OICH - Mission Primary Care Clinic

When?

The Mission Primary Care Clinic opened February 2007.

How?

The Mission is funding 100% of the operating costs of the Primary Care clinic for the first year. Mental health services have been seconded to the clinic from the Royal Ottawa Hospital. Dental services are being provided by volunteer dentists and are funded through donations and Mission fundraising efforts. Other services like foot care are provided by volunteers.

Who Does it Serve?

The Mission Primary Care Clinic is being established to provide quick access to primary and mental health care for people who are homeless and without health care services. The primary care clinic will serve adults who are living in a shelter, on the streets or in a rooming house provided they meet the acceptance criteria and are referred to the clinic. The goal of the clinic is to treat homeless people in a timely fashion reducing medical complications and linking them to health care on an ongoing basis.

Who Is Eligible for Services?

Those eligible for service includes people without a family doctor who are not eligible for services at a downtown community health centre. People who have a family doctor or, who are a client of a community health centre or, who do not have OHIP will be directed to their own family doctor or local community health centre as appropriate. People who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health and who are not able to access other mental health services can be assessed by the psychiatric nurse practitioner through a referral from the ROH Outreach team. The dental clinic will serve people living in shelters or on the streets. At this time we cannot accept working poor for dental care.

Who can make a referral?

Referrals to the clinic can be made by 1) shelter workers, 2) staff of day programs serving the homeless 3) nurses doing outreach to the homeless 4) CMHA outreach workers, 5) Rooming house outreach workers, 6) Wabano Outreach team, 7) CHC outreach teams 8) Oasis 9) Centre 507 outreach team 10) Options Bytown 11) self referral.

Providers can make referrals can be made on line using a system called CAISIE. You can also use this system to see if the client attended the clinic. Doctors and nurses working with the homeless can access patient/client charts using the OSCAR system. Training on this system is slowly being rolled out across the homeless sector. In the meantime, you can make a referral by sending the referral form with the client.
Who is Staffing the Primary Care Clinic?

The clinic will be staffed 5 days per week by a primary care nurse practitioner with telephone back up from a physician. Mental health services will be available one day per week from a psychiatric nurse practitioner with back up from a psychiatrist. Dental services are available Monday Tuesday Wednesday for half days. There will be an internist medical clinic once a week.

What Services are Provided?

Primary Care Patients needing assessment and treatment of non life threatening medical problems can be seen at the clinic. Immunization, injections, blood work and simple diagnostic procedures will be provided. Examples of health problems which could be referred to the clinic include: cough, colds, rashes, infections, wounds. Services will include completion of forms but not ODSP applications.

Mental Health Patients needing assessment, diagnosis, initiating medication, stabilization of medications, education about mental illness, education about the role of medications in managing mental illness, education about medication side effects can be seen at the clinic. The primary care clinic cannot provide crisis intervention, long term follow up or counseling. Clients who have been assessed by other mental health services can only be seen at the request of the mental health service providers.

Dental Care Patients with dental pain, abscesses, simple denture work, preventative dental care, extractions, some restorative work, fillings, and access to an oral surgeon who will attend the clinic periodically. Patients with an infection in their mouths should be referred to the primary care nurse practitioner for treatment of the infection prior to being booked for dental care.

Specialists An internist will provide clinics weekly based on referrals from the other practitioners. Other specialty clinics are being planned.

What is the duration of service?

Patients will be seen and treated for their health problems and, once the problem is resolved or, they are referred elsewhere for ongoing care, they will be discharged. There are only 20 spaces per day for primary care and 8 per day for mental health services so, it is very important to insure that the clinic remains accessible to those who do not have care.

What is the difference in the role of the nurses who do outreach to the shelters and the primary care clinic staff?

The role of the nurses who do outreach to the shelters has not changed. They will continue to be the first contact to the health care system for many homeless persons. The primary care clinic will support the excellent work of the outreach nurses by providing a resource where they can refer clients who need primary health care who would otherwise experience difficulty with access. Similarly, we hope that the outreach nurses will follow up on clients who have received treatment in the primary care clinic to insure that they are able to adhere to the recommended care.
**Do Patients Need ID?**

Patients do not need ID however, if they do not have a health card they will be welcome at a CHC. If they are on ODSP or other dental benefits, they should bring their dental benefit card to the dental clinic. Clients will need a drug card to obtain prescriptions.

**Can you prescribe narcotics or Methadone?**

The primary care nurse practitioner will not prescribe narcotics. Dentist may have to prescribe pain medications however, these prescriptions will be dispensed daily and patients will have to be assessed for pain each day in case their needs have changed. We cannot prescribe methadone.