ABCCM 2021 Strategic Directions

ABCCM's by-laws call for the member churches to set the direction of our ministries each year at our annual meeting in November. At our May meeting, we ask for Ministry Action Proposals. In September, we report on the proposals for those new directions, as well as each ministry's goals for service during the next year. Our focus remains on providing a safe place to share God's love, grace and mercy for congregations and individuals to engage with their neighbors, helping to meet critical needs, and equipping them with new strategies.

Listening and Caring

We thank God for the many churches that provide outreach and ministry to the community through their members fulfilling the call to serve our most vulnerable. We offer our best ministry when people are greeted with dignity and with respect in a clean, safe facility. Listening and caring with warmth are the first steps toward hope and offering God's love and grace – plus bringing the "Good News" as we share our common strengths and find solutions together.

Covid - 19 Safety Policies: Safe for Volunteers to Return

ABCCM has implemented safety measures at each Ministry facility. Our Crisis Ministries, Veteran Services of the Carolinas and Medical Ministry continue to see people either over the phone or by meeting outdoors in the parking areas. We restrict access to the buildings, but are installing UV-C ionizers and filters that make our air in each building safe this winter. Our transitional housing at the Veterans Restoration Quarters and Transformation Village have plenty of space to socially distance while serving meals or teaching classes or assisting behind glass in the reception areas. ABCCM provides masks and gloves for all volunteers who need them. *Thankfully, no one has contracted Covid-19 at any of ABCCM's facilities.* If you are willing, please tour the ABCCM Ministry to see all the safety measures and then make an informed decision about returning. Currently many are coming back – hope many will join them as our neighbors and our homeless need to your ministry.

Guiding Principles for all ABCCM Ministries

- Build on core ministries with our congregations, volunteers and community partners
- As a leading faith-based organization filling gaps in our community safety-net, we will listen to participants and volunteers as well as use data-driven analysis about critical needs and services.
- Recruit, train, equip and empower volunteers in ministry that changes, restores
 and is transformative for others utilizing best practices that drive great outcomes.
- Maintain effective collaborations with health and human service providers. Continue to answer the Biblical calls to service as Jesus declared in Matt. 25: 35-41 and Isaiah 61:1-3.

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Crisis Ministry 2021 Strategic Directions

ABCCM's Crisis Ministries have focused its entire 51 years on being a listening ministry that offers the basic necessities with basic values. We rely on the churches to raise the food and clothes that their volunteers distribute as they compassionately help families fill the gaps by giving help to their neighbors. *Our number one strategy is to be a safe place where volunteers can serve.* We are safe with our Covid-19 guidelines. Please visit to see for yourself. We need volunteers more than ever to listen and care to others.

ABCCM's Crisis Ministries will continue training in the best practice called Critical Time Intervention (CTI). This model parallels the four stages of intentional, missional community in our homeless ministries. They will begin using the assessment

tool of the self-sufficiency matrix, which measures 16 areas that encompass the subcategories in the social determinates of health. Utilizing this CTI model, the fundamental emergency assistance services of food, clothes and financial assistance will be known as our "impact ministries." Utilizing the Unite Us software, we will be able to track referrals and "close the loop" on these crisis situations and demonstrate the level of stability achieved in the first 90 days of impact ministries.

We are inviting all volunteers to be a part of our experience where about 25%, or one in four families, build stable bridges out of crisis. Our experience also shows that about 50% or two out of four families need to be equipped with new strategies in order to sustain stability and move toward thriving lives. Every volunteer's life experiences have taught (you) skills that other families need to hear in order to help them make strategic decisions. We need volunteers trained and helping in this "strategic ministry" phase after the first 90 days to offer life-skill classes such as nutrition, food preparation/shopping, financial counseling, budgeting, housing education, and transportation assistance to help them build bridges that sustain their stability and take meaningful steps out of poverty. Our experience shows that the remaining 25%, or one in four, need intensive education and professional skill building to obtain living wage jobs and develop a career ladder. We need volunteers trained and helping in this "empowerment ministry" phase to focus on goals that stabilize their health, repair their credit, establish reliable transportation and achieve employment certification for skilled level jobs. These services will be offered in 90 days blocks and work with families over 9 months to equip and empower them to achieve their greater potential and dreams.

