



Cincinnati Police Department
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2010 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

Award Nomination: Code Enforcement Response Team

The City of Cincinnati developed the Code Enforcement Response Team (CERT) as a technique of last resort to address crime infested and blighted properties. The goal of CERT is to reduce calls and complaints to city departments as well as arrests and reported crimes to the Police Department at specific hotspots.

It is the goal of the team to shift the accountability of crime and disorder from the neighborhood and City to the property owner whose lack of physical and social maintenance has allowed crime to incubate and propagate.

Properties with code violations lower the property values of the community and reduce the quality of life of community members. CERT aims to minimize the financial effects that crime associated with these properties, have on the community and city as a whole.

SCANNING

Team members are cross trained to recognize and react to buildings poor physical condition and are breeding grounds of crime. Typically these properties consume government resources and lower the property value of the community. By working as a team and citing the property owners with code violations from city departments; the team creates more leverage, persuading property owners to comply with orders.

ANALYSIS

Analysis reveals most properties have been an issue for several years. In the case of one housing complex, the property during the period 2001 to 2006 averaged 210 service calls yearly. From January to May, 2006, 100 calls were received; which 77 referenced drugs, disorder and violence. The property was well above the baseline for service calls for its community.

Analysis of calls to service to a nursing home revealed 212 critical missing patients over a 10 year period.

Response

Teams often obtain an administrative search warrant and work as a close knit team. It is the goal of the team to reduce disruption to the community by addressing code and criminal violations at a given property.

In one case the team was not content with the level of compliance and rather than seeking civil sanctions chose to have a building owner arrested for building code violations. The building was then vacated and barricaded.

In another case the team involved Adult Protective Services, when it was determined that an elderly hoarder could not correct code violations. CERT also gained assistance from the group People Working Cooperatively which installed a new furnace in the residence.

ASSESSMENT

CERT was effectively able to minimize drug and nuisance activity at a selected multi-family, dramatically reducing calls for city services.

In the case of the nursing home there was only one reported critical missing patient in 2009 and none in 2010.

No CERT case is identical. Blighted and crime infested properties pose a significant threat to the city. They permit crime to develop, and are counterproductive to the goals of the City of Cincinnati. CERT targets these locations to promote growth within the city. CERT is a final action when all other city resources have been depleted.

2010 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

Cincinnati Police Department
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Captain William Long – Fire Department
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INTRODUCTION

In 1998 the City of Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) at the request of the City Manager developed the Code Enforcement Response Team (CERT) as a method of addressing crime infested and blighted properties in the City of Cincinnati. The primary goal of CERT is to reduce calls for service and complaints to city departments as well as arrests and reported crimes to the Police Department at specific hotspots, while continuing to promote public safety by enforcing city code compliance for these dangerous areas. CERT shifts the accountability of crime and disorder from the neighborhood and city to the property owners whose lack of physical and social maintenance has allowed crime to incubate and propagate. The focus of CERT also extends to properties with structural and sanitation flaws that present a clear and imminent danger to its residents and the surrounding community. Properties with code enforcement flaws lower the value not only of the property but that of the surrounding community. CERT aims to minimize the financial effects that crime associated with these properties, have on the community and city as a whole. CERT is a solution to the reduction of crime and blight when traditional police methods and code enforcement prove ineffective.

A key aspect of CERT is that it is a Unified Code Enforcement Process. Properties assessed by CERT have numerous severe code violations, to the extent that they cross multiple city disciplines. CERT is cross-functional and draws its primary team members from the Police Department, Health Department, Buildings and Inspections Department, Fire Department, Litter Patrol and the Prosecutor's Office. CERT acts as a cooperative team assisting each department in its effort to minimize blighted and high crime properties. The city-wide team meets on a monthly basis and the team has meetings in which Departments and members can submit cases for review and consideration. For a case to be qualified for CERT action it must require the services of at least two of the member departments. The team is community driven and cases are often brought to its attention through complaints reported by individuals, community councils and business associations. CERT works with these groups to assess which properties pose the greatest area threat. It uses the SARA model to assess which departments will be necessary to resolve the pertinent issue(s). Every

member of CERT is fully trained in SARA and follow the Problem Oriented Guides to Policing in order to unify the team's methods of developing solutions. The team encourages open communications which is beneficial and necessary for the cooperation required to achieve timely problem resolution among numerous city departments. Typically, one team member will have extensive knowledge of one city department while another member will be an expert in a different discipline. Thus, the different departments are able to support one another rather than hinder the other's progress.

When approached with a problem property, CERT will first seek compliance from the owner. Utilizing as many departments as are applicable for each case, the team creates leverage against uncooperative property owners. Members from one department are permitted to observe all aspects of a problem and are eligible to write code violations that members of other departments may not recognize or could not enforce. Highlighting code violations from several departments generates a greater possibility of civil and/or criminal sanctions for property owners, and thus, forces compliance. CERT is able to gain the attention of problem property owners when traditional policing and code enforcement do not. The team forces a landlord to acknowledge the code issues and educates them of the consequences of noncompliance.

