

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FUNDED BY EMPIRE HEALTH FOUNDATION, PIONEERING COLLABORATION BY THREE LOCAL NONPROFITS WILL PROVIDE FREE HEALTH SERVICES TO HOMELESS WOMEN

In a new partnership effective immediately, three local nonprofits have joined together to offer low-income and homeless women free access to health services. Funded by Empire Health Foundation, the program called *Access to Health and Hope* will provide registered nursing consultation and treatment to women served by Transitions' Women's Hearth and Volunteers Of America's Hope House. The Women's Hearth and Hope House are both located in downtown Spokane and serve hundreds of homeless women each month—the Hearth during the day and Hope House overnight.

The third nonprofit, Christ Clinic/Christ Kitchen will provide the actual services and become a “medical home” for uninsured women served by Hope House and the Hearth. Along with access to health services, the collaboration will provide education through classes at the Women's Hearth on health-related topics and preventive care. Once a homeless woman establishes her “medical home” at Christ Clinic, she may qualify for free mental health services as well.

There exists a circular cause and effect relationship between homelessness and healthcare. Obtaining healthcare can result in homelessness when hospital or medication costs eat up rent money. And the homeless are three to six times more likely to become ill and need health services than people who are housed. (National Health Care for the Homeless Council, 2008)

Finding healthcare is a tremendous challenge for uninsured and under-insured low-income and homeless women served by Transitions' Hearth and VOA's Hope House. By providing a medical home, *Access to Health and Hope* should also reduce the burden on local emergency rooms where this population of women typically end up for all medical treatment, including primary care and mental health services.

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