



Healthcare Hospitality Network, Inc.

The Healthcare Hospitality Network, Inc. (HHN) is a nationwide professional association of nearly 200 unique, nonprofit organizations that provide lodging and support services to patients, families and their loved ones who are receiving medical treatment far from their home communities.

Hospital Hospitality Houses

A hospital hospitality house is a home-like facility with private sleeping rooms and bathrooms. Hospitality houses are unique in that they also have shared communal areas such as a kitchen and dining room, living or family rooms, playrooms, offices, libraries, and outside gathering places. Hospital hospitality houses also offer shared laundry facilities, and many of them provide public computers for their guests and shuttle services to local treatment facilities. These shared areas present many opportunities for the guests to connect with one another, creating a community that specifically meets their needs.

Hospitality houses cover a wide spectrum of sizes and areas of focus. Some houses provide lodging for just a few families, and others host more than 100 families at any given time. Some houses are specific to the treatment of certain conditions such as cancer or transplants, and some serve specific age groups, such as children and their families. Many of the houses provide lodging for anyone who is in their community for treatment.

Not only do nonprofit hospitality houses ease the stress of securing lodging in an unfamiliar city, but they also provide a less expensive option to families. Nonprofit houses are cheaper than a local hotel; some houses are free or have sliding scale rates, and others' rates are significantly lower than other local options. By reducing some of the costs of receiving care and providing specialized housing, the stress these families are experiencing is mitigated, allowing them to focus on the most important thing – healing.

The Need for Hospitality Housing

HHN member houses help more than 600,000 individuals and families each year by providing home-like lodging. The need for hospitality housing, however, far out-paces the availability. Where there are hospitality houses, they are often full, causing families to be put on waiting lists or referred elsewhere, typically to local hotels.

The HHN national office links patients and families directly to lodging resources. Approximately 50% of the time, there is no hospitality house to refer patients to, so the national office must refer callers to hotels or local charities. Patients who have no means report sleeping in cars or, in some instances, turning down treatment.

Over time, the lack of options for families will only increase. With the advancement of healthcare technologies, the increasing trend of specialized medical facilities, and the growing acceptance in the medical field of the importance of “treating the whole person, not just the patient,” more and more people are leaving their home communities to receive the best possible care. Thousands of people each day make life and death healthcare decisions; oftentimes limited financial resources become the deciding factor. Hospital hospitality housing helps ease part of the burden for some, but not everyone -yet. HHN exists to help thousands of families, now and in the future, by growing and expanding home-like healthcare lodging.

Three Proven Strategies

HHN’s purpose is to deliver on three primary services: professional support, capacity building, and direct assistance.

Professional support to members

HHN assists its members through consultation and subject matter expertise to build capacity and support the management of their facilities.

The HHN’s work with its members is the underpinning of the “industry” of hospitality housing. HHN serves as the clearinghouse for and reviewer of best practices, provides direct professional education through its *Certified House Professional*, and offers nationwide technical assistance and support to enhance program delivery through the members’ houses.

In the words of one of HHN member, “Thank you very much for the continued flow of information! We have just moved into the public phase of a capital campaign to build a hospitality house on the campus of our main hospital. We quote HHN in our campaign materials and have designed our house, created the operating budget and are making staffing recommendations as a direct result of the valuable information you have provided us. It has truly been a blessing to be associated with such a helpful organization!” (Laura)

Capacity building for underserved communities

HHN works with underserved communities in bringing medical lodging services to their healthcare system.

HHN is the go-to resource for individuals and organizations as they take the first steps toward opening a hospitality house in their communities. Community groups and healthcare systems across the country contact HHN for information, guidance and support for their efforts to bring hospitality housing to their cities.

From a new member, “I am the new Executive Director at the shelter. Today is my first day in the office, and I wanted to immediately contact you, as I know that you are a wealth of information and expertise - two things I know I need! I am extremely excited to be part of this wonderful world of hospitality houses and am eager to learn from you and others who have walked down the path I am just beginning to navigate.” (Katie)

Direct assistance to patients and families

HHN connects patients and caregivers to high quality, low cost or free lodging options.

The network provides a unique and valuable service directly to patients and their families. HHN staffs a toll-free phone number and provides a website inquiry option for patients and families seeking referral for lodging, travel and other support services. The inquiries come from across the country for all types of illness or injuries. In 2012, the national office assisted more than 1,500 patients and their families

In one recent call, Debbie from Maryland called HHN seeking lodging for a friend who recently underwent brain surgery. Ted is wheelchair bound, and traveling to and from Baltimore for tests and treatment is beyond his physical endurance. Debbie found HHN on the Internet and called the national office, which referred Debbie to one of several hospitality houses in Baltimore. Debbie reported back that she was able to connect Ted with hospitality lodging.

History of HHN

The Healthcare Hospitality Network, Inc. was incorporated in 1986 in direct response to the need for a professional association. Early hospitality house managers in several states started meeting in the early 1980s for the purpose of supporting existing homes, including their staff and volunteers, and to promote the development of hospitality housing across the country. Known as the National Association of Hospital Hospitality Houses, Inc. (NAHHH) since its inception, the membership unanimously voted to change the name to the Healthcare Hospitality Network, Inc., in September 2012.

HHN is lead by a diverse and professional Board of Directors from throughout the US. Twelve to twenty-six directors bring a wealth of experience and backgrounds in hospitality housing, nonprofit management, corporate leadership, medicine, law and education.

HHN Members

HHN member houses range from community-based four-room facilities like the Walton Guest House in Salem, Oregon, to the Family House in Pittsburgh with its 163 rooms spread across four house locations. The American Cancer Society Hope Lodges with 60 plus-room houses and Ronald McDonald Houses with upwards of 80 room homes are also active members.

Many members are community organizations, hospitals or healthcare systems that do not yet have lodging services, and many of them are in the beginning stages of creating their nonprofit organization. Other members include hospitals, healthcare systems, organizations and individuals who support the work of hospitality housing.

While many cities and healthcare organizations have the vision and the drive to bring hospital hospitality lodging to their communities, the 'how to' can be quite overwhelming. Whether starting from an existing building or starting from a piece of land, the unique nature of hospitality housing is unlike building any other type of facility. HHN is the sole resource for communities to look to for everything from building plans, to best practices, to one-on-one consultation with those who have been "there." Time, money and resources are used more efficiently and effectively when "trial and error" is the exception to the rule.

For nearly over 30 years, HHN has served as the axis for hospital hospitality lodging across the country. Through the development of an expansive library of information and resources, HHN is able to provide assistance as a “subject matter expert” on issues facing both small and large member houses. It is through the commitment of HHN members and leaders that the availability of hospital hospitality housing has grown significantly over the decades. It is, and always has been, HHN’s commitment to helping launch new houses and to partner with other hospitality organizations that will ensure these critical services continue to be available.

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