



# 2024 | Community Benefits Report

# Wisconsin Hospitals Care: Supporting Stronger Communities

## A Message from WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding

Wisconsin's hospitals and health systems have always been there—24 hours a day, seven days a week—to deliver high-quality, accessible health care. But their commitment doesn't end at the hospital doors. They provide more than health care, finding new ways to meet our state's evolving needs and strengthen the communities they serve.

In 2023, Wisconsin hospitals provided **\$2.3 billion** in community benefits. These efforts included hundreds of millions of dollars in charity care, subsidized services and investments in health professions education, ensuring that patients and families receive care when and where they need it. Still, hospitals go further, helping address issues like food insecurity, transportation challenges, mental health needs and workforce shortages that directly influence our health and quality of life. Ninety-six percent of Wisconsin hospitals are non-profits and reinvest their resources back into local communities to address unmet health needs. Simply put, many of these services wouldn't be possible without the additional commitment from hospitals.



With workforce shortages in all industries and the need to recruit more talent to Wisconsin, high-quality health care is critical to Wisconsin's economic competitiveness. Accessible, high-quality health care is important to employees and their families as they consider relocating to another state or community. As trusted community partners, Wisconsin hospitals collaborate with local employers to ensure that workforces and their families stay healthy, can access care promptly, and return to their lives and jobs more quickly. These business-hospital partnerships help maintain a strong economy, protect productivity and contribute to overall community well-being.

There is no doubt about it—hospitals are prepared to care for you and your family when you need them most. But this is not something to take for granted. Hospitals are facing mounting financial pressures due to rising costs for labor and supplies, but also payment challenges, such as severely inadequate Medicaid reimbursement.

At some point, the financial challenges reach a breaking point, as seen with the recent closure of two hospitals this year in the Chippewa Valley. These critical services—not just health care, but also community-supporting programs—disappear.

Even while one-third of the state's hospitals are currently operating with a negative margin, Wisconsin hospitals continue to face undeserved criticism by some for not doing enough, including questioning the value of their tax-exempt status. Removing that status would not only increase health care costs by hundreds of millions of dollars, but also reduce access to vital services. WHA is committed to educating policymakers and working with stakeholders to preserve this status and ensure hospitals can continue fulfilling their essential roles.

This year's Community Benefits Report features stories from across Wisconsin. Organized by region, these examples highlight the programs and partnerships that exemplify our hospitals' dedication to improving overall health and well-being. We encourage you to explore the report, share these stories, and learn how your local hospitals are making a difference. An interactive online version is available at [WHA.org](http://WHA.org), and we'll be showcasing these stories on social media in the months ahead.

Thank you for recognizing all that Wisconsin's hospitals and health systems do to build stronger futures for our communities—every day.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Borgerding". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.

Eric Borgerding,  
WHA President/CEO

# Community Benefit Fiscal Year 2023 Financial Summary

Community Benefits	
Charity Care at Cost	\$168,268,524
Medicaid Shortfalls	\$1,570,643,485
Losses on Other Public Programs	\$25,585,526
Subsidized Health Services	\$109,894,836
Nursing Home Losses	\$18,063,381
Benefit Category	
Community Health Improvement Services	
<i>Community Health Education</i>	\$29,066,457
<i>Community-Based Clinical Services</i>	\$6,908,157
<i>Health Care Support Services</i>	\$22,123,075
<i>Social &amp; Environmental Improvement Activities</i>	\$6,103,113
Total Community Health Improvement Services	\$64,200,802
Cash or In-Kind Donations	\$53,107,891
Loss on Health Professions Education/Workforce	\$301,510,339
Loss on Research	\$16,095,166
Community Building Activities	\$12,080,667
Community Benefit Operations	\$9,157,841

**Total Community Benefits\* \$2,348,608,458**

*\* WHA follows CHA Community Benefit Guidelines, which excludes Medicare shortfalls and bad debt expense from the community benefit calculation. In fiscal year 2023, the statewide estimate for Medicare shortfalls was \$3,341,364,098 and bad debt at cost was \$240,760,324.*




**2024** Community Benefits Report



Scan the QR code to read the full report!

