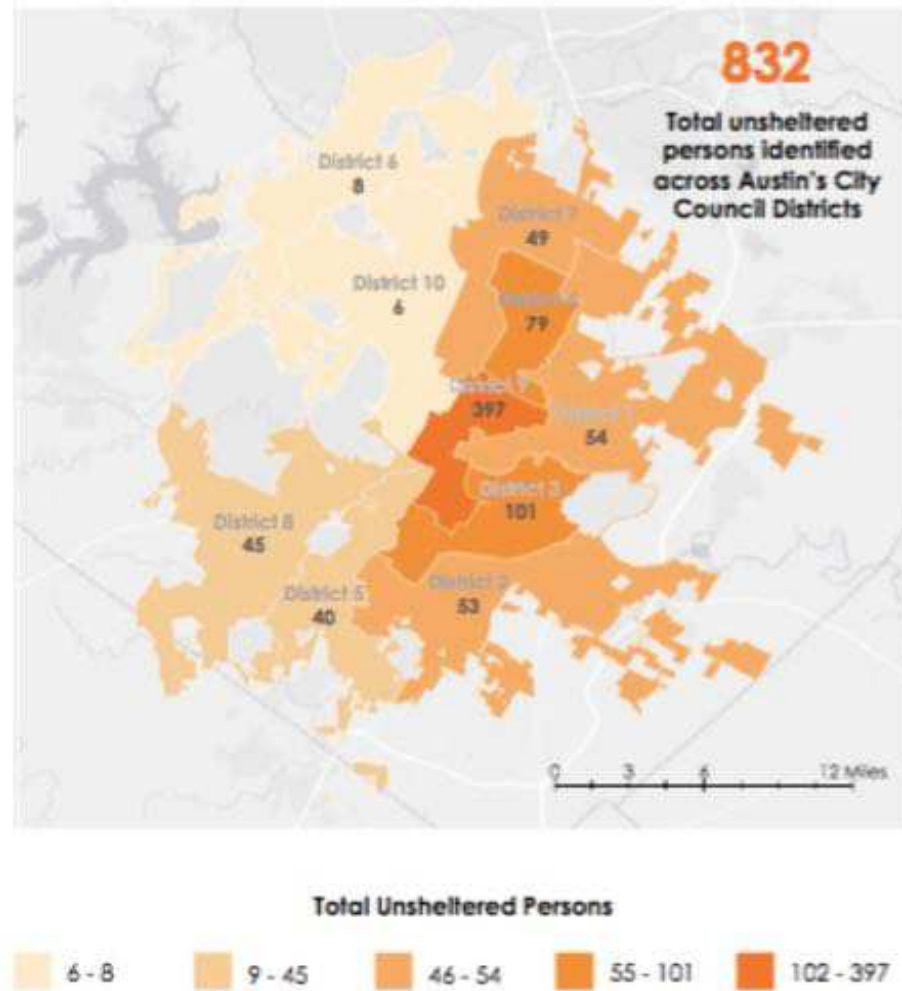


# Objectives

To tell our story to . . .

- Illustrate the potential that exists for collaboration with EMS personnel in the work of homeless healthcare
- Encourage those in other communities to build relationships with and explore greater engagement with EMS
- Receive constructive feedback from others doing this work in other areas

# Homelessness in Austin



## PIT Count 2018:

1,014 Unsheltered

1,133 Sheltered (up 5% from 2017)

