



LAWNDALE CHRISTIAN  
**HEALTH CENTER**

*Loving God. Loving People.*



**2020 SUMMER NEWSLETTER**

## LETTER FROM THE CEO



Dear LCHC Partners,

Our routine Summer Newsletter is being sent at a time when most of our routines have vanished. The past five months have been significant. We've been challenged in so many different ways. As you read through this newsletter, I don't think you'll find many surprises; the past several months of your lives have been similarly challenged. This newsletter touches on our perspective of what has been a collective experience.

Our staff members have responded to the challenges of 2020 with courage and creativity. I think it is fair to say that the emotions of fear, exhilaration, and exhaustion have accompanied our efforts. It has not been easy.

The Black Lives Matter movement and the disparities of COVID-19 have reminded us that in the body of Christ, if one part suffers, every part suffers with it. This idea is echoed in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous words, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Wearing a mask and declaring that Black Lives Matter are both powerful statements that recognize our common humanity and promote justice and health.

As we look to the future, MLK's wisdom should guide each of us. Each day I hope we'll find the courage to engage the words that form our mission, "to show and share the love of Jesus." We are each only one, but together we form a community capable of impacting our culture and our health.

Thank you for partnering with us.

Bruce Miller  
CEO, Lawndale Christian Health Center

# HOPE IN A PANDEMIC

“We’re available here for our community, and they trust us.”  
- Sheba Gandham, RN



Responding to the viral challenge of COVID-19 has required immense flexibility, care, and compassion from our entire staff. We’ve completely reimagined and restructured how we run our clinics to make sure patients and staff are safe and the community has access to the medical care they need.

Part of the reimagined LCHC includes COVID-19 testing. We have two drive up testing sites, along with a mobile van doing rapid tests for residents of homeless shelters throughout the city.

**3,915**  
Tests

**852**  
Positive tests

**15%**  
14-Day Positivity Rate

To avoid interrupting our essential ongoing care, we implemented telehealth visits so that our patients can have an appointment with their provider while staying safely at home. Six months ago, our providers weren’t doing a single telehealth visit. Now, we have 400 virtual visits per day to monitor patients’ chronic conditions, update medications, and check in on their mental health.

**23,890**  
Medical Telehealth Visits

**4,067**  
Behavioral Telehealth Visits

With less in-person interaction, patients need constant access to up to date information and guidance from medical professionals. We’ve taken over 39,000 patient calls in the last three months, with medical providers and nurses available to speak with any patient with COVID-19 symptoms. We’ve redoubled our communication efforts across our websites, social media, and email newsletters to more than 24,000 patients.

As a healthcare provider, we are honored to be able to serve our beloved patients and community despite the challenges of the pandemic. As some of our staff have said, “This is what we’re here for.”

# SERVING AT HOTEL 166



For over three decades, Heather Duncan, FNP, has cared for people experiencing homelessness in Chicago. Her relationships with patients and her dedication to their wellbeing have made her deeply aware of the unique challenges faced by this population. "You can't talk about healthcare for the homeless without talking about housing, social determinants of health, and all the other underlying factors. We have to remember the stressful position our patients are in."

On a normal workday, Heather can be found at shelters around Chicago, providing medical care with LCHC's Mobile Health Team. In the current pandemic environment, she is part of the team of LCHC providers caring for homeless patients at a boutique hotel in downtown Chicago.

The Hotel 166 program – temporary housing for high-risk residents of homeless shelters – has garnered local and national attention. The Chicago Tribune and The Wall Street Journal are among the publications that have reported on this unique effort. From the inside, Heather reminds us that the patient experience is complex. "The people staying here are high risk due to their age, medical conditions, or both. They'll continue to be high risk for something even when COVID is no longer a threat." Their need is not just for stable housing, but for the type of care that allows them to stabilize their medical and mental health as well. "It needs to be the whole package in order for them to be successful," she says.

As our staff works hard to meet the acute needs of the men and women staying in the hotel, they also prioritize fun and social interaction. The patients get fresh air each day on the hotel's rooftop and enjoy exercise and dance – individually and in small groups. Medical rounds are more than just a time for taking vitals – these face-to-face interactions allow patients and staff to share laughs, stories, updates, and in the case of one imaginative patient, his well-loved magic tricks.

