WISCONSIN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

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2018 COMMUNITY BENEFITS REPORT

2018

# WISCONSIN HOSPITALS CARE:

## Improving Health and Wellness in Their Communities

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# WISCONSIN HOSPITALS CARE: IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN THEIR COMMUNITES

## A Message from Eric Borgerding, WHA President and CEO

Wisconsin hospitals and health systems provide nationally recognized care to citizens across the state each and every day.

While Wisconsin is ranked first in the Midwest and fourth in the U.S. for its high-quality health care, our hospitals strive to do more, and their work goes far beyond hospital walls.

Wisconsin hospitals and health systems help address the critical, unmet health care needs of their neighbors, friends, and community—which ultimately leads to a healthier state overall.

Hospitals fund neighborhood health centers, ensure citizens have access to free meals and can purchase their medication, help citizens find transportation and housing, bring dental services into our schools, and much more. Collectively, Wisconsin hospitals and health systems funded nearly **$1.8 billion** in community benefits and charity care in fiscal year 2017.

Many of these services would not be possible without the support of Wisconsin hospitals—and the dedicated men and women who volunteer and work for these organizations. Simply put, our hospitals and health systems are Wisconsin's health care safety net.

WHA is proud to share our annual Community Benefits report, which highlights the programs, services, and activities hospitals provide for free, as well as the financial assistance they provide to patients, to ensure everyone can afford the treatment they need and deserve.

Hospitals are part of the fabric of Wisconsin, and high-quality, high-value health care is one of this state's greatest strengths.

**Wisconsin hospitals and health systems help address the critical, unmet health care needs of their neighbors, friends, and community—which ultimately leads to a healthier state overall.**

Wisconsin hospitals and health systems are demonstrating a sustained commitment to affordable, accessible, quality health care 24/7, and all of us are fortunate to have such a robust health care system that is a model for other states across this nation.

Eric Borgerding,
WHA President/CEO

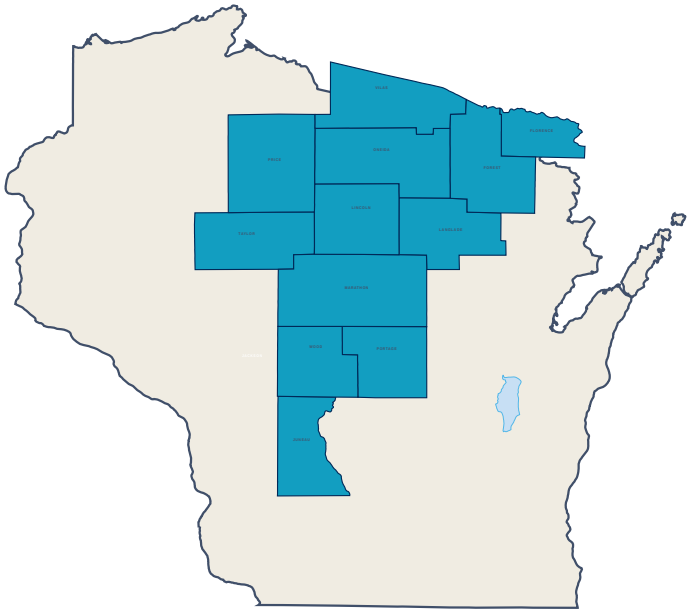
# COMMUNITY BENEFIT FISCAL YEAR 2017 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

| Community Benefits | |
|---|---|
| Charity Care at Cost | $183,519,789 |
| Medicaid Shortfalls | $1,055,930,666 |
| Losses on Other Public Programs | $38,104,532 |
| Subsidized Health Services | $128,473,652 |
| Nursing Home Losses | $12,427,156 |

| Benefit Category | |
|---|---|
| Community Health Improvement Services | |
| *Community Health Education* | $30,556,221 |
| *Community Based Clinical Services* | $11,862,291 |
| *Health Care Support Services* | $17,648,813 |
| *Social & Environmental Improvement Activities* | $4,195,745 |
| Total Community Health Improvement Services | $64,262,070 |
| | |
| Cash or In-Kind Donations | $42,542,911 |
| Loss on Health Professions Education/Workforce | $242,356,054 |
| Loss on Research | $12,491,620 |
| Community Building Activities | $8,416,066 |
| Community Benefit Operations | $8,647,989 |
| **Total Community Benefits*** | **$1,797,173,505** |

** WHA follows CHA Community Benefit Guidelines, which excludes Medicare shortfalls and bad debt expense from the community benefit calculation. In fiscal year 2017, the statewide estimate for Medicare shortfalls was $2,142,886,053 and bad debt at cost was $215,519,276.*

# North Central Region

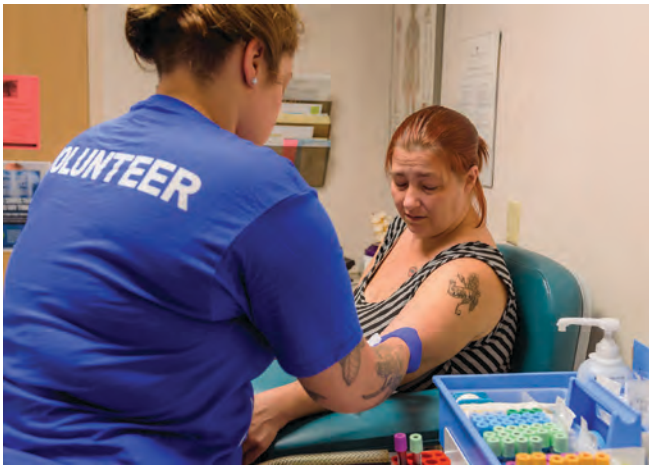


**Total Region Community Benefits: $152,958,882**

## MEDICAL MISSION AT HOME BRINGS FREE HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO STEVENS POINT

Ascension provided more than 200 free health care and social services to people in need at its Medical Mission at Home held at Ascension St. Michael's Hospital and Ascension Medical Group in Stevens Point.

The Medical Mission at Home provides real-time delivery of organized health and social services to those who would not have access to care, including medical evaluations, basic laboratory testing, medical imaging (x-ray, mammography, ultrasound and echocardiogram), adult urgent dental care, pharmacy/medications and spiritual services.




*Phlebotomist Sara Place performs a blood draw on Wendy Simons of Stevens Point during Medical Mission at Home*

Wendy Simons of Stevens Point sought out the Medical Mission at Home after being diagnosed with diabetes more than two years ago.

"Not having insurance and knowing that I have diabetes has been a heavy burden on me the last few years," said Simons. "We do our best to make ends meet and insurance is not something in our budget. I am grateful for Ascension having this event in our community and all the friendly people who helped me today; it warms my heart."

Simons, who recently turned 41, also received her first mammogram and necessary lab work to get the full picture of her diabetes issue as well as an echocardiogram.

Ascension and its Community Resource Partners also developed referral plans to help participants receive the care they need beyond the event.

"We want to establish an ongoing relationship with those we were blessed to serve here today so we can care for them beyond the Medical Mission at Home should they need it," said Crystal Kirschling, Chief Administrative Officer and V.P. of Patient Care Services at Ascension St. Michael's Hospital.

**Ascension St. Michael's Hospital, Stevens Point**

## FIXED INCOME ISSUES

Located in the heart of Wisconsin's Northwoods, Ascension Eagle River Hospital serves people of all ages during the year, from permanent residents to the many visitors to the area during the summer or the height of the snowmobile season. Many of those permanent residents are older adults living on a fixed income.

"I recently had a patient who was an elderly woman whose only income was her social security payment that totaled about $10,000 per year," said Sue Easley, patient financial counselor at Ascension Eagle River. "After needing care and treatment, she was faced with mounting medical bills that she could not pay."

Easley helped the woman sign up for medical assistance as a secondary insurance, but had a couple of outstanding bills prior to the medical assistance coverage and could not pay them.

"Thanks to our financial assistance I was able to offer her an application, which she completed and qualified for 100% write off for the outstanding bills," said Easley. "She was very thankful, and I can only imagine how difficult it must be to live on that income and what a relief it would be to get this assistance."

**Ascension Eagle River Hospital**

*Photo courtesy of Ascension St. Michael's Hospital*

## OVERCOMING A LITTLE AT A TIME

At Ascension Wisconsin, we provide a health care safety net for many people who might otherwise go without health care—particularly those who are poor and uninsured.

Recently, a couple enrolled in the Ascension St. Clare's Hospital financial assistance program. They are insured but have many medical bills, including bills in collections.

"When I went to visit the patient, she told me that she is trying to pay a little on each bill and can't afford another bill," said Jane Malitz, Patient Financial Counselor, Ascension St. Clare's. "She stated that she didn't think they would qualify for financial assistance and after further discussion and evaluation I was able to help with a large majority of her Ascension bills, even those in collections."

Malitz says the patient was grateful and is an example of the discussions she has with patients and their families each and every day.

**Ascension St. Clare's Hospital, Weston**

## ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER

Wisconsin is blessed with a strong system of critical access hospitals whose purpose is to provide much needed services to rural areas. One of those is Ascension Good Samaritan Hospital in Merrill.

In her role as a Patient Financial Counselor at Ascension Good Samaritan, Jane Malitz interacts with people from all walks of life as they face difficulties and barriers to survive.

Medical issues are often an added burden to the seemingly constant struggle to provide shelter, food and other basic necessities for individuals and families alike.

"I was proud to have recently assisted a patient who is 66 years old, homeless and has no family," said Malitz. "His only companion is his cat."

What originally seemed like a minor illness brought the man to Ascension Good Samaritan where he was diagnosed with a much worse illness—cancer.

"The patient had some insurance but was off from work for an extended period because of the original illness and had large co-pays and deductibles, with no means to pay them," said Malitz. "I worked with the patient to cover those costs through financial assistance and he was grateful for the support."

Jane's efforts are an example of Ascension's commitment to and respect for each person's dignity with a special concern for those who struggle with barriers to access health care services.

**Ascension Good Samaritan Hospital, Merrill**

## RELIEF FROM THE "COST OF BEING HERE"

Sue Easley is a Patient Financial Counselor based at Howard Young Medical Center, part of Ascension.

Each day, she meets a variety of people looking for help in understanding complex terms that involve medical terminology, billing practices and many other things they have a tough time understanding.

terminology, billing practices and many other things they have a tough time understanding.

Recently, a case worker at Howard Young Medical Center called Easley to ask if she would come and visit with a patient who was upset about the "cost of being here."

"After calming her down, I explained we had a financial assistance program," said Easley. "We completed a screening and it did not take long to realize that she would qualify. "

Easley informed the patient that she qualified for a 100% financial assistance package for the next six months.

"This patient was so grateful, to the point of crying," said Easley. "She had just found out she had breast cancer and would be starting chemotherapy and radiation treatments."

Easley says she has heard from this patient quite often over the past couple of years because she has been so grateful. The last contact came a few weeks ago because she just found out her cancer had returned.

"She was overwhelmed that we could assist her again," said Easley. "I am so happy that we have access to this financial assistance program to be able to relieve this terrible financial burden from people who are going through so much. This gives them one less thing to worry about and to concentrate on getting well."

**Howard Young Medical Center (part of Ascension), Woodruff**

## A GRATEFUL PATIENT IN TOMAHAWK

Critical access hospitals provide vital services to Wisconsin communities and in Tomahawk, Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital is celebrating 125 years of caring for a community located in the heart of the Northwoods.

Access to services in these rural areas can be a barrier and for those on a fixed income, unexpected medical bills can provide difficulty on many different fronts.

Amber Davis is a Patient Financial Advocate serving Ascension facilities in the Northwoods, including Ascension Sacred Heart. Recently a patient scheduled an appointment with Amber to discuss his medical bills.

"He was in his 80s and really struggled to understand his bills with several of his balances going to collections," said Davis. "He did not know what his options were other than the fact that he just could not keep up."

Davis took the time to review his account and informed him that based on his income level, he was eligible for Ascension's financial assistance program. After completing his enrollment and review, he qualified for 100% financial assistance, including his overdue balances.

Ascension provides financial assistance for certain individuals who receive emergency or other medically necessary care from Ascension.

"I had a tough time putting my pride aside to ask for charity," said the man a few weeks later when he called Davis to personally thank her. "I was relieved to learn of the Ascension financial assistance program and don't know where I would be without Amber's help."

**Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital, Tomahawk**

## COUPLE APPRECIATIVE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ALWAYS TAKES TIME TO SAY THANKS

Older Americans face a variety of health issues, often while balancing living on a limited income.

A Rhinelander couple with health battles on several fronts recently paid a visit to Amber Davis, a Patient Financial Advocate at Ascension St. Mary's Hospital in Rhinelander.

"The wife was in treatment and was being seen at several different facilities, some not even ours," said Davis. "Our first appointment consisted of going through a stack of bills, and sorting through the Ascension statements that I could assist with."

Davis says that even with some support from Medicaid, the patient was left with large out-of-pocket expenses they could not manage in their budget.

"The trips back and forth for her treatments were taxing, as they live about 45 minutes from town, and they had to make several trips per week," said Davis. "As a result, we would always set up a time to review bills when they knew she would be here for a doctor visit."

Davis was able to get the couple qualified for financial assistance and she says it warmed her heart how grateful they were.

"They couldn't believe there was a program that could aid like this. They kept asking if there was a monthly premium, or fee—and were so pleasantly surprised to know this program exists and is available to them."

Davis says the couple will still visit her and say hello and thank her again whenever they are passing through to an appointment.

**Ascension St. Mary's Hospital, Rhinelander**

## BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT IS KEY COMPONENT OF BABY-FRIENDLY DESIGNATION

Ascension St. Michael's Hospital received international recognition as a Baby-Friendly Designated birth facility.

Baby-Friendly USA, Inc. is the U.S. authority for the implementation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, a global program sponsored by the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

*L to R: Cindy Weisbrod, Crystal Kirschling, Kara Mrozek and Lora Harris, Ascension St. Michael's Hospital*

"This initiative encourages and recognizes hospitals, birthing centers and physicians that offer an optimal level of care for breastfeeding mothers and their babies," said Crystal Kirschling, Chief Administrative Officer and Vice President of Patient Care Services at Ascension St. Michael's.

As part of its Community Health Implementation Strategy, this designation includes a multi-year project to improve overall breastfeeding rates (both initial and ongoing) and support to breastfeeding among families who are served by Ascension St. Michael's Hospital. The process includes policy development, staff training, prenatal and postpartum teaching plans, and linkages to community resources.

Ascension St. Michael's is one of three Ascension facilities in Wisconsin to achieve Baby-Friendly status and collaborates with the Portage County Breastfeeding Coalition, Portage County Health and Human Services, and University of Wisconsin Extension in tandem with Ascension Medical Group clinicians.

Based on the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, this prestigious international award recognizes birth facilities that offer breastfeeding mothers the information, confidence, and skills needed to successfully initiate and continue breastfeeding their babies.

"This program is the gold standard of care and the ten steps are designed to encourage a culture that is supportive of breastfeeding that starts prior to delivery and touches many different areas of our facility," said Lora Harris, RN, BSN, IBCLC, Lactation Consultant and Perinatal Education Coordinator, Women & Infant Center at Ascension St. Michael's

**Ascension St. Michael's Hospital, Stevens Point**

## PREVENTION FUND PROGRAM HELPS PATIENTS WITH IMMEDIATE NEEDS

For some people, making the decision each month of whether to purchase medications required to keep them alive and healthy or pay their heat bill is a real struggle. In April 2015, Aspirus Langlade Hospital established the Prevention Fund Program. The purpose of this program is to provide limited financial assistance to patients with an immediate need to purchase medications, medical supplies or other immediate needs identified to reduce unnecessary visits to the emergency department, walk-in clinic, admissions or readmissions for patients who suffer from significant medical conditions such as infection, COPD, CHF, hypertension or diabetes.

By providing this immediate assistance, the patient is allotted the time needed to apply for Medication Assistance Programs available, while being able to take the medication immediately. Since the inception of the Prevention Fund Program, support has been provided in over 50 instances to patients who otherwise would have gone without the needed medication, medical supplies or treatment needed to treat a potential life-threatening issue.

In fiscal year 2017 (July 2016-June 2017), 18 patients received assistance through the Prevention Fund program. Several patients needing financial support are in need of diabetic medications and supplies. In fiscal year 2016 (July 2015-June 2016), 21 patients received assistance. For all patients receiving support through the Prevention Fund Program, their medical records are reviewed for one year to determine if the financial support they received may have positively impacted their health.

Through implementation of the Prevention Fund and working with patients, we learned that many of those patients unable to meet their financial needs are not educated on the medical assistance programs available to them or how to apply for such programs. The Prevention Fund has started working closely with social workers/case managers to ensure patient needs are being identified and supported.

Aspirus Langlade Hospital has solely funded the Prevention Fund Program with dollars designated under its Community Health Improvement budget. For the past two fiscal years it has provided $10,000 in funding each year.

**Aspirus Langlade Hospital, Antigo**

## "I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT"

One day a few years ago, financial counselor Wendy Rudolph visited Aspirus Medford Hospital's cafeteria with more than grabbing lunch on her mind. Wendy was also popping by to return a check to Neal Olkives. A SeniorCare enrollee, Neal worked the cash register in the cafeteria. He'd given Wendy the check earlier that day to pay a medical bill.

*Fran and Sharon Coenen with Lilly, Westboro*

*Neal and Isabel Olkives, Medford*

"Wendy came down and gave me my check back," Neal recalls. "I asked her why and she said I qualified for financial assistance for my health care. I couldn't believe it. I thought, 'What the heck?' Like yee haw! I was surprised. You might say it got dropped on me and I'm glad I was able to catch it. That check was over $100. Consequently, Aspirus takes care of all our co-pays and any balance we might have."

Aspirus' Financial Assistance Program is designed to help low-income, uninsured and underinsured patients with assistance paying for part or all of their medical care. Qualifying patients with Medicaid plans are enrolled in Aspirus' MA 100% program automatically and expenses not covered by Medicaid are forgiven.

Like Neal Olkives, Sharon Coenen was surprised to learn her Aspirus medical bills were covered.

"Last year, our insurance plan wasn't working out. We were paying $100 a month to cover some bills. An Aspirus financial counselor called and said we didn't have to worry about making the payments anymore. I was very happy. Some months it was hard to come up with the money to pay. We're very thankful."

**Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics**

## MILE BLUFF CONTINUES 125-YEAR COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

Mile Bluff Medical Center has been serving the community since 1893. Throughout this time, the organization has remained committed to providing compassionate and progressive care, improving the health and wellness of the community, and going beyond expectations in health care.

Most often, this commitment involves meeting the medical needs of area residents. Other times it means assisting patients financially.

Mile Bluff operates the only hospital in Juneau County, and offers programs and services for everyone in the area—regardless of their ability to pay. Its passion for serving others is amplified by Mile Bluff's Community Care Program, which helps those who need assistance in covering health care expenses.

During the 2017 fiscal year, Mile Bluff was able to help over 400 individuals who were unable to pay some or all of their medical bills; and more than $1,000,000 of debt was forgiven through the Community Care Program.

One woman who helps walk patients through Mile Bluff's program is patient advocate Pam Schryver. Pam works one-on-one with individuals to assist them with filling out forms, and to answer any questions they may have. One grateful recipient stated: "Pam was a pleasure to work with. She found a way to help get our bills paid. Pam is a definite asset to Mile Bluff!"

As long as there is a need for health care, there will also be a need for financial assistance. Mile Bluff will remain committed to offering both of these things to the individuals it serves.

**Mile Bluff Medical Center, Mauston**

## NORTHWOODS SUMMIT DEVELOPS ADVOCATES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Two years after he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, Kevin Hines attempted to take his life by jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge.

Hines' story provided the keynote presentation at the 3rd Annual Frank B. Koller Biennial Mental Health Summit at the Campanile Center for the Arts in Minocqua.

*L to R: Andrea Stefonek, Manager, Ascension Koller Behavioral Health; Dr. Shawn Pflugardt, Psychologist, Ascension Koller Behavioral Health; Matt Runnells, Presenter; Heidi Pritzl, Social Worker, Ascension Koller Behavioral Health; Kevin Hines, Presenter*

More than 100 mental health and community professionals attended the daylong session hosted by Ascension Koller Behavioral Health with support from Ascension St. Mary's Hospital, Ascension Eagle River Hospital, and Howard Young Medical Center, part of Ascension.

Hines is one of only 34 people to survive the fall and is the only Golden Gate Bridge jump survivor who is actively spreading the message of living mentally healthy around the globe. He is a mental health advocate, award-winning global speaker, bestselling author and documentary filmmaker who reaches audiences with his story of an unlikely survival and strong will to live.

"After attending the program and completing a survey, 89 percent of our attendees either agreed or strongly agreed they were better prepared to advocate for the mentally ill," said Jessica Schiek, Director of Ascension Koller Behavioral Health. "Kevin was part of a dynamic lineup of speakers who helped attendees better understand mental illness and the best ways to help people recover."

