Hospira Foundation Provides Largest Single Donation in Organization History

With the recent acquisition of Hospira by Pfizer, CommunityHealth was privileged to be awarded a legacy grant from the Hospira Foundation in support of our cancer screening program. This grant, totaling more than $1.2 million, is the largest single gift ever made to CommunityHealth and will support our wide range of cancer screening into 2019, even as we anticipate growing exponentially during that time.

CommunityHealth’s program, now called the Hospira Foundation Cancer Screening Program, includes breast cancer screenings, mammograms, colon cancer screenings, colonoscopies, cervical cancer screenings, oral cancer screenings, patient education, and other ancillary services. In 2014, we conducted more than 3,500 cancer screenings and connected patients to treatment at partner hospitals when cancer was diagnosed.

The Hospira Foundation Cancer Screening Program will help CommunityHealth reduce the disparity in cancer detection and related deaths in the uninsured.

This remarkable grant will make a difference in so many lives. We are grateful to the Hospira Foundation for this truly momentous gift.

National Award from Mutual of America Foundation

CommunityHealth has been recognized by the Mutual of America Foundation for our outstanding contributions to the community in partnership with Northwestern Medicine, Presence St. Joseph Hospital, Rush University Medical Center, and University of Chicago Medicine, whose internal medicine residents provide care at our two health centers. Selected as one of the top three programs nationally, CommunityHealth will be honored at a high-profile event in New York City this November, to be followed by a Chicago-based event in early 2016.

The Mutual of America Community Partnership Award annually honors the outstanding contributions that nonprofit organizations, in partnership with public, private, and other social sector organizations, make to society. The award’s criteria includes being able to demonstrate the value of our partnerships, ability to be replicated by others, and our capacity to stimulate new approaches to addressing significant social issues.

Volunteerism and partnership are two of CommunityHealth’s key pillars of support, as our volunteer-based model relies heavily on partnerships with local hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, training programs and community organizations to operate our two health centers. We are currently supported by more than 1,400 volunteers, including providers (e.g., physicians, dentists, nurses and pharmacists) and other clinic volunteers (e.g., interpreters, lab technicians).
After a hospital diagnosed Josefina Ramos with diabetes, she began treatment for the condition but still found herself feeling very ill months later. Ramos’s son advised her to come to CommunityHealth, and when she arrived for her first visit two years ago in a wheelchair, not knowing why she was unable to walk. Ramos began seeing Dr. Mourad Senussi (a former resident from Presence St. Joseph Hospital) at CommunityHealth for her diabetes, but shortly thereafter, she began to experience hallucinations. After a diagnostic referral, doctors quickly discovered that Ramos had a brain tumor.

Dr. Senussi referred Ramos to The University of Chicago Medicine for surgery to remove the tumor. At the hospital prior to her surgery, Ramos experienced another hallucination: “I went to have my surgery, and the walls were a different color, and I thought there was another bed in the room. After the surgery, thank god, everything is fine.”

As Ramos began to recover, these strange hallucinations went away, she was able to walk again, and her surgical scars began to heal. Ramos also received news that the tumor was not cancerous.

Thanks to CommunityHealth, Ramos states that she feels much better and continues to manage her diabetes now with the help of Dr. Babs Waldman, Volunteer Medical Director. CommunityHealth is proud to provide a full range of services that can help our patients overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles to health. Ramos expresses her gratitude for the donations and support given to CommunityHealth because, without it, “a lot of people would still be sick.”

When did you start volunteering at CommunityHealth?
About two years ago.

What influenced you to start volunteering at CommunityHealth?
I moved to the Chicago area a few years ago, and after I reciprocated my pharmacist license here, I was looking for both job and volunteer opportunities. I learned about CommunityHealth, and I wanted to give back to the community using my expertise and education. This seemed like a good match.

What was your first impression of CommunityHealth?
I had a great first impression when I came to CommunityHealth because I realized that the clinic used a holistic approach to helping people. It included other aspects of the person’s health, like cooking classes, diabetes education, and exercise classes. I love that I feel like I’m a link in a very important chain in helping people gain access to healthcare, but also empowering them to lead healthy lives.

