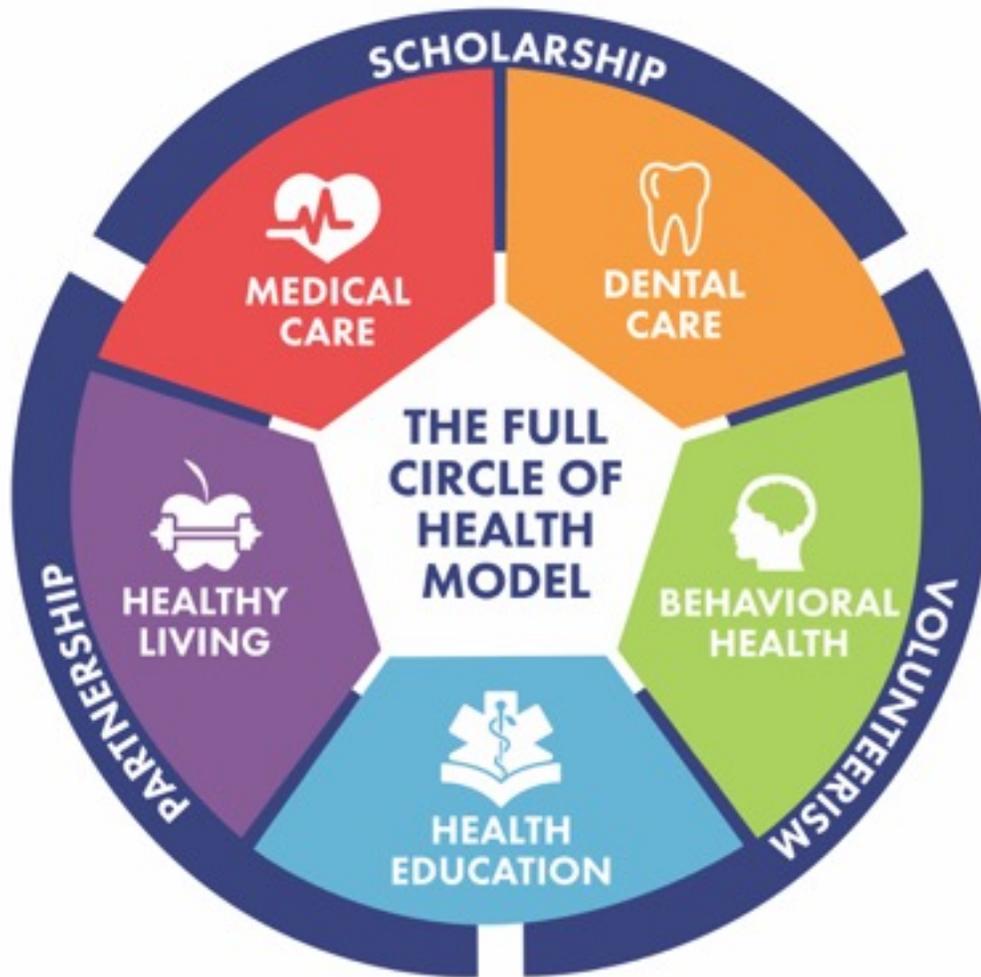


Addressing the Life Expectancy Gap:
The Good Samaritan Full Circle of Health



Good Samaritan Health Center
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Executive Summary

People living in Atlanta's Westside have a life expectancy 13 years less than those living in Atlanta's wealthiest areas. Poverty, lack of health insurance and healthcare access, homelessness, language barriers, and unemployment are among the social determinants of health predisposing Atlanta's uninsured population to adverse health outcomes. Located in the Westside neighborhood, the Good Samaritan Health Center (Good Sam) provides care to low income and uninsured communities with a mission of "spreading Christ's love through quality health care to those in need."

In order to decrease the devastating life expectancy gap, Good Sam has developed a Full Circle of Health model to address social determinants of health. The Full Circle of Health includes medical care, dental care, behavioral health services, health education, and healthy living tools. Medical care includes comprehensive primary care along with prenatal care, pediatrics, diagnostic labs and imaging, case management, and specialty services. The dental program offers hygiene, restorative care, prosthetics, and specialty care. The behavioral health department offers same day assessment and well as scheduled counseling sessions and psychiatric consultation. Health education programming compliments medical services and includes diabetic education, nutritional consults, cooking classes, kidney health classes, and prenatal classes. Good Sam further enhances patients' ability to engage in healthy lifestyles through the Good Sam farm, farmer's market, and wellness center. These services provide patients with opportunities for affordable fresh produce and a safe place for exercise.

