Introducing Alex Plum
The Corner Health Center's New Executive Director

The Corner Board and Staff are thrilled to welcome Alex Plum to the role of Executive Director.

Alex Plum, MPH, MBA(c), CHES, is a servant leader passionate about building bridges between and among communities to improve the primary health care of populations. For the last seven years at Henry Ford Health in Detroit, Alex established, directed, and evaluated systems, policies, and programs designed to connect integrated care teams to community social services with a special focus on business sustainability and return on investment. He built Henry Ford's international reputation as a demonstration site for “global to local” health care transformation by adapting and applying evidence-based models from low-resource settings around the world and has secured over $5M in grants during his tenure.

An ordained deacon at Cass Community United Methodist Church, he partners with student doctors from Wayne State University to facilitate a weekly free clinic that integrates primary care, behavioral health, and social services. Alex is a Salzburg Global Fellow, a former Paul D. Coverdell Fellow, and a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Micronesia, 2008-2011). He is an alumnus of Emory University (MPH, Behavioral Science & Health Education), Michigan State University (BA, International Relations & Political Economy), and he will complete his MBA in healthcare supply chain in 2023 at Wayne State University. He lives in Detroit with his partner Jason and dog Yolly.
A Message from our Interim Executive Director, Ellen Rabinowitz

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as the Interim Executive Director of The Corner Health Center. I have always been a huge fan of The Corner, both professionally and personally. It has been so inspiring to see the work up close. There is a reason The Corner is celebrating its 42nd Anniversary. The services and programs continue to have a tremendous impact in our community. I’m grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such an amazing staff, and I’m thrilled to be a part of the transition to new permanent leadership at The Corner. Welcome Alex, as you lead The Corner into its next chapter.

Corner Health Center Board of Directors 2022

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Save The Date!

Meet Alex Plum, our new executive director, and

Celebrate The Corner's 42nd Anniversary

Wednesday, December 7, 2022
5:00-7:00pm
Zingerman's Greyline, Ann Arbor
The Corner continued to serve youth and young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been increasing our staff and hours to ensure that young people and their children continue to have access to healthcare. We know that young people still need the Corner to attend to their ongoing medical concerns. Being healthy is more important now than ever. Because of you, we are able to provide our patients with vital services such as mental health care, prenatal visits, and COVID-19 vaccines.

Your support allows the Corner to provide reliable, high quality, affordable, and judgement-free healthcare to youth and young adults.

In addition to onsite visits, we continue to provide telehealth appointments in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and to make our services more accessible. Masks are required to continue to prevent transmission.

The Corner is making an effort to spread COVID-19 vaccination awareness and increase vaccination rates in Washtenaw County. In 2021, we vaccinated hundreds of community members, and continue to do so. When vaccines became available this Spring for children under age 5, The Corner was one of the first sites in the State to offer these vaccines. To date, we have provided over 2200 vaccines to our community.

The Corner Health Center is committed to providing mental health care. We know mental health is a challenge for many in our community right now. We have seen a significant increase from previous years in patients seeking mental health and behavioral health services.

You are essential to delivering healthcare services to youth and young adults. With your support, we can continue to provide care for our youth, and provide education for the community. Your financial support makes it possible for us to continue our work.

CORNER IMPACT FY2022

- 1,407 patients served at 5,710 visits (an increase of 31.5% and 16.2% from FY2021)
- Patients served were 65% Female, 30% Male, and 5% Non-Binary
- 22% of patients were Transgender, including Non-Binary
- 38% of our patients were Black or African American, 37% were White, 7% were Asian, Native, Arab, and Other; and 5% were Latinx or Hispanic
The Corner has partnered with the Director of the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI), Dr. Jim Sayer, to survey patients for 30 days to evaluate their transportation needs. Through these surveys, UMTRI is working on providing solutions to alleviate transportation barriers for our youth and their children here at the Corner. This partnership will explore financially sustainable mobility options for the Corner Health Center's patients. Lack of reliable transportation can be a large barrier to receiving adequate medical care. We are excited for this new opportunity for the people we serve.

Removing Barriers to Care

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Capital Donations at Work for Youth

The Carls Foundation, a charitable trust founded by Michigan engineer William Carls and his wife Marie in 1961, has been a major contributor to the capital needs of the Corner Health Center for more than 14 years. “There’s a trust between us and Corner Health,” says Elizabeth Stieg, Executive Director and President of the Carls Foundation.

The foundation first donated funds for the Corner’s clinic expansion in 2007, and again in 2019 for a new power generator that keeps our vaccines, medicine and food pantry refrigerators and freezers running. This past year, the foundation provided funding for an ultrasound machine and waiting room furniture.

“For us, the real comfort is knowing that there are people out there who need what [Corner Health] provides. If we can be there to help you provide that care, that’s what we’re here for,” says Elizabeth. “We’ve helped out organizations with bridging [gaps in care], creating a safety net. From a health standpoint, that’s what Corner Health Center is– a safety net for vulnerable populations.”

The Corner is a grateful partner of the Carls Foundation, whose generous donation of ultrasound equipment will support the health futures of pregnant young women and babies.

OUR MISSION:

The mission of the Corner Health Center is to inspire 12- to 25-year-olds (and their children) to achieve and sustain healthy lives by providing judgment-free, affordable health and wellness care and education.
MIHP Services Help New Moms and Babies Thrive

Jane is a 22-year-old patient who first came to the Corner after getting a positive result on her at-home pregnancy test. Her mother, who had been a Corner patient when she was pregnant with Jane, recommended the Corner for her care.

