

# Stories From the Shadows: Reflections of a Street Doctor

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Dr. O'Connell's collection of stories and essays, written during thirty years of caring for homeless persons in Boston, gently illuminates the humanity and raw courage of those who struggle to survive and find meaning and hope while living on the streets. Dr. O'Connell graduated summa cum laude from the University of Notre Dame in 1970 and received his master's degree in theology from Cambridge University in 1972. After graduating from Harvard Medical School in 1982, he completed a residency in Internal Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital. In 1985, Dr. O'Connell began fulltime clinical work with homeless individuals as the founding physician of the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, which now serves over 12,000 homeless persons each year in two hospital-based clinics (Boston Medical Center and MGH) and in more than 60 shelters and outreach sites in Boston. With his colleagues, Dr. O'Connell established the nation's first medical respite program for homeless persons in 1985, with 25 beds nested within the Lemuel Shattuck Shelter. This innovative program now provides acute and sub-acute, pre- and post-operative, and palliative and end-of-life care in BHCHP's 104-bed Barbara McInnis House. Working with the MGH Laboratory of Computer Science, Dr. O'Connell designed and implemented the nation's first computerized medical record for a homeless program in 1995. From 1989 until 1996, Dr. O'Connell served as the National Program Director of the Homeless Families Program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Dr. O'Connell is the editor of *The Health Care of Homeless Persons: A Manual of Communicable Diseases and Common Problems in Shelters and on the Streets*. His articles have appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Circulation*, the *American Journal of Public Health*, the *Journal of Clinical Ethics*, and several other medical journals. Dr. O'Connell has been featured on ABC's *Nightline* and in a feature-length documentary entitled "Give Me a Shot of Anything." His first book, *Stories from the Shadows: Reflections of a Street Doctor*, was published in 2015 and featured on NPR's *Fresh Air* with Terry Gross. He has received numerous awards, including the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Award in 2012 and The Trustees' Medal at the bicentennial celebration of MGH in 2011. Dr. O'Connell is president of BHCHP and an assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. "...A remarkable collection of raw and real tales about Dr. O'Connell's homeless patients and the stories they've entrusted to him"  
-Thomas Farragher, Pulitzer Prize winner and Boston Globe columnist

"I wish I had written this book. It is one of the best books about homeless Americans that has ever been published. Dr. O'Connell sounds a wakeup call that pricks the conscience: Am I my brother's keeper?"

- Pete Earley, former Washington Post reporter and New York Times bestselling author of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize finalist, *CRAZY: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness*

"You hold in your hands a precious gem...this volume instantly and irrevocably transports you into a fascinating universe of individuals usually invisible to us... often faceless and nameless, lost in plain sight, and forced to live on the fringes of society. But this volume makes unforgettable those who are usually forgotten. The riveting stories presented here capture each life in such moving and vivid detail that you will be forever changed."

- Howard K. Koh, M.D., M.P.H., Professor, Harvard School of Public Health, 14th Assistant

Secretary for Health, US Dept of Health and Human Services

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