

'Medical respite' offers a place in US cities battling homelessness

WASHINGTON: Henry Jones had been living on the streets of Washington, DC for more than a decade when his health finally started failing. Sick, suffering from alcoholism, and increasingly unable to walk, he sought to check into an emergency room in the US capital - but intake workers there refused to admit him, he said, because he did not have an acute condition. He was at risk of falling through a major hole in the social safety net.

A case worker told him he could go to a shelter, where he could at least get a bed for a few nights. Or he could try another option: a small organization that offered medical services to the homeless, as well as a place to simply rest. Jones went with the second option, an organization called Christ House that gave him medical care and a bed to sleep in. Later, it helped him stop drinking, get a permanent home - and even a job. "Being on the street, people look down on you, thinking that's the way you're going to live the rest of your life," said Jones, who now works at Christ House.

"And that's what makes Christ House much different from any other place: The people help you get back up on your feet," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, sitting next to the showers that he oversees for use by homeless people. Founded in 1985, Christ House was one of the first places in the country to offer a service that is increasingly being embraced in cities nationwide: medical respite, or recuperative care, which seeks to fill a gap between what emergency rooms and shelters can provide.

"This is a gray area: If you're housed, you'd be discharged from a hospital and given instructions to stay off your feet," said Julia Dobbins of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council (NHCHC) umbrella group, which published standards on the issue in 2016. "But people without homes don't have a safe, clean place to recover, and that's a gap in care," she added.

While homeless shelters exist across the United States, these typically close during the daytime, Dobbins said: "We criminalize homelessness in this country, so people can't lay around - they have to be up and moving." Respite facilities offer rest and recuperation, but also give workers a chance to see what support patients might qualify for, connect them to other services, and generally offer them "time to think about what is the next step in their life," she said.

Complicated cases

Christ House said it is an unusually expensive operation, offering 24-hour medical care, housing and more. Medical director and co-founder Janelle Goetcheus recalled one resident last year who before coming to the centre had been living on a park bench near a local hospital - and going back and forth for cancer radiation treatment.

Christ House gave the man a place to stay during his treatment and facilitated his trips to the hospital. Some patients' needs are straightforward, said Goetcheus: for instance, a woman has surgery on her leg and needs a

place to mend for a few weeks, the type of rest she would not be able to get at a shelter or on the street. Other cases are far more complicated, involving multiple acute and chronic illnesses and mental health problems, often exacerbated by years of sleeping rough, substance abuse and lack of medical attention.

Goetcheus said that since the early days when Henry Jones came to the organization, the health problems plaguing Washington's homeless population have worsened. This is particularly true for the increasing numbers of homeless elderly people, those with mental health problems and undocumented migrants, for whom complex medical care is often impossible, she added. "For the hospitals, there is a lot of pressure to have very discreet (specific) admissions for acute medical needs and then get people discharged," she said. "So more people are ending up on the street."

Struggle for funding

Medical respite programs have grown by about a third since 2012, going from 60 to 80 initiatives nationwide, according to the NHCHC. Yet nationally, programs vary widely, with little agreement even on what medical respite means, although that is starting to change.

But there is growing consensus among researchers that the approach appears to offer significant cost savings for hospital systems and public coffers. In one 2018 study, researchers with Brandeis University in Massachusetts

found that respite programs could save several thousands of dollars per hospital patient by cutting down on expensive readmissions. As yet, however, long-term funding remains the single biggest obstacle for respite programs, according to health and homelessness experts.

Most respite projects have an average of three funders, said Dobbins, and the vast majority of respite centers are unable to bill the federal government as medical providers, so they depend on philanthropy and a patchwork of public and other funding sources. Sean Barry, a spokesman for the American Hospital Association, said the industry group does not have a public stance on medical respite, but noted it has referenced "improved care transitions and reduced readmissions" as two benefits of such programs. The federal government does support respite programs, to some extent.

