



2024
COMMUNITY
BENEFITS
REPORT

 UMass Memorial Health

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY TRUST

Our Community Benefits Mission

UMass Memorial Health is committed to improving the health of all those it serves and addressing the health problems of those experiencing poverty and other medically underserved populations. Our commitment also includes tackling social drivers of health — unemployment, lack of housing and access to healthy food — that negatively impact our community’s health and wellness.

What Are Community Benefits?

Community Benefits are programs and services not-for-profit hospitals provide to improve community health. These programs and services focus on identified community needs and address health disparities among disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. Community Benefits must meet one of the following criteria:

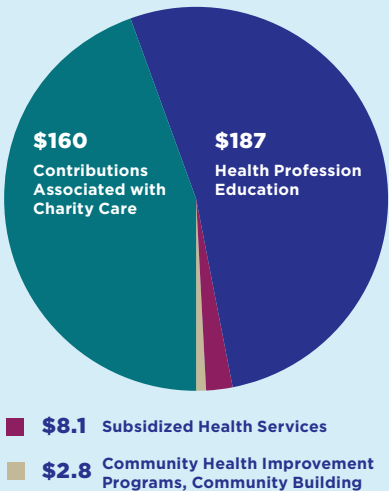
- Improve access to health care services
- Enhance the health of the community
- Advance medical or health knowledge

In 2024, UMass Memorial Health contributed \$359.2 million to positively impact the health and well-being of the communities we serve. Our Community Benefits contributions support charity care, subsidized health services, education of health professionals, research, community-based programming and partnerships. In addition, \$297.8 million in other non-Community Benefits expenses were absorbed through bad debt write-offs and Medicare shortfalls.

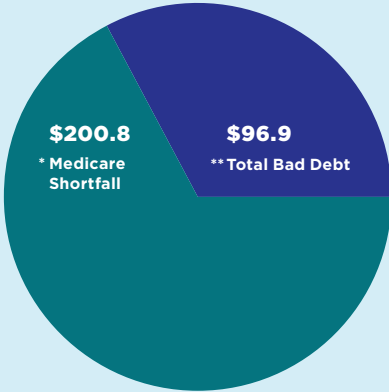
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2024 Community Benefits
Total: **\$359.2 Million**



Other Significant Expenses:
\$297.8 Million



* Medicare Shortfall: Net loss incurred for the cost of providing services to Medicare patients versus income received from the Medicare program.

** Total bad debt: Expenses for receivables that can no longer be collected are written off.

Cover: Pictured, from left, are staff from Growing Places newly opened food processing center in Gardner, MA: Brady Blake, Youth Leader-Processing Youth Lead; Michelle Mullen, Value Chain Assistant Manager; Marielle Vega, Value Chain Manager; Dani Lewis, Youth Leader; and Caitlin Blake, Youth Program Leadership Mentor.

Dear Community, Partners and Friends

We are pleased to provide an update on a year that exemplifies UMass Memorial Health's continuous commitment to serve our communities through collaboration and meaningful connection. We understand the importance of uplifting and listening to the voices of our community members and partners, so we focused on this important work this past year.

Our priorities remained steady, yet adaptable to the changing times and needs of our most vulnerable populations. We continued to focus on the physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being of our community members, addressing the rising needs of food insecurity and housing. In this year's report, we highlight some of the accomplishments of our caregivers and partners and are truly humbled by what we've been able to accomplish together.

We are proud of our collective efforts to contribute to an equitable food system, and we have made great strides in its progress (page 4). Additionally, the impactful work of our Determination of Need grantees (page 23), who have created a community of practice that relies on each other for best practices and support. You will also read about UMass Memorial's continued outreach to increase health care access through the Kraft Community Care in Reach, Road to Care Mobile Addiction Service (page 7), the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile (pages 10 and 11) and educational programming.

We continue to sustain and enhance our Anchor Mission work, including being recognized by the Health Care Anchor Network as a national leader in using our purchasing to create positive social and economic change in our community. Our Workforce Development programs are thriving, fostering opportunities for our caregivers to develop professionally and grow within UMass Memorial Health. We continue to break ground with our Anchor Mission investments into community organizations, which we believe are changing the lives of individuals, families and hopefully generations to come, all grounded in dignity and equity.

Overall, the stories we share are a testament to the cultivation of trust within our community, demonstrating that we will go further together through genuine relationships and by listening to one another. We asked you to partner with us — working side by side — in the spirit of growth and humility, and we are grateful you responded.



Eric W. Dickson, MD

Eric Dickson, MD
President and CEO
UMass Memorial Health



Elvira Guardiola

Elvira Guardiola
Chair, Community Benefits Committee
UMass Memorial Health

UMass Memorial Health Leadership

UMass Memorial Medical Center

Justin Precourt, DNP-RN, President

Mario Florez, Vice President, Community Health and Caregiver Belonging

UMass Memorial Health – Harrington

Edward Moore, President and CEO

Angela Chviek, MBA, CMA, Senior Director, Strategic Planning, Philanthropy and Outreach

UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital

Charles Cavagnaro III, MD, FACP, President

Patricia Pistone, Associate Vice President, External Affairs

UMass Memorial Health – Marlborough Hospital

Charles Cavagnaro III, MD, FACP, President

Ellen Carlucci, Vice President, Development, Marketing and Communications

UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional

Edward J. Kelly, President

Tricia Oliver, Vice President, Public Relations, Marketing and Communications

Building a Regional Food System Together

In 2023, UMass Memorial Health leaders were asked by President and CEO Eric Dickson, MD, to focus on one priority area to improve community health. Based on data from the Community Health Needs Assessments (page 25) and initiatives within UMass Memorial, addressing food insecurity stood out as the area where the most significant impact could be made. Data shows that many families in our region, like in the rest of the country, struggle to access healthy food. According to the nonprofit Project Bread, food insecurity rates in Massachusetts have risen from 19% in 2019 to 37% in 2024.

UMass Memorial partnered with Somava Saha, MD, MS, CEO and President of WE in the World, a nonprofit working globally to design community-driven programs that advance health, well-being, equity and racial justice. Together with community partners, we began developing an approach to creating an equitable food system — one where everyone has access to healthy food, and where local growers, distributors and food recovery programs can thrive.

Working with Community

A group of UMass Memorial leaders and caregivers came together to form a food equity working group to guide this effort. Their first step was to listen by asking the community where the health system could add the most value. The working group then mapped assets, identifying needs, opportunities and existing strengths and aligned these findings with UMass Memorial's Levers of Action: Clinical Care Integration; Funding and Investing; Infrastructure Development; and Policy and Advocacy to see where we could help to make an impact over the short-, medium- and long-term.

Next, UMass Memorial hosted three "Design Days." Two events were held in Worcester, with more than 60 participants, and one in North County, with 40 in attendance. These events brought together caregivers and community partners to answer a simple but powerful question: *What can we do together that we can't do alone to build an equitable food system for the region?*

Worcester Design Day 1: Focused on building a shared understanding of Worcester's food system, including production, processing, distribution, access and food recovery. Participants identified existing efforts and gaps, and what other voices needed to be at the table.

Worcester Design Day 2: Brought additional community partners and UMass Memorial caregivers together to align resources further and narrow the focus. "Both Design Days were filled with dynamic conversation and opened up opportunities for collaboration. This experience deepened my understanding as a community partner of the many ways that UMass Memorial engages with the food system," said participant Grace Sliwoski, Director of Programs, Regional Environmental Council.

North County's Design Day: We expanded our asset mapping, allowing us to learn more about the specific resources and needs in this part of the region. As noted, participant, Ayn Yeagle, MS, RD, Executive Director of Growing Places, "Having this relationship allows us to have bi-directional communication between organizations, and we are building something together instead of it just being transactional."

Identifying Focus Areas: Three Emerged

- 1. Build Trust and Relationships** by engaging patients who screen positive for food insecurity through social drivers of health screenings (page 6) and collaborating with UMass Memorial and the community to connect them with relevant resources. Additionally, to expand UMass Memorial's involvement in regional food tables.
- 2. Reduce Waste and Improve Access to Food** by making the food system more efficient and by supporting community-led programs.
- 3. Create sustainable impact** by purchasing from local and disadvantaged growers, aligning Anchor Mission (page 20) investments with food priorities, and supporting internal and external policy efforts addressing food insecurity. One example of this type of investment is UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital providing Determination of Need Funding in fiscal year 2024 to support the nonprofit Growing Places' new food processing center in Gardener (page 5).

