



November 7, 2017 – for immediate release

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Groundbreaking for health care clinic, housing building in East Portland: The Blackburn Building

PORTLAND, OR: Central City Concern (CCC), Portland’s non-profit serving people impacted by homelessness, poverty and addictions since 1979, broke ground on the third of three buildings in the Housing is Health initiative, a pioneering commitment from local hospitals and health organizations to supportive, affordable housing. CCC also announced the name of the building (25 NE 122nd Ave., Portland)—the Blackburn Building—which honors CCC’s President and CEO Emeritus Ed Blackburn, who recently retired after 26 years at CCC. Ed was instrumental in pulling together the Housing is Health initiative, which was the culmination of years of outstanding leadership and relationship building.

The two-story health care facility will serve 3,000 people each year with recovery and mental health services, as well as targeted primary care services. The clinic will include a pharmacy, 52 units of respite care, including 10 units of palliative care. Additional housing will include 90 units of transitional housing and 34 permanent homes. Integrated resident and health support services will help residents stay housed.

The groundbreaking celebration began at 2 p.m. CCC President and CEO Rachel Solotaroff, M.D., Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson and Metro Councilor Shirley Craddick spoke about the new project. Other speakers included Tricia Tillman from Oregon Housing and Community Services, Drew Hammond of US Bank, Melissa Garcia of Low Income Investment Fund and Heather Lyons from Corporation for Supportive Housing.

Community member and CCC client Mike Holevas described his journey from high school science teacher to addict. He once bought drugs on the very corner where the Blackburn Building will be. “This corner [where I used to buy drugs] now can be the site where thousands who are suffering—and believe me, we suffer—can come for transformation, healing; families will be restored,” he said.

Additional speakers included representatives from the Housing is Health initiative’s six hospitals and health organizations: David Russell, Adventist Health Portland president and CEO; Eric C. Hunter, CareOregon president and CEO; Janet O’Hollaren, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Hospitals chief operating officer; Mark Enger, OHSU vice president of Network Operations; Pam Mariea-Nason, Providence Health & Services – Oregon executive, Community Health Division; and George Brown, M.D., Legacy Health president & CEO.

“The Housing is Health collaboration is an excellent example of health systems recognizing the impact housing has on an individual’s health,” said Rachel Solotaroff, MD, CCC president and CEO. “They’ve united for improving health outcomes as well as the common good of our community. This housing will remain affordable for generations and it couldn’t come at a better time.”

The developer is Central City Concern, the architect is Ankrom Moisan, the general contractor is Walsh Construction and the construction manager is GLI.

In addition to the Housing is Health partners, funding for the development of the Blackburn Building is provided by Oregon Housing and Community Services, US Bank, Portland Housing Bureau, CSH, Low

Income Investment Fund, Oregon Health Authority, Metro, Energy Trust of Oregon and Multnomah County.

For more information, visit centralcityconcern.org.



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