

Care in Action

How the people and programs of America's tax-exempt hospitals benefit their communities every day

Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital

Yakima, Washington

A 63-year-old woman received care for congestive heart failure and atrial fibrillation at Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital. Unfortunately, she had limited medical insurance benefits that only covered a fraction of her total bill. She called the hospital seeking assistance because she was overwhelmed with the remaining medical bills. Hospital financial counselors were able to help her apply for Medicaid, and when she found out she was denied that coverage, they assisted her in completing an application for hospital charity care. She was approved due to financial hardship and **Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital wrote off the entire amount** owed by the patient after her insurance payment.

Beaumont Hospital

Royal Oak, Michigan

Beaumont Hospital collaborated with local firefighters, police and other volunteers to build the first injury prevention/safety center in Michigan – "Safety City U.S.A." The center includes replicas of household rooms and an indoor park setting that are used to demonstrate possible fire and safety hazards. For example, the bedroom fills with "simulated smoke" teaching children how to react and exit in the event of a fire. Recently, a seven-year-old girl who visited "Safety City U.S.A." with her 1st grade class was credited with saving her family when their home caught fire. After participating in the fire safety field trip, she went home and encouraged her mother to purchase smoke detectors, develop a family fire escape plan and practice evacuating.



La Rabida Children's Hospital Chicago, Illinois

La Rabida Community Asthma Program for Children (LCAPC)

LCAPC was formed by the hospital in response to startling statistics about asthmatic children – asthma is the number one cause of pediatric hospitalizations, resulting in as many as 14 million lost school days each year. Working with the public schools, LCAPC identifies at-risk children, screens and diagnoses them, and then educates parents and teachers on the signs and triggers of asthma, how to respond in an emergency and how to improve physical environments to reduce asthma triggers. LCAPC then helps connect students with the proper medical resources to help manage their conditions.

The Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Operation Safety Net® (OSN) *An innovative street outreach program for the unsheltered and transient homeless population, OSN consists of 14 teams that perform medical rounds by walking the city's streets, alleys and riverbanks providing prenatal care, health counseling, TB and HIV testing, and protection from severe weather conditions through an organized shelter. The program trains approximately 100 residents and medical and nursing students annually in street medicine.*

Advocate Lutheran General Hospital

Park Ridge, Illinois

Lewis tried to ignore the sores on his legs because he didn't have health insurance. Lewis' legs were infected and a chest X-ray showed his lungs also were infected. Doctors also realized Lewis had suffered a heart attack and needed a defibrillator implanted in his heart. Without insurance, Lewis and his wife feared he wouldn't receive care. "They told me not to worry – that the hospital would work it out. I received the implant – **the hospital covered the expense,**" Lewis said. Lewis has since started cardiac rehabilitation, and his legs are finally healing with the help of physical therapy and wound care.

Fairview Ridges Hospital

Burnsville, Minnesota

Lisa, a 24-year-old woman, was devastated when her fiancé and father of her two children died in an accident. She did not know if she should get help or just deal with the loss on her own. She also didn't know how to best help her children, Joey, five, and Jase, four. She learned of Youth Grief Services offered through Fairview Ridges Hospital and decided to sign the whole family up. The seven-week workshop teaches adults and kids about grief and coping strategies. Lisa reflects that the "most important thing we learned was that we were not alone and what we were experiencing was normal."



UH Bedford Medical Center

Bedford, Ohio

Joseph signed up for a free screening through the Dare to C.A.R.E. program at UH Bedford Medical Center and was surprised to learn that his left carotid artery was more than 80 percent blocked, putting him at very high risk for stroke. He underwent surgery and made a full recovery. Through University Hospitals' DARE to C.A.R.E. community outreach program, individuals 60 and older, and others with high risk factors, receive free screenings thanks to Bedford Medical Center, Geauga Medical Center and Richmond Medical Center.

