

Milestones in COMHAR's History

The 1970's

In 1974, a new nonprofit corporation was established and named **COMHAR, Inc.** In January 1975, Episcopal Hospital received a small grant to expand to a full community organization. This grant was then transferred to the new corporation and **COMHAR** became a free-standing center with a community governing board.

Day program/sheltered workshop established for individuals with intellectual disabilities who lived at home with their families in the community.

First Community Residential Rehabilitation (CRR) programs for individuals with mental illness open for 9 women on Frankford Avenue and for 6 men on East Clearfield Street. Day services expand for adults with intellectual disabilities through Vocational Habilitation Program.

Judge Broderick declares that individuals committed to State institutions have a "right to treatment."

The 1980's

The first Community Living Arrangement (CLA) for 3 adults with intellectual disabilities opens at 1760 Frankford Avenue.

COMHAR receives its first grant from HUD (Housing and Urban Development) for subsidized rentals for individuals with mental illness and creates 10 apartments on East Lehigh Avenue.

The Firewood Program, **COMHAR's** first Community Integrated Employment program, begins.

COMHAR's third HUD project establishes two in-community intensive care programs for individuals with more severe mental health symptoms.

Pennhurst State Center is closed.

The Open Door Clubhouse, the first psychosocial rehabilitation program in the city based on the NYC Fountain House program, opens.

Project PROACT, the prototype for the intensive case management model, opens.

Closure of Philadelphia State Hospital announced. The concept of behavioral health Managed Care evolved from theory to practice.

The 1990's

Ryan White Care Act passed. Philadelphia State Hospital is closed.

COMHAR receives PSH Diversion funds to provide services to individuals discharged from extended acute care inpatient at St. Mary's Hospital to **COMHAR's** Intensive CRR Programs.

COMHAR receives funds to provide city-wide services for individuals who are HIV+ and need mental health care.

Woodhaven State Center downsizes, giving consumers the right to choose where they receive services; leads to expansion of community residential programs.

Supported Independent Living introduced in CRR program; 18 individuals select where they will live while maintaining needed support.

Focus on **COMHAR's** aging clients – Home Health Care license obtained; IDD Seniors Program opens.

The Community Living Room (CLR) was established as a federal demonstration program to serve the mental health needs of individuals with HIV/AIDS. Funds secured for housing for this population.

Groundbreaking for Administrative Offices at 100 West Lehigh Avenue.

First Mental Health Parity Law passed.

COMHAR establishes Children's Services.

Embreeville State Hospital deinstitutionalization begins, resulting in further expansion of residential programs.

COMHAR opens its first LTSR, Independence House, at Oxford Avenue for 16 individuals leaving Norristown State Hospital.

Specialized bilingual/bicultural mental health services initiated for the Latino community.

Supreme Court issues Olmsted decision that it is a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act to keep individuals in restrictive inpatient settings when more appropriate community services are available.

The 2000's

The PEW Charitable Trusts funds the OATS program to provide outreach services to elderly Latinos in need of mental health services.

CLA program adds 3 programs for individuals being discharged from Ebensburg State Hospital and takes over 5 programs in Montgomery County. CLR receives national recognition for providing integrated mental health and HIV services.

COMHAR begins Health District Project to provide mental health assessment and treatment for low-income elderly at four Philadelphia Health District locations, thus integrating their physical and mental health care.

COMHAR's IDD Services partners with the Phillies to provide recreational, exercise and social opportunities for individuals with special needs through the medium of baseball.

COMHAR issues a \$4,500,000 bond to finance acquisition and rehabilitation/construction of facilities, refinance existing mortgages and upgrade technology.

COMHAR opens specialized LTSR on E. York Street for aging individuals with serious health challenges being discharged from Norristown State Hospital.

New facility for Outpatient Services opens at 2055 E. Allegheny Avenue and the Open Door Clubhouse moves into the newly renovated Emerald Street site.

COMHAR's Partial Hospital programs are transformed into psychiatric rehabilitation programs called HOPE CIRC (Community Integrated Recovery Center), licensed by OMHSAS.

COMHAR partners with St. Christopher's Hospital and Center City Pediatrics, applies for and is awarded one of only eight national pilot projects for the screening, diagnosis and treatment of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Administrative Office Building renamed in honor of Dorothy Anderson, COMHAR's long serving Board President.

The 2010's

COMHAR opens two new residential programs in Northampton County for individuals being discharged from the closing of

Allentown State Hospital.

The **COMHAR** Intensive Case Management and Resource Coordination Services are re-organized to Blended Case Management to better meet system and person needs.

Specialized HIV/AIDS Services, the Strawberry Mansion Outpatient Program and the Latino Outpatient Treatment Program are redesigned to facilitate a walk-in day for same day access to services.

The HOPE CIRC Program and the Adult Outpatient Program implement the Common Ground Initiative, an evidence-based practice to improve person-centered care, peer support and individual communication with doctors.

COMHAR's Children's Services program is awarded participation with the Thomas Scattergood Foundation for the *Building Agency Capacity in Program Evaluation Initiative*. The two-year grant offers support from the expertise of staff from The Consultation Center of Yale University to learn practical program evaluation skills to identify and track program processes and outcomes.

COMHAR relocates the Latino Treatment Program and HOPE Latino Program to new, expanded facilities with expanded services. The Latino Treatment Program is awarded participation in the Trauma-focused CBT Treatment Program for children and families; another evidence-based practice initiated to improve the quality and outcomes of service to our community.

COMHAR forms an innovative new partnership between the Pennsylvania Ballet and the COMHAR's Community Living Room, bringing adults that have mental illness and HIV/AIDS into the world of dance for a special program during the holiday season part of the Ballet's Art-Reach community engagement branch that offered individuals from the Community Living Room a chance to not only experience George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker* as an audience member, but as dancers themselves.

The 2020's

COMHAR pivots to Telehealth due to COVID-19 to provide uninterrupted care for outpatient and other non-residential programs supporting members to gain access via free phone technology.

COMHAR is awarded RFP with the County of Northampton Office of Mental Health for a new residential program, ORLTSR - overseeing/executing lease, preconstruction meetings, zoning hearings, etc.; the 8 bed highly structured therapeutic residential treatment facility opens.

The Development and Communications Department is created at **COMHAR** with a focus on fundraising practices to bring in sustainable revenue streams into COMHAR.

COMHAR recognized by DBHIDS EPIC Evidence Based Program Designation in Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR).

COMHAR IDD Community Services was selected to implement a Competitive Integrated Employment Model.

COMHAR is awarded \$4 million CCBHC grant to provide integrated care.

COMHAR is awarded a Mural Arts Grant from the Porch Light Project to create two murals for the organization. The first mural, under the instruction and direction of artist Marisol De La Garza, involves working with members of **COMHAR's** Community Integrated Recovery Centers (CIRC). The mural is designed for **COMHAR's** administration facility.

COMHAR's administration building is newly renovated creating a Learning and Collaboration Center as a training resource for **COMHAR** staff and the community.