"One of the providers took me to my storage unit to be reunited with my guitar and my magic gear," Nathan shared. "I was asked to perform for the other residents on the hotel roof. I did about seven shows over two days." Nathan is a skilled performer and artist – classically trained in guitar and perfecting his sleight of hand. He currently has two shows booked later this year, which he hopes won't be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

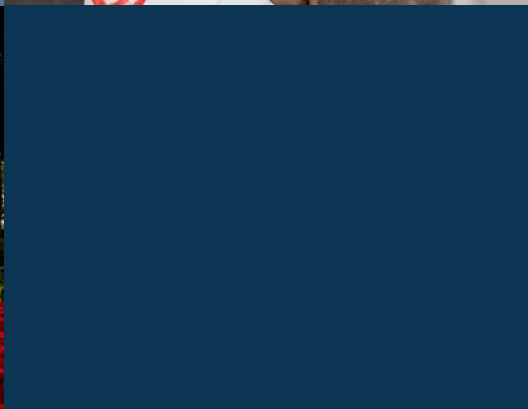
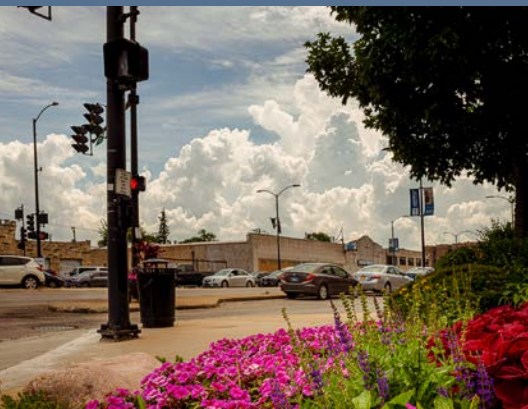
As is the goal for each of the remaining patients at the hotel, LCHC staff are working to secure a lease for Nathan to move into a place of his own. While he is quick to show gratitude for his time at the hotel, he is excited to have more independence and to see friends and family again.

Nathan's presence has truly blessed the staff and other patients at Hotel 166. He freely shares his passion for memorizing Scripture, encouraging both himself and others with God's Word. Despite the challenges of isolation, he maintains hope that he will be able to flourish no matter where life takes him.

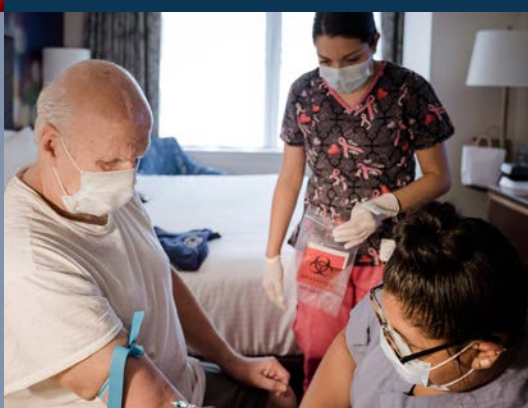


“We’re honored to serve our beloved patients despite the challenges of the pandemic.”

“These conversations highlighted the beautiful diversity within our health center.”



“It’s allowing people to see a little deeper into homelessness.”



# BLACK LIVES MATTER



This spring, the realities of systemic racial injustice, known all too well on Chicago's West Side, were highlighted globally following the tragic murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. In outrage and in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, many LCHC staff joined the protests that followed, demanding justice for these violent acts and calling for reform to systems that perpetuate racial injustices. Our neighborhood, patients and staff represent the Black community, so these violent acts hit particularly close to home at LCHC. Our Leadership Team and Board of Directors released a joint statement regarding the clinic's stance on the acts of injustice:

*"LCHC was founded to address the racial inequities in healthcare in Chicago. This continues to be our core contribution to the work of seeking the just welfare of our city. Speaking out against systems and acts of racism and injustice is central to our core values as a community organization and our commitment as Christians.*

*We draw conviction from Jesus' words: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34). In this love, we boldly declare: Black lives matter. Black lives matter to us. Black lives are loved by God."*

Chicago health data shows that majority black communities on the West Side — including North Lawndale — have a life expectancy as many as 15 years fewer than majority white communities in the city. Growing up just three miles west on Roosevelt Road should not remove more than a decade from the average child's life expectancy.

While this is but one example of the staggering effects of systemic injustice in Chicago, our mission to provide quality healthcare offers a powerful opportunity to work towards justice in our neighborhood.

In addition to our public outcry, we have also taken this time to invest internally, encouraging discussions among staff regarding racial diversity. LCHC hosted weekly videoconferences titled 'My Neighbor', in which staff of differing racial backgrounds discussed their own race and how it impacts their work, faith, and community life. While there is work left to be done within our organization, these conversations highlighted the beautiful diversity within our health center which strengthens our ability to "Love God and Love People" together.

We will continue celebrating the diversity of our staff and community while actively seeking justice in the health and wellness of our neighbors. As Pastor James Brooks said in his introduction to the 'My Neighbor' series, "We want to get to know our neighbors better. We want to be a good neighbor."

*You can find LCHC's full statement on our website at [Lawndale.org/publications](https://www.lawndale.org/publications).*