

CLARKSON INSTITUTE TARGETS GAP IN HEALTH CARE DELIVERY



With a nod to its roots, Clarkson Regional Health Services looks to uncover gaps in health care delivery and then find ways to fill them. Clarkson Regional Health Services (or CRHS) is an Omaha-based nonprofit organization that has worked to improve and advance health care in Omaha since it formed the area's first hospital in 1869. CRHS continues to make substantial contributions to health care in Nebraska and Western Iowa.

"The gaps in health care have changed over the past 155 years, but they still exist," said James Canedy, M.D., president CRHS. "A large gap that has been identified is poor access to mental health care – especially in underserved populations."

Filling that gap is the current focus of the Clarkson Institute, a new initiative of CRHS that takes a design-build approach to project delivery grounded in data and analytics to plan, innovate and measure success in health care programs and projects.

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First, a look back to 1869. Robert Harper Clarkson, the first bishop of Nebraska for the Episcopal Church, and his wife, Meliora, took notice of the many gaps in health care in Omaha. The area was afflicted by typhus, poor sanitation and a lack of physicians and facilities to care for the sick and injured, especially for women and children. Their work, assisted by the attending surgeon for Union Pacific Railroad, led to Omaha's first hospital – Good Samaritan.

Later named Bishop Clarkson Memorial Hospital, the institution would relocate and later collaborate with the University of Nebraska to form what is now Nebraska Medicine. CRHS is still a co-member of Nebraska Medicine with the University of Nebraska. Clarkson Regional Health Services considers Nebraska Medicine an important community asset and is committed to its continued success, Dr. Canedy said.

In 2016, Clarkson Regional Health Services leadership began to re-evaluate its role, core capabilities and strategic direction. "With the formation and integration of Nebraska Medicine, CRHS was no longer immersed in day-to-day hospital operations. We, however, wanted to continue to make an impact on health care and became increasingly involved in mission-driven programming and expanded its philanthropic support to a diverse group of organizations," Dr. Canedy said.

Through this process, Clarkson Institute emerged, said Torri Criger, J.D., CRHS chief operating officer and general counsel. "The Clarkson Institute will focus on data analytics, internal project development, and philanthropic partnerships with other organizations. For each project, whether internally developed or in partnership with other nonprofit organizations,

Clarkson Institute will provide monitoring and data collection with subsequent analysis to help inform the outcomes of the program or project, share insights, and facilitate innovation."

Currently, Clarkson Institute works with the Omaha Community Foundation to identify potential project partners/grantees and to invite proposals. Projects are chosen and approved through an internal evaluation and selection process, taking into consideration, among other things, potential impact, innovation, and alignment with Clarkson Regional Health Service's mission and priorities. An important component for Clarkson Institute going forward will be reporting and disseminating learnings and insights from these projects.

Clarkson Institute will also provide an initial analysis of the project to help with design, assuring adequate outcomes measures are in place and able to be monitored. The institute will also follow projects and help with insights along the way.

Clarkson Institute, during the past 18 months, partnered with several community organizations to improve access to mental health, Criger said.

While facilities for providing mental health care are critical, Dr. Canedy said, supporting programs that increase access to services or provide work force development is just as important. "And these services need to be in a trusting environment in their community provided by practitioners in their culture or community."

Dr. Canedy and Criger shared the list of those organizations supported by the Clarkson Institute and their impact to date:

- Santee Sioux Nation Society of Care – providing culturally based mental health services, primarily through telehealth. The Society of Care is a trauma and resilience resource for self-identified Native American youth and their families in Nebraska. Society of Care ensures its services are responsive to the cultural, racial, and ethnic differences, including celebrating the uniqueness of each tribe. This approach improved access to care and acceptance for treatment opportunities. The result was more than 1,300 people receiving treatment. Another benefit was workforce development through apprenticeships offered at local high schools.
- Project Harmony – focusing on workforce development to increase access to mental health services. Clarkson Institute's support allowed Project Harmony to fund scholarships, internships and stipends, undergraduate and graduate students obtain training in trauma-informed mental health care. In addition, to tap into the needs of the underserved, Project Harmony used funds received from its partnership with Clarkson Institute to provide expressive art therapy programs and to launch Connect to Wellness, a digital tool that children and their families can access while waiting for therapy.

- OneWorld Community Health Centers – expanding OneWorld’s model of integrated mental health with primary care and increasing its workforce to add Bilingual Spanish-English behavioral health therapists and interpretation services for other languages. With the support from the Clarkson Institute, OneWorld already has added two therapists to provide individual counseling to patients needing mental health care. “We knew the demand was out there among the community, but we did not know the extent of that demand,” OneWorld leaders reported. “The metro area lacks providers for mental health therapy and the hiring pool is limited. We are thrilled to have already added our new counselors.”
- Boys Town – supporting mental health care services and providing care coordination in Grand Island and central Nebraska. Engagement with non-English-speaking families through onsite interpretation services and a language line resulted in more than 200 behavioral health visits in languages other than English.

Boys Town shared a success story about the Creutzberg family that illustrates the impact buoyed by financial support from CRHS:


The Creutzbergs adopted five boys, ages 5 through 14. “There’s never a dull moment in our home. It’s the perfect amount of excitement and controlled chaos seasoned with an abundance of love,” the Creutzbergs shared. “With that

being said, it’s been a challenge to find someone who can keep up with and really support our family.” Their Boys Town care coordinator supervisor was that person.

“Not only does she help with paperwork, she also interacts with our children. She comes up with all sorts of creative and new ideas for us to implement that are helping our family be successful.”

“One of the most valuable things is she always affirms our kids and tells them how wonderful they are. She compliments them and speaks to their strengths in a positive way. At times, our family requires unconventional and unique accommodations that aren’t always supported or viewed as positive compared to ‘normal’ families. As our care coordinator, she always sees these as positive, advocates for them and helps us keep moving toward our goals, together.”

The Clarkson Institute also provided support for Bridges to Mental Health (see story on page 18).

Dr. Canedy said the Clarkson Institute will identify other gaps in health care. Clarkson’s mission is to support or provide innovative health care delivery solutions that align quality, cost-effective services with select population needs. “Our first focus is on mental health. That’s our priority given the need right now in Nebraska.” 



The Canedy File

Hometown
Omaha

Undergraduate Degree
University of Nebraska-Lincoln in zoology

Medical Degree
University of Nebraska Medical Center

Residency
Campbell Clinic-University of Tennessee College of Health Sciences in orthopedics

Specialty
Orthopedic surgery

Title
President

Institution
Clarkson Regional Health Services

Hobbies
Restoring old cars

Family
Wife, Diane Canedy

Why He Joined MOMS
“I’ve been a MOMS member since 1988. I believe it’s important for physicians to have a voice in the community and at the Legislature, and to offer education and information to physicians.”