The Full Circle of Health model is supported by volunteerism, community partnerships, and scholarship. Volunteers support all of the services that comprise the Full Circle of Health at Good Samaritan. Volunteer providers also enable patients to receive specialty medical and dental care as well as additional counseling services and psychiatry. Through strategic community partnerships, Good Sam is able to support community programs and ministries as well as link patients to social

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services beyond the scope of Good Sam. Good Sam's commitment to scholarship is demonstrated through ongoing provider education, publishing research and best practice strategies, tracking clinical outcomes through the quality assurance program, and educating future health care providers. This report outlines the Full Circle of Health model and discusses Good Samaritan's commitment to growth, community engagement, and scholarship alongside excellence in health care delivery.

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Addressing the Life Expectancy Gap: The Good Samaritan Circle of Health

Atlanta is a health care hub, home to the Center for Disease Control, the American Cancer Society, and several major research universities. While Atlanta boasts some of the most innovative and outstanding health care services in the world, health disparities cloud health care progress. People living in the Bankhead neighborhood, where Good Samaritan Health Center is located, have a life expectancy 13 years less than those living in the more affluent Buckhead neighborhood (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2015). The socioeconomic gradient and accompanying social determinants of health disparities are literally issues of life or death in Atlanta. Located in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for primary care, dental care, and psychiatric care (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016), the Good Samaritan Health Center (Good Sam) serves uninsured and vulnerable communities in the Atlanta metro region. Since opening in 1999, the board, staff, and volunteers of Good Sam have discovered that health care provision is only the first step in impacting health outcomes. In an effort to improve health outcomes within the community, Good Sam has developed the Full Circle of Health model encompassing medical care, dental care, health education, behavioral health, and healthy living support systems including food access and exercise in an integrated model. This paper describes the Full Circle of Health model developed at Good Sam, its implementation, and its impact on the health of patients.

Origins: The History and Mission of Good Sam

The Good Samaritan Health Center (Good Sam) is a healthcare non-profit organization that was founded in 1998 by Atlanta pediatrician, Dr. Bill Warren. With a mission of “spreading Christ’s love through quality healthcare to those in need,” the clinic serves a diverse population where the entire family can receive quality healthcare in an atmosphere of dignity and respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion. The clinic provides a healthcare home and a safety net to uninsured and medically underserved people in the community.

Good Sam opened for service in downtown Atlanta in January of 1999 with a staff of eight and a handful of volunteers. From the first day, Good Sam provided comprehensive primary medical care, dental care, mental health counseling, and health education services to uninsured, low-income individuals and families in metropolitan Atlanta. During the first year of opening, Good Sam provided 6,600 patient visits. A team of 45 full and part-time staff and more than 60 volunteers provided over 27,000 patient visits in 2015.

Good Sam provides comprehensive healthcare for uninsured low-income patients including the working poor, the homeless, and those eligible for Medicaid/Medicare. Patients pay for services according to an affordable sliding scale based on household income; no one is ever turned away due to inability to pay. Those who are unable to pay receive care at no charge. While patient fees and insurance reimbursement cover some of the clinic operation costs, the Good Sam development team solicits individual donations and grants to maintain operation and allow for growth.

Vulnerability: The Face of America's Uninsured and the Patients of Good Sam

Despite the positive impact of health care reform through the Affordable Care Act, 32 million Americans remain uninsured, 80% of who are in a family with at least one working family member (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2015). Lack of health insurance is particularly problematic in Georgia where over 19% of adults are uninsured, which is well above the 13.8% national average (Sweeny, 2015). Ninety percent of patients at Good Sam are uninsured increasing their likelihood of lacking access to needed health care as well as poor health outcomes. One-quarter of uninsured adults report going without needed health care due to cost and 22% report being unable to afford the medication they were prescribed (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2014). As a result of lacking health care access, adults without health insurance are less likely to receive preventive services, more likely to forgo needed

follow visits and effective therapies for chronic diseases, and are more likely to be diagnosed with later-stage cancers (Institute of Medicine, 2009).

