

Anchored in Our Community



UMass Memorial Health — committed to improving the environmental, financial and physical health of the people of central Massachusetts

DECEMBER 2021

◆ FROM THE DESK OF ERIC DICKSON, MD

President and CEO, UMass Memorial Health

“You can’t have quality care without equity.” This is a quote from a leader at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. The basic premise is that we can’t provide the highest quality of care to all patients if we don’t put an intentional focus on ensuring patients are not disadvantaged from receiving care based on “socially determined circumstances,” which includes the color of their skin, ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, income level, etc. That means that for some patient populations to get the care they need, we have to do even more to get equitable results.



This past year, UMass Memorial embarked on a systemwide health equity project focused on improving an area of clinical care in which we had identified significant disparities between patients based on race. Based on our own patient data, we found that we had fewer well-child visits among our Black and Latino pediatric patients. Our project team identified barriers for parents to keep these well-child visit appointments – things like lack of transportation, child-care for other children in the household, language barriers and scheduling conflicts with work hours. To support parents and improve accessibility to these visits, our team implemented multiple strategies, including:

- Conducting well-child visits during acute care appointments
- Actively reaching out to patients who had not yet received their well-child visit, and to reschedule when they canceled or were “no-shows” for their visits
- Scheduling the next visit at the time of the current visit
- Providing patients and their families with an information sheet highlighting the importance of preventive care visits
- Created a dashboard where practices could see their performance and the patients who needed their visits
- Facilitating transportation for patients who are eligible for reimbursement through Medicaid.

ANCHOR MISSION STEERING COMMITTEE

◆ CO-CHAIRS

Douglas Brown

President, UMass Memorial Community Hospitals Inc. and Chief Administrative Officer, UMass Memorial Health

Cheryl Lapriore

Senior Vice President, Chief of Staff, Chief Marketing Officer, and President, UMass Memorial Health Ventures, UMass Memorial Health

◆ COMMUNITY BENEFITS DEPARTMENT

Monica Lowell

Vice President, Office of Community Health Transformation/Community Benefits, UMass Memorial Health

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

To provide feedback or request more information, email communications@umassmemorial.org.



UMass Memorial Health

THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF HEALING



This nine-month project resulted in a 16 percent improvement in well-child visit adherence among black patients and a 12 percent improvement among Latino patients. These great results in a short period of time have garnered national attention. The UMass Memorial team is the recipient of the first-ever Bernard J. Tyson National Award for Excellence in Pursuit of Healthcare Equity by The Joint Commission and Kaiser Permanente. This is a national award that recognizes health care organizations for their work to achieve a measurable, sustained reduction in one or more health care disparities.

We've learned from this experience that we must be intentional in improving access to care and reducing disparities with a particular focus on the most vulnerable communities who need us the most. It is an important part of our anchor mission to have an equity lens to identify barriers to equitable, high-quality care, and to use antiracism approaches to help even the playing field. Quality care must be equitable care. ♦

◆ **UMASS MEMORIAL HEALTH - HEALTHALLIANCE-CLINTON HOSPITAL PLAYS INTEGRAL ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ANCHOR COLLABORATIVE IN NORTH WORCESTER COUNTY**

As a positive sign of the expansion of the “anchor institution” concept, UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital is providing significant financial support to and participation in the development of the North Central Massachusetts Anchor Collaborative. In July, HealthAlliance-Clinton awarded \$200,000 through its Determination of Need program to the Community Health Network of North Central Massachusetts (CHNA 9) to help it establish this new Anchor Collaborative. The award is the first of two installments of a five-year grant totaling \$500,000.

Beyond this significant financial contribution, the hospital will play a role as one of the six anchor institutions that design and implement the work of the Anchor Collaborative. The other anchor institutions taking part are Community Health Connections, Fitchburg State University, Gardner Public Schools, Heywood Healthcare, and LUK, Inc. All these institutions are significant, place-based non-profit organizations that play a vital role in the communities in north central Massachusetts. Under the coordination of the Health Equity Partnership (CHNA9's new name) the goal of the group is much like that of UMass

Memorial Health's own anchor mission: to have direct impacts on growing and sustain local economic and social wealth as well as healthy communities.

