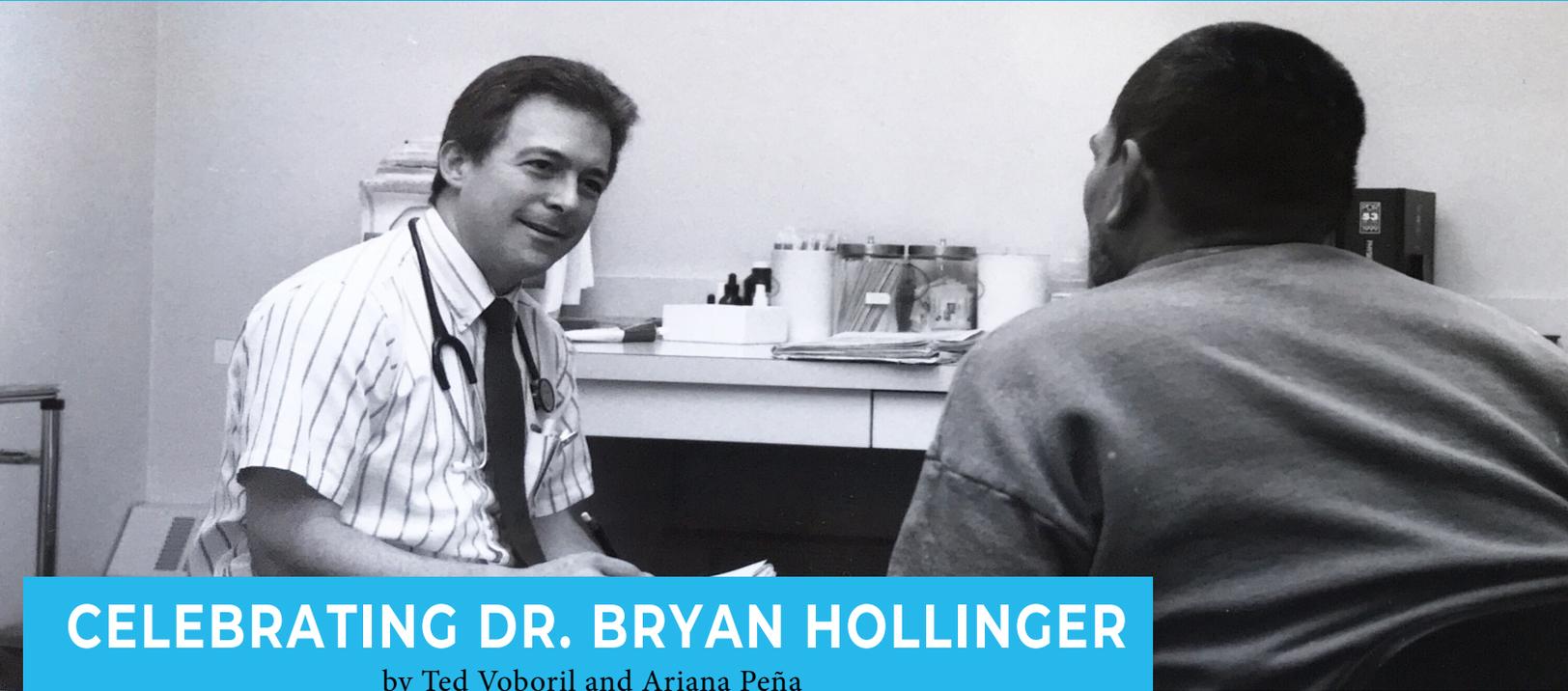


# MESSAGE OF HOPE

A Newsletter of Esperanza Health Center



## CELEBRATING DR. BRYAN HOLLINGER

by Ted Voboril and Ariana Peña

If you were to ask one of Esperanza Health Center's staff members to pick one word that best describes Dr. Bryan Hollinger, Esperanza's chief medical officer (CMO), who will retire at the end of this year after more than 27 years of service, many of the same adjectives would consistently come up: *faithful, leader, humble, servant, dedicated, man of God*. As the year comes to a close, all of us at Esperanza are celebrating Dr. Hollinger, who has faithfully served with Esperanza for most of the health center's history, first as a physician and then in leadership roles as Esperanza's CMO and as the medical director of our HIV care team.