Good Sam patients, who are the working poor, the homeless, and those on Medicaid or Medicare, are families and individuals living at 200% or less of the federal poverty line. The vast majority of patients at Good Sam do not have any form of medical insurance. Those that do have insurance are often unable to afford their copays or deductibles. Good Sam is located just west of downtown adjacent to the English Avenue, Vine City, Washington Park, and Grove Park neighborhoods where over 25,000 nearby residents qualify for our services based on income. By offering affordable health care for low-income residents and those lacking health insurance, Good Sam provides access to preventive medicine, chronic disease management, and a medical home for the community.

Poverty and lack of health insurance contribute to a population's vulnerability, but they are not the only factors influencing a population's vulnerability. Vulnerable populations are those who "may be vulnerable to health care quality problems for one or a combination of underlying reasons, including those pertaining to their financial circumstance or place of residence, health, age, or functional or developmental status, or ability to communicate effectively" (President's Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry, 1998). Patients at Good Sam experience all of these contributing factors.

Good Sam serves a diverse population that is 30% African American, 7% Caucasian, 57% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 3% other. Many Hispanic patients face language barriers when accessing care. In response, all full-time medical providers at Good Sam speak Spanish and numerous interpreters are on staff to ensure patients have access to care in their language.

Good Sam also offers full family services in one location. Patients often have more than one appointment scheduled with different departments. By offering full family services including adult primary care, prenatal care, pediatric care, and preventive and restorative dental treatment, families can schedule appointments for

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multiple family members the same day. The Monday through Saturday schedule allows patients to schedule around their employment obligations, avoiding missed workdays and associated income loss. Finally, Good Sam provides patient navigation and care coordination services, assisting patients in obtaining imaging and specialty services through a large network of partners.

State and federal policies are needed to address the uninsured crisis, but Good Sam is daily making it possible for uninsured people in Atlanta to receive the same high quality health care they would receive if covered by health insurance. Good Sam serves as a medical home for uninsured patients allowing them to receive medical care, dental care, behavioral health services, and health education over the course of their lifespan.

The Full Circle of Health: The Pathology of Social Determinants of Health

While Good Samaritan provides high quality, evidence-based care, clinical care alone cannot solve the life expectancy gap. A growing body of evidence reveals the significance of social determinants of health in determining health status, disease burden, and life expectancy. The World Health Organization (2012) defines social determinants of health as “conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, including the health system” which are “shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels.” While one clinic alone is not equipped to address all such determinants, Good Sam’s Full Circle of Health model aims to address critical determinants within the scope of a community clinic.

Social determinants of health can be conceptualized as a gradient in which people’s socioeconomic status and social position determine their place in the societal gradient. People at the top of the gradient have jobs, insurance, safe housing, food access, education, and social support. Those at the bottom of the gradient lack employment, insurance, saving accounts, stable housing, and access to education. An individual’s position on the gradient has a direct impact on the individual’s health. Middle income Americans are more than twice as likely to die before the age of 65

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than top income earners while those on the bottom are three times as likely to die prematurely (Adler & Steward, 2007). Those at the bottom of the gradient experience much higher levels of chronic stress. The stress brought on by unemployment, violence, lack of food, and instability in housing has a physical toll. This type of chronic stress results in system overload and disease (McEwan, 2006) including cardiovascular disease (Steptoe & Marmot, 2002) and premature birth (Wadwa, Entringer, Buss & Lu, 2011).

The programmatic design of Good Samaritan aims to increase people's health status and equip them for healthy lives. While Good Sam cannot address all social determinants, the Full Circle of Health model connects multiple types of care and healthy living resources to maximize health status. The Full Circle of Health at Good Samaritan surrounds the patient and family with services designed to address chronic stress and provide comprehensive support for those faced with an unfair burden of access disparity and disease in Atlanta. The Full Circle of Health is made up of the following (Figure 1):

