



BI-ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



AUG
2023

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A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since our founding 35 years ago, ASHwell has always been an organization by, and for, the beautifully vibrant and diverse community of Austin, Texas. Long before we were ASHwell, we were the Wright House Wellness Center, and our founders' vision to improve the lives of those living with HIV, AIDS, and hepatitis C still lives and thrives in the work we do today.

As a radically inclusive nonprofit holistic sexual health and wellness center, ASHwell innovates and strives toward achieving health equity and reducing barriers to access for queer and trans folx, people of color, people who use drugs, and others historically left behind by the healthcare system. We have grown our impact exponentially since introducing our clinical services and rebranding in 2018, but as access to PrEP and gender affirming care face relentless and baseless attacks and the need for our services increases, we have reaffirmed our commitment to our patient-clients, partners, and funders with strategic moves to expand access and improve public health outcomes. From our groundbreaking integrated hep-C program to our unique peer advocacy and holistic care services, ASHwell's fearless team continues to craft imaginative programming that address the unmet needs of our community. Our Board of Directors, Leadership Team, and Community Advisory Board (CAB) reflect the populations we serve in terms of sexuality, status, and gender identity, and we lean on our CAB's unique and valuable input to keep us community-informed and accountable as we grow. ASHwell stands out in its creative approach to integrated, whole-person care to cure hep-C and end HIV in a sex-positive, kink-friendly, and overall affirming environment for every patient-client that walks in our doors.

This report provides an overview of our services, accomplishments, and financial wellness, and even more importantly, it allows us the opportunity to give everyone from partners and funders to our patient-clients a transparent snapshot of where we are at and where we are going. We want each of you to know our strengths and areas we aim to grow in — because YOU are the heart and soul of ASHwell, and it would be impossible to keep Austin sexy, healthy, and empowered without you by our side. Thank you for supporting Austin's queer health.



Cynthia "Cy" Herrera
Executive Director



MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

OUR MISSION

Empowering central Texans by providing sexual health and wellness services that serve the body, mind, and spirit.

OUR VISION

We envision a community made up of individuals, regardless of status, station, or background, that are empowered to navigate their own sexual health and wellness without shame, stigma, or judgment.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

ASHwell is passionately committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We provide a safe, discrimination-free space for all, predominately serving those from low-income, LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities. Our aim is empowering individuals through comprehensive sexual health and wellness services, challenging norms, and fostering dignity and respect for all.



ASHwell is on a mission to keep Austin sexy, healthy, and empowered.

OUR HISTORY

ASHwell, formerly known by many names including the *Wright House Wellness Center and The Austin Immunity Health Clinic*, traces its roots back to 1988 when individuals living with AIDS and holistic health therapy practitioners in Austin, TX united with a vision. Our founders' original mission was to support those with HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C ("HCV") with holistic therapies. With medical advancements shifting the focus from delaying death to managing illness and improving quality of life, ASHwell's programs have evolved and adapted with community need.

Today, we strive to deliver comprehensive, whole-person care to promote sexual health and wellness in communities most at risk of contracting HIV and HCV, including people of color, men who have sex with men and women, people of the trans experience, and people who use drugs in Central Texas. We offer medical care, integrative holistic care, plus social wellness care and patient advocacy. We promote destigmatization of sex and drug use, celebration of identity and sexuality, and radical inclusion and acceptance of people as they are. Our holistic approach carries on our long tradition of integrating complementary health therapies, recognizing their effectiveness in addressing chronic pain and illnesses. As we continue to grow, we remain dedicated to creating a safe and inclusive space, empowering all individuals to take charge of their sexual health and well-being.

OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

We know that sexual health can feel scary or intimidating sometimes. That's why we do everything we can to make visiting ASHwell an empowering experience. We nurture client-centered communication so clients can always talk openly and honestly about sex, sexuality, gender, or whatever's on their mind. We value our clients' individuality and encourage them to be wholly and enthusiastically themselves. We're dedicated to delivering sexual health services in a way that makes sense to each person. Together, we'll achieve the sexual health and wellness goals of everyone that walks in our doors.