The Biennial Mental Health Summit is designed for anyone interested in mental health advocacy and suicide prevention, including mental health professionals, social workers, teachers, school staff, medical professionals or family members.

**Howard Young Medical Center (part of Ascension), Woodruff**

## ASCENSION ST. CLARE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CELEBRATES SUCCESS

Wisconsin 85th State Assembly Representative Pat Snyder visited students from DC Everest High School who work at Ascension St. Clare's Hospital in Weston as part of the Take Your Legislator to Work Campaign on Thursday, May 24.

Organized each year by the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD), the campaign coordinates visits between legislators and their constituents with disabilities. During the visit, Rep. Snyder saw firsthand the community-integrated employment in action and learned more about the value it brings to the employee, employer and community.

Since opening in 2006, Ascension St. Clare's has been partnering with DC Everest's Workforce Development program. Each semester, two to four students work at the facility in Nutritional and Environmental Services.

"This is an important program to help these students learn and develop important skills that will benefit them for their lifetime," said Snyder. "This visit has helped me learn more about the

*Back Row: DC Everest School Superintendent Kristine Gilmore; Ascension St. Clare's President Jeremy Normington-Slay; State Representative Pat Snyder. Front Row: DC Everest Workforce Development Students who work at Ascension St. Clare's Hospital*

program and will hopefully raise awareness for other businesses to join this important workforce development initiative."

According to the Wisconsin BPDD, when people with disabilities work in the community at a competitive wage, they are less likely to rely on publicly funded programs. And, 87% of customers say they would prefer to patronize businesses that employ people with disabilities.

"We value this partnership with DC Everest for the benefit of these students and our community," said Jeremy Normington-Slay, Ascension St. Clare's president.

**Ascension St. Clare's Hospital, Weston**

## WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH THROUGH EXPANDED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

*L to R: Nicole Kubiaczyk, Andy Barth and Meghan Mattek of Aspirus Langlade Hospital and Richard Ducane of Menominee Regional Public Transit, operators of Red Robin Transit*

Aspirus Langlade Hospital and Red Robin Transit are pleased to announce a partnership regarding expanded public transportation services to residents in Langlade County. The Community Health Needs Assessments conducted in both 2013 and 2016 identified transportation as one of the greatest difficulties in accessing health care services in Langlade

County. As a result, a team was established at Aspirus Langlade Hospital to determine options to positively impact this issue in the community. An assessment was conducted to understand the current state of public transportation and found affordable public transportation services with convenient hours were limited in the community.

Red Robin Transit provided the only public transportation services in the City of Antigo and within an eight-mile radius of the City. Service opportunities were restricted by Red Robin Transit due to budget limitations. In April 2017, funding was approved through Aspirus Langlade Hospital's sponsored Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph (RHSJ) Mission Fund Council to strengthen the public transportation services not only in Antigo, but to all 888 square miles of Langlade County through a collaborative agreement with Menominee Regional Public Transit, operators of Red Robin Transit.

Expanded transportation services in Langlade County now include:

- Two additional routes on the City of Antigo Flexed Route bus service, now operating from 9:15 a.m. until 6:35 p.m. with 18 stops six times daily Monday through Friday throughout the city.
- One additional van operating under the Reserve-a-Ride service. This is a door-to-door service with the rider reserving the ride in advance in which they are picked up at their location and driven to another location without the need of going to a bus stop.

**Aspirus Langlade Hospital, Antigo**

## "COUNSELING FOR ALL TO REACH EMOTIONAL SUCCESS" MENTAL HEATLH COUNSELING

In October 2017, the Medford Area Public School District began offering its new CARES (Counseling for All to Reach Emotional Success) Model of school-based mental health counseling. A collaborative effort between the Medford Area Public School District, Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics, and Counseling Connection, the CARES Model increased the availability of mental health counseling for students on location at their schools.

The CARES Model addresses social, emotional, behavioral and mental health needs of students through preventive and intervention methods to allow for better success in school, at home and in life.

Aspirus provided a three-year grant through its Community Benefits program that enables all students to receive mental health counseling during the school year if needed, even if parent insurance or Medicaid does not cover the cost of the services.

School-based mental health counselors work in partnership with school staff to identify, screen and evaluate students who could benefit from counseling, as well as to provide referrals and deliver mental health services to students. Parents may also refer their child for these services by contacting their child's school.

While Counseling Connection counselors traveled between Medford Area Public Schools for five years providing school-based mental health services prior to the institution of the CARES Model, the CARES Model allows more children and adolescents to receive mental health counseling in the school setting. Within four months of the CARES Model going into effect, 13 students who would have otherwise been unable to receive counseling were receiving services.

**Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics**

## PAINTING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

What makes up a healthy community? Most would think of bike paths, quality food options, and affordable housing. A healthy community also includes partnerships between health care facilities, community development leaders and residents working together to create and inspire through art.

*Community paint day held at Aspirus*

*Participants viewing the mural at the dedication*

In Marathon County, Wisconsin, this approach to health isn't theoretical. It's a growing effort called "RISE UP—Painting a Healthy Community" that is steadily picking up speed. Marathon County residents' health needs are changing. There was a clear need for a different kind of approach to creating a healthy environment—an environment that honored the diverse voices of the community and addressed the many health factors that impact health outcomes. Those community leaders recognized this and created RISE UP.

A number of community leaders in Marathon County came together to create the non-profit organization after a series of

opportunities to learn about the power of art in health. The group traveled to Philadelphia to be mentored by Mural Arts of Philadelphia and learn the process called "Porchlight." The group was able to replicate that vision and tailor it to meet the needs of residents in Marathon County.

The first workshop was implemented at Aspirus Wausau Hospital. It pulled together a unique group of individuals that included individuals with chronic health conditions and community members looking to contribute in the program. This group met weekly to explore art in a way that was creative, inspiring, and free flowing. From the connection they developed, they were able to design a mural, giving a voice to what hope, happiness and health meant to them.

With the help of lead artist, Stephanie Kohli, they were able to break down the mural into a large paint-by-number canvas and hold several community paint days. Workshop participants worked alongside community members, teaching them how to paint the mural and engaging in conversations about the meaning behind the mural. This collaboration is the power behind the art—to break down stigma and build strong social connections in our community.

Once the mural was painted by workshop participants and the community, the mural was detailed and installed. The beautiful mural is now on display at Aspirus Wausau Hospital for all to enjoy. It resides in a courtyard stairwell outside the main cafeteria. RISE UP has three more projects under way with the support and partnership of Aspirus Wausau Hospital. Together we aim to heal, strengthen, and unify our community.

**Aspirus Wausau Hospital**

## FLAMBEAU HOSPITAL CONNECTS AGING COMMUNITIES

Flambeau Hospital serves an aging community and aims to meet these needs in a variety of ways. One piece of this equation is to foster educational opportunities created by high school students and aimed at senior citizens, which embrace the power of technology and its effect on long-term independence. This is the mission of the Connected Aging Communities (CAC) Coalition, a project of Flambeau Hospital, also supported by UW-Extension, Northcentral Technical College, three area libraries, and four area school districts.

As part of this endeavor, "Learn to Connect" asks high school students to develop curriculum and implement a mentoring program which introduces senior citizens to a multitude of technology platforms. According to Coalition Member Gail Huycke, these platforms include online "shopping, video conferencing, using library services, texting, using email, searching, cleaning out files, writing and sharing documents." The classes also explore personal interests and tap into connections brought by social media. High school students drive this content in partnership with their audience, encouraging both groups to realize how technology touches their lives.

According to Tom Kaster, Flambeau Hospital's Senior Finance Director and CAC Chair, "Learn to Connect opens doors to everyone. While seniors increase access to important functions like online banking, or checking personal medical records, students polish their leadership and communication skills.

Ultimately, intergenerational relationships form and thrive in the process, and what is most lasting is a sense of empathy and understanding of local issues for one another's neighbor." With those outcomes, the program has quickly grown.

**Flambeau Hospital, Park Falls**

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS TEAM HELPS CONNECT PATIENTS WITH CARE

Eighty percent (80%) of a person's health is determined by social factors, like food and housing, access to health care, income and education. To address these social determinants of health, Marshfield Clinic Health System, Family Health Center of Marshfield, Inc., and UW-Eau Claire created the Community Connections Team to engage volunteers, most of them university students, and provide referrals to community-based services for patients with unmet social needs.

This experience helps volunteers better understand how social, economic and environmental factors affect overall health and allows Marshfield Clinic health care providers to look beyond the usual scope of practice to improve health. During medical and dental visits, patients are screened for social needs and referred to volunteers who discuss needs, locate and share resources, and provide follow-up to ensure patients are connected with community resources.

Preliminary results of the program are showing an impact on several health indicators such as improved blood sugar, cholesterol, and BMI, along with decreased emergency department visits and appointment no-shows. Community Connections Team is pioneering new ways for clinic, campus and community partners to promote health. The program will be expanded to other clinic and community sites using student and community volunteers. Continuous monitoring will be done on the impact of the program providing evidence that can sustainably inform future work in health equity.

**Marshfield Clinic Health System**

## COMMUNITY PARAMEDIC PROGRAM LAUNCHES IN MERRILL

Ascension Good Samaritan Hospital and the Merrill Fire Department launched a Community Paramedic program to improve the health of people with chronic illnesses.

Ascension Good Samaritan serves a large rural and elderly community with a sizeable number of patients diagnosed with congestive heart failure (CHF), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and pneumonia.

*L to R: Jane Bentz, Community Outreach Coordinator, Ascension Good Samaritan Hospital; Merrill Fire Chief Dave Savone; Robyn Schertz, M.D., Medical Director of Emergency Services at Ascension Good Samaritan*

"Home health and skilled nursing services are excellent options for home-bound patients, but many with chronic illnesses do not meet the criteria for coverage under their health insurance," said Robyn Schertz, M.D., medical director of emergency services at Ascension Good Samaritan. "Community Paramedicine is an emerging health profession that serves to close this gap by using existing providers such as paramedics in expanded roles."

Referrals for the program originate with patients from Ascension Good Samaritan whose primary discharge diagnosis is COPD, pneumonia or CHF.

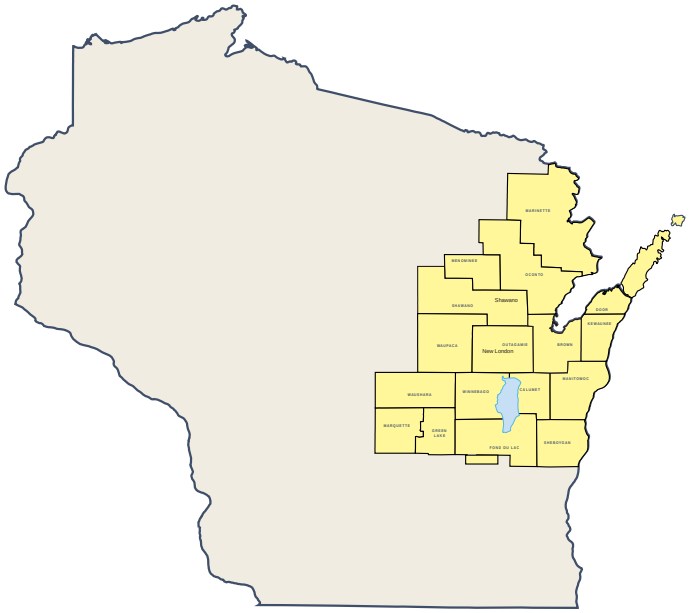
The program also provides a safety net for other important health issues and includes depression screening and a nutritional assessment with referrals to community services if concerns are discovered.

In addition, falls account for the most common cause of trauma, especially among the chronically ill or elderly populations. As a result, the community paramedic program will also offer home safety checks, a comprehensive review of the patient's home and surrounding structures that will identify and offer suggestions to remediate trip or fall hazards before an accident happens.

Funding for this program is provided by Ascension Good Samaritan as part of the hospital's commitment to measurable strategies to address identified community health needs.

**Ascension Good Samaritan Hospital, Merrill**

# Packerland Region




**Total Region Community Benefits: $276,880,322**

## GRATEFUL CARE

A young woman had recently experienced several health setbacks that made it difficult for her to continue working. Being self-employed, she was worried that she and her husband would quickly fall behind on household expenses and was unsure of what her insurance would cover.

Thankfully, she worked with a financial counselor at Ascension NE Wisconsin – St. Elizabeth Campus and applied for their financial assistance program. Because of her and her husband's unique situation, it took some extra time to get everything approved and there were a few setbacks along the way, but in the end, everything was approved.

When her financial counselor called her to share the good news, she erupted in tears, grateful for all that Ascension St. Elizabeth did to help get her finances and health back on track.

**Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Campus, Appleton**

## WHEN DIVORCE LEADS TO A GAP IN COVERAGE

Lucinda had been struggling to manage an illness for quite some time before she was admitted as an inpatient to Aurora BayCare Medical Center. Even though her symptoms started weeks prior and had been worsening, she avoided seeking medical help, as she was uninsured and unsure she'd be able to afford to pay medical bills.

Lucinda was newly divorced and living on her own. Although she was still working, her medical insurance had been through her ex-husband's employer. Gaining access to medical insurance following a divorce can be difficult, and Lucinda was struggling to find coverage that she could afford. She attempted to gain access through Medicaid, but she was denied due to being over the income limits.

While Lucinda was in the hospital, she completed a financial assessment with the hospital's financial advocate. Following the completion of the assessment, Lucinda was approved for the Aurora Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program at a 100% discount for the medical expenses she incurred while in the hospital.

Lucinda was deeply moved by her Aurora Helping Hand approval. "When I explained what the program was, she broke down into tears," said Aurora's financial advocate. "She said that this was such a weight lifted off her shoulders, and she felt blessed that this was something offered to her. She was so grateful and could not thank me or Aurora enough for helping her through this difficult time."

**Aurora BayCare Medical Center, Green Bay**

## A HELPING HAND DURING TIMES OF TRANSITION

Maria is a young woman, married with two children. She worked part-time through her most recent pregnancy, but had an unpaid maternity leave following the birth of her child. While she was pregnant, Maria had been able to gain medical coverage through BadgerCare. This coverage provided her with access to prenatal care, which is well known to help prevent pregnancy complications. Unfortunately, her coverage ended shortly following the birth of her child, leaving her uninsured again.

Because she had a limited income and is undocumented, Maria had a difficult time gaining access to coverage again.

Although her pregnancy was "normal," Maria experienced complications during labor. Her newborn child required emergency admittance to Children's Hospital of Wisconsin immediately following birth, and Maria had residual post-partum issues that required physical therapy to heal properly.

She needed help, so she reached out to the hospital's financial advocate, who helped Maria fill out a financial assessment. Maria was approved for the Aurora Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program, which enabled her to complete physical therapy, and in turn, enabled her to turn her full focus on healing and caring for her family.

**Aurora Medical Center in Manitowoc County, Two Rivers**

## A HELPING HAND WHEN IT'S HARD TO BREATHE

Michael was diagnosed many years prior with asthma. In the past, he was prescribed a long-term asthma control medication. When taken regularly, this medication controls chronic symptoms and prevents asthma attacks—the most important type of treatment for most people managing asthma.

Michael had been unable to gain access to asthma medications for quite some time, as he was uninsured, living on a limited income, and couldn't afford to purchase the medication out-of-pocket. When he began experiencing shortness of breath, he came to the emergency department (ED) at Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh. The ED providers determined that Michael's symptoms were so severe that if left untreated, they could become fatal.

Michael became very worried about how he would pay for his ED visit and the medications he needed, but the financial advocate had a plan:

"After a financial assessment, I was able to get Michael approved for the Aurora Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program. He was so happy when I explained that the approval meant he would not have to pay for his visit out-of-pocket, he began to cry tears of relief," the hospital's financial advocate reported. "I was also able to work with our local free clinic and get him the medication he needed at home, including a nebulizer, also at no cost. A clinic nurse even came to the ED to deliver the supplies and demonstrate how to use them at home."

**Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh**

## A HELPING HAND WHEN THE UNEXPECTED OCCURS

One Friday, during the last day of a long week at work, John experienced what he described as severe chest pain. He left work and headed straight to the emergency department (ED) at Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center.

A full examination by the ED physician determined that John, a 42-year-old single father who worked full-time, had a heart condition that required admittance to the hospital. When he provided his health care cooperative insurance card with his admittance paperwork, John found out that his insurance had lapsed. He later discovered that the bank account he used to auto-pay his coverage premium had been hacked and drained, preventing payment of his most recent premium from being processed.

John felt stuck. He was unable to get right back to work because of his newly discovered heart condition, and it would take time to work out the issues related to his hacked bank account. He found himself suddenly uninsured, faced with the challenge of recovering on a limited income and drained bank account.

Fearing the bills to follow, John reached out to the hospital's financial advocate, who helped him complete a financial assessment. John was approved for Aurora's Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program. The medical expenses he already incurred in the ED and the follow-up care he required would be covered at 100 percent.

With great relief, John was able to concentrate on getting better for his daughter and moving forward.

**Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center**

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE UNINSURED

Sam recently took a full-time job at a local retail store. Unfortunately, an unexpected health care situation occurred, and he ended up in the hospital at Holy Family Memorial. Sam had an outstanding bill of over $10,000. He had signed up for health insurance through his new job, but the coverage wouldn't kick in until after 90 days and he did not qualify for BadgerCare.

Holy Family Memorial was able to cover over half of Sam's medical bills through their Community Care Extreme Medical Debt Fund and offered him the loan program for the remainder of the balance.

**Holy Family Memorial, Manitowoc**

## AURORA BAYCARE MEDICAL CENTER PARTNERS WITH N.E.W. COMMUNITY CLINIC IN GREEN BAY

"I started a successful career in my 20s. I had everything I needed and for so long."

That's Beth, a 60-year-old board member—and client—of the N.E.W. Community Clinic in Brown County.

"But one day, all of that changed. I became unemployed, developed an illness and had no insurance."

Having depleted her resources, Beth moved in with her son and his wife. Her condition worsened. But then a kind soul told Beth about N.E.W. Community Clinic, one of Aurora BayCare Medical Center's Well Community partners that help low-income and uninsured people in the Greater Green Bay area access quality, comprehensive and compassionate health care.

This was enormous for Beth, who struggled with feeling like "less of a person."

Beth explained: "My doctor and I discussed medical probabilities together. I never felt rushed," she said. "The best part is that the staff and volunteers treated me with the utmost respect."

N.E.W. is not a place where you're seen by a doctor or dentist, then sent on your way. The clinic helps clients access the resources they need to live well when challenges arise.

Aurora BayCare Medical Center greatly values the partnership with the N.E.W. clinic. They have supported N.E.W. Clinic through the Aurora Better Together Fund and the "A Cause to Celebrate" event, and we continue to underwrite the costs for a bilingual pediatrician, Yolo Diaz, M.D., to see and treat children and their families at the N.E.W. location inside Nicolet School in Green Bay, Monday through Thursday mornings.

**Aurora BayCare Medical Center, Green Bay**

## AURORA MEDICAL CENTER AND LAKESHORE COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE: THE BACK STORY

Aurora Medical Center in Manitowoc County has had a longstanding partnership with Healthy Teeth Healthy Community of Manitowoc County Inc., which was operating a successful free dental program. Aurora was one of the "founders" for expanding the clinic to provide medical and behavioral health as Community Clinics of Manitowoc County, working with other community leaders since December 2010, providing both in-kind leadership and financial support. It donated $15,000/year for three years to get it started.

After a few years of working with Northeast WI Area Health Education Center, Public Health, and Holy Family Memorial, it was determined that Community Clinics of Manitowoc County could not meet all the criteria for a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) by itself. Since Aurora Medical Center - Manitowoc County worked very closely with Aurora Sheboygan Medical Center, they were able to partner and become an FQHC under the same umbrella: Lakeshore Community Health Care, Inc. (LCHC).

Aurora Medical Center - Manitowoc County has continued to be part of this service since the opening of LCHC in October 2015. Aurora's chief nursing officer serves on the Manitowoc Advisory Committee to the LCHC board. Aurora provides radiology services for patients referred from LCHC and works closely with LCHC on referrals from the ER. LCHC received $1 million through Aurora's Better Together Fund to support and expand medical and behavioral health services in both Sheboygan and Manitowoc, along with additional in-kind donations, to help LCHC implement Epic's electronic medical record for their medical and behavioral health services.

**Aurora Medical Center in Manitowoc County, Two Rivers**

## FINDING A REASON TO SMILE THANKS TO SUPPORT FROM HSHS-EASTERN WISCONSIN DIVISION

When you meet six-year-old Viviana, she seems like many other shy six-year-olds. But looking at her now, you wouldn't know the struggles she endured just four years ago.

