

Grant Outcome Report

His Branches: Expanding Health Services to the People of Rochester, NY

Two Special Opportunity Grants to His Branches provided funding to convert its health clinic to an Article 28 Diagnostic and Treatment Facility. Conversion to Article 28 status allows for additional State and federal reimbursements, which would make it possible for His Branches to provide services to more people.

The Problem

Private practitioners working in association with His Branches have provided medical services at the current location for the past 30 years. In today's contracted reimbursement environment, however, the sustainability of these services is in question. The management team at His Branches knew that converting to Article 28 status would allow for increased Medicaid reimbursements and community support in the form of donations and grants, as well as additional State and federal funds. Increased organizational accountability would also contribute to the project's long-term sustainability.

In 2004, His Branches filed an application with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to convert its health care program to a full Article 28 Diagnostic and Treatment Facility. By converting to an Article 28 facility, His Branches conservatively estimated it could expand its number of patient visits from 7,500 to 10,000 because of the additional cash flow it would receive through State and federal reimbursements for its services. Most of this cash flow would be generated from capitated payments for Medicaid services as opposed to its current, highly discounted Medicaid fee-for-service rate. Article 28 status would allow His Branches to put its providers on the payroll and conduct fundraising—activities that private ownership functionally precludes.

On June 5, 2006, NYSDOH approved His Branches' Certificate of Need application requesting permission to convert to a licensed Article 28 Community Health Center, subject to 11 contingencies. His Branches had completed nine of these contingencies at the time of its proposal to the New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth). The two remaining contingencies were to: **(1)** document that it had received a grant pledge of \$20,0000 to cover one-time costs associated

KEY INFORMATION:

GRANTEE

His Branches

GRANT TITLE

Conversion to Community Health Center Status

DATES

Phase I: December 2007–March 2008
Phase II: January 2011–May 2012

FUNDING

Special Opportunity Grant RFP (August 2007)

GRANT AMOUNT

Phase I: \$23,000
Phase II: \$10,687

with the conversion; and **(2)** submit a comprehensive quality assurance plan acceptable to NYSDOH. In 2007, NYSHealth awarded \$23,000 to His Branches, the first of two grants, to complete these tasks.

This project was awarded under NYSHealth's Special Opportunity Grant Request for Proposals in fall 2007. Under this RFP, NYSHealth was interested in supporting special opportunities that represented a one-time chance for an organization or group of organizations to have a large impact on the health of a group of people or to significantly improve the State's health care system. NYSHealth was especially interested in funding nontraditional or pioneering ways of making a difference through this RFP. This particular project represented a one-time opportunity to expand health services to people in a medically underserved area of Rochester, NY.

Grant Activities and Outcomes

The main activities of this grant involved completing the last two contingency steps required by the NYSDOH to finalize His Branches' conversion to Article 28 status. By the close of the grant, NYSDOH had accepted His Branches' completed quality assurance plan and comprehensive policies and procedures manual. In addition, His Branches implemented a fully integrated and functional suite of medical records software that included electronic medical record keeping, scheduling, and billing for private and third-party insurance payers, as well as mandated New York State reporting. His Branches had also completed renovations on its clinical office suite to meet or exceed all of NYSDOH's requirements for an outpatient primary care diagnostic & treatment facility, which was pending inspection by NYSDOH.

By the close of the grant, most of His Branches' proposed tasks had been completed. Final inspection from NYSDOH had not yet occurred, so its conversion to community health center status was not yet completed, though fully expected.

Unfortunately, inspection by the NYSDOH revealed that although the facility met necessary building codes at the time of its application, it no longer met the code for disabled bathroom facilities, which had changed during the application process. Renovations to meet the new code would cost His Branches an additional \$45,000. His Branches determined that these renovation costs were too much to take on at the close of the NYSHealth grant and put its Article 28 request on hold.



In 2011, NYSHealth awarded a second grant to His Branches to bring its bathroom facilities up to code and complete its requirements for achieving Article 28 status. His Branches identified a cost-effective renovation plan that was approved by the NYSDOH, put it out for competitive bid, and completed the project within the timeframe specified on its NYSHealth grant application.

Following completion of the renovation, the His Branches facility was inspected by the NYSDOH and found to meet code with several smaller revisions requested, including rerouting of the ventilation ductwork in its laboratory. These final facility renovations added approximately \$1,500 of new expenses and resulted in full Article 28 licensure for His Branches on July 28, 2011.

The Future

Following licensure, His Branches progressed into a full Article 28 conversion process, became recertified by the National Health Service Corps as a recognized site, and initiated the process of becoming certified as a patient-centered medical home.



His Branches: Expanding Health Services To The People Of Rochester, NY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ABOUT THE GRANTEE

His Branches, Inc., is a nonsectarian Christian ministry that seeks to bring hope, healing, and restoration to individuals, families, and entire neighborhoods. Its goals include providing high-quality, faith-based family health care that is accessible and affordable; developing collaborative health and wellness centers in underserved neighborhoods that serve as catalysts for positive individual and social change; offering preventive health and wellness education services that help clients learn how to stay healthy and reduce the risk of illness; and providing access to individual and family therapy and counseling services to restore personal and family wholeness. Its programs include Grace Family Medicine (primary care), Embracing Options (pregnancy support), Hope Family Counseling and Support Center, and Rochester Youth Outreach.

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