

MCHRC



MARYLAND COMMUNITY
HEALTH RESOURCES
COMMISSION



MARYLAND RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Introduction

- “Maryland’s Rural Health Stories” highlights the human impact of programs in rural communities funded by the Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC).
- To date, the CHRC has awarded 236 grants totaling \$71.3 million. Of this, more than half (121 of 236) have supported programs in rural Maryland.
- Under this collaboration with the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA), patients offer their perspective, through on-camera interviews and written testimonials.
- This is the third patient testimonial in “Maryland’s Rural Health Stories.”
- More patient testimonials from across the state will be released later this year.
- To access these testimonials, please visit: <https://health.maryland.gov/mchrc/Pages/RURAL-HEALTH.aspx>

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To learn more about CHRC and MRHA and how they partner with rural organizations, please visit their websites:
<http://dhmh.maryland.gov/mchrc/pages/Home.aspx>
www.mdruralhealth.org
www.mdruralhealthplan.org

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Juan’s Story

Lower Shore Clinic’s CareWrap Initiative

Juan has suffered serious physical and mental duress over the last few years, and attributes his good current physical and mental health to the Lower Shore Clinic’s CareWrap Team Initiative, a program designed to reduce avoidable hospitalization. The CareWrap Initiative, supported by a two-year grant from the CHRC, addresses the behavioral health needs of patients who present to Peninsula Regional Health System by providing intensive coordinated care post-hospitalization.

Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Juan experienced a serious health crisis: he lost half his body weight, over 100 pounds, and had unexplained bleeding. Doctors were convinced he had cancer and he was advised to seek treatment in the US. Upon his arrival in the States, he was skinny, sick, and felt isolated.

“Language was my first barrier. I couldn’t get around it”. He felt he knew nothing about how to access health care.

He became extremely ill and discouraged and finally was hospitalized for 15 days at Peninsula Regional. Juan says, *“I was very depressed, had diabetes and uncontrolled blood pressure...I cried a lot. I couldn’t see the light at the end of the tunnel. To me, life was over.”* In the hospital, a caseworker referred him to the Lower Shore Clinic’s CareWrap Initiative.

The CareWrap team coordinates all of Juan’s health care, assisting him by filling prescriptions, scheduling appointments, providing instruction on a healthy lifestyle, and linking him to social supports such as housing, transportation, and benefits.

He praises the whole team, noting that his team leader often runs errands for patients on her own time. *“They help me a lot with continuous appointments to monitor my health... I’m better physically and mentally”*, he says. Juan’s team also referred him to a specialist, who discovered that he did not have cancer.

When the CareWrap program was implemented in 2017, Peninsula Regional reported a 50% decrease in admissions and observations for the 30 participants, as well as a projected \$927,000 in estimated cost savings.

The CareWrap Initiative successfully prevents hospital readmissions and reduces health care costs while its nurturing holistic focus brings hope to patients.

Juan’s CareWrap team has become his second family. Both his brother and his father died while he was in the US, and he was not able to return to Puerto Rico for their funerals. The clinic team and their continual support is very special to him.

Juan’s closing remarks were: *“The clinic...this is my family.”*

“They treat people with compassion, warmth. All of these integrated programs here have been the support that I needed”