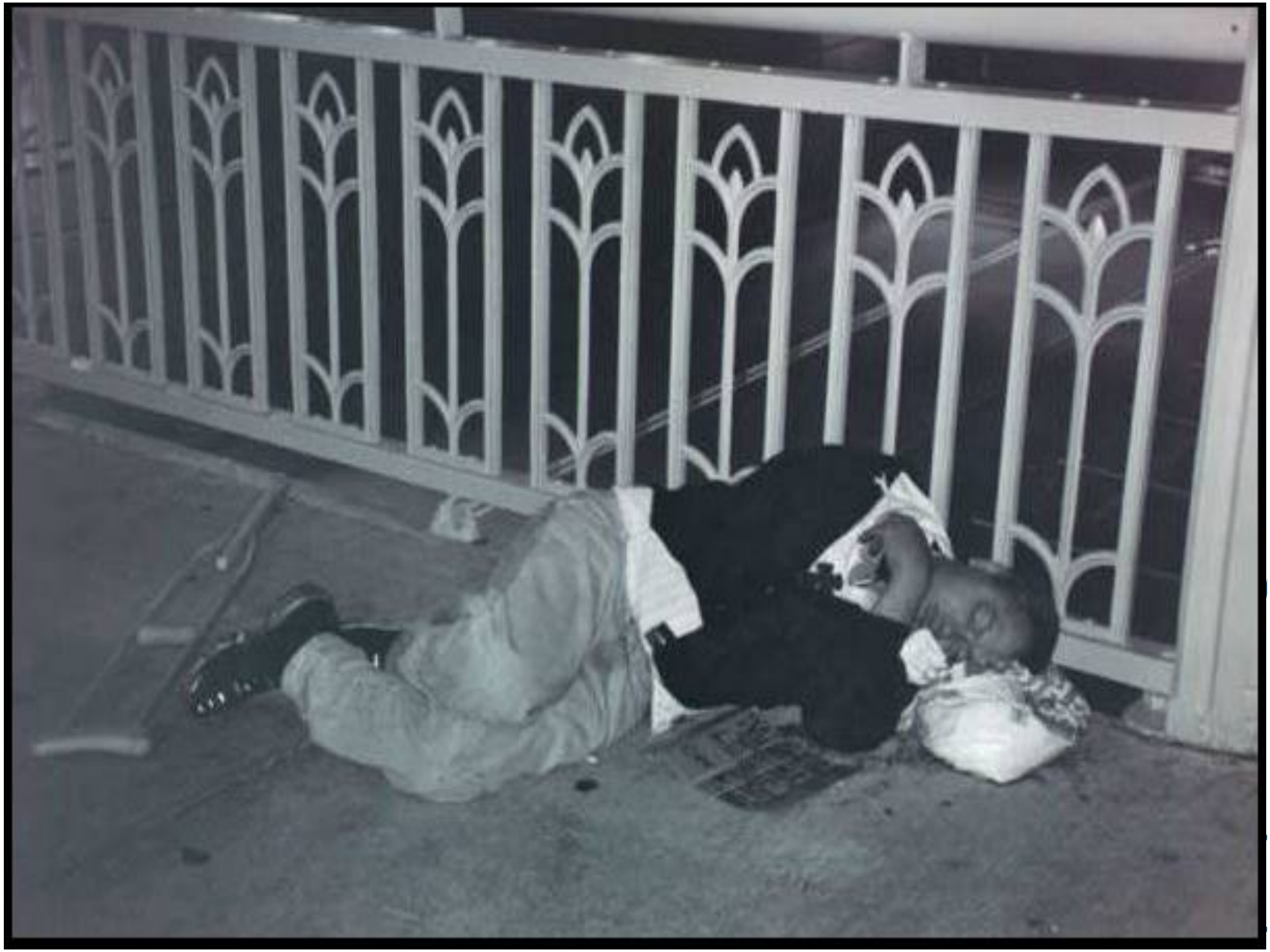
The Street Medicine Movement in the US and Abroad

James S Withers, MD FACP
Street Medicine Institute

What is “street medicine”?