Moving Forward

In early 2025, we met with participants from each of the Design Days as part of a Regional Report-Out to get their input on these three priorities, which will form a strategic plan for this work.

"Seeing the big picture has allowed us to connect the dots across every part of the food system and be able to leverage more resources to where the gaps are," said Mario Florez, Vice President, Community Health and Caregiver Belonging, UMass Memorial Health, and Co-Leader of this work with Patricia Pistone, Associate Vice President, External Affairs, UMass Memorial - HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital.

Said Pistone, "UMass Memorial Health's continued commitment to engage community and patient voices to execute a work plan based on that input will result in a regional food system that is more coordinated, more inclusive and sustainable over time."

Our work continues in 2025 with additional Design Days in Harrington and Milford, as well as expanded asset mapping and continued Regional Report-Outs to ensure that Central Massachusetts is building an equitable food system — together.

Food Program Highlights

From seasonal food drives to on-site gardens, year-round efforts across the UMass Memorial Health system help address food insecurity in our communities. Below are a few of the many ways we are helping those in need:

UMass Memorial - Harrington: Bridge Fridge Community Closet and Pantry

To help address food and clothing insecurities in South Central, MA, Harrington opened two free “Bridge Fridge Community Closet and Pantry” locations on its Southbridge and Webster campuses in 2023. These locations include shelving and outdoor refrigerators and freezers, with space for hanging items.

Non-perishable, refrigerated and frozen food, as well as clothing and toiletries, are regularly donated from Harrington caregivers, and through public donation drives. These items are available to community members facing food or clothing insecurity year-round from 6 am to 8 pm daily.

“Hope for the Holidays” Giving

United Way of Tri-County’s Marlborough Community Cupboard distributes groceries and produce to Marlborough residents monthly. Fresh fruits and vegetables are also available to clients on a weekly basis, allowing people to access healthy items that may be too expensive in a retail grocery store.

In 2024, UMass Memorial Health - Marlborough Hospital staff collected 458 pounds of food to donate to the Community Cupboard during “Hope for the Holidays,” almost double the amount they collected in 2023. Caregivers also donate items throughout the year to other Community Cupboard events (page 15).

Processing Food Locally

The Leominster-based nonprofit, Growing Places, opened a new food processing center in Gardner in January 2025 with investment support from UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital. Located in a converted kitchen



Pictured, top, Dani Lewis, Youth Leader, and Merielle Vega, Value Chain Manager. Pictured, below, Brady Blake, Youth Leader-Processing Lead, process vegetables at Growing Places new processing center.

in the old Waterford St. School, the center will process locally grown food for distribution to area hospitals and schools.

Not only is the processing center helping increase nutritious food from farm-to-table and farm-to-school operations, it’s also building the local economy, which “is a win-win for the community,” explained Growing Places Executive Director Ayn Yeagle, MS, RD. “The processing center increases accessible food by allowing Growing Places to lightly process the healthiest food that we can provide to our community and offer it in a way that is easy for people to prepare and consume at home, and to work with institutions in a way that is a bit different to create products that align with their needs.”

RX Food FARMacy Program

In August of 2022, UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital launched the Rx Food-FARMacy initiative at the Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center and HealthAlliance Fitchburg Family Practice (Residency Program) in collaboration with the Leominster-based nonprofit Growing Places and its Local Food Works program. Their goal is to create better ways for patients to access healthy food. In fiscal year 2024:

- Used the social driver's of health assessment tool to screen 4,546 patients identified with food insecurity.
- Made Food as Medicine referrals to 119 patients, with 100% referred to nutritionists and Growing Places.
- Referred patients to fresh food resources, and provided Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and/or Healthy Incentive Program (HIP) screenings. As a result, 35 patients were enrolled in Growing Places home delivery program. This partnership with the Department of Transitional Assistance lets individuals purchase fresh, local produce using SNAP/HIP benefits, or to pay by debit/credit, and have food delivered to their door, or picked up at local community locations.
- The Cancer Center and Fitchburg Family Practice hosted 20 local Growing Places' Mobile Markets.

SDOH Screenings and Follow-Ups

UMass Memorial Health launched a new approach to screening patients for social drivers of health (SDOH), these are the non-medical factors that may affect a patient's health and well-being.

SDOH screenings help caregivers understand and address social needs, such as food insecurity, housing instability and transportation barriers, which can impact a patient's ability to manage their health. Once identified, UMass Memorial helps connect patients with appropriate resources and support services. Efforts in 2024 that related to SDOH screenings and follow-ups included:

- Using a newly updated questionnaire, nearly 140,000 primary care patients and 16,000 inpatients were screened.
- Developed a partnership with Get Well (a digital patient-engagement platform) to text information on local resources to patients requesting help connecting to local support services.
- In partnership with the Worcester Community Action Council, placed community health workers in eight of the largest UMass Memorial primary care clinics to meet with or call patients asking for help.
- Provided 1,000 MassHealth patients with food and housing supports through six of our flexible service provider partners.
- Supported access to other food supports through philanthropy-funded program collaborations with Growing Places, Fresh Connect and Community Harvest.

"This endeavor brought together staff from across the organization to figure out how we can provide the best whole-person care to patients," said Stephanie Doan-Soares, DrPH, MPH, Senior Director for Health Policy and Equity. "I'm excited to see how we can continue to improve our processes to further integrate social care into standard health care delivery."

About CommunityHELP

Search for free or reduced cost services like medical care, food, job training, and more

Busque servicios gratuitos o de costo reducido como atención médica, alimentos, capacitación laboral y más

communityhelp.net



For more information, visit communityhelp.net.

CommunityHELP connects area residents and their health care providers to free and low-cost services for food, housing, transportation, health care, education, employment and legal issues. Built on the multilingual search platform, FindHelp.org, CommunityHELP.net is a cooperative effort between UMass Memorial Health and Reliant Medical Group, which provides primary and specialty care to patients throughout Central and MetroWest Massachusetts.

CommunityHELP is one way UMass Memorial Health is delivering patient-centered and culturally appropriate care that addresses the complexities of everyday life that impact health.

Bridging Hospital and Community: Dr. Kavita Babu Leads the Way



Kavita Babu, MD, Medical Director for Community Benefits, Chief Opioid Officer and Co-Director of the Road to Care Mobile Addiction Service.

In August 2024, Kavita Babu, MD, assumed a new leadership position as the Medical Director for Community Benefits at UMass Memorial Medical Center, furthering her commitment to advancing public health and addiction medicine. Building on her work as Chief Opioid Officer and Co-Director of the Road to Care Mobile Addiction Service, Dr. Babu's new role addresses the root causes of health disparities by extending the reach of the health system directly into Worcester neighborhoods.

"Emergency physicians see firsthand how structural barriers lead to preventable crises. This work is a natural extension of emergency medicine beyond the hospital walls, grounded in the belief that improving health outcomes means engaging with patients before they arrive in the ED," Dr. Babu explained.

Dr. Babu actively collaborates with Matilde Castiel, MD, Commissioner of Health and Human Services for the City of Worcester, to improve public health. Dr. Babu credits Dr. Castiel and Victoria McCandless, UMass Memorial's Senior Vice President, Chief of Staff and System CEO Communications Officer, for leading critical equity efforts during the pandemic through the COVID-19 Equity Task Force. The collaboration

has also yielded initiatives such as the Worcester Integrated Hepatitis Data Environment, a multi-institutional effort that shares data to enhance hepatitis C testing and treatment.

"It's been an honor to work alongside an extraordinary team at UMass Memorial; Dr. Kavita Babu, Dr. John Broach, Dr. Hugh Silk and Dr. Erik Garcia; whose daily commitment goes far beyond clinical care," said Dr. Castiel. "They are champions for our community's health, treating those struggling with addiction, mental illness and homelessness with deep compassion and unwavering dedication. True change in the social drivers of health will only come when we unite around a shared vision; one where no one is left behind. Together, we can build a healthier, more equitable future for all."

Added Dr. Babu about the partnership, "We continue to pursue a shared goal: building a healthier, more connected Worcester where equity is embedded into every layer of care."

That commitment is perhaps most visible through the continued success of the Road to Care Mobile Addiction Service. Since its clinical launch in 2021, the program has provided over 13,000 visits to more than 2,000 individuals. The mobile clinic has contributed to reduced reliance on 911 for non-emergent issues, increased engagement in long-term treatment and stronger connections to primary care. Fiscal year 2024 also saw an increased integration of paramedics and social workers, enabling the team to initiate hepatitis C treatment, manage withdrawal, and connect patients to housing and insurance, meeting patients where they are, physically and emotionally.