Currently, City Prosecutor Keith Forman acts as the CERT representative in the City Prosecutor's Office. It is his role to assist in the preparation of warrants and coordinate with team members of the legal aspects of their investigation. When offenders are uncooperative it is his job to prosecute them in the housing docket municipal court or assist in the civil litigation process.

No two cases brought to the CERT team are identical. Most cases involve different aspects in a community solely beyond criminal activity. By forcing compliance of city law and building codes, police do not receive as many service calls and these properties pose less of a safety threat to its residences, neighbors and emergency personal. While properties permitting excessive crime tend to be the focus of CERT, it also addresses cases where individuals are being threatened by inhumane living conditions and are unable to help themselves. CERT is the epitome of the Broken Window Theory and it is a proven method to "close the windows."

The three cases presented represent the different types of cases CERT frequently investigates.

SCANNING

Case #1 - Buildings at 127 and 129 E. Clifton Avenue in the Over-the-Rhine Neighborhood of Cincinnati are adjoining apartment complexes which had over 30 units and approximately 20 “paying” residents. In May, 2006 numerous community complaints regarding the property were reported to the City of Cincinnati. Calls for police service involved reports of drugs, disorder and violence at the addresses. The buildings were in extremely poor physical condition. This setting created an ideal location for crime. The properties lack of security and maintenance, such as a broken gates, no lighting, etc..., encouraged trespassing. Due to the calls by neighbors regarding these properties the area located in the northern section of Over-the-Rhine had become a regular area of police attention. Officers who had reported to calls at 127 and 129 E. Clifton Avenue recognized that the buildings were in horrid physical condition and had dozens of code violations, in addition to harboring crime. The property consumed extensive hours of police resources and lowered the property value of the surrounding community. Citing the property owners with code violations from several city departments creates more leverage, persuading them to comply.

Case #2 - 1857 and 1859 Grand Avenue is the location of the Westside Health Center, a nursing home and assisted living facility. In 2007 an officer serving a warrant at this location in the Price Hill neighborhood observed the decrepit conditions of the building and poor care the facility provided for its residents. The poorly-maintained facility was using soiled and decaying mattresses, had toilets that would not flush, roach and fly infestations, padlocked fire doors and medications in unlabeled bottles. It was clear to the officer the facility was not being maintained nor was it providing proper care to its occupants. Many of the occupants could not afford better care and were incapable of providing care for themselves; living at the center was their last resort. The case was brought to CERT which quickly involved numerous city, state and federal departments in order to assess the issue of the Westside Health Center.

Case #3 – Police and Fire Departments responded to a Deceased Person call at 5754 Windsorhill Drive in the Westwood Neighborhood. The residence was occupied by two brothers, one of which was the reported deceased. While working to extricate the deceased officers observed unsanitary living conditions and numerous code violations. The brothers had been suffering from “hoarder disorder”, a form of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. The officers observed trash and debris stacked to the ceiling, vermin infestations and improperly stored solid waste. The doorways of the home were blocked with debris forcing the emergency crews to crawl on top of the clutter to enter the house. The property’s value was well below that of the surrounding properties, and its physical condition was lowering the value of the surrounding homes in the neighborhood.

CERT acts as the City’s Hoarder Specialists. The Health and Fire Departments work most frequently with hoarders, and both departments are represented on the team. CERT members know exactly which departments to call to effectively resolve a hoarder case. The SPCA is often used in situations when excessive animals are encountered. In this case the surviving brother was elderly and did not have the means to resolve the building codes issues nor to obtain treatment for his disorder. The team recognizes that hoarders pose a threat to themselves, their neighbors and city officials such as firemen. A rescue worker answering a call at the address of a hoarder is entering a worst case scenario. Homes of hoarders pose a severe fire safety threat for the excess solid waste, which can act as a catalyst in the instance of a fire. In most cases rescue workers are unaware of the condition of a building’s interior, to these workers, the house of a hoarder can be lethal. Due to CERT’s expertise in hoarding cases the team began resolving this case.

ANALYSIS

Case #1 - CERT police officers conducted crime analysis of 127 and 129 E. Clifton Avenue. The analysis revealed that the property had been an issue for several years. During the period 2001 to 2006 the property had averaged 210 service calls a year. From January to May, 2006 100 calls were received; 77 referenced drugs, disorder and violence. The property had been the target of over 100 service calls per year from 1998-2006. Both 127 and 129 E. Clifton Avenue had occupied much of the CPD’s time in the past eight years. The addresses were well above the baseline for service

calls for its community. Community and Business Councils had voiced their concern to the police about the activities being conducted at the properties.

