

Frontline Workers

Frontline workers are healthcare personnel who provide routine and essential care to patients, generally encompassing non-physician staff in non-managerial roles. Examples include nurses, medical assistants, receptionists, and community outreach specialists, among others. Nontraditional health care settings especially rely on frontline workers, many of whom come from the communities themselves, to provide culturally-competent care.

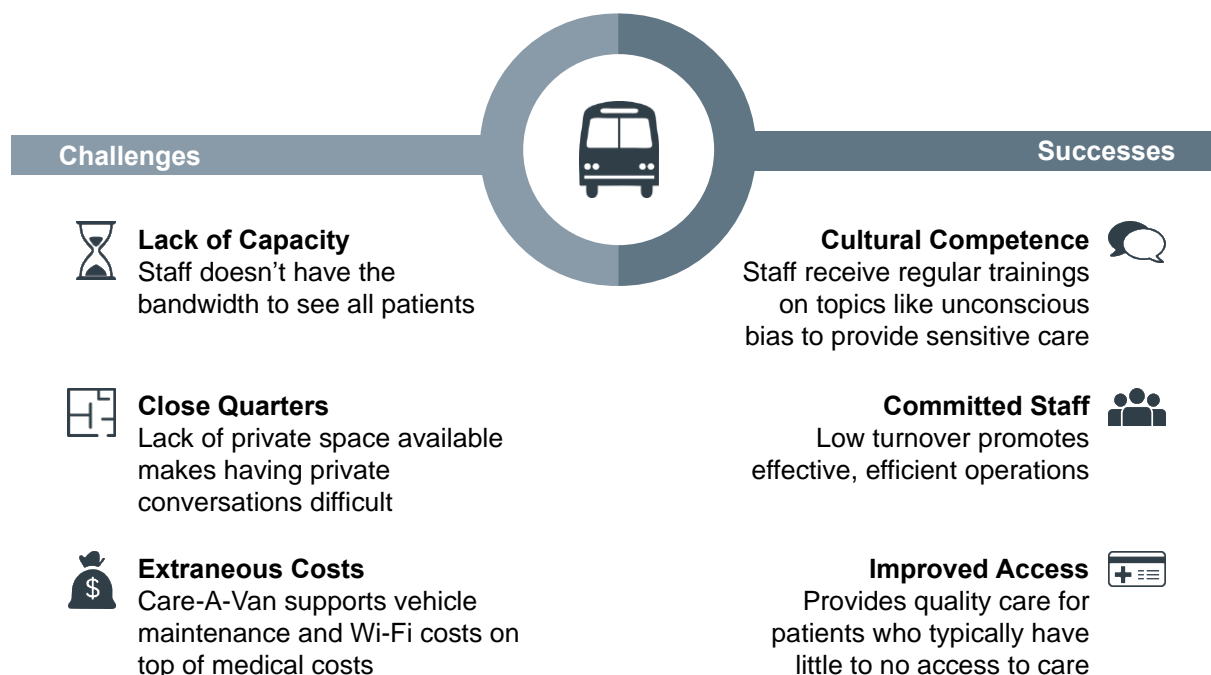
Care-A-Van: Overview

Care-A-Van is a mobile patient-centered medical home operated by Bon Secours Health System that provides services to underserved communities in 21 locations across the greater Richmond, VA area.

By taking steps to accommodate community needs – like ensuring that at least one third of the team on any given van is fluent in both English and Spanish – Care-A-Van has positioned itself as a trusted community resource. The program has become so popular that it is common for patients to arrive at a site and line up for care hours before the van shows up. This happens despite the fact that Care-A-Van does little to no advertising; patients hear about the service from friends, care managers in local hospitals, and Care-A-Van’s partner churches.

Challenges and Successes

As with any provider organization, frontline workers at Care-A-Van face challenges. They have to contend with low staff bandwidth, limited space, and tight funding. Despite these challenges, the staff is still able to make a noticeable impact. Tracking quantitative metrics, such as patient numbers or specific outcomes data, is beyond the van’s staff and technical capacity. In its place, the Care-A-Van team cites consistent patient turnout and the fact that they consistently work at full capacity as indicators that their program is a success. For the staff in particular, the ability to provide culturally sensitive care and low turnover rates are further markers of success.



Care-A-Van Team

To learn more about Care-A-Van's model, we sat down with the program's practice administrator and a community outreach specialist, Helen Gonzalez.

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Care-A-Van's Engaged Staff

“We have a united and caring staff that works hard supporting each other for the benefit of our patients.”

*Helen Gonzalez
Community Outreach Worker, Care-A-Van*

In order to operate an impactful and sustainable mobile care program, Care-A-Van relies on the collaboration of a multidisciplinary team. The clinical side of the team is comprised of physicians, advanced practitioners, nurses, nutritionists, pharmacists and medical assistants. Also central to the program's success are its practice administrator, registrar, interpreter, licensed clinical social worker, and community

outreach specialist. According to Ms. Gonzalez, a typical day for a community outreach specialist involves assisting with Medicaid applications, making referrals to specialists and pharmacists, and connecting patients to community resources.

While each team member provides a service critical to the program's operation, its sustainability can be largely attributed to the staff's shared commitment to the mission. This is not by chance—during the hiring process, the Care-A-Van team searches for candidates who demonstrate sincere motivation to work in low-resource settings.

Takeaway

So, when looking to build out your frontline workforce, consider the best practices Care-A-Van has found. Start by finding staff that are motivated and committed to your mission, and provide training and support in areas that will help them succeed with your patient population. Frontline workers play an important role in making sure that all patients have access to high-quality care.