This work is a natural extension of emergency medicine beyond the hospital walls, grounded in the belief that improving health outcomes means engaging with patients before they arrive in the ED."

Kavita Babu, MD, Chief Opioid Officer and Co-Director, Road to Care Mobile Addiction Service, UMass Memorial Medical Center

Community Support Program Helps People “Live Their Best Lives”

Those coping with mental health or substance use disorders often face additional barriers, including challenges with establishing and maintaining access to health care, community-based resources and social supports. UMass Memorial Health - Community Healthlink's Community Support Program (CSP) serves as a vital link to connect clients with short-term, intensive outreach and care coordination services.

“Our goal is to empower people to be as independent as possible and live their best lives,” said Donna Pierce-Judkins, LMHC, Senior Director, Community Healthlink. “We’re here to help fill the gaps and to help them navigate.”

CSP is a service of Community Healthlink, the designated Behavioral Health and Substance Use Services entity within the UMass Memorial Health system, serving individuals in need of mental health and addiction services throughout the northern and central regions of Worcester County. Its team of case managers and recovery support navigators helps clients access:

- Housing, benefits, employment and medical/dental care.
- Support for those who are homeless, including assisting them to find housing and acclimate to a new setting.
- Specialized expertise on justice system-related issues.
- Resources for those with a substance use diagnosis.

“Our purpose is to serve the community wherever they are, whatever their needs are,” said Pierce-Judkins. “We have an amazing, empathetic team that works to meet every need.”

That could mean helping clients obtain social security or SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, connecting them to a local support group, or accompanying them to doctor's visits. They can also refer individuals to other Community Healthlink services.

In 2024, CSP assisted nearly 550 individuals in 23 cities and towns. These short-term supports enable lasting connections that can positively impact their well-being for years to come.

Pierce-Judkins recalls meeting a veteran recently who had become homeless and was about to visit his primary care physician for help.

“

Our goal is to empower people to be as independent as possible and live their best lives.”

**Donna Pierce-Judkins, LMHC, Senior Director,
UMass Memorial Health - Community Healthlink**

She suggested CSP. The program helped him to find housing, fuel assistance and VA benefits, and even purchase furniture for his home.

“This is one of the most satisfying parts of the work we do,” said Pierce-Judkins. “Knowing that we made a difference – that someone, somewhere, is in a better place because of this program.”

Community Healthlink Programs Offer Enhanced, Expanded Care

UMass Memorial Health - Community Healthlink's Clinical Stabilization Services (CSS) and Transitional Support Services (TSS) reopened in mid-2024 with renovations and enhanced services to support their mission of helping individuals overcoming substance use disorder successfully transition to a new phase of life.

CSS, a post-detox program providing short-term, intensive treatment for adults in the early stages of recovery, reopened in July 2024. TSS, for those who have detoxed, stabilized and are continuing towards recovery and engaging in treatment, relaunched in April 2024.

Among the wide-ranging program enhancements, including renovating the client rooms and group session rooms. “We listened to client and stakeholder feedback to ensure we created a more welcoming environment that includes private, HIPAA-compliant spaces,” said Stephanie Manzi, Vice President, Substance Use & Crisis Services, Community Healthlink.

Additional improvements include:

- A new, evidence-based curriculum for use in one-on-one or group settings.
- Enhanced staff training and support.

The relaunch has garnered a positive reception in the community. “People are speaking highly of our services here and are more likely to recommend them to others,” said Manzi.

Fatima, a CSS client, shared, “It’s more than a community. It’s a family. You have so many people you can talk to. This is a very comfortable place to come and get the help that you need.”



Having a shared life experience, clients often support and bond with each other during the program.

Building Trust and Improving Birth for All Communities

“This hospital-based program, modeled closely on community-based doula programs, is a rarity.”

Cherise Hamblin, MD, Program Director, UMass Memorial Medical Center Doula Program



The UMass Memorial Medical Center Doula Program is transforming maternity care for underserved working families by providing doula support, which is associated with improving health and wellness outcomes for birthing patients.

UMass Memorial Health provider Cherise Hamblin, MD, has long been committed to improving patient care, especially for those who are underserved. In May 2024, she launched the UMass Memorial Medical Center Doula Program, dedicated to improving health and wellness outcomes for birthing patients.

“As an OBGYN, I see the limitations of clinical medicine in addressing societal issues like racism or unpaid family medical leave,” Dr. Hamblin explained. “I can’t fix those. That realization pushed me to rethink how we could improve maternity outcomes and experiences. One solution I landed on was doula support.”

Since its launch, the program has supported 138 births. Research indicates that doula care is linked to lower cesarean section rates, higher breastfeeding rates and greater overall satisfaction with the birth experience. But beyond the numbers, it’s the trusting relationships doulas build with patients before birth that genuinely stand out. This prenatal trust eases fears, empowers patients during labor and extends well into postpartum care.

“This hospital-based program, modeled closely on community-based doula programs, is a rarity,” Dr. Hamblin noted. “It’s rare to see such institutional commitment to a non-clinical, non-revenue-generating service focused on working families. That was deeply compelling about UMass Memorial Health’s support.” The program also reaches beyond hospital walls by offering free

childbirth education classes at the local YMCA, led by trusted community voices.

Additionally, the program fosters local workforce development by contracting with local doulas and training an additional 35. These financial and professional opportunities help improve socio-economic factors for all communities. “Bringing people into community helps them build successful businesses,” Dr. Hamblin said. “The workforce development piece has been incredibly fulfilling, alongside seeing the profound impact doula care has on patients’ birthing experiences.”

Through trust, education and opportunity, the UMass Memorial Medical Center Doula Program is helping to reshape maternity care for those often-underserved families.



This hospital-based program, modeled closely on community-based doula programs, is a rarity.”

Cherise Hamblin, MD, Medical Director, UMass Memorial Medical Center Doula Program

Bringing Care Where It's Needed Most

UMass Memorial Ronald McDonald Care Mobile Expands to Clinton and Marlborough

The UMass Memorial Ronald McDonald Care Mobile (Care Mobile) has long been a beacon of hope for underserved families across Worcester County. In 2024, the program expanded its reach to the City of Marlborough by first partnering with the Marlborough Community Cupboard, and since 2023, to the Town of Clinton through the Clinton Public Schools. By partnering with both areas, much-needed medical and preventive dental care goes directly to children and their families. By eliminating barriers such as transportation and lack of insurance, the Care Mobile is helping close critical gaps in health care access for community members in the region.

“The Care Mobile has been a lifeline for children and families who otherwise would fall through the cracks. By bringing health care directly to schools and neighborhoods, we’re not just treating patients, we’re building trust, improving outcomes and strengthening the community from the ground up,” said Michelle Muller, FNP, Manager of the UMass Memorial Ronald McDonald Care Mobile.

Services provided include physical exams, semi-urgent care, vaccinations and chronic disease management, along with dental cleanings, fluoride applications and oral health screenings, all to help patients establish connections to long-term health care. The mobile clinic doesn’t just offer health services; it also reviews the social drivers of health needs (such as food access, health insurance, primary medical and dental providers, and housing) with each patient and offers holistic support for overall wellness.

“By bringing health care directly to schools and neighborhoods, we’re not just treating patients, we’re building trust, improving outcomes and strengthening the community from the ground up.”

Michelle Muller, FNP, Manager, UMass Memorial Ronald McDonald Care Mobile



Pictured, above, Care Mobile Nurse Practitioner Brianna Soares, FNP, administers a vaccine to a patient. Pictured, below, patients receive McDonald's gift cards after their visits.



Over the past year, the Care Mobile has made monthly visits to Marlborough and Clinton, treating over 225 patients, including children and adults. In response to a surge in vaccine needs at the Clinton Schools, where school officials reported that more than 70 students were behind on their immunizations, the Care Mobile team launched a dedicated vaccine clinic in November 2024.

This extension clinic operates monthly and is coordinated directly with Clinton School officials to ensure privacy and efficiency. By partnering with community organizations and connecting with the Clinton Schools, the Care Mobile team has been able to reach families who might otherwise go without care. The program also supports surrounding communities, such as the Town of Hudson with plans to expand direct services to additional schools and community locations across the region.

UMass Memorial Ronald McDonald Care Mobile Steps Up for Migrant Families

In response to an influx of migrant families in Massachusetts, the UMass Memorial Ronald McDonald Care Mobile (Care Mobile) partnered with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to deliver essential medical and preventive dental services to families residing in emergency shelter hotels across Central Massachusetts.