These buildings were a nuisance in the community and hindered any neighborhood improvement. The properties harbored individuals selling drugs and had numerous violent crimes reported. The buildings dilapidated condition provided a hazardous place to live. The impoverished occupants were being taken advantage of by their landlord, Kevin O'Reilly. Beat Officers had observed and reported several code violations viewed on the property.

An analysis of the Permit and Code Database informed CERT of the former and outstanding violations recorded for the Clifton Avenue properties. The numbers of violations at the buildings were excessive after being juxtaposed with neighboring buildings. The property owner had been formally cited previously for code violations in apartment 13 at the complex. However, traditional policing and code enforcement had been ineffective, and the landlord had ignored the code violations and was unconcerned with the crime residing on his property. After reviewing crime statistics and code violations, the team determined that a CERT action would be the best course of final action.

Case #2 - A crime analysis of calls to service for the Westside Health Center on Grand Avenue was conducted by CERT. From the years 2002-2008 the Westside Health Center received over 100 calls to service annually. The Health Center was also above the baseline for calls to service for its community. When analyzing the specific types of calls for police service in a ten-year period, from 1998 to 2007, it showed 212 critical missing patients reported, averaging 19 critical missing patients a year. The reporting officer had already observed that the building was in violation of numerous city and state codes and concluded that the health center staff was not maintaining the safety of their residents.

Analyzing the former and outstanding permit and code violations revealed that the building was an ideal candidate for CERT. Its abundance of code violations made the property vulnerable to CERT's course of action. A health center containing a nursing home and assisted living facility with countless code violations poses several life and safety issues. CERT gained assistance from the State of Ohio Health Department in order to understand the proper methods of operating a facility

such as Westside. This understanding was vital in order for CERT to fairly resolve the issues of the building. The traditional policing and code enforcement practices had been shown ineffective at the Westside Health Center and CERT was the last resort.

The problem was with the management of the health center. Despite receiving funding from Medicaid and Medicare the health center's owner, Abe Fischer, did not fund necessary repairs or supplies. Residents of the health center did not receive necessities such as adult diapers and medication. The residents were endangered. Many were unable to provide their own care and were relying on the health center to provide them with the proper care. Fischer was providing below minimum funding for the Westside Health Center in order to enhance his profit. Business and Community Councils had issued complaints regarding the health center's attraction to crime and that its poor condition was lowering property value for businesses and residences in the area. The senior advocacy group Pro-Seniors became aware of the facility's poor resident care and was very outspoken against Fischer and his management. As an advocate for residents, Pro-Seniors allowed investigators unbridled access to the common and private areas of the facility where residents were being victimized. CERT became involved to encourage the owner to comply with city codes in order to care for his residents, and to reduce police activity at the site.

Case #3 - 5754 Windsorhill was occupied by an elderly man who was unable to make his residence comply with orders of code violations on his own. His home was filled with debris that had been accumulating for many years. While the residence posed little criminal threat, it was a severe safety hazard. The permit and code database revealed that the traditional method of code enforcement was ineffective. The condition of the home posed a clear danger to its resident, but, more importantly, if the property were to catch fire the neighboring houses and rescue workers would be at risk. In the past CERT has worked with hoarders on many occasions. CERT specializes in promoting public safety by not only removing the risk, but resolving the offenders need to hoard.

RESPONSE

Case #1 - CERT acts as a final action when all other resources have been depleted. The team obtained an administrative search warrant for 127 and 129 E. Clifton Avenue. Team members observed and issued a plethora of fire, health and building code violations. Windows were broken, gutters were falling down, trash was improperly stored and scattered about the premise. There were roach infestations, individuals stealing electricity from neighboring buildings, rotted plumbing and improper waste storage. There were approximately 20 "legal" residents, however many non-residents were illegally utilizing the property. In June 2006, Kevin O'Reilly met with CERT to discuss the quality of life issues at his property. CERT representatives expressed how O'Reilly could abate the code violations. Also, in order to reduce radio calls for drugs, disorder and violence, O'Reilly was informed and given an opportunity to attend training of basic Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Techniques. It is CERT's policy to attempt to let the owner comply with the citations before pursuing any legal action.

O'Reilly showed initial progress and cooperation. He invested in a uniformed police detail for 127 and 129 E. Clifton Avenue on July 20, 2006. The police detail produced 32 arrests and issued 22 trespassing warnings. He evicted problem tenants as a method to reduce police radio calls. Improvements were made to the building with new paint applied to portions of the building and a new front gate installed. The trash scattered across the premise was collected and stored in appropriate containers. After making these minimal improvements to the property, the owner ceased to continue with the program. After three months, the owner discontinued the police detail in October, 2006. CERT was not satisfied with O'Reilly's efforts. It became obvious that the initial repairs were designed to stall CERT action. The owner envisioned that he would eventually resort to a more lax effort, similar to what occurred with his former citations at similar properties. With community backing the CERT team, wanted ongoing and continued improvements that it could present to the concerned community. The team's goal was to reduce calls for service to the baseline and to remove the life safety issues at the residence. Leaving O'Reilly's property as it was after he had claimed to repair it would have left the City of Cincinnati vulnerable to a lawsuit for inaction.

