



[insert contact details]

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As Registry Week Ends, Work of Housing the Homeless Begins

Compelling Data Emerges as 75 Volunteers Complete 471 Surveys of Local Homeless

Five Homeless Respondents Move into Housing *This Week*

Seventy-five volunteers took to the streets and trails of Omaha and Council Bluffs this week to compile a by-name and photo detailed registry of the region's homeless. Participants in Omaha Registry Week, a local partnership with the national 100,000 Homes Campaign, surveyed 471 homeless individuals in the Omaha metro region, identifying more than one third of them as vulnerable and at increased risk of death.

Each of the top five most vulnerable homeless identified throughout the week have been placed with case managers and will enter permanent housing this week. The first, Carmen, who suffers from terminal cancer and has been homeless for 15 years, signed a lease and moved into her own apartment last night (10/14/10).

"Registry Week has been a huge success," said local Campaign coordinator **Erin Porterfield**, Executive Director of the Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless. "The collaboration of service providers, businesses, government officials and local volunteers is a huge testament to the willingness of our community to come together to house the most vulnerable. We're closing out the week with enormous cause for hope."

Volunteers gathered data using the **Vulnerability Index**, a 33-item questionnaire utilized by the 100,000 Homes Campaign. Volunteer teams captured data on health status, institutional history (jail, prison, hospital, and military), length of homelessness, patterns of shelter or mission use, and previous housing situations. In the coming months, **the Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH) and Heartland Family Services** will use this data to identify the most vulnerable members of the region’s homeless population and prioritize them for permanent housing. Nationally, this approach saves lives and an average of \$30,000 dollars per person in publicly funded services.

The Vulnerability Index is based on research by Dr. Jim O’Connell of Harvard University, which shows that certain medical conditions place homeless individuals at much higher risk of death than members of the general population facing identical conditions.

176 homeless individuals in Omaha and Council Bluffs qualified as vulnerable by this standard. Of these, 42 are veterans, comprising 50 percent of all homeless veterans surveyed. Among the total surveyed homeless population (471), 13 are over 65 years of age, 24 suffer from cancer, and 116 report being the victim of a violent attack since becoming homeless. Local homeless residents have spent an average of 4.4 years on the street. Among those listed as immediately vulnerable, that number jumps to 6.22 years.

See below for a detailed breakdown of all demographic data compiled over the course of Omaha Registry Week:

KEY REGISTRY DATA POINTS:

Indicator	Number	Percentage
At-Risk Tri-Morbid	92	52%
At-Risk ER or Hospitalized Over 3X	70	40%
At-Risk ER over 3X	41	23%
At-Risk Age Over 60	19	11%
At-Risk HIV/AIDS	4	2%
At-Risk Liver Disease	33	19%
At-Risk Kidney Disease	18	10%

At-Risk Indicators

At-Risk Cold/Wet Weather Injury	48	27%*
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* indicates higher than national average

Older Adults

- 13 people (3%) are 65 years and older
- The oldest respondent was 68 years old

Years Homeless

- The average years homeless for the total population is 4.44
- The average years homeless for the Vulnerable Cohort is 6.22 years.
- The average years homeless for the Non-Vulnerable Cohort is 2.65 years.

Service Needs (Total Surveyed)

- 179 people (38%) reported a dual diagnosis of mental illness and substance abuse
- 330 people (70%) reported a history of substance abuse
- 231 people (49%) reported signs or symptoms of mental illness

Health Conditions (Total Surveyed)

- 99 people (21%) reported having asthma
- 66 people (14%) reported having diabetes
- 47 people (10%) reported having Hepatitis C
- 71 people (15%) reported having heart conditions
- 38 people (8%) reported having emphysema
- 24 people (5%) reported having Cancer

Veterans (Total Surveyed)

- 84 (18%) surveyed were Veterans
- 42 of the 84 Veterans (50%) are Vulnerable

Inpatient Hospitalizations and Emergency Room Visits (Total Surveyed)

- A total of 1223 inpatient hospitalizations and ER visits were reported in the past year
- 137 (29%) of the consumers accounted for 1095 visits or 90% of the services

Health System Impacts (Total Surveyed)

- 334 (71%) report having no insurance
- The majority of reports having no insurance go to Detroit Charles Drew Homeless Clinic (30%) and Creighton University Medical Center (19%)

Jail & Prison

- 130 (28%) of respondents reported having been in prison
- 330 (70%) of respondents reported having been in jail

Violence

- 116 (25%) report being a victim of a violent attack since becoming homeless

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The 100,000 Homes Campaign is a national project of Community Solutions, bringing together change agents from across the country to find homes for 100,000 of the most vulnerable and long-term homeless individuals and families by July 2013. The Campaign aims to transform our response to chronic homelessness by giving communities concrete, data-driven tools and connecting them with one another so that no one has to innovate alone. Visit our website at www.100khomes.org.