

# VNA Foundation

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## **CHICAGOLAND HOMELESS SERVICE AGENCY RECEIVES AWARD FOR MOBILE HEALTHCARE SERVICES** *The VNA Foundation Recognizes The Night Ministry with Inaugural Anne M. Davis Mobile Health Award*

**CHICAGO, Ill. –September 2010** – Homeless individuals face a multitude of health care problems as they struggle to survive on the streets. Infectious diseases such as hepatitis and respiratory infections are rampant, and chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension commonly go untreated. Providing healthcare to this population requires creative solutions, and one truly exceptional service, The Night Ministry’s Outreach and Health Ministry program, was recently awarded the first annual Anne M. Davis Mobile Health Award by the *VNA Foundation of Chicago*.

The award, named in honor of a longstanding, highly devoted and extremely valued VNA volunteer and Board member, recognizes a VNA Foundation grantee that *uses mobile health services in a particularly innovative, effective and/or impactful way*.

The Night Ministry’s Outreach and Health Ministry program reaches homeless and precariously housed individuals at their time of need on the Chicago streets where they dwell. The program consists of a mobile Health Outreach Bus, staffed by qualified Outreach Professionals and Nurse Practitioners, that travels at night to six different Chicago neighborhoods. The Health Outreach Bus provides services six nights each week, by visiting the neighborhoods on a consistent basis at the same time and evening each week, in the high-needs target areas of Uptown, Roseland, South Shore, Humboldt Park, Pilsen, and Wicker Park. The schedule allows the Outreach Bus to establish a sense of consistency for bus visitors, by being a presence in each neighborhood regularly and at the same time each visit.

“One of Mrs. Davis’ particular interests is health care for the underserved as provided by mobile health units,” said Rob DiLeonardi, Executive Director of the VNA Foundation of Chicago. “She was always rightfully determined that the VNA’s current work accurately reflect its heritage, and viewed the teams of nurses who deliver service on-site via their mobile health vans and buses as perhaps the closest link to the horse-drawn carriages and traveling nurses used by the original Visiting Nurse Association of Chicago.” For this reason, it was the decision of the VNA board that the best way to honor Mrs. Davis’s four decades of service was to create the Anne M. Davis Mobile Health Award, a grant to highlight and honor this particular method of healthcare delivery. Although there were many candidates from which to select for this award, The Night

Ministry Outreach and Health Ministry Program bus, that has for many years worked to address the needs of persons on the nighttime streets of Chicago, was the unanimous choice for this inaugural distinction. Last year, over 75,000 patient contacts to an estimated 5,800 persons were made by the Outreach Bus, with many of those contacts leading to key interventions that improved the health or even saved the lives of clients.

### **About The Night Ministry**

Since The Night Ministry's start nearly 35 years ago, the agency has grown to provide services throughout the city in youth housing and street outreach programs. The Night Ministry's programs are nondenominational, with a focus on building trusting relationships with those in need and empowering them to meet their own needs. In addition to the Outreach and Health Ministry Program, the agency offers shelter and housing services for youth through its Open Door Youth Shelter Interim Program and its Transitional Living Program, and provides housing for pregnant and parenting young women in the Responsive Ability Pregnant and Parenting Program. The Night Ministry also collaborates with the Broadway Youth Center to provide drop-in services to youth who are homeless or precariously housed and who need a safe environment to spend time after school or during evening hours.

### **About the VNA Foundation**

Since 1995, the VNA Foundation has operated exclusively as a grant making foundation, giving financial support to nonprofit organizations offering home- and community-based care to the medically underserved. In 2010, the VNA Foundation awarded 62 grants amounting to more than \$2 million. Recipients of the grants include a variety of agencies providing health care and health services to the working poor, the homeless, and the disenfranchised. For more information on the VNA Foundation, please visit [www.vnafoundation.net](http://www.vnafoundation.net).