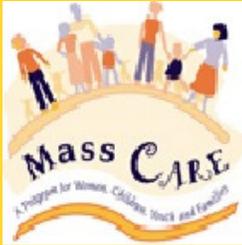


MassCARE Newsletter

February 2016

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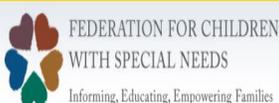


Key Components of MassCARE

- ✂ Consumer Programs for Women, Youth and Families
- ✂ Medical & Care Coordination Services
- ✂ Case Management
- ✂ Peer Services
- ✂ Access to HIV-Related Medical Care

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The Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) publishes the MassCARE Newsletter bi-annually - Stay Connected!

Greater Lawrence Family Health Center MassCARE Services

The mission of the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center (GLFHC) is to improve and maintain the health of individuals and families in the Merrimack Valley by providing a network of high quality, comprehensive health care services and by training health care professionals to respond to the needs of a culturally diverse population. For nearly 30 years, GLFHC's presence in the city of Lawrence has ensured that the indigent, minorities, and working poor have access to quality primary health care. The city's 72,043 residents live within its seven square miles, making it



one of the most densely populated urban communities in the country (2000 U.S. Census). More than 51 percent of Lawrence residents live below the federal poverty levels and nearly 60 percent of the population is Latino – the city has the largest proportion of Hispanics than any Massachusetts community.

The MassCARE program at

GLFHC is integrated into the highly successful HIV program as part of their Community Support Services Department. MassCARE clients have a dedicated Medical Case Manager (*see highlight on Karina Solis on page 3*) and also have access to the full range of services provided by their Ryan White Part A and C programs including transportation, Peer Support, nutrition, Care Coordination, pharmacy, prevention and education and primary care. MassCARE clients have access to primary medical care including Obstetrical care at one of their six primary care sites; they also have access to HIV specialty care.

Interview with Donna Picard: Award Winning Nurse, Retires After 23 Years of Care and Service for Mothers and Children with HIV/AIDS



Donna Picard, RN

When did you start working with MassCARE? 1992. I was employed by Lowell Community Health Center with collaboration with Greater Lawrence Family Health Center and came to be the nurse at the two sites.

What did the disease look like at that time with those you were caring for? There were five positive children in each site from 11 months to 7 years old; a couple were very sick with respiratory and neurologic deficits due to the

impact of the virus. I knew several of these children because I was the pediatric nurse manager at Lawrence General and took care of them when they were hospitalized.

How about the women? Confidentiality was a huge issue for them. To protect their privacy, the Lawrence MassCARE pediatric HIV clinic was held on Wednesday mornings when the Health Center site was closed so no one would see the women or their children. Later we arranged for a Family Practice provider to see the mom (or the pregnant women) at the same time so she would not have to come to the Health Center during regular hours.

Anything else that stands out from the early years? Lowell had a challenge as its practice included adult medicine and pediatrics only; no Obstetrics (OB) on staff. At that time they could not find an OB provider willing to be the point person for the program. They did not want to be known as the doctor caring for HIV positive women.

What's changed? What's stayed the same? The biggest change is the simplification of HIV medications to one pill once a day, rather than 13 pills multiple times a day. What has stayed the same is stigma and fear of disclosure.

"continued on page 2"



Donna Picard, BSN, RN
Nurse Medical Manager for
the MassCARE Program
and Manager of HIV
Clinical Services at GLFHC
since 1992.

*"The University of
Massachusetts
program and
Donna Picard were
significant contributors
to advances in the
treatment of HIV
infection in pregnant
women which has
almost completely
eliminated
maternal-infant
HIV transmission."*

Dr. John Sullivan (2010)

*"Donna Picard's
dedication was a
pivotal part of the
reason that no children
have been born with
HIV in Lawrence for
more than a decade,
and none of our female
patients have given
birth to an HIV
infected baby since
1994."*

GLFHC's Award Winning
Nurses (2010)

*"Donna is truly the
mother of MassCARE.
She provided MANY
years of advocacy,
leadership and
commitment which
have had a real impact
on the program and
our consumers across
the state."*

Sandra Broughton, MHA
Director, MassCARE
(2016)

Continued from page one Interview with Donna Picard

How will we end stigma? The only way it will change is when the HIV+ community steps up and says "we're living with HIV". It has to come from them. As long as people are hidden, others don't think they have to come out. Then the general public thinks it's "those people" who have HIV, and no one in "my world" has it. It will change when someone they know and care about lives with HIV.

What is your best memory? Overall the depth of relationships with clients. Watching kids through all stages of development. Mostly that they're around! I thought I'd be doing pediatric hospice, and am happy that only three children died in my 23 years.

