Mount Carmel
Community Outreach:
Street Medicine Program
Working with Unsheltered Seniors
Laura Imbrock, Case Worker

Objectives
► To meet patient's acute medical need
► To connect patient with appropriate and consistent medical care
► To care for the whole person: mental health, drug treatment, food resources, address safety, housing, help with IDs and birth certificates, etc.

Mobile Coach
Taking Medicine to People

Goals of Street Medicine
(In camps)

- To find those living in places not meant for human habitation
- To address acute and chronic conditions
- To ensure safety
- To help with immediate needs: clothing, food, shelter, etc.
- To build relationships
- To establish rapport and eventually engage people in services they need and will accept
Older Patients experiencing homelessness:

Common Experiences:
- Exhausted family resources/relationships
- Find the experience (and the lack of privacy and dignity that comes with it) especially traumatizing (especially the shelter experience)
- Lack support system

Where do unsheltered seniors stay?

Tents/Under Bridges
Abandoned Buildings

Also in cars (running or not), steps of buildings, basically anywhere that can provide a sense of safety.

Medical Challenges in assisting this population
- Mobility Issues
- Keeping track of meds/appointments
- Stolen medication
- Managing Several Chronic Conditions
- Transportation to variety of specialties around the city (often in suburbs)
- Great need for medical respite
- Safe discharge when homeless?
- When ADLs are not an issue, yet safety of living situation is not available

Actually outside

Great need for medical respite
Safe discharge when homeless?
Risk of Infection: Tetanus, getting stuck with heroin needles, HepC etc.

- Insulin Dependent Diabetic, lack of refrigeration
- Breathing Machine – lack of electricity
- Incontinence – lack of sanitary restrooms
- Long term smoker = COPD = higher risk of pneumonia
- More prone to frostbite
- Diabetic neuropathy = unable to feel the frostbite
- Pair physical medical issues with mental health and addiction
- Undiagnosed Alzheimer’s/dementia
“It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness.”
- Eleanor Roosevelt

Questions?