ABCCM Crisis Ministries have called these volunteers "counselors" who primarily offered financial emergency assistance. We need "counselors" who can do this, but also help families walk through these new steps to achieve their goals. We need volunteers that we will train on intake and emergency financial solutions; they will be called *impact volunteers*. We need volunteers who will be trained to become *strategic volunteers* who work on equipping clients with greater life-skills. Since new studies equate an entitlement mentality of public benefits as an addiction, we will use the addictions model of peer support training to establish family support volunteers in our empowerment ministries. We will use these best practice training models with other cultural impact training, such as Circles and Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World.

We will train our churches and community groups using poverty simulation experiences to engage them in responding to the call of these new volunteer opportunities.

We are filling the gap for meal support in West Asheville though the relocation of our soup kitchen and partnership with Mt. Pisgah Seventh Day Adventist church. We will continue offering the ABCCM Daily Bread at Sonrise at our new location on 1543 Patton Ave., 11:30 to 1pm. In addition to meeting the needs for a hot meal, we will develop services and provide resources that strengthen and support the more ongoing needs of our neighbors in need.

Our initiative to address food insecurities will continue through our partnership with the Community Engagement Department of Buncombe County. Our Hominy Valley site will facilitate four Community Engagement Markets coupled with nutritional education, food demonstrations and community resources to help the growing families we serve. These markets will be located at Enka Middle School, Hominy Valley Crisis Ministry, Bartlett-Arms Apartments and Shiloh.

We will continue to work with City and County schools and social workers who are tracking the most vulnerable children who are homeless and those needing food and other basic necessities. We will assist churches to meet the needs through our four Crisis Ministries: Downtown (24 Cumberland), South, North and Hominy Valley; and, we encourage east Buncombe churches to support Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry as our sister Ministry. Our top strategies are:

- Increase rent and mortgage funding as ABCCM is seeing approximately 12 families day asking for this assistance that do not qualify for public assistance.
- Increase heating funds to help families in crisis needing immediate help.
- Promote food and blanket drives with local businesses and schools.
- Promote and increase the Christmas Angel program for families in need.
- Promote our clothing and, household collection centers at each Crisis Ministry site. Support our Donations Ministry collecting furniture and appliances at our warehouses.

 Work with City and County school social workers to provide essential food and clothing to the families of homeless children in schools to bring stability and opportunities to establish a home of their own.

Donation Ministry / Warehouse

2021 Strategic Plan

The Donation Ministry and Warehouse have separate strategies for 2020 which worked well in 2019 and 2020.

Donations

Currently the Donation Ministry receives donations of all sorts of home goods, appliances, clothes, linens, glassware, and furniture of all descriptions. Unfortunately, not all is usable or fixable and many items are not appropriate for our Crisis Ministry needs. ABCCM is committed to recycling, so every item received is either set aside for vouchers which are issued by the four Crisis Ministries for assisting their clients; separated for possible sale at either the antique market, flea market, or online sales; or recycled or scraped. ABCCM utilizes a volunteer team to sort items for sale in an antique store or consignment shop. Clothing is a large component of the donations and is sorted by season and size and offered to the Crisis Ministries. Clothes that are stained or torn are baled for sale to overseas outlets. Occasionally, vintage clothing is received and can be resold.

Strategic Plan for 2021:

We formed a team of volunteers to sort, price, and market items through the antique stores, flea market, online markets, and to various dealers of these items. We are currently recruiting volunteers to join our newly formed sales group. The need is for enough volunteers to allow a once a week commitment.

The Goal:

The financial goal is \$3,500 per month in sales.

Warehouse

Currently the Warehouse is operating out of five ABCCM locations consisting of a donation trailer at the VRQ, the four Crisis Ministry locations at 24 Cumberland

Avenue, and satellite warehouses at North, Hominy Valley and South. The last two locations are the primary receiving spaces. Also, ABCCM leased approximately 10,000 square feet of space from *Hearts With Hands* Warehouse in Swannanoa. The Warehouse fleet consists of three box trucks and a small dump truck. Two of the box trucks are used mainly for all pickups and deliveries, while the third is used for special events due to age. The dump truck is used for recycling and landfill runs. In addition, ABCCM has a tractor trailer fleet which is used for storage and special events such as **Return to Bethlehem.** The current warehouse situation is overrun with items. The staff is constantly moving items to make room for more, while at the same time, filling the vouchers of the Crisis Ministry clients. ABCCM has been able to bale clothes to recycle at the Swannanoa warehouse.