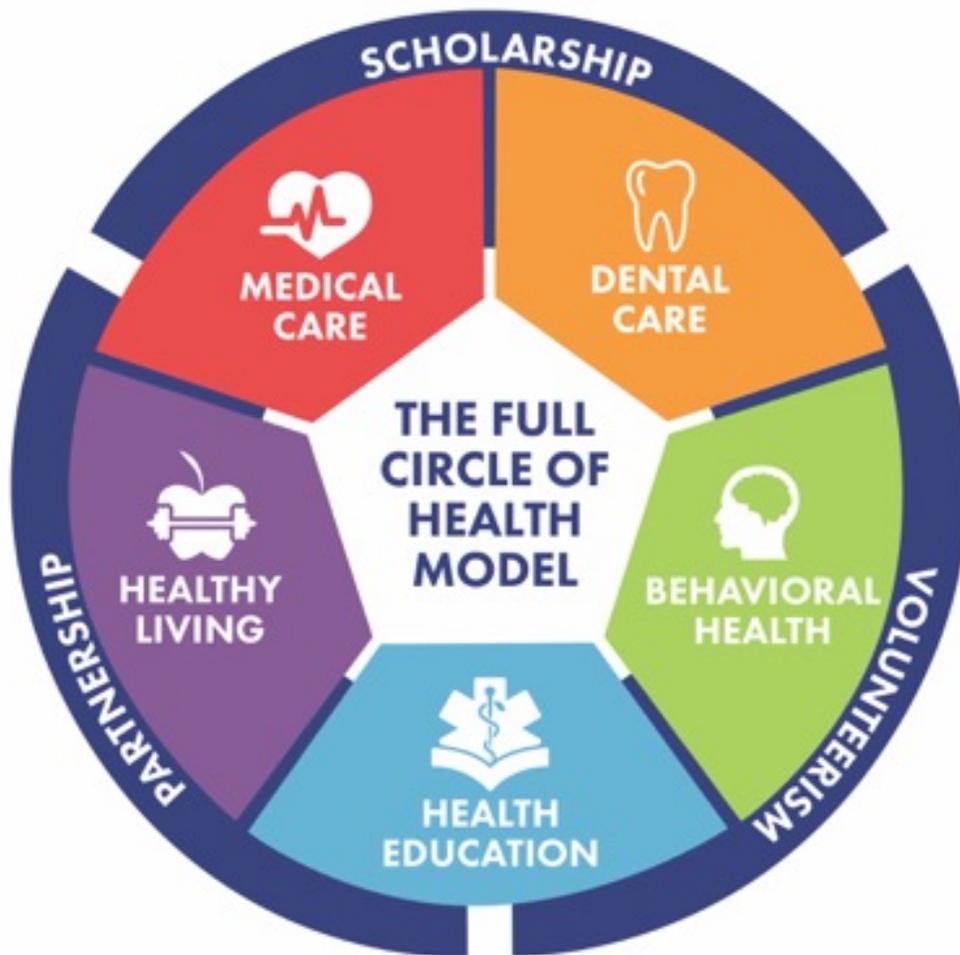
- **Medical Services.** Good Samaritan offers evidence-based primary care with an emphasis on preventive medicine, chronic disease management, and full services across the lifespan. Case management services allow patients to receive specialty care.
- **Dental Services.** The dental department offers both restorative and preventive dental care with the goal of improving health and quality of life through evidence-based dental care.
- **Behavioral Health.** This department recognizes the influence of mental wellbeing on health status and offers counseling and psychiatry services in an integrated approach.
- **Health Education.** The Health Education programming provides patients and community members with information about self-care, chronic disease management, and nutrition.

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- **Healthy Living.** The urban farm, daily farmer's market, and community gym promote access to health living options for Good Sam's patients and community.

The integration and implementation of each of these services is supported by a team of dedicated volunteers and a commitment to partnership with like-minded organizations in the city to maximize Good Sam's efforts and link patients to services beyond the scope of Good Sam.

Figure 1. The Good Samaritan Full Circle of Health



Medical Services: Primary Care and an Integrated Approach

The foundation of care at Good Sam is evidence-based primary care. Primary care includes annual wellness exams, curative care for acute illnesses, and management of chronic diseases. The goal of primary care is to prevent illness, restore health, and prevent health deterioration. Primary care is effective in promoting positive health outcomes and is largely underutilized in the U.S. An increase in primary care physician supply is associated with improvements in all-cause, cancer, heart disease, stroke, and infant mortality in addition to improvements in life expectancy and self-rated health status (Macinko, Starfield, & Shi, 2007). Primary care includes Good Sam's pediatric program in which children receive check-ups, vaccinations and treatment of childhood illnesses. The prenatal program serves approximately 70 women each year providing access to comprehensive prenatal care including ultrasound, lab work, and childbirth classes. Good Sam providers manage an array of chronic illness including diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. In addition, patients have access to affordable cancer screening tests such as mammography and Pap testing. Primary care at Good Sam also includes on-site radiology and full laboratory services.

