

Milwaukee, Wisconsin – Lapham Park Venture

PROJECT SUMMARY

Assisted living communities offer support services and activities that give seniors a popular alternative to nursing home care. But such communities are expensive and out of reach for low-income seniors. Lapham Park, a public housing development in the City of Milwaukee, has addressed the problem by creating the nation's first assisted retirement community for low-income seniors, the Lapham Park Venture.

The Lapham Park Venture was the first assisted-living facility within a public housing development in the nation. More than 30 percent of its residents are over 70 years old, 98 percent are African-American, and over 74 percent of residents have a median annual income of less than \$8,000. Faced with an ever-shrinking pool of resources and a growing demand to meet the healthcare needs of elderly residents, stakeholders formed the Lapham Park Venture to bring together practitioners in planning, housing, gerontology, and social services to provide on-site integrated care. The Housing Authority raised over \$1.3 million in a capital campaign to renovate the building's basement to evoke the atmosphere of a 1930s Milwaukee streetscape. The clinical space includes exam rooms, a therapeutic bathing space, and an exercise room.

The Venture brought together experts and practitioners in housing, healthcare, social services, and gerontology using a continuing care model to coordinate and deliver health and social services to residents who live at Lapham Park. The flexibility offered by the use of waivers in the Medicaid and Medicare funding provided options for the long term care to help elderly age in place.

The Venture's program of consumer-focused healthcare has produced results. Nursing home placements have fallen from five percent to less than two percent a year. Some 75 percent of residents have their needs met at the facility. On-site services for independent living permit 96 percent of residents to age in place because evictions for behavioral problems or inability to pay rent has drastically been reduced. Taxpayers also win as public dollars are saved through increased efficiency and smarter use of resources. The Venture has reduced Medicaid nursing home costs by over \$1 million a year.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin – Lapham Park Venture

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The increasing need for long-term care services continues to create significant budget concerns for Federal and State governments. Financing acute care is largely the responsibility of Medicare and the federal government, while long-term care financing is the primary venue of Medicaid and state governments.

Long-term care services for seniors represent a substantial share of total health care spending in the United States and is an area of major concern for state policymakers. Nursing home and home health care accounted for almost 12 percent of personal health expenditures in 2005, and they were approximately 14 percent of all state and local health care spending. Neither private insurance nor Medicare covers long-term care to any significant extent, and few older adults have private long-term care insurance. The disabled elderly must rely on their own resources or, when these resources are depleted, turn to Medicaid or state-funded programs to pay for their long-term care. The high cost of long-term care is enormous, a year stay in a nursing home in Wisconsin in 2006 cost \$72,635. (*Source: Genworth Financial 2006 Cost of Care Survey, Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Facilities and Home Care Providers, March, 2006*)

Medicaid coverage for long-term care provides a safety net for the middle class as well as the poor. The total amount spent on long-term care services in the United States (in 2003) was \$183 billion. On an aggregate basis, the biggest share, 48 percent, is paid for by Medicaid, and at least 60 percent of people over age 65 will require some long-term care services at some point in their lives. And, contrary to what many people believe, Medicare and private health insurance programs do not pay for the majority of long-term care services that most people need

Public housing is the largest federal program offering housing assistance to low-income elders. For many, it offers a form of security every bit as indispensable as their retirement income. It can be their only bulwark against fear of homelessness, institutionalization, and isolation. But the elderly resident population is changing radically, bringing new challenges to public housing providers. These residents are not only poorer than the general senior population, they are also older, disproportionately minority and female, have few if any financial resources and are more likely to be alone. The population served by the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) was and remains very reflective of this population.

Public housing did not originally target older Americans at all. The situation began to shift in 1956 when Congress for the first time gave preference to seniors in public housing. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, a large number of developments were built specifically for low-income seniors. With very few exceptions, these were traditional apartments. While adequate for the majority of low-income older residents, this housing no longer provides the flexibility to allow residents to age in place, nor does it necessarily provide the range of housing options needed to serve the increasing share of frail seniors.

A significant portion of public housing for the elderly is rapidly becoming physically and functionally obsolete. Most developments are simply not equipped to meet the residential and

supportive service needs of their increasingly frail and diverse residents. Without these services, the only alternative can be moving people into expensive, costly, and isolated institutions. People can be devastated by unnecessary institutionalization, and services provided in nursing homes are also far more costly than those offered in other settings. As a result of these changing demographics, elders have become “housing burdened” or victims of “treat or eat” whereby elderly residents are forced to choose between treating a medical condition or eating.

HACM and other stakeholders serving the elderly and disabled population began to notice the rapid decline in the health of older adults in 1991, along with the scattered, duplicative, or lack of services available to this vulnerable population.

Created in 1991, the Lapham Park Venture became a synergy of public, private, and nonprofit investment, drawing on the contributions of experts and practitioners in housing, medicine, and social services. HACM provided the infrastructure for the Venture and managed the renovation of the building space.