Direct **delivery of health care to those sleeping rough**

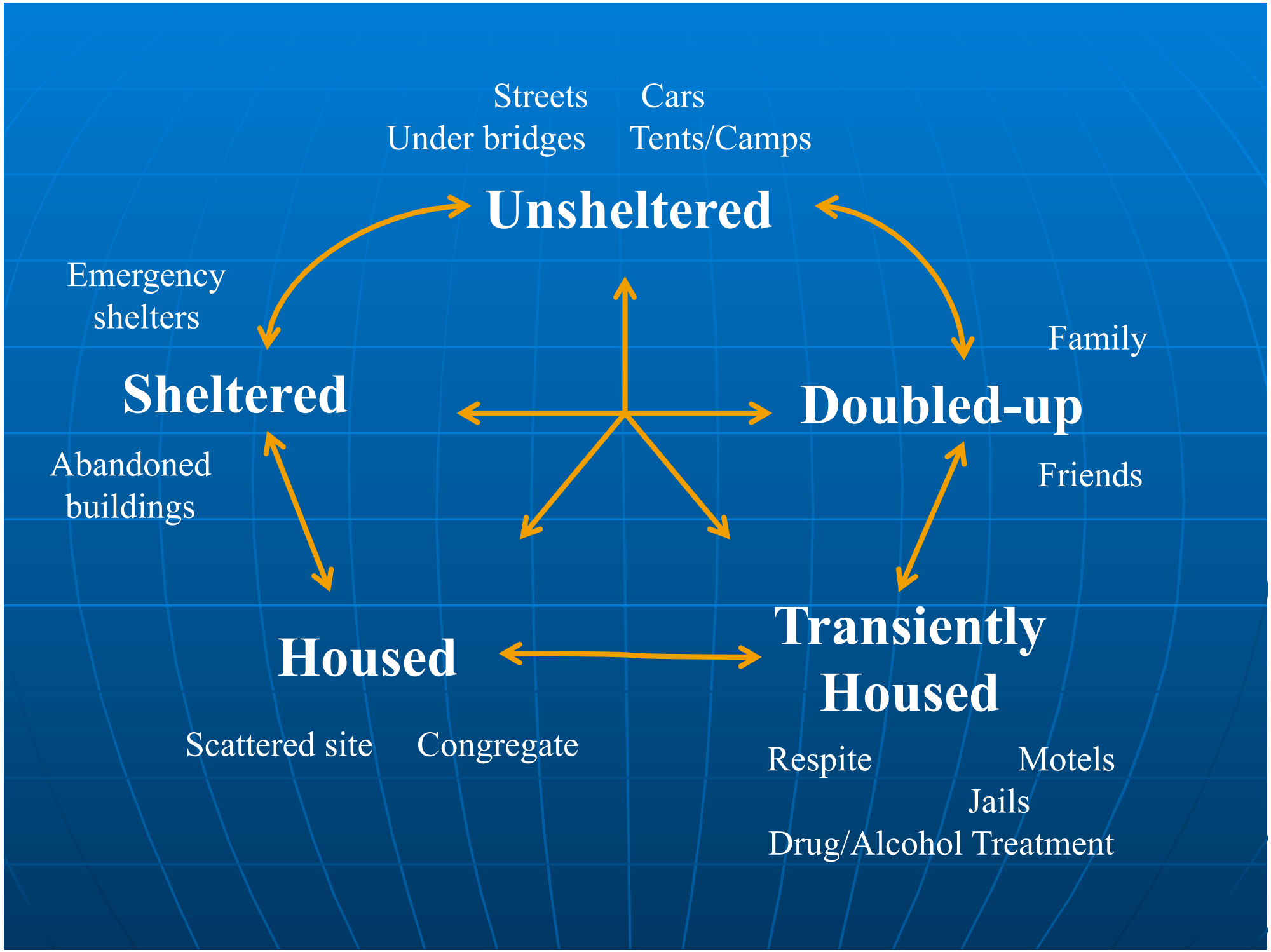
- Joining their reality
- Connecting with their social fabric
- Gaining solidarity through trust
- Working with them towards solutions



Transient vs. Chronic Homelessness

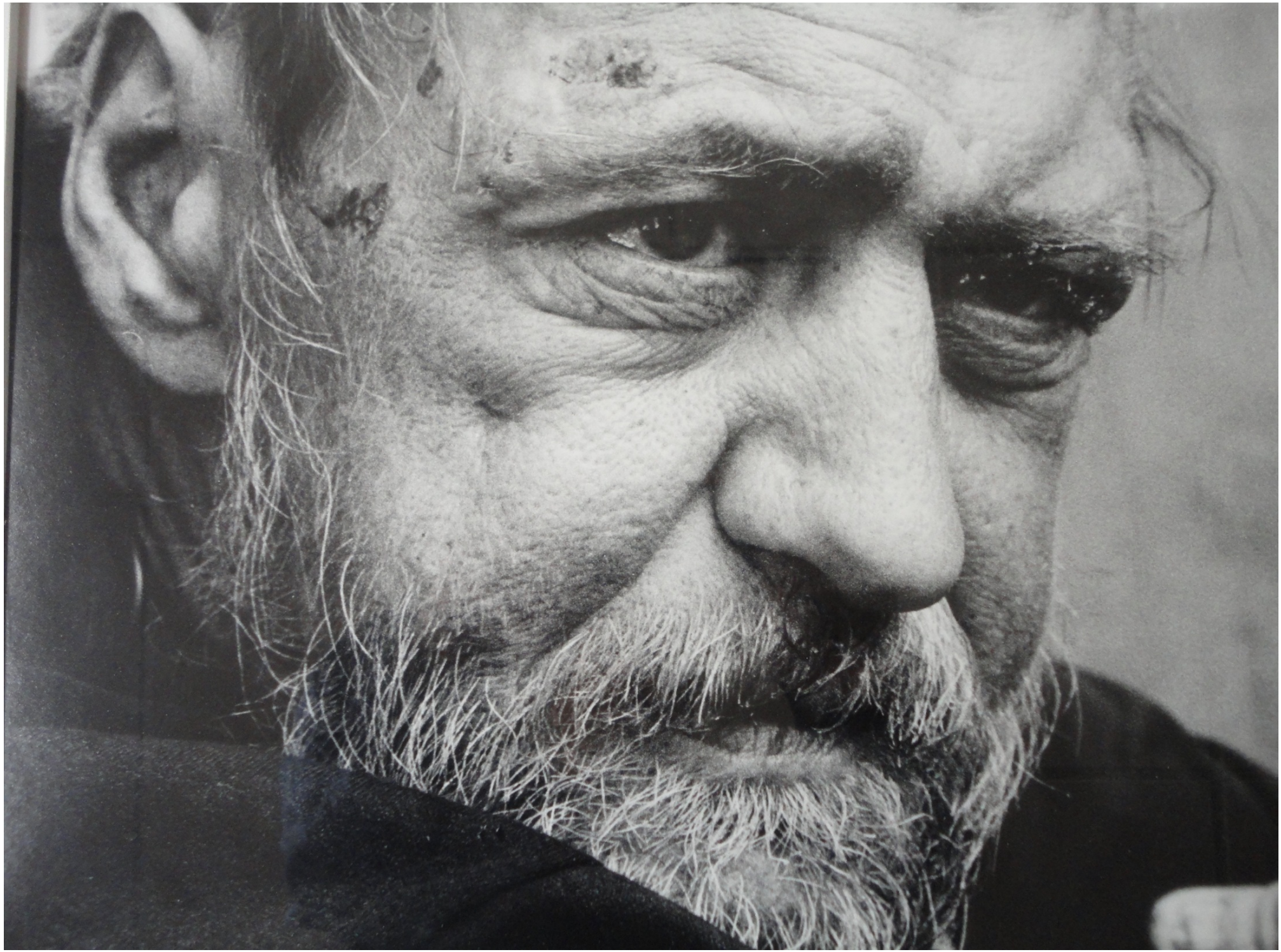
- 80% have duration of homelessness of one month or less
  - Utilizing one third of the system's resources
- 10% remain homeless for more than six months (largely unsheltered)
  - Utilizing over half of the system's resources

