

Suzanne Falkenberry

I met with a family I met through at the Meriter ER. Briefly, Mrs. C brought her son, ZW age 5, into the ER due to a fever for 3 days. During the interview, Mrs. C mentioned that they are soon to be evicted from their apartment because her husband is incarcerated due to a domestic violence dispute in January and is not paying rent. Mrs. C. says she and her family (3 boys ages 13, 11, and 5) will be forced into a shelter and have not been able to find one that is willing to accept them.

On further discussion with Mrs. C. She reveals that her family has been very unstable for many years now, and they have been in and out of shelters for almost 10 years. She has battled problems with drugs and alcohol and has been sober for 3 years now. She has five children, 3 boys live with her and her 2 daughters live in Minneapolis with relatives. She last saw them in December. She is currently married but her husband is in jail. He is not the father of her children, and she was not comfortable with the way he disciplined them. She reports he physical punishes the children, but she would not describe it as abuse. Mrs. C does not work, but is actively looking for a job. She does not have a telephone, and transportation and child care are issues for her. She has a high school diploma but has never maintained steady employment outside the home. They do not have a phone in the home, but she uses a neighborhood center's phone.

She and the 3 boys moved to Madison from Minneapolis in September and were living in the YWCA until October when they got an apartment on Allied Drive because Mrs. C's husband moved to Madison after being released from jail. They will be evicted this week. She has been unable to locate a shelter that will accept her. She has been unable to get in touch with several places including the Salvation Army. She has a case worker at the YWCA with whom she maintains close contacts with who is actively looking for a shelter as well. Mrs. C. would prefer to not go to the Salvation Army because she does have a few possessions that she does not want to give up.

All three boys are doing very well in school. They all participate in a neighborhood afterschool program until 4:45. They get breakfast and lunch at school and a late afternoon snack at the afterschool program.

Our initial interview and resource access was the same day as Mrs. C does not have a phone and as noted below their appt at MCHC was not for another month.

Goals:

-**Shelter**- as above

-**Food** – Mrs. C. had been receiving food stamps but was terminated due to failure to attend a scheduled appointment with her case worker.

-**Medical care** – Mrs. C and her children do have Badgercare insurance although they have not seen a regular doctor since arriving in Madison.

-**Transportation** – Mrs. C relies on the bus system for transportation but has little money to do so.

Follow up – Since Mrs. C does not have a telephone, we spent the afternoon together in the ER making phone calls and gathering information. A hospital social worker was briefly involved and helped us with the first goal of housing.

Shelter - Although our ultimate goal was not met, we did make some progress for Mrs. C. Using a handout entitled, “Housing Resources in Dane County” we made phone calls to the Salvation Army as well as Mrs. C’s caseworker at the YWCA. Many of the resources that we suggested calling, Mrs. C said she had worked with in the past or was currently working with. We did make the plan that if the family was evicted, they would go to the Salvation Army for temporary shelter.

Food – Mrs. C already had a case worker with the county for food stamps, but she had been unable to connect with him. I called and was able to speak with her case worker. An appointment was made for later in the week to (hopefully) have her food stamps reinstated. She said she still had enough food leftover from before the food stamps ran out and she could make it for at least a couple weeks. She denied our suggestion of a food pantry to assist with fresh foods for now. The children got 2 meals a day plus a snack away from home.

Medical care – I called and set up an appt for ZW, who was present in the ER, for a 5 year well-child check with Dr. Greg Demuri at SMCHC on April 8th. It was felt on d/c from the ER that although the child was in need of routine medical care, close follow up for this episode was not needed. She claimed his immunizations were up to date before entering kindergarten. Mrs. C’s two other sons also needed routine care and she thought did need updates on their immunizations. Due to uncertainty in her schedule she did not set up routine appointments for them at this time, but was given the number for the public health desk at the MCHC as well as for appointments with Dr. Demuri.

A call was also placed to the school nurse, Stephanie, at Thoreau elementary school that ZW attends. I filled her in on the familys’ situation and so the health office might “red flag” them as possibly needing extra help with health care and social support.

Transportation – Mrs C relied solely on the bus system to get around. The social worker and I were able to secure a book of bus tickets so Mrs. C could get home, get to her food stamp case workers’ appointment and possibly to ZW’s appt with Dr. Demuri.

Through Dane County Connections (242-7441) there apparently is a program that provides transportation to medical appointments for persons with Medicaid. We left messages regarding transportation to medical appointments. We were never able to speak to anyone directly about this program, but I left a message letting them know that she would be calling and gave her the phone number for Dane County Connections. She was also going to ask her food stamp case worker if he had any information as all these programs were located in the same facility (Dane County Job Center on Aaberg Avenue).

I got bus schedules and transfer information for Mrs. C for her ride home today, her appointment with her case worker, and for ZW’s doctor appointment in April. (Madison Metro 266-4466).

Due to a lack of telephone and possible imminent eviction, I did not have access to contact for follow-up. I did speak with the school nurse who, hopefully, will be able to follow-up further with this family.