Providence St. Vincent Medical Center

Portland, Oregon

Carol and Doug had recently resettled from Las Vegas to Oregon. Carol, a breast cancer survivor, learned that back pain she attributed to moving was caused by bone cancer. Having retired early, the couple was without health insurance. A financial counselor with Providence helped them gain coverage and also arranged for Providence to cover most of their medical bills. "Everyone has been so sweet to us," Carol said of the financial assistance and her on-going cancer care. **"They're just angels."**



The Cleveland Clinic Health System

Cleveland, Ohio

When Anne left a full-time job to attend nursing school, she lost her health insurance coverage. She turned to North Coast Health Ministry's free health care and medication assistance program for help. The Cleveland Clinic Health System provides space, free or discounted lab and radiology services and other program support when needed. "I came into this wondering what kind of care I was going to get, and this has been no different than any other doctor I've ever been to," Anne said. "Their concerns about me are always present. **It's top-notch medical care.**"

Northern Hospital of Surry County Mount Airy, North Carolina

Medical Ministries Clinic

The Medical Ministries Clinic serves the medical needs of the indigent population in Surry County. Every Tuesday night, approximately 40 to 50 patients come to the clinic to receive care provided by volunteer doctors and nurses, all of whom are on staff at Northern Hospital of Surry County. The hospital donated equipment to set up the clinic, plus supports the cost of lab work and X-rays. The clinic treated 2,088 patients in 2006.



Kishwaukee Community Hospital

DeKalb, Illinois

Five-year-old Kayla cries when she can't go to therapy

at Kishwaukee Community Hospital's Unlimited Performance Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine facility. When she began therapy for her cerebral palsy, she could barely move her legs and left arm. Now she can carry a plate of food. Her progress almost came to a halt when the family's health insurance reached its limit and other assistance was not available. Kayla spends five hours a week in the pediatric therapy program. Without insurance, the family faced an annual expense of thousands of dollars. The hos-

pital was able to assist the family so Kayla could continue to get the help she needed. "We can't say enough about the help we received from the hospital," Kayla's father said.

Grinnell Regional Medical Center

Grinnell, Iowa

A 27-year-old woman sustained multiple injuries in a motor vehicle accident on her way home from a job interview for a teaching position. She was brought to Grinnell Regional Medical Center's emergency department and, after undergoing surgery to repair a broken leg, spent five days in the hospital. After being discharged, she required eight weeks of physical therapy. Because she did not have health insurance coverage or a job and was ineligible for Medicaid, **Grinnell covered the cost of all her medical expenses.**

Memorial Medical Center

Neillsville, Wisconsin

Like many farmers, Ronald was accustomed to working with aches and pains.

But one pain in particular brought him to Memorial Medical Center's emergency department. From there, Ronald was admitted to the hospital for several days. After consulting with physicians and running tests, he was finally discharged. Ronald and his wife lived primarily on his Social Security. When Ronald received his bill in the mail, he made an appointment to speak with Amanda in Financial Services. "I just told her the truth ... that I was going to need help paying the bill. And Amanda couldn't have been nicer. Two days later, Amanda called to say it was taken care of," Ronald said. "We can't thank them enough."

Woman's Hospital Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Perinatal HIV: Know Your Status, Protect Your Baby

This multi-faceted program ensures women know their HIV status and receive preventative treatment before giving birth. The program uses patient classes, the hospital magazine, physician and staff training, case management and hospital protocols to educate patients and staff. Brochures and teaching materials also are distributed through various community outreach programs. Baton Rouge has one of the nations' highest rates of AIDS cases. Without intervention, as many as 20-30 percent of HIV-infected pregnant women could transmit the virus to their infants. But with appropriate treatments, the rate can be reduced to 1-2 percent.

Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital & Clinics

Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin

A 64-year-old Wisconsin woman with aggressive uterine cancer quickly accumulated thousands of dollars in hospital bills. She couldn't afford health insurance, was denied disability because of her limited income, and was just shy of qualifying for Medicare. With limited financial resources and no health insurance, she found hope in her birthday horoscope – "You're in line for a miracle, so you can take on the impossible." That day she got a call from Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital & Clinics' Community Care program saying that **her medical bills would be covered**. This program helps 300-500 patients every year.



South County Hospital Healthcare System

Wakefield, Rhode Island

Carol describes the staff at South County Hospital as "putting patients first."

She sustained serious injuries when struck by a car and was informed by her doctors that she would need extensive occupational and physical therapy. Twice weekly therapy sessions meant traveling by boat back to the mainland, a daunting task for a woman still afflicted with injuries. Carol also wondered

how she would afford this added medical expense. After meeting with a financial specialist, Carol was assured that the hospital could meet her needs and would cover any costs that were not paid by her limited disability policy. **"The hospital made sure I received the care that I needed,"** said Carol. "I don't have to worry about how I will pay for it or how I will get there. It really serves the community well."