Medical Care

- HIV Prevention
 - PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)
 - PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)
- HIV Treatment
- Hepatitis C (HCV) Testing & Treatment
- Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs)
- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) Care
- Gender Affirming Care
- Vaccinations
- Wellness Visits



Supportive Programs

- HIV Case Management
- Medication Access
- Premium Assistance
- Peer Support
- Emergency Assistance Funds



Community Engagement & Strategic Partnerships

ASHwell's Outreach Team is constantly collaborating within the community. Depending on the day, you can find us providing sexual health information, supplies, education, and medical care at schools and universities, health fairs, bars, or cultural events.

Our groundbreaking PrEP Pop-Up series was the first in the nation to bring PrEP medical care into nightclubs, uprooting the clinic to transport cutting-edge HIV prevention medication to highly vulnerable "hard-to-reach" and "hidden" populations.

OUR IMPACT

HEP-C PROGRAM

We launched our hepatitis C program in 2021 to cure people of hep-C that were previously unaware of or unable to access treatment. To date, ASHwell has successfully guided 50+ people through the 8-12 week program, connecting all enrollees to Affordable Care Act insurance to do so. Our Patient Advocacy team stands out in the profound trust built between patient and provider, helping clients overcome any fears in the process. This lifesaving program continues to give hep-C positive clients their life, dignity, and confidence back.



“When you’re ready to leave 'that life' behind, become willing, and take the right step forward this is an amazing opportunity. It’s easy. They did everything for me. I just had to be willing to put in the work.”

– Hep-C Program Participant



HOLISTIC CARE

ASHwell now offers NO COST access to holistic services to our patients thanks to our partnership with AOMA Graduate School of Integrative Medicine. Any ASHwell client is now able to schedule and access various holistic therapies, including:

- **Medical Qigong** | This energetic therapy utilizes physical movement, breathing exercises, and mental intention to balance and relax the nervous system, bringing a sense of calmness into the body and mind.
- **Tuina** | This form of Asian bodywork involves hands-on, manual manipulation of muscles, joints, and the energetic meridians of the body. Tuina is excellent at treating musculoskeletal problems, helping to relax tissues of the body and calm the mind.
- **Acupuncture** | This ancient practice has been used for thousands of years to treat ailments of the body and spirit. The foundational philosophy is based on a holistic approach to health and healing by balancing our energetic frequencies in a gentle and nuanced way.



SOCIAL ADVOCACY

ASHwell's Social Advocacy team works directly with HIV-positive clients for support and resources. New clients are connected with a Social Wellness Advocate to access essential resources such as food, housing, and other benefit programs.

Our Social Wellness Advocates are knowledgeable HIV case managers who work with clients to construct treatment plans, help them navigate appointments and services, and advocate for them as needed to ensure all clients receive a vast array of resources and supports.

"I'm proud to work with a team that takes a whole-person approach to client care by providing a space of comfort and safety to improve clients' lives.

**– Azucena "Susy" Vega,
Asst. Director of Social Advocacy**

PEER ADVOCACY

ASHwell's Peer Advocacy team works hard to provide emotional support and linkage to care for each client. Our team of Peer Advocates ensure clients are receiving the highest standard of care by taking the necessary time, care, and attention to support them in their journey. Our advocates aim to be every client's cheerleader and help them discover the drive and confidence to follow through with their empowerment plans, so they host weekly drop-ins and attend outreach events to create opportunities to connect with peers.



"Peer Support is a safe place to be. We do all kinds of things, have a lot of fun, and help each other out. We can talk about anything, especially our issues. Love this group - we're family! Keep up the good work!"

– Peer Advocacy Client

OUTREACH

Our Outreach team and CAB are always out in the community. On any given day, you can find us at schools and universities, health fairs, bars, or cultural events, providing sexual health information, supplies, education, & medical care.

Our groundbreaking PrEP Pop-Up series was the first in the nation to bring PrEP medical care into nightclubs, uprooting the clinic to transport cutting-edge HIV prevention medication to highly vulnerable, “hard-to-reach” populations.



"I appreciate being one of the recognizable community members leading ASHwell's outreach efforts to rebuild the trust many LGBTQIA+ & BIPOC folx have lost in the healthcare system. We deserve that as individuals and as a community."