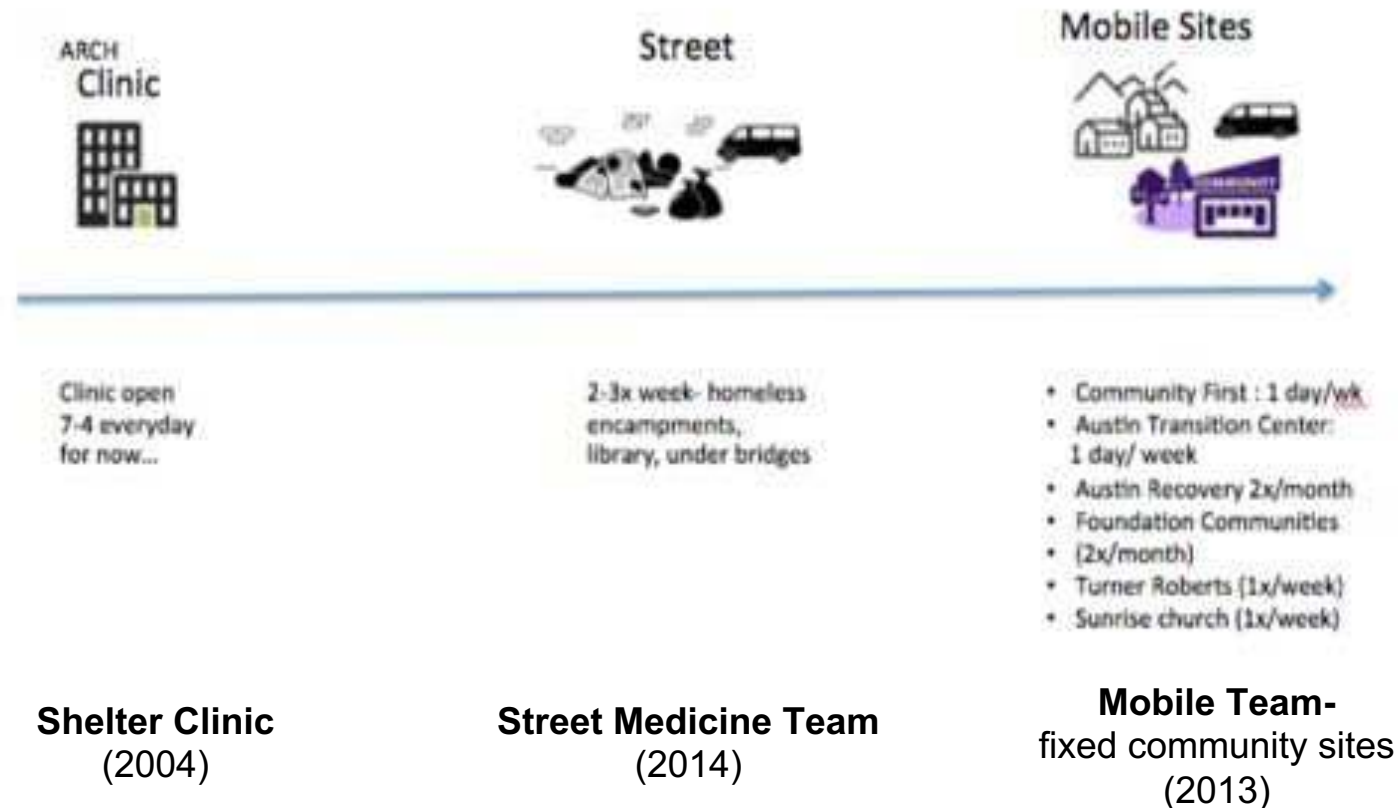
## Housing:

2 Shelters with 472 beds,  
various transitional housing  
settings

# Homeless Healthcare in Austin



**Mission Statement:** To provide access to high quality, integrated healthcare and social services that focuses on meeting the needs of vulnerable, marginalized, and mobility-limited individuals by eliminating societal and logistical barriers.





# Shelter Clinic @ ARCH (2004)



- Clinic open Monday-Friday 7 am – 4 pm
- Offer medical appointments and walk-ins
- Mental Health services, lab, TB testing
- Case Management
- Clinic is part of a larger FQHC



# Mobile Team (2013)

Our mobile team goes to fixed sites in the community and sets up a mini clinic.

They meet acute and chronic medical needs and preventative goals.





# Street Medicine (2014)

Street Medicine team goes out in their van seeking individuals outside offering medical care (acute, chronic, preventative).

Blood draws/testing

Prescriptions/refills

Referrals to specialists

MAP enrollment





# Other Homeless Services in Austin

- Integral Care--MH services (street outreach--PATH, eMCOT, MCOT)
- Austin/Travis County EMS Community Health Paramedics
- Recuperative care- 12 beds at a SNF
- ECHO--housing system coordinator
- Medical Assistance Program (MAP)
- CD Doyle Clinic (Sun only, med student-run)
- Sunrise Community Church (“weirdest little church in Texas”)



# CommUnityCare's journey to street medicine. . .and collaboration with the CHPs

- CUC is large FQHC in central TX with 19+ clinics
- 92000 individuals served last year
- 60% of funding comes from Central Health
- Homeless healthcare clinic started 2004
- 2013 CUC was asked to take on DSRIP mobile health project
- Oct 2014– street medicine was launched under the mobile program



# Challenges Encountered

- Transportation issues
- Barriers to emergency behavioral health eval/assistance
- CUC policies made street team flexibility difficult
- Lots we didn't know--like how and when to consider ED, community resources, etc.