Strategic Plan for 2021:

- Ten storage container units will be added at the top of the parking lot at 20 Twentieth Street.
- Staff and volunteers will do a better job of sorting items as they arrive and move them to designated spaces for Crisis Ministry vouchers; or to sale, use, recycle or salvage. Volunteers are needed for this purpose.

In Conclusion

The Donation Ministry and Warehouse personnel must work together to handle the tremendous volume of items received each day by ABCCM. These plans call for a more coordinated effort to assure the needs of both are met. Unlike our neighbor groups who operate Thrift Stores, we give away the best and sell the rest.

Medical Ministry 2021 Strategic Directions

The Clinic serves uninsured adults between the ages of 18 and 65 residing in Buncombe County with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level. The number of uninsured has risen dramatically in the pandemic with estimates as high as over 40,000 in Buncombe Co. From this population, the Clinic serves approximately 3,500⁺ uninsured patients a year, of which 70% hold a job. Based on our understanding of the need, the Clinic, with additional partners in the community, needs to double services provided.

Beginning in 2020, we are grateful for new partners WNC Bridge Foundation, Leon Levine Foundation, VAYA Health and Sisters of Mercy Foundation. We expanded staff, which expanded volunteers (especially physician and dental providers) until pandemic policies were instituted.

ABCCM clinic is operating medical and pharmacy services Monday–Thursday, 9-6. Dental services have been suspended. Our behavioral health pharmacy still operates at 356 Biltmore, but dispenses at 155 Livingston.

Our two licensed pharmacies have been very successful in continuing to recover medicines from physician offices, nursing homes and pharmaceutical companies. Through the Office of Rural Health, we're offering help to those on Medicare who fall into the "donut hole" with no subsidy for their medicines until they meet a new level of deductible and uninsured patients unable to obtain chronic medications. We fill prescriptions from our stock of sample and donated medications plus the Dispensary of Hope. Periodically we assist mission teams with basic medical supplies and give our surplus medical equipment to Samaritan's Purse. We've partnered with VAYA Health and with mental health agencies to provide bridge medications for uninsured patients during their medication assistance application period.

Strategies for 2021

- Continue to serve the growing number of uninsured in Buncombe County for urgent care and specialty clinics for chronic disease needs in six weekly sessions (Monday-Thursday).
- Restore 2 weekly dental sessions to provide emergency extraction services (on Monday and Thursday evenings).
- The clinic will continue to partner with colleges and universities (currently 12 schools) to provide a community site for students to actively care for uninsured patients.
- Continue to develop collaborations and partnerships to improve health access, health education and care management to improve the social determinates of health for our patients.
- Collaborate with the WNC Free Clinics Consortium, NC Association of Free and Charitable Clinics and the National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics to educate about the systemic issues facing the uninsured.

- Work closely with the VRQ/Steadfast House to provide health stability, health education and navigation.
- Collaborate with WCMS/Project Access, MAHEC Dental Residency and WNCCHS/Minnie Jones to provide dental services at the ABCCM Clinic.

Jail Ministry 2021 Strategic Directions

The Jail Ministry is a supportive, encouraging, and healing ministry that offers meaning and direction to inmates as well as staff at the Buncombe County Detention Facility. By sponsoring an in-house staff chaplain, this ministry offers pastoral counseling; spiritual insight and guidance; confidential reflection, prayer, and support during additional crises for the individuals who are facing the life challenge of being incarcerated; as well as for the staff and officers at the Detention Facility. The Jail Ministry also recruits and assists in overseeing volunteers who offer a variety of faith based study groups offering hope, encouragement and options of new direction based on spiritual principles. Through donations, this ministry also provide Bibles, religious and other reading material.