– Jasper, Community Advisory Board



CLINICAL CARE

We know that sexual health can feel scary or intimidating. That's why we do everything we can to make visiting ASHwell an empowering experience. We provide office visits and labs for our services at \$0 out-of-pocket cost to our patients, and almost all medications are zero-cost to patients, *regardless of health insurance status*. ASHwell's Clinic delivers a suite of sexual health and wellness services, including:

- **PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)**
- **PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)**
- **HIV Testing and Treatment**
- **Hepatitis-C Testing**
- **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**
- **Gender Affirming Care**
- **Vaccination Referrals**
- **Wellness Visits**

MEASURING PROGRESS

147

Patients served monthly, on average, by ASHwell's Clinic.

ASHwell's Clinical Services and Patient Advocacy teams support an average of 147 patients per month in accessing reliable insurance, PrEP & nPEP, gender affirming care, hep-C treatment, HIV treatment, and more. With an ever-growing number of patients, these teams help keep Austin healthy, sexy, & empowered.

In the first half of 2023,

95%

of medical case management clients had a current Care Plan, thanks to ASHwell's Social Advocacy team.

34

Community Engagement events were attended or operated by the Peer Advocacy team from January - June 2023.

77%

A majority of ASHwell's clients self-identify as LGBTQIA+, along with 71% of ASHwell's Board of Directors & Executive Leadership.

50+

ASHwell has treated and guided more than 50 clients through our hep-C program, securing and covering the premiums of health insurance plans for all enrollees through the Affordable Care Act.

3 in 5

of ASHwell's clients and staff identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC).

14%

of ASHwell's patients identify as transgender, genderqueer, nonbinary, or otherwise gender non-conforming.

1,200+

HIV tests conducted over the last year, linking patients to HIV prevention and treatment services that may have seemed unattainable before testing.

In its first 3 months,

72

AOMA integrative medicine sessions were provided to active ASHwell clients.

\$250,000+

in community investment was awarded to ASHwell in the first two quarters of Fiscal Year 2023 from the organization's diverse and growing network of support.

ASHWELL CARE FOR ALL FUND

Cuts in medication assistance programs and new barriers for the uninsured have changed the way we are able to care for our patients, and that's not cute! ASHwell has historically served QTPOC and under-insured kinky critters in a safe and affirming space designed with their unique needs in mind. Unfortunately, funding cuts and political attacks are making it harder than ever for folx who have historically been left behind to access basic care.

Last year, we launched the ASHwell Care For All Fund to bridge the cap of care for under-insured people in Austin. This fund, through the F**k Buddies monthly giving campaign with six donation levels to choose from, lets us center patient care by getting folx into services from their very first contact with ASHwell. No stress. No hassle. No cost!



QUEER YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FUND



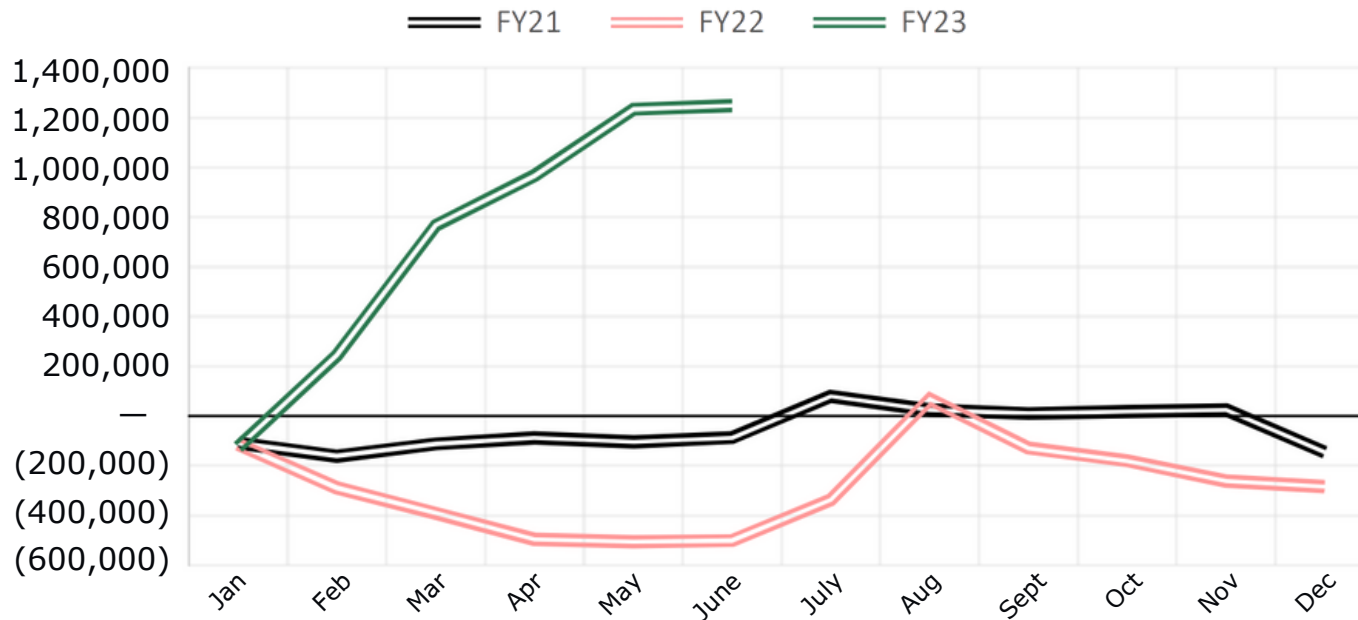
ASHwell's Queer Youth Empowerment Fund (AQYEF) is the latest evolution of Queer Youth ATX, a direct-aid resource by and for young LGBTQIA+ people in Austin, TX. AQYEF was started to provide direct relief to LGBTQIA+ youth under age 26 to buy groceries, pay rent, purchase textbooks, pay for medical expenses and pay off debt incurred after being cut off from their families.