Due to the support of volunteers health care providers, Good Sam is also able to offer numerous specialty services on-site. Orthopedic, gastroenterology, neuro-ophthalmology, gynecology, podiatry, and cardiology services are provided by volunteer licensed providers on a monthly basis. A weekly procedure clinic allows patients to receive minor surgeries in office. A bi-monthly gynecology clinic offers colposcopy and endometrial biopsies. A volunteer gastroenterologist makes it possible for patients to receive hepatitis C treatment. In addition to these onsite services, collaborative relationships with private practices and hospital systems provide patients with access to diagnostic imaging, oncology, nephrology, neurology, urology, and other specialty services. Good Sam primary care providers and medical support staff offer case management to assist patients in accessing specialty

services, obtaining diagnostic testing and continuing ongoing medical co-management with specialty providers.

Good Sam prioritizes evidence-based care as part of a clinic wide quality improvement program. Providers meet weekly to review guidelines and incorporate published research and guidelines into daily practice. Good Sam providers strive to incorporate the highest standards of care while meeting the unique needs of the population served.

As Good Sam seeks to meet the needs of its immediate community, the staff has learned flexibility, moving outside of traditional health care structures to better serve the needs of the community. One Fridays, Good Sam operates a fully integrated clinic dedicated to providing care to homeless individuals. Transportation services bring patients from a downtown park and a local homeless shelter to Good Sam for care. A team of staff and volunteer primary care providers, dental providers, counselors, and psychiatrists work together to provide comprehensive services to everyone who comes. These services along with medication are provided without any cost to the patient. This fully integrated clinic allows patients experiencing homelessness to have a medical home.

An essential role of the medical program at Good Sam is the ability of the medical providers to link patients to other Good Sam services. Primary care providers tell patients about the health education programming available and refer patients to the dental program, specialty care services, and health education classes. Good Sam continues to strategize and change in order to more effectively link patients to additional services. While foundational, medical care is limited in its ability to impact long term health indicators. Herein lies the critical need for the services that make up the full circle of health.

Dental Care: The Social and Physical Implications of Dental Health

Oral health has long been recognized as a major component of a person's overall health status. The oral environment is often the place where early signs of disease

manifest, and disease in the oral cavity is linked to major systemic diseases. While research is ongoing, periodontal disease is associated with heart disease and treatment of periodontal disease decreases inflammation throughout the body (American Heart Association, 2012). In addition, research indicates that dental disease may be a cause of endocarditis and preterm birth and is linked to poor glucose control in diabetes (Mayo Clinic, 2016).

Good Samaritan provides comprehensive dental services including prevention and education. A healthy mouth is the start to providing pain free comfortable food intake and proper nutrition. The Good Sam dental program is truly comprehensive including emergency care for relief of pain, infection or trauma as well as non-emergent exams and x-rays. Treatment planning is based on patients' desires and optimal care standards. Such plans might include restorative care (fillings, crowns, veneers, onlays), prosthetic care (fixed bridgework, complete and partial dentures), and specialty care (periodontal treatment, root canals, oral surgery, and TMD therapy). In addition to treatment, licensed hygienists provide oral hygiene care and education as well as follow up for prevention and maintenance.

As with all of Good Sam services, care is provided by licensed professionals who are a mix of paid full time staff and community volunteers. Care provided at Good Sam is supplemented by arrangements with private practice specialists who see complicated cases in their private offices at reduced fees. Within Good Sam, dental and medical providers collaborate to maximize the quality of care patients receive. When dental providers detect emergent blood pressures or glucose readings prior to procedures, a medical provider can evaluate patients the same day. Medical patients presenting with acute dental needs are able to receive triage and care through the dental department. This collaboration not only maximizes quality patient care but also fosters a team-approach to care at Good Sam.