What did you hope to accomplish and do you think you accomplished it? I personally grew tremendously with this position. I'm painfully shy and I did things I never thought I'd do, like public speaking. I also never thought I'd be doing this for this long. I'm glad the Program is still around, but it makes me sad there is a need for the program to be around and that there still are newly diagnosed young people, and pregnant women still diagnosed in pregnancy.

Do you have any advice for new MassCARE staff? I would say to learn the history of the HIV epidemic – through books and movies. Also the classic thing of listening and meeting people where they are.

What will you miss the most? And the least? What I will miss the most are my interactions with clients. What I will miss the least is the reporting! Especially the data collection by hand.

Does it feel weird not to receive phone calls from providers needing your help? Yes, it does feel very strange, a feeling like I'm not needed.

What will you be doing in retirement? I don't want to lose my HIV/AIDS growing knowledge base, so I plan to stay current and continue to participate in the AIDS Education and Training Centers. I will also be doing per diem work at GLFHC to assist with transition to a new manager as well as per diem at Lawrence General; and I'm also in process of becoming a Casa volunteer at the Department of Children and Families as a Special Advocate for children. There is also a new detox center for women in Lowell and I'll be volunteering there.

How about for fun? Cleaning closets in my house – and also travelling.

We hope you'll stay involved with MassCARE. Absolutely; I plan to stay involved with the Health Fair, and the One Love conference.

Any final thoughts? I am very proud to have been in the MassCARE program, and to see it evolve and still thriving.

Interview conducted by: Sandra Broughton & Margarita Diaz

Annual MassCARE Health and Fitness Fair

MassCARE held its 5th annual Health and Fitness Fair (HFF) at an amazing new venue, the Cedardale Convention Center



Cedardale Convention Center

in Groveland on August 22nd. MassCARE's annual Health & Fitness Fair (HFF) with 106 consumers in attendance this year, provides the community with a wonderful forum to access education and the opportunity to be a community. Each year, MassCARE invites local health and wellness organizations to widen the scope of resources available to consumers and help raise awareness of the various supportive

agencies in their communities. This year we had thirteen interactive exhibitors' tables ranging from sexual health, family planning, and healthy relationships; to nutrition, diabetes, and mental health; to money management, fitness, and yoga.

MassCARE launched the HFF health screenings in 2012 which has now become an integral part of the day. Each year we have added various screenings to support health and wellness for our consumers. In August we had a total of eight health screenings relevant to the MassCARE consumers including: oral health, blood pressure, BMI, Type-II diabetes, hepatitis, HIV, alcohol/drug abuse/misuse, and mental health. The oral health screenings provided by



Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine

the BU School of Dental Health, saw 22 people ages 3yrs. to 60yrs, some of whom attended the 2014 HFF and are now demonstrating significant improved oral health. Many of the children also learned how to brush the teeth of a T-Rex dinosaur and went home with their own oral health kit while others made a tooth necklace to wear home. A prevention dental plan was prepared for each person screened to discuss with their doctors.

We also had health and wellness presentations related to supporting behavioral changes. Similar to previous years, the health fair provided three wellness presentations based on consumer feedback: oral health, smoking cessation, and nutrition.

With a last jump in the pool and a celebration cake we closed our HFF with wishful anticipation of the 2016 HFF. → Stay tuned for HFF 2016 plans.

What does MassCARE mean to you?: Community Voices



Recently we asked MassCARE consumers to share with us "What does MassCARE mean to you?". Their responses were inspiring and the following list includes some of the

most common responses:

- An organization that helps out.
- Learn new things every time.
- MassCARE means that I am not alone and that there are people that care for me.
- Family time.

- Togetherness.
- My advocates are my lifelines.
- MassCARE is support for my family.
- Health awareness.
- Helping the community to take the initiative with their own health.

HFF Survey (2015)

It Takes a Village: MassCARE Staff Voices



Karina Solis
MassCARE Coordinator

When I took the position as a MassCARE Coordinator for GLFHC, back in February 2015, I must say I was a little nervous. I have worked with many different types of populations, from homelessness, substance abuse, brain injury, autism, mental health, prenatal, and special education. However, I had never worked with the HIV population and knew very little regarding HIV medications, programs, services, etc. Although I had very little knowledge in this field I decided to take the challenge and learn something new; I have and I am glad I did.

I know today that those who live with HIV are

members of every population and they are less of a unique population, but a real community of women, men and youth from every walk of life with their own challenges of fear, stigma, and discrimination. Those living with HIV are members of our families, neighborhoods, and circle of friends because HIV does not discriminate and anyone can become part of this community if one is not educated about HIV viral transmission and prevention; I teach about this now.