Once BCDF allows ABCCM volunteers to return, here are Strategies for 2021

- Staff Chaplains minister to the spiritual needs of inmates and families.
- Staff Chaplains build encouraging, pastoral relationships with officers and staff
- Staff Chaplains oversee, support, and encourage faith based jail volunteers.
- Recruit new volunteers for faith-based programs as needed.
- Organize, maintain, and keep supplied the BCDF library's faith based section.
- Share with faith based organizations the vision and mission of the Jail Ministry and current needs.
- Encourage churches to include ABCCM Jail Ministry in their annual budget.
- Encourage churches and others to donate LARGE-print paperback Bibles and Recovery Bibles.
- Encourage churches and others to donate Christian paperback novels and other religious materials.
- Host an annual volunteer recognition event.

- Option of requesting occasional help from the benevolence account for a specific need.
- Encourage congregations to develop a 'Re-entry Ministry,' which provides
 discipleship to released individuals and assists them with transition into community
 in hopes of becoming productive citizens who will be motivated to continue their
 fresh walk with the Lord instead of returning to a lifestyle of crime.

ABCCM Homeless Services Strategic Directions for 2021 Veterans' Restoration Quarters & Steadfast House/Transformation Village

Homeless Services is made up of both the Veterans Restoration Quarters for men, the majority being male veterans, and The Steadfast House for women and children, which includes female veterans. Both of these programs provide housing, food, case management, education and connection of our residents to both mental and physical health providers. All residents at both facilities are supplied three meals per day. Both facilities have access to a nurse, computer lab, workout facilities and laundry room privileges. They also receive transportation services to the VA Medical Center and needed medical appointments. The goal of these programs is to move the resident from a state of homelessness to a position of self-sustainability.

Veterans Restoration Quarters (VRQ) is a 246 bed facility that serves 172 veterans in transitional housing, 50 veterans in permanent supportive housing, 18 veterans/civilians in nightly emergency shelter and 8 civilians in a transitional housing program.

Steadfast House is a 48 bed facility that houses 31 single women and 7 moms with children. 10 of these beds for women are designated for veterans. 5 of these beds are emergency shelter. The need for more beds continues to increase. Our current waiting list for transitional housing is over 100.

Transformation Village is a new facility that will replace Steadfast House and nearly double the capacity to house transitional residents. The added capacity at our new facility will help reduce our waiting list and meet the needs of vulnerable women and children.

Strategies for 2021: Homeless Services Combined:

 Continue to ensure program congruency across VRQ and Transformation Village and provide parallel services to each entity.

- Continue to improve case management through:
 - Ongoing training for our staff (eg. Crisis Intervention Training, Trauma Informed Care, Mental Health First Aid, Motivational Interviewing, Diversity Training, PsychArmor, etc.)
 - Conducting combined case management meetings to ensure program continuity.
 - Conduct weekly one on one case staffing meetings with each case manager.
- Cross utilizing staff for maximum efficiency.
- Complete development of Phase 3 of our Apricot Case Management software which will enhance our reporting capabilities.
- Update Resident Handbook to reflect new program offerings at each facility.
- Implement GPD Clinical grant program at each facility.
- Maintain implemented strategies involving COVID 19 protocols to protect the health and safety of our residents, staff and volunteers while maximizing service delivery in all areas.
- Implement Code Purple disaster relief during winter nights when the temperature is below 32 degrees.
- Rename developmental levels to better reflect a resident's growth, learning and achievement journey.
- Further expand our education curriculum to:
 - Execute Curriculum Restructuring Plan which includes expanding core class offerings, adding Diversity and Co-Dependency classes and developing program specific curriculum (Bridge, Clinical, etc.) which focuses on meeting needs/building skills of program participants.
 - o Focus on expanding virtual learning opportunities.
 - Incorporate Computer Based Training modules (CBT's) into our core curriculum allowing residents to better work at their own pace and have an educational resource they can refer to when they exit to permanent housing.
 - Focus on adding spiritual based life skill courses to our curriculum.
 - o Migrate Talent Learning Management System (LMS) to manage, track, and enhance our curriculum and record participation.
 - O Continue to strengthen and build community collaborations and partnerships with the VA, A-B Tech, Goodwill, Our Voice, civic organizations, businesses and qualified volunteers to bring new classes on