When Viviana was two years old, while living in Honduras, she suffered from seizures. The medication she was prescribed caused a high level of bacteria in her mouth, which in part caused severe dental problems.

Viviana struggled socially as she developed decay and visible cavities on her teeth.

*Viviana and her mother after Viviana's post-surgery checkup*

Thanks to a new pilot program in Brown County, Viviana's mother says her daughter was able to see a specialist at St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center in Green Bay. While under anesthesia, Viviana underwent a full mouth restoration.

The pilot program, which is in its first year, is operated by the Oral Health Partnership, in conjunction with Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS). The system agreed to open its doors for children who require dental procedures, free of charge to families struggling financially.

Viviana's mother, Mirsa, says they are grateful. "Viviana didn't like to look at her teeth because they had cavities she could see. But now she likes to look at her teeth and shows them off to her friends," said Mirsa.

Many families who've inquired about the pilot program have been eligible to receive emergency Medicaid assistance or other coverage, they just didn't know it. Program advisors were able to help connect those families with the additional resources.

From May through December 2018, HSHS expects to provide up to $25,000 and other free administrative support.

**HSHS St. Vincent Hospital / HSHS St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center, Green Bay**

## TWO NEW CLINIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR AURORA MEDICAL CENTER IN OSHKOSH IN 2018

The Living Healthy Community Clinic (LHCC) was operated by the UW Oshkosh College of Nursing for over 20 years to provide a safety net for the uninsured. Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh along with other community entities provided financial and in-kind support to the LHCC. When UW Oshkosh decided to close the LHCC at the end of 2017, Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh responded to the efforts of two other entities to fill the gap.

1. *Father Carr's Place 2B* is a faith-based ministry encompassing housing, a food pantry, spiritual services and a drop-in medical clinic, the "St. Francis Clinic." Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh President Dr. John Newman visited the St. Francis Clinic and offered advice and support regarding their rapid growth. They help patients obtain benefits from programs such as Medicaid, and offer free lab, X-ray, and specialty consults if a patient's household income is less than 250% of the federal poverty level.

2. *Partnership Community Health Center* (PCHC) is a federally qualified health center serving Winnebago County that previously had only Fox Cities locations to the north of Oshkosh. For several years, PCHC has operated a dental clinic near Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh. With the closing of the LHCC, PCHC moved rapidly to offer a primary care nurse practitioner two days per week in their Oshkosh location.

With a strong awareness of the social determinants of health, Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh is committed to its partnership with the St. Francis Clinic and PCHC to ensure medical needs are met for individuals and families with economic, housing and food insecurity. We look forward to the next chapters in our local collaborations.

**Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh**

## AURORA SHEBOYGAN MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER HELPS LCHC AND SALVATION ARMY

Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center maintains a close partnership with Lakeshore Community Health Care (LCHC), a Federally Qualified Health Center that provides primary and preventive medical, oral and behavioral health services to uninsured and underinsured individuals in Sheboygan County and surrounding communities. In 2015, Aurora provided pro bono support to implement and maintain LCHC's electronic medical record, Smart Chart Connect (SCC). During 2017, LCHC provided a patient-centered medical home for 92 uninsured patients first treated in our ED.

Additionally, Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center provides free lab testing for patients referred from the Salvation Army Red Shield Clinic.

**Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center**

## BLESSINGS ABOUND

For Stephanie Hanes and her husband, Ted, you would never guess the road they have faced together in 12 years of marriage. As Fond du Lac residents, they enjoy life with their five children - Valerie, Almanzo, Oliver, Faith and Wyatt.

*The Hanes Family*

Stephanie is finding great fulfillment raising her children as a stay-at-home mom. "I always knew my calling was to be a mom," Stephanie says. "We knew we wanted a lot of children."

Stephanie graduated from Marian University and was teaching at Trinity Baptist School for two years when she became pregnant. Lisa Weber, MD, was her primary care physician with Agnesian HealthCare, and Mary Schultz, MD, was her obstetrician.

"My pregnancies were always difficult for various medical reasons," Stephanie recalls. "I was fortunate that I had tremendous support from my husband, family and church. When Oliver was only a year old, I discovered we were expecting again. I had symptoms that sent me to the emergency department, and unfortunately, it ended in a miscarriage."

Between Faith and Wyatt, the couple suffered a devastating second loss. "I never thought it would happen again," according to Stephanie. "With that emotional loss, I didn't take the time I should have to talk with other moms or a counselor."

A third miscarriage occurred. "I was hurt and angry and scared," she says. "In May 2017 when Wyatt was conceived, the whole family was scared and nervous. We were afraid to hope."

That's when Stephanie took advantage of one-on-one grief support, as well as support group participation through Resolve Through Sharing® (RTS) Bereavement Services. "They just listened and let me be real and cry," Stephanie says. "They acknowledged that my miscarriages were a loss and that those children mattered."

Resolve Through Sharing® (RTS) is a specialized support group program for those who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death.

**Agnesian HealthCare, Fond du Lac**

## BUILDING STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS ALCOHOL AND DRUG MISUSE IN BROWN COUNTY

During Aurora BayCare Medical Center's most recent Community Health Needs Assessment, drug use was identified as one of the top four health issues challenging the community. Aurora BayCare Medical Center is addressing unhealthy drug use in Brown County through the hospital's implementation strategy, including:

- Designating experts from the hospital team to serve on Healthy Brown County 2020 alcohol and drug-use action group 2018, focused on barriers to treatment. Additionally:
    - » Paramedic, EMT, and first-responder partners are beginning to collect data on overdoses to share as the group develops strategies to educate community members.
    - » The group installed locked drop boxes in safe locations within the community and is educating community members about how to safely dispose of their unused medications.

- Developing a Suboxone clinic in Brown County in collaboration with clinic partners to increase access to treatment.
- Supporting the Jackie Nitschke Center. This intensive, continuous, and personal substance abuse treatment facility reaches out to individuals and families affected by addiction and raises awareness around AODA issues in the Greater Green Bay area. In May 2018, Aurora BayCare Medical Center fulfilled part of this commitment by hosting A Cause to Celebrate, which raised more than $65,000 to support the Jackie Nitschke Center.

Through further development and implementation of these strategies, Aurora BayCare Medical Center hopes to increase access to resources that help those managing alcohol and drug abuse and provide community education on preventing possible drug misuse.

**Aurora BayCare Medical Center, Green Bay**

## REACHING OUT TO MANITOWOC'S HMONG COMMUNITY

Expanding access to health care for diverse groups, as well outreach services and educational opportunities specifically targeted to reach identified groups, is a system-wide focus within Aurora Health Care.

Team members at Aurora Medical Center in Manitowoc County have been working to expand the hospital's relationship with the local Hmong Community. They began by developing a plan to hold an open house to introduce Hmong students to health careers. To explore other opportunities, community members were invited to attend a monthly meeting.

Hmong representatives from Lakeshore Technical College, Job Center, UW-Manitowoc, Lakeshore CAP, and Catholic Charities attended the meetings. But after hearing of our plan to reach out to students, they informed us that our plan was flawed. What we learned from them was that no student would come to the event because we are "unfamiliar" to them, and that, in order to reach the children of Hmong families, we first need to build relationships with the parents.

Each time this group met, our team learned more about the Hmong culture and the unique needs of Hmong families within Manitowoc County. We changed our strategy from providing exposure to health professions to providing health education and screenings at local Hmong outreach events.

*A free screening at Aurora's Hmong Family Ties event*

So far, our team has been well-received within the Hmong community. We've been invited to provide health outreach at a variety of events and are continuing to look for additional ways we can support the community.

**Aurora Medical Center in Manitowoc County, Two Rivers**

## SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

According to Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh's most recent Community Health Needs Assessment, the rate of rape for Winnebago County was 17 reports per 100,000 persons. But varied definitions of rape and sexual assault/violence result in underreporting.

Specialized trauma-informed care and compassion is essential for survivors of sexual assault to move beyond the trauma of assault in order to begin their healing journey.

"When patients come in, they're traumatized and in crisis," said Brenda Doolittle, a Forensic Nurse Examiner and Sexual Assault Department Supervisor at Aurora Medical Center Oshkosh. They need a place that's safe, comfortable, relaxing and private, and they need trauma-informed care," she continued.

But that's just the beginning. Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh has advocates who meet and follow up with survivors and assist them with filing police reports, preparing for court

proceedings, and in obtaining counseling and other support they need to move forward with their lives

During 2017, Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh Forensic Nurse Examiners:

- Provided 115 people with trauma-informed care in response to sexual assault;
- Referred 150 people to community partners for continued services and support; and,
- Conducted 75 community education, prevention and outreach training sessions for 1,925 community members.

"If we provide survivors with the support they need, we can help them gain control of their healing journey and give them the tools they need to prevent secondary physical and emotional health problems from developing," said Doolittle.

**Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh**

## GETTING KIDSHAPE IN THE CLASSROOM WITH PLYMOUTH JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Aurora's KidShape program*

In Sheboygan County's 2017 Community Health Needs Assessment, nutrition and physical activity was identified as a top health issue, with 68% of the children engaging in physical activity for 60 minutes at least five days out of the week.

KidShape is a six-week family-based program to help reduce childhood obesity, first offered in 2017 to the Plymouth Joint School District and presented to three first-grade classrooms, reaching a total of 75 children and their families. Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center's Wellness Coordinator Michelle Urbanek, and Dietitian Jane Uraynar, facilitated the program, with weekly lessons including physical exercise, trying new foods, and educational materials for parents.

Students were surveyed at the end of the program to determine their retention of concepts. They reported the importance of eating family meals, and, when polled, the majority of kids increased the number of family meals they ate together. Students were able to list all of the MyPlate categories and healthy food options in each, and healthy fitness activities to meet their daily goal of being active for 60 minutes.

Heather, a Horizon Elementary teacher, reported: "The kids and I enjoyed the different activities each week, sampling smoothies and making snacks, as well the movement and exercise, from troll yoga (one of the kids' favorites) to planking. I would love to do this program again when we do our 'all about me' science unit."

**Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center**

## CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF WISCONSIN'S TREATMENT FOSTER CARE SERVICES PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH THE CARE AND SUPPORT THEY NEED

With over 125 years of experience caring for children and families, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Community Services offers a multitude of services across the state, including foster care and adoption services.

Children's provides family-centered and strengths-based programs to help keep children safely at home in a nurturing environment. If children require out-of-home placement, Children's work diligently to move children to permanency through reunification with parents, placement with relatives, guardianship transfer or adoption.

Out-of-home care services are offered throughout the state from office locations in Baraboo, Eau Claire, Kenosha, Madison, Milwaukee, Neenah and Wauwatosa. In addition to general foster care and family case management, Children's also provides treatment foster care and special needs adoption services. Out-of-home placement ensures safety while parents enhance their protective capabilities.

A Children's treatment foster family from the Fox Valley area took placement of an eight-year-old boy who is deaf and was diagnosed with Noonan syndrome, which causes heart, growth and development concerns. Previously, he had struggled to gain weight and had very limited communication skills.

Since being placed with the family, he has made significant improvements, including participating in therapy to learn how to eat orally, gaining weight and learning to sign. For the first time in his life he is able to effectively communicate.

Providing children with a connection to family and appropriate care and support helps them on a path to success and makes them more likely to finish school, find a job, achieve stable housing and grow into a healthy adult.

**Children's Hospital of Wisconsin - Fox Valley, Neenah**

## ROOM TO GROW AT THE COMMUNITY'S GARDEN

*Community Garden in full bloom*

In late summer, The Community's Garden is teeming with a variety of herbs, vegetables, flowers and pollinators. Located on Door County Medical Center's (DCMC) campus at 16th Place in Sturgeon Bay. The 20' X 20' plots are rented to individuals for $40/year. In promoting good health, DCMC offered a 50% reduction on the rental fee for families who receive SNAP benefits through FoodShare, WI.

The mission of The Community's Garden is to showcase the connection between a community's well-being and nature. This year, 43 gardeners are harvesting 42 plots, rounding out another successful growing season at The Community's Garden.

"The garden is a laboratory for learning," says Carmen Schroeder, a Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist at DCMC and board member of The Community's Garden. "It provides access to gardening, a place for healing and camaraderie, and a way for the community to work together to be good stewards of our land."

Schroeder says it has been exciting to see the garden evolve and to meet new strategic goals over the years. At the start of this year's season, five raised garden beds were added to accommodate gardeners. Whatever your level of gardening proficiency, there is room for you to grow at The Community's Garden!

**Door County Medical Center, Sturgeon Bay**

## BELLIN'S PEER RECOVERY COACHES HELP FIGHT OVERDOSE EPIDEMIC

Drug addictions affect millions of people in the U.S., with drug overdoses now the leading cause of death among Americans under age 50. Every day, emergency rooms see an increasing number of patients who have overdosed on opioids and other drugs.

With the help of a federal grant administered through Wisconsin Voices for Recovery, Bellin Health has teamed up with Green Bay's DarJune Recovery Community for a new approach to helping those facing addiction. The grant is funding a program that trains and places Peer Recovery Coaches in the Bellin Hospital Emergency Department.

"The use of recovery coaches in the Emergency Department is helping to bridge a gap that is sometimes experienced by patients and families after an overdose or other drug issues," said Laura Hieb, Bellin's Chief Nursing Officer. "It's another way of utilizing community resources to help patients make the transition to treatment as quickly as possible."

*Bellin Health has teamed with a local recovery organization to place trained Peer Recovery Coaches in the Bellin Hospital Emergency Dept.*

The peer recovery coaches go through 30 hours of training, are certified and are scheduled so there is 24/7 coverage for the Emergency Department.

"The peer recovery coaches offer recovery advice and support," said Mandy Suthers, DarJune CEO and founder. "They help individuals with substance abuse problems as they face a range of life problems—from unemployment to housing—that often hamper recovery."

The Bellin - DarJune program began in January 2018. It is one of seven pilot peer recovery coaching programs now underway in Wisconsin.

**Bellin Health, Green Bay**

## CREATING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

Holy Family Memorial's mission is to achieve a healthier community. Everything they do, every day, focuses on this. With that in mind, Holy Family Memorial created a Wellness Fund to assist individuals who are ready to take that first, positive step toward a healthier life.

The Wellness Fund is available to anyone who needs financial assistance to participate in a program to help improve a health outcome. Examples of programming include fitness center membership, nutrition counseling, tobacco cessation and a diabetes prevention program.

Holy Family Memorial invests in these individuals' participation in various wellness programs and the individual makes a nominal ownership investment and commit to participate.

In 2017, 30 individuals took the opportunity to make a healthier change in their life. Each person lost an average of 11.5 pounds! Holy Family Memorial received an overwhelming number of positive responses. One individual noted that they were able to lose over 20 pounds, and the weight loss helped ease their surgery recovery.

The result of the Holy Family Memorial Wellness Fund—a healthier community, one person at a time.

**Holy Family Memorial, Manitowoc**

## HSHS ST. CLARE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL HELPS THE HOMELESS

Anyone with the right training can change a dressing or treat a patient, but the team at the Oconto Falls HSHS St. Clare Regional Wound Care and Hyperbaric Center went beyond the customary and ordinary to help a homeless man. Through their generosity and compassion, they truly lived the HSHS mission of revealing and embodying Christ's healing love.

*SCO Wound Center Staff*

"Our patients' care, both here and away from our hospital, is our No. 1 priority," said Cathy Delveaux, lead tech at the center. "We truly love being able to help our patients in any way we can."

In 2017, the center started treating a man whose legs were paralyzed and partially amputated. When the staff in Oconto Falls learned he was living in his van, they sprang into action to help.

- Through an arrangement with the Pastoral Care Department, he received a hot meal from the cafeteria on treatment days.
- Staff members gave him cases of water they had purchased, fresh produce from their gardens, and bag lunches brought from home.
- On 90-degree days they encouraged him to remain at the hospital after appointments and gave him screens and duct tape to put in the van's windows to keep the mosquitos out on summer nights.
- They assisted him into clean clothes he would bring with him to the center and helped him acquire a wheelchair and van donated by another patient.
- They provided a private room where he could meet with a care manager from a social service agency and sat in on the meetings to answer questions.

Eventually, housing was arranged for him in Marinette County, but he is remembered fondly by the staff in Oconto Falls.

**HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital, Oconto Falls**

## HSHS ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL SUPPORTS MINDFUL CLASSROOM INITIATIVE

For more than 50 years, through advocacy, education and information, Mental Health America in Sheboygan County has worked to raise awareness and cut the stigma surrounding mental health.

One of its programs is the Mindful Classroom, which utilizes an evidence-based curriculum to train teachers and students to create calmer classrooms. The program was originally developed by Growing Minds.

During the 10-week program, students learn:

- Focus and attention by noticing their surroundings and cutting distractions
- Self-awareness and self-regulation using the five senses; students learn to be present and pause to make more thoughtful choices
- To be aware of thoughts and emotions
- Kindness, generosity, gratitude and compassion in order to build social skills and relationships

While the program has been implemented for a couple of years, the program saw its greatest success during the 2017 school year. Sixty-five classrooms and more than 1,200 students participated. Based on surveys, 80 percent of students reported better focus in the classroom and 95 percent of educators reported calmer classrooms.

Through a contribution provided by HSHS St. Nicholas Hospital, more students and teachers were able to participate in the program.

"With HSHS St. Nicholas Hospital's support, in the last school year we have been able to serve 40 percent more students and the outcomes have been phenomenal. With youth facing increased stress and trauma, numbers like these show we are working upstream and making a difference," said Kate Baer, Executive Director of Mental Health America in Sheboygan County.

**HSHS St. Nicholas Hospital, Sheboygan**

## STAR (SCHOLARS ON TARGET TO ACHIEVE RESULTS): CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE YOUTH IN THE FOX CITIES

*STAR Coordinators build relationship with students upon which to build for success.*

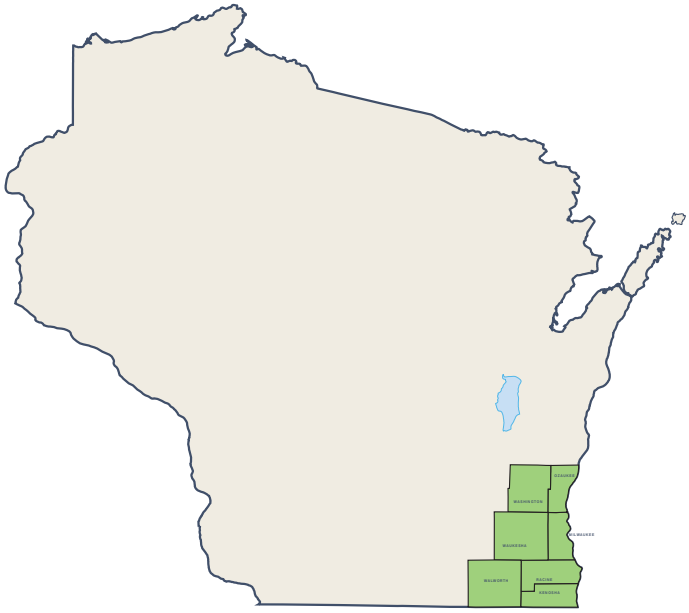
ThedaCare led an effort to understand the experience of people who are Black/African American living in the predominantly white Fox Cities. One discovery was the 20%= differential between graduation rates of black vs. white high school students. As a result, the Scholars on Target to Achieve Results (STAR) program was developed.

Partners in this program include African Heritage, Inc., the Boys & Girls Club of the Fox Valley, local colleges and universities, United Way, Community Foundation, law enforcement, Appleton and Menasha school districts, ThedaCare, and others.

STAR, which is housed through the Boys & Girls Club, provides additional supportive relationships to help give students what they need to be successful. The goal is to impact graduation rates, the percent of students on track to graduate and post-secondary enrollment. The STAR program began a pilot in February 2018. To date 123 youth have enrolled.

**ThedaCare, Appleton**

# Southeastern Region



**Total Region Community Benefits: $681,067,619**

## FINDING A HELPING HAND IN HOPE OF A BETTER LIFE

S.S., age 25 and a single native of Thailand came to the United States as a refugee in 2016. During his refugee health exam (a requirement to obtain visa approval), he was informed he had chronic hepatitis B, meaning he would need long-term medical care, which he received at Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center through Medicaid.

When S.S. obtained his permanent resident card, he began working for a temporary agency that did not provide insurance. In June 2018, his Medicaid insurance ended because his income had raised over the eligibility limits.

Faced with the challenge of not speaking English and having been temporarily insured for the first time in his life when he arrived in the U.S., he did not understand the concept or nuances of why his insurance ended or how to access coverage.

During a visit with his physician in June, one of the nurses connected him with the hospital's financial advocate. With help from one of the hospital's interpreters who spoke with S.S. in his native tongue, the financial advocate was able to help him complete a financial assessment. Upon completion, not only was he able to purchase insurance from the Marketplace, he gained approval to receive Aurora Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance to cover the gap between Medicaid ending and the start of his new coverage.

**Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center, Milwaukee**

## A LETTER OF THANKS FOR YOUR HELPING HAND

"A couple of years ago, I drained my savings and ran up my credit cards trying to cover household expenses, which put me in financial ruin. I am a single person, and I live from check-to-check trying to get caught up on my bills and regain control of my finances.

"I didn't have insurance and I couldn't afford insurance. At the time I checked into insurance, it was more than I could afford and I didn't qualify for BadgerCare, even though I barely had enough to cover my day-to-day living expenses. I was stuck between a rock and a hard place.

"When I learned I needed a medical procedure, you took the time to show me that I could get insurance through the Marketplace, and you took the time to help me through the process of applying for Aurora's Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program.

"I can't begin to tell you how much you helped me. If it weren't for you and Aurora Helping Hand, I wouldn't have received the procedure I needed, because I would have been too scared to add another bill on top of my pile of debt. You helped me find peace-of-mind knowing that my health is back on track.

"I am grateful for all the work you did to help me. Hopefully others recognize what a wonderful asset you and Aurora Helping Hand are to people in need."

Sincerely,
A grateful patient

**Aurora Lakeland Medical Center, Elkhorn**

## AN UNEXPECTED GIFT

When Phillip* visited the emergency department at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital Ozaukee for abdominal pain in early May 2018, he never expected it would end with a cancer diagnosis.

Phillip's initial visit to the emergency department led to a nine-day stay in the hospital, further testing, and follow-up with an oncologist. By mid-May, Phillip was diagnosed with stage four colon cancer and incurred more than $60,000 in medical debt. Shortly after his diagnosis, Phillip's employer encouraged him to take time to focus on his health and decreased his hours at work. His sudden loss of income led Phillip to our financial assistance counselor, Sonia.

Sonia worked with Phillip to review his options for insurance or social security disability. At only 50 years old, Phillip was optimistic about his diagnosis, wanted to stay busy and felt he

had enough energy to continue working and declined disability. Knowing he would incur additional debt during his cancer treatment, Sonia worked with Phillip to get him approved for Ascension's financial assistance program. Now, 100% of Phillip's cancer treatment is covered at no cost.

"I am extremely grateful to Sonia and to the care team at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Van Dyke Cancer Center," said Phillip. "Everyone has been so kind and helpful from the very beginning. Thank you."

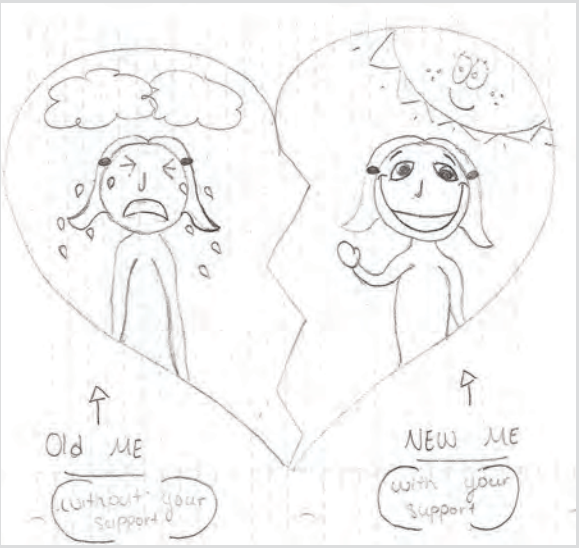
**name changed to protect patient identity*

**Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital Ozaukee, Mequon**

## ROGERS PATIENT CARE GRANT INSPIRES GIRL TO "JUMP FOR JOY WITH GLEE"

"I can't thank you enough for all the support you've given me to get through treatment! When I came to Rogers, I couldn't sit down, couldn't wear a coat, couldn't sleep with a blanket, couldn't shower or do self-care, couldn't stop following my mom around all day long, and much more. You have changed my life for the better, and I don't know how to praise you enough.

"Also, I think you deserve much more than just a 'Thank You' on a piece of paper. You've given me so much time to recover here at Rogers, and you have given me so much effort, kindness, and hospitality to try and get me the help I need. This facility is amazing and has the best coworkers to give us




confidence to redeem our normal life back without OCD and anxiety! Your organization has helped many people overcome the 'impossible,' but guess what? You have just made the 'impossible' change to the 'POSSIBLE' in this little heart of mine therefore changing MY WORLD!

"I used to not be able to smile because of my OCD, but now I'm able to jump for joy with glee that I've been cured and helped. So now I can finally move on to more exciting possibilities in life! I wish I could just come out and hug you because I'm so thankful for all you've done for me!!!"

Through the patient care grant program, Rogers Memorial Hospital Foundation provided $833,000 in charity care last year.

**Rogers Behavioral Health, Oconomowoc**

## ACCESS TO SPECIALTY CARE FOR THE UNINSURED—A COORDINATED APPROACH

With 8-10% of Milwaukee county residents uninsured at any point in time, Milwaukee's health systems have sponsored free clinics and worked closely with federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and other community clinics to weave a stronger safety net of care for low-income and vulnerable individuals. But, access to specialty medical care for uninsured adults has been a very challenging issue.

Through the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership, the four Milwaukee health systems—Aurora Health Care, Ascension, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, and Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin—established the Specialty Access for Uninsured Program (SAUP) to create a barrier-free, coordinated process to provide much needed specialty diagnostics and treatment for uninsured patients.

The SAUP offers timely, managed, and clinically appropriate access to specialty care for more than 17,000 uninsured patients who are established in a primary care medical home at one of Milwaukee's 11 participating safety net clinics. The result? Since 2012, the three adult health systems have guided more than 11,000 referrals for specialty services—from arthritis to vascular surgery!

Maria is very grateful for her SAUP experience. Challenged by rheumatoid arthritis, she was on the verge of using a wheelchair, unable to work and depressed. Her FQHC provider enrolled her in SAUP, and Maria attended regular appointments with a health system's rheumatologist, knowing that her lack of insurance was not a barrier. Now she is walking, doing household chores and back to work.

"Thanks to SAUP, I have my life back," says Maria.

**Milwaukee Health Care Partnership**

## A HELPING HAND WHEN YOU CAN'T DO IT ALL ALONE

For years, Alyssa was determined to effectively manage her diabetes on her own by visiting her primary care physician often to ensure that she was on track and that her levels were controlled.

Alyssa is a single woman and works a lot of overtime. Recently, when her finances were reevaluated, she lost her BadgerCare coverage due to being slightly over the income limits. Unsure of how to gain access to insurance and aware that she couldn't afford to pay for medical services out-of-pocket, she attempted to manage her diabetes completely on her own.

After a short time, however, Alyssa developed new, serious symptoms: light-headedness upon standing and an increased heart rate. When the symptoms began to increase in severity and frequency, she went to the Emergency Department (ED) at Aurora Medical Center in Grafton.

When Alyssa revealed her financial situation to her care providers in the ED, they called the hospital's financial advocate, who immediately met with Alyssa. The advocate was able to help Alyssa apply and receive approval for Aurora's Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance program.

Alyssa was relieved and overjoyed. In her note to the financial advocate she said, "Now I can get back to managing my diabetes the right way and hopefully avoid another visit to the hospital ED in the future!"

**Aurora Medical Center in Grafton**

## COMMUNITY CARE REUNITES MICHIGAN MOM WITH BABY

A new mom from Michigan was visiting Wisconsin with her boyfriend last summer when she suffered cardiac arrest and had to be admitted to Ascension Franklin Campus. She spent many days in the ICU and after weeks of gaining strength was ready for inpatient rehabilitation. Unfortunately, because of her Michigan Medicaid insurance, her care team could not find a facility to transfer her to. Because of her condition, she required costly medical transport back to Michigan that her insurance would also not cover.

Cynthia Ramirez, RN, Case Management Supervisor, along with other members of her team and departments throughout the hospital started to think creatively to help this patient get back home. "We wanted to get this patient the care she needed and get her back with her baby and family in Michigan," Ramirez said.

The team, with help from Jean Kasulke, case manager, was able to find a rehab facility in Michigan that would accept her, secure medical transportation and provide several medications at no cost to the patient.

"There were many people involved who worked very hard in order to make this happen. It was a total team effort," said Sheila Gansemer, Vice President, Patient Care Services, Ascension Franklin.

The patient and her boyfriend expressed gratitude for the compassionate care they received and reuniting their family.

**Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Franklin Campus**

## A HELPING HAND WHEN SYMPTOMS WORSEN

Shannon was diagnosed with hypothyroidism a few years ago. She was familiar with many of the symptoms: fatigue, dry skin, weight gain, thinning hair and even depression. However, she started experiencing something new and scary: blood in her urine.

Even though Shannon didn't have a steady income and was uninsured, she knew that blood in her urine could mean something serious was happening. She could not afford to pay for medical care, but after seeing blood in her urine consistently for a couple of days, she went to the Emergency Department (ED) at Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha for an exam.

The ED physician conducted diagnostic tests and informed Shannon that she needed surgery to correct the thyroid bleed she was experiencing, and that the issue would continue to worsen if were not treated.

Shannon was panicked, not only worried about her health, but about expenses piling up for the medical treatment she needed.

The ED team contacted the hospital's financial advocate and asked him to meet with Shannon. After collecting Shannon's information and conducting a brief financial assessment, the advocate helped Shannon apply for Aurora's Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program. Shannon was approved for a 100% discount on the care she already received in the ED and for the surgery and follow-up care she required to recover and resume her plans for getting on with her life.

**Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha**

## ASCENSION ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL'S COMMUNITY CARE HELPS MILWAUKEE WOMAN STAY ON HER FEET

"Ella" has her hands full as a single mother caring for her 33-year-old son with cerebral palsy. Another challenge is dealing with multiple sclerosis (MS) for the past 36 years. She adores her physician, Dr. Bhupendra Khatri, she sees at Ascension St. Francis Hospital; but when her medication started to become ineffective at controlling her symptoms, she was leery about trying an IV treatment he suggested because of the $2,000 a month price tag. While she believed it may slow the progression of the disease, she had no idea how she would pay for it.

Dr. Khatri connected her with Financial Counselor Sue Hider to see if she would qualify for the Ascension St. Francis Hospital's community care program. Ella explained to Sue that while she had insurance she could not pay the high deductible that came along with it.

"I knew how much Ella had on her plate caring for her son and dealing with a chronic disease. It was my privilege to help her get the financial help she needed so she could afford the treatment that would improve her health," Hider said.

The costly infusion treatments are working, and Ella is still walking with the assistance of a cane and even exercising several times a week.

"I'm doing really well. That Sue is such a sweetheart. I don't even know what my life would be right now without those treatments. I'd never be able to afford them on my own. I'm so grateful for the helping hand when I needed it most," she said.

**Ascension St. Francis Hospital, Milwaukee**

## A HELPING HAND TO CARE FOR YOURSELF

Patricia cares for her elderly mother full-time. To bring in some income, she also works part-time in the evenings as a server at a local restaurant. Because of her part-time employment status, she doesn't qualify for medical benefits through her employer.

Overall, Patricia considered herself to be in good health, but recently began experiencing unfamiliar symptoms. Throughout the day, she would frequently feel sluggish and had an unquenchable thirst that would not go away regardless of the amount of water she consumed. She also started developing headaches that often could not be relieved with over-the-counter headache medications.

Suddenly, during one of her evening shifts, Patricia started to sweat and her vision became blurred. Her friend immediately drove her to the Emergency Department (ED) at Aurora Medical Center Summit, where the ED physicians determined that Patricia was diabetic and was experiencing a diabetic attack.

Patricia had not seen a doctor in years due to being uninsured, and she had no idea that she was diabetic. Informed of her new diagnosis, she knew she needed to talk with a financial advocate. Together, Patricia and the financial advocate completed a financial screening, and Patricia was approved for Aurora's Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program.

The approval enabled her to receive follow-up care and work with a medical professional to get her diabetes under control so she could find relief from her symptoms, continue working and continue providing care for her mother.

**Aurora Medical Center in Summit**

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE EASES STRESS FOR MILWAUKEE WOMAN

When 64-year-old "Christie" felt ill in March 2018, she knew it wasn't the usual aches and pains. She was having trouble breathing. Christie visited an urgent care and was diagnosed with pneumonia; she was prescribed antibiotics and told if she felt any worse to get to Ascension St. Joseph Campus. She did get worse but didn't want to go to the hospital because she knew she couldn't afford it.

After seeing her lung specialist, Ascension physician Dr. Om Prakash Ahuja, Christie was admitted to Ascension St. Joseph and stayed there for four days. She was feeling better but sick with worry over the upcoming medical bills. Christie was put in touch with Financial Counselor Monique Jenkins who helped her qualify for Ascension St. Joseph's Community Care Program.

"It makes my day when I'm able to help someone and relieve their financial stress," said Monique.

"I just couldn't believe it. I owed close to $3,000 that I couldn't pay, and they just took care of it. I never even got a bill. I can't tell you how grateful I am and what lifting that burden meant to me," said Christie.

She was so appreciative, she sent Monique a thank you card—Monique's first since becoming a financial counselor in December 2017.

"It was so unexpected to get that sweet note from her. It meant a lot to me," Monique said.

Christie is still recovering from multiple ailments, but not worrying about a stack of bills helps her focus on getting stronger.

**Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - St. Joseph Campus, Milwaukee**

## A HELPING HAND WHEN ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

Maria was removing snow from the sidewalk in front of her house when she slipped on a patch of ice and landed on her arm. When she attempted to get up, she realized she could no longer move her arm.

Maria has been a long-time patient of the Albrecht Free Clinic, so she went there for medical care. After the clinic's physician evaluated the injury, he directed Maria to go to the Emergency Department (ED) at Aurora Medical Center in Washington County as her injuries required care that was beyond the capabilities of the clinic.

During the short drive over to the hospital's ED, Maria began to feel anxiety about the fact that she had no insurance and lived on a limited income. She wasn't sure how she would be able to afford to pay for the medical expenses she was about to incur.

After the ED providers assessed and cared for Maria's injury and discharged her from the ED, Maria visited the hospital's financial advocate, who walked her through a financial assessment. Although she wasn't eligible for any public programs at the time, Maria was approved for a 100% discount on the medical care she received that day through Aurora's Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program. In addition, the approval meant that she was also able to receive the physical therapy services necessary to achieve a full recovery.

**Aurora Medical Center in Washington County, Hartford**

## ROGERS' PATIENT CARE GRANT GIVES KRISTY UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT

At the age of 10, Kristy moved out west with a dream of skiing at the Olympics. Over the next six years, her team's coaches became family…except one.

Kristy's dreams were shattered as she secretly lived under the abuse of one of her coaches for two years before returning home, and her pain and destructive eating disorder behaviors followed her.

*Kristy found support, peace and safety*

Being from Oconomowoc, Kristy was embarrassed to go to Rogers Behavioral Health, so she eventually sought treatment across the country instead. Afterward, a severe relapse led her to Rogers' inpatient program, and then to the partial hospitalization program for eating disorders.

Kristy explains what happened next: "Four weeks into the program, my insurance company denied coverage. After already being $100,000 in debt, I felt like giving up. It wasn't until my therapist asked me why, that I finally spoke about the rape."

Kristy's therapist recommended her for a patient care grant from Rogers Foundation to attend the partial hospitalization program for PTSD to address her trauma.

"When I learned about the grant, I accepted it conditionally. I told myself that I would give it my all, and if it didn't work, I was going to take my own life."

Thankfully, after 16 weeks of hard work, Kristy found freedom, peace, and safety. She says that if it weren't for the grant and her family, she would not be here today.

"I know that every day, I can choose to make it a good day. I now understand that there's more to life than to just survive."

Through the patient care grant program, Rogers Memorial Hospital Foundation provided $833,000 in charity care last year.

**Rogers Behavioral Health, West Allis**

## FILLING THE COVERAGE GAP

K.K., a 64-year-old woman, arrived to the Emergency Department (ED) at Aurora Medical Center Burlington experiencing severe symptoms due to a serious medical condition. K.K. informed the staff that she knew her condition was serious, but waited as long as she could before coming in because she was uninsured and waiting for her Medicare coverage to begin in a few weeks.

Upon completion of a medical exam, the ED staff determined K.K needed emergency surgery. Following her surgery, K.K was admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) and was an inpatient at the hospital for nine days total.

The hospital's financial advocate met with K.K while she was recovering in the ICU. While completing a financial assessment, K.K revealed that she was retired and her only income was her social security. She explained she had been delaying care while waiting for her Medicare coverage to begin.

Following the assessment, the financial advocate was able to approve K.K. for 100% coverage through the Aurora Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program. This approval meant that all physician and hospital bills for her ED visit, hospital admission, surgery, hospital stay, and follow-up care would be covered at 100% until her Medicare coverage started.

K.K. was overcome with gratitude and tears, repeatedly thanking the financial advocate.

**Aurora Medical Center in Burlington**

## CONTINUING CARE BETWEEN INSURANCE PLANS

Ben was 28 years old and diagnosed with bipolar disorder after experiencing unusual and extreme mood changes five years earlier, making it difficult for him to function in his day-to-day life. When he was admitted to the Aurora Psychiatric Hospital for inpatient treatment, he was experiencing a depressive episode.

Ben had started a new job two weeks prior to his hospital admission, so he wasn't yet eligible for medical coverage through his employer. When the hospital's financial advocate completed a financial assessment with Ben, she discovered that his income was over the limits for him to qualify for a BadgerCare health plan. The advocate suggested that Ben try applying for Aurora's Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program.

After filling out the application and providing the supporting documents, Ben received approval for a 100% discount on his hospital inpatient stay and any follow-up medical services he would need until his employer's insurance began. Ben was very thankful for the approval and was happy to move forward with managing his diagnosis and his new job.

**Aurora Psychiatric Hospital, Wauwatosa**

## BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Transitioning from living at home with one's parents to living independently can be tough for a 20-year-old, especially when trying to manage a chronic health problem.

Take Jake for example: Jake moved out of his parents' home last year and into his own apartment. He supports himself financially by delivering pizzas and waiting tables for a local Italian restaurant. Jake averages about $8 per hour, but his hours fluctuate weekly. Although he is able to pay his bills, medical insurance through his employer is unaffordable, and his average income is over the limit for BadgerCare by a small amount.

Jake has diabetes, which makes it difficult for him to manage alone. His symptoms were so bad recently that he was hospitalized at Aurora St. Luke's South Shore to get his levels under control. Jake was terrified to receive a hospital bill for the much-needed care he received.

Aware of his situation, the hospital's financial advocate visited Jake during his hospital stay and helped him complete a financial assessment. Jake was approved for Aurora's Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program, which provided a 100% discount on his hospital and medical expenses, including an important follow-up visit with an Aurora physician.

Jake is looking forward to meeting with the financial advocate again during this year's Marketplace Open Enrollment to find an insurance option that is affordable for him.

**Aurora St. Luke's South Shore, Milwaukee**

## HELPING THOSE WHO ARE HOMELESS

Aurora Sinai Medical Center is one of only two essential safety-net hospitals in Milwaukee's downtown area. Care is provided in the Emergency Department (ED) to patients experiencing limited access to care due to financial struggles, being uninsured or even being homeless. These circumstances sometimes result in patients who have avoided seeking medical care for years.

One such example is a 61-year-old man who swallowed his pride and came to the Aurora Sinai Medical Center ED in search of relief from severe right elbow pain with two weeks of swelling. When asked to rate his level of pain on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most severe, the man replied, "My pain has been at an 8 for many days now, and that's why I finally came in for help."

An Aurora financial advocate visited the man in the ED, and he revealed he was living in a nearby shelter for quite some time because he had no income. In completing a financial assessment, he was approved for Aurora's Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program.

When the financial advocate informed the man of a 100% discount on the services he needed and received, he threw his hands in the air with joy and thanked her profusely for her help.

"You could just see the gratitude in his eyes at the prospect of treatment for his pain and for being accepted as a patient, as if a horrible stigma had been lifted from his shoulders," the advocate shared. "His smile conveyed it all."

**Aurora Sinai Medical Center, Milwaukee**

## RACINE MAN RECEIVES ASSISTANCE, PAYS IT FORWARD

Delivering compassionate, personalized care to people living in poverty and those who are underserved or can't afford health insurance is the goal of Ascension Wisconsin's community care programs.

Following a job loss and without health insurance, Racine's Scott Pedersen received vital financial assistance from the Ascension All Saints community care program after a more than two-month stay at the hospital for pancreatic and sepsis issues. His experience could not have been better, he said.

*Scott Pedersen with his Bug-out Bag*

"My healing was physical, but the psychological healing that occurred was amazing. The doctors, nurses, chaplains, pharmacists, custodians—everyone treated me and my family as if they were treating their own family."

