**Oregon, Texas, and California homeless population**

**Compare and contrast how Oregon and two other states serve their homeless population**

Oregon is a state on the west coast of United States. The state was inhabited by indigenous tribes before settlers, western traders and explorers arrived. It is the ninth largest state in United States with a population of four million American. Its capital is known as Salem and is the most populated region in Oregon. It is one of the most geographically diverse state in United States with presence of volcanoes, evergreen and mixed forests, and abundant bodies of water. The economy is powered by various hydroelectric power, fishing, and agriculture.

Despite Oregon boasting of different job markets, more people are living on the streets of Oregon as homeless people and the population is increasing since 2015. According to the data released on 2015, approximately 13,953 people were homeless in Oregon and the number increases to date with 6 percent of the number ("America's homeless: numbers, characteristics, and programs that serve them", 2015). Most homeless people live under bridges, along sidewalks and fields. About 14 percent of homeless people in the state suffer from mental illness and 12 percent are either drug addicts or alcoholics. This is the main reason health care practitioners as nurses are being involved in helping most homeless people. The state of Oregon has created health care services in day programs that help most homeless people. Day programs have been created to act as shelter-based clinics where nurses are assigned duties to offer mental and physical help to the homeless people. A good example is St. Francis House in Boston that offers shopping services to the homeless. Other services include health clinics for homeless that are managed by nurses and volunteers. Another program is food services that involve a food van and a group of nurses that help the elderly homeless. A registered nurses forms part of team in the food van and is responsible for performing basic health assessments and referrals for those willing. The state employs two nurses to work with the van and they alternate in offering health care services to the homeless.

Another program initiated to help homeless people is known as the So Others Might Eat (SOME), a day programs the aims to offer breakfast and lunch to the homeless. SOME has been a site for medical clinic since 1982 and has a group that comprises of four physicians committed to serve the homeless and other people that offer counselling and social services to the homeless.

Most homeless people have mental disabilities, physical disabilities or both and cannot survive on their own. An example of a program that meets the needs of these people includes the Veterans Administration community placement program. The program secures housing for the physically and mentally disabled veterans that are facing discharge from VA medical Centre.

**Texas**

The recent annual homeless assessment report in United States suggests that approximately 19,177 people are homeless in Texas and 7 out of 10,000 people in Texas are homeless. The government offers grants to the Texas to combat homelessness. For example, the Trump government has promised Texas millions of dollars to solve the issue of homelessness through health care services and creation of urban shelters. An example of program is the Texas Homeless Network that creates local and regional programs for the homeless (Beard, 2011). Health care facilities have programs and nurses that move around to offer health care services to the homeless. The mobile clinic targets the most vulnerable people in the street like the people above 55 years, women, and children (Beard, 2011). These groups are vulnerable to diseases and infections and require shelter. The development of community resource cards for those experiencing homelessness and ex-offenders has played an important role in Texas homeless community. The Texas government has created community service cards that nurses and other volunteers use to help homeless people. According to Texas government health, shelter and food are key points in handling homeless community and the government aims to offers these services and reduces cases of homelessness.

**California**

Nurses play a key role in helping homeless in the community because they offer both social and medical services to the homeless. In March 2016, California government formed a WellSpace Health program, launched to as a street nurse program (*A study of the issues and characteristics of the homeless population in California*, 2015). The program is funded by Sutter health. The role of a registered nurse includes offering medical care, counselling, confidante, and crisis support. The primary role of WellSpace health is to offer health care services for the homeless in Sacramento area. The program has walk in clinics where homeless people with diseases can seek medical help despite their financial abilities. The recent statistics show that the number of homeless people in California is increasing and needs to be addressed. Sacramento County has increased by 30 percent in two years and approximately 3665-lack permanent shelter *(Quigley, Raphael & Smolensky, 2013)*. The street nursing program is comprehensive in California and reaches homeless people to perform screening tests, make referrals, and treat injuries.

In summary, Oregon, California and Texas have homeless people and the number keeps increasing each year. Some of the common problems faced by homelessness in the three states include lack of food, lack of shelter, lack of clothing and diseases/infections that arise from cold environment. All the states have nursing services with different names funded by the government to help homeless people. The main aim of these programs is prevent and treat infections and reduce the number of homeless people in the community. The difference comes in when the government allocates funds to handle homeless people. Each state has different number of homeless people and Oregon seems to have the largest. The government offers grants to help homeless based on the population.

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