- and off the campuses for our residents that support our new curriculum and provide improved services to our men, women and children.
- Continue to facilitate Educational Fairs in partnership with AB Tech to increase enrollment in degree and certification programs, leading to living wage employment.
- Continue to increase employment/income opportunities through:
 - Consistent referrals/utilization to HVRP resources that will assist with obtaining and training for living wage employment.
 - Identify and engage employers who provide certifications and educational programs as part of employment.
 - Identifying and assisting residents who may qualify for disability and service connect income.
 - Continue to collaborate with Pisgah Legal Services to promote the SOAR program and assist with other legal needs.
 - Facilitate Veterans Benefits Administration to explain all available benefits to our veteran men and women.
 - Facilitate job fairs with community businesses and resources to promote living wage jobs and recruitment of residents into these positions.
 - Utilize a background check system to assist with identifying housing opportunities, job opportunities and program applications.
- Strengthen and enhance our overall program through:
 - Continue utilization of the Resident's Councils at the VRQ and Transformation Village that recommends/evaluates potential changes to policies and improvements to programs.
 - Continued utilization and active engagement of the Advisory Councils at the VRQ and Transformation Village to identify and develop programs/procedures that will enhance the work we do with our residents and provide more opportunities for our volunteers.
 - Continue to engage our local congregations and volunteers to offer spiritual formation and discipleship training that encourages our residents to voluntarily engage with congregations in the community.

- Cross reference volunteer databases at both facilities to cultivate volunteer opportunities at Transformation Village.
- Recruit more volunteers to facilitate classes and provide tutoring/mentoring to our residents.
- Increase training for all volunteers to assist them in maximizing their effectiveness for our residents.
- Due to COVID 19 crisis develop avenues of virtual volunteer service.
- Recruit, train and retain a demographically diverse volunteer base.
- Continue to work to fill volunteer gaps, especially with cook teams.
- Develop a volunteer recognition program.

Strategies for 2021: Specifically for Transformation Village:

- Execute comprehensive transition plan for Transformation Village.
- Integrate volunteers into all Transformation Village support areas.
- Develop new partnerships/collaboration to support operation budget at Transformation Village.
- Re-engage our Recruiting Project Plan to expand outreach to female Veterans.
- Recruit and train Child Enrichment Teams to provide structured playtime for the children residing in Transformation Village. Child enrichment team members provide safe and trusting adult relationships to help mitigate the effects of homelessness on children.
- Develop mentoring, job coaching and Faithful Friends programs in which a volunteer is trained and makes a commitment to provide strategic support to residents at Transformation Village.
- Develop volunteer receptionist and greeters positions supported by RAs (Resident Assistants).
- Train and certify appropriate staff in the Triple P parenting program.
- Secure scholarships and training funds that will provide education and vocational training that equip residents with living wage employment.
- Collaborate with Helpmate and Our Voice to coordinate services for residents dealing with domestic/sexual violence.
- Conduct outreach and recruitment of women centric organizations/groups/clubs to educate and inform about access for homeless women and Veterans.

Strategies for 2021: Specifically for Veterans Restoration Quarters:

- Collaborate with the Charles George VA Medical Center to coordinate care and benefits for our residents.
- Integrate volunteers into all VRQ support areas.
- Maintain professional case management standards for residents in each stage of programming.
- Reengage our Recruiting Project Plan to expand outreach to male veterans.
- Develop a mentorship program in which a volunteer makes an individual commitment to a resident at the Veterans Restoration Quarters.
- Add additional HUD VASH rooms to assist the community with permanent housing solution for veterans with housing vouchers.

ABCCM Veteran Services of the Carolinas

We provide outreach and services to homeless veterans through four major programs and across 55 counties in North Carolina. Major Goals for 2021:

- NC Serves Western will merge and manage NC Serves Coastal to provide call center services for Veterans in crisis. Utilizing technology, we will double our outreach and impact to reach over 1200 Veteran.
- Employment and training services for Veterans across 49 counties, called, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP).
- Rapid re-housing and homeless prevention services across 35 counties, called Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF).
- HOPE services which is an aggressive outreach service to reach chronically homeless Veterans who have been traditionally reluctant to utilize VA or other services.

Overview of Strategic Plan 2021

In July of 2020 VSC conducted its first Leadership Retreat. Included in this retreat were the members of the VSC Leadership team: four Regional Coordinators, four Assistant Directors, Training Coordinator, Quality Improvement Manager, and Managing Director. During this retreat the team analyzed each grant program using a SWOT analysis and formulated 2021 goals using the SMART method. These activities informed the VSC Macro level strategy. As VSC moves into 2021 this Macro level strategy is broken into four core areas of focus.