While Worcester has a wide range of health care resources, the Care Mobile team was asked to concentrate on surrounding towns with fewer community services, including Shrewsbury, Westborough, Hudson, Marlborough, Auburn and Northborough. The mobile clinic began visiting these shelters two to three weeks out of each month, providing direct, on-site care that addressed both immediate health needs and longer-term challenges.

“When the call came to support newly arrived migrant families, we knew immediate action was critical,” Michelle Muller, FNP, Manager of the Care Mobile, explained. “These families were living in unfamiliar places with limited access to care, so we brought services directly to them.”

Over 1,000 patient visits were completed at these shelters, underscoring the scale of need. Care Mobile services included flu and COVID-19 immunizations, health screenings, family planning, and referrals to primary care providers, dentists and other specialists. Recognizing the importance of communication, especially among the large number of Haitian Creole-speaking families, UMass Memorial hired a dedicated in-person Haitian Creole interpreter to assist with clinical conversations. This ensured that families were not only treated but also fully understood the care they were receiving.

A key part of the program involves empowering families to navigate the health care system. Staff helped individuals enroll in health insurance, distributed appointment reminder cards, and personally accompanied some patients to outside specialty appointments. Transportation coordination was handled in partnership with



The UMass Memorial Ronald McDonald Care Mobile prepares to help newly arrived migrant families.

hotel case managers and state health officials, helping to remove a critical barrier to follow-up care.

“By addressing both clinical needs and systemic barriers to health care access, our Care Mobile team played a vital role in supporting migrant families during a time of great uncertainty,” Muller said. This initiative exemplifies UMass Memorial’s ongoing commitment to reducing health disparities and ensuring that every child and family in the region has access to high-quality care, no matter where they are from or where they live.

“

These families were living in unfamiliar places with limited access to care, so we brought services directly to them.”

Michelle Muller, FNP, Manager, UMass Memorial Ronald McDonald Care Mobile

Free Clinic in Fitchburg

In fiscal year 2024, Determination of Need funding (page 23), administered through UMass Memorial Health - HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital (HA-C), financially supported the City of Fitchburg to establish a free clinic for migrant/refugee and homeless families. HA-C also secured grant funds to purchase equipment for the clinic.

Services are supported by clinicians from UMass Fitchburg Family Practice and Residency Program who volunteer their time giving annual physicals, vaccinations and basic medical care while connecting individuals with local resources to address social drivers of health, such as food insecurity, housing instability and transportation barriers.

Community Comes First at the Worcester Free Care Collaborative

“We had more than 6,500 people walk through our doors last year. Every one of those numbers represents an individual with their own story and their own challenges.”

David Runyan, MD, President, Worcester Free Care Collaborative



Worcester Free Care Collaborative volunteer physicians, nurse practitioners and nurses from UMass Memorial Health load up for a community event providing free medical care to vulnerable populations.



WORCESTER
—FREE CARE—
COLLABORATIVE

Free and compassionate health care is saving lives every day in Worcester, thanks to the dedication of seven organizations that are uniting for the greater good.

In 2022, the free medical programs of Akwaaba, Epworth, Free Health Stop at the India Society of Worcester, St. Anne's, St. Peter's, Wesley, and the Worcester Islamic Center came together to form the Worcester Free Care Collaborative (WFCC). The nonprofit's purpose is to serve as a voice for advocacy and policy change, while its member programs provide free medical care to vulnerable populations. In 2024 alone, WFCC's team of 270 volunteers provided care to 6,500 patients at no cost.

“The individual medical programs are independently operated, and they are 100% volunteer driven,” explained David Runyan, MD, WFCC President. “It's a group of great people who get together to do a wonderful thing for the community.”

While WFCC's free medical programs were created to serve uninsured and underserved residents, the ongoing shortage of primary care providers has increased demand across the board, including among insured individuals who cannot find PCPs accepting new patients.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, WFCC programs struggled with staffing shortages and funding gaps. Recognizing the essential services these clinics provide, UMass Memorial Health stepped in with critical support. “Dr. Eric Dickson and his team were fantastic and said let's come together and see how we can help,” Dr. Runyan said.

UMass Memorial expanded liability coverage and simplified onboarding procedures, clearing the way for more UMass Memorial-affiliated caregivers to volunteer with WFCC. The health system also promoted these opportunities internally, further boosting volunteer recruitment.

Beyond staffing support, UMass Memorial helped WFCC identify grant opportunities, build community partnerships, and connect with local service providers willing to donate supplies or offer discounted services.

“We had more than 6,500 people walk through our doors last year. Every one of those numbers represents an individual with their own story and their own challenges,” explained Dr. Runyan. “When you talk with them, you see how truly appreciative they are to have a place where they can receive care. It is the greatest feeling.”

Bringing Asthma Care Home

Managing childhood asthma can be a daunting task, especially for families living in low-income or rental housing where asthma triggers are often unavoidable. In Worcester, nearly 10% of pediatric patients, and disproportionately those in low-income settings, have asthma. To address this challenge, UMass Memorial Medical Center offers a unique In-Home Pediatric Asthma Program that helps Worcester families gain control of their children's asthma through personalized care, education and advocacy.

The in-home model is designed to meet families where they are, both physically and emotionally. "The In-Home Asthma Program allows for more time to be spent with families in the comfort of their own homes, and I believe that plays a huge component in effectively managing their asthma," said Outreach Liaison and Community Health Worker Stephanie Mesa, CHW-C. "It allows the families to ask any range of questions without feeling rushed or shamed for not knowing the answers in the first place. It allows me to build rapport with the family and gauge what else they may need and organically have a conversation with them that may address those needs."

Children living in substandard housing often face persistent asthma triggers like mold, dust, roach and rodent infestations, poor ventilation and old carpeting, all of which can worsen symptoms. "Most of my families live with these conditions," Mesa explained.

The Medical Center's program does more than treat asthma; it empowers families. Through in-home visits, community health workers identify environmental triggers, provide supplies such as bedding and cleaning products, and connect families with asthma education and legal support when needed. This family-centered approach ensures that care is culturally sensitive, proactive and preventative. So far, the In-Home Pediatric Asthma Program has supported 65 families.

"Addressing asthma only at an annual physical isn't enough. We must be proactive, meet families where they are, and support them with ongoing education and resources," said UMass Memorial Medical Center Primary Care Physician, Beverly Nazarian, MD. This approach is reducing school absenteeism, Emergency Department visits and hospitalizations for asthma.



Pictured, above and below, Outreach Liaison and Community Health Worker Stephanie Mesa, CHW-C, UMass Memorial Medical Center, shows a young patient how to use an inhaler.



“

Addressing Asthma only at an annual physical is not enough. We must be proactive, meet families where they are and support them with ongoing education and resources.”

Beverly Nazarian, MD, Primary Care, UMass Memorial Medical Center

UMass Memorial Health - Harrington: Community Education

Launched in October 2023, Harrington Hospital's Community Education Series has quickly become a trusted resource for residents throughout the region. Originally envisioned with a handful of annual presentations, the series has surpassed expectations, hosting 12 sessions in fiscal year 2024, which drew more than 220 attendees from Southbridge, Sturbridge, Charlton and Webster.

The goal of this series is to deliver essential, practical health education directly to the public. Each free, 45-minute session includes an open Q&A, allowing for conversations between health care professionals and the community. Topics have ranged from depression and healthy aging to stroke awareness, fall prevention and more. One presentation on healthy bladders drew a crowd of 67 attendees.

The series also includes programming geared toward younger audiences, focusing on topics such as internet safety, healthy relationships and nutrition. Events are hosted in welcoming and accessible locations, such as senior centers and public libraries.

To further expand its reach, Harrington also attends community resource fairs, offering services, including blood pressure screenings, Narcan training and fall prevention education. Bilingual presentations ensure Spanish-speaking residents can also benefit from these resources, a growing priority for the outreach team.

The success of the program culminated in Harrington's first Community Health Fair, which welcomed more than 200 participants. "It was nice to see that so many people wanted to participate," said Outreach Manager Marysol Cruz.

Looking ahead, Harrington plans to expand the program this coming year to include over 25 events, reaching more than 5,000 people and thereby deepening its commitment to community well-being.