Following his successful recovery, Pedersen wanted to show his appreciation. He's now giving back to the hospital by filling bug-out bags—pre-packed bags for fast retrieval in emergency situations, filled with socks, pants or shorts, shirts, underwear and other items—that are given to elderly and underserved patients leaving the hospital's emergency room. The bug-out bags are also for individuals who might be at a higher risk for a return trip to the hospital and want to keep one handy at home.

"The entire staff worked together to heal me…and through the community care assistance, my family. This is a small way to help other patients," said Pedersen.

**Ascension All Saints Hospital, Racine**

## FINANCIAL HELP GETS MOM NEEDED CARE

Mary, age 40 and a single mother of three minor children, works full time for a temp agency that doesn't offer insurance. When she learned her earnings disqualified her to be eligible for BadgerCare, she turned to the Marketplace to purchase her own insurance but was told she had to wait for open enrollment.

It was severe pain that drove her to our Emergency Department (ED) before she was able to acquire coverage. Upon examination a mass was revealed, which required further testing. That's when Mary became even more concerned, because she stated she did not have the resources to pay for the tests.

One of Aurora West Allis Medical Center's financial advocates met with Mary and helped her complete the application for Aurora's Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program. Upon learning she was approved for her medically necessary care to be covered, Mary's stress and agitation were greatly reduced, and she was able to better handle the need for further tests and agree to the health care she needed to be able to care for her children.

**Aurora West Allis Medical Center**

## ASCENSION'S HURIAS FAMILY OZAUKEE COMMUNITY CLINIC

Ann* was working part-time and going back to school to obtain her graduate degree when she found out she had aged out of her parents' insurance and was unable to qualify for Medicaid. Ann was unsure how she would be able to afford routine medical care, when a friend recommended she apply for Ascension Columbia St. Mary's financial assistance program.

Her financial counselor, Stephanie, connected Ann to the Huiras Family Ozaukee Community Health Clinic at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital Ozaukee for services. For more than 15 years, the Huiras Family Clinic has provided ongoing non-emergency, urgent or primary care, at little to no cost to Ozaukee residents. Ann was grateful to have a place close to home for care.

Recently, Ann called Stephanie out of the blue to share she graduated, found a wonderful job, and wanted to donate to the Huiras Family Clinic because she was so grateful for the compassionate, personalized care provided to her two years ago.

"I want other people who find themselves in a situation like mine to be able to have the same kind, welcoming experience I did," said Ann.

** name changed to protect patient identity*

**Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital Ozaukee, Mequon**

## AURORA MEDICAL CENTER PARTNERS WITH LAKE AREA FREE CLINIC

Lake Area Free Clinic (LAFC) provides high-quality comprehensive health care to Waukesha County residents in need.

Marcia was let go through downsizing from a job she had worked for over 20 years. After a year of searching for employment, she was forced to file for bankruptcy, needed help with utilities and food stamps and had no access to health insurance. Managing her chronic conditions became a challenge.

Then Marcia was referred to LAFC and her life took a new turn in a positive direction. One of the clinic physicians began working with Marcia to manage her multiple health conditions. The clinic not only helped her gain access to care and vital medications, it gave her hope, which helped her gain control of her health and her life.

Marcia's story is just one example of the many lives that are touched by the clinic. In 2017 alone, the clinic accommodated 3,177 patient visits and registered 333 new patients.

Not only is the clinic an Aurora Better Together Fund recipient, Aurora Medical Center in Summit supports the clinic's operations by providing CT and MRI imaging services for patients referred by LAFC. This partnership between LAFC and Aurora Medical Center in Summit remains a vital component of the clinic's ability to provide comprehensive care to Waukesha County's uninsured population.

**Aurora Medical Center in Summit**

## CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF WISCONSIN FIGHTS TOOTH DECAY

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin's Dental Centers serve more than 15,000 patients annually, with approximately 40 percent of patients having a special health care need. Critically, over 90 percent of dental patients are covered by Medicaid or Medicaid HMO.

Dental caries, known as decay or cavities, is the most common childhood disease, with approximately 25 percent of children having a cavity by age three. A noninvasive treatment called silver diamine fluoride (SDF) was approved by the Food & Drug Administration in 2014.

SDF is a liquid that is applied to teeth to kill bacteria, prevent the spread of decay, and reduce tooth sensitivity. Using a case-by-case approach, dentists may utilize SDF applications to manage caries before more comprehensive, invasive treatment

may be needed. SDF is an important treatment tool for children, particularly if they might be too young for or fearful of traditional cavity removal procedures or have special health care needs which require unique care approaches.

While SDF is a proven and valuable tool to help manage decay, it is currently only covered in 19 states; in Wisconsin, it is not a Medicaid- or Medicaid HMO-covered service. As such, Children's offers this low cost, noninvasive treatment to most of its patients without charge. More than 1,000 children received SDF at Children's in 2017. Using this treatment helps keep children healthy and allows Children's providers to ensure children receive the best, most appropriate dental health care.

**Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Milwaukee**

## AURORA MEDICAL CENTER IN WASHINGTON COUNTY IS A LONG-TIME SUPPORTER OF ALBRECHT FREE CLINIC

Albrecht Free Clinic provides free medical and dental care to uninsured and under-insured residents of Washington County. The clinic's health care providers, nurses, and volunteers donate their time and expertise to successfully improve the quality of life and health for the clinic's patients.

Aurora Medical Center Washington County is a long-time supporter of the clinic. The hospital, in partnership with Froedtert Radiological, provides laboratory and sub-specialty back-up to support patients and offer aid in diagnosis. Team members serve the clinic through volunteering, and the hospital accepts patient referrals and provides funding, including through the Aurora Better Together Fund.

In 2018, Aurora Medical Center Washington County developed a plan to begin supporting the clinic in a new way. By the end of 2018, the hospital will be underwriting and helping to manage the clinic's phone and video medical interpreter program, which will be operated by a third-party service. These interpreter services will provide the tools the clinic needs to provide the same quality of care to all patients regardless of their preferred language.

**Aurora Medical Center in Washington County, Hartford**

## GETTING PATIENTS THE MEDICINE THEY NEED

For more than 18 years, Community Outreach Health Clinic (COHC) located on the Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin Community Memorial Hospital campus in Menomonee Falls has been providing health care services to those who are uninsured, underinsured and in need of financial assistance.

Joel Nazaretian is a patient who relies on COHC to help manage his Type 2 Diabetes. Diagnosed at age 56, this life-long disease means his body doesn't process insulin properly, causing higher than normal blood glucose (sugar) levels. Hyperglycemia, elevated blood glucose, can become a serious problem. If left untreated, it can lead to a life-threatening condition called ketoacidosis.

*Joel Nazaretian at the Community Outreach Health Clinic*

Diabetes can be managed with medication; however, Joel does not have insurance and cannot afford medications. He works part-time as a customer service representative and rents an apartment in Butler, so he relies on the Community Outreach Health Clinic for his insulin medication.

For many patients like Joel, access to medications and medical supplies are vital. In one year alone, medications valued at $177,911 were distributed to patients by COHC. Joel's insulin, like many medications, is temperature sensitive. COHC was grateful to receive a donation in 2017 from the Waukesha County Community Foundation to purchase a pharmacy-grade refrigerator, ensuring that temperature-sensitive pharmaceuticals are stored safely in a controlled environment.

"I don't know what I would do without insulin from the clinic," said Joel. "I think they provide a wonderful service to the community."

**Froedtert & The Medical College of Wisconsin Community Memorial Hospital, Menomonee Falls**

## AURORA HEALTH CARE AND THE MILWAUKEE HEALTH CARE PARTNERSHIP CONNECT INDIVIDUALS WITH PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Advocate Aurora Health's five hospitals in Milwaukee County (Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center, Aurora St. Luke's South Shore, Aurora Sinai Medical Center, Aurora West Allis Medical

Center and Aurora Psychiatric Hospital) are members of the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership (MHCP), a public/private consortium dedicated to improving care for underserved populations in Milwaukee County.

In 2016, access to health care surfaced as a top priority in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) conducted collaboratively by the partners: Only 61% of adult respondents in the City of Milwaukee reported having a medical home.

Because individuals without a primary medical home are likely to utilize emergency department (ED) resources more frequently and not derive the benefit of routine primary care to manage their health issues and stay well, the four Aurora hospitals with EDs addressed this through their community health strategies. They continued to participate in the MHCP Emergency Department Care Coordination (EDCC) initiative to link Medicaid-eligible and uninsured patients with primary care medical homes and dental care in the Milwaukee area by scheduling appointments in the ED before patients are discharged. The goal is to:

- Decrease avoidable ED visits and related hospitalizations
- Reduce duplicative ED tests and procedures
- Connect high-risk individuals with primary care health homes and other health resources

During 2017, among these four hospitals, 2,797 appointments were scheduled through the EDCC initiative, of which 2,517 were appointments with Federally Qualified Health Centers. Another 71 were scheduled for Aurora Walker's Point Community Clinic and 38 for Bread of Healing Clinic (which is supported by Aurora Sinai Medical Center).

**Advocate Aurora Health, Milwaukee**

## ASCENSION SETON MOBILE DENTAL CLINIC IMPROVES ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE

For people who are underinsured or uninsured, access to dental care can be financially out of reach. Oftentimes, families have a challenging time finding a dental provider that accepts state or federally-funded insurance programs and are left without routine dental care—leading to toothaches, decay, and infection.

"We know oral health care impacts our overall health," said Annie Meece, clinic manager, Ascension Mobile Dental Clinic, "It's important that everyone has equal access to quality care."

That's why Ascension Seton Mobile Dental Clinic hosted a weeklong free community outreach event at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital Ozaukee in June 2018.

Throughout the week, 45 patients received oral health assessments, oral cancer screenings, dental cleanings, and tooth extractions at no charge.

*The Ascension Seton Mobile Dental Clinic parked outside Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital Ozaukee*

Alex* had been putting off a visit to the dentist to fix his broken back tooth for months. Recently unemployed and without benefits, Alex was unable to pay for the care the tooth needed. Eventually he was in so much pain from the infected tooth, he visited the emergency department and received an antibiotic that alleviated some symptoms—but he knew the pain would return. When Alex learned that Ascension Seton Mobile Dental Clinic would be in the area to provide free care – he immediately made an appointment. During his appointment, it was discovered the infection had spread and he would need two teeth extracted. Although disappointed, he was relieved to know he would finally receive care he desperately needed and expressed his gratitude to the Ascension Seton Mobile Dental Clinic staff.

**name changed to protect patient identity*

**Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital Ozaukee, Mequon**

## AURORA SINAI MEDICAL CENTER: ONE FREE CLINIC AND ONE FQHC WITH TWO SERVICES ON CAMPUS

Progressive Community Health Center (PCHC) has been serving patients in Milwaukee since 1999. In 2016, Aurora Sinai Medical Center collaborated with PCHC to open both a primary care clinic in the hospital's physician office building, and a Progressive Urgent Care Clinic adjacent to the Emergency Department. In 2017, a total of 7,028 individuals were served by the Progressive 12th Street Urgent Care Clinic.

Bread of Healing Clinic has worked with Aurora Sinai Medical Center for the last 16 years to provide vital health services to people without health insurance at three community-based sites on Milwaukee's north side. This health home provided over 6,068 bilingual urgent and primary care clinic visits in 2017. Bread of Healing Clinic also conducted 868 counseling visits, 752 dental visits, 454 "other" specialty visits and

referred 63 patients to physician-specialists through Aurora's Specialty Access for Uninsured Program. Lastly, an Aurora registered nurse is the clinic's manager.

**Aurora Sinai Medical Center, Milwaukee**

## AURORA ST. LUKE'S MEDICAL CENTER AND AWPCC SERVE NEIGHBORHOOD

Aurora Walkers Point Community Clinic (AWPCC), located in the heart of Milwaukee's most diverse south-side community, is open 50 hours per week to serve a neighborhood with the highest percentage of uninsured people in the state and provide care free of charge. This includes bilingual urgent, primary, preventive and specialty health care; bilingual mental health services; and ED and hospital referrals for uninsured persons.

During 2017, a total of 6,621 patients were served through 17,231 patient visits provided at Walker's Point, the Salvation Army Clinic, James Madison, and South Division High Schools.

Additionally, the State of Wisconsin contracted with AWPCC to coordinate the required medical screening of newly arrived refugees to Milwaukee, serving 183 individuals in this program during 2017.

**Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center, Milwaukee**

## TEAMWORK LEADS TO POSITIVE PATIENT OUTCOME

When Sergio Zopiyacatle Mazahua, 23, went to the Albrecht Free Clinic in October 2017, he was having physical and emotional difficulties impacting his life. Clinic staff partnered with Casa Guadalupe Education Center; together they were able to rule out serious problems and help him.

*Sergio works with Community Health Navigator Laura Salcido at Casa Guadalupe*

Sergio's initial complaint was urinary frequency. A specialist at Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin St. Joseph's Hospital ruled out infection or blockage. Medication was prescribed to help alleviate his symptoms. A month later, he returned to the clinic complaining of dizziness and feeling tired.

"The only thing we turned up on his labs was that he was slightly anemic," said Alissa Mosal, RN, clinical supervisor at Albrecht Free Clinic. "We also did a sleep study to rule out any issues with sleep apnea."

While the staff at the Albrecht Free Clinic focused on Sergio's physical health, Laura Salcido, community health navigator and interpreter for Casa Guadaulpe in West Bend, worked with him to deal with stress and anxiety.

"We worked together to change his diet, and he lost weight," she said. "We also taught him techniques to cope better with stress, such as music."

Today, Sergio is feeling much happier, healthier and productive. He has been able to stop taking most of his medications. Sergio is very grateful for everything that was done for him both at Albrecht Free Clinic and at Casa Guadalupe.

"Everyone has been very professional," he said. "They treat me well and with respect."

**Froedtert & The Medical College of Wisconsin St. Joseph's Hospital Campus, West Bend**

## AURORA MEDICAL CENTER BURLINGTON AND HEALTH CARE NETWORK PROVIDE FREE AND LOW-COST HEALTH CARE

Health Care Network, Inc. (HCN) is a non-profit agency providing free or low-cost health care to residents of Racine County who are medically uninsured, or medically insured but with no dental coverage, and have limited income. Services are provided at the Health Care Network office and throughout the County by health care professionals who volunteer their time, offices and skills. The agency is a member clinic of Wisconsin Association of Free and Charitable Clinics.

Aurora Medical Center Burlington partners with HCN, donating health care services as well as space (in-kind) at the Aurora Waterford clinic. During 2017, 13 Aurora providers treated patients through HCN. Their specialties included cardiology, dermatology, gastroenterology, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopedics, podiatry, rheumatology and urology. Additionally, Aurora Memorial Hospital in Burlington accepted 138 vouchers from HCN to provide radiology, laboratory and specialty care services to their patients, and helped one ED patient establish a health home with HCN.

**Aurora Medical Center in Burlington**

## AURORA LAKELAND MEDICAL CENTER AND OPEN ARMS EXPAND SERVICES

Aurora Lakeland Medical Center partnered with the Open Arms Free Clinic in Elkhorn, supporting the clinic through donations of specialty consults and imaging services. As one of the Aurora Better Together fund recipients, Open Arms has used the funds to expand their Behavioral Health and Dentistry offerings. Aurora Lakeland team members and physicians donate time at Open Arms Free Clinic, the first and only free medical and supportive care clinic in Walworth County serving low-income and uninsured residents with primary, medical, dental, vision, behavioral health, lab and pharmaceutical.

**Aurora Lakeland Medical Center, Elkhorn**

## AURORA MEDICAL CENTER IN KENOSHA PROVIDES OB AND NEONATAL CARE

At Kenosha Community Health Center (KCHC), where more than 15,000 patients are seen per year, Aurora Medical Center Kenosha has been a partner for many years. Each of those years, the hospital has referred patients to KCHC to establish a health home, and Aurora's physicians provide follow-up care at KCHC to obstetric and neonatal patients who deliver at Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha.

In 2017, Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha's Chief Medical Officer served as Chief Medical Officer of KCHC.

**Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha**

## ADDRESSING HEART HEALTH DISPARITIES IN MILWAUKEE

Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital's Community Health Needs Assessment found that 40% of diabetes and 25% of hypertension cases are undiagnosed among African Americans. These chronic diseases can lead to heart disease. To address this glaring health disparity, Ascension Columbia St. Mary's created the Be of Good Heart community outreach program.

Dr. Joshua Liberman, preventive cardiologist at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital and one of the founding supporters of Be of Good Heart explained why it's so important to address this community health disparity. "Heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in this country," he said. "Out of the 72 counties in Wisconsin, Milwaukee consistently ranks the worst in heart health—with people living in Milwaukee County having four years less life expectancy than those living in Ozaukee County. Our zip codes matter more than our genetic codes."

From October 2017 to June 2018, 2,425 people received free diabetes and hypertension screenings and education at Be of Good Heart sites at Ascension Ebenezer Health Resource Center,

*Julia Means, RN, parish nurse, Ascension Columbia St. Mary's, takes a patient's blood pressure at a Be of Good Heart screening site in Milwaukee*

Ascension St. Joseph Campus, and community and faith-based organizations throughout Milwaukee. An additional 1,627 people were screened for hypertension at Ascension Seton Dental Clinic. Many people who were screened had elevated blood pressure and blood-sugar levels—some of whom were not aware of their hypertension and diabetes. Ascension Columbia St. Mary's community outreach team worked with patients to develop a plan to manage their chronic diseases and connect them with primary care physicians.

**Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital, Milwaukee**

## ASCENSION ELMBROOK GETS SENIORS MOVING

Ascension Elmbrook therapists in Brookfield help senior residents stay active and out of the hospital by teaching two exercise classes every week at the Senior Center. "We lead them in gentle exercise that focuses on balance, flexibility and strength," said Sarah Hoffman, physical therapist. "We also work in some cognitive exercises throughout the class as well."

Each class is attended by between 50-70 seniors, including Carol Spruill. "I enjoy the various instructors. It keeps the exercise routines fresh from class to class. The instructors seem to enjoy their time with us and we feel the same way about them. I have been attending the senior exercise classes for more than 10 years. My doctor has said that he is pleased that I attend the classes and says, 'it shows'," she stated.

The health benefits associated with senior fitness can lead to better mobility, maintenance of independence and a better overall quality of life, explains Hoffman. Seniors who exercise regularly tend to recover more quickly from injury, illness or surgery. Hoffman says in addition to the physical benefits, these classes improve emotional health, as well by offering some much-needed socialization time.

**Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital – Elmbrook Campus, Brookfield**

## ADDRESSING THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF OUR AGING POPULATION

In 2014, the total number of injury-related emergency department (ED) visits among Walworth County adults aged 65 and older was 1,136, which is a rate of 7,228.3 per 100,000, significantly higher than the state rate of 4,249.74.*

Aurora Lakeland Medical Center's NICHE-certified Senior Resource Nurse Program works to ensure aging adults receive care that promotes function, autonomy, and dignity, and reached 1,546 aging adults and 542 families during 2017. Program referrals included:

- 1,247 to the Patient Call Manager
- 108 for home visits
- 227 scheduled clinic visits
- 40 cognitive screenings
- 88 for services through Aurora at Home

Aurora Lakeland Medical Center also provided community outreach educational sessions, including:

Stepping On, a seven-week program of participative classes proven to reduce falls and build confidence in older people. Classes build participants' confidence in their ability to manage their health behaviors, reduce their risk of falls, and maintain active and fulfilling lives. In 2017, 38 participants completed the program at the hospital.

We also offered two six-week sessions of Healthy Living with Diabetes, a six-week program that covered:

- Techniques to deal with the symptoms of diabetes (fatigue, pain, hyper/hypoglycemia, stress, and emotional problems such as depression, anger, fear, and frustration);
- Appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength and endurance;
- Healthy eating;
- Appropriate use of medication; and,
- Working more effectively with health care providers.

**Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH), Available at https://www.dhs.wisconsln.gov/wish/Index.htm. Accessed May 2, 2017.*

**Aurora Lakeland Medical Center, Elkhorn**

## AURORA MEDICAL CENTER IN GRAFTON PARTNERS WITH AOC TO PROVIDE ABUSE-RESPONSE SERVICES

The Aurora Better Together Fund was created to fund local non-profit organizations whose missions are focused on providing better access to health care and abuse-response services within the community. The goal of the fund was to support Aurora Medical Center in Grafton in identifying partners to expand the continuum of care in community-based settings and to support their work in providing access, resources and services.

The fund helped to foster one particularly enduring relationship with Advocates of Ozaukee County (AOC), an agency that provides services for those experiencing domestic or sexual violence.

*Aurora team members during Aurora's Weeks of Caring at the AOC facility.*

Not only was the agency a beneficiary of Aurora's Better Together funds, but through sponsorships and in-kind services, team members engage with AOC in a variety of ways:

- Aurora Medical Center in Grafton's vice president of human resources serves on AOC's board of directors.
- Hospital team members with special expertise provide education to the team at AOC as needed. The most recent training session was about de-escalating aggressive behavior.
- Aurora team members donate time annually through Aurora's Weeks of Caring at the AOC facility.

Whether Aurora Medical Center in Grafton refers patients cared for in their forensic nurse program to AOC for follow-up support, or AOC refers individuals to them, this thoughtful collaboration is helping to lift this important organization as they pursue their purpose of ending domestic and sexual violence through support, empowerment, education and transformation for survivors.

**Aurora Medical Center in Grafton**

## CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM COLLABORATIVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TEAMS IN SCHOOLS

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin provides a variety of school-based mental health services in more than 25 schools in communities including Eau Claire, Stevens Point, Marshfield, Madison, Milwaukee and Racine. School-based mental health care increases access to early intervention services by treating children soon after a concern has been identified in a comfortable, accessible and familiar setting. It reduces the barriers of transportation, missed academic time and stigma associated with obtaining mental health services.

One in five students arrives at school with a diagnosable mental health concern that affects their ability to learn. Children's mental health professionals work with school guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, teachers and parents to foster a healthy environment for students, coordinate care and provide consultation and education that supports positive classroom interventions for kids and teens who face mental and behavioral challenges.

At SC Johnson Elementary School in Racine, a second-grade student with a history of temper tantrums and explosive anger struggled academically and socially and was referred to therapy in the school-based mental health clinic at school. His mother, classroom teacher and other educational staff supported him by setting goals and communicating weekly to implement his treatment plan and interventions. After three months, the student was no longer explosive when angry, had improved attention and focus and displayed empathy to peers. After taking additional testing in math and reading, his scores increased dramatically!

Collaborating with schools to provide mental health care can have a positive impact on kids, families, schools and communities.

**Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Milwaukee**

## PROVIDING OUTREACH FOR THE TINIEST MEMBERS OF KENOSHA COUNTY

Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha's most recent Community Health Needs Assessment revealed that even though the rate of infants dying before their first birthday in Kenosha County has decreased, the rate of deaths per 1,000 live births remains higher than the statewide rate and doesn't meet Healthy People 2020 goals.

As a hospital that delivers babies within a semi-rural community, in 2017 Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha responded with strategies that reach out to the broader community and contribute to the larger community-wide focus on infant mortality, health and safety:

- 102 mothers who were patients of Kenosha Community Health Center received care at Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha.
- 9 free lactation classes were provided to 78 attendees.
- 32 free well-baby care classes were provided to 78 community members.
- 48 free prenatal care classes were provided to 153 attendees.

After birth, education needs for parents and care needs for baby continue. Breastfeeding is well-recognized as an optimal method for feeding and nurturing infants, reaping nutritional, immunological, developmental, psychological, social and economic benefits for both moms and their babies. During 2017, 156 mothers utilized our follow-up lactation support services post-discharge.

Additionally, to expand awareness around infant health and safety to prevent illness and unintentional injury, all 767 mothers who delivered at Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha received:

- Safe-sleep education and sleep sacks for their babies.
- Car seat education, with 40 safety tests performed by certified car-seat technicians.
- Information on second-hand smoke and referrals for cessation support.

**Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha**

## IMAGING INVESTMENT MEETS VITAL COMMUNITY NEED

*Standing in New Imaging Suite L-R: Shadie Majidi, MD; Shante Dodd; Alonzo Walker, MD; Bridget Frasheski; Rochelle Justman; Mary Beth Gonyo, MD; and Tiffani Duffe*

Progressive Community Health Centers offer imaging services at Lisbon Avenue Health Center in Milwaukee thanks to the Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) health

network's investment and partnership with the federally qualified health center. Committed to meeting identified community health care needs, the health center features an imaging services suite that includes a screening mammography system, an ultrasound system, a digital X-ray system and computer workstations. In addition to the equipment, the Froedtert & MCW health network donation included a two-year grant to support imaging operations. Froedtert radiology technicians staff the new suite and images are read by MCW radiologists.

"Imaging, and mammography in particular, is essential to providing a full complement of health care services in the communities we serve and helps reduce health disparities in our city," said Cathy Buck, President of Froedtert Hospital. "Research shows that people who live in medically underserved areas suffer disproportionately from cancer compared to other populations. Making this improvement possible is a natural next step in our continuing support of Lisbon Avenue Health Center."

"People deserve access to high-quality, comprehensive health care services no matter where they live," said Jenni Sevenich, chief executive officer of Progressive Community Health Centers. "We know African-American women have a higher incidence of advanced breast cancers, and access to preventive care is part of the problem. Having mammography right here in the neighborhood increases the likelihood that women will get screened and receive timely care if a problem is found."

**Froedtert & The Medical College of Wisconsin Froedtert Hospital, Milwaukee**

## WELL-TRAINED EMS PROVIDERS IMPROVE ACCESS TO CARE AND OPTIMAL OUTCOMES

The provision of quality health care relies on a well-trained workforce, but shortages in the health care industry and the gap between supply and demand continues to grow, making workforce development a priority in Aurora Medical Center in Summit's community health improvement plan.

Aurora is committed to supporting the development of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers in Western Waukesha, Eastern Jefferson and Southern Dodge Counties, not only to ensure the best care possible for all individuals before arriving to a hospital, but also to encourage EMS providers to remain engaged in the industry.

Aurora facilitates EMS trainings multiple times per year in locations across the service area and focus on Trauma Simulation utilizing SimMan® and Sim Baby™. Partners include the fire departments of Johnson Creek, Ixonia, Western Lakes, Lake Country and Town of Delafield, as well as EMS providers in Mayville, Wales, and Genesee.

Aurora Medical Center in Summit also trained members of the U.S. Navy reserve, in partnership with Lake Country Fire Department, on critical airway management seen in trauma patients. Additionally, they partnered with local EMS providers to provide Stop the Bleed train-the-trainer educational opportunities to EMS professionals, who then work with community partners to train their staffs in the use of tourniquets and clotting agents to prevent severe blood loss during a traumatic injury.

*U.S. Navy trauma simulation*

Finally, Aurora Medical Center in Summit partnered with Target Distribution Center, a large local employer, to provide education for their medical-responder staff; this training also included simulated traumatic injuries with SimMan®.

**Aurora Medical Center in Summit**

## $26M IN POOLED RESOURCES MAKES COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Since 2007, Milwaukee's health systems have pooled more than $26 million to support a Shared Community Investment Fund (SCIF) as a way to align priorities and reduce fragmentation in efforts to collectively improve health care for low-income and uninsured populations in Milwaukee county.

Through the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership—Aurora Health Care, Ascension, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, and Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin—make annual contributions to the SCIF that are in addition to their individual community benefit commitments.

The SCIF has made meaningful improvements in the health, and health care of patients served at the five Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) in Milwaukee. To date, $16 million of health systems' SCIF funds have been directed to

FQHCs to increase primary, dental and behavioral health care capacity in the community.

Perhaps the greatest impact has been made in the area of behavioral health—one of the top health needs identified in the health systems' most recent shared community health needs assessment.

Says Jenni Sevenich, Progressive Community Health Centers CEO and chair of Milwaukee's FQHC Coalition, "Support from Milwaukee's health systems is strengthening our ability to recruit psychiatrists and expand our facilities. Their funding is more than a shared investment—it reflects a shared commitment to community-based behavioral health care."

**Milwaukee Health Care Partnership**

## AURORA MEDICAL CENTER IN WASHINGTON COUNTY FOCUSES ON THE NEXT GENERATION WORKFORCE

Aurora Medical Center in Washington County is committed to supporting the community by providing a sustainable pipeline of appropriately trained and work-ready individuals to support the workforce needs of Washington County.

Within their Implementation Strategy, they plan for multiple job shadowing and other formal career experiences and scholarships for students pursuing health careers. The hospital teams up with Hartford Union High School (HUHS) and the Washington County Workforce Alliance each year to organize junior business tours. These tours are offered to students to help them discover a route to career success within the health industry.

*HUHS Day of Service Group*

In 2018, the hospital hosted 35 students who toured the emergency, rehabilitation, and wound/hyperbaric departments, as well as the operating room. During their tours, the students had the opportunity to talk with health care professionals who shared insights about what their jobs are like and what type of education or training is required to work in their respective fields.

Aurora Medical Center in Washington County also sponsored the HUHS Day of Service. During this special day, 30 students spent the day volunteering in the community alongside hospital leaders as a means to build leadership and community-engagement skills. Students can also use their experiences on this day to develop a network of helpful future career contacts and begin building a list of work and leadership experiences to share on their resumes.

**Aurora Medical Center in Washington County, Hartford**

## PROHEALTH CARE ADDS DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY EMPLOYEE AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING TO LOCAL EFFORTS

Nearly 9,000 Waukesha County residents have dementia, according to the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Waukesha County. It is projected that by 2030, 13,000 people in the area will be living with dementia.

ProHealth Care has become a partner in dementia-friendly efforts to make people more supportive and responsive to any person in the community who might have memory loss, dementia or Alzheimer's disease. The efforts are part of the Wisconsin Healthy Brain Initiative and are supported by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, AARP Wisconsin and the Alzheimer's Association of Southeastern Wisconsin, among others.

In Waukesha County, Oconomowoc and Pewaukee are already designated as Dementia Friendly Communities because of their efforts to enable people with dementia to improve their quality of life and live independently for as long as possible. Brookfield, Lisbon and Menomonee Falls are working to become Dementia Friendly Communities.

In addition to offering dementia-related community education and participating in local dementia-friendly initiatives, ProHealth Care has begun providing workshops to help its employees and volunteers understand how to interact with and assist individuals with memory loss or dementia. The workshops emphasize how to recognize that someone may have memory loss, teach ways to communicate with people who have dementia, and explain how dementia alters people's perceptions.

Workshop attendees learn that the many touchpoints and pieces of information involved in just one health care visit can cause disorientation among people with cognitive issues. Patience, helpful questions, active listening and careful explanations can help temper potential unease or distress for patients and their family members.

In 2018, ProHealth also added the computer-based learning program, "Dementia – What I Need to Know," to its employee online learning center.

In September, ProHealth hosted a Dementia Friendly Community Resource Fair with the Oconomowoc Dementia Friendly Coalition at ProHealth Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital. The fair included free health screenings, exhibits, and a Memory Café gathering for people with memory loss, mild cognitive impairment or dementia, along with their loved ones.

**ProHealth Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital**

## HELPING COMMUNITY MEMBERS UNDERSTAND THEIR BLOOD PRESSURE READINGS

Aurora Memorial Hospital in Burlington's most recent Central Racine County Community Health Survey revealed that 31% of adults reported high blood pressure in the past three years, a statistically significant increase from 21% in 2003.

Blood pressure is an important part of everyone's health, because high blood pressure contributes to many forms of cardiovascular diseases. Blood pressure screenings are important because high blood pressure usually has no symptoms, so it can't be detected without being measured.

"It benefits everyone to understand and monitor their blood pressure," says Sally Gerson, RN, Aurora Memorial Hospital in Burlington's Community Outreach and Education nurse, who is helping community members do just that.

Each month, Sally leaves the hospital campus and provides blood pressure screenings for individuals within various community settings. In 2017, Sally conducted 27 screenings for a total of 300 individuals, 79 of whom had high blood pressure, 11 who learned they had high blood pressure for the first time. She also provided an additional 429 blood pressure screenings during 26 free drop-in blood pressure screenings taking place within a local Aurora Health Care clinic, and 18 individuals were referred for clinical management. Every participant who is screened is counseled by Sally and provided with educational materials.

By helping community members understand their blood pressure, Sally is providing an opportunity for individuals to learn to self-monitor, which can lead to early intervention or better blood pressure management and control for those who are already receiving health care interventions from their physicians.

**Aurora Medical Center in Burlington**

## ADDRESSING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDER SHORTAGES THROUGH EDUCATION

Continuing behavioral health education ensures that providers' practices are current, aids in the development of connections with other behavioral health professionals, and enhances self-efficacy. But shortages of behavioral health professionals are a national, state, and local issue. To address this, Aurora Psychiatric Hospital provides education through two strategic program offerings:

1. **Behavioral Health Series for Health Professionals.** The objective of this evidence-based programming is to improve diagnostic and therapeutic capabilities in psychiatry and addiction medicine for psychotherapists, psychologists and physicians treating patients and their families. Programming is based on analysis of practitioner needs, as requested by past attendees, and topics relevant to medical and allied staff. In 2017, Aurora Psychiatric Hospital provided 10 continuing education programs and three intensive workshops for 542 attendees, of whom 366 (68%) reported they will change a specific aspect of their practice as a result of the lecture or workshop.

2. **Behavioral Health Issues in Schools.** The onset of many mental health conditions occurs in adolescence, and undiagnosed and untreated mental health conditions can affect a student's ability to learn, grow and develop. School personnel play an important role in identifying the early warning signs of an emerging mental health condition. This series provides instruction intended to help school professionals better understand the underlying causes of behavioral health illnesses, as well as treatment alternatives and strategies for coping with these problems. In 2017, Aurora Psychiatric Hospital hosted 17 continuing education lectures for 178 school professionals.

**Aurora Psychiatric Hospital, Wauwatosa**

## PROHEALTH COMMUNITY FAIR BRINGS LOCAL RESOURCES TOGETHER FOR FREE RESOURCES AND HEALTH SCREENINGS

ProHealth Care brings scores of community organizations and public agencies together one Saturday every spring to provide free resources and health screenings for area residents.

The ProHealth Community Fair is held at the Waukesha County Exposition Center, an easy-to-find location accessible by public transit with plenty of parking. At the fair, ProHealth Care professionals from more than two dozen departments are

joined by representatives from more than 40 local agencies to staff exhibits, answer questions and provide information about health, safety and community support.

Among the exhibitors are fire and law enforcement agencies and organizations that provide free services, including the Addiction Resource Council, Lake Area Free Clinic and the Women's Center.

Resources provided at the fair include $5 bike helmets and helmet fittings, free radon testing kits, CPR demonstrations, hands-on activities for children and adults, healthy food recipes and samples from ProHealth dietitians, and other giveaways.

*An attendee gets a screening at ProHealth's Community Fair*

Health screening stations focus on balance, basic cognition, blood pressure, blood type, body mass, bone density, grip strength, lung function, oral cancer and vision. Free health assessment screenings are also provided by appointment as part of a collaboration between ProHealth Care and the National Kidney Foundation. The assessments include analyses of blood and urine samples for cholesterol and blood sugar, as well as blood pressure and body mass index readings, and counseling with a health care professional.

In 2018, 30 fair attendees who were screened were encouraged to seek follow-up care with their primary care provider or were assisted in finding a local physician. Detailed information about free medical clinics was provided to individuals who had concerns about the cost of care.

The majority of ProHealth Community Fair attendees are Waukesha County residents. In a given year, one-third to one-half of attendees are Spanish speakers. Between one-fifth and one-third of attendees each year report that they do not have dental insurance.

In the past four years, about 4,000 people attended the fair.

**ProHealth Waukesha Memorial Hospital**

## AURORA CANCER CARE PROVIDES SCREENINGS AT PRIDEFEST

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) community is a medically underserved and understudied population in the United States. According to the National Cancer Institute, in addition to national guidelines for prevention and screening, cancer surveillance also includes the assessment of environmental and behavioral cancer risk factors, screening practices, and the quality of care across the cancer care continuum.

Additionally, according to the American Cancer Society, studies have found that lesbians and bisexual women have higher rates of breast cancer than heterosexual women and get less routine health care than other women.

Within the 2018 Milwaukee Pride event was a community health and wellness area for participants to interact with community allies from various fields, including heath care. Clinicians from the Aurora Cancer Care team were able to provide discreet breast cancer and oropharyngeal cancer screenings for the first time at the festival and, in partnership with the American Cancer Society, educational materials for cancer prevention and education specific to the LGBTQ+ community. Materials were available for HPV education from the CDC and oral cancer education from the Oral Cancer Foundation, in addition to Aurora Cancer Care materials.

Between Pride dates of June 8th and June 10th, Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center clinical team members were able to perform 30 blood pressure screenings, 20 oral cancer screens, and just over a dozen clinical breast exam screens, some of which resulted in referrals for follow-up care.

**Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center, Milwaukee**

## AURORA ST. LUKE'S SOUTH SHORE AND THE CUDAHY SCHOOL DISTRICT TEAM UP TO STOP THE BLEED

Stop the Bleed, a national awareness campaign and call-to-action, cultivates grassroots efforts that encourage bystanders to become trained, equipped, and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency before professional help arrives. A person who is bleeding can die from blood loss within five minutes; therefore, it is important to quickly stop the blood loss. No matter how rapid the arrival of professional emergency responders, bystanders will always be first on the scene. Those nearest to someone with life threatening injuries are best positioned to provide first care.

Cudahy school district and Cudahy Health Department identified a need to organize Stop the Bleed training for all the teachers in the district and to purchase kits for all the schools. Aurora St. Luke's South Shore has several caregivers who are trainers, and they teamed up with the Cudahy Health Department to train the teachers within the school district. Each teacher who completed the training received a certificate of completion. The health department also used grant funding to purchase the training kit, and Stop the Bleed kits were provided for the entire school district. This means that 40 teachers were trained, and all seven Cudahy schools now have their own Stop the Bleed kits readily available onsite.

**Aurora St. Luke's South Shore, Milwaukee**

## AURORA SINAI MEDICAL CENTER ENCOURAGES SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES

In Milwaukee County, 45% of newborns are born in an Aurora Hospital (Aurora Sinai Medical Center and Aurora Women's Pavilion).

In 2017, to protect newborns from the risk of co-sleeping deaths, Aurora began to offer a Baby Box to each new parent, at no cost.

*An Aurora Baby Box*

A Baby Box is a non-toxic, chemical-free, heavy-duty cardboard box that provides a safe sleeping environment for a baby's first three months of life. Baby Boxes comply with American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations and meet U.S. Product Safety Commission safety regulations. The Aurora Baby Box also comes with a mattress, waterproof fitted sheet and some baby and mother- care items.

"All mothers given an Aurora Baby Box must first review a 20-minute educational video and complete a short quiz," says Elizabeth Newton, MSN, RN, Patient Care Manager, Women's Care Center at Aurora Sinai. "Our goal is to promote the box as another tool for the parents to use for safe sleeping until the family gains access to a crib or Pack 'n Play. At Aurora Sinai, mothers who received a Baby Box reported that they are put to use as a toy or storage box when no longer needed for baby to sleep. And when non-patients are in need of a baby box, they are referred to the Baby Box Co. website, where they can complete an online program and post-test to receive a free box."

**Aurora Sinai Medical Center, Milwaukee**

## AURORA WEST ALLIS MEDICAL CENTER HOSTS HEALTH SCIENCE AWARENESS DAY

As outlined in the Wisconsin Health Care Workforce 2015 Report, hospitals should support the educational preparation of students to meet existing and future workforce needs as the rate of change in health care accelerates, and to fill new and emerging roles.

Aurora West Allis Medical Center is committed to partnering with local school systems to inspire and prepare the next generation of health professionals. In 2017 they hosted a Health Science Awareness Day at their campus to showcase the wide variety of careers within the health care industry, and to educate students about positions that can be attained through a post-secondary certificate, associate degree, bachelor's degree and doctorate programs.

More than 80 juniors and seniors from West Allis high schools turned out. Clinical staff presented a wide array of health care-related careers through a series of real-life scenarios and panel discussions. Afterward, 89 percent of the students correctly identified the level of academic preparation required to pursue the health-related careers they observed.

"The event was a wonderful experience for students," said the District K12 Career and Technical Education Coordinator.

During 2017 they further supported this strategy, which included:

- 105 health career students job-shadowed
- 4 students from Cristo Rey High School (in Milwaukee) participated in work-study
- 33 teachers from New Berlin School District visited Aurora West Allis Medical Center, attending a session to learn more about health-related careers.

**Aurora West Allis Medical Center**

## ROGERS PATIENT CARE GRANT HELPS PATIENT MAKE ENDS MEET

When she was 11 years old, Dawn's father died by suicide. She didn't know how to handle it. No one close to her did. For 19 years, she hid the anxiety and depression that suffocated her, until one dark night, she couldn't mask it anymore.

*From surviving to thriving*

With help from her boyfriend, she called Rogers Behavioral Health and was admitted to one of its intensive outpatient programs. Here, she received something that had been missing—a support network. Ten weeks later, she left with hope and determination, eager to start a new chapter.

That's when the bills came. "When I started treatment," explains Dawn, "my insurance deductible and out-of-pocket maximum had not been met. Mid-way through is when my insurance started paying in full, but by then, I already had a sizable debt. I did not have a job, and my boyfriend's income covered only what we needed to survive."

Two weeks later, Dawn mentioned her situation to one of her counselors at Rogers, and he suggested she apply for a patient care grant from Rogers Foundation.

