Community Health: A Social Investment

“Our investment in health exists just as much in the community as it does at the bedside. We engage in deliberate conversations with patients, their families and caretakers to identify social drivers that may affect their recovery. Our skilled multidisciplinary care teams compassionately coordinate seamless transitions and create access to community resources.”

- LeighAnn Sidone, D.N.P., RN, C.E.N.P.
  President and Chief Operating Officer
  Suburban Hospital

Caring for the community beyond the walls of the hospital and elevating health equity has been a deliberate and focused priority of Suburban Hospital for 80 years. We strive to build a healthier community for our patients, staff and neighbors with intentional health improvement strategies designed to address identified needs. We undertake health improvement in various ways, including through collaborations built on long-standing relationships with trusted and committed partners. Most recently, the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was completed jointly with all four Montgomery County hospital systems, exhibiting collegiality among local health care leaders for the good of the individuals we collectively seek to keep well, safe and empowered to live, work and play in Montgomery County. This community impact report highlights the ways we are advancing solutions to address unmet needs to safeguard a healthy future for our community.

Suburban Hospital has long approached health improvement by viewing individuals as a whole person, more than just the health condition with which they present at the hospital. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted upstream inequities across every facet of local, national and global health. Systematic structural barriers such as access to quality health care, economic stability and social context, shed light on the need to approach population health improvement with the whole person in mind. Our focus in this area has been sharpened with the inclusion of new strategies that address emerging barriers.

While we continue to offer comprehensive initiatives designed to deliver evidence-based programs addressing chronic disease, cancer and behavioral health, we also integrate intentional approaches concentrated on the social determinants of health that impact health outcomes. The 2022 Montgomery County Hospital Collaborative CHNA addresses such issues as food insecurity, workforce or labor shortages, income inequality and housing cost burden.

HOW OUR INVESTMENT IMPACTS THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE.
Serving as liaisons to the community, Suburban Hospital’s Community Health Workers (CHWs) navigate various local services and resources to best meet patients’ needs as part of the outpatient diabetes services. By focusing on social aspects which may pose barriers to positive health outcomes, CHWs provide much-needed assistance with services for transportation, food access, medication costs or wellness programs. Having the support of a CHW serves to set patients up for success in managing their health. For example, our CHW will follow-up with patients living with diabetes as part of the hospital’s Diabetes Self-Management Training program. The CHW may learn that, in addition to trying to manage their diabetes, the patient also needs reliable transportation to doctors’ appointments, so they provide these resources as well.

“Patients say they need resources but do not know where to start. My role is to help them by gathering information and creating the best possible solution for their needs.”

- Darlyne, CHW
During the FY23 holiday season, Suburban Hospital departments supported 22 families in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools, Linkages to Learning and Montgomery County Child Welfare Services. Hospital staff provided gifts and household and food items, making the lives of 99 individuals in our community a little bit brighter for the holiday.

“Dear Suburban Hospital Community, thank you so much for your generous holiday donations and support of Highland Elementary School Linkages to Learning. With your contributions, we were able to serve more than 55 children this year. It is because of your kindness and compassion many children were able to have a joyful and fun holiday season! Thank you!”

- School counselor at Highland Elementary School

“I am beyond grateful for everything you all have done for my family. I was not looking forward to the holidays … but your gifts have lightened the load and have given the kids something to look forward to on Christmas.”

- A grateful parent
Dine, Learn & Move (DLM) is a multifaceted interactive program designed to prevent and manage cardiovascular risks associated with poor diet and physical inactivity. The success of this free monthly program, run continuously since 2008, is the collaborative approach to improve health outcomes among vulnerable populations experiencing health disparities. Supported by Suburban Hospital and the University of Maryland Capital Region Health, other key partners include Prince George's County Health Department, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation.

Each month, this 90-minute virtual program operates in three separate sections, combining both nutrition and fitness education. A certified exercise instructor leads a live movement session, and a registered dietician from the health department provides health education on a topic such as reading nutrition labels, adhering to portion sizes, shopping in season and eating in color. The program concludes with a live cooking demonstration conducted by a local chef who offers recipes that are heart healthy, diabetes friendly and made with easily accessible and affordable ingredients.

“I already knew I wanted to do medicine, but this (experience) opened my eyes to the branches available in medicine.”
- 2022-23 Medical Explorer

“The speakers were very passionate about their jobs and that passion passed down to me. It influenced me to be certain with my choice to pursue a career in medicine.”
- 2022-23 Medical Explorer

Dine, Learn & Move is certainly turning me into a much stronger, healthier and happier person, and I’m loving it! My knowledge is steadily increasing, and when you know better, you do better. I feel absolutely great and wonderful.”
- A grateful participant

The Medical Exploring Program is a signature, one-of-a-kind, interactive educational initiative designed for high school students who are interested in pursuing a career path in clinical care or science and want to strengthen their understanding of the medical profession. For over 25 years, students have participated in hands-on learning labs that replicate key functions of the hospital system from the region’s top physicians, surgeons and multidisciplinary health care professionals during the academic year. To date, over 3,000 local high school students have graduated from this program.

“I am reading and understanding labels better. There was a time I did not pay labels much attention and my blood pressure stayed high. Because of Dine and Learn, I now read my labels, exercise more and my pressure has become more stable.”
- A grateful participant

TO DATE, OVER 3,000 LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE GRADUATED FROM THIS PROGRAM.
Our Key Partners

- Montgomery's Kids
- A Wider Circle
- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
- Alzheimer's Association
- American Heart Association
- Greater Washington Region
- American Lung Association
- American Red Cross
- Archdiocesan Health Care Network
- B-CC YMCA
- Bethesda Cares
- Bethesda Chevy Chase Rotary Club
- Catholic Charities
- Charles E. Smith Life Communities
- Clinica Proyecto Salud
- Colesville United Methodist Church
- Community Bridges
- Community Reach of Rockville
- Department of Parks and Recreation Prince George's County
- EveryMind
- Girls on the Run Montgomery County
- Healthy Montgomery
- Highland Elementary School
- Identity Inc.
- JDRF
- Jewish Social Service Agency
- Latino Advocacy Advisory Group
- Latino Health Initiative
- Leadership Montgomery
- Linkages to Learning
- Main Street
- Manna Food Center
- Mansfield Kaseman Health Clinic
- Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
- Mary's Center
- Mobile Medical Care, Inc.
- Montgomery Cares
- Montgomery County Cancer Coalition
- Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Montgomery County Department of Parks and Recreation
- Montgomery County Food Council
- Montgomery County Housing Opportunity Commission
- Montgomery County Office on Aging
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Montgomery Hospice
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
- National Institutes of Health-National Heart Lung and Blood Institute
- National Institutes of Health-National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
- Nexxus Montgomery
- Nourishing Bethesda
- Parent Encouragement Program
- Primary Care Coalition
- Prince George’s County Health Department
- Safe Sitter, Inc.
- Scotland Community Partnership
- Small Things Matter
- Spirit Club
- St. Catherine Laboure
- Stepping Stones Shelter
- The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce
- Tobacco Free Coalition
- United Way of the National Capital Area
- University of Maryland Capital Region Health
- University of Maryland School of Public Health
- Village to Village Network
- Washington Metropolitan Oasis