

## **Care Resource Launches “The SPOT” Mobile Medical Clinic with Syringe Services Program to Address Opioid Crisis and HIV Epidemic in Broward County**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FORT LAUDERDALE, SEPTEMBER 30, 2021** // In response to the opioid crisis, ongoing HIV epidemic, and the COVID-19 pandemic in Broward County, Care Resource Community Health Centers, Inc. announces the launch of The SPOT (Special Purpose Outreach Team) Mobile Medical Clinic, which provides the only Syringe Services Program (SSP) approved by Broward County and authorized under the Florida Infectious Disease Elimination Act (IDEA). The SPOT also addresses the immediate need to bring COVID vaccinations and mobile medical care to historically underserved communities.

A foundational gift for the purchase of The SPOT’s mobile medical clinic was made by Peter B. Cinelli, M.D., a retired New York surgeon and Fort Lauderdale philanthropist. Additional funding is provided by United Way of Broward County, Care Resource, and a Gilead FOCUS award to support HIV/HCV testing and linkage to a first appointment. Future funding relies upon grants and private donations due to the limited and restricted SSP funding available from the government.

“We have seen firsthand the increase in patients coming to us with HIV, Hepatitis C, and other infections after sharing used syringes,” stated Dr. Thomas Smith, Director of Behavioral Health Services at Care Resource. “We’ve also seen a dramatic rise—51%— in opioid-caused deaths in Broward over the first half of 2021 compared to the previous year. The SPOT’s SSP is key to preventing these tragedies by taking used syringes off the street, providing HIV and HCV testing, and preventing overdoses through education and naloxone distribution.”

Access to care is one of the many barriers for individuals struggling with substance abuse. The SPOT will serve hard-to-reach communities and connect people who use IV drugs with vital services available at Care Resource including medical and behavioral healthcare, and HIV prevention and treatment plans. SSP participants are also five times more likely to enter treatment, like Care Resource’s Medically Assisted Treatment program, for substance use disorders.

“The SPOT program is an innovative approach to public health and will help everyone in Broward County: the participants, the public, and our first responders by safely disposing of used syringes and reducing deaths from opioids. We are proud to fund this crucial service,” said Kathleen Cannon, President/CEO of United Way of Broward County.

### **About Care Resource:**

Care Resource provides affordable, high-quality healthcare and support services to the most vulnerable and diverse medically underserved populations of South Florida. We offer comprehensive health and support services to address the full healthcare needs of our pediatric, adolescent, and adult patients. A 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization and a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), we have four locations located in Midtown Miami, Little Havana, Miami Beach, and Fort Lauderdale. To learn more about Care Resource’s services visit [CareResource.org](https://www.CareResource.org). Media kit available at [CareResource.org/the-spot-media-kit](https://www.CareResource.org/the-spot-media-kit).