While the physical implications of dental hygiene are well established, dental care addresses social determinants of health as well. In its report to the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research

(2000) found that oral conditions can limit social functioning including communication, social interaction, and intimacy. The Institute found that oral conditions impact self-image and may limit educational and career opportunities. As Good Sam dental providers are restoring mouths, they are also enabling social interactions and improvements in self-image, which may result in new opportunities for work, education, and social engagement.

Behavioral Health: The Mind and Body Connection

Mental health counseling has been a part of Good Samaritan's services since the clinic's opening. However, based on the need of the community, this department is actively expanding. Mental health illnesses are common, with 18.1% of U.S. adults having some form of mental illness (National Institutes of Health, 2014). However, mental health care has not received parity with other health services in terms of insurance coverage or access. Georgia ranks 47th in the nation in terms of mental health care access (Mental Health America, 2016).

Access to mental health care is particularly critical in lower income communities. Mental health issues are five times more prevalent among individuals living in poverty (Schiller, Lucas, & Peregoy, 2012). Living in an impoverished environment causes significant psychological stress leaving individuals with limited cognitive "bandwidth" for daily tasks let alone educational advancement. However, people living in poverty are the least likely to access traditional counseling services. Those on an extremely limited budget must make critical decisions with money and often are in the position of prioritizing paying for food and shelter over the expense of mental health care.

Good Sam seeks to remove the barriers to obtaining mental health care by offering low cost counseling services onsite. The counseling department provides quality mental health care to individuals, couples, and families in a judgment free environment that is inclusive of all races, ethnicities, and religions. Good Sam offers individual, couple, child/adolescent, and family therapy. During sessions licensed

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counselors assist patients with a variety of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, grief/loss, anger management, as well as issues stemming from trauma. Skilled interpreters are available to sit in on sessions for patients whose primary language is Spanish. Every attempt is made to schedule counseling appointments on the same day as medical or dental appointments for the patient's convenience. Between scheduled sessions, the counselor is available to meet with patients during their medical visits.

The counseling department is expanding to provide additional community services. Counselors are available to provide educational talks to community groups on a variety of counseling-related issues such as anger and stress management, bullying, effective communication, and healthy family functioning. The counseling center will offer Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) to patients. DBT has been proven to help clients achieve gains in emotion regulation, distress tolerance, mindfulness, and improved interpersonal relationships.

Psychiatric services are available at Good Sam on a part-time basis. Psychiatrists offer diagnostic evaluations to determine appropriate mental and behavioral health diagnoses, medication stabilization and management. Psychiatrists partner directly with primary care providers and counselors to maximize patient outcomes.

Good Sam is working toward fully integrated mental health services where patients have access to counselors and psychiatrists during their primary care visits without scheduling separate office visits. Integrated care is actively implemented on Fridays when Good Samaritan provides care to homeless Georgians. Patients are seen by primary care providers and then receive psychiatric evaluation and/or counseling services as needed during the same office visit.

Health Education: Prevention and Treatment Beyond the Clinical Setting

Health education is a growing service at Good Samaritan. The goal of the all health education programming is to positively impact people's health related decision

making beyond the walls of Good Sam by helping people manage chronic conditions and, even more importantly, avoid such conditions altogether. Individual behaviors, such as smoking and lack of exercise, account for nearly 50% of all premature deaths, highlighting the necessity of health education in impacting health outcomes and life expectancy (Hardcastle, Record, Jacobson, & Gostin, 2011). By equipping people to make healthy decisions, Good Sam has a wider impact on the health of individuals and their families.

Much of the Good Sam's health education program focuses on nutrition including food purchasing, food preparation, and understanding the impact of food on the body. This program is augmented by the Good Sam teaching kitchen, a state-of-the-art commercial kitchen designed for food preparation instruction. Good Sam has a full time-time Registered Dietician whose work is supplemented by partnerships with other nutrition-related and health education organizations. Good Sam offers monthly group nutrition medical visits in English and Spanish in which patients learn about nutrition, physical activity, weight loss, and affordable nutritious cooking. In addition, Good Sam hosts healthy cooking demonstrations to teach patients and community members about cooking simple, nutritious, and affordable meals. In an effort to address the childhood obesity epidemic, Good Sam offers youth nutrition workshops in which youth ages 8-17 years receive cooking demonstrations and discussion about healthy eating and physical activity.