The CERT team conducted a follow-up with O'Reilly and was not content with his level of compliance. On April 27, 2007 O'Reilly was arrested for building code violations. The building was vacated and barricaded on May 12, 2007. It is currently owned by Bramble Savings and Bond.

Case #2 - On March 13, 2007, CERT served an administrative search warrant for the Westside Health Center to assess the condition of the property. The team found over 100 code violations. In May 2007, the police also served a criminal search warrant after receiving several more complaints reporting abuse, patient neglect and stolen property. Abe Fischer, the owner, was charged criminally with over 27 building code violations. He refused to make efforts to comply, claiming he passed city inspection. He pleaded not guilty to the criminal building code violations.

With the subsequent threat of jail time and the possibility of losing Medicaid and Medicare funding Fischer began funding the necessary property maintenance. He agreed to comply with the codes and paid \$5,000.00 in court costs. CERT used proven methods to leverage Fischer into producing the necessary property changes. CERT's efforts were successful in improving the quality of life issues at the facility and reducing the police calls to service. Abe Fischer still currently owns the property.

Case #3 - The resident of 5754 Windsorhill was willing to comply with CERT; however, the issue was that he did not have the means to fix the code violations himself. The Fire Department found code violations for defective smoke alarms, blocked ingress and egress, improper use of extension cords and excessive accumulation of combustible items. Building inspectors reported that the roof, gutters, furnace and plumbing fixtures needed repair. The Health Department discovered violations of sewage backup, excessive waste accumulation and vermin infestation.

Due to the age of the resident at Windsorhill, CERT decided it was necessary for Adult Protective Services to accompany them for the inspection. Hoarding is a mental disorder so Adult Protective Services were present to assess the mental and physical condition of the resident in order to determine his needs. CERT also gained assistance from the group People Working Cooperatively which installed a new furnace in the residence. CERT successfully contacted the man's family who funded repairs for the plumbing and helped remove the waste. The house was returned to a livable

condition, posing no further safety hazard. CERT specializes in assisting hoarders overcoming their disorder. The goal is to improve the code violations present at a property, and provide a resident assistance in overcoming his/her disorder so that he/she will not recidivate.

ASSESSMENT

Case #1 - CERT was effectively able to minimize drug and nuisance activity at Clifton. The owner Kevin O'Reilly no longer owns the property. It is currently owned by Bramble Savings and Bond and is vacant. The residents of O'Reilly's building were assisted in finding new housing in buildings that posed fewer hazards. The residential neighbors to 127 and 129 E. Clifton are able to live without the distraction and dangers that previously occupied the neighborhood. From 2008 to the present there have been a total of 12 calls to the police for service. This average of four calls annually is a significant improvement from the average number of over 200 calls a year prior to involvement of CERT. There has also been a tremendous decrease in drug activity, disorder and violence. There were only 4 arrests in 2008 and none subsequently. This is a major improvement compared to 2004 with 45 arrests, 2005 with 26 arrests, and 2006 with 78 arrests.

The property on Clifton Avenue was a nuisance to the local residents and a source of time consumption for the police. Since CERT's involvement, the property has stayed statistically equivalent to its neighboring buildings in regards to calls for service and code violations. The building is no longer being monitored on an individual basis, yet CERT is still awaiting the auditor's 2011 assessment of the property's value and the value of the surrounding properties to determine if they were successful in raising property value for the building and community.

Case #2 - Abe Fischer continued to resolve the code violations issued by CERT. He lost the facility's Medicaid and Medicare funding due to the code violations. The nursing home portion of the property was closed with the assisted living facility the only section being occupied. The Center is currently self-pay due to its funding loss. The residents who could not afford to stay at Westside were moved by the City of Cincinnati to appropriate facilities elsewhere in the city.

With CERT's involvement the Health Center was brought to code. Members of the CERT team monitored Fischer's cooperation. There was only one reported critical missing in 2009 and none in 2010; a significant drop from the previous average of 19 critical missing patients annually. The Center improved the monitoring of its occupants and has not needed to rely on the police to locate its residents. From 2003-2008 the Westside Health Center averaged 29 calls a year for violent mentally-impaired individuals. There have been only four calls total since CERT's involvement. The staff has taken better control of the remaining residents and has made tremendous strides in providing suitable care for its residents. The residents that require medication are now receiving it, resulting in additional reduction of calls to service for mentally-impaired individuals and critical missings. The Westside Health Center no longer poses a hazard to its residents nor is it consuming an excessive amount of police time. The property's value will be assessed in 2011. Since the open assisted living portion of the center is currently abiding by state code and is a tremendous improvement compared to its condition when CERT initially became involved it should see an increase in value.