Education has always been central in my life. I hold a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business with a concentration in Health Care Management and I am currently pursuing a graduate degree at Southern New Hampshire University in

Clinical Mental Health Counseling, specializing in Adult Substance Abuse. On the one hand, my educational background has given me the strength, knowledge, wisdom, faith, hope, and courage to develop and utilize my learned skills to help others find their inner strength, faith, hope and courage to do and achieve things they never thought they could. On the other hand, I have learned so much from my clients of how not to take the little things in life for granted and how strong they truly are to stand up for themselves; they have even taught me the valuable skill of self-expression to find my voice.

My job is rewarding and I am grateful I am part of the MassCARE team.

Engage Educate Empower / The MassCARE Way

Do you like art or music? Do you enjoy expressing yourself creatively? Do you have a message you want to share with your community? Do you want to have fun and hang out with your peers?

If you've answered yes to ANY of these questions, then MassSTYLE is for you!

Fresh for 2016, we are rolling out a new youth-focused initiative that incorporates **Art, Music, and Leadership** into one

cohesive activity! The goal of this program is capture youth voices and ideas, and channel it in a project (song or art) that youth can be proud of and share with their community!

Youth who participate in this program can look forward to developing a number of leadership skills:

- ✓ Critical & Creative Thinking
- ✓ Project Management Skills

- ✓ Self-Confidence
- ✓ Listening/Communication Skills
- ✓ Goal Setting Skills & Follow Through
- ✓ Collaboration/Team Work

If you are interested in participating in our programming, please reach out to your local MassCARE Coordinator or Peer for more details!

Kepler Jeudy at kepler@nextstepnet.org.



Leah Marie
MassCARE Peer Advocate

Voices that Matter: More From the Community

Why I am a MassCARE Peer...

- I am a peer to help people in their journey.
- To have a place at the table, and to be heard.
- To be able to look in someone's eyes and give them HOPE.

- To be able to learn and to be able to educate.
- I am a peer to give people affiliation, instrumental, informational, and emotional support.

**"We are not HIV,
we are women living with HIV."**



MassCARE (Massachusetts Community AIDS Resource Enhancement)

MassCARE is a statewide program which provides access to coordinated, comprehensive, family-centered, culturally and linguistically competent medical care, social service support and peer services for women, infants, children and youth living with HIV and their affected family members. MassCARE promotes early identification and enhances available care in a community-based setting with an HIV medical home approach. It is funded under Part D of the Federal Ryan White Program and is located at Federally-qualified community health centers in four sites.

MassCARE Community Sites

Brockton Neighborhood Health Center
Family Health Center, Worcester
Greater Lawrence Family Health Center
Lowell Community Health Center

MassCARE Consumer Programs

Federation for Children with Special Needs:

Women & Their Families Program

Next Step: MassSTYLE Youth & Families Program

MassCARE Contact Information

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Save the Dates for Upcoming MassCARE Events:

- **May 17th:** Worcester Empowerment Women's Program
- **May 31st:** Brockton Empowerment Women's Program
- **April 19th:** MassSTYLE Statewide Youth Event
- **June 7th:** Lawrence Empowerment Women's Program
- **August/TBA:** Annual Health & Fitness Fair in Groveland

Contact your coordinator / peer leader for more information.

MassCARE Sites

Brockton Neighborhood Health Center

63 Main Street
Brockton, MA 02301
Contact: Leila Depina
Phone (508) 894-3569
Fax (508) 559-1158
Email: depinal@bnhc.org

Family Health Center Worcester

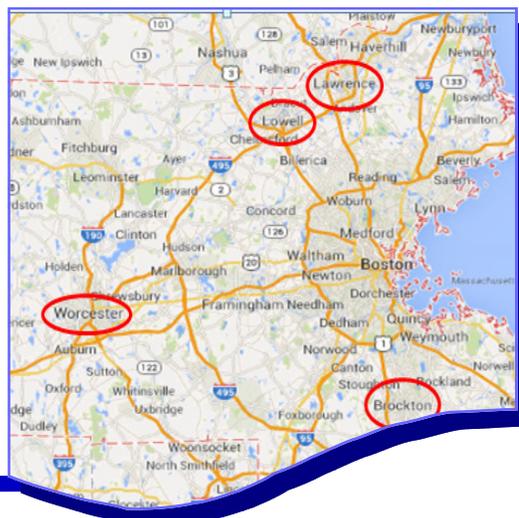
26 Queen St
Worcester, MA 01610
Contact: Joyce Vincente-Bachier
Phone (508) 860-7892
Fax (508) 860-7865
E-mail: Joyce.Vincente-BachierFHCW@umassmed.edu

Lowell Community Health Center

161 Jackson Street
Lowell, MA 01852
Contact: Carmen Bedard
Phone (978) 322-8664
Fax (978) 970-0057
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Greater Lawrence Family Health Center

73 D Winthrop Ave - Plaza 114
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