



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 21, 2018, 8 a.m. (EST)

CONTACTS: Caroline Woodward  
Director of Development and Planning  
Bethlehem Haven  
[CWoodward@bethlehemhaven.org](mailto:CWoodward@bethlehemhaven.org)  
T: 412-391-1348, ext. 228 / M: 412-605-7532

Kimberly Reding Development  
Assistant Bethlehem Haven  
[KReding@bethlehemhaven.org](mailto:KReding@bethlehemhaven.org)  
T: 412-391-1348, ext. 222

**BETHLEHEM HAVEN'S NEW MEDICAL RESPITE CENTER**

*To provide the city's homeless with a safe place to heal after a hospital stay*

**PITTSBURGH (June 21, 2018)** – The [Bethlehem Haven of Pittsburgh, Inc.](#) Board of Directors proudly announces the Grand Opening of **Bethlehem Haven's Medical Respite Center**. The Center, located at 905 Watson Street, provides 29 private units of temporary housing coupled with post-acute medical care so vulnerably housed people can recover in a safe, supportive environment.

"Most people leave the hospital after a medical procedure to recover in their home, with family or loved ones to care for them. But homeless people didn't have that option. The Medical Respite Center changes that and offers a supportive home and a place for healing," said **Debbi W. Linhart, Chief Executive Officer of Bethlehem Haven**.

Bethlehem Haven first piloted a five-unit Medical Respite Program with Allegheny Health Network. Based on its success, a group of leaders from Bethlehem Haven, AHN, Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS), Pittsburgh Mercy, UPMC Health Plan, and UPMC Mercy convened to develop a larger-community based Medical Respite Center in Uptown. The Center expects to house nearly 200 people each year.

## **Bethlehem Haven's new Medical Respite Center**

### **Page 2 of 2**

In addition to 29 private sleeping units to accommodate both male and female clients, the Center was designed to be a healing space for convalescing patients through the use of a calming and neutral color palette, abundant natural light and the integration of warm wood elements. Respite guests will have easy access to on-site laundry, computer stations, and the services of two other tenants in the building: a health clinic staffed by the Primary Care-Healthcare for the Homeless and Wellspring Drop-In Center, a day program of Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net®.

Bethlehem Haven provides the short-term housing, daily meals, and supportive services like counseling and assistance with securing permanent housing and employment. During their stay, individuals are connected to health insurance, primary care, and behavioral health care. Transportation to and from medical appointments is also provided. Medical oversight and care coordination, including intake and discharge from the program, are provided by the referring hospital or health system.

### ***What is Medical Respite?***

Medical Respite is post-acute medical care for homeless persons who are too ill or frail to recover from a physical illness or injury on the streets but are not ill enough to be in a hospital. Individuals recovering from deep tissue infections or surgery often need 4-6 weeks of home care delivered by a visiting nurse. But for those who are homeless or unstably housed, the options are limited to a lengthy stay in the hospital or a nursing home. Homelessness complicates efforts to treat illness and injuries and the outcomes can easily become disastrous. Bethlehem Haven offers an alternative – safe, temporary housing coupled with home health care and on-site supportive services. There are around 80 Medical Respite Centers in the country, but Bethlehem Haven's program is only the second in Pennsylvania. To learn more about Medical Respite, visit [www.nhchc.org](http://www.nhchc.org).

### ***About Bethlehem Haven***

Bethlehem Haven is a homeless shelter located in Pittsburgh that provides safe shelter and sanctuary for 150 individuals each and every night. Every person served by Bethlehem Haven is linked to supportive services, specifically designed for their individual needs, so they can achieve self-sufficiency, permanent housing, and personal empowerment. Bethlehem Haven is part of the Pittsburgh Mercy Family of Care™. To learn more about Bethlehem Haven, visit [www.bethlehemhaven.org](http://www.bethlehemhaven.org).