This particular case had a major effect on the City of Cincinnati's Health Department and its methods of evaluating nursing facilities. Before CERT the Cincinnati City Health Department inspected and certified properties such as Westside. Due to its error in permitting the Westside Health Center to pass its inspections, the State Health Department is now the only department qualified to conduct evaluations.

Case #3 - The greatest concern in hoarding cases is the occupant's tendency to recidivate. The Windsorhill address has been properly brought to code. In hoarding cases it is not uncommon for those suffering from the disorder to begin collecting items to fill their home again. Upon follow-up inspections conducted by CERT members the resident's home on Windsorhill was still without any violations. The house is now little threat to the safety of its resident and his neighbors. The elderly resident has showed no signs of returning to his hoarding actions. CERT representatives are waiting for the 2011 auditor's inspection in order to fully evaluate its effect on the property.

CONCLUSION

No CERT case is identical; however these three cases represent examples of the array of problems investigated by the team. Blighted and crime infested properties pose a significant threat to the city. They permit crime to develop, and are counterproductive to the goals of the City of Cincinnati. CERT targets these locations to promote growth within the city. CERT is the city's final option to resolve blighted buildings.

CERT is an ongoing project with the city. They focus on problems that are community concerns and promote community development. CERT's current activity is a sign of its effectiveness. It is an effective tool to lower crime and return hazardous homes to safe lodging. CERT does not require any extra funding, only extra time by those that are on the team. The members of CERT are dedicated to the team and to finding solutions to problem addresses. The key aspect to CERT is the Team. The team is a unified cooperative entity that is dedicated to their goal of minimizing hazardous properties that hinder growth within the city. CERT's actions prevent the city from being in a state of arrested development.

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Supporting Documentation:

Crime Reported at 127/129 E. Clifton Ave

	Frequency	Percent
1997	10	6.9
1998	7	4.9
1999	9	6.3
2000	11	7.6
2001	12	8.3
2002	22	15.3
2003	19	13.2
2004	18	12.5
2005	14	9.7
2006	13	9.0
2007	8	5.6
2010	1	.7
Total	144	100.0

Arrests at 127/129 E. Clifton Ave

	Frequency	Percent
1999	18	7.6
2000	31	13.1
2001	19	8.1
2002	7	3.0
2004	45	19.1
2005	26	11.0
2006	78	33.1
2007	8	3.4
2008	4	1.7
Total	236	100.0

	Frequency	Percent
1998	118	7.0
1999	120	7.1
2000	133	7.8
2001	186	11.0
2002	241	14.2
2003	211	12.4
2004	223	13.2
2005	212	12.5
2006	188	11.1
2007	49	2.9
2008	2	.1
2009	4	.2
2010	8	.5
Total	1695	100.0

