According to recent studies, as many as one in four adults and a significant percentage of children experience mental health issues at some point in their lives. More than half do not receive treatment. In response to this need, we have deepened our commitment to Integrated Care, where behavioral health providers are core members of primary care teams, co-managing patient care with their medical colleagues. This has led to innovative programs that make it easier and more comfortable for our patients to access care.

A “Warm Handoff” makes a personal connection
Entering treatment for behavioral health is hard, and for some making the first appointment is the most difficult step.

To address this problem, Lynn Community Health Center has adopted a “warm handoff,” in which a primary care provider who feels their patient is in need of behavioral health care personally introduces a therapist to the patient during the course of a medical visit. The therapist has a brief conversation with the patient right there, and schedules a future appointment. The result? The number of patients who followed through with therapy increased from about half to 71%!

Caring for those with Serious Mental Illness (SMI)
Patients with serious mental illness often have the opposite problem: they are comfortable with their therapist but do not receive regular medical care. This year we launched a program bringing primary care providers to the behavioral health team.

Providing medical care in a familiar setting where those with SMI already feel connected has helped many, especially those with chronic illnesses, receive medical care.

“Part of my job is to make a patient comfortable enough so that I can do routine care,” says Ellen Coletti, NP on the Behavioral Health Team. “It can take time, but it is essential that the patient feels engaged and in charge of their care. It may mean that some tests and exams don’t happen in the first visit, but we get there.”
Integrated approach to substance use disorders helps patients succeed

Addiction is an urgent priority in our community. Recent public health data shows that Lynn has one of the highest rates of overdose deaths in the state, more than double the state average. In 2014, Lynn saw 281 overdoses and 35 deaths.

To address this crisis we have expanded our Integrated Addictions Program, which incorporates our integrated care model into treatment for substance use disorders.

Primary care physicians, psychiatrists, behavioral health therapists, nurse case managers, and medical assistants make up a multidisciplinary team that manages the comprehensive health care needs of patients diagnosed with a substance use disorder. Suboxone and Vivitrol, medications that blocks the opioid receptors in the brain, are integral to treatment.

Most patients in this program have other, often multiple, medical and behavioral health conditions that add to the complexity of their cases. Treatment for chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension are common, as are behavioral health issues such as depression or anxiety. The team has developed a strong collaboration with the health center’s Infectious Disease Team to best care for those who also have HIV, hepatitis C, or tuberculosis.

Highlights of 2014-2015: Growth in capacity and commitment

Eye Clinic doubles in size, expands Optical Shop
Since the Eye Clinic opened in 2009, demand for eye care services has soared. This year we doubled the size of our Eye Clinic, allowing us to care for more patients. The Optical Shop now has new equipment and skilled technicians who grind lenses in-house, reducing the time it takes for patients to get their eyewear.

Dental residency offers advanced training
The Dental Clinic has been selected by the Lutheran Medical Center Department of Dental Medicine as a training site for the Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) Program. This program advances a resident’s skills in general dentistry well-beyond traditional school-based or clinic-only based programs. Upon successful completion of the program, residents graduate as highly skilled and confident dental practitioners.

Workforce training gives front line staff extra skills
The health center teamed up with Union Hospital and SEIU 1199 to develop a training program to help front line staff best meet the needs of behavioral health patients with complex needs. To date more than half of the health center’s 300 front line employees have attended the two-day program that includes advanced training in customer service and de-escalation. This program is funded by the Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund. Lynn Community Health Center was one of 51 grantees in Massachusetts.
Enrollment sees record demand for services
In 2015, Mass Health resumed its annual review of members, a practice that had been suspended for two years due to a software issue at the Massachusetts Health Connector. The result was an overwhelming flood of patients who needed to re-apply for coverage. Thanks to the heroic efforts of our enrollment staff, we helped 20,103 individuals apply for coverage this year.

New EHR improves patient care
On May 19, 2015, the health center launched Epic, a state-of-the-art Electronic Health Record and Practice Management System. Epic will improve efficiencies, facilitate our innovative model of Integrated Health Care, improve quality of care, enhance care coordination and collaboration, and better manage our operations, reporting, and data analysis.

New leadership prepared for continued growth
This year saw both change and growth in our leadership team. New Chief Medical Officer Dr. Kiame Mahaniah came to the health center having served as CMO of North Shore Community Health Center. He approaches community health as a social justice issue, and is dedicated to fighting the many health disparities that face underserved populations.

Bernadette Thomas, DNP, is our new Chief Operations Officer. She has an impressive background of clinical and administrative experience, most recently as the Chief Nursing Officer at East Boston Neighborhood Health Center.

Dr. Patrick Lee is our first Chief of Performance Improvement. He initially joined our team as the provider champion during our conversion to Epic.

They look forward to successfully meeting the challenges that next year will bring.

Group Therapy Program grows and innovates
The group therapy program has grown to more than 50 groups. Like our integrated care teams, many therapy groups go beyond traditional mental health diagnoses and address specific health issues, such as depression or diabetes.

We have also partnered with the National Alliance for Mental Illness to establish peer-to-peer support groups. Seven hav patients completed the 10 hour training and now offer peer support groups for those with mental illness.

All group therapy participants are invited to participate in a year-round walking group, focusing on the benefits of exercise to both mind and body. It has grown to over 100 regulars!

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Health center meets rigorous standards
The health center, accredited by the Joint Commission for both primary care and behavioral health since 2000, was again recognized with The Joint Commission Gold Seal of Approval™, a nationally recognized standard signifying that we have met rigorous standards for quality and safety.

Visit www.lchcnet.org for more information on these and other Lynn Community Health Center Programs.

We are also on Social Media

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Joyce Reen, RN, Director of Nursing
Cindy Steger-Wilson, Director of Marketing
Bernadette Thomas, APRN, Chief Operating Officer

Financial Report Fiscal Year 2015
Revenue
Net Patient Service Revenue $34,931,703
PACE Personnel Reimbursement $23,670,816
Grants and Contracts $16,657,091
Premium Revenue $4,593,568
Net assets released from temporary restrictions used in operations $4,159,478
Other Revenue $142,496
Total Revenue $84,155,152

Expenses
Salaries and Wages $53,172,140
Employee Benefits $12,114,422
Medical Expenses $10,520,617
Occupancy $3,933,811
Administrative and General Supplies and Expense $970,373
Purchased Services $1,716,575
Transportation $77,332
Depreciation and Amortization $1,291,447
Interest Expense $456,901
Insurance $270,533
Total Expense $84,524,151

Service Statistics
Total Number of Visits: 272,143
Total Number of Patients: 39,180

Ethnicity
- Multiracial 12%
- White 17%
- African American 11%
- Hispanic 48%
- Asian 8%

Economic Status (% of poverty level*)
- Below 100% 61%
- 101-150% 15%
- 151-200% 9%
- 200% 5%
- Unk 7%

* a family of 4 living at poverty level earns $24,300 a year or less