National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2010


Streets
Cars
Under bridges
Tents/Camps
Unsheltered
Emergency shelters
Sheltered
Abandoned buildings
Family
Doubled-up
Friends
Housed
Scattered site
Congregate
Transiently Housed
Respite
Motels
Jails
Drug/Alcohol Treatment

Mortality Rates

- Hwang looked at data from 17,292 homeless adults seen by BHCHP from 1988 to 1993
  - Cohort observed for average 2.9 yrs/ person
  - 558 deaths recorded, giving crude mortality rate of 1114 per 100,000 person-years.
  - Mean age of death: **47** (median 44)
- Studies in six other major urban areas showed similar premature mortality



Why we SHOULD NOT do street medicine

- "There aren't many street homeless"
- "It's not my job"
- "They're not ready for help"
- "Society won't approve" (hate by proxy)

- "We don't have enough resources…"

Jeffrey Romoff
University of Pittsburgh
Medical Center
$5.97 million
Herbert Pardes, MD
former CEO of New York-Presbyterian
Hospital (New York City)
Keeping Them Honest
AHEAD
BIG BILLS, BIGGER SALARIES
CNN

Why do street medicine

- Current care is ineffective/expensive
- Rough sleepers deeply disconnected
- Care built on ***street reality***
- Foster latent healing potential
- Strategically positioned in community
- Natural whole-person advocacy
- *The Right Thing To Do*

Street Medicine- Getting Started

- Medical Leadership ("Physician Champion")
- Review conditions and efforts
- Identify "guides" - establish teams
- Pilot rounds - minimal expectations
- Keep records and review lessons

"Let the streets teach you"

Street Medicine- Values Based

- Extreme person centered care
- Non-judgmental, “grace based”
- Continuous and lasting relationship
- Patient motivated and driven
- Mutuality and respect
- Harm reduction and prevention oriented

Listen!

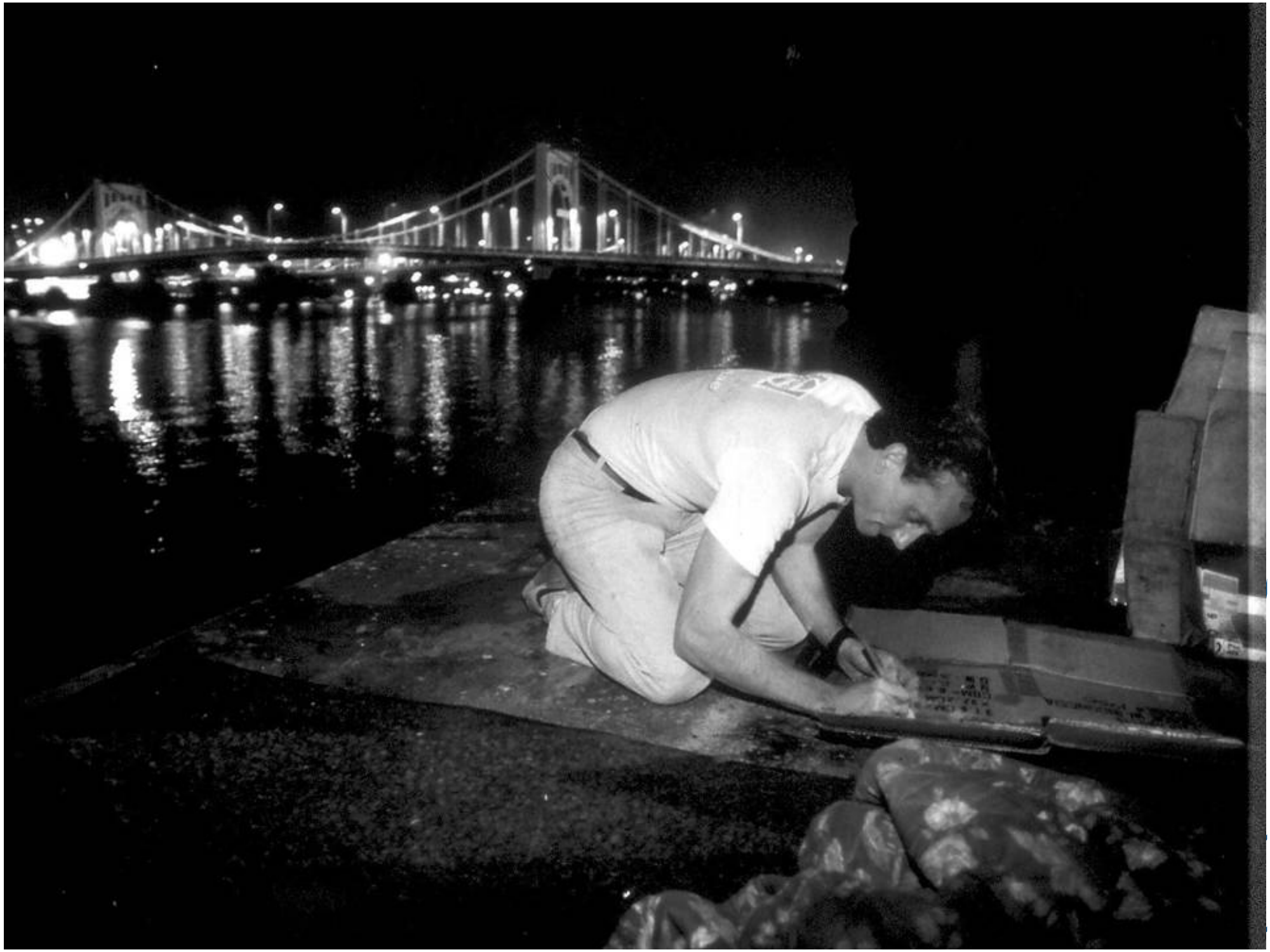
Operation Safety Net (Pittsburgh)