Community Outreach in Action: UMass Memorial – Harrington Hospital



When a devastating fire in Southbridge on November 12, 2024, left 14 families homeless, UMass Memorial - Harrington Hospital's Community Outreach team sprang into action. Within 48 hours, Outreach Manager Marysol Cruz visited the site and partnered with the Massachusetts Municipal Association to support a resource fair at the local senior center for victims. Families received help such as replacing driver's licenses, refilling prescriptions, accessing food, clothing and baby supplies.

An internal email to Harrington caregivers following the fire sparked a flood of generosity, with thousands of donated items pouring in over the course of two days. Volunteers from across departments, Emergency Management and the local TRI-EPIC committee (the local regional emergency planning committee) all helped sort, pack and deliver supplies, often hand-delivering essentials to families in hotels or temporary housing.

"We take pride in the Harrington way," Cruz said. "When we are called to action, it's all hands on deck."

Pictured, left, caregivers from Harrington attend a resource fair at the local senior center for those displaced by a fire in Northbridge, MA.

UMass Memorial Health – Marlborough Hospital: Supporting Community



Little Free Library

In 2024, Marlborough Hospital celebrated the first anniversary of their “Little Free Library.” This collaboration with Marlborough City and public officials (pictured left) has provided more than 200 health and wellness educational books and cookbooks, including ones in multiple languages. The library’s goal is to promote reading and health literacy and to provide books to patients with limited English proficiency or those who may not have access to them.



Tools for School

Marlborough Hospital once again collaborated with the United Way of Tri-County Community Cupboard team to fill backpacks with school supplies for children in grades K-12. In 2024, the Marlborough Hospital team stocked and assembled 24 backpacks (pictured left).



Kits for Kids

Started in 2006, Kits for Kids is a Marlborough-based nonprofit organization that helps kids in need who are in foster care or medical facilities. They provide kits with various “goodies,” including a stuffed animal, socks, hand-knit items and their own toiletries. Marlborough Hospital caregivers and the community came together to build 150 “Kits for Kids” to give to children in the Emergency Department (pictured left).



Empowering Seniors to Stay Healthy

In October of 2024, the Marlborough Hospital caregivers attended the Senior Resource Fair sponsored by the Senior Center of Marlborough (pictured left). Aligned with the mission of the Marlborough Council on Aging and Senior Center to promote health, successful aging and enhancing quality of life, Marlborough Hospital caregivers educated seniors on mobility, common fall risks and how to complete a health care proxy form.

Narcan Training to Save a Life

To address opioid overdoses in the community, Marlborough Hospital conducted a free NARCAN (also known as Naloxone) training at the hospital in September 2024. In November, the hospital partnered with the Hudson Health Department to offer a training at the Hudson Public Library. The goal of these free trainings and widely distributing this lifesaving nasal spray medication to members of the community is to reduce fatal opioid overdoses.



Metalsmith John Hayden repurposes garden tools from guns collected at Guns 2 Gardens events.

Injury Prevention Center

The Injury Prevention Center at UMass Memorial Medical Center offers injury prevention programs to the community, including Child Passenger Safety, a Teen-Parent Driving Contract, lifesaving Stop the Bleed training and Guns 2 Gardens.

“Guns 2 Gardens” is a gun buyback program to help reduce gun violence and its public health impacts. One of the many programs funded by the Medical Center’s Community Benefits in 2024, this program helps remove the number of unwanted, improperly stored or at-risk firearms in the community. In partnership with the Worcester Police Department, the Worcester Department of Public Health, the Worcester County District Attorney’s Office and other community stakeholders, this is a “no questions asked” program.

In its 23rd year, the event is held annually in December, offering gift cards in exchange for unwanted firearms. Participants also receive gun safety education and are offered gun trigger locks free of charge. Firearms are collected at multiple locations around Worcester County, and all guns are destroyed and repurposed into garden tools by volunteer blacksmiths (pictured left). These tools are then donated to local community gardens, including the Regional Environmental Councils’ YouthGROW program (page 18). On December 14, 2024, 151 firearms were collected and repurposed into garden tools.

Coalition Building

One of these coalitions is the Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester, which brings together people and organizations to address racial and health equity in the region. In 2024, the Medical Center’s Community Benefits provided funding and served as a member of the Coalition’s Steering Committee. Partners in the coalition include the Worcester Division of Public Health, service providers, local health departments, consumers and residents of Worcester and four surrounding towns. Together, they implement the Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP) to improve health and well-being throughout Greater Worcester (page 25).

Health Insurance Enrollment Assistance

UMass Memorial is dedicated to assisting its patients and community members in enrolling in health insurance. At Harrington, financial counselors assist individuals without health insurance or those requiring a coverage plan change by providing navigation and support through the application process, as well as guidance on financial aid and required paperwork. An estimated 1,725 community members were served in fiscal year 2024. HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, the Medical Center and Marlborough Hospital also provide this type of assistance.

Medical/Legal Partnership

The Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP)’s Advocacy for a Healthy Community brings together legal aid lawyers, private lawyers and clinicians to address the health-harming legal needs faced by low-income pediatric and adult primary care patients served by four Medical Center clinics. The MLP supports clinicians and patients by having legal specialists intervene to address social drivers of health (such as food insecurity, housing and transportation) that negatively impact patients’ health. In fiscal year 2024, the MLP processed 290 referrals and conducted 100 legal consultations.

Providing Free Community Health Screenings

UMass Memorial caregivers participated in numerous community events throughout 2024 to provide free health screenings and education on health issues, such as diabetes, skin cancer, nutrition and high blood pressure, especially to underserved populations. On May 23, 2024, in honor of Skin Cancer Awareness month, HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital dermatologists partnered with the Fitchburg Department of Health for a Free Skin Cancer Screening Clinic at the Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center. That day, 34 individuals received screenings and education on the importance of skin care and screening.

Awareness Program Highlights Dangers of Vaping and Other Tobacco Use



Pictured, above, Radiology Resident Patrick Assoua, MD, presents the harmful effects of vaping/smoking and other tobacco use to Worcester middle and high school students. Pictured, below, with Dr. Assoua is Radiologist Lacey McIntosh, DO.



Each year, UMass Memorial Health Cancer Center collaborates with community liaisons to enhance cancer prevention awareness in our region, and leadership designates at least one event to help reduce cancer risk in our community. In 2024, Cancer Center caregivers shared an engaging presentation with middle and high school-aged students at the Challenge and Reach Academy in Worcester on the harmful effects of vaping/smoking and other tobacco use.

While both combustible and e-cigarette use by high schoolers in Massachusetts has declined in recent years, a 2023 Massachusetts Youth Health Survey found that e-cigarette use among middle school students continues to increase. In 2023, 11.7% reported trying e-cigarettes, up from 10.1% in 2021.

The awareness event included time for students to interact, ask questions and delve more deeply into this important topic. Facilitators Lacey McIntosh, DO, radiologist; Patrick Assoua, MD, radiologist resident; and Carisa Lozoraitis, RN, MSN, Cancer Center Quality Program Manager, covered topics including the harmful effects of nicotine, risks of tobacco use (including heart and lung disease, increased risk of lung and other cancers and asthma) and benefits of quitting.

“Educating children about the risks of their actions is key to a healthy, safe community and fosters trust between the UMass Memorial Health Cancer Center and our youth, encouraging them to share vital knowledge with their families and friends,” explained Carisa Lozoraitis, RN, MSN, Cancer Quality Program Manager, UMass Memorial Health Cancer Center.

There are plans to expand this educational event to other Worcester schools in the coming months.

Healthy vs. Tobacco Exposed Lungs

UMass Memorial Health - HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital Simonds-Sinon Cancer Center caregivers also provided tobacco education in 2024. At community fairs, they demonstrated healthy versus tobacco-exposed lungs to more than 500 residents, many of them children.

Regional Environmental Council: Youth Urban Agriculture

Hands-on Learning Experience



Mario Florez, Vice President of Community Health and Caregiver Belonging at UMass Memorial Health (center left) visited Regional Environmental Council Director of Programs Grace Sliwoski (center right) and YouthGROW participants at the Main South farm.

Youth Growing Organics in Worcester (YouthGROW) is a leadership development and employment program that supports young people in Worcester, especially those from under-resourced neighborhoods. This year-round youth program, offered through the Regional Environmental Council, provides financial resources and teaches essential professional skills, including communication, problem-solving and time management.

With a focus on combating food insecurity and promoting sustainable food systems, youth ages 14-18 work on local urban farms and learn through hands-on experience about sustainable farming, urban agriculture and community service. They also participate in a curriculum that encompasses professional development, social justice and leadership to prepare them to take on leadership roles in their communities.