# ATCEMS Community Health Paramedic Story



## History of Community Health Paramedicine

**“The right resource to the right place at the right time”**

Assistant Chief Andy Hofmeister, Paramedic, Austin Travis County EMS



# The Big Five (Seven, in context of Homelessness)

PCP

Medical Funding

Mental Health Services

Transportation

Access to medications

**PLUS...**

Food

Shelter





## **“Sammy”**

CHPs help ensure appropriate treatment at ER when patients need to be sent to the hospital.

# Current Collaboration

- 1-2 full days of collaboration each week (CHP, provider, MA)
- 1-2 days additional days each week of CHP follow up
- Dedicated EMS Sprinter

# A Day in the Life of the CHP-Mobile Street Med Team

730 am: CHP picks up  
ambulance (sprinter) at EMS  
HQ

830 am: Team meets at  
SEHWC, huddles to plan day,  
load up





# A Day in the Life. . .



830-3 pm: Visit patients on street, in camps (lunch on the run often)

3-5 pm: Return to SEHWC to chart, fax, process labs, restock, return ambulance to EMS HQ

Next Day: CHP coordinates follow up (meds pick-up, diagnostics, appts, etc.)



# A Day in the Life. . .





## “Ray Ray”

CHP-mobile street med team can reduce ER visits, provide more comprehensive health care.



# Alfred “Tim”

Persistence by CHP in building relationship with a client unwilling/unable to engage in plan of care developed by provider pays off.



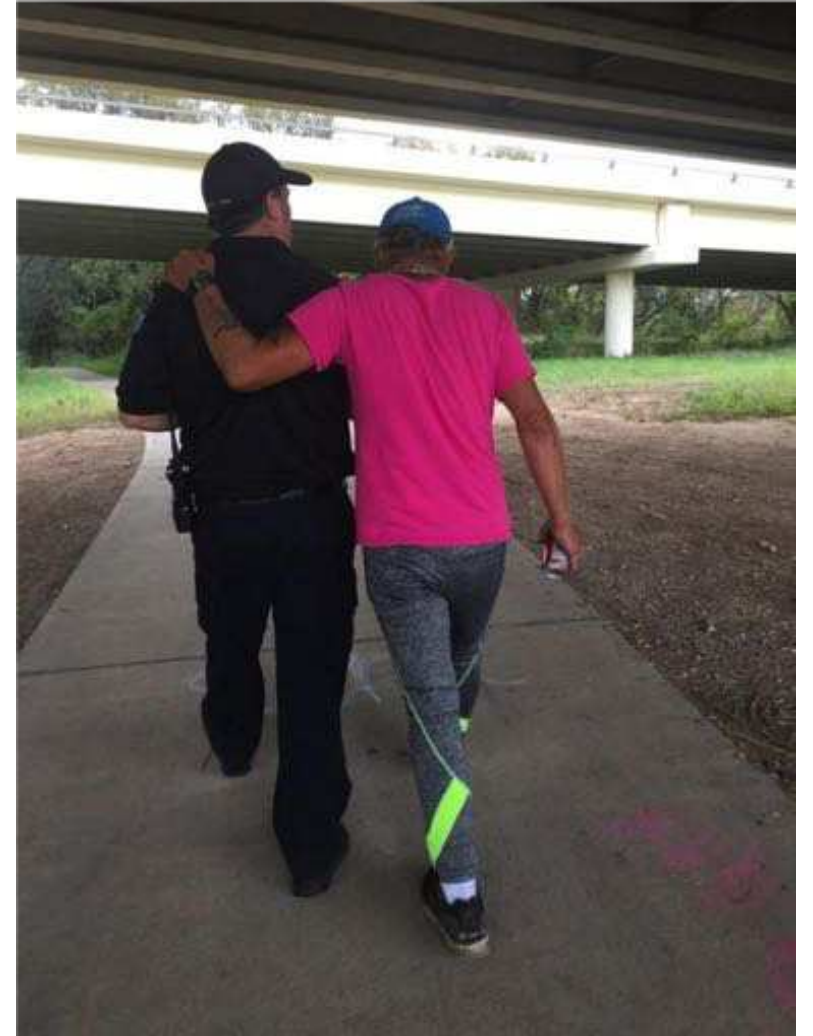


# What Does Each Partner Bring?

## CHP

Mission: To reduce ER utilization and hospital readmissions

- Mobility and flexibility
- Medical training
- Specialized skill set
- Familiar with city layout
- Well connected in community



# What Does Each Partner Bring?



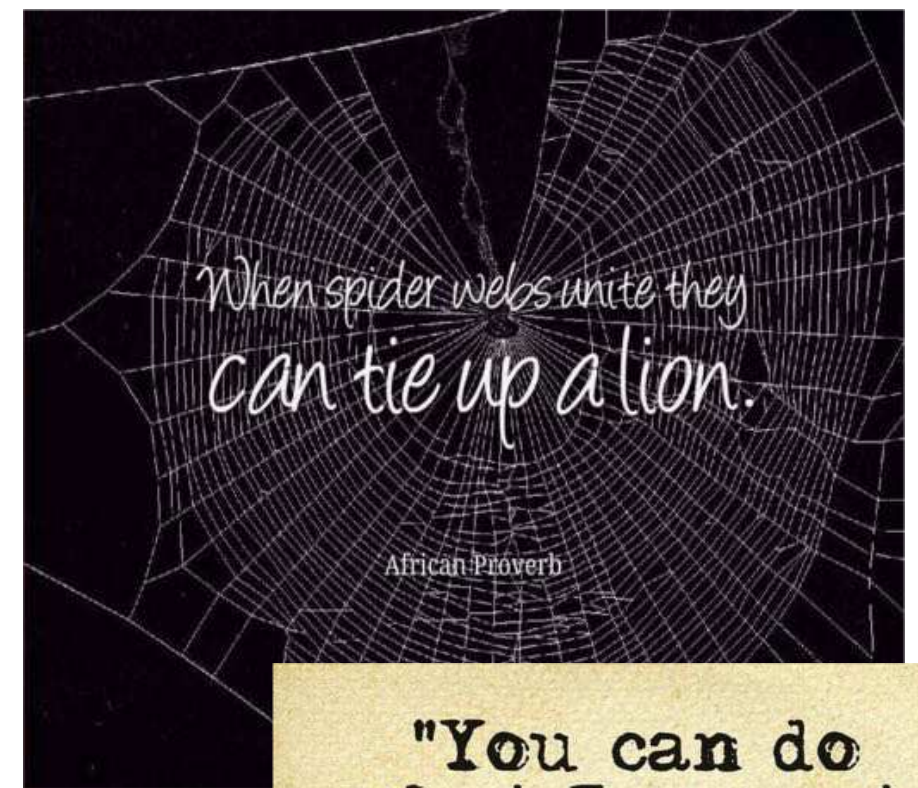
## CUC mobile

Mission: To meet healthcare needs of vulnerable, marginalized, and mobility-limited individuals by eliminating societal and logistical barriers.

- Credentialed medical provider
- Access to large clinic network and associated resources
- Access to specialties

# Organizational Synergy!

- Different missions, different scopes of practice, overlapping patient populations
- Both organizations bring unique resources and skills
- Members of each organization work to the top of their licensure
- Clear line of communications, understanding of roles & responsibilities is key.