7 6'92

Outreach

Establishing understanding and trust with the street homeless community

Learning ***your*** appropriate identity as clinicians and as a program



INREACH

(accompanying back into “the system”)

PRINCIPLES: pursue what makes sense to the patients

-Collaborate…

-Advocate…

-Innovate…

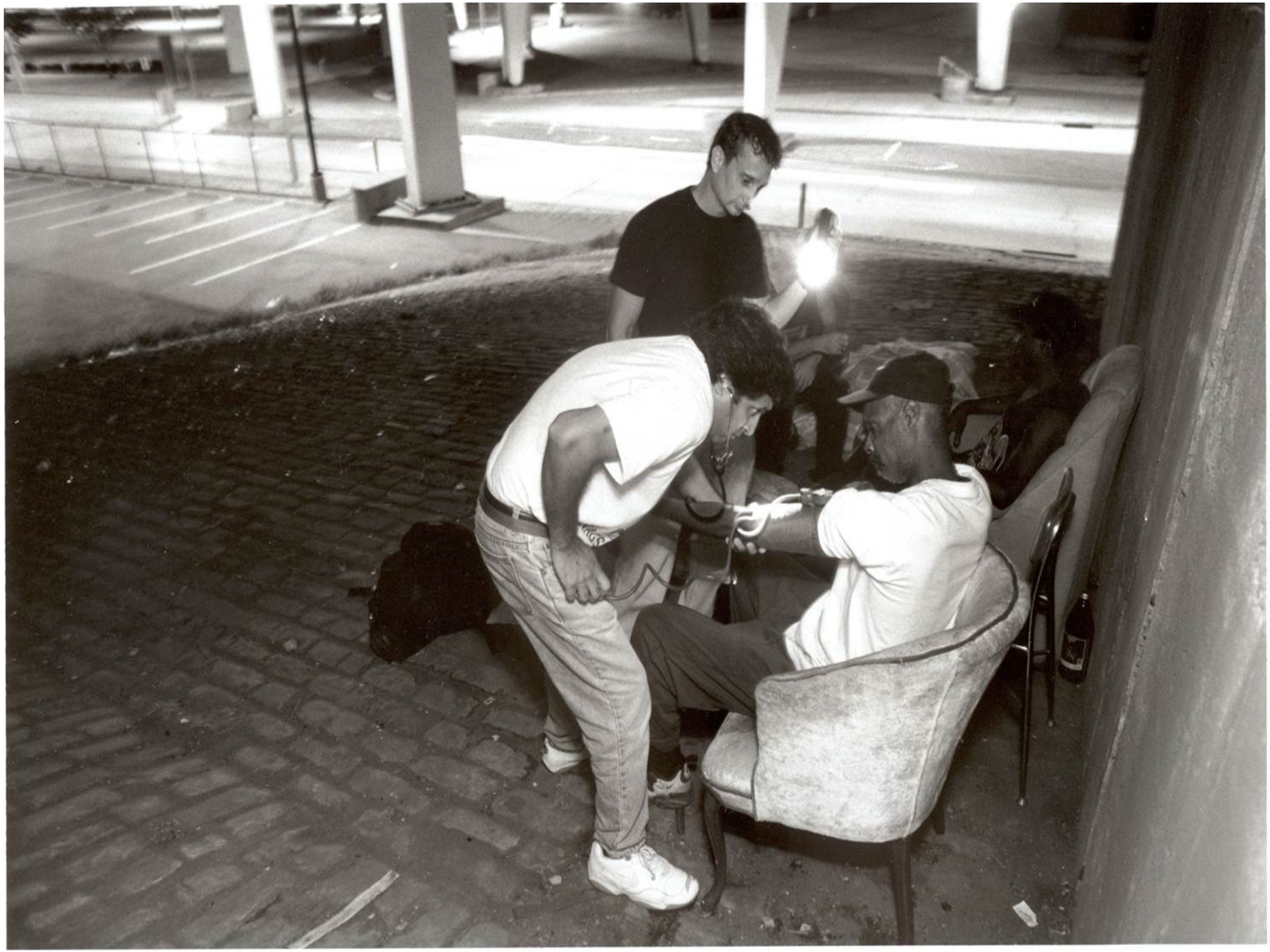
-Celebrate!

