

Staying the Course: Getting to Goal

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In June 1967, five individuals joined together and incorporated 'Spectrum' to develop, coordinate and execute programs to achieve effective communication of information, services and techniques for family planning in the community.' For 17 years, this organization, named Better Family Planning, successfully operated eight neighborhood clinics and family planning information centers in North and West Philadelphia.

In 1984, the organization received funding to subsidize the cost of care, thus fulfilling the mission of providing primary care services to anyone regardless of their financial status. This designation as a federally qualified health center allows the Spectrum to respond to the need for increased access to care to the medically underserved. The agency's name was changed from Better Family Planning to Spectrum Health Services to reflect the new mission to deliver primary care health services. The eight sites were consolidated into two locations, HHC in West Philadelphia and the Broad Street Health Center (BSHC) in North Philadelphia. BSHC continued to provide only family planning services until 1994. In November 1994, the BSHC relocated to its current site and began operation as a comprehensive

health care facility, offering the full range of primary services.

For over 35 years, Spectrum has operated out of these locations to provide health care services that are responsive to community needs. Spectrum's model of care provides for all ages and for the complexity of medical and social issues experienced by the patients served. Core medical services include pediatrics, ob-gyn, and adult health. The core services are supported with programs and services for adolescent health, geriatric health, HIV/AIDS outreach and primary care, in addition to specialized case management services for people with diabetes, cardiovascular problems, hypertension and asthma. Patients are provided access to quality health care according to a philosophy of patient-centered, culturally and linguistically appropriate and respectful care. The clinical team of medical providers, nurses and medical assistants work in concert to ensure that patient care is thorough, complete and fully understood by the patient. Medical care is provided based on professionally accepted standards of care and delivery in a confidential and ethical manner to all patients.

Over the 35-year period, the initial Haddington site of 1,000 square feet grew to 9,229 square feet in three noncontiguous areas in a small shopping center. There were 13 exam rooms, one lab space and four counseling rooms. The Center was bursting at the seams and had to work diligently to serve its more than 10,670 patients in

less than adequate space.

The Spectrum Board of Directors organized a Capital Campaign Committee to develop a plan to secure funding to support building a 12,000 square foot facility one block from the Haddington site. The untimely death of the director of 30 years halted the entire project until a new leader could be appointed.

In January 2004, Phyllis B. Cater took the helm as the chief executive officer with the goal of growing the organization and building the new facility. After a search of all of the available properties within a ¼ mile radius of the center, a medical office building four blocks from the current site became available. Planning for the development of a 36,000 sq. ft., green, state-of-the-art facility was completed, and after challenges to obtain the needed funding were overcome, construction of the new health center began in spring 2011.

The new three-story building is located on a busy corner that is a crossroads of several bus routes and near the train line, which provides greater access to the site. There are a number of closed small businesses on the busy shopping street, and a new modern building and the additional people it will bring to the area will help with community revitalization. The number of exam rooms increased from 13 to 32, and they will provide enough room to serve more than 27,000 patients by the end of 2014. The new facility allows for establishing an eight-

operatorial dental service and expanded behavioral health and case management services. The new Spectrum Community Health Center has enhanced Spectrum's ability to manage chronic disease in a multi-disciplinary team approach.

Spectrum Health Services has provided healthcare services to three generations of families over the past 40 years. Our dream of being able to serve our community for the next 40 years has been facilitated with a building that not only provides space to deliver care but also serves as a catalyst for continued economic development in the community we serve.