During the summer of 2024, with support from UMass Memorial Health, YouthGROW employed 40 teens over six weeks as members of their intensive agriculture-based youth employment and leadership programming. Youth grew 50 varieties of fruits, vegetables and herbs, maintaining three gardens, including the Grant Square Community Garden (right) and rooftop farm at Polar Park in Worcester. They provided support for school gardens across the city, as well as working with the horticulture team at New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill.

Beyond farm work, YouthGROW participants helped plan and conduct outreach for community events, including the annual Greenhill Neighborhood Association Block Party, hosted in Grant Square Park. They supported youth climate justice efforts

in partnership with the Massachusetts Audubon Society and worked alongside volunteer groups, including the Massachusetts Master Gardeners and the Worcester Native Plant Initiative.

“Participants leave with increased confidence and a deeper understanding of urban agriculture’s role in sustainable food systems, positively impacting their health and the broader community,” said Grace Sliwoski, Director of Programs, Regional Environmental Council. “YouthGROW not only benefits participants but also strengthens neighborhoods, helping to build a more equitable and resilient future in Worcester.”



Grant Square Community Garden in Bell Hill

Established in 2010 by the Regional Environmental Council (REC) with support from UMass Memorial Health and the City of Worcester, the Grant Square Community Garden in Bell Hill has 34 raised beds that are maintained by YouthGROW workers (pictured above) and neighborhood residents.

The Grant Square Community Garden is a member of the Urban Garden Resources of Worcester (UGROW) program, a community garden network that includes 76 community and school gardens in the City of Worcester, with more than 600 gardeners and 2,500 students. Funding from UMass Memorial supported both the Grant Square Community Garden site and the broader network of gardens throughout the city of Worcester.

HOUSING

Throughout Worcester County, finding safe and affordable housing has become challenging, leading many individuals and families to live in substandard housing and, for some, homelessness. Housing is one of the non-medical conditions that UMass Memorial Health is committed to addressing. Below are a few of the housing efforts supported by in 2024:

SMOC Medical Respite Pilot Program

South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc. (SMOC) is committed to providing safe, temporary housing options for individuals experiencing homelessness after a hospital stay, while they search for long-term housing solutions.

In collaboration with UMass Memorial Medical Center, SMOC opened a Medical Respite Pilot Program in March 2024. Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, program and medical professionals staff this seven-bed medical respite.

To date, the Medical Respite Pilot has supported 12 individuals with tailored, needs-based services aimed at addressing their physical, mental and behavioral well-being (read about Terrance's experience below). Services include critical medical care, individual care plans, assistance with daily living activities, housing resources, benefits enrollment, psycho-social support, case management, and other non-medical services and referrals.

"Despite an intimidating path ahead of them — from taking care of their medical needs and mental health, gathering required documents for housing (including identification), establishing income, and addressing other barriers like family issues or substance use — each person who has come to the program has made significant efforts to improve themselves," noted Elizabeth O'Connor, Manager of Institutional Giving, SMOC.



Meet Terrance

Previously living in a SMOC shelter, Terrance was one of the first graduates from the Respite Program. With a long history of chronic disease, after entering the Respite Program in early 2024, within months, his health improved, and he became a leader in the program among his peers.

Hector Reyes House

Substance use disorder is an ongoing challenge in our region. To help address this issue, UMass Memorial Health not only provides clinical interventions such as the Road to Care Mobile Addiction Service (page 7) but also funds community-based programs throughout Central Massachusetts to support all individuals facing this challenge.

One of those programs is the Hector Reyes House, a 25-bed residential substance addiction treatment center for men, which provides in-house medical care and recovery support to reduce relapse and ease the transition to independent living. Founded in 2009 by UMass Memorial and the nonprofit Latin American Health Alliance, the program serves, on average, 80 men annually.

In need of a new fire prevention and protection system, the Medical Center's Community Benefits provided a Determination of Need grant (page 23) to support this renovation.

Central Mass Housing Alliance (CMHA)

Central Mass Housing Alliance (CMHA) received Determination of Need funding (page 23) in fiscal year 2024 from the Medical Center's Community Benefits to provide temporary financial assistance and stabilization services to families, helping them maintain their housing. "Short-term financial intervention paired with stabilization services interrupts the cycle that leads to homelessness," said Leah Bradley, CEO, Central Mass Housing Alliance.

The program targets families who are temporarily struggling to pay rent and whose income exceeds the eligibility threshold for government assistance. By providing prevention support, quality services, education and advocacy, CMHA fosters long-term residential and economic stability for participants.

Eligible households are provided six months of case management and financial assistance. Other support includes helping to create a stabilization and self-sufficiency plan, advocacy with landlords, referrals to employment options, and setting up realistic payment plans to avoid evictions and utility shutoffs.

Anchored in Our Community

In 2018, the UMass Memorial Health Board of Trustees committed to redirect 1% of their long-term investment portfolio, or \$4 million, to address social drivers of health in economically challenged neighborhoods. In 2021, when UMass Memorial Health – Harrington joined the health system, an additional \$4 million was committed to invest in the Harrington service area. Anchor Mission investments, in the form of low-interest loans, focus on four pillars: Local Investment, Hiring, Procurement and Volunteerism. The following are examples of investment loan projects highlighted in fiscal year 2024:



Student art exhibit in the Remillard Family Pavilion Lobby of the Medical Center's University Campus.

LOCAL INVESTMENT

Student Art Exhibit Brings Color and Creativity to the Medical Center

In April 2024, UMass Memorial Medical Center's Community Benefits partnered with Creative Hub Worcester to bring the "POP Fusion" student art exhibit to the Remillard Family Pavilion Lobby at the Medical Center's University Campus (pictured left). The exhibit featured original artwork by students in grades 9–12 from Worcester Alternative School, a public day school that supports students in a non-traditional learning environment. Creative Hub Worcester — one of the first organizations to receive funding through UMass Memorial Health's Anchor Mission initiative — provides equitable programs for creative expression in accessible places.

For many of the students in the exhibit, this was the first time they had made art since elementary school. The opportunity to create and share their work allowed them to explore their creativity in new ways and appreciate the impact art has on mental health.



UMass Memorial Health caregivers volunteer at the Community Harvest Project.

VOLUNTEERISM

Harvesting for the Community

On September 11, 2024, UMass Memorial caregivers again rolled up their sleeves to volunteer at the Community Harvest Project, a nonprofit farm in Harvard, MA, that engages and educates volunteers to grow fruits and vegetables for hunger relief throughout the state (pictured left). On that day, UMass Memorial volunteers from multiple departments picked 3,600 pounds of apples.

After harvesting the apples, volunteers sorted through them, ensuring that only the highest-quality apples were packed into 63 boxes, totaling 2,520 pounds or 16,380 servings, to distribute to local food banks, pantries and nonprofit organizations addressing food insecurity.

Volunteer Thomas Ward, Manager, Work-Life Services, explained about why these opportunities are so important, "Community volunteering improves emotional and social well-being, and for our caregivers, it helps them reconnect with their purpose and reasons they became a health care worker."



Michael is a graduate of the Patient Care Associate Pathway Program working as a housekeeper at UMass Memorial Medical Center.

HIRING

Patient Care Associate Pathway Program

One of the “earn as you learn” training programs, offered through UMass Memorial Health, is the Patient Care Associate Pathway Program. This program is designed to help community members and UMass Memorial caregivers start a rewarding career as a Patient Care Associate (PCA). While in the program, participants earn a salary and benefits, receive training, and earn certificates in Home Health Aid and Basic Life Support. Upon completion of the program, participants are guaranteed a job as a PCA I within the UMass Memorial system and a \$3,000 stipend for completing the training and maintaining employment for six months.

PCAs provide basic patient care tasks, provide clinical support, monitor vital signs and keep medical staff informed of any changes in a patient’s condition. They also assist with daily living activities, such as feeding, bathing and mobility.

Michael, a graduate of the PCA program, was hired as a housekeeper at the Medical Center. Previously working in the Emergency Department, Michael observed the work PCAs did and knew he wanted to pursue a career as a PCA. “This program has allowed me to grow my career, and I want to take it further. I want to go to nursing school. I just want to better myself. Ever since I got into the health care field, there’s been no looking back,” Michael shared in a video about his experience in the program.

To learn more about the program and Michael’s story, visit: www.ummhealth.org/careers/workforce-development.



UMass Memorial provides opportunities for caregivers to build their careers within the UMass Memorial Health system.