Though Jane struggled with alcohol use disorder, she quit drinking “cold turkey” when she found out she was pregnant. Adding to the emotional toll of abrupt withdrawal, her relationship with her family was strained and the father of her baby was not involved. Jane felt intimidated by the idea of being a single mother, and was terrified of relapsing during pregnancy and unintentionally harming her unborn baby.

Jane was connected with several Corner Health programs that she actively participated in during her pregnancy, including the Maternal Infant Health Program, SMART Recovery, individual therapy, Safe Baby and virtual childbirth classes. One of Jane’s main goals was to breastfeed her baby for as long as possible, as she hoped this would help her maintain her sobriety after the pregnancy. She met with a Corner lactation consultant several times before and after the birth to implement a breastfeeding plan.

We are so honored to report that Jane is now thriving as a single mom to a beautiful, exclusively breastfed 7-month-old daughter, whom she absolutely adores. She has reconnected with her family and has maintained her sobriety throughout this entire journey. Jane says her baby saved her life, but we know that she was the one who did the hard work.

Your support has expanded services available to patients like Jane as needs shift throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, as the Corner has implemented virtual parent workshops and support groups as well as safe and accessible parent-child playgroups. You ensure the future of healthy moms, healthy babies, and healthy families at the Corner.
Dotty and Brent Williams are two dedicated, longtime supporters of the Corner Health Center and the people we serve. Their support of the Corner began with their connection with Founding Medical Director David Share and Founding Executive Director Joan Chesler, and has continued throughout the years. “By 1992, it became clear to me that the Corner serves a critical niche in the safety net of clinical and mental health services in our community,” said Brent. To have the Corner right in the community was “really unique and worth supporting”.

Dotty began volunteering at the Corner in 2018, two years before the COVID-19 pandemic hit America. She began in the pantry downstairs two days a week, and added a third day transporting food from Food Gatherers. During the beginning of the pandemic, volunteering was put on a temporary hold. Dotty was given an opportunity to get vaccinated so she could return to volunteering in person, which she accepted.

For Dotty, the ability to be in such close proximity to where the need is– being face-to-face with people– is important. Dotty's background is in nursing, and calling people from the waiting room and doing vitals at the Corner took her back to doing patient care. “Just being that close to where the need is, looking in the eyes of these people, watching them interact with their babies and with each other- for me it was just a really great experience,” she said.

During the COVID pandemic, Dotty started thinking about what other things she could do for the Corner, and decided to start the Dyan A. Aretakis fund in honor of her dear friend and colleague. Before she passed in 2018, Dyan was a very strong believer in education and proactively providing birth control. “She made a difference in the teen pregnancy rates in Virginia almost single-handedly,” says Dotty.

The Aretakis fund provides long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) for our patients. LARCs are the best form of contraception, but are not paid for by Medicaid at a freestanding health center like the Corner, causing most patients to fall between the cracks. In addition, undocumented people aren’t usually able to get LARCs. Dotty said starting the fund “seemed like a no-brainer.”

The support of people like Dotty and Brent Williams is vital to the continued services of the Corner Health Center. The Corner is grateful for their generosity and dedication to our mission.

A grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has funded a series of workshops centered around spreading factual information about COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccines through artistic expression. During a time when misinformation is rampant, the arts allow young people to communicate authentically and ask questions about the pandemic that they may not have felt comfortable asking before.

A series of monthly workshops from February through June 2022 allows Washtenaw County youth to learn new skills in improvisational theater, rap/hip hop, spoken word, dance, self-care, and more. Artist facilitators will lead skill-building activities to open up dialogue about health while health specialists will provide reliable, science-based vaccine information. An exciting culminating event will spotlight the creativity and knowledge learned from the workshops with a larger audience.

We greatly appreciate your continued support as we use this event to share artistic and powerful information to keep the community safe during the pandemic.
In Ypsilanti, black infants are four times more likely to die in their first year of life than their counterparts, and black women are three times more likely to have pregnancy complications than white women, leading to higher rates of congenital abnormalities. Yet, black mothers and their children remain underserved in health care.

In compliance with new MDHHS guidance to address this disparity, Corner Health Center has secured funding from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation to expand services provided as part of our Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP). We have initiated home-visiting services to patients, extending the period of postpartum support and care to underserved management mothers and babies from 2 months to 18 months.

This support comes during a critical period in which young mothers can feel particularly isolated and emotionally challenged, especially those facing transportation, childcare barriers, and mental health concerns. These behavioral health services, nutritional education, mentoring and peer groups, health information consumption guidance, and social support help to ensure equitable care and outcomes for vulnerable patients.

Launching At-Home Support for Young Moms

Lori Bennett has worked at the Corner Health Center for over seven years, starting off part-time as a part of a grant-funded program on Monday evenings to bring in new patients to the Corner. Her role then expanded to part-time nurse practitioner. She continues to do work with FSHARP, a program she developed many years ago doing work with family and youth shelters in Washtenaw County. For FSHARP, Lori does weekly health assessment visits at Ozone House and family shelters.

In 2021, Lori became the Interim Clinic Manager. In this role, Lori worked with the Corner’s clinical staff to develop and improve clinic processes and ultimately improve the patient and staff experience, as well as strengthen the clinical team. Lori and the clinical staff have developed education, workflow, and supply strategies to improve clinical processes. Under her direction, the Corner has implemented new quality control and inventory tracking procedures, and are collecting data for monthly review and analysis. In 2022 Lori became the Clinic Director.

“There are amazing, hardworking, passionate and dedicated people working here,” Lori says, “and I am really happy to be part of this team.” The Corner is honored to highlight the tremendous value Lori has added to clinic staff and processes, and the work she continues to do to ensure patients have equitable access to high-quality healthcare.

Celebrating 7+ Years Working at the Corner

Thank You for Being Superheroes to the Youth We Serve!