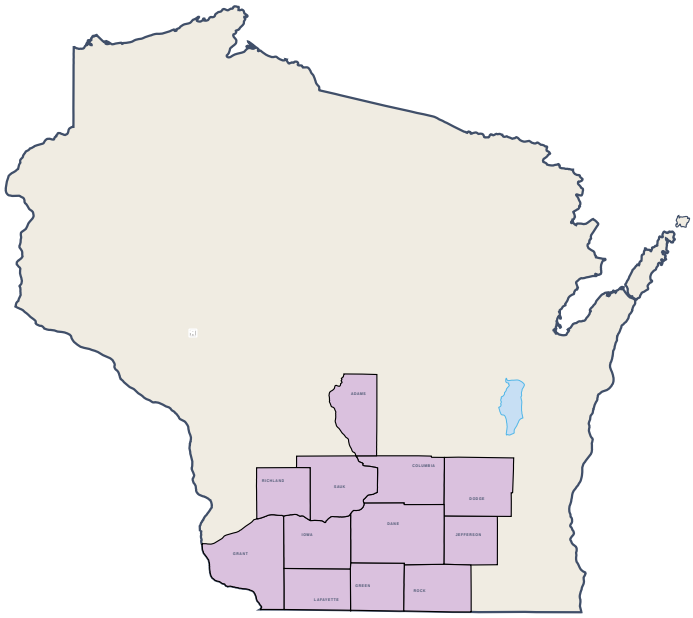
"When I received a grant for the outstanding balance, I broke down in tears. Without it, we would have had to figure out what else to cut to make ends meet. This grant is something I could never thank Rogers Foundation enough for! To me, this was a huge blessing and helped me out more than they will ever know."

Dawn is now balancing a full-time job with college courses to become a child psychologist.

Through the patient care grant program, Rogers Memorial Hospital Foundation provided $833,000 in charity care last year.

**Rogers Behavioral Health System, Oconomowoc**

# Southern Region




**Total Region Community Benefits: $382,950,112**

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDES STRESS RELIEF

When a person becomes ill, their first priority should be their physical well-being. UW Hospital and Clinics' uncompensated care program is there to work with these patients who experience financial hardship related to their medical bills.

To help patients better focus on their health instead of financial situation, UW Hospital and Clinics is proud to offer a Community Care program to patients who are unable to pay for the care provided at UW Hospital and Clinics. Patients work with dedicated staff members to apply for financial assistance to cover all or a portion of their bill. In fiscal year 2017, UW Hospital and Clinics' Community Care program provided $14.9 million of charity care at cost.

This assistance comes as a major relief to these patients who have already gone through the stress of a medical problem. As one former patient wrote, "I left the hospital needing to focus on my care and recovery, but I was overwhelmed with anxiety about my medical bills. When I found out UW Hospital and Clinics could help with my medical bills, it was such a weight off my shoulders. I could finally worry about my physical health instead of my financial situation."

**UW Hospital and Clinics, Madison**

## FORT HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND PATIENT FINANCIAL ADVOCATES WORK AS A TEAM TO PROVIDE FREE CANCER SCREENINGS

When patients are uninsured or underinsured they often do not seek preventive care due to the fear of the expense. In particular, skin cancer screening is not typically a priority for these patients. Fort HealthCare's Dermatologist Dr. Martin Okun has been conducting free skin cancer screenings over the past year and potentially saving lives. He is not only doing the screenings in his office, but he is taking it out to the people and making it convenient for them by providing exams at places such as the Jefferson County Fair and local senior centers.

In one particular case, Dr. Okun diagnosed a patient with melanoma who would never have been examined if it wasn't for the free screening. The man had no insurance, and with the help of Dr. Okun he was referred to Jami Miller, a Patient Financial Advocate for Fort HealthCare, and she was able to work with him on coverage and care.

The man was extremely grateful as he didn't think there were options for him and didn't know where to start. Between the providers at Fort HealthCare and the Patient Financial Advocates, many patients with financial need were helped through our partnership with the Rock River Free Clinic, as well as finding financial assistance programs that meet their needs. Fort HealthCare providers are thinking outside the box, and by going outside the walls of their clinics and meeting people in the community, they are able to reach those who might not otherwise have been reached.

**Fort HealthCare, Fort Atkinson**

## BONNIE'S BATTLE WITH HEART DISEASE

Bonnie went to Beloit Health System's Emergency Department in February 2018 with heart attack symptoms after working a 10-hour shift at a local factory. She soon found out she needed triple bypass surgery. She couldn't return to work, and without income and duration at her new job, wasn't able to get on the company's insurance plan.

Faced with a nightmare dilemma, Bonnie couldn't pay out of pocket for her surgery and couldn't afford her health insurance COBRA payments. With limited assistance in making those payments, Bonnie considered not getting the heart surgery.

Lara Hermann, Beloit Health System Foundation Executive Director, identified funds from charity care that paid for Bonnie's COBRA for four months, therefore allowing her to

*Bonnie takes a break from her battle in Beloit Health System's VIP Grille*

keep her COBRA insurance. Bonnie had triple bypass surgery and later enrolled in her company's insurance plan.

"It is satisfying to find ways to help those in need," Lara Hermann says. "Helping in this way took away some of the major stress related with a serious illness and helped Bonnie concentrate on her recovery."

Bonnie continues to see providers at Beloit Health System. She thanks Dr. Hilton Hudson, II, Cardiothoracic Surgeon and the nurses from Beloit Health System's Hendricks Family Heart Hospital for her heart surgery.

"I'm so thankful the hospital helped me get the insurance I needed." Bonnie said. "I don't know what I would have done without it and wouldn't want any woman to go through what I've been through."

**Beloit Health System**

## PROVIDING $64,000+ IN DENTAL CARE TO KIDS IN NEED

Since opening in 2009, Green County's Fowler Dental Clinic has provided over $640,000 in dental services to over 660 children who may have otherwise gone untreated. Monroe Clinic has been an active supporter every step of the way. The project grew out from a need identified in Monroe Clinic's Community Health Improvement Plan.

"Since our beginning, Monroe Clinic provided funding, volunteers, equipment storage space, prescriptions, printing, fundraising support, meeting space and more," explained Fowler Dental Clinic Executive Director Deb Douglas.

Working through Monroe Clinic & Hospital Foundation, the health care organization joined other non-profits, private donors and volunteers, like Brodhead dentist Julio Rodriguez, DDS, to support Fowler Dental Clinic, while Green County Health Department provided space at their Pleasant View complex. Unfortunately, the aging Pleasant View facility is due for demolition and Fowler Dental Clinic needed a new location.

"At the same time, space became available in a building on the Monroe Clinic campus," explained Mike Sanders, Monroe Clinic President/CEO. "Our Board thought it would be a great fit for Fowler Dental Clinic to move to our campus, which is a more convenient location for the children served."

Monroe Clinic invited Fowler Dental Clinic to relocate to the vacant building after remodeling. The move will result in more space, better functionality and privacy, as well as accessibility—all designed to best accommodate the specialty of pediatric dentistry.

Fowler Dental Clinic's move and daily operations are also made possible with generous support from the Delta Dental Foundation, the Monroe Fund, United Way, C.G. Schmidt, and many private citizens throughout the community.

Sanders noted families can now coordinate dental and other health care appointments, which is convenient for those with limited transportation. This close partnership means dentists can conveniently use Monroe Clinic operating space when surgical procedures and sedation are needed—services that may otherwise require extensive travel for low-income families.

"We're excited about partnering with Fowler Dental Clinic to better serve our community," adds Sanders.

**SSM Health Monroe Clinic Hospital**

## RAMC DEVELOPS "HEALTH 4U" FOR THOSE WITH METABOLIC SYNDROME

The number of people nationwide with diabetes in 2015 was 30.3 million Americans, or 9.4% of the population. Diabetes still remains the seventh leading cause of death in the United States. In 2017, Sauk County had 11% of its population diagnosed with this disease, compared to 9% of Wisconsinites.

Diabetes is an important marker for a wide range of health behaviors and is a valuable source of data used to understand how risky health behaviors take a toll on a community. Obesity was one of the top three priorities identified in Reedsburg Area Medical Center's (RAMC) 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment. High blood pressure, elevated blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist or abnormal cholesterol levels—having just one of these conditions can contribute to the risk of serious disease. Together, these symptoms are even riskier and form a condition called metabolic syndrome, often a precursor to diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

*HEALTH 4U team*

Aggressive lifestyle changes can delay or derail the onset of serious diseases. RAMC's goal is to engage with community members with these conditions and teach them how to lead a full and healthy life through their HEALTH 4 U Program, a PreventT2 National Diabetes Prevention Program with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-approved curriculum. Some features of the program included:

- Working with RAMC's registered dietitians and health and fitness professionals to expand participants' nutrition and exercise knowledge.
- Receiving support from fellow participants with like goals.
- Learning about tools like food and exercise trackers.
- Having access to an on-site fitness center.
- A variety of group exercise classes available Monday through Friday.
- Having access to cardio equipment in the Cardiac Rehab Department
- Weekly monitored food and activity logs
- Small class sizes – limited to 12 participants

Each 12-month program consists of 26 sessions spread throughout the year. The first phase attempts to improve lifestyle habits through weekly education sessions and exercise. The second phase follows with bi-monthly support sessions, phone calls, and e-mails. Past classes have had great results with an average of 20.8 pounds lost in 12 weeks!

**Reedsburg Area Medical Center**

## FORT HEALTHCARE JOINS LOCAL FORCES TO REDUCE OPIOID USE

*Photo courtesy of the Daily Jefferson County Union*

Fort HealthCare's Community Health Needs Assessment findings reflect the state's results reporting that opioid use and misuse is one of the most significant health needs affecting residents in our state, and in our local community. Fort HealthCare supports the Wisconsin State Health Assessment & Health Improvement Plan, and has implemented programs in partnership with local agencies to help manage this crisis.

Fort HealthCare's response to the challenges presented by opioid misuse takes the form of the Opioid Use Task Force, comprised of Fort HealthCare leaders, pharmacists, providers, and local law enforcement, first responders, and other community health partners and agencies, as well as participation in the Jefferson County Drug Free Coalition.

Fort HealthCare works extensively with the community to educate and assist with proper prescription drug disposal, safe medication management, support providers with a use monitoring program, and in aligning our resources with law enforcement, first responders, and other community health partners and agencies. Fort HealthCare provides local law enforcement and schools with education, training, and support, which can be modified and incorporated into existing youth education and outreach programs.

Communication with patients about their choices for pain management is also a part of these strategies. To help identify opportunities for intervention, Fort HealthCare primary care, behavioral health, emergency room teams and obstetrics nurses, providers, and staff employ a screening tool with early intervention protocols put in place. The screening tool is also used at the Fort HealthCare-supported Rock River Free Clinic where treatment options are available.

**Fort HealthCare, Fort Atkinson**

## HOUSE OF MERCY HOMELESS CENTER: A VITAL RESOURCE, ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN

In the 1990s, Mercyhealth emergency department physicians were alarmed to see a growing number of patients list a car as their primary residence. In response, Mercyhealth and key community partners formed a task force… and the House of Mercy (HOM) was born.

House of Mercy is a Mercyhealth-system-owned and operated 25-bed homeless center that provides up to 30-day short-term emergency shelter for single women and families in Rock County. Homelessness is a significant social determinant of health. Homeless patients may be predisposed to worse health outcomes due to poor living conditions and food insecurity and tend to have limited resources for self-care.

*A volunteer at the House of Mercy*

Since 1996, House of Mercy has served 6,300+ individuals (50% children). It is filled to capacity with a waiting list. More than 100 local volunteers, plus an annual $20,000 donation from the Mercyhealth Association of Volunteers, make this vital resource possible.

"I first came to the House of Mercy not knowing much about being homeless. I have learned so much. The shelter helped me find a place to call home and the road back to life. There were things I thought I couldn't do. The shelter helped me become stronger. One big lesson I learned was there are still good people out in the world that care. I want to say thank you to the staff for being there and listening and putting me back on the right road. They treated me like I mattered. Sitting and talking about my dreams reminded me that I'm not too old to pursue my goals." –Denise

Even with extensive volunteer support, the House of Mercy requires at least $150,000 to $250,000 per year to remain operational. The Mercyhealth Association of Volunteers is a tremendous force when it comes to fundraising for this important center. The Association donates at least $20,000 per year directly via money raised through a variety of fundraisers, such as the gift shops at Mercyhealth hospitals, the volunteer-operated Castaways Thrift Shop, and book and cookie sales. Association volunteers also assist with the planning and implementation of the annual House of Mercy Charity Ball, an anticipated community event with all funds benefiting the House of Mercy. More than 100 volunteers contribute in some way, like Ashley, who stops by weekly to provide respite to parents and organize children's activities.

Children can be disproportionately affected by homelessness. Last year, the Janesville school district identified 500+ homeless students. On any given night there are more than 300 individuals homeless. The House of Mercy is a partner in helping to address this pressing issue in our region. Case management has repeatedly been shown to decrease recividism rates. Every House of Mercy client is provided with case management. Nearly all clients demonstrate improvement. Stability and self-sufficiency are largely increased because of the full array of essential and supportive services.

**Mercyhealth, Janesville**

## EDUCATING PARENTS ABOUT DRUGS AND ALCOHOL: "HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT"

Through work with the Stoughton Wellness Coalition, a partnership of the City of Stoughton, Stoughton Area School District and Stoughton Hospital, the coalition is working on prevention strategies to reduce youth alcohol and drug use.

The Stoughton Wellness Coalition has created a mobile mock teen bedroom to help educate adults on the hidden signs of drug and alcohol use. The mock teenage bedroom increases awareness of common items that can be substance abuse warnings.

"We want adults to be aware and know possible indicators," says Teressa Pellett, coalition coordinator. Pellet is employed by Stoughton Hospital through a Drug Free Community Grant which Stoughton Hospital initiated.

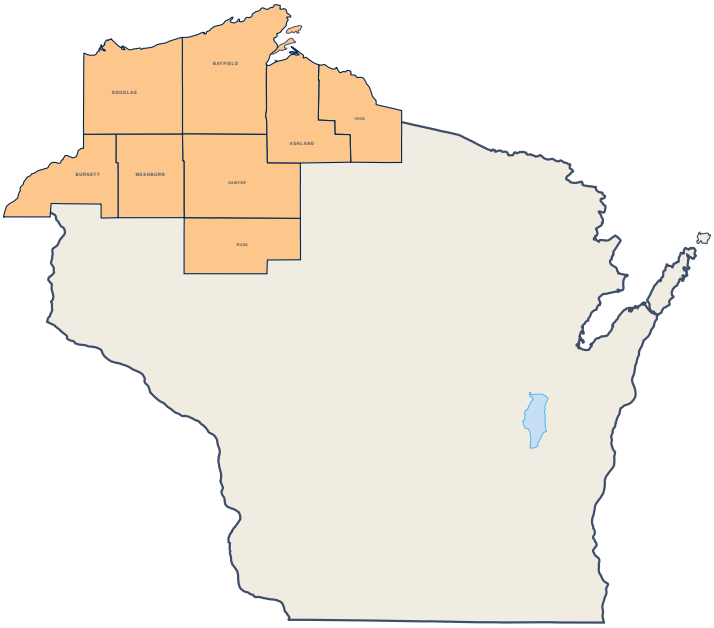
*Parents view the mock bedroom during high school parent athletic orientation*

The mock bedroom has been set up at the high school athletic parent orientation and both high-school and middle school open houses. Approximately 200 adults have viewed the room where a variety of mock substances are hidden, giving adults the opportunity to uncover items from seemingly innocent objects. Video game consoles, board games, undersides of desks, shoes, CD cases and more can easily be used to hide drugs, paraphernalia or other illegal substances. There are many websites that show people how to keep their "valuables" safe. These safes are easy to purchase online and can come in the form of water or soda bottles, deodorant cans, hair brushes and more.

If a parent does discover alcohol or drugs, addressing problem behavior early is important to preventing negative consequences in the future.

**Stoughton Hospital**

# Vikingland Region




**Total Region Community Benefits: $17,163,084**

## ESSENTIA HEALTH PROVIDES LIFE-SAVING FINANCIAL AID TO COMMUNITY'S HOMELESS

Harbor House Crisis Shelter provides emergency, transitional and long-term housing and aid to about 500 individuals and families in northern Wisconsin. Half of those served are children. To do this, the organization relies on generous donations. Essentia Health, which has one hospital and four clinics in the area, has donated more than $40,000 to Harbor House over the past 16 years.

*Essentia employees getting ready to help cook a delicious meal for Harbor House residents*

"Essentia's donations are life-saving to Harbor House," explains Executive Director Reverend Barbara Certa-Werner. "If we did not have Essentia's help, we would not be able to serve as effectively and to the level of excellence that we currently do."

Besides support donations since 2002, Essentia Health contributed $1,000 in 2017 to help fund a training workshop for those who work the frontlines to help homeless men, women and children. Harbor House was chosen for Essentia's United Way Day of Caring service project, where employees stepped outside the hospital and clinics and helped bake cookies with homeless children.

"So many children in our care lack positive role models outside the school walls," adds Certa-Werner. "We so appreciated the time they gave our youngest clients."

Emily Anderson, program manager of community health at Essentia, says the work at Harbor House directly connects to the health of our underserved community members.

"There are many ways in which housing can impact health. Having good health requires having homes that are safe and affordable. Lack of affordable housing can place a financial burden on families forcing trade-offs between food, medication, and other basic needs. If we truly want to improve health in our communities, focus on improving housing conditions is essential."

In 2018, a $12,000 grant from Essentia will support Harbor House's basic service needs. "At Essentia Health, it's our mission to make a healthy difference in the lives of those we're called to serve," says Terry Jacobson, St. Mary's Hospital-Superior administrator. "Our work with Harbor House directly impacts the most vulnerable in our community and truly lives up to that mission."

**Essentia Health St. Mary's Hospital, Superior**

## BURNETT MEDICAL CENTER INTRODUCES NEW DRUG DISPOSAL METHOD

The 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment identified alcohol and other drug abuse to be Burnett County's most significant health need. Burnett Medical Center is helping to combat the growing epidemic of drug abuse, specifically prescription drug abuse, by providing a solution to safely dispose of opioid painkillers and other unused medications.

In May 2018, a public drug collection and disposal receptacle was placed in Burnett Medical Center's main entrance for the safe and anonymous disposal of unused or expired medicines and controlled substances.

"We often receive questions from our community asking how they can safely get rid of their unused medications," said Gordy Lewis, Burnett Medical Center CEO. "We're happy to be able to give back to our community by providing a safe solution to

getting unused medications out of their homes and harm's way."

This initiative is so important for the community because medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to misuse and abuse, accidental poisonings and overdoses. By getting them out of the home as soon as possible, fewer people will be tempted to experiment with stronger, more dangerous drugs such as heroin and methamphetamine.

By addressing this vital public safety and public health issue, Burnett Medical Center is now the third permanent medication drop box location in Burnett County. Burnett Medical Center's hope is to be a resource for community members in order to decrease the amount of unused prescription drugs and ultimately make the community a healthier place to live.

**Burnett Medical Center, Grantsburg**

## EVERY DOLLAR HELPS

This past summer, Washburn Wisconsin resident Steve visited patient financial services at Memorial Medical Center in Ashland in hopes of consolidating some of his medical bills. Instead, he discovered that due to a more generous charity care policy, he qualified for assistance.

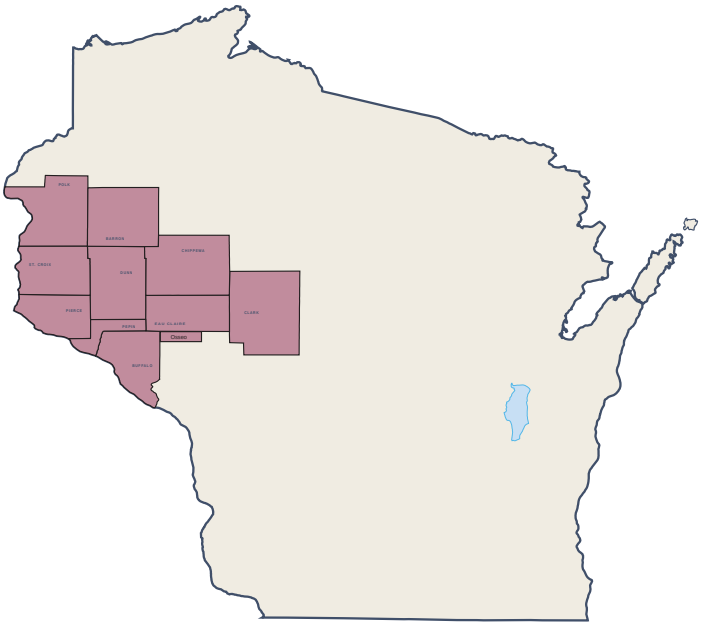
"I was right on the border of qualifying for assistance," Steve says. "But, I filled out the paperwork and based on what I pay for health insurance and my overall income, I qualified."

