2025 GROUNDED IN COMMUNITY

UMass Memorial Health

Community Benefits Report

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 conditions — unemployment, lack of housing and access to healthy food — that negatively impact our community's health and wellness.

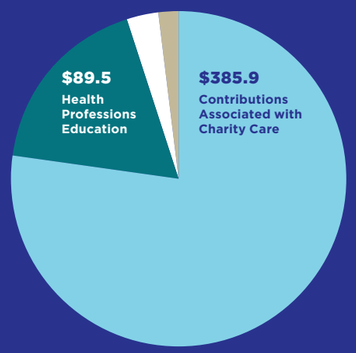
What Are Community Benefits?

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 healthcare services
- Enhance the health of the community
- Advance medical or health knowledge

In 2025, UMass Memorial Health contributed $499.3 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, $284.6 million in other non-Community Benefits expenses were absorbed through bad debt write-offs and Medicare shortfalls.

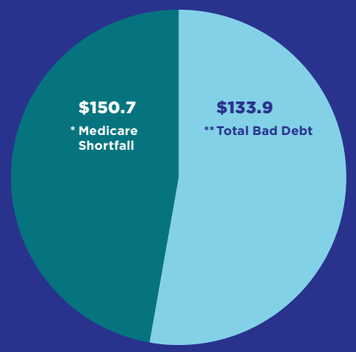
2025 Community Benefits Total: $499.3 Million



Subsidized health services: $15.4

Community Health Improvement Programs, Community Building: $8.5

Other Significant Expenses: $284.6 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.

Report Highlights

2 Launching FEAST: Food Equity and Sustainable Transformation Initiative
3 Food Access and Equity Highlights
6 Tackling Substance Use Disorder & Mental Health
7 Road to Care Mobile Addiction Service
9 Ronald McDonald Care Mobile – Celebrating 25 Years
10 Building Bridges to Better Health: Marysol Cruz
11 Training Partnership Empowers Worcester Residents to Save Lives
12 UMass Memorial Health Community Outreach
14 Promoting Positive Youth Development
16 Determination of Need Funding
18 Anchor Mission
22 Turning Community Health Needs into Action
23 Expanding Community Engagement
24 Awards and Recognitions

Cover from left: Jose Machado, Co-founder of Kind Hearts of Southbridge; Marysol Cruz, Manager of Volunteer Services, Outreach & Inclusion, UMass Memorial Health - Harrington; and Charles Diaz, Co-founder of Kind Hearts of Southbridge (page 10).

UMass Memorial Health

From Our Leaders

Dear Community, Partners and Friends

We are proud to share a year of progress that further solidifies UMass Memorial Health's unwavering commitment to the community. In 2025, we deepened our efforts to engage by immersing ourselves in the communities we serve and by grounding our work in their voices and needs.

UMass Memorial recognized the challenges many families faced this past year. Rising costs, food insecurity, limited affordable housing, barriers to healthcare access and increasing pressure on household budgets forced many to make difficult choices. In response, UMass Memorial teams rose to the challenge and worked alongside community partners to provide support through intentional, community-informed efforts.

We also know that community well-being extends beyond clinical care. This year's report shows how we came together as a system to serve the whole individual by addressing social drivers of health — such as food insecurity, housing instability and transportation barriers — and advancing policy, systems and environmental change.

You will see how our food equity work continues to grow through the FEAST (Food Equity and Sustainable Transformation) initiative (page 2), and how our grants support small and large community-based organizations throughout Central Massachusetts. In addition, our mobile health efforts are more crucial than ever. Learn how the UMass Memorial Health Ronald McDonald Care Mobile program secured funding to purchase a new vehicle to expand service to children and families (page 9). We are also proud to work with partners like the nonprofit Legendary Legacies to offer "Stop the Bleed" training to youth and frontline community members in partnership with the Injury Prevention Center at UMass Memorial Medical Center (page 11). This national public health campaign teaches people how to recognize and treat life-threatening blood loss in emergencies.

Our Anchor Mission work also continues to thrive, strengthened by Community Benefits programs across our system and by the UMass Memorial Community Health Equity Team's focus on cross-departmental and community collaboration. Building on that foundation, this report features our local purchasing efforts to support small businesses, as well as Workforce Development programs that create career advancement opportunities for UMass Memorial caregivers and employment pathways for community members.

Together, these stories show what it means to be "Grounded in Community." They reflect not only what we do, but how our community expects us to show up. We remain committed to doing what is right and needed with our communities — not to or for them.

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

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Justin Precourt, DNP-RN, President

Mario Florez, Vice President, Community Health and Caregiver Belonging

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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 – Milford Regional
Edward J. Kelly, President

Michelle Sanford, Manager, Community Benefits

Launching FEAST: Food Equity and Sustainable Transformation Initiative

> "The FEAST initiative reinforces an important lesson: communities already have the knowledge and ideas needed to improve food security — they simply need trusted partners willing to listen, invest and remove barriers."
>
> Casey Burns, Executive Director, Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester and Co-chair, Center on Food Equity

In 2025, UMass Memorial Health launched Food Equity and Sustainable Transformation (FEAST), a new initiative focused on strengthening food equity across Worcester and north Worcester County. FEAST was shaped by more than 130 community members who took part in local "design days," where they identified existing resources, named gaps and worked together on practical strategies to address food insecurity in the region.

At the heart of FEAST is a simple idea: the people most affected by food insecurity should help lead the work to change the food system. While community input shaped the initiative's priorities, goals and strategies from the beginning, UMass Memorial aligned our internal resources — purchasing, partnerships and community benefit investments — to support them.

In 2025, FEAST focused on several community-based goals:

- **Direct 10% of food** purchases to local, small and disadvantaged growers
- **Establish a policy to allocate 40%** of the UMass Memorial Health's $10 million community investment fund to food equity-related projects
- **Engage 100 patients** in a collaborative process to help design food access programs and referrals
- **Advocate** for improvