

Caring for you.

With heart.

Michael's Story

"Michael" is a slight man with a twinkle in his eye and an easy smile under an unruly beard. Arriving in Manchester as a refugee 20 years ago, he worked and lived independently for some time. When the trauma of genocide in his home country took a toll on his mental health, Michael lost the ability to support himself and became homeless.

Michael visited the Emergency Department at Catholic Medical Center in the summer of 2016, in danger of losing his leg. Inadequate housing and hygiene caused a small cut on his leg to become infected. Michael was admitted to the hospital. There, he met the Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) Outreach Team who visited him in the hospital to build a relationship and teach him about HCH clinic services.

The HCH clinic is a collaboration between CMC and Manchester Health Department and provides comprehensive primary care, integrated behavioral health care, and nursing case management at two shelter-based clinics in Manchester. HCH also has a clinical team that conducts daily street outreach. Their mission is to guarantee access to high-quality, comprehensive health care for all people who are homeless in Manchester in a way that respects their dignity. Michael, who was disconnected from the medical care system at the time of his hospitalization, was the perfect candidate for HCH's integrated care model.

Michael left the hospital with a comprehensive after-care plan, which included daily visits to change his wound dressings. But anxiety from his post-traumatic stress disorder kept him away from the emergency shelter. Michael chose to return to living on the streets. Over time, and after a second hospitalization, the HCH team helped him address his fear of the shelter, and he started sleeping there most nights. In doing so, he began taking better care of himself:



keeping his wounds cleaner, getting better quality sleep, eating better and making regular medical appointments.

Today, Michael lives in an apartment of the Housing First program of New Horizons for New Hampshire and is followed weekly by the HCH team at clinic and on home visits. Michael's success is one example of HCH's commitment to integrated, patient-centered, long term care that respects the self-determination and dignity of the homeless population. For more information, visit CatholicMedicalCenter.org and search "Health Care for the Homeless." ■■