The space as it was prior to the Lapham Park Venture

The Founding Members of the Venture were HACM, SET Ministry, Milwaukee County Department on Aging (MCDA), Community Care Organization (CCO), Marquette University School of Nursing, Columbia-St. Mary’s Family Practice Residency Program and the Alzheimer’s Association – Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter “Circle of Friends.”

Program operations were funded with monies from the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Using the existing funding resources of MCDA and the Older Americans Act, the Community Options Program and Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Support and SET Ministry, staff were able to serve over 50 residents with a wide array of complex long term care needs.

The Venture Partners agreed that SET Ministry, with its successful outreach and health promotion programs, was a logical choice to be the lead agency for the Lapham Park Venture. In the role of lead agency SET Ministry is responsible for on-site case management for residents and inter-agency coordination, communication and collaboration with Venture agencies. MCDA contracts with SET Ministry to provide case management services to Lapham residents which reduced the number of MCDA case workers at Lapham Park from 22 to 1. In addition to case management services, SET Ministry staff is responsible for case-finding and outreach.

Following an initial assessment, a care plan is designed with the resident. The care plan may include housekeeping chores, personal care, medication management, Lifeline, or other supports. The care plan is the basis through which other Venture partners are engaged to provide services to residents. SET Ministry provides service to all residents of Lapham Park, regardless of age or frailty. Some residents may receive only information and referral service, blood pressure checks or medication checks, while other residents may choose to only participate in recreational activities, the meal program or exercise activities. Residents choose their level of involvement with the Venture, knowing they can increase or decrease their involvement at any time.

Community Care Organization's (CCO's) role in the Venture is to provide community-based care for elderly and disabled persons functionally eligible for nursing home care. CCO consumers are supported in their choice to receive care in their desired living situation - at home in Lapham Park. In return for capitated payments from Medicare and Medicaid, CCO is responsible for all acute, primary, specialty and long term care for the consumer. This care is managed by an interdisciplinary team consisting of the consumer, a geriatric nurse practitioner, social worker, RN and a medical assistant. CCO contracts with physicians, who serve as primary physicians or specialty physicians and with other vendors as needed - physical therapist, nutritionist, podiatrist, or dentist. Enrollment in CCO is voluntary and consumers can disenroll at any time. CCO accepts referrals from all other Venture Partners, including self-referrals and referrals from family or friends.

Through a contractual agreement with CCO, Columbia-St. Mary's Family Practice Residency Program provides physician care on-site at the Venture clinic. Lapham Park residents can see their physician in the clinic either by appointment or as a walk-in. Physicians also make home visits to residents at Lapham Park. The CCO Geriatric Nurse Practitioner or SET Ministry staff apprise the physicians of any health changes or concerns they have about any of the residents.

The Senior Meal Program is funded and monitored by MCDA with Goodwill providing the staff and day-to-day operation of the program. All Lapham Park residents are eligible to participate in the congregate meal program, regardless of age. Because the majority of residents at Lapham Park are age 60 or older, program rules permit younger disabled persons to participate in the meal program as well. An important aspect of the meal program is the volunteer support from

residents. Volunteers assist with serving meals, clean-up and the carry meals to residents who find it difficult to ambulate to the congregate meal site in the building.

The Alzheimer’s Association – Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter “Circle of Friends” is a multi-faceted program that helps residents stay alert, intellectually stimulated, and socially active through educational programming, arts, crafts and music. Programs help to enhance the quality of life for residents and include information on political issues, grassroots advocacy, personal reminiscences and intergenerational events. Circle of Friends also serves as an ongoing assessment tool for identifying and monitoring dementia among the Lapham Park residents. Residents are referred to the Circle of Friends through SET Ministry or CCO. MCDA provides the funding for Circle of Friends.

Following are photos of the renovated Lapham Park Facility, the area is known as the “town square” and was funded with over \$1.3 million in public and private sector funding. These financial partners included the: Helen Bader Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Jane B. Pettit Foundation, M & I Foundation, Milwaukee County Community Development Block Grant Office, and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.



Residents of Lapham Park enjoying an activity at the “Town Square”



Dr. LaShan meeting with a resident at Lapham Park to discuss his health needs.



Assistant Secretary for Aging at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Josefina G. Carbonell, visiting the Lapham Park Venture.

The Lapham Park Resident Organization (RO) has been involved with the Venture since its inception. RO representatives meet with Venture partners on a regular basis to insure that programs and services are culturally sensitive and meet the needs of the Lapham Park residents.

Representatives from the RO were part of the design team for Lower Walnut Street and have been involved in the strategic planning of the Venture. The Resident Organization acts as a referral source for Venture agencies and provides an important link for their neighbors who are reluctant or apprehensive about engaging Venture services for themselves.