<u>People</u> – Staff is the best asset we have to drive impact in our communities. This focus area includes, growing leadership, investing in our people and giving them the resources to be successful.

<u>Operational Efficiency</u>– As VSC has grown in staff, geography and programs; increasing operational efficiency and updating policies and procedures remains a vital function for exceptional performance and accountability.

<u>Infrastructure-</u> We must continually look within in order to build and maintain a strong foundation. Developing better tools for measurement and evaluation will allow our team to forecast potential barriers and create enhanced strategies to mitigate risks.

<u>Ministry -</u> Building upon the ABCCM guiding principles and Isaiah 61:1-3, VSC will continue to meet the needs of Veterans and their families by harnessing and leveraging our existing programs and fostering community partners.

Macro level strategies for 2021

<u>People</u>

- High Performance Leadership
 - Develop and grow mid-level managers
 - o Enhance leadership with a systematic model
- Build stronger Performance Management system
 - Develop new Performance Evaluation (based on Competency and Contribution)
- Implement new Learning model across all VSC programs
 - o Improved LMS virtual trainings
 - o Incorporate into Performance Management
 - o Internal and External Program specific trainings
- Build Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan for internal staff and community partners

Operational Efficiency

- Technology Plan
 - o Automate Business Approvals (timesheets, travel, expenses, etc.)
 - Improve Hiring workflow processes
 - o Enhance delivery and tracking of internal and external surveys

- Technology Risk assessment completion
- Update VSC Policy and Procedure Manual

Infrastructure

- Develop Measurement and Evaluation toolkit
 - o Generate weekly Program reports
 - Expand reporting to include leading indicators that support 'Assumption models'
 - Track trends with cross referencing economic factors and social media utilization
- Central Headquarters space planning
- Evaluate and formulate a new detailed pay scale chart
- Secure CARF accreditation Renewal
 - o Accessibility Plan, Technology Plan, Safety Plan, Cultural Training

Ministry

- Cultivate and grow strong partnerships with faith-based communities across
 North Carolina
 - Advance VSC's involvement with church community
- Service Expansion explore areas where VSC may expand current programs
- Enhance outreach with marketing and brand awareness to clients, community and stakeholders

Foodservice Operations 2021 Strategic Directions

We will continue to offer our job training classes on both basic and advanced culinary skills in order to get our graduates into living wage jobs in the ever growing hospitality industry in the Asheville and surrounding areas. Our success rate of employment after graduation remains very high and the education we provide has been beneficial to those employers. This will allow living wage earners the stability they need to be successful.

We will also continue to provide assistance of food within our Crisis Ministry, to allow those budgeted food dollars to be redirected to other budget areas of our clients, giving relief to the family budget for additional needs.

Our foodservice team will continue to provide a safe and productive working environment for both our residents and volunteers to prepare and serve meals for each other. The interactions of our volunteers mean so much to our clients and makes them feel like they are a part of a much larger community. The support of our volunteers provides us a caring and loving workforce that produces quality meals for each of our residents and crisis clients when they need it the most.

Our residents will continue to benefit from our positive working relationship with the VAMC and Buncombe Country Department of Health. Our focus on nutritional meals will bring a healthier lifestyle to our residents, giving them less need for healthcare once they have achieved the goal of proper nutritional balance and intake. We will remain a "safe food first" provider and continue our high standards of sanitation and inspection readiness practices form both partner agencies.

In continuing the focus of providing healthier foods to both our residents and Crisis Ministry clients, we will increase their knowledge on what is healthier for them, allowing them to add food items to their repertoire of menus that they may have not been exposed to in the past. Some of these food items will come from our partners at Food Connection, while others will come from our food pickups for Crisis Ministry, and our own purchasing department. This will allow access to heathier food options our clients may not have been aware of, as well as start dialog around the nutritional benefits of these same items.

These areas will be directed at all of our foodservice operations, including Veteran's Restoration Quarters, Steadfast House, Transformation Village, our Crisis Ministries including ABCCM Daily Bread at Sonrise, and internal event functions.