Following God's call, Bryan joined Esperanza in 1994 after he completed his internal medicine/pediatrics residency at the University of North Carolina. As

Dr. Carolyn Klaus, Esperanza's founder, recalls in her book about the health center's early years, Prescription for Hope: "A tip from a friend brought [Bryan] to us, and we clearly needed him. We just weren't sure Esperanza would keep its doors open long enough to hire him. As deadlines for other job offers approached, he decided to turn them all down and wait. Our money came through, and after eight weeks of intensive language training in Guatemala, he began work at our clinic the next fall."

Since that time, Bryan and his wife, Judy, have lived in the North Philadelphia community where they raised their two adult sons, Zac and Michael, and have been core members of their church, New Life Presbyterian Church Philadelphia.

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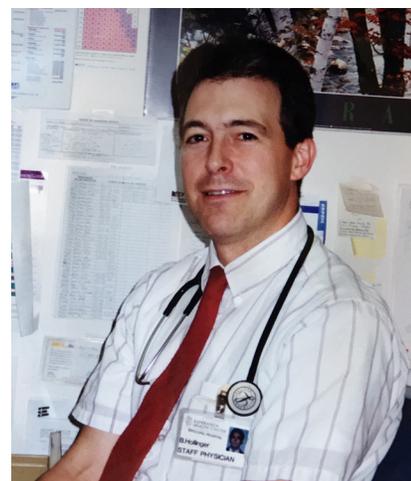
Reflecting on nearly three decades of caring for his patients, Bryan is thankful “not so much that I’ve been able to be a brilliant doctor, but that I’ve been able to be a friend to [my patients], to encourage them and to love them over time. I think our patients don’t know whether we’re up to date on the latest studies on their medical problems, but they do evaluate us on whether we care....being present for them and caring for them over time creates a trusting relationship that I think outweighs a lot of other things.” When patients first come to Esperanza, they may not understand why their medical provider is serving in North Philadelphia. But, as Bryan explains, over time they see that Esperanza’s providers are here “because they love the community, and they love Jesus.”

His patients also attest to the dedication, love, and care he has consistently provided. In the words of Carmen (photo, top left, opposite page), a patient of Dr. Hollinger’s since 2012, “Bryan is completely committed to the maximum care of his patients...I always felt Bryan gave true attention to my health problems.” When Carmen first came to Esperanza Health

Center, she was without insurance and in dire need of health care. “I’m sitting here today because of Bryan,” explains Carmen. “When I got sick, I didn’t have any insurance. I was in desperate need of a blood transfusion.” Bryan visited Carmen in the hospital after the procedure and recommended she get a colonoscopy. It was then they discovered she had cancer and began treatment immediately. “I don’t know if another doctor would care to take my case the way he did,” Carmen said.

Melvin, one of Bryan’s patients for almost all of his 27 years at Esperanza, also testifies to the care he’s received: “[Bryan Hollinger is] phenomenal. He is a very learned person and he’s never judged. He looks at all of his patients as human beings.” Melvin recalls how Bryan consistently made an effort to be involved in his life outside the clinic walls and the deep trust

that developed between them. “Dr. Hollinger was my launching pad. Everything I did, I ran it through him... Bryan always gave me good advice...and I don’t take advice from many people,” says Melvin.



Bryan’s compassion for others extends far beyond his patients. Throughout the course of his career, he has become a trusted friend, mentor, and father-figure to fellow clinicians and Esperanza staff. Cyndi Diaz, an Esperanza employee of fourteen years and medical assistant who has worked closely with Bryan for over seven years, notes, “Dr. Hollinger is known to us [medical assistants] as ‘Papá,’ which in English means ‘Dad.’ Papá Hollinger was always a symbol of integrity, manhood of God, truth and a father figure.”

Cyndi notes Bryan’s humility, vulnerability, and transparency and how he has served others inside and outside of the workplace.

“Dr. Hollinger...constantly seeks to walk the path Christ sets before him in a way that honors his wife, his sons, his peers, [and] the staff he leads,” says Cyndi. “Like our heavenly father, [Bryan] has taught us valuable, priceless lessons through meetings, devotionals, and during clinics throughout the years... till this day, I absolutely treasure [his counsel].” As the health center has grown from a small clinic on North Fifth Street to a multi-site community health center with over 220 staff, God has time and again demonstrated His faithfulness to Esperanza. In early 2000, shortly after relocating to a new site in North Philadelphia, Esperanza faced a seemingly insurmountable financial challenge: a six-week period with no paychecks, due to a large Medicaid reimbursement payment that was significantly delayed. Despite this, none of the staff quit.