Operation Safety Net Mission

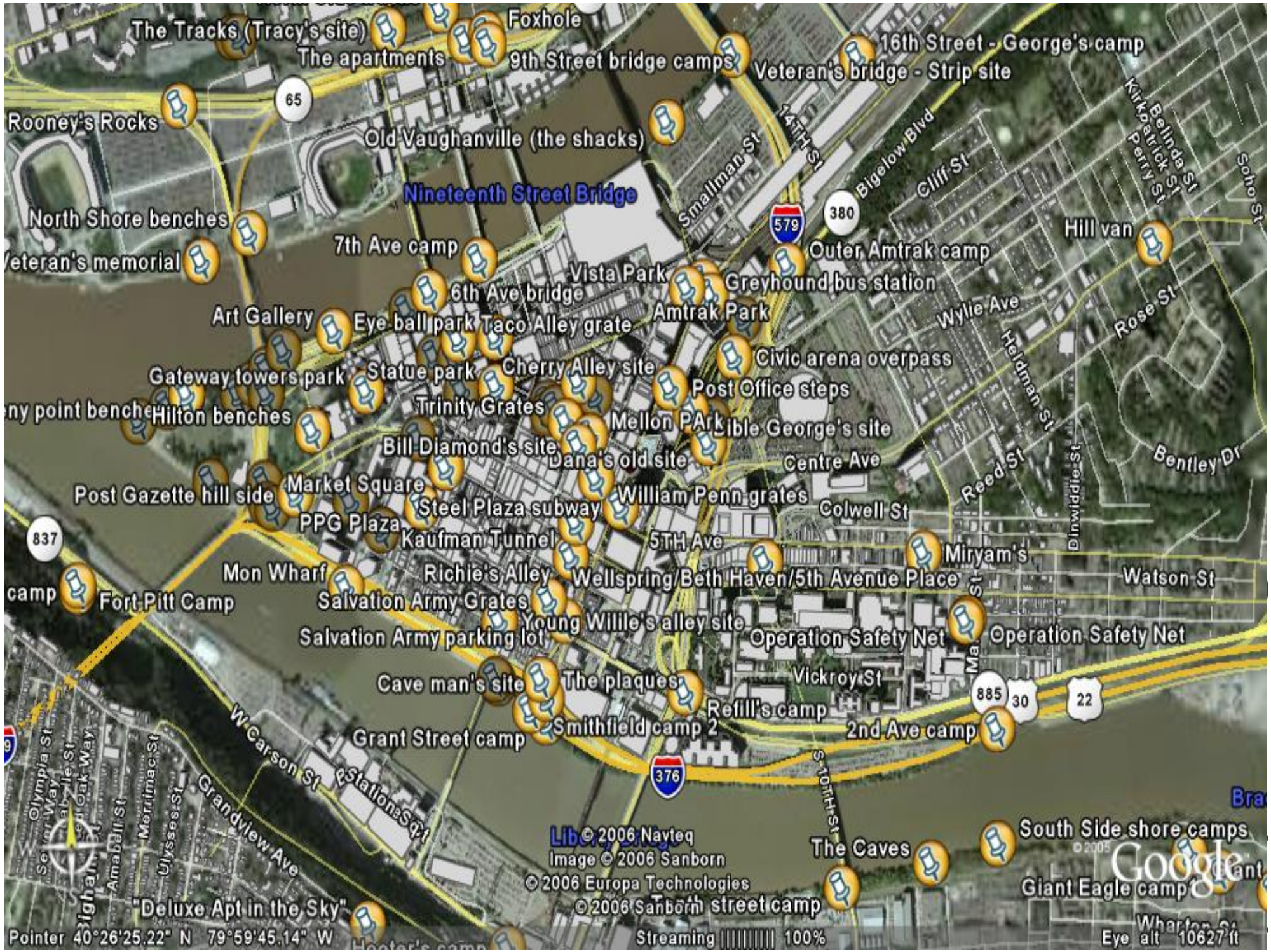
As long as there are people sleeping on our streets, under our bridges and along our rivers;

Operation Safety Net will provide health care and services that are tailored to meet their reality.

