

## **The Harambee Nursing Center: Community-Based, Nurse-Led Health Care**

### **The Challenge:**

**Providing health care in a low-income Louisville, KY, neighborhood with high rates of teen pregnancy and substantiated child abuse, where chronic health problems are endemic, and where substance abuse and the resulting violence and crime are rampant.**

### **The Goal:**

**Enhance access to community-based, culturally competent health care services that emphasize prevention; empower residents via health education and promotion programs; increase the diversity and cultural competence of the health care workforce; and demonstrate innovative strategies to improve health.**

### **An Innovative Solution:**

**A nurse-managed, holistic, community partnership approach to health care, emphasizing continuous participatory community assessment, collegial interdisciplinary relationships and community-wide programming**

### **What It Is**

- A community-based, nurse-led academic health center, operated since 2003 by the University of Louisville School of Nursing in partnership with several other religious and non-profit groups, providing health care services that are accessible, acceptable and affordable. ("Harambee" is an African tribal term that means "a community coming together to better society.")

### **What It Does**

- Operates a primary care clinic five days per week (with extended hours when needed).
- Provides annual exams and episodic exams, emphasizing preventive services such as Pap smears, prostate screening and lipid management.
- Offers other services including a weekly parenting program, weekly hypertension management clinic, classes for self management of chronic illness, school and sports exams for underserved children, vaccinations for adults and children, onsite mammograms, health fairs and other screening events, as well as follow up care for low-income and uninsured patients.
- Because many in the community have no primary care physician, the Harambee Nursing Center (HNC) has become their de facto center for primary care. When hospitalization and access to specialty care become necessary, Harambee staff act as advocates for clients.

### *Where To Learn More*

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## How It Stands Out

- Operates with an Advisory Council consisting of leaders from the community and health care organizations providing advocacy, consultation and ongoing support to the HNC.
- Location directly in the community makes services more accessible to patients.
- Staff spends more time assessing all of their need, not just physical care.
- Provides a commitment to outreach that is an improvement on available services. (e.g., going to underserved schools to provide school physicals and immunizations onsite and in a women's shelter)
- Serves as a resource for uninsured and underinsured patients – no one is turned away.
- Has achieved several significant service milestones:
  - 850 patients have established the HNC as their primary health care home.
  - The number of patient visits to the HNC continues to increase steadily, with an average of about 35 patient primary care clinic visits per week.
  - Walk-in appointments increase accessibility (about 40 percent of patient visits are by walk- in appointment).
  - An average of 60 health promotion encounters/month.
  - Unmet clinical preventive services (e.g., pap smears, breast exams, blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose screening, prostate screening, weight screening, colonoscopy referrals, smoking cessation and living will education) offered/provided to all clients.
  - Two-ten clients per week obtain needed primary care follow-up after being seen in ER.
  - Unnecessary hospitalizations are prevented on about 1/4th of these clients.
  - Cost of primary care is reduced by ½ or more on each client.
  - Credentialed by Medicare, Medicaid and Passport Health Plan.