HIRING

Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program

In July of 2024, 15 UMass Memorial Health caregivers entered the first UMass Memorial Medical Assistant Registered Apprenticeship Program. In this year-long program, participants are hired into a Medical Assistant I position, earning a salary and retaining benefits while attending classroom education at Quinsigamond Community College. They also receive on-the-job training at the Medical Center and Community Medical Group locations and prepare for the national certification exam. Once certified, they advance to a Medical Assistant II role within the UMass Memorial system and earn a 5% wage increase.

Medical assistants ensure smooth operations in clinical settings by performing tasks such as taking vital signs, preparing patients for exams and assisting with procedures.

In partnership with the SHARE Union and Quinsigamond Community College, this is the first health care registered apprenticeship in Central Massachusetts.

“Our Medical Assistant Registered Apprenticeship Program creates meaningful career advancement opportunities while strengthening our primary care workforce,” said Kelly Aiken, Director of Workforce Development. “By investing in our caregivers, we’re not only building pathways to health care careers but also filling critical positions needed to ensure our community has access to the quality primary care it needs and deserves.”

To find out more about the program and when applications for the next cohort are available, visit: ummhealth.org/careers/workforce-development.

ANCHOR MISSION



Rita Oben, Room Service Attendant, UMass Memorial Medical Center, taking a serving of butternut squash bisque to a patient.

PROCUREMENT

A collaboration between the UMass Memorial Health Food and Nutrition team, CommonWealth Kitchen, Plainville Farm in Hadley, MA, and the nonprofit Boston Area Gleaners resulted in a new menu staple — New England Squash Bisque — at the UMass Memorial Medical Center as well as other hospitals in the New England region.

Led by CommonWealth Kitchen Chef Kevin Doherty, 5,000 lbs. of butternut squash from Plainville and Boston Area Gleaners produced 1,000 gallons of bisque for patients and Medical Center caregivers to enjoy.

Jessie Curran, Sodexo Sustainability and Wellness Manager at the Medical Center, was the driving force behind this effort. In her role since October 2022, Curran has been instrumental in fostering partnerships between the Medical Center and locally owned food vendors. Committed to increasing spending on goods and services from local businesses, the Anchor Mission's purchasing pillar explores these partnerships. Curran's focus on community relationships has resulted in the "I'm a Local" series and the development of long-term supplier relationships, which help pave the way for more local options.

"Purchasing from local farms, businesses and production kitchens is a catalyst for community growth, environmental stewardship and economic vitality. We're bringing regional ingredients to our patients and caregivers to strengthen the food system, community and economy in Central Massachusetts," said Curran.

Anchor Mission Pillars



LOCAL INVESTMENT

Allocate system long-term investment funds to address social drivers of health and economic opportunities through collaboration with financial and philanthropic organizations, local government and housing authorities in the region.



LOCAL HIRING

Partner with community-based organizations that serve vulnerable populations to mitigate barriers to employment, identify growth opportunities and formalize a hiring pipeline.



LOCAL PROCUREMENT

Build opportunities for local purchasing and vendor contracts.



VOLUNTEERISM

Expand upon the network of UMass Memorial Health caregivers who volunteer in ways that improve the health of the people living in the communities our health system serves.

Determination of Need Funding

Under Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations, health care organizations must file a Determination of Need (DoN) funding application when planning capital improvement projects for their facilities, with 5% of the expenses dedicated to community health. In 2024, UMass Memorial Medical Center and UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital committed funds to support programs that promote population health and address the critical health care issues in the community.

UMass Memorial Medical Center DoN Funding

In 2024, the Medical Center's Community Benefits awarded nearly \$5 million in grants to 18 local non-profit organizations working to improve health outcomes for communities across the Worcester region. This investment came from The North Pavilion construction project, which provides 72 new hospital beds at the Medical Center. Two of these grants are highlighted below.

Zac's House: A Place to Call Home

Finding safe, affordable housing can be daunting for Worcester-area residents, especially those from marginalized groups. In 2024, DoN funding was provided to expand the infrastructure of Zac's House a safe and supportive housing program for young men through the Christian Community Church, a religious organization providing spiritual services and community outreach programs.

The first of its kind in Worcester and Worcester County, Zac's House, is a housing option for young men overcoming significant obstacles and transitioning into a new chapter of their lives. This program has a special emphasis on those who do not have family, providing them with a place to live and a village to empower them with educational and vocational opportunities for personal and professional success. While residents have private space, shared communal living areas encourage social interaction and a supportive environment. Residents have access to advisors on financial literacy, education and vocation as well as cooking classes.

"We are especially grateful to UMass Memorial Health for their invaluable support, which has been instrumental in helping us expand the infrastructure of the project. Their partnership has allowed us to create more space and, more importantly, a safe and stable environment for those we serve," said Sarai Rivera, DMin, Co-Founder of Zac's House, and Co-Senior Pastor of the Christian Community Church.

Supporting Independence and Self-Sufficiency

The Worcester Refugee Assistance Project (WRAP) has been assisting Afghan refugee women and girls since 2021. In 2024, the Medical Center's Community Benefits supported a program to help them obtain their driver's licenses.

Historically limited in mobility and access to transportation, having a driver's license helps refugee women to achieve independence and self-sufficiency, including transitioning into their new community and the workforce. A driver's license provides them with the opportunity to access health care facilities, mental health facilities, recreation areas and healthy food.

WRAP, contracting with two local driving schools, covers the fees for each enrolled student, which includes eight road lessons and a road test. To date, 22 women have enrolled with five successfully receiving their licenses.

Said Millie Rao, Executive Director, WRAP about this effort, "We are not just teaching women to drive; we are steering them towards a better future here in their new home of Worcester."



We are especially grateful to UMass Memorial Health for their invaluable support, which has been instrumental in helping us expand the infrastructure of this project."

Sarai Riveria, DMin, Co-Founder Zac's House, and Co-Senior Pastor, Christian Community Church

Grant Funding Provides Vital Pediatric Mental Health Support



UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital

HealthAlliance-Clinton invested more than \$915,000 from fiscal year 2023-fiscal year 2024 in Tier 1 (awards up to \$10,000), Tier 2 (awards up to \$50,000) and Tier 3 (awards up to \$300,000) to local non-profit organizations working to improve health outcomes for communities in the region. The 34 grants awarded during this time support initiatives that address components of the hospital's 2021-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, including: healthy food and nutrition; behavioral health and substance use, housing, neighborhood and built environment; social and community context; health care access and quality; economic stability and chronic diseases (heart disease, diabetes and cancer). Highlighted right is one of those recipients, the United Way of North Central Massachusetts.



Children participate in one of the United Way of North Central Mass activities encouraging social connection, expression and empowerment.

Grant Funding Provides Vital Pediatric Mental Health Support

A \$46,800 Determination of Need grant in 2024 from UMass Memorial - HealthAlliance-Clinton to the United Way of North Central Massachusetts is providing important resources for area young people and mental health professionals on issues such as anxiety, depression and social media use.

"This grant was a godsend, as it allowed us to continue a lot of our work after COVID-19 funding for these efforts ended," said Kory Eng, President and CEO, United Way of North Central Massachusetts. "Without the grant, our ability would have been limited and less multi-faceted."

Grant funding supported the following:

- **Monthly Youth Mental/Behavior Health Roundtables**
Community mental health agency members are collaborating on best practices and training initiatives to serve the youth in the region better.
- **Local Youth Agencies**
Programs supporting marginalized youth; activities that encourage social connections, expressions and empowerment; youth peer leadership training; and engagement/support for families impacted by mental health challenges. The agencies (Pathways for Change, YMCA of Central Mass, LUK Crisis Center and The Club Lunenburg Teen Center) serve nearly 1,200 youth in the area.
- **Training Sessions for Local Mental Health Professionals**
Two widely attended trainings, "Supporting Youth with Social Media" and "Early Psychosis: Symptoms, Identifications and Treatment," received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with attendees sharing they felt better prepared to support youth and their families.

"UMass Memorial Health understands that meeting the overall health of the community goes beyond clinical intervention and includes addressing these kinds of social indicators," said Eng. "We appreciate their continued partnership and investment."