# Hospital Tax-Exempt Status is Critical to Meeting Community Health Needs

*Nearly all of Wisconsin's hospitals are non-profit, tax-exempt organizations. But what does that mean to you, as a patient?*

When you pay for services at a hospital or a health system-affiliated clinic, those dollars are reinvested back into the health care system to improve quality and access to care.

**Unlike for-profit insurance companies that pay dividends to shareholders with patient premium dollars, not-for-profit hospitals reinvest their margin into community needs.**

Wisconsin hospitals also use their non-profit, tax-exempt status to stretch their resources for services that would otherwise never be delivered in a “free market.” Think of the importance of a pharmacy in a rural community or an emergency department open in the middle of the night that treats everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

Over the years, many layers of government—including local municipalities—have reduced the services provided to their residents while hospitals across the state have filled the void.

In 1997, Congress repealed the Boren Amendment, which allowed state governments to set Medicaid reimbursement for hospitals based on something other than their actual costs. As one would expect, Medicaid reimbursement rates for hospitals plummeted as state budgets became tight. In recent years, WHA has worked with elected officials to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for hospitals, but Medicaid losses in Wisconsin remain substantial—at \$1.6 billion.



Every so often, a legislator or interest group critiques hospitals “earning” their tax-exempt status, claiming losses from Medicaid shouldn’t count toward hospital community benefit calculations. Hospital Medicaid losses are a measure of government underfunding that would otherwise result in unmet health care needs for those living in poverty. While state Medicaid programs are critical funding sources for health care, they do not cover the cost of providing care and are dependent upon hospitals to care for patients regardless of payer source—a clear community benefit.



Photo courtesy of Froedtert Hospital & MCW



Photo courtesy of Mayo Clinic Health System, La Crosse

**Removing hospital tax-exempt status would increase the cost of health care by hundreds of millions of dollars in Wisconsin, reduce access to care or both.**

Just recently, the American Hospital Association published a study from Ernst & Young that found the value of community benefits that hospitals across the nation provide outpaces their federal tax-exemption by a factor of 10.

Protecting tax-exempt status for our state’s non-profit hospitals is critical to maintain access to care that otherwise would not exist in the community. The stories in this report are a sampling of how hospitals put their not-for-profit tax exemptions to work to improve the health of people all over Wisconsin.

If you would like more information about how your local hospital is impacting community needs beyond the stories in this report, be sure to read their Community Health Needs Assessment on your local hospital’s website.



Photo courtesy of Grant Regional Health Center



Photo courtesy of Mile Bluff Medical Center



Photo courtesy of Stoughton Health



Photo courtesy of Burnett Medical Center



Photo courtesy of Ascension Calumet Hospital

# Highlighting Wisconsin Hospitals' Community Impact

The 2024 Community Benefits Report showcases how Wisconsin hospitals make a difference beyond patient care. Hospitals partner with community groups, educational institutions and businesses to strengthen local economies, create opportunities for future health care professionals and support the well-being of individuals and families alike.

Underscoring this vital role, hospital board members who also serve as local business leaders share firsthand insights on how hospitals help strengthen the social and economic foundations of our communities.

“ *Aspirus Health plays a vital — and at times overlooked — role in our communities. Through challenging years, Aspirus has grown and evolved, while continuing to provide the excellent, compassionate care people depend on. As the region’s largest employer, Aspirus Health is deeply embedded in the social and financial fabric, collaborating with community partners to advance health improvement initiatives.*

**Kathy Kelsey Foley**

Director Emerita, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum and chair, board of directors, Aspirus, Inc.