Good Sam also has a diabetes education management program aimed at patients with diabetes as well as those at risk for diabetes. This interdisciplinary program involves the collaboration of the Registered Dietician, Medical Doctors, Nurse Practitioners, Diabetic Educators, and Pharmacists who partner with patients to improve their knowledge of self-management of diabetes. Good Sam also hosts monthly diabetes classes in which patients receive education and discuss management strategies in a group setting.

In addition to classes focusing on nutrition, Good Sam offers additional unique health education opportunities. The Good Sam prenatal program, "Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Childbirth, Healthy Parenting" offers group educational visits in

each trimester addressing topics such as fetal development, childbirth, infant care, and breastfeeding (Lathrop & Prithum, 2012). A monthly Kidney Smart class is hosted at Good Sam by a dialysis Registered Nurse to discuss the management and prevention of chronic kidney disease.

Good Samaritan will continue to develop educational programming to meet the needs of the community. Primary care providers refer patients into these programs as part of their care and community members are invited to attend as well to maximize community impact.

Health Living: Food Access and Physical Activity

As Good Sam worked to impact social determinants of health outside of clinical care, access to healthy food emerged as a critical need. Nineteen percent of Georgia households are food insecure and 2 million Georgians live in food deserts (Staples, n.d). Good Sam's urban farm makes food accessible and affordable to Good Sam's patients and neighbors.

The mission of the Good Samaritan Urban Farm and Market is to grow quality produce for the patients and community members served by the Good Sam and to sell that produce at affordable prices. The one-acre farm is supported by a farm manager, farmhand, and nearly 75 volunteers each year. The farm is growing and producing over 8000 lbs. of produce per year.

Food produced on the farm is distributed to patients in a variety of ways. First, the Good Sam farmer's market is located right at the entrance of the clinic and offers affordable prices on fresh produce for anyone dropping by. Those with SNAP benefits can get double their dollars when shopping at the farmer's market. The staff talk to patients about the produce, how to prepare it, and even offer meal suggestions. In addition, Good Sam staff and volunteers use seasonal farm produce in all cooking demonstrations and nutrition visits. Patients can learn how to prepare the produce during their visit and buy some to take home on their way out.

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Good Sam also runs a Food RX program in which patients with nutrition related illness such as diabetes and high blood pressure can receive produce vouchers. In the Eat Well Live Well program, participants attend monthly classes in which they learn about healthy eating and receive a cooking demonstration. Participants attend multiple classes building upon their knowledge of nutrition and its impact on chronic diseases. Each month, participants leave with a voucher for a month's worth of produce, which they can receive at the Farmer's Market. The cooking classes help participants learn how to prepare the fresh produce they are receiving.

These health education programs exemplify the Full Circle of Health approach. Providers offer screening for nutrition-related illnesses and prescribe classes and nutrition consults for patients. Patients can immediately meet with the nutritionist to begin learning about healthy eating and set personal goals. The patient is then invited to join a class and participate in the cooking demonstrations. Finally, the patient can purchase produce while at the clinic and continue lifestyle changes at home and within their community.

This year, Good Sam will offer a safe and affordable place for exercise by opening a wellness center onsite. Urban Perform, a partnering organization, will manage the gym as their second location and conduct a fitness program Monday through Saturday. Good Sam providers will have the ability to refer patients for classes and workout sessions. As the wellness center becomes a reality, Good Sam will continue to explore new ways of linking high quality medical care, education, and proactive steps toward addressing social determinants of health.

Volunteers: Keys to Sustainability and Access

The implementation of Good Sam's Full Circle of Health model is made possible by a team of dedicated volunteers who services supplement and expand those offered by staff providers. Volunteers assist with administration tasks, work on the farm, and provide healthcare. Over 40 clinical providers volunteer \$250,000

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in clinical services. Volunteer health providers make it possible for patients to receive affordable specialty care at Good Sam as well as increase Good Sam's capacity to continue serving new patients. Volunteers also assist with marketing, administration, the prayer room, and the farm.

All volunteers complete a volunteer application and the Good Sam staff provides appropriate vetting and training for all volunteers. A competitive internship program also attracts passionate students, many of who hope to become health care providers. The key to successful volunteer recruitment at Good Sam revolves around the commitment that volunteers are valued and given a specific task for their time at Good Sam. Volunteers do meaningful work and each volunteer, whether providing direct patient care or working on the farm, is scheduled for a specific time and given the support needed to maximize their time at Good Sam.

