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NEWS

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A New Organizational Structure at PCMH

A recent organizational restructuring at PCMH has meant more benefits for both employees and clients. With the retirement of the vice president for clinical services, an opportunity arose to rethink PCMH's structure and align it with the external world, the goal being to better integrate its residential division with the outpatient ambulatory division. To that end, PCMH decided to create the position of chief operating officer, who oversees all agency operations.

Instead of its former two divisions, PCMH now has three: Residential, Clinical, and Care Coordination. All three divisions report to the COO, and meet regularly to enhance the integration and enrollment of all of PCMH clients into clinical services to enable full coordinated care—from housing stability to care coordination to provision of clinical services.

“The restructuring has allowed us to eliminate any silos within PCMH and provides more opportunity for our clients, as well as employees, to move from one department to another,” says PCMH CEO, Jacob Barak.



Mr. Barak notes that the reorganization has re-established a career ladder within PCMH, fostering an environment with ample opportunity for promotion from within for deserving candidates. Staff can rise through the ranks from a front desk position at a PCMH residence to a counselor position to a case manager—and ultimately, all the way to a directorship role.

The reorganization comes at a time when PCMH is facing mounting external pressures, including calls for reductions in federal budgets through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), lack of cost-of-living adjustments in government contracts, and pressure from managed care organizations on costs and services. Despite these challenges, PCMH continues to thrive: the agency has between 3500-4000 clients at any given time, and more than 1,200 residential units. That number will grow to nearly 1,500 in the next two years with the opening of the Shakespeare Residence this summer, followed by the openings of the

Marion Avenue Residence in the Bronx and the Gates Avenue Residence in Brooklyn, both scheduled for 2019.

“We’re trying to create an environment where we can function successfully regardless of the stormy political climate and the changes that are happening around us,” Mr. Barak explains. “While we’re still developing new programs, we’re being more careful than ever in terms of how we deploy our capital resources, in order to ensure the long-term success of PCMH.”

Residential Snapshot: Shakespeare Residence

The Shakespeare Residence, the latest addition to PCMH’s growing residential portfolio, is perched on a quiet corner in the Bronx, where the only sounds are an occasional passing car and birds chirping.

The interior is bright, clean, and modern, and the building’s amenities include an enclosed back courtyard complete with a pergola, benches, and lush landscaping, a cheerful gathering space from spring through fall. Slated to open soon, Shakespeare has 60 units spread over nine floors; all studios, they feature glossy kitchen cabinets, tile backsplashes, hardwood floors, roomy bathrooms, ample storage, and plenty of natural light. Apartment inspections will be conducted on a weekly basis to ensure residents are managing well.

Shakespeare is a Community Residence, meaning residents require assistance with their medication and daily living skills. About



Shakespeare’s 60 single units feature a host of amenities, including modern kitchens with glossy wood cabinets.

50% of residents will come to Shakespeare from state psychiatric centers, while the others are NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) priority populations referred from acute psychiatric units, individuals under Treatment (AOT), individuals with serious mental illness being released from prison, or those under supervision of the Brooklyn Mental Health Court. So far, 20 applicants have been accepted and will move in upon the building’s opening. Once the residence opens, intake interviews will be conducted on-site by Shakespeare’s Program Director, Wanda Ellis, for candidates who qualify following an initial interview at a state psychiatric center. Non-psychiatric referrals will have their initial interviews on-site. Residents will pay program fees totaling 55.5% of their increased social security benefits since it is a Level 2 Residence, meaning residents are highly supervised. All residents will be assigned to one of Shakespeare’s five full-time residential counselors, with whom they’ll meet once a week,

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Shakespeare Residence in the Bronx is the latest addition to the PCMH residential portfolio.

Assisted Outpatient



An enclosed courtyard, perfect for spring and summer barbecues, is another highlight at Shakespeare.



and must abide by a curfew of 11pm on weeknights and 12am on weekends. There will also be five front-desk counselors should residents need additional assistance at any time.

Ms. Ellis, a nearly five-year PCMH veteran, has served as Program Director at both the Teller Residence and, most recently, at the Echo Place Residence, and is excited for the new challenges that Shakespeare will bring. “I’m looking forward to managing a Community Residence, which I’ve never done,” she says. “The requirements are different, but the expectations are the same.”

Wanda Ellis, Program Director at Shakespeare, is looking forward to a new challenge following her tenure at the Teller and Echo Place Residences.

Program Spotlight: Care Coordination

PCMH’s Care Coordination programs are a key component of the organization, providing a wide array of healthcare services to residents of Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. Part of the Health Home network, it’s an integrated care management model comprised of multiple providers—including medical, mental health, and substance abuse—who together address a member’s needs. These services are overseen by a dedicated Care Coordinator, who ensures his or her member receives all the care necessary to stay as healthy as possible.



“The theory is if you have one person who knows and communicates with all of your providers, you’re going to receive better care, because providers don’t usually speak to one another,” says Dianna Musca, a six-year PCMH veteran who has run the program since 2014. “By relaying information back and forth between these caregivers, we can keep our members healthier, out of the emergency room, and out of the hospital.”

Each Care Coordinator typically has around 40 members that they visit once or twice per month, though some members require more frequent visits depending on their needs. Since most have mental illness as well as chronic medical conditions, Care Coordinators spend a lot of time educating them about topics like diabetes and hypertension, and how their diet affects these issues. They also escort members to medical appointments as needed, and teach them how to measure their blood sugar.