“ *Having Beloit Health System in our community strengthens the local economy by not only providing health care but also creating jobs, attracting other businesses and supporting the well-being of our workforce.*

**Kathy Hendricks**

Executive Director, Customer Connectivity, ABC Supply and Trustee, Beloit Health System



“ *Our community relies on Froedtert ThedaCare Health for more than just medical care; they’re an anchor institution that supports other local businesses, from service providers to suppliers, helping to create a stronger, more resilient local economy.*

**Jim Kotek**

Vice chair of the Froedtert ThedaCare Health board, retired president and CEO, Menasha Corporation



“ *SSM Health continues to make significant investments in Wisconsin to expand services where people need them most, including the establishment of the new South Madison campus, a new outpatient center under construction in Sun Prairie and a new clinic planned for Verona. SSM Health is a committed civic partner, and I am proud that so many of its leaders are personally engaged, giving their time and talents to ensure our communities thrive.*

**Jeff Tubbs**

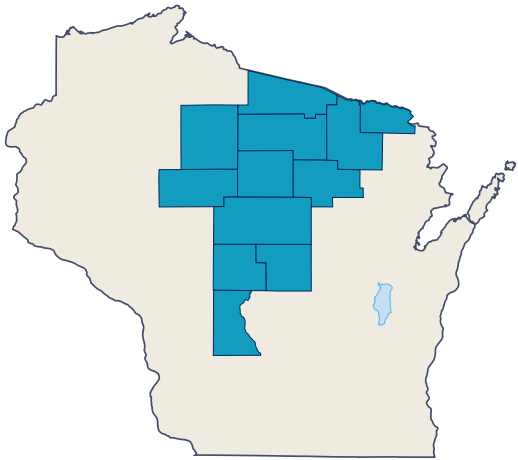
Executive VP, Findorff and member of SSM Health Foundation Board



Beyond these perspectives, you will find more than 140 hospital stories—organized by region—highlighting the initiatives that drive positive change across Wisconsin. To explore these stories, visit our website at [WHA.org/CommunityBenefits](https://WHA.org/CommunityBenefits).

# Hospital Stories

## North Central Region



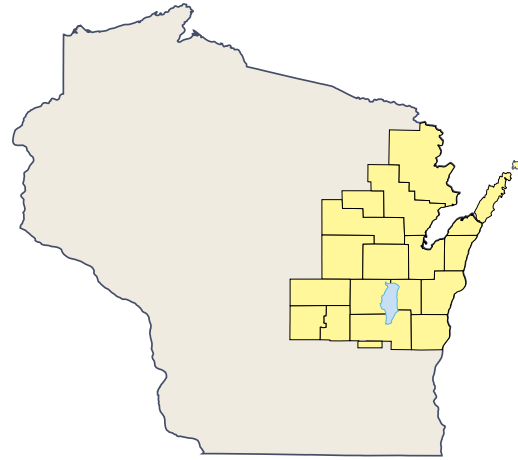
**Total Region Community Benefits:**  
**\$209,393,176**

- Aspirus Eagle River Hospital
- Aspirus Health
- Aspirus Langlade Hospital, Antigo
- Aspirus Medford Hospital and Aspirus Rhinelander Hospital
- Aspirus Merrill Hospital, Merrill
- Aspirus Riverview Hospital, Wisconsin Rapids
- Aspirus Stevens Point Hospital, Stevens Point
- Aspirus Wausau Hospital
- Marshfield Medical Center - Marshfield
- Marshfield Medical Center - Minocqua
- Marshfield Medical Center - Park Falls
- Marshfield Medical Center - River Region, Stevens Point
- Marshfield Medical Center - Weston
- Mile Bluff Medical Center, Mauston

### North Central Region *by the numbers*

Emergency Department Visits: 161,345  
Births: 3,973  
Individuals Served: 348,613

