

# Profiles

## Carole Romm

*She finds her place at Central City Concern.*

At Central City Concern, a nonprofit organization in Portland, Oregon, that provides services to the homeless, Carole Romm talks about one client who had been on the streets for eight years. His background included a criminal record and mental illness, and he got a job counting recycled bottles. “They gave him a permanent job in the warehouse, and now he’s moving into his own apartment,” Romm said proudly. “The clients work with peer mentors, people who have been through it.” Oregon’s high unemployment rate makes the advocacy work harder, she said, “but we’ve had unbelievable success in the supported employment program.”

Romm, 63, oversees public affairs, program development, and fundraising for the organization, which provides services ranging from housing to employment to medical care while addressing the reasons for homelessness—addiction and mental illness. In her career she’s been a paralegal, a teacher, a public health insurance administrator, and a health program consultant. But above all, she said, she’s been a nurse.

Born and raised in Queens, New York, she graduated from Cornell University with a bachelor’s degree in labor relations and attended graduate school at the University of Chicago but didn’t finish the program. She came back to New York and taught for a year at a junior high school in Brooklyn. “Teaching didn’t mesh with me,” Romm

said. She moved to the West Coast, got married, and worked as a paralegal. After the birth of her first child she realized she needed to get settled in a career that would provide more security for her daughter. She worked as a hospital clerk, and it opened her eyes to nursing.

“I saw how nurses got into people’s lives in a direct way, became intimate with them quickly,” she said. She got her associate’s degree in nursing from Portland Community College in 1982. Romm worked at Oregon Health and Science University and Emanuel Hospital for five years as a nurse in the neonatal ICU, but the work took an emotional toll and in 1991 she got her master’s in public administration from Portland State University. She moved on to CareOregon, a Medicaid managed care plan developed by the state.

In 2000 she applied for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Executive Nurse Fellowship and wrote a how-to manual for starting or expanding an existing



Carole Romm works in public affairs, program development, and fundraising at Central City Concern, a nonprofit organization in Portland, Oregon, that provides services to the homeless. “I may not be doing blood pressures, but I see it as population health,” Romm said of her work. Photo courtesy of Carole Romm.

community health center. When the fellowship ended in 2003 she began working with Central City Concern on compliance review and risk management. “I may not be doing blood pressures, but I see it as population health,” said Romm of her work.

“Fifteen thousand people come through our doors a year, and I’m promoting their health.”

—Patrice O’Shaughnessy

### Nurse Appointed to Federal Information Technology Committee



Connie White Delaney, PhD, RN, FAAN, FACMI, dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Minnesota, has been named as one of 13 members of a new federal advisory body on health information technology. The group, which was created under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (under the aegis of the U.S. Government Accountability Office), will help create policy and standards “for the development and adoption of a nationwide health information technology infrastructure.” Delaney’s appointment will last one year. ▼