The original resource was founded by Garrett Chase — now our Asst. Director of Strategic Partnerships — to financially support young queer folx. He created the resource during a time of personal financial distress after ceasing ties with homophobic family upon coming out. In 2022, it became AQYEF to draw in more funds from grants, corporate gifts, and individual donors and provide even greater financial relief to LGBTQIA+ youth in Central Texas.

FINANCIAL WELLNESS

THE NUMBERS: THEN AND NOW

NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT): FY21 - FY23



ASHwell's journey over the past three years has been transformative, experiencing rapid growth and overcoming challenges to our financial wellness. **At the midpoint of FY23, the organization's financial health showed a remarkable growth of approximately 349%, reporting a YTD surplus of \$1,247,622.** Our innovative approach has conquered obstacles like cuts in medication assistance and access barriers for the uninsured, and leveraging our 340B revenue model has allowed us to continue providing free and low-cost sexual health and wellness services to our patient-clients.

Financial stability is the cornerstone of our mission to make a lasting impact in our community. With passion and dedication, ASHwell remains committed to delivering exceptional care to those we serve.

349% In just one year, ASHwell has experienced 349% in financial growth.

OUR FUNDING MODEL

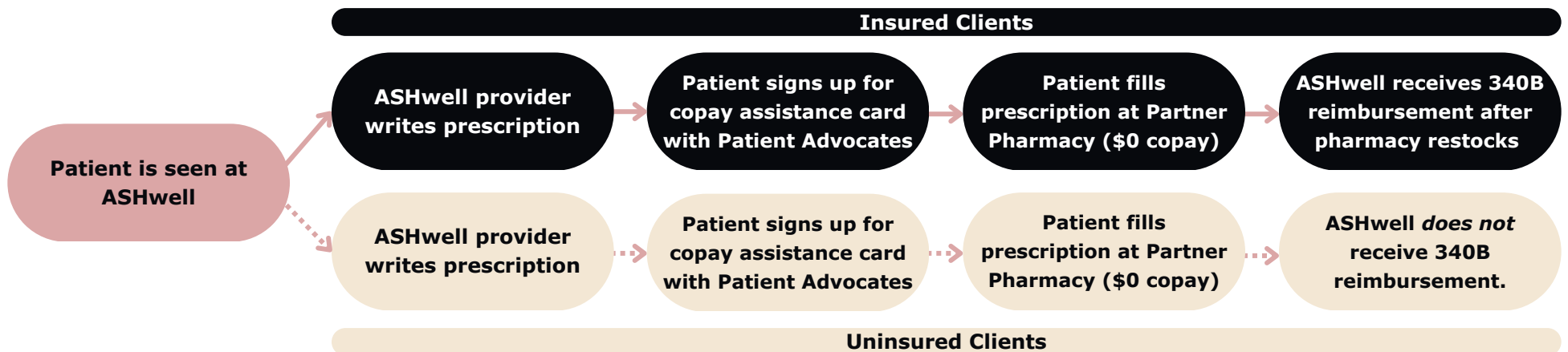
So... what's **340B**?