## Packerland Region



**Total Region Community Benefits:**  
**\$391,520,785**

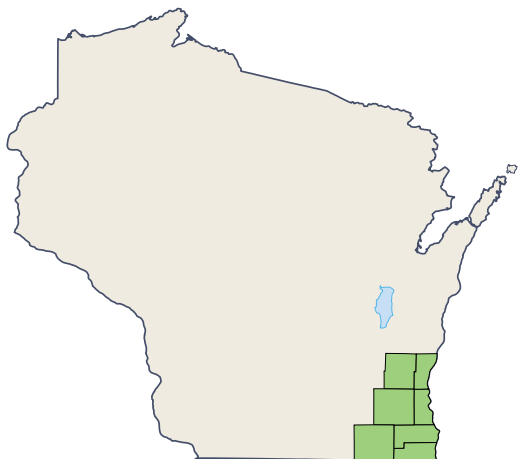
- Ascension Calumet Hospital, Chilton
- Ascension NE Wisconsin - Mercy Campus, Oshkosh
- Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Campus, Appleton
- Aurora BayCare Medical Center, Green Bay
- Aurora Medical Center - Bay Area, Marinette
- Aurora Medical Center - Manitowoc County, Two Rivers
- Aurora Medical Center - Oshkosh
- Aurora Medical Center - Sheboygan County, Sheboygan
- Bellin Health, Green Bay
- Bellin Health Oconto Hospital, Oconto
- Bellin Psychiatric Center, Green Bay
- Children's Wisconsin - Fox Valley, Neenah
- Door County Medical Center, Sturgeon Bay
- Froedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital, Manitowoc
- Hospital Sisters Health System, Wisconsin
- SSH Health St. Agnes Hospital, Fond du Lac
- ThedaCare, Neenah

### Packerland Region *by the numbers*

Emergency Department Visits: 378,134  
Births: 11,173  
Individuals Served: 662,019

***View complete stories on [www.wha.org](http://www.wha.org).***

# Southeastern Region



**Total Region Community Benefits:**  
**\$1,128,105,718**

- Ascension All Saints Hospital, Racine
- Ascension Columbia St. Mary's - Milwaukee Campus
- Ascension Columbia St. Mary's - Ozaukee Campus, Mequon
- Ascension Elmbrook Hospital, Brookfield
- Ascension St. Francis Hospital, Milwaukee
- Ascension St. Joseph's Hospital, Milwaukee
- Aurora Health Care
- Aurora Lakeland Medical Center, Elkhorn
- Aurora Medical Center - Burlington
- Aurora Medical Center - Grafton
- Aurora Medical Center - Kenosha
- Aurora Medical Center - Summit
- Aurora Medical Center - Washington County, Hartford
- Aurora Psychiatric Hospital, Wauwatosa
- Aurora Sinai Medical Center, Milwaukee
- Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center, Milwaukee
- Aurora St. Lukes South Shore, Milwaukee
- Aurora West Allis Medical Center, West Allis
- Children's Wisconsin, Milwaukee



*Photo courtesy of Rogers Behavioral Health*

- Children's Wisconsin - Milwaukee
- Froedtert Health Neighborhood Hospital, New Berlin
- Froedtert Hospital, Wauwatosa
- Froedtert Menomonee Falls Hospital
- Froedtert West Bend Hospital, West Bend
- Milwaukee Health Care Partnership
- ProHealth Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital
- ProHealth Waukesha Memorial Hospital
- Rogers Behavioral Health, Brown Deer
- Rogers Behavioral Health, Oconomowoc
- Rogers Behavioral Health, West Allis

## Southeastern Region *by the numbers*

Emergency Department Visits: 736,240  
Births: 20,826  
Individuals Served: 1,212,346



# Southern Region



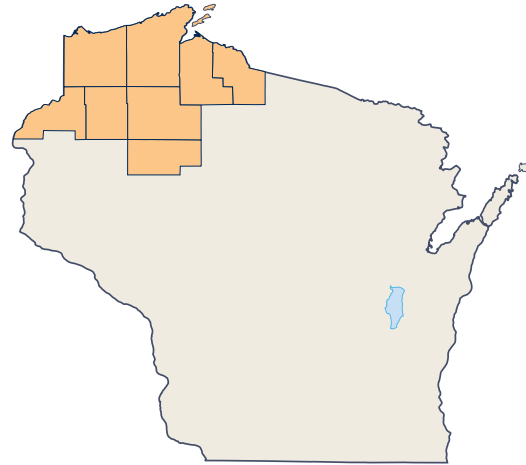
**Total Region Community Benefits:**  
**\$358,995,979**