The North Central Massachusetts Anchor Collaborative worked with the Healthcare Anchor Network to coordinate numerous interviews and focus groups throughout the community. These conversations helped the group determine its initial priority: workforce development.



According to Chelsey Patriss, Executive Director of Health Equity Partnership, “Now we’re digging deeper to explore what ‘workforce development’ really means for the region. When institutions mention the term, they tend to mean the pipeline from education to internships to training and advancement programs. Community members speak about it in a more holistic way, including thinking of barriers to work and opportunities that are lacking such as transportation, affordable housing, childcare, flexible schedules and a living wage. Our work will be rich and deep – and we hope that the solutions we come up with will be more sustainable and impactful to the community.”

“I’m most excited about the buy-in to this model from the leadership at each partner institution, including our own,” said Rosa Fernandez, Director of Community Health and Volunteer Services at HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital. “Respected leaders at each institution are pledging their support to this Anchor Collaborative. This is an opportunity to change the narrative about how to solve these issues in our communities. We are action-oriented – there is a sense of urgency with our group.”

In the first half of 2022, the group will have an action plan in place and expects to already be implementing the work needed to meet its goals for improving workforce development in the region. ♦

◆ MAKING HOMEOWNERSHIP A REALITY, ONE HOUSE AT A TIME

BRINGING HOME OWNERSHIP FROM DREAM TO REALITY

It takes vision to see a vacant lot and imagine the possibility of using it to provide a home for someone who would otherwise be unable to afford one.

That's exactly what's happening with a 1.3-acre parcel on Cedar Street in Sturbridge. The town donated the land, which is in a single-family residential neighborhood, to Habitat for Humanity of MetroWest/Greater Worcester. With a loan of \$400,000 from UMass Memorial Health's Anchor Mission, the organization will build a four-bedroom house with approximately 1,560 square feet of living space. When the home is complete in August 2022, it will be sold to a family making 30-60% of the median income in the area.

"Turning this unused space into a home for a hard-working family takes sustained commitment, collaboration and hard work," said Kathryn Behan, Senior Director, Clinical Affiliations & Anchor Mission Strategy at UMass Memorial Health. Funds for the loan come from UMass Memorial's commitment to put 1% of investment assets into local communities.

"It's wonderful that we as an organization have the opportunity to invest in the community. Being healthy is so much more than getting treated at a doctor's office or a hospital. It can start with having a stable home, and home ownership can be the beginning of generational change."

The family who will buy the property will be part of the construction process. The deed for the property will ensure that it will be classified as affordable housing in perpetuity. ◆



Pictured from L to R: Jean Bubon, Sturbridge Town Planner; Jeff Bridges, Sturbridge Town Administrator; Debbie Maruca Hoak, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity MetroWest/Greater Worcester; Douglas Brown, President, UMass Memorial Community Hospitals and Chief Administrative Officer, UMass Memorial Health; Bryan Clancy, Habitat for Humanity MetroWest/Greater Worcester, Board President

◆ SUPPORTING HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN SOUTHBRIDGE AREA

When UMass Memorial Health acquired Harrington Hospital in Southbridge earlier this year, officials looked beyond the hospital walls as they thought about the health of the community and recognized how much an infusion of funding could help. As a result, UMass Memorial's Anchor Mission will invest \$4 million in community organizations located in the Harrington service area over the next five years.

"Harrington Hospital was built with the support of people in the Southbridge community walking up with donations," said Jessica Calcidise, Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer at Harrington. "This is such an amazing opportunity for us to be able to give back to them. And it's such a positive at a really hard time."

The first two projects to receive funding were vetted by committees at the local and hospital system level — and ultimately approved by the Anchor Mission Steering Committee. Both will improve health and well-being of area residents.