Luther Midelfort Hospital

Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Larry and his wife Agnes weren't prepared when Larry felt like he was having a heart attack. When they arrived at the Luther Midelfort Emergency Department, they were worried about Larry's health, but Agnes had another concern — they did not have insurance or the means to pay a large hospital bill. "I told staff right away that we didn't have insurance, but they said 'don't worry about that right now. We'll talk about that when Larry is stable.' There was never any pressure," she says. Today, Larry has recovered from quadruple cardiac bypass surgery and is finishing up the cardiac rehabilitation program. **And, their entire hospital bill was covered by the financial assistance program.** "We are so thankful," Agnes says.

Mercy Hospital

Port Huron, Michigan

Sue, a financial counselor at Mercy Hospital, reflects on the notes of thanks written to her by patients and family members. Through Mercy Care, the hospital's financial assistance program for those in need, she was able to help a man in desperate need of eye surgery. Previously unemployable and uninsured, the man now has a much brighter future and wrote, "You are the best. Now I can see life as it is. Sue, thanks for everything."



Parma Community General Hospital

Parma, Ohio

Dee was uninsured when she relocated to Cleveland to start her own business and health problems sidelined her. The Parma Health Ministry, a service of Parma Community General Hospital and Parma Christian Church that cares for local uninsured residents, **provided Dee with the care she needed but could not afford.** The program has handled more than 2,800 patient visits since its inception, and has diagnosed and treated patients for conditions ranging from cancer and heart disease to diabetes and hypertension.

Saint Francis Medical Center

Grand Island, Nebraska

Raymond started using drugs when he was 12 years old. He got help for his addiction through Saint Francis Medical Center, which created the Student Wellness Center to provide general health care services, as well as mental health counseling, including assistance for students with drug and alcohol problems. Since getting help from the Center, Raymond has consistently achieved A's and B's in class work and has participated in many school and community activities.

Beatrice Community Hospital and Health Center Beatrice, Nebraska

Ready-Set-Go

Ready-Set-Go is an annual back-to-school event organized by the hospital and The Salvation Army. The event provides low-income children in grades K-12 with sports physicals and the supplies they need to start the school year. Each child receives a health kit; a school backpack filled with school supplies; coupons or vouchers to local retail, shoe and clothing stores; haircut vouchers; hearing, vision and dental screens; a public library card; and information on topics ranging from diabetes education to health insurance.

*Evanston Northwestern Healthcare
Evanston, Illinois*

Evanston Township High School Health Center

Through a collaborative partnership with the local high school and health department, Evanston Northwestern Healthcare (ENH) was able to establish a free school-based health clinic for the school's approximately 3,000 students. The clinic is staffed by ENH employees with the overall goal of providing primary health care services in a caring environment, promoting healthy lifestyle practices and reducing the barriers students encounter in their efforts to access health care services. Specific services include evaluation and treatment of acute illnesses, follow-up and management of chronic illness conditions and health maintenance visits, including routine physicals and immunizations.

Yuma Regional Medical Center

Yuma, Arizona

Before receiving care from the School Health Care Program, Leticia missed 45 days of school in one year due to severe asthma. Leticia, who has had asthma since she was six months old, sat on the sidelines, watching as the other children played. But through regular medical monitoring, daily medication and education about her illness, Leticia has blossomed into a happy and healthy eight-year-old. **The program serves children who don't have health insurance.**

Leticia is just one of the thousands of Yuma County school children who have received free medical care since the School Health Care program was launched.

Blessing Hospital

Quincy, Illinois

At 43, "Jane" found herself struggling with a \$1,000-a-month bill for medications to treat her three chronic conditions. She has a job, but it does not offer health insurance, and she does not have enough money left over from her paycheck to pay for doctor visits and medications. Jane is now able to manage her health conditions through the Community Outreach Clinic, a community health program supported by the hospital and the medical community. **The clinic provides free, non-emergency primary health care,** access to hospital services, specialists and medications to adults without government or private insurance.



This is a small sampling of what hospitals across America are doing in their communities every day. For more information on how hospitals are helping their communities, visit www.caringforcommunities.org.



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