What has CommunityHealth taught you? What have you taught others here?
CommunityHealth has taught me that even though I’m coming here to offer something for other people, at the same time, I’m seeing people leave empowered to be healthier. And I’m realizing that there can be a ripple effect that happens in the community. Because the patients are healthier, they can give back to their families and communities in positive ways, as well. I like to see the bigger picture of what’s happening outside my pharmacy walls.

What is your favorite memory at CommunityHealth?
It’s always rewarding when I see the lightbulb go on for somebody. Maybe they had no idea what medication they were taking, what it was for, or why they were taking it, or maybe they were taking it incorrectly. So I always feel like it’s rewarding when people come to understand their health better and get their questions answered. Those little moments that happen throughout the day are what I find rewarding.
AbbVie Helps CommunityHealth Treat Hepatitis C

Partnership with pharmaceutical company AbbVie is helping CommunityHealth treat Hepatitis C among our patients. Given the high cost of medications for treating Hepatitis C, we have not previously been able to offer Hepatitis C treatment on-site. However, through the Patient Assistance Program (PAP), AbbVie has begun donating medications for CommunityHealth patients with Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus. It is spread primarily through contact with the blood of an infected person. Today, most people are infected with the Hepatitis C virus by sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs. Before implementation of widespread screening of blood products in the U.S. in 1992, Hepatitis C was also commonly spread through blood transfusions and organ transplants. Some people also become infected through needle-stick injuries in health care settings or contract the disease from a birth mother who has Hepatitis C. Less commonly, a person can become infected through sharing personal care items, such as razors or toothbrushes or having sexual contact with a person infected with Hepatitis C.

Untreated Hepatitis C is a major cause of cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and liver cancer. An estimated 2.7 million persons in the United States have chronic hepatitis C virus infection. However, most people do not know they are infected because they don’t look or feel sick.

While the Affordable Care Act was fully implemented in 2014, many patients continue to struggle with access to affordable health care, and many of CommunityHealth’s lowest income patients are not eligible for Medicaid. AbbVie recognizes the difficulties that these patients face and has efficiently provided the medicine that they need. Two patients have already been treated for Hepatitis C, thanks to AbbVie’s support, and CommunityHealth anticipates more will benefit.

In the past year, CommunityHealth conducted 193 screenings for Hepatitis C, and 9 patients tested positive. Many CommunityHealth patients are immigrants born between 1945 and 1965—a demographic where the disease is more prevalent.

Emily Hendel, Director of Nursing Services, has led CommunityHealth’s efforts to screen and treat patients for Hepatitis C in partnership with University of Chicago’s ECHO program. Hendel states, “We are trying to do more universal screening. We suggest that, in addition to testing of patients born between 1945 and 1965, patients being screened for HIV should also get at least one screen for Hepatitis C.” These screening efforts will help CommunityHealth diagnose more cases of Hepatitis C, and AbbVie’s support in this program ensures that many of these newly diagnosed patients will have access to appropriate treatment.

CommunityHealth Partnerships in the Spotlight

> Judith Haasis, Executive Director, was appointed to the Presence Health West Town Community Leadership Board. She will provide experience and insights from the community served by Presence Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center in order to transform and improve upon the health and well-being of those served by the hospital.

> Volunteer Medical Director Dr. Babs Waldman will be honored at the Rotary Club of Chicago Northwest’s 25th Annual Dinner Dance on October 30 for her work with CommunityHealth.

> CommunityHealth’s Take Action! Diabetes Management Program was selected as one of two grantee programs highlighted at Advocate Bethany Health Fund’s Networking Reception in September. Laura Ciresi Starr, Foundation Relations & Communications Manager, shared program impact with leadership from more than 70 community organizations serving Chicago’s west side.

> This September, Consulting Magazine recognized West Monroe Partners with a Social & Community Investment Award for the firm’s pro bono IT partnership with CommunityHealth. CommunityHealth Executive Director Judith Haasis and Board Member William J. Hinde, a Director with West Monroe Partners, were both on hand in New York City to accept the award.

> Director of Nursing Services Emily Hendel, along with volunteers Dr. Babs Waldman and Dr. Andrea Baumgartner, are participating in The University of Chicago Medicine’s ECHO-Chicago Hepatitis C program. The program includes training for primary care providers and ongoing web conference calls to discuss risk assessments, testing, diagnosis, counseling, staging, monitoring, and treating Hepatitis C. It is designed to expand primary care capacity for screening and evidence-based care in underserved neighborhoods. CommunityHealth was also recently selected as one of five free/charitable clinics in Illinois to participate in an ECHO curriculum for hypertension, sponsored by Americares.