Funding recipient Renaissance Medical Group (RMG) in Southbridge offers an adult day health program that can serve up to 192 people, many of whom speak Spanish. But the waiting list includes 180 more who need the service. This grant will help RMG increase the program's capacity.

Another recipient is the Center of Hope Foundation, which provides resources, services and opportunities for people with disabilities and their families in the area. The foundation will use the funds to start rehabilitating a building to house Scoops of Hope, an ice cream shop to be staffed by people with disabilities. The goal is to teach participants practical skills that could potentially be transferred to other work opportunities.

"Both of these projects will benefit the community tremendously," Jessica said. "And they're great examples of how our mission at Harrington is well-aligned with UMass Memorial as a whole." ◆

◆ COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, at **UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital**, it was paramount to provide clear communication, especially in the form of signage, to patients, caregivers and the community. Conditions and regulations were constantly changing, so it was important for the Hospital to be nimble and efficient. While it already had an existing vendor relationship with Alpha Graphics Shirley, that connection became even more important for both parties. “Alpha Graphics Shirley never hesitated to get a job done in a timely manner for us – sometimes turning projects around within a few hours and delivering. Jeff, Steven and Christine became an important extension of our business during the COVID pandemic, and we have been lucky to have such a high-quality partner locally,” said Kathy Boudreau, Special Events Coordinator at HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital. For Alpha Graphics Shirley, its contract with HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital was instrumental to its survival after it saw its print business drop off dramatically because of the pandemic. “The hospital’s business helped support us through a daunting 2020-2021 time period,” said Jeff Schwarz, Owner and President, Alpha Graphics Shirley. This partnership highlights the critical impact that local purchasing can have in our communities.



Pictured (L to R): Christine Roy (Alpha Graphics Shirley), Steven Borodawka (Alpha Graphics Shirley), Kathy Boudreau (HealthAlliance-Clinton), Jeff Schwarz (Alpha Graphics Shirley)

At **UMass Memorial Medical Center**, a “Trauma Training Series” will be held at noon on the third Thursday of every month, providing subject matter experts opportunities to share knowledge about aspects of trauma and resilience with providers and members of the community. The training series is being hosted by the Worcester Addresses Childhood Trauma (Worcester ACTs) program, operated out of the Community Benefits Office at the Medical Center under the leadership of Laurie Ross, PhD. The training series is intended to build a more informed community and foster knowledge about the impact trauma has on individuals and communities throughout the life cycle. “We firmly believe that if providers understand families’ situations more intimately, their response will be humane rather than blame,” Amy Ebbeson, LCSW, Worcester ACTs. Links for the trainings are shared and agencies have reported using the sessions in their own staff development efforts.



To help local law enforcement officers gain a better understanding of what it’s like to live with a mental health diagnosis so they can respond to calls more effectively, members of **UMass Memorial Health – Community Healthlink’s** Westwinds Clubhouse in Fitchburg met with Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) personnel from local police departments in September. CIT training equips police officers to help them to avoid serious injury or death in emergency situations with people with mental illness. “We know mental health plays a significant role in many interactions with law enforcement,” says Deborah Downing, program director at Westwinds. “This was an eye-opening experience,” said Leominster Police Sergeant E.J. Tocci. “It was great to hear so many success stories and know a place like this exists. I now have more resources at my disposal when I’m trying to help people in tough situations.”



◆ UMASS MEMORIAL HEALTH

UMass Memorial Health is the largest not-for-profit health care system in Central Massachusetts with more than 15,500 employees and 2,100 physicians, many of whom are members of UMass Memorial Medical Group and Harrington Physician Services. We are the clinical partner of the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Our comprehensive system includes UMass Memorial Medical Center, UMass Memorial Health – Harrington, UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, UMass Memorial Health – Marlborough Hospital, and UMass Memorial Health – Community Healthlink. Together, we impact every aspect of life in the region by making health and wellness services available to everyone, advocating for social equality and providing economic stability and opportunity. There are many ways to heal. We pursue them all. Relentlessly. Visit www.ummhealth.org.

To find a physician in your community, call 855-UMASS-MD (855-862-7763). ◆