Innovation: Assisted living communities offer support services and activities that give seniors a popular alternative to nursing home care. But such communities are expensive and out of reach for low-income seniors. Lapham Park, a public housing development in the City of Milwaukee, has addressed the problem by creating the nation's first assisted retirement community for low-income seniors. The Venture has brought together experts and practitioners in housing, medicine, social service, and gerontology using a continuing care model to coordinate and deliver health and social services to low-income older adults who live in public housing. The flexibility offered by the use of waivers in the Medicaid and Medicare funding provides options for long term care and helps elderly to age in place

Strategy: Created in 1991, the Venture was a synergy of public, private, and nonprofit investment, drawing on the contributions of experts and practitioners in housing, healthcare, social service, and gerontology. The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee provides building space for the Lapham Park Venture, managed the renovation of the facility and collaborates with program partners in the delivery of service to residents. With funding from the Medicare and Medicaid programs, the Community Care Organization provides community-based, long-term care services on site to frail residents who otherwise would qualify for care in a nursing home. Milwaukee County Department on Aging funds a congregate meal site, transportation for residents and case management services, which are provided by S.E.T. Ministry. All residents have access to on-site physician services provided by Columbia-St. Mary's Family Practice Clinic, funded mainly by the Medicaid program. Residents never face a waiting list for services meaning they are able to age in place and in better health. The Venture is being replicated in other housing authorities in the nation, and is being replicated at 2 other housing developments managed by the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee. The Venture's focus of providing consumer-focused health care has produced remarkable results. Nursing home placements have fallen from five to less than two percent a year. Some 75 percent of residents have their needs met through Venture services. On-site services for independent living permits 96 percent of residents to age in place. In addition, the number of evictions because of behavioral problems or the inability to pay rent has dropped. Taxpayers also win as public dollars are saved through increased efficiency and a smarter use of resources. We estimate that the Venture has reduced Medicaid nursing home costs by over \$1 million a year.

Future impact: The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee focused the work of practitioners in gerontology, housing, healthcare and social services to provide integrated, consumer-centered care to low-income frail elderly living in public housing. The Lapham Park Venture is a replicable model that prevents the premature and unnecessary placement of frail elderly in nursing homes by redirecting existing resources and funding to help elderly age-in-place. The Venture has assisted residents in remaining in their own homes, while saving substantial dollars in Medicaid nursing homes costs. Elderly who need long-term care encounter a coordinated financing system, along with a seamless service delivery system. Integrated

systems of financing for long term care and services reduces costs while providing maximum choice for older adults.

Sustainability: The Wisconsin Medicaid agency helped both in planning and operating the Venture, by approving and implementing the use of waivers for long term health care. Milwaukee County Department on Aging funds a congregate meal site, transportation for residents and case management services, which are provided by S.E.T. Ministry. S.E.T. Ministry provides other social services on site as well, and receives private donations to help fund some of these services. Community Care Organization provides community-based, long-term care services on site to frail residents who otherwise would qualify for care in a nursing home. Access to on-site physician services provided by Columbia-St. Mary's Family Practice Clinic is funded mainly by the Medicaid program. Marquette University has student nurses available for hands-on public health care training. One factor that helped ensure the success of the program is that early in the process, Venture partners included residents in the planning process.

Documented Outcomes for the Lapham Park Venture to date:

For the Residents

- ▮ A service enriched environment
- ▮ Early identification of needs
- ▮ Wellness and prevention activities on-site that promote functionality
- ▮ Builds community
- ▮ Continuity of care increases compliance with treatment and medication protocols
- ▮ Builds resident leadership capacity
- ▮ Encourages a higher standard of behavior and civility within the building
- ▮ Provides access to quality and culturally sensitive care
- ▮ Provides the opportunity to age-in-place
- ▮ Provides access to health, recreation and social programs without any increased cost to the resident

For the Venture Partners

- ▮ Strengthens community partnerships and enhances knowledge across interdisciplinary fields
- ▮ Reduces the need for public dollars
- ▮ Enhances professional understanding of patients within their home environment and the special challenges facing impoverished, frail seniors
- ▮ Supports each agency's ability to carry out their professional mission and vision
- ▮ Provides a continuum of care with traditional amenities for low-income older adults by reallocating limited financial resources
- ▮ Enhances agency's reputation within the community and on a national level

Achieved Goals and Objectives

- ▮ 96% of the residents are able to age-in-place as desired
- ▮ 75% of the residents are able to have their needs met
- ▮ 91% of resident experiencing lease violations, preserved their tenancy through Venture Services
- ▮ Over \$1 million saved in Medicaid nursing home costs on an annual basis



Sr. Lucina Halbur, President & CEO of SET Ministry, Commissioner Rocky Marcoux City of Milwaukee, and Maria Rodriguez Family Services Manager accepting the American Planning Award for Social Advocacy for the Lapham Park Venture.