A spokeswoman for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said that although respite programs are not covered as a matter of course, states can apply for federal assistance under Medicaid - a joint federal and state health program for the poor - on a case-by-case basis. "REALLY DIFFICULT PLACE" Interest in respite is growing significantly, said Dobbins, whose office oversees a respite network of more than 1,000 members, up from 840 in 2015. A respite initiative at Portland's Central City Concern, a non-profit, will soon include a specific focus on mental health - a factor that is largely missing among respite programs, Dobbins said. — Reuters

CLINIC
PAGE





248 33 199





Dr. Ahmed Hosni Abd Elhamid
Consultant



Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally
Senior Registrar



Dr. Abeer Khattab
Specialist



Cataract Surgery



Glaucoma



Retina



General Ophthalmology



Follow-Up All Treatments

Ophthalmology Services

Follow us on social media @hadclinic

Tel: 1828392
Whatsapp Us
+965-6000 2104

Dr Sahar Ghannam

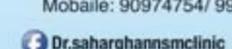
Dermatology consultant, skin treatment and laser

Timing: Saturdays and Wednesdays from 10 am to 5 pm
Sunday, Monday and Tuesday from 9:30 am to 5 pm
Thursday from 9:30 am until 1 pm

Friday is a holiday.

Address: Fourth Ring Road - Abdallah Fadalah Street, Meidan Hawally, opposite fire station - block 35, building 31.

Clinic Phones: 25610407/ 409/ 314 Fax: 25610465
Mobile: 90974754/ 99166746


To advertise on this Page

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617

or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

WELCOME

Dr Tammam Abou Ali
Consultant ENT, Head & Neck, Facial Plastic Surgeon.

Fellowship of the royal college of surgeons in UK and Ireland.
10 years work experience in Jeddah Hospital, KSA, Riyadh.
In Head of ENT department in Farwajia Hospital, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
10 years work experience in UK and Ireland.



- Endoscopic Sinus Surgery
- Septoplasty and turbinate reduction surgery by laser or RF
- Snoring and OSAP Surgery
- Rhinoplasty with open and closed techniques
- Microscopic Middle Ear Surgery and Tympanoplasty
- Salivary gland and parotid surgery
- Thyroid and parathyroid surgery
- Micro laryngeal surgery

1 888 883

www.qmc-kuwait.com





Dr. Abdullah Hadi
Cardiology Department
Consultant - Internal Medicine
Interventional Cardiology & Adult Cardiology

د. عبد الله هادي

قسم أمراض القلب والأوعية الدموية
إستشارات - الأمراض الباطنية
وأعراض القلب والفسطرة القلبية التداخلية للكبار

We bring you the best expertise

Contact Taiba Hospital: 1808088 @TaibaHospital

Dr. Husain Alenezi

-Board Certified Urologist.
-Endourology Society-Approved Fellowship In Endourology And Robotic Surgery At Western University, Ontario, Canada.

Expert in diagnosing and treating:

- 1- Urinary Stones (Kidney, Ureter & Bladder) By Endoscopy & Laser
- 2- Prostate Cancer And Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
- 3- Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms In Males And Females
- 4- Tumors And Malignancies Of The Urinary Tract (Kidney, Adrenals, Ureter, Bladder And Testes)
- 5- Male Factor Infertility And Varicoceles (Microscopic Surgery)
- 6- Erectile Dysfunction



Contact Taiba Hospital: 1808088

94449452

Twitter: @DrHusain_Urol

Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family

Book your appointments today!





Dr. Kiran Taraka
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Zarreena Zahir
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Hassan Khan
Senior Cardiologist



Dr. P. Seshendra Nath
Orthopedic Consultant (UK/USA)
Specialized in Neck, Shoulder, Hip and Knee

50721507
24551555
www.exircenterkw.com

EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALITIES CENTER

Block No.4 Jahra - Kuwait

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR INSURANCES

Tel: 24568857 / 24568899 info@exircenterkw.com www.exircenterkw.com

