

SOUTH SIDE HEALTHY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Town Hall Q&A – July 16, 2024

1. Does the organization have a dedicated committee focused on COVID and long COVID? If so, what is the focus and how do I connect with the leadership?

SSHCO does not have a committee dedicated to COVID or the impact and implications of long COVID. We do have patients with symptoms of long COVID whom we have directed to primary care providers and connected to social service supports to continue on their journey of improved health, but our organization does not have a specific focus on long COVID.

2. Is the "Mental Health First Aid" curriculum part of the SSHCO University training?

SSHCO does have that training available to our staff through our partner site Sinai Chicago and their Sinai Urban Health Institute. Our staff have the opportunity to complete that training within the first 90 days of their start date.

3. What do you think was the best part of the SSHCO health fair?

The SSHCO Community Advisory Council, who put on the health fair, was very happy with all of it, but felt the best part was the one-on-one connections made – meeting people and their families, getting to know their needs and challenges, sharing information, and really seeing the impact we are making connecting people to services and resources.

4. Can you elaborate on your mental health services and how we can access these services?

The SSHCO Community Health Workers help guide people to the resources they need, whether it be a physician or therapist at one of our 13 provider organizations or a community organization providing mental health or substance use support. SSHCO has also utilized some of its state funds to subsidize additional providers to make mental health care more accessible.

5. What are the eligibility requirements for housing for the flex housing?

We aim to screen people in rather than out to support as many people as possible. Eligibility requirements include having an unstable housing situation (an individual or family is in a shelter, or doubled up, or just has nowhere to really call home), and they are engaged with SSHCO care coordination services, living with one or more chronic health conditions, and Medicaid recipient/eligible or uninsured.

6. Can Community Health Workers who work with SSHCO refer patients for the flexible housing pool? Does the case management come from the "pool" or administrator, or from the SSHCO directly?

Yes, SSHCO care coordinators can and do refer, and then the case management support comes from three subcontractors to the Center for Housing and Health who runs the SSHCO Flexible Housing Pool – Of Color, Inc., Holistic Alliance and Chicago Family Health Center which is an SSHCO provider partner.

7. How can I apply for the jobs you mentioned?

All available positions are listed on our website – www.southsidecommunityhealth.com and interested community members can apply right from our career page.

8. Are there demographics on patients served by SSHCO? (i.e., for example, average age)

Those we are seeing and supporting through SSHCO services generally fall in the age range of 25-44 and are pretty much a split between male and female patients. Most of our patients are African American.

9. Do any of the housing options include onsite mental health support services?

All the housing in the Flexible Housing Pool are scattered sites -- private market buildings with private market landlords -- so there are no mental health services onsite. However, the case managers working with each individual or family are very adept at connecting people to the resources they need, including mental health services.

10. Do any of the SSHCO resources respond to needs related to weather related challenges or emergencies? (thinking of the tornado warnings last night/July 15)

There is no specific program in place through SSHCO around weather emergencies, but our SSHCO employees and our provider network of hospitals and federally qualified health centers are in the community, know the community, and can often refer people to services that support these needs.

11. Do you have any projects in which people with DEIA and/or public health experience can volunteer to participate?

There's no shortage of work! We have taken on some interns for certain projects, but don't currently have a formal volunteer program except for the wonderful volunteers who are part of our Community Advisory Council. Please contact us through the website with what you have in mind. We do see in the future having a more formal volunteer arm of the work that we do – where residents can volunteer in a variety of ways. We don't have that yet, but it is part of our long-term plan.

12. How does SSHCO University coordinate with the community colleges on the South Side in its programs?

SSHCO doesn't currently have active partnerships at this moment, but we are looking to build a pipeline for newly educated community health workers, nurse care coordinators and other needs beginning in 2025.

13. Who are the partners of the SSHCO University? Who is eligible to apply to the SSHCO University?

The SSHCO University is available to all of our employees and new hires at any time. And we are hoping to build more partnerships with community organizations and our provider partners to provide additional development and training support.

14. As a Medicaid Managed Care Organization, we would have loved to participate in your health fair however we received the invitation too late to submit to HFS for approval. How are you engaging the health plans so that we can get the information soon enough to support future events?

We were in a bit of a time crunch getting this first health fair done, but we learned some good lessons that we hope to apply in potential future SSHCO health fairs or events down the road. We will put earlier outreach to MCOs on that list!