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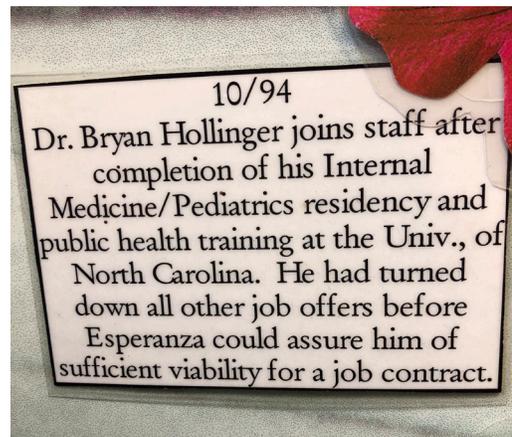


**"BRYAN IS COMPLETELY COMMITTED TO THE MAXIMUM CARE OF HIS PATIENTS..."**

A few weeks earlier, Bryan, his brother, Bradford and sister, Lisa, had begun a 25-foot-long Wall of Faithfulness (photos, right), based on Matthew 6:25-33, for the entrance hallway of the new site (photo, top center), as a visual reminder of how God had provided time and again for Esperanza throughout its history. During a staff retreat, each staff member individually placed written answers to

prayer, one by one, on the mural. A few hours later, the delayed Medicaid payment came through. As Dr. Klaus recalls in her book, “over \$200,000 had been wired to Esperanza’s account...during the day they had spent giving thanks to God.”

Today, a new digital Wall of Faithfulness based on the painting “Forever God is Faithful” by Stephanie Soto (to learn more, visit [mosaic.esperanzahealth.com](http://mosaic.esperanzahealth.com)) continues to record many new ways God demonstrates His faithfulness to Esperanza. As Bryan shared recently, as he and Judy prepare for a new season of ministry, his prayer for Esperanza is that we “stay on mission, with Christ as our focus, with the vision that true health is to know Jesus as Lord.”



## A MESSAGE FROM SUSAN POST

*CEO of Esperanza Health Center*

It is my privilege to highlight Dr. Bryan Hollinger’s legacy in this edition of Message of Hope. Bryan reminds me, and all of us, to look ahead at what God will do as we reflect on what God has done. I don’t know of a better way to honor Bryan than to continue looking to the Lord for our future. I am grateful for the things Bryan has taught me about what it means to provide healthcare with God in the center of it; these are things on which we will build.



**BUILDING HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Outdoor Patio
- 
- Community Classrooms
- 
- Gymnasium
- 
- Event Space
- 
- Fitness Center
- 
- Rooftop Terrace

**Give the Gift of Esperanza**

Your generous gift to Esperanza Health Center will enable us to give esperanza to our patients & community.

Please consider becoming a "HopeBuilder" monthly donor to make a greater impact year-round! Make a gift today by visiting our website at: [esperanzahealth.com/donate](http://esperanzahealth.com/donate).

Or, please send a gift by check to: Esperanza Health Center, Attn: Development, 4417 N. 6th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19140.

We're excited that construction is well underway on our new **Community Wellness Center**, located just half a block from our Kensington health center site, with completion projected for summer 2022. Our hope is that this new facility will create a safe place, a respite, where there will be community ownership and collaboration, and where wellness will be displayed.

Hope is more than merely a wish—it is a confident expectation that things will get better than what the naked eye can see. It is an expectation that light will break through darkness, that a creation that is deemed good will arise from chaos.

To see things beyond what the naked eye can see takes a dose of faith in God, that He is in control of all things and that nothing escapes His purview. It reminds me of Abraham Kuyper's quote: "There is not a square inch in the whole of creation over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

Many complexities exist in Kensington: the brokenness, the resilient people

groups that are, at times, at odds with each other but exist side-by-side. While evil lurks, there is also beauty here. Relationships are strong in this community. We see people fighting for life for each other, literally and figuratively. We believe that Kensington is fertile ground for this "new thing," the construction of a new Community Wellness Center.

This new facility is a visible demonstration that we have hope, and that we will see hope as our presence unfolds in not only the building itself, but also in programs we will offer and people who are brought together in this new space. We want to create community, have diversity, provide a place for families, create unity, and be an encouragement to our neighbors.

Ultimately, we want to bring hope that comes from our faith that God has not forgotten this place. We believe that He is ever present, that it's worth our investment, that location is important, and that this new facility is a place where God is creating a footprint and declaring that it is Mine!