127-129 East Clifton Avenue



Average Scale: 1 inch = 51.9 feet

127-129 East Clifton Avenue



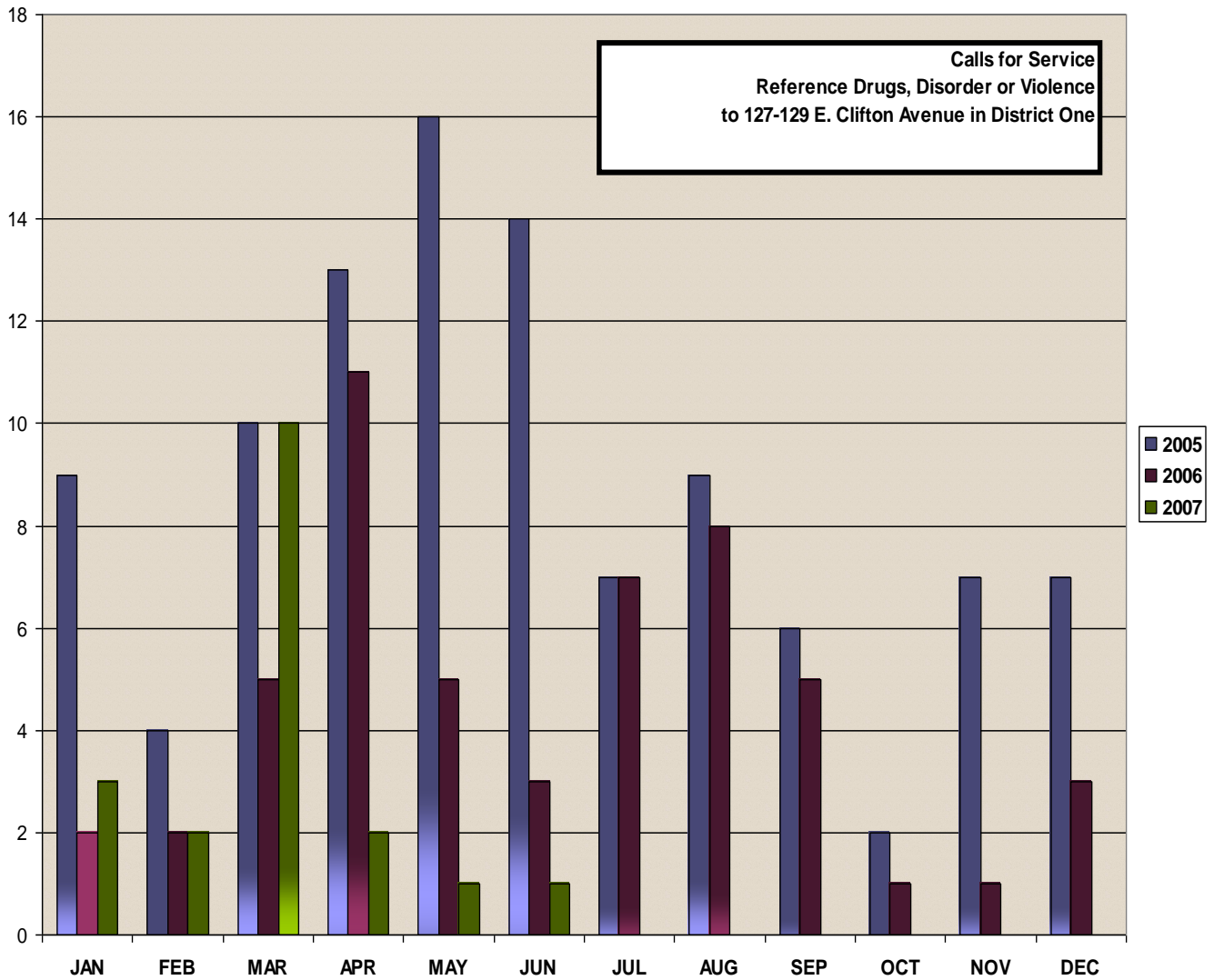
127-129 East Clifton Avenue





127-129 East Clifton Avenue



127-129 East Clifton Avenue




1857 and 1859 Grand Avenue



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Broken trust

How the system failed the mentally ill poor

BY EILEEN KELLEY AND DAN HORN • EKELLEY@ENQUIRER.COM AND DHORN@ENQUIRER.COM • AUGUST 22, 2008

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PRICE HILL - Cincinnati police Officer Aaron Layton was hunting for a suspect in February when he went room to room inside the Westside Health Care Center. He didn't find his suspect, but he was stunned by what he saw.

Conditions inside the nursing home so alarmed Layton that he got a search warrant and returned 16 days later with dozens of police and city and state inspectors. They described conditions worse than a crack house: Soiled mattresses. Vomit in the hall. Toilets that wouldn't flush. Sinks with no hot water. Rooms infested with roaches and flies. Pipes held together with shoestrings. Fire doors tied shut.

Investigators discovered that nurses' aides gave the mentally ill patients who lived there medicine the aides could not identify. Drugs were stored in unlabeled bottles. Even a basic first-aid kit was nowhere to be found.

"It's dirty. It smells. It's deplorable," said police Capt. Kim Frey.

Discoveries from the police raid on March 13 were all the more shocking because city and state workers responsible for the residents' health and safety had just inspected Westside and its companion residential care facility, the Terrace at Westside. They had found problems in those inspections, but nothing on the scale of what police found the day of the raid.

An Enquirer investigation found that for at least five years, annual inspections had failed to turn up problems near the magnitude of the health and safety hazards cited by police.

Year after year since at least 2003, inspectors with the Ohio Department of Health and Cincinnati Health Department approved the facilities after management promised to fix problems. State and city inspectors seemed poised to approve the facilities again this year until Layton sounded the alarm.

In the month after the raid, state health inspectors documented nearly 200 pages of violations at Westside and the Terrace.

"How was this missed?" asked City Councilman Chris Monzel, a member of council's health committee. Council will hold hearings next month to learn what when wrong and why.

The answer might come too late for the facilities, known as "The Hill," or for the more than 60 poor, mentally ill and often infirm residents who still call the place home. The state wants to stop Medicaid payments that keep Westside open, and owner Abe Fischer faces a misdemeanor charge of violating the city's building and fire codes.

State health officials told nursing home residents Wednesday they should look for a new place to live. Many may have to return to families that cannot handle them, to nursing homes that would prefer they go elsewhere or to the streets.

Some residents and their advocates say taxpayers and the buildings' residents are paying a price now because a system that was supposed to protect them failed.

"The system is inadequate," said Mary Day, ombudsman for Pro Seniors, an advocacy group for the elderly. "I say, 'Hallelujah!' to police. It's just unfortunate that it took their action for the public to learn what is going on."

Fischer said his facilities are safe and clean. He said the state and advocacy groups are trying to run him out of business.

"It was like somebody said, 'You're going down, and there's nothing you can do about it,'" Fischer said.

Most residents went to the the Hill because there was nowhere else to go.

Almost all are mentally ill. Some have behavior problems. Others fight drug addictions. A few have been thrown out of other facilities.