Street Work

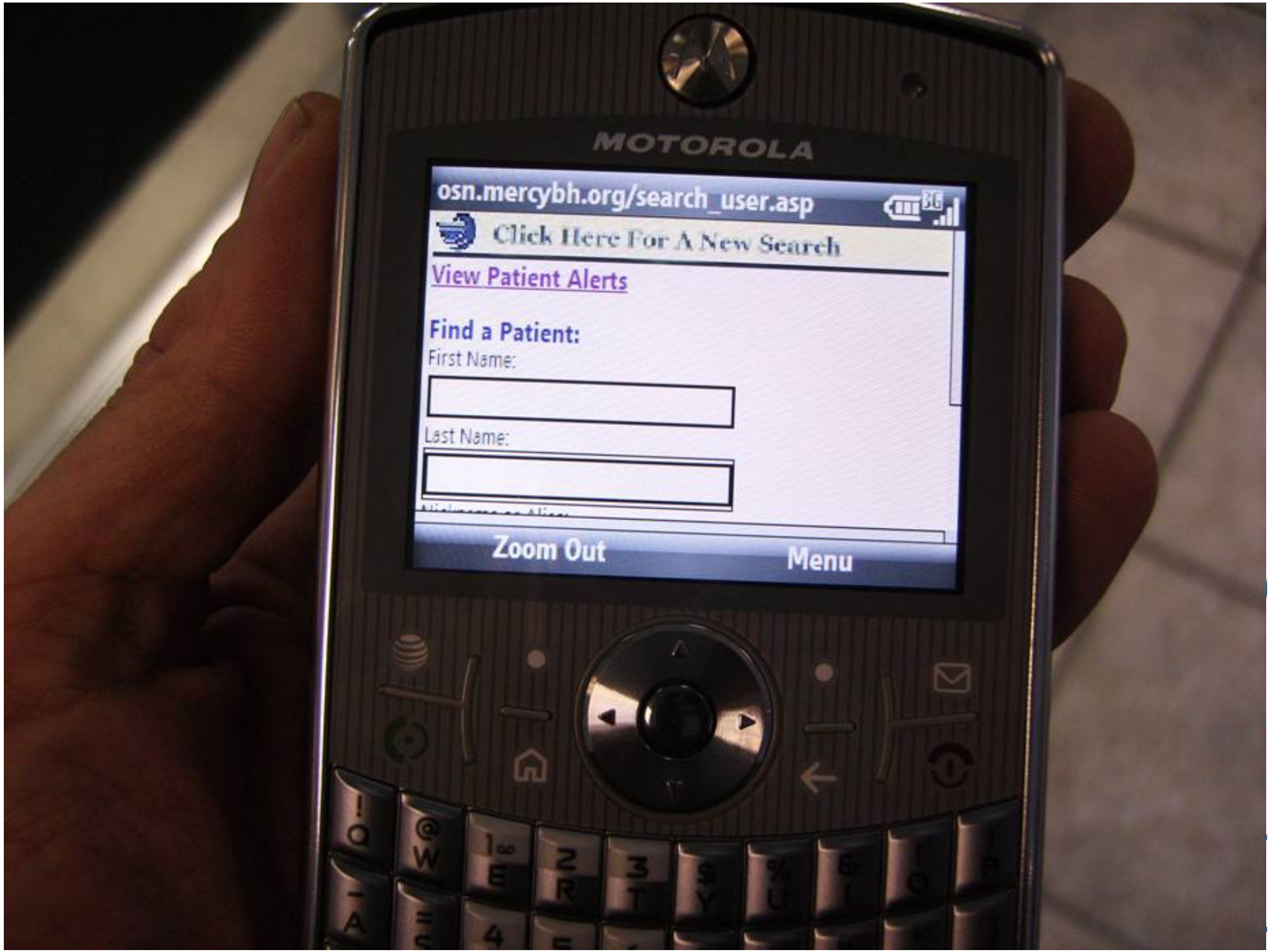


First Aid
CVS
WelchAllyn


The Tracks (Tracy's site)
Foxhole
The apartments
9th Street bridge camps
16th Street - George's camp
Veteran's bridge - Strip site
Rooney's Rocks
Old Vaughanville (the shacks)
Nineteenth Street Bridge
North Shore benches
Veteran's memorial
7th Ave camp
Vista Park
6th Ave bridge
Greyhound bus station
Outer Amtrak camp
Hill van
Art Gallery
Eye ball park
Taco Alley grate
Amtrak Park
Civic arena overpass
Gateway towers park
Statue park
Cherry Alley site
Post Office steps
Trinity Grates
Hilton benches
Mellon Park
Bible George's site
Bill Diamond's site
Dana's old site
Centre Ave
Post Gazette hill side
Market Square
William Penn grates
Steel Plaza subway
Colwell St
PPG Plaza
Kaufman Tunnel
5TH Ave
Miryam's
Mon Wharf
Richie's Alley
Wellspring/Beth Haven/5th Avenue Place
Watson St
Fort Pitt Camp
Salvation Army Grates
Young Willie's alley site
Salvation Army parking lot
Operation Safety Net
Operation Safety Net
Cave man's site
The plaques
Vickroy St
Refill's camp
Smithfield camp 2
2nd Ave camp
Grant Street camp
W Carson St
Station Sq
Grandview Ave
S 10TH St
South Side shore camps
The Caves
Giant Eagle camp
"Deluxe Apt in the Sky"
Tooth street camp
© 2006 Navteq
Image © 2006 Sanborn
© 2006 Europa Technologies
© 2006 Sanborn
Pointer 40°26'25.22" N 79°59'45.14" W
Streaming 100%
Eye alt 10627 ft
Google

Mercy
Life
A mission of Mercy

EMERGE
Mercy


MOTOROLA
osn.mercybh.org/search_user.asp
Click Here For A New Search
View Patient Alerts
Find a Patient:
First Name:
Last Name:
Zoom Out
Menu

Mercy

Stage I Program

- Grassroots
- Ongoing street outreach
- Intense learning phase/Needs assessments
- Establish identity/build trust
- Basic records and follow-up plans

Advocacy - ***"with the people"***

Philosophical Dilemna

"Robin Hood"

vs.

"The Sheriff"

Stage II Program

- Centralized organization – regular staff
- Social Workers – effective referrals
- Improved records system
- Higher community profile
- Funding/ Grant writing
- Collaborative specialist services
- Follow-up systems
- "Transitional Primary Care" – critical strength to be dependable

Stage III Program

- Multidisciplinary care
- 24/7 coverage/continuity of care
- Hospital consult services etc.
- Housing/legal/higher levels of service
- Regional/national service learning
- Advocacy/research

"Medical Home for the homeless"

Continuous Care Model

Homeless Hospital Consults

Hospital Length of Stay

- LOS for homeless inpatients 9 days, nearly double the national average[1]
- Recent study in Toronto: homeless individuals stayed in the hospital longer than their housed counterparts[2]
  - Average increased cost of $2,559 extra per person per admission
  - Total excess hospital cost of $8 million over five year period

1. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2008
2. Hwang S, et al. Medical Care, April, 2011