> Emily Hendel, Director of Nursing Services, has led CommunityHealth’s efforts to screen and treat patients for Hepatitis C in partnership with University of Chicago’s ECHO program. Hendel states, “We are trying to do more universal screening. We suggest that, in addition to testing of patients born between 1945 and 1965, patients being screened for HIV should also get at least one screen for Hepatitis C.” These screening efforts will help CommunityHealth diagnose more cases of Hepatitis C, and AbbVie’s support in this program ensures that many of these newly diagnosed patients will have access to appropriate treatment.
CommunityHealth Pilots
Pre-Diabetes Class

This summer, CommunityHealth piloted a new health education class focusing on pre-diabetes. While we are already treating more than 1,000 diabetic patients, CommunityHealth has designed this class to educate those who are at high risk for developing diabetes.

The pre-diabetes pilot was a ten-week course based on a diabetes prevention curriculum published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Adelle White, Health Education Coordinator, explained, “The course empowers patients to know that they can prevent diabetes. Some patients think it is inevitable because many members of their family have it.”

In every class, patients learned about the complications of diabetes, how to prevent it, and how to form healthy habits through a hands-on approach—exercising for at least fifteen minutes, eating a healthy snack, and cooking were all part of every class. The patients also received a gift each class as incentive to develop healthy habits. For example, in one class, the patients were given stevia seeds to grow at home (Stevia is a natural no-sugar sweetener).

Five women enrolled in our first pre-diabetes class. Their participation was important, because as White states, “They are also caretakers of their family. Beyond educating these folks, they are also educating their families.” If we are able to prevent some of these patients from actually becoming diabetic, it will be a major victory for their health – and potentially their family members’ health, too. We will continue to offer a shorter (6-week) version of this class in 2016.

Volunteer-Driven Messages For Meds Campaign a Success

CommunityHealth volunteers raised an impressive $13,605 in our 2015 Messages For Meds online fundraising campaign. This was the third year for this campaign, which encourages volunteers to ask their personal networks for contributions to cover the cost of medications not otherwise donated to our MedAccess Chicago Pharmacy. Development Coordinator Andrew Sutherland, who managed the campaign, explained, “Medications are important for patients to get well and stay well. Any funds donated in this campaign directly benefit the patients.”

The design of the online fundraising campaign allowed volunteers to engage on their own time, and it helped build a feeling of community at the clinic. Participants are entered to win incentives such as cash prizes or shadowing a senior medical provider. Medical student groups from five partner schools and individual clinic departments (e.g., pharmacy, interpreters) divided into teams that worked together to raise funds.

The Loyola Stritch School of Medicine team made an especially impressive showing, raising $4,550. Team captain Jeff Weishaar said, “We thought it would be a great way to rally CommunityHealth volunteers around raising some money for the clinic we were working in, growing in, and serving others in.” He noted that while donating one’s time is essential to the livelihood of the clinic, financial donations are also needed, and “a little bit of help from volunteers could make a huge difference in making the clinic run for a long time.”

This year, there were 63 participants in Messages for Meds who sent a total of 758 emails - every email averaged $18 worth of revenue for CommunityHealth. But the value goes beyond the amount of money raised. Sutherland explains, “Even if every single email doesn’t bring in money, it can make people aware of CommunityHealth, whether that means liking us on Facebook or letting a future patient know about our services.”

CommunityHealth is thrilled about the increased engagement and activity in this year’s Message for Meds campaign, and we look forward to future online fundraising initiatives. Thank you to all that participated and made this year’s campaign a success!
Together we can build a healthier Chicago, are you in?

Thinking about your future?
Planned giving integrates your charitable gift with your overall financial, tax, and estate planning goals to maximize benefits to both you and a cause important to you, such as Community-Health. To learn more, contact Aleta Rupert, Director of Development, at 773-969-5942 or arupert@communityhealth.org.

Join us!
Tuesday, November 10, 2015
7:30 - 10:30 AM
Mid-America Club: Burnham Room
200 E. Randolph Dr., 80th Floor

TO REGISTER & LEARN MORE:
Call: 773.969.5952
Email: jfischer@communityhealth.org
You can also visit us online at communityhealth.org/allinchicago

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