"You basically went there or you went to the streets," said Cynthia Alexander, whose mother, Fannie Lee Daniels, spent 10 years on the Hill before leaving in January for an Avondale care facility.

Alexander said the facilities deteriorated each year her mother lived at Westside.

To bathe her 75-year-old mother, Alexander said she'd go to the shower room, grab a wrench and give the shower nub a good yank. With the water on, she'd guide her mother into the room, a place typically clogged with other patients' soiled underwear and clothes, but missing the shower controls and curtain.

Alexander said she often asked for adult diapers, which were rarely available. She worried her mother didn't get her medicine on time or as often as she needed. She noticed her mother's bedsheets were often filthy.

She wanted to move her mother to another facility for years, she said, but the older woman always refused.

"Don't say anything, I don't want to cause problems," her mother would say, trying to shush her daughter.

"There is no excuse for these nursing homes not to be run well, or at least decently," Alexander said. "Somebody really needs to be paying attention. I just think of all the people that didn't have anyone to speak up for them."

For three decades, Westside and the Terrace have been the homes of last resort among Cincinnati's 30 nursing homes and 15 residential-care facilities.

Catering almost exclusively to mentally ill poor people, the Hill was supposed to provide better care than the old state mental hospitals, the massive institutions that states emptied in the 1970s and 1980s.

Residents on the Hill live in a one-story brick building that is divided between nursing home patients and those in assisted living, which provides some basic care for people who don't require around-the-clock attention.

Many spend their days wandering the halls or sitting outside smoking on cement buffers and old milk crates that border the parking lot.

The public pays most of the cost of their care: Medicaid pays about \$150 a day per nursing home resident, while separate programs pay \$877 a month per person for those in the assisted living area at the Terrace.

Fischer said he paid 75 employees and his own salary of \$129,000 last year, but everything else went into operating and improving the facilities. Fischer's family operated as many as six nursing homes over the years. All but Westside and the Terrace have been sold.

"I've tried to do anything and everything to keep the residents there," Fischer said. "This just shows that the state doesn't give a rat's you-know-what about those residents."

Fischer, who owns a house in Indian Hill and a second home on Sanibel Island, Fla., said he's spent as much as \$300,000 on repairs and improvements since the raid.

Today, the facilities have undergone some cleaning and repairs. They bear little resemblance to the scene police described in March.

Mold has been cleaned from the walls. Fire doors are accessible. Cigarette butts that littered rooms and the wine and beer bottles outside are gone.

Still, state officials say the problems are not.

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The same inspections also found that problems such as inadequate staffing, poor bookkeeping, improper storage of medication and broken equipment persisted year after year. Each year, however, the facilities submitted a plan to fix the problems and city inspectors signed off on it.

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McGuire said state inspectors didn't find severe problems when they first went to The Hill this year, either. "The state had been there before, too," she said.

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Care very tough to find

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What shocks her, she said, is that it passed inspections for as long as it did. "I don't know how they can pass everything," she said. "It is a very relaxed place where rules are not followed."

A national study in 2004 found that facilities that house mentally ill residents and rely heavily on Medicaid often have more trouble following the rules. Researchers found those facilities were twice as likely to be cut from the Medicaid program because of inspection violations.

"It's not an easy job in the first place," said Vincent Mor, a Brown University researcher who co-authored the study. "If you add a lot of mental health residents, that adds to the burden."

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For three decades, Westside and the Terrace have been the homes of last resort among Cincinnati's 30 nursing homes and 15 residential-care facilities.

Catering almost exclusively to mentally ill poor people, the Hill was supposed to provide better care than the old state mental hospitals, the massive institutions that states emptied in the 1970s and 1980s.

Residents on the Hill live in a one-story brick building that is divided between nursing home patients and those in assisted living, which provides some basic care for people who don't require around-the-clock attention.

Many spend their days wandering the halls or sitting outside smoking on cement buffers and old milk crates that border the parking lot.

The public pays most of the cost of their care: Medicaid pays about \$150 a day per nursing home resident, while separate programs pay \$877 a month per person for those in the assisted living area at the Terrace.

Fischer said he paid 75 employees and his own salary of \$129,000 last year, but everything else went into operating and improving the facilities. Fischer's family operated as many as six nursing homes over the years. All but Westside and the Terrace have been sold.

"I've tried to do anything and everything to keep the residents there," Fischer said. "This just shows that the state doesn't give a rat's you-know-what about those residents."

Fischer, who owns a house in Indian Hill and a second home on Sanibel Island, Fla., said he's spent as much as \$300,000 on repairs and improvements since the raid.

Today, the facilities have undergone some cleaning and repairs. They bear little resemblance to the scene police described in March.