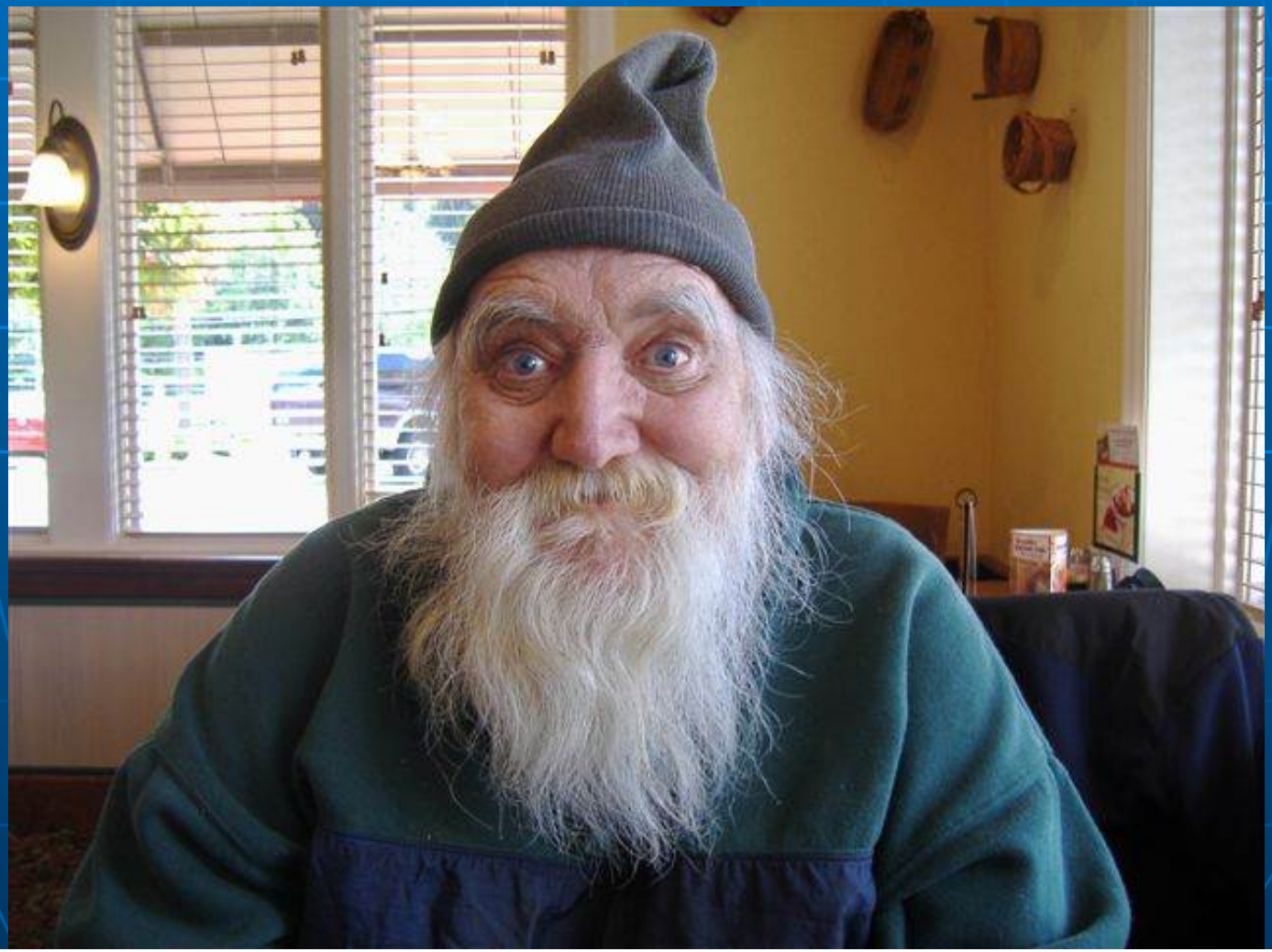
Dr. Reese, Mon Oct 20.

Mr. Shepton has Gateway insurance and thus far, they have only approved coverage for one day → Oct 18.

They are requesting a discharge plan.

Thank you,
Maurey RN
Quality Management
#2051

Housing



The Morbidity Cycle

JESUS
Prayer
People
7

Students

I'M A
KEEPER

Social Change Through Future Leadership!

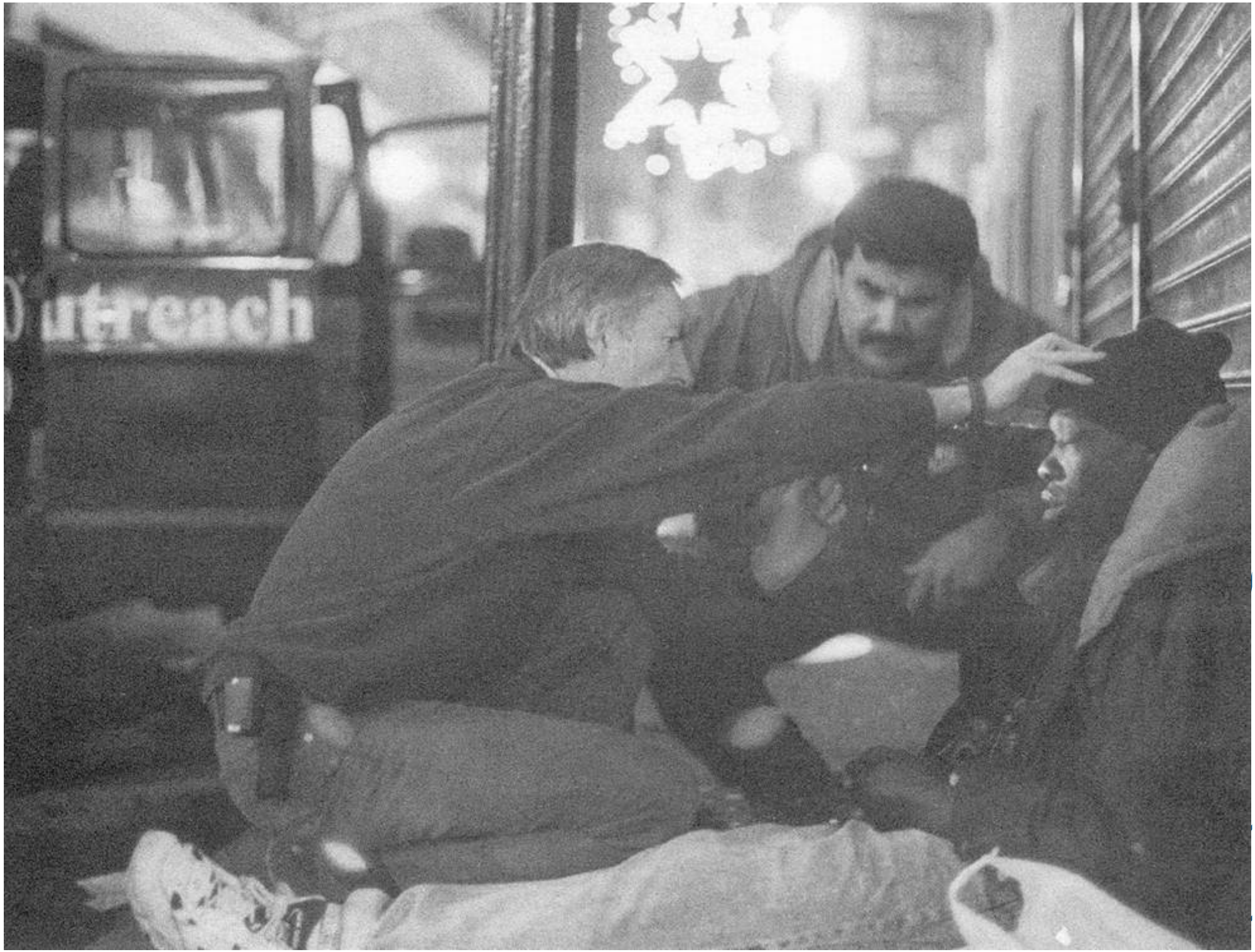
Dr. Doohan visits Alan, a homeless man living in I.V., to check his recovery from pneumonia.