This meant instead of consolidating medical bills, the Memorial Medical Center portion of his medical bills, or $4,800, was forgiven. "This may not seem like a lot of dollars in terms of medical expenses, but that couple hundred dollars a month makes all of the difference for me. It is a huge deal and I'm just so grateful for their assistance."

In total, Memorial Medical Center gave $467,000 in charity care in its latest fiscal year, in addition to forgiving an additional $1.2 million in bad debt. As one of the poorest regions in the state, it is just one more way Memorial Medical Center can do their part to assist their friends and neighbors in receiving the care they need, in the place they love.

**Memorial Medical Center, Ashland**

# West Central Region




**Total Region Community Benefits: $122,887,346**

## HELPING MAKE ENDS MEET

People who are poor or underinsured often make the difficult decision to go without health care.

Recently, a couple enrolled in the Ascension Our Lady of Victory Hospital financial assistance program. The husband was told he needed to undergo treatment, which meant he would have to stop working, apply for early disability and live off his wife's income from a part-time job.

His wife was experiencing stress due to the amount of bills and cost for the treatment and knowing they couldn't afford the monthly payment. Jody Nordine, Financial Counselor, Ascension Our Lady of Victory Hospital, talked with the couple and assured them the hospital's financial assistance program could benefit them, and their information would remain private.

"This was not an easy decision for the couple, as the husband informed me they are proud people and don't ask for help," said Nordine. "Without our assistance there is no way they would be able to afford everyday living costs."

**Ascension Our Lady of Victory Hospital, Stanley**

## HSHS SACRED HEART HOSPITAL COLLEAGUES GO THE EXTRA MILE TO SERVE COMMUNITY

After some of the pharmacists, lab technicians, receptionists, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and other colleagues leave HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital for the day, they don't go home—because their work day is not done.

They head to the Chippewa Valley Free Clinic to donate their time and compassion. Maribeth Woodford, free clinic executive director, said the clinic functions as most other health care facilities do—with one main difference. "Volunteers run our clinic, not paid staff," Woodford said. "Many medical volunteers come from Sacred Heart Hospital."

Rhonda Brown, director of 3D Community Health with HSHS Sacred Heart and St. Joseph's hospitals and a leader of the Community Health Needs Assessment, said the top need of mental health is served by their area free clinics.

That's why supporting those who volunteer at those health facilities is so important. It helps the community in more ways than one.

"What is so critical about all of these offerings is that every dollar we save we are able to put back into patient services, medications and medical supplies—better serving our community's most vulnerable population," Woodford said.

The free clinic is a safety net, Woodford said. It keeps basic health care needs of those living in poverty out of emergency rooms and urgent cares. It provides free medication to those upon discharge from Sacred Heart and who have no ability to pay. It's about helping all people in need.

**HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire**

## GRATITUDE CHALLENGE IN NORTHWEST WISCONSIN IMPROVES MOOD, HEALTH

Mayo Clinic Health System in northwest Wisconsin offered a free community event called the "Gratitude Challenge" to encourage community members to practice gratefulness. The challenge included a simple daily task to improve mood and overall health.

During the 30-day challenge, participants were prompted on provided sheets to journal large and small things to be grateful for, track efforts to do something kind for others and dedicate time to being present in the moment daily.

"This challenge made me think on a daily basis of all that I have to be grateful for," says an anonymous participant. "Even the smallest of things, like a smile from my granddaughter, really helped me to stay positive."

More than 500 community members participated in the challenge, with over 100 under age 18. Nearly half of the participants reported recording 21 - 30 journal entries throughout the challenge. By the end of the challenge, the participants who said they are thinking extremely positive doubled in number from 15% on the pre-challenge survey to 30% on the post-challenge survey.

"The gratitude challenge was a wonderful challenge to start a new habit," says an anonymous participant who is a mother. "Every evening at bedtime, I talked with my three-year-old daughter about what we were thankful for about our day. We recorded it on a calendar so we can look back and see all the positives in our lives."

Ninety-one percent of participants said they will "more than likely" participate if the challenge is offered again.

**Mayo Clinic Health System - Northwest Wisconsin, Eau Claire**

## HEALTHPARTNERS HOSPITALS OFFER "POWERUP" HEALTHY KIDS PROGRAM

Engaging and impacting local communities is the PowerUp youth health initiative—making it easy, fun and popular to eat better and move more—so youth can reach their full potential. PowerUp is a long-term commitment to create change and is in partnership with schools, businesses, health care, civic groups, families, kids, and the entire community. This program serves HealthPartners hospitals and clinics in the St. Croix Valley, including the western Wisconsin communities of Amery, Clear Lake, Hudson, New Richmond, and Somerset. It's supported by Lakeview Health Foundation (Stillwater, Minn.), HealthPartners and its local hospital foundations.

In less than five years, PowerUp in western Wisconsin has reached more than 44,000 youth through outreach events that focus on improving the food and physical activity environment for kids and families at libraries, state and county parks and trails, county fairs, and schools. PowerUp's cornerstone

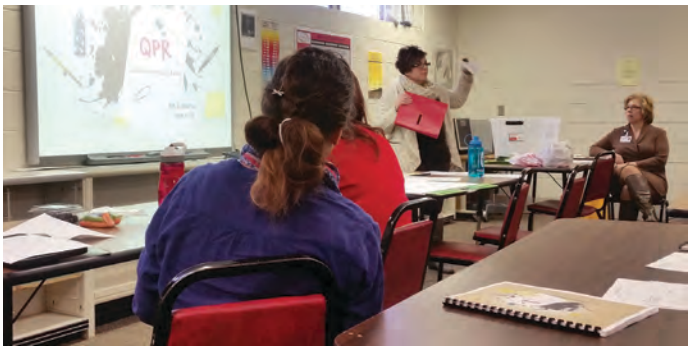
program, Try for 5 School Challenge, is a fun-filled challenge that encourages all elementary-aged students to eat more fruits and veggies. Elementary schools in these communities all participate, reaching over 6,000 students with an average participation rate of 89 percent.

*Kids in the PowerUp program*

In addition to supporting children's health, HealthPartners has also recently implemented prescription drug take-back bins at Amery, Westfields, and Hudson Hospitals in an effort to address opioid abuse and misuse of prescription medications. These bins provide the community a proper and safe way to dispose of unused or no-longer-needed medications.

**HealthPartners (Amery Hospital & Clinic; Hudson Hospital & Clinic; and Westfields Hospital & Clinic, New Richmond)**

## HSHS SHINES LIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA




*In 2016, HSHS Sacred Heart and St. Joseph's hospitals' 3D Community Health began teaching QPR -- a suicide prevention model -- to students in Chippewa Valley schools. Today, all children are trained in Chippewa Falls High School, and many other students are trained throughout the area.*

Like breaking an arm or a chronic heart condition, mental disorders need the same type of medical attention and compassion. Colleagues with HSHS St. Joseph's and Sacred Heart hospitals' 3D Community Health: Body.Mind.Spirit are working hard to dispel myths about such disorders and educate the public with Mental Health First Aid and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) classes throughout the Chippewa Valley. The Chippewa Valley Community Health Needs Assessment rates mental health as one of the top concerns in the area.

**Mental Health First Aid**

"Our Mental Health First Aid classes have taken off," said Laura Baalrud, Community Health Educator with 3D Community Health.

The eight-hour course teaches participants how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. "It's a way to help spark life-saving conversations in the community," Baalrud said. Of all adults in the U.S., half will be diagnosed with a mental health disorder in their lifetime.

Mental Health First Aid sets an action plan to teach people to identify the risk for suicide or harm, listen non-judgmentally, give reassurance and information, and encourage appropriate professional help.

"If we're going to say that mental health is a top concern in our area, we have to put our hearts into doing something about it," Baalrud said of HSHS Western Wisconsin Division paying for the rigorous training and time to have two colleagues educated. "HSHS St. Joseph's and Sacred Heart hospitals' 3D Community Health has taken a lead role to educate people in the community on this important topic. It's up to us to continue to follow through."

**HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire and HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital, Chippewa Falls**

## ASCENSION OUR LADY OF VICTORY INCREASES SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

Twenty-five emergency medical responders in Clark and Chippewa counties participated in QPR suicide prevention training thanks to additional training sessions coordinated by Ascension Our Lady of Victory Hospital in Stanley.

QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer. As part of the training, participants learn the knowledge and skills to proactively interact with an individual who may be considering suicide.

Specifically, those who participated in the Gatekeeper Training gained the knowledge to:

- Know what behaviors/warning signs indicate someone might be at risk for suicide.
- Understand risk factors affecting those who attempt or complete suicide.

- Effectively communicate with someone who might be at risk for suicidal behavior and know how to refer that person to a mental health professional.
- Learn and access community resources available to assist individuals at risk for suicide and their families, friends, and coworkers.
- Learn about local and national resources for suicide prevention

"Just as people trained in CPR help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis," said Jill Pollert, CommunityLink Specialist at Our Lady of Victory.

Pollert says that participants were also given a three-month post training evaluation to assess impact.

**Ascension Our Lady of Victory Hospital, Stanley**

## PROTECTING TEENS FROM TEXTING AND DRIVING

*Safe Start Driving school accepts donations of Cell Slip Cases*

With more than 21 percent of teen drivers involved in fatal crashes distracted by their cell phones, it was time to look at what could be done to help bring this number down.

For the past year, St. Croix Regional Medical Center has donated signal-blocking devices called CELLslips to all new drivers in the Safe Start Driving School. CELLslips are pockets with special linings that block all incoming and outgoing phone calls, texts or app notifications. Once the phone is removed from the pocket, all notifications and messages are received.

"The CELLslips not only remind the teens to put their phones away, but their parents as well," stated Safe Start Driving School Instructor Dory. "We hope that with these slips teens and parents will not be tempted to check their phone while driving."

**St. Croix Regional Medical Center, St. Croix Falls**

## CULTIVATING FRESH FOOD FOR CHIPPEWA FALLS COMMUNITY

*Eagle Scout Trevor Opsal, second from right, stands with his parents and HSHS St. Joseph's Community Garden leader Roger Elliott, left. The Community Garden is a way for local food pantries to distribute fresh vegetables to people who wouldn't normally have the opportunity to purchase or grow them.*

With help from his parents and other Eagle Scouts, Trevor Opsal mostly measured twice and cut once while building a garden shed from the ground up. The shed, completed in early fall 2017, holds much needed shovels and other tools used in the HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Community Garden. The garden is a way for families who are strapped to grow their own nutritional food. Others are also encouraged to grow and donate all yields to food pantries throughout the Chippewa Valley.

During a recent Chippewa County census, it was revealed that 14 percent of Chippewa County residents are considered food insecure—more than 8,700 people.

When HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital conducted its last Community Health Needs Assessment and determined food insecurity was a top concern, the hospital answered back.

Throughout the season, the plots on property adjacent to L.E. Phillips-Libertas Treatment Center in Chippewa Falls were sowed by volunteer gardeners, and a few hundred pounds of fresh vegetables were harvested.

Since its first year, not only has the garden acquired more growers and a locked eight-foot fence, but it also boasted an increased yield each year. By the end of the 2017 growing season, garden director and volunteer Roger Elliot recorded an astounding 2,731 pounds of food either taken home to a needy table or donated.

In a community like Chippewa Falls where people are prideful and humble, food insecurity is often overlooked. Now, those people in need have one less thing to worry about as they get back on their feet.

**HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital, Chippewa Falls**

## PLAIN COMMUNITY FARM SAFETY EVENT CLARK COUNTY, 2018

Approximately one-third of the population of Clark County, WI, is Amish or Mennonite, commonly known as the Plain Community. In 2017, 47.1% of births in Clark County were to the Plain Community. As the Plain Community continues to grow in central Wisconsin, the unique health and safety needs of the community should be explored and addressed.

Farming is the primary occupation among Plain people with children and youth routinely working in the agricultural environment. As such, Plain Community children and youth are at risk for agricultural injury.

Since 2008, the Clark County Child Death Review Team (CDR) has investigated eight agricultural-related fatalities and one near death among the Plain children.

After a recent investigation, the Corporation Counsel asked the Clark County Health Department to assist in delivering programs or resources to the Plain Community to prevent future child agricultural injuries

*Attendees at the Plain Community Farm Safety Event*

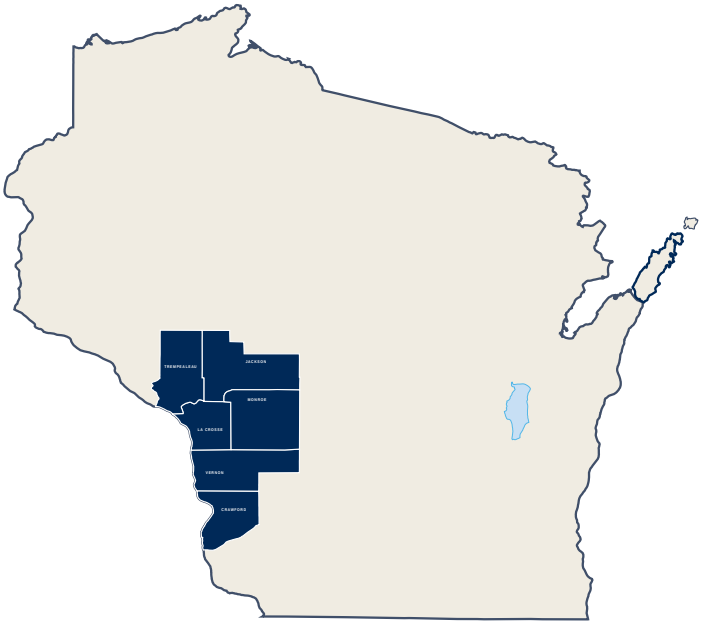
The Clark County Health Department enlisted the help of organizations with expertise in agricultural safety and health and injury prevention (which included Marshfield Medical Center - Neillsville) to plan and conduct the Plain Community Farm Safety Event.

The goal was to educate Plain community parents on skid steer and confined space safety, appropriate child work assignments, appropriate child supervision, and basic injury response.

All Clark County Plain Community members were welcome to attend the Farm Safety Event. The event was advertised via flyers distributed to key community members and businesses to pass out and display. A recorded message was sent to Plain community household phones. In addition, the Plain community midwife provided information about the event at home visits and check-ups.

**Marshfield Medical Center - Neillsville**

# Western Region




**Total Region Community Benefits: $113,751,455**

## THE DANGERS OF DRIVING AND TEXTING

Not a day goes by that Melissa Duoss doesn't think about the moment she looked at a text message while driving. The Tomah resident and pharmacist at Tomah Memorial Hospital says her life changed forever following a car accident near her hometown of Milton in December 2011.

"I was on my way to a friend's house and (driving) on a back-country road when I looked down to read a text message and when I looked up I just continued to go straight into a tree," said Melissa who shared her story to hundreds of area residents who attended Monroe County National Night Out Aug. 7 in Tomah's Winnebago Park.

*Tomah Memorial pharmacist Melissa Duoss explained the danger of texting and driving during a presentation as part of the annual TMH coordinated Monroe County National Night Out held Aug. 7 in Tomah.*

It was the 16th year Tomah Memorial Hospital's community outreach dept. has coordinated the event.

The violent collision caused the brake pedal on Duoss' car to crush her right ankle, which required 16 screws and 2 plates to put back together.

Since her first surgery nearly seven years ago, Melissa has had two additional operations that included taking a piece of her hip to rebuild damaged bones. She also has completed months of therapy, which gave her limited use of her ankle.

In addition to her ongoing physical complications, Melissa had to deal with the loss of a friend who was texting and driving.

"My friend that pulled me out of my car (accident) passed away in a car accident four months later basically doing the same thing, so it really hit close to home."

Melissa has taken a pledge not to text and drive. "I always thought of myself as invincible; I never thought it would happen to me. I was really good at it (texting), I could email, I would say, 'it's not inattentive driving because I was emailing or on Facebook', but then when I realized after doing it with a text message that it's all the same thing—it's very scary."

Melissa also knows she is lucky to be alive and can share her story with others. "I'm lucky that it was just a tree and just me and I didn't have friends in the car or I didn't hit someone walking across the street or hit another car and end a life that way so I'm very thankful for that."

**Tomah Memorial Hospital**

## BLACK RIVER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL HOSTS GARDENING FOR YOUR HEALTH EVENT

Melinda Myers, a nationally known gardening expert, author, and TV/radio host presented to an eager group of more than 120 gardening enthusiasts. Through a partnership with the Karner Blue Garden Club and Black River Memorial Hospital, Myers presented two sessions that included Vegetable Gardening Success and Simple Landscape Makeovers. Myers also shared the many mental health benefits of gardening. The collaboration was intended to encourage healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, and chronic disease prevention through gardening. She left attendees with more confidence in their abilities and provided tips for healthy gardening.

Dr. Carol Martin, Black River Memorial Hospital emergency department physician and Garden Club past-president, stated, "This event was for the first-time gardener and the experienced gardener. Gardening not only allows people to

*Melinda Myers, nationally known gardening expert, talks with attendees at the Gardening For Your Health event*

grow their own healthy produce to feed their families, it also feeds the soul."

The event took place at the Black River Falls Middle School. Myers was present to do a book signing before and after the event. There were other booths the attendees enjoyed such as the newly developed Jackson County Farmers Market, Public Health Nutritionists, Jackson County Master Gardeners, and a local florist. This event was free to the public.

**Black River Memorial Hospital, Inc., Black River Falls**

## COLLABORATION KEY TO ADDRESSING SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN RURAL AREA

Children, neighbors, friends, family members—it can happen to anyone. The Lybert family lived through the devastation of drugs and alcohol as their son Tyler struggled with drugs for 11 years before he decided to get help. After treatment, the family came together and decided to share their story to help youth and families with alcohol and drug prevention education, intervention and support. The family has spoken to over 85,000 youth in 100 middle and high schools across Wisconsin.

The Lyberts came to Sparta High School through a collaboration including Mayo Clinic Health System in Sparta and Tomah, Tomah Memorial Hospital, Gundersen Health System – Tomah Clinic, and the Monroe County Safe Communities Coalition. The presentation was free and open to the community.

Community partnerships have proven an effective means for stretching resources and reaching more people. Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare in Sparta, which includes a primary care clinic and a 25-bed critical access hospital, continues to provide alcohol and other drug

treatment and prevention services that address the needs of its patients. Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare in Sparta also participated in Monroe County's alcohol and other drug-abuse initiative and worked with Tri-County Heroin Addiction coalition as a treatment resource for the law enforcement agencies in Monroe, La Crosse and Vernon counties.

**Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare, Sparta**

## FARMERS MARKET, FREE SUMMER MEALS ENHANCE NUTRITION

In a neighborhood labeled a food desert, Gundersen Health System and community partners came up with solutions to fill the need.

Led by registered dieticians, Gundersen provided free meals to children ages 18 and younger in La Crosse's Powell-Poage-Hamilton (PPH) Neighborhood—at the door step of Gundersen's La Crosse headquarters—as part of the Summer Food Service Program funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Gundersen's Community and Preventive Care Services team also coordinated a weekly farmers market in the PPH neighborhood, featuring local food producers with fresh produce, eggs and much more.

Enhancing the nutrition and quality of life of our neighbors is part of Gundersen's mission and was achieved during these fun, collaborative programs.

**Gundersen Health System, La Crosse**

## HOSPITAL SHARES LAND TO KEEP RECOVERY CENTER IN NEIGHBORHOOD

When Coulee Council on Addictions, a nonprofit organization providing addiction recovery services in La Crosse, Wisconsin, found itself in dire need of a new facility, it turned to a neighboring nonprofit, Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare, for help. As the two organizations discussed how the hospital might best support a larger, more welcoming recovery center, the answer soon became apparent: The hospital could provide land on its campus so the recovery center could remain in the neighborhood where it has served people for 40 years.

Substance abuse was identified as a top priority in the hospital's most recent Community Health Needs Assessment. Coulee Council on Addictions provides confidential help to individuals and families impacted by addiction and leads the community in prevention, education and awareness.

An agreement between the organizations allows Coulee Council on Addictions to lease land on Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare's La Crosse campus at a cost of $1 per year. Construction on the recovery center began in the fall of 2017, and the facility opened its door to the public in July 2018. The new 13,000 square foot facility includes a private area for counseling services, flexible multi-purpose rooms for education and support group meetings, a kitchen, a resource center and library, a drop-in center, a meditation and contemplation area, and office space for other nonprofits to meet with and assist recovery center patrons. The organization is also expanding its services to include arts and crafts and outdoor activities.

According to Joe Kruse, regional chair of administration for Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare, "This unique collaboration ensures timely and vital resources will be available for people working toward a better future. We welcome the Coulee Recovery Center to our campus and look forward to continuing to collaborate to address recovery needs in our community."

**Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare, La Crosse**

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