Volunteers have also created unique programs that provide specific services to the community. Several pediatric developmental physicians created a monthly developmental clinic in which children with developmental delays can receive appropriate diagnosis and are connected with needed resources. A volunteer prosthetist created the Good Sam Orthotics and Prosthetics Clinic. A lab on site allows for the creation of new limbs for patients with amputations. All women with abnormal Pap tests receive colposcopy at Good Sam due to the colpo clinic supported completely by volunteer providers. An oral surgeon performs procedures in office allowing patients to continue their dental treatment plans. These volunteers and others greatly expand the services offered to Good Sam patients.

Partnerships: Growing Beyond Organizational Capacity

As mentioned previously, social determinants of health encompass a wide variety factors including housing, employment, and education. Factors such as these are outside of the scope and capacity of Good Sam. Good Sam's goal is to continue to advance the Full Circle of Health model while building connections with organizations which are addressing other determinants. Good Sam does this by

supporting other organizations as well as connecting patients to services outside of Good Sam.

In order to be a community partner, Good Sam creates memorandums of understanding with organizations in our neighborhood. The goal of such partnerships is to enhance access to health care, allowing other organizations to focus on their missions. Good Sam has MOUs with schools, shelters, and recovery organizations to provide health services to their participants. Good Sam strives to support organizations working toward improved education, access to affordable housing, and other social determinants.

Second, Good Sam continues to build a network of community partners where patients can be referred who need assistance outside of the scope of Good Sam. For example, Good Sam counselors have completed training to complete housing referrals for homeless patients. These referrals are then sent to the Atlanta Continuum of Care in order for patients to receive housing. Good Sam seeks to better understand all of the good work occurring in the community and foster partnerships for the betterment of the community.

Scholarship

As Good Sam grows and the staff learns from years of experience in working with Atlanta's vulnerable communities, Good Sam aims to position itself as a thought leader with the goal of sharing best practices. By sharing successful programs and strategies, Good Sam extends its sphere of influence and has the potential to impact the health of vulnerable communities beyond Atlanta.

Since its opening, Good Sam has provided learning opportunities to healthcare professional students in an effort to raise up a generation of health care providers who understand the need for accessible, affordable care and the unique needs of uninsured patients. Good Sam providers serve as preceptors for medical students, nurse practitioner students, physician assistant students, and dietitian students. Good Sam offers internship programs for students interested in non-profit

management, community organization, and health professional careers. Good Sam also serves as a site for practicums and work-study jobs for public health students. Students leave Good Sam with skills and experiences they are able to apply in their future careers, in which many will serve vulnerable communities.

Good Sam also has a quality assurance program in which all departments track measurable outcomes including clinical outcome benchmarks and patient satisfaction. All teams contribute to a monthly report which documents progress, adverse events, and policy changes. All staff members receive a quarterly report of clinical outcomes and patient satisfaction survey results. This report is used to assess community impact and adapt programs to better meet the needs of the community. Health care providers also meet weekly to review clinical guidelines, demonstrating Good Sam's commitment to practicing evidence-based care. The goal of the quality assurance program is promote a culture of excellence with a focus on continued change for maximizing quality care.

More recently, Good Sam has launched the Good Samaritan Institute to convene healthcare professionals, publish cutting-edge research, and educate the next generation of providers to improve the quality of healthcare for those in need. Quarterly Lunch & Learns gather healthcare professionals for the purpose of continued education and networking. Good Sam also seeks to publish research and best practices through research papers, white papers, programmatic guides, and scholarly blogs. By sharing ideas and data, Good Sam enables other organizations to adopt successful strategies and impact their communities.

Conclusion

Good Samaritan's mission of "spreading Christ's love through quality care to those in need" has remained consistent through years of growth and change. While the mission will never change, Good Sam strives for flexibility and excellence, adapting to the needs of the community and implementing best practices. Good Sam delivers quality care within the Full Circle of Health approach to impact health

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outcomes in a way not possible with traditional medical care alone. Closing the 13-year life expectancy gap requires excellence in the work of Good Sam, consideration of social determinants of health, and meaningful partnerships within the community. Good Sam is committed to this goal and will continue to advance and improve the Full Circle of Health model.

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