- Aspirus Divine Savior Hospital, Portage
- Fort Healthcare, Fort Atkinson
- Grant Regional Health Center, Lancaster
- Gundersen Boscobel Area Hospital and Clinic, Boscobel
- Gundersen Moundview Hospital, Friendship
- Marshfield Medical Center, Beaver Dam
- Reedsburg Area Medical Center, Reedsburg
- SSM Health Monroe Hospital, Monroe
- SSM Health St. Clare Hospital, Baraboo
- SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital, Janesville
- SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital, Madison
- SSM Health Wisconsin, Madison
- Sauk Prairie Healthcare, Prairie du Sac
- Sauk Prairie Healthcare, Sauk City
- Southwest Health, Platteville
- Stoughton Health, Stoughton
- UW Health, Madison
- UnityPoint Health - Meriter, Madison
- Watertown Regional Medical Center, Watertown

## Southern Region *by the numbers*

Emergency Department Visits: 373,941  
Births: 10,602  
Individuals Served: 759,670

# Vikingland Region



**Total Region Community Benefits:**  
**\$27,185,737**

- Burnett Medical Center, Grantsburg
- Essentia Health St. Mary's Hospital, Superior
- Marshfield Medical Center, Ladysmith
- Spooner Health, Spooner

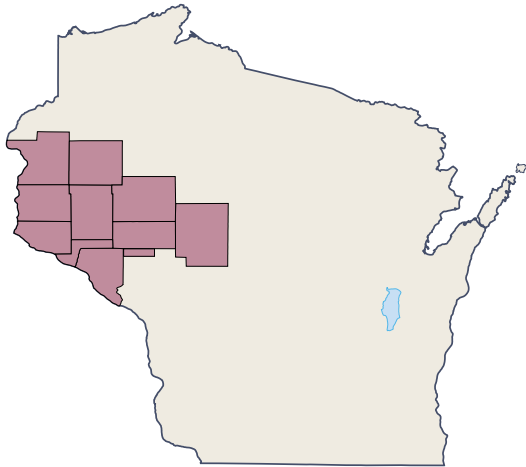


Photo courtesy of Gundersen Boscobel Area Hospital and Clinics

## Vikingland Region *by the numbers*

Emergency Department Visits: 48,279  
Births: 317  
Individuals Served: 87,912

## West Central Region



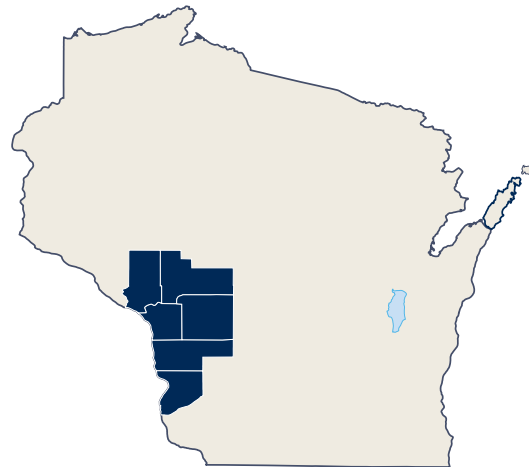
**Total Region Community Benefits:**  
**\$103,989,429**

Adventhealth Durand  
Aspirus Stanley Hospital  
Cumberland Healthcare, Cumberland  
Marshfield Medical Center, Eau Claire  
Marshfield Medical Center, Neillsville  
Marshfield Medical Center, Rice Lake  
Mayo Clinic Health System - Northland in Barron  
Mayo Clinic Health System - Oakridge in Osseo  
Mayo Clinic Health System, Eau Claire  
Mayo Clinic Health System - Chippewa Valley, Bloomer  
Mayo Clinic Health System - Red Cedar, Menomonie  
St. Croix Health, St. Croix Falls  
Western Wisconsin Health, Baldwin

### West Central Region *by the numbers*

Emergency Department Visits: 158,193  
Births: 3,814  
Individuals Served: 317,397

## Western Region



**Total Region Community Benefits:**  
**\$109,805,582**

Black River Memorial Hospital, Black River Falls  
Gundersen Health System, La Crosse  
Gundersen St. Joseph's Hospital & Clinics, Hillsboro  
Mayo Clinic Health System, La Crosse  
Mayo Clinic Health System, Sparta  
Tomah Health, Tomah

### Western Region *by the numbers*

Emergency Department Visits: 96,722  
Births: 2,698  
Individuals Served: 230,585



