New Help for Victims of Torture and War Trauma at a Minnesota Medical Clinic

St. Paul, MN – HealthEast Care System and the Center for Victims of Torture™ (CVT) today announced Healing Hearts, Creating Hope: Exploring the Efficacy of Integrated Mental Health Services for New Refugees, a three-year collaborative project to provide new, on-site mental health services to refugees at the HealthEast Roselawn Clinic in St. Paul.

HealthEast Roselawn Clinic is a primary care clinic serving a large and diverse refugee population, including many Karen from Burma. Since 2010, HealthEast Roselawn has worked with CVT on its Healing in Partnership project to provide mental health screening for newly arrived refugees.

According to a report on the STATE OF THE ASIAN PACIFIC MINNESOTANS from the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, it is estimated that Minnesota has the largest population of Karen outside Southeast Asia. Many have resettled in communities in the Twin Cities’ East Metro. CVT has documented a significant prevalence of torture among the Karen population. A high percentage of refugees, especially survivors of torture and war trauma, suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder, major depressive disorder and associated stress-related problems. Often, refugees suffer from ongoing and untreated trauma symptoms, sometimes years after their resettlement.

Healing Hearts, Creating Hope will help these refugees gain access to coordinated and specialized mental health and case management services by placing CVT psychotherapists and social workers directly in the HealthEast Roselawn Clinic. The project will measure and study whether this model of care delivery produces improved patient outcomes and reduces health costs. This research will be used to determine whether a similar model can be replicated in other primary care settings across Minnesota that serve refugees but do not have on-site mental health services.

“This new collaboration with CVT combines CVT’s expertise in culturally competent care for people who have experienced war trauma with the HealthEast Roselawn Clinic’s longstanding
position as a trusted provider of quality care for the Karen community,” said Jim Letts, MD, Site Medical Director, HealthEast Roselawn Clinic. “Our clinic in St. Paul has five full time staff who are themselves refugees from Burma and have built a good infrastructure of language access and cultural competency at the clinic. Roselawn Clinic now cares for more than 2,500 Karen patients.”

“HealthEast Roselawn Clinic has long been committed to serving the Karen and other refugee communities as a primary care provider,” said Alison Beckman, Project Manager/Clinical Supervisor. “With this project, the clinic and CVT are now working to meet the unmet mental health needs of refugees who otherwise would not have access to mental health care. By bringing these services right to their existing clinic, refugees will have new hopes for leading healthy and productive lives.”

*Healing Hearts, Creating Hope* is funded by grants from The John and Ruth Huss Fund of the Saint Paul Foundation, The Saint Paul Foundation, F.R. Bigelow Foundation, and The Jacob and Valeria Langeloth Foundation.

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*HealthEast Care System is a community-focused, non-profit health care organization that provides innovative technology, compassionate care and a full spectrum of family health services. HealthEast includes Bethesda Hospital, St. John’s Hospital, St. Joseph’s Hospital, and Woodwinds Health Campus as well as outpatient services, clinics, home care and medical transportation services. Practicing financial responsibility, HealthEast is the largest, locally-owned health care organization in the Twin Cities’ East Metro with 7,300 employees, 1,200 volunteers and 1,400 physicians on staff.*

*CVT is a nonprofit based in Minnesota with an office in Washington D.C. and projects in Africa and the Middle East. CVT provides comprehensive care for victims of torture, conducts research and training, and undertakes policy efforts to commit the U.S. and other institutions to work against torture and aid torture survivors. Visit [www.CVT.org](http://www.cvt.org).*