Operation Safety Net

www.operationsafetynet.net

Street Medicine Networking

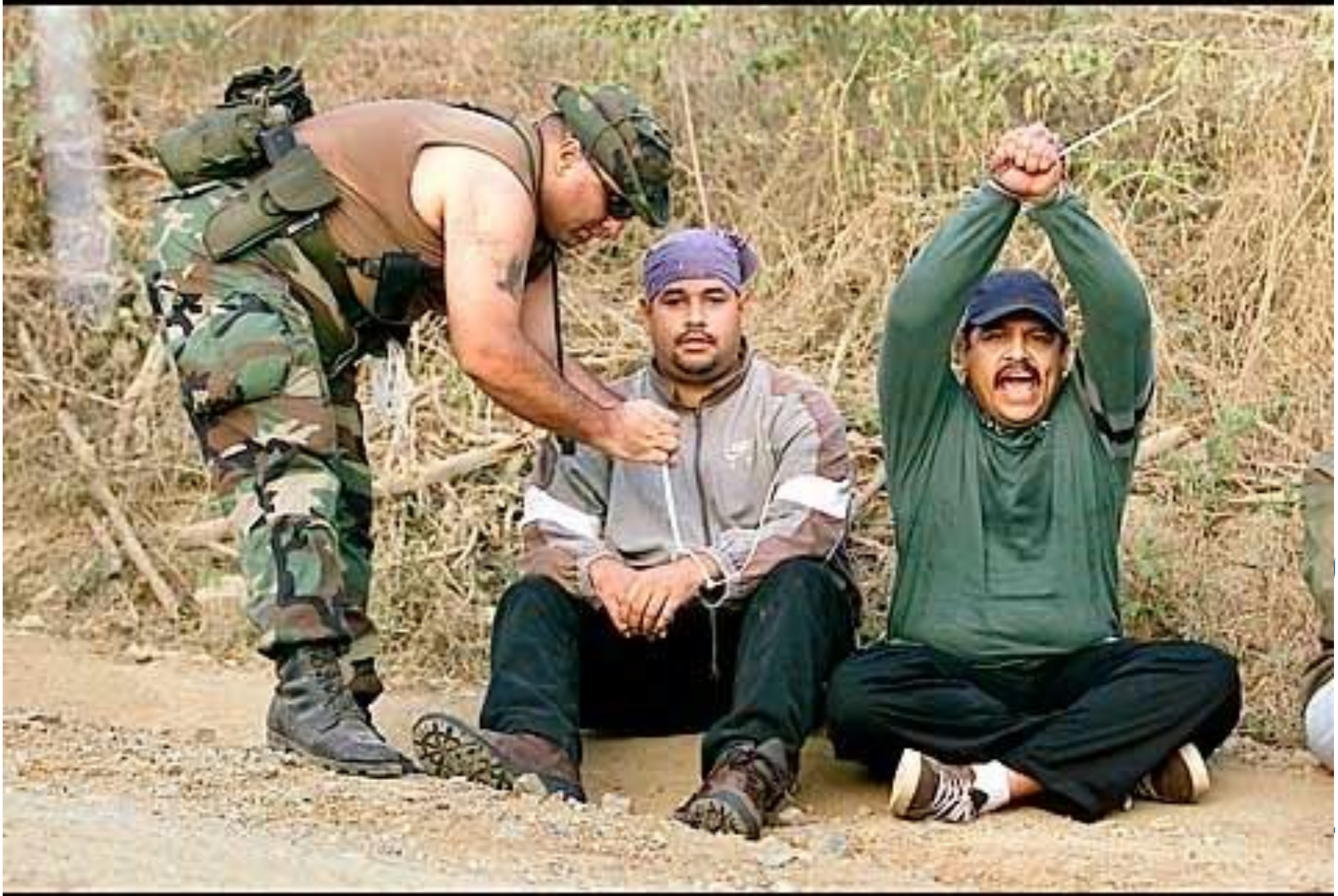
08.03.2006


Outreach

RN
Gander Mountain

A COMUNITARIA
ION COMPASION

International Street Medicine Symposium 2005



EXIT

8th International Street Medicine Symposium

INTERNATIONAL
STREET MEDICINE
SYMPOSIUM
street medicine institute
'Go to the People'
WWW.STREETMEDICINE.ORG

Street Medicine Network

street medicine institute

'Go to the People'

Vision

Every rough sleeping person possible will have direct access to reality-based health care (street medicine)

*Every health science school will have a "**classroom of the streets**"*

Street Medicine Institute Purpose

- Assist communities seeking to establish their own street medicine programs
- Improve the practice of street medicine
- Promote the spirit of the street medicine movement
- Create learning opportunities in the context of street medicine

www.streetmedicine.org

Thank you!