Dianna Musca, a six-year veteran of PCMH, has run the Care Coordination program since 2014.

To qualify for the free Care Coordination program, members must have active Medicaid and either two chronic medical conditions, a serious and persistent mental health condition, or HIV/Aids. The program services nearly 1,100 individuals on a monthly basis, including a small children's program in Manhattan only; some members are referred from other providers or from other PCMH programs, while others come from the Department of Health.

According to Ms. Musca, the recent PCMH restructuring, which created the Care Coordination division, underscores the Care Coordination program's considerable impact. "It recognizes how large we are—at this point, we're comparable in size to the Residential division," she says. "There are a lot of lives we're responsible for."

Those interested in the Care Coordination program, or those who want to refer a prospective member, are required to fill out a simple, one-page form, which is then run through a state database to make sure applicants are not already affiliated with another care management agency or health home. The form is available from Marta Gelpi at 212-576-4167 or mgelpi@pgcmh.org.

Client Close-Up: PCMH Success Stories



John Smalls

Bronx Park East Residence

It's no exaggeration to say that John Smalls' life began again after he moved into PCMH's Bronx Park East Residence. Having spent many of the last 30-plus years chronically homeless, he came to the residence in 2012, where he has flourished ever since.

"Finding PCMH and living in Bronx Park East is the best thing that ever happened to me," he says. "I never knew that an organization like this existed before I arrived here."

Mr. Smalls, who credits former state Assemblyman Keith Wright with helping to connect him with PCMH, tries to take advantage of everything the Bronx Park East Residence has to offer. He participates in its many groups as often as possible, including a yoga group on Saturday, and another where he can discuss his disability with others who have similar conditions.

"The groups have given me a chance to vent and talk about my situation so I can better myself," he says. "I've learned from counseling that communication is one of the best keys you can use to come up with solutions."

When he's not participating in groups and other activities at the residence, Mr. Smalls keeps busy by assisting with sweeping and other jobs around the building, which he says helps him to stay positive. With the staff's aid and encouragement, he also strives to keep his regular appointments with his doctors. "When you live on the streets for decades, it's easy to end up in the hospital for all different types of reasons," he says. "I'm very thankful to have people to push me to keep myself healthy now that I'm in recovery."

Monthly gatherings, when he and other residents chip in for takeout food and watch a movie, are another highlight that Mr. Smalls looks forward to at Bronx Park East. He also enjoys cooking for himself—his favorite meal is chicken, rice and corn—in his apartment, which he takes pride in keeping spotless and where his 22-year-old daughter comes to visit him often.

"You never forget the bad days when you were homeless and didn't have a meal," he says. "Now I'm so grateful to have a beautiful place of my own."



Rosemarie Wright
Echo Place Residence

Rosemarie Wright's big, bright smile conveys the contentment she's felt since arriving at PCMH's Echo Place Residence on September 1, 2015. She came to Echo after living for almost 20 months at the Lenox Hill Shelter, and has embraced her new life at the residence from day one.

"The feeling of community at Echo is very cool," Ms. Wright says.

She keeps busy by attending her appointments, which include seeing her residential counselor twice a month, and also enjoys the Monday movie nights at Echo, as well as the weekend barbecues in the courtyard. Ms. Wright also appreciates how clean and secure her home is.

"It's very nice and I feel safe there," she says. "The staff runs a tight ship. I never have to look over my shoulder when I get off the elevator to make sure there's not someone in the hallway who isn't supposed to be there."

Born in Philadelphia, Ms. Wright appreciates the trips she occasionally takes to see her sister there—where she also gets to have a cheesesteak, her favorite sandwich. While she says she'd like to live more independently one day, she's grateful to have her own home where she can cook her favorite dishes, like oxtails and potatoes, and where her 28-year-old grandson—she has three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren—can visit her.

As she puts it, "My life's gotten better since I've been at Echo, most definitely."



Lenora Mack
Teller Residence

A resident of Teller Residence in the Bronx since it first opened eight years ago, Lenora Mack has thrived there ever since she arrived from Monica House, a community residence in Queens.

She's a big fan of the game nights, football nights, barbecues, and other events that Teller residents enjoy. "Lots of residents go to day programs," she explains. "But on the weekends the staff really tries to help everyone keep busy with activities."

Ms. Mack credits her participation in Teller's poetry group with aiding in her ongoing recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. "The poetry group has really helped me open up," she says.

The relationships she's established with the Teller staff have been another highlight of her time at the residence. "They're like my extended family—we don't always agree, but I'm grateful that they're always there for me," she says. "If residents need anything, we can always go to the staff, and if they can't help, they always know who to refer us to."

While Ms. Mack interacts with all the Teller counselors—"I'm like their bug," she laughs—she's grateful for her relationship with her primary counselor, Evelyn. "We have a great relationship and a great understanding," she says. "She gives me my space to make my mistakes, and she's there for me if I feel I'm slipping a little."

Ms. Mack just completed a basic computer refresher course, and hopes to return to work one day, though medical conditions including lupus and diabetes make employment difficult at the moment. But with the staff's help—and that of her father, whom she's very close with and talks to every day—she's embracing every new challenge.

"The staff doesn't let us make excuses," Ms. Mack explains. "They encourage us to do our best and take the most out of life."