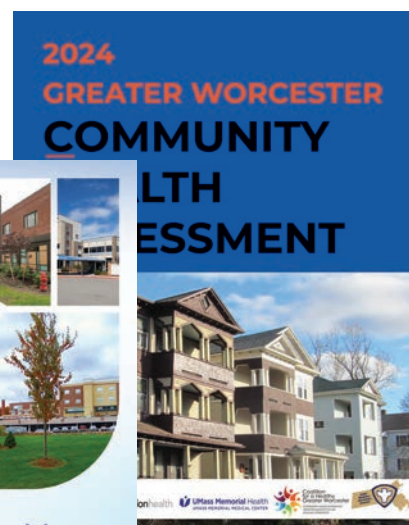
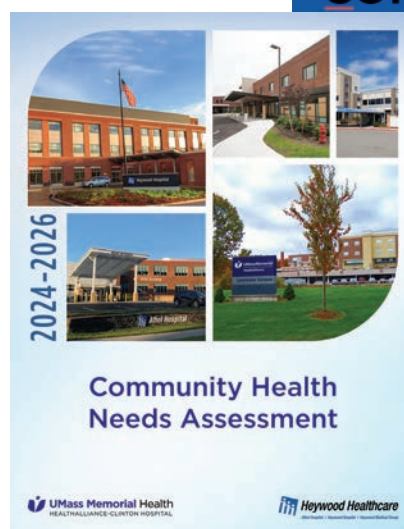
UMass Memorial Health understands that meeting the overall health of the community goes beyond clinical intervention and includes addressing these kinds of social indicators."

Kory Eng, President and CEO, United Way of North Central Massachusetts

Community Health Needs Assessments

As part of a not-for-profit health care system, each hospital within the UMass Memorial Health system conducts a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years, tailored to its specific region. Each CHNA identifies its community health issues in close partnership with community health stakeholders, social service providers, advocates, community residents and organizations to develop strategies to address barriers to care, health outcomes disparities and gaps in health care services.

Based on the CHNA findings, hospitals then collaborate with community partners and local health departments to develop and update the local Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and develop a three-year Community Benefits Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) that aligns with the CHNA and CHIP. In 2024, the Medical Center and HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital completed their CHNAs, and in the spring of 2025, they published their SIPs. Marlborough Hospital completed their CHNA in 2023 and published their SIP in 2025. Harrington completed their CHNA in August 2025 and will publish their SIP by the end of 2025.



Collaborations Help Inform Approaches

The creation of the 2024 Worcester Community Health Needs Assessment was developed with the City of Worcester Health and Human Services, Fallon Health, Central Massachusetts Regional Health Alliance, the Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester, and the Medical Center's Community Benefits. The Community Benefits Department then collaborated with the Coalition for a Healthier Greater Worcester to update the 2021-2026 CHIP to meet revised priorities from the 2024 CHNA.

"This process informed the way Community Benefits Determination of Need (DoN) grants were distributed. We used the CHNA to inform our DoN/CHI Advisory Board of the priorities in the CHNA, which informed three grant priorities," said Mario Florez, Vice President of Community Health and Caregiver Belonging, UMass Memorial Health. "In addition, we worked in alignment with the CHIP recommendations to strategize for policy, systems and environmental change through addressing upstream issues. All of these processes informed our SIP."

For HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, the 2024-2026 CHNA was a collaborative effort between the hospital and Heywood Healthcare. Key contributions were also made by Health Equity Partnership of North Central Massachusetts, Three Pyramids/Minority Coalition of North Central Massachusetts, and Health Resources in Action.

"Partnering with Heywood Hospital, HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital was able to more fully capture the scope of health challenges across North Central Massachusetts in our 2024-2026 Community Health Needs Assessment, said Patricia Pistone, Associate Vice President, External Affairs, UMass Memorial Health - HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital. "This collaboration, alongside key contributions from the Health Equity Partnership of North Central Massachusetts and Three Pyramids/Minority Coalition, helped us align around shared priorities like equitable access to care and maternal health, and build a foundation for more unified, equity-driven solutions."

RECOGNITIONS AND AWARDS



Dr. Erik Garcia Recognized for Compassionate Care

Internal Medicine physician Erik Garcia, MD, Department of Family Medicine, UMass Memorial Medical Center (pictured left), was recognized as one of the 2024 National Compassionate Caregivers of the Year by the Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare. This award honors health care professionals who display extraordinary devotion and compassion in caring for patients and families.

Dr. Garcia has been caring for Worcester's homeless population and most vulnerable community members for decades. Through his work with the Road to Care Mobile Addiction Service (page 7) and AIDS Project Worcester, Dr. Garcia offers medical care, dignity and humanity. This recognition is a testament to his unwavering compassion and commitment to make a difference in the lives of his patients and community.



Milford Regional Joins UMass Memorial Health

On October 1, 2024, Milford Regional became part of the UMass Memorial Health system. UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional is a nonprofit, acute care community and regional teaching hospital with 148 beds and 300 primary and specialty physicians serving a region of 20-plus towns. Milford Regional has a long history of investing in community health needs. As part of its most recent renovation and expansion in 2015, it opened a 78,000-square-foot building that houses a new Emergency Department, Intensive Care Unit and private patient rooms.

“Since first clinically partnering more than 30 years ago, our two organizations have realized much success through multiple points of patient-centered collaboration. Taking our longstanding partnership with Milford Regional to this next level allows UMass Memorial Health to meaningfully expand our continued work to provide high-quality, accessible and affordable care to the communities of Central Massachusetts,” said Eric Dickson, MD, President and CEO of UMass Memorial Health.

UMass Memorial Medical Center Recognized as High Performing in Maternity Care by U.S. News & World Report

For the third year in a row, U.S. News & World Report recognized UMass Memorial Medical Center as a “high performing” maternity hospital. This recognition is based on objective measures of quality, such as cesarean delivery rates in lower-risk pregnancies, newborn complication rates, exclusive breast milk feeding rates, early elective delivery rates, birthing-friendly practices, and transparency on racial/ethnic disparities, among other measures.

“This recognition demonstrates our caregivers’ commitment to providing patients with high-quality, safe and patient-centered care throughout their entire pregnancy and postpartum journey,” said Tiffany Moore Simas, MD, MPH, MEd, MHCM, Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology. “We are especially proud of the ongoing work we do every day to ensure the highest quality outcomes and experiences for our patients, partnered with equity of outcomes via health care that addresses racial and ethnic disparities.”

Excellent Health Outcomes for All Certification

UMass Memorial Health - HealthAlliance-Clinton and UMass Memorial Health - Milford Regional Medical Center were awarded the Excellent Health Outcomes for All certification by The Joint Commission. This nonprofit organization accredits and certifies health care organizations and programs in the U.S.

This advanced certification recognizes hospitals that are committed to delivering equitable, high-quality care to all patients, regardless of their background, identity or circumstances.

UMass Memorial Health is dedicated to our mission of ensuring that every patient receives safe, compassionate and effective care across the system. This fall, the Medical Center, Marlborough Hospital and Harrington will be surveyed for the same certification.

Our System

- Largest health care system in Central Massachusetts
- Largest provider of safety net care in Central Massachusetts
- Supports a dedicated financial assistance program that provides free or discounted care to qualifying patients and their families
- Invests in community-based programs and initiatives that address social drivers of health



Pictured, above, youth from the Regional Environmental Council's YouthGROW program, one of our many community partners, participate in educational training (page 18).

Our Community Benefits Partners

Without the ongoing support of our many Community Benefits partners we could not do the important work highlighted in this report. Together through outreach programs, addressing food insecurity and health equity, we continue to bring health care, education and resources to those most vulnerable in Central Massachusetts.

- Academic institutions
- Advocacy groups
- Community health centers
- Community development corporations
- Local and state health departments
- Local city and town governments
- Neighborhood groups
- Philanthropic organizations
- Schools and community-based groups

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- Page 3: (Elvira Guardiola): Robert Carlin Photography
- Page 7, 26: Matt Wright Photography, (Dr. Garcia)
- Page 11: Collin Hamilton Studio
- Page 12: Worcester Free Care Collaborative
- Page 14: UMass Memorial – Harrington Hospital
- Page 15: UMass Memorial – Marlborough Hospital
- Page 19: South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc.
- Page 24: United Way of North Central Massachusetts

Caring for Central Massachusetts Communities

20,812 Caregivers | 5 Hospitals on 11 Campuses | 1 Health Care System



UMass Memorial Health is the largest not-for-profit health care system in Central Massachusetts with more than 20,000 caregivers and more than 3,100 providers, many of whom are members of UMass Memorial Medical Group and Milford Regional Physician Group. We are the clinical partner of UMass Chan 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, UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional 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, at the bedside, in the clinic or community, or even at home, 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.

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