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5754 Windsor Hill Drive

- Cpd responded to a “DOA” at this address
- Insanitary living conditions were observed and reported at the city-wide cert team meeting
- Cert team members were allowed access to the property for inspection
- Numerous code violations were observed

CITY CODE ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

FIRE PREVENTION

- DEFECTIVE SMOKE ALARMS
- INGRESS / EGRESS BLOCKED
- IMPROPER USE OF AN EXTENSION CORD
- EXCESSIVE ACCUMULATION OF COMBUSTABLE ITEMS

CITY CODE ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

BUILDINGS AND INSPECTIONS

- ROOF, GUTTERS, AND DOWNSPOUTS IN POOR REPAIR
- INOPERABLE PLUMBING FIXTURES
- INOPERABLE FURNACE

CITY CODE ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

- SEWAGE BACK-UP IN THE BASEMENT
- EVIDENCE OF VERMIN INFESTATION
- EXCESSIVE WASTE ACCUMULATION

SUPPORT AGENCIES INVOLVEMENT

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

- ACCOMPANIED CERT TEAM MEMBERS ON INITIAL INSPECTION
- ASSESSED MENTAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITION OF CLIENT
- MADE A REFERRAL TO COUNCIL ON AGING

SUPPORT AGENCIES INVOLVEMENT

COUNCIL ON AGING

- OFFERED SEVERAL HOURS A WEEK OF HOUSEKEEPING SERVICES
- OFFERED PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANCE
- OFFERED “MEALS ON WHEELS”

SUPPORT AGENCIES INVOLVEMENT
PEOPLE WORKING COOPERATIVELY

- INSTALLED A NEW FURNACE
 - MADE A REFERRAL TO CLIENT'S HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE FOR REPAIR OF STORM - DAMAGED ROOF
- FAMILY INVOLVEMENT
- PROVIDED EMOTIONAL SUPPORT
 - PROVIDED PHYSICAL LABOR FOR REMOVAL OF WASTE
 - CLIENT'S NEPHEW PROVIDED PLUMBING REPAIR SERVICES

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5754 Windsor Hill Drive – After CERT



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Sampling of CERT Cases 2006 - 2007

Address	Departments Involved	Department Representatives	Description	Action Taken / Current Status / Updates
127/129 E Clifton Ave CPD-D1 Owner - Kevin O'Reilly	H, CPD, B&I, Law	B&I - Mike Finn CPD - Steve Saunders	Inspected again on 4/16; photos taken. B&I court papers filed 4/18; Health orders filed 4/26	5/23/07: Owner Kevin O'Reilly arrested on 4/27 for Health and B&I violations. Now in the court process. Set for Housing Docket on 6/15/07 . 8/1/07: Owner is scheduled for court on 8/3/07. 8/3/07: Per Keith Forman, owner pled NC, got 1 yr probation & ordered to bring properties into compliance. All Depts need to monitor for next 30 days & advise Keith if any developments or lack of compliance. 10/10/07: Property has been boarded up.
1331 Ethan Ave. CPD-D5 Scrapyard Owner - Mike Rece	CPD, CFD, B&I, H	CPD - Katrina Neal CFD - Bill Long B&I - Will Cohn H - Robin Anderson	Unsightly scrapyard has taken over the street	9/12/07: Depts meeting on 9/18 to discuss inspection and Admin SW, licensing, zoning issues. 10/10/07: Per Health, they do not have a current license to act as a scrapyard. B&I checking into Zoning Variance (Reggie Lyons / supv of zoning). 10/24/07: CFD asked T&E to put up parking signs, but signage is not up yet. 11/7/07: All Depts did a consent search on 11/7/07 - numerous health and fire violations; CPD found copper and catalytic converters. CPD also installed cameras several weeks ago. D5 investigating.
1401 Race St. CPD-D1 Bangs Market	CPD, CFD, B&I, H	Health - John Sanders B&I - Cheryl Taggart	Liquor inspection on 7/19/07, where numerous violations were found. CPD took photos; Admin SW scheduled for 7/26.	8/15/07: Admin SW was completed on 7/26; all Depts had numerous code violations. 8/29/07: John Sanders (Health) reinspected, over 1/2 of violations have been taken care of & 6-7 left. B&I (Cheryl Taggart) had over 12 violations. Adv'd renovations will cost over \$1 mil. ON HOLD until October.
147 E. Clifton Ave CPD-D1 Chief's Market and attached Apts	CPD, H, CFD, B&I	CPD -Tim Eppstein B&I - CFD - Bill Long H -	Business has exposed wires, cat living inside; drug dealers use business for dealing; Residents in apts refuse entry to police	11/7/07: Law needs to followup on legalities of searching the attached apts, due to owners being off-site and different from the market Mgr.
1500 Grosbeck CPD-D5 Hillrise Senior Center	CPD, Health, CFD, B&I	CPD - Katrina Neal H - John Sanders CFD - Bill Long	Filthy, roaches and bedbugs	10/10/07: Health and CPD to inspect. 10/24/07: Per Health, this is not a state-registered institution, so state inspector was unable to assist. CFD and B&I to inspect.