The 340B program is a federal program that allows certain healthcare organizations, such as ASHwell, to purchase prescription drugs at discounted prices. These discounted prices are typically lower than what other healthcare providers pay for the same drugs, and allow us to prescribe and dispense these drugs to eligible patients at a free or more affordable rate.

The program was established to help eligible healthcare organizations —including public or nonprofit hospitals, institutions serving a significant number of low-income patients, or community health centers — serve populations historically left behind by the healthcare system and provide affordable medications to patients who may not have access to them otherwise.

Overall, the 340B program helps eligible healthcare organizations stretch their resources, expand access to medications, and provide vital healthcare services to underserved communities. ASHwell uses the savings from the discounted drug prices to further our mission and provide additional services to clients.

Here's how it works:



MEET THE TEAM

LEADERSHIP TEAM



Cynthia "Cy" Herrera
Executive Director



Garrett Chase
Asst. Director of
Strategic Partnerships



Dennis Chau
Director of Data &
Finance



Sandra Chavez
Director of Social
Wellness



Tarik Daniels
Assistant Director of
Peer Advocacy



Sheira Gentle
Assistant Director of
Patient Advocacy



Liz Gray
Director of Operations



Eric Perez
Asst. Director of
Clinical Services



Marcus Sanchez
Director of Strategic
Advancement



Jeremy Stilb
Associate Director of
Creative Strategies



Susy Vega
Assistant Director of
Social Advocacy



Ben Walker
Director of Clinical
Services

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Helen Michael
Board President



Estevan Delgado
Board Vice President



Hannah Alexander
Board Member



Troy Gras, M.D.
Board Member



Rob Johnson
Board Member; Chair,
DEI Committee



Al Reid
Board Member; Chair,
Wellness Committee



Eric Santamaria
Board Member



Tracye Shaw
Board Secretary; Chair,
Finance Committee



Wil Wever
Board Member; Chair,
Strategic Advancement
Committee

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Dorian Arriaga

Andrew Griffin

Michaela Stanch

Riley Clark

Sebastien Hubiera

Ryan West

Jasper Campos

Randy Lopez

Hayden Williams

Brady Faucett

Jessica Soukup

Noor Z.K.

A LOOK AHEAD...

ASHwell has experienced tremendous growth over the last few years, but we know that in order to grow sustainably and equitably, we must keep a close pulse on the needs of the community, the effectiveness of our services, and the opportunities to expand. As we prepare to launch new initiatives, bring on new staff, and show up for the community in new ways, we look forward to working with all our stakeholders to continue keeping Austin sexy, healthy, and empowered.



Sustainable Growth

- ASHwell's Leadership Team will identify various ways to diversify revenue streams for organizational longevity, including investments, capital campaigns, corporate partnerships, and more.
- ASHwell will include all stakeholders in Strategic Planning processes, including staff, the Community Advisory Board, and community partners.



Expanding Our Reach

- We will develop ASHwell on Wheels — a mobile outreach and testing program — to bring sexual health and wellness services to the community and make access more equitable.
- ASHwell will prioritize equity and accessibility in growth to bring the biggest impact to the community.
- Our Strategic Advancement team will grow partnerships and diverse community support to improve the number of services offered and strengthen our referral network.



Showing Up, Speaking Out

- As a healthcare organization, we will be more vocal in legislative and policy matters that impact our work, our clients' lives and wellbeing, and the quality of care when sexual health and wellness services are under attack — within legal policy advocacy limitations.
 - ASHwell will work with our Community Advisory Board to help clients identify safe and affirming spaces Supporting our clients in identifying safe and affirming spaces — particularly for health services.
-

SAVE THE DATE: NOV 2, 2023 | 6-10 PM



ASHWELL'S BACKYARD BBQ HOEDOWN & LIVE DESSERT AUCTION

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

- SUGAR DADDY | Presenting Sponsor \$5,000
- SEXY SUPPORTER | Supporting Sponsor \$2,500
- ROWDY RIDER | Contributing Sponsor \$1,000
- KINKY CUTIE | Community Sponsor \$250 - \$750

For sponsorship inquiries, contact Garrett Chase (he/him), Asst. Director of Strategic Partnerships, at gchase@ashwellatx.org.

Follow us for updates!

@ashwellatx