**"You can do  
what I cannot  
do. I can do  
what you  
cannot do.  
Together we can  
do great  
things."**

*- Mother Teresa*



# Data: Austin Transition Center

3154 TX-71, Del Valle, TX 78617

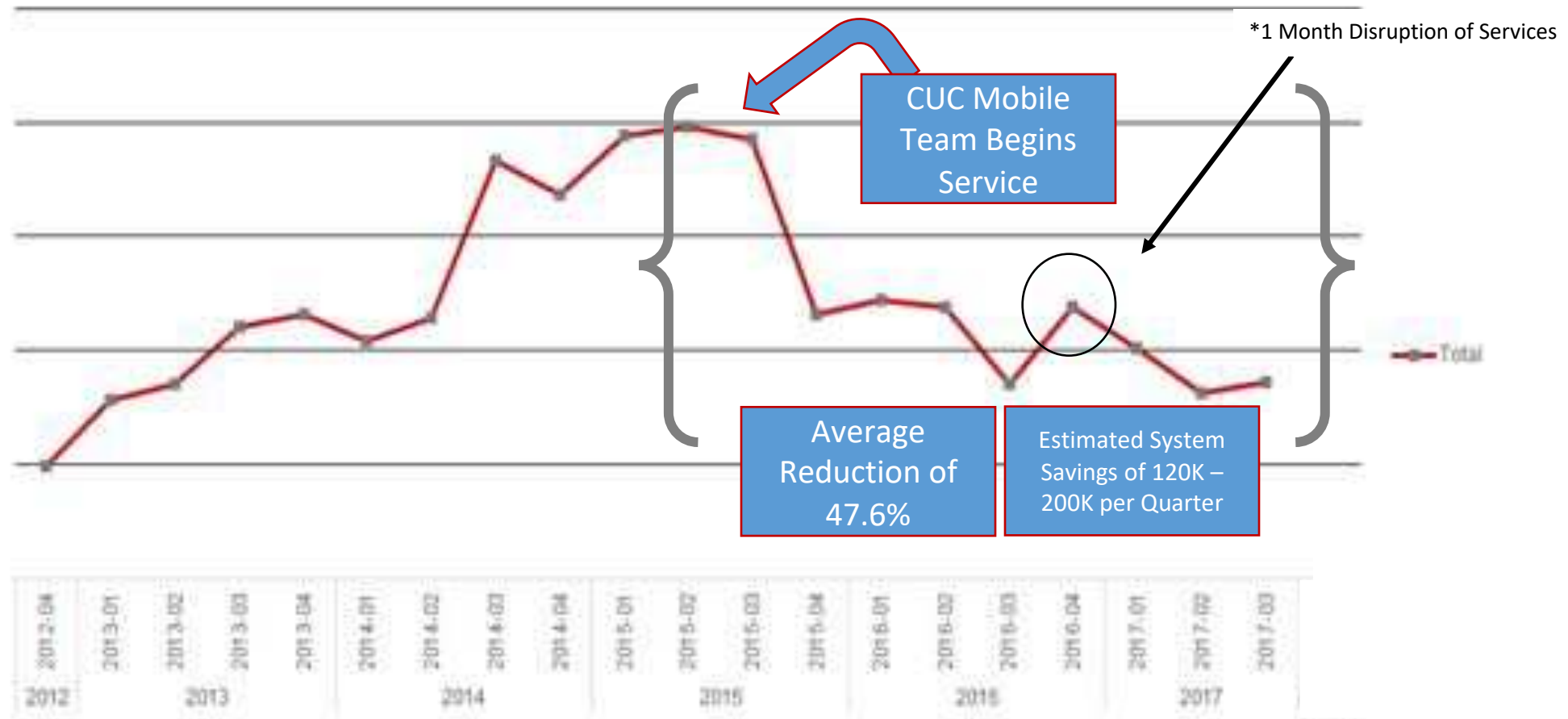


Freq: 1x/ week  
Team sets up in the Recreation Room





# What is Success?



Trend Illustration of the Reduction of EMS calls at ATC After CUC Mobile Intervention - \*specific data removed at request of CHP. Please do not redistribute.

# Challenges

- Electronic information flow/access to each other's EMRs
- Managing patient follow up effectively, QA
- Financial sustainability



# What's Next?

- QA/efficiencies
- Data collection
- Confirm effort in line with strategic goals of partners
- Reimbursement strategies
- Expand?
  - More days on street?
  - Suboxone treatment
  - HIV PReP?
  - Hep C?

# Questions/Discussion





# References

ECHO. April 26, 2018. Homelessness in Austin/Travis County: 2018 Annual Count Results and Plan to End Homelessness. <http://www.austinecho.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/180425-Homeless-PIT-Count-and-Action-Plan-Press-Release-FINAL.pdf>

ECHO. April 23, 2018. Austin's Action Plan to End Homelessness. <http://www.austinecho.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/180423-Action-Plan-to-end-Homelessness.pdf>

ECHO. Sept 1, 2017. Homelessness in Austin/Travis County: Current Needs and Gaps report. <http://www.austinecho.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/170901-Austin-Homelessness-Needs-Gaps-Analysis-2017.pdf>

Feldman, B., and LaCroix, L. Administrative Concerns in Street Medicine: Assuring Quality without Sacrificing Mission. Presented by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Monday, April 23, 2018 | 12-1 p.m. CT. <https://www.nhchc.org/2018/03/upcoming-webinar-administrative-concerns-in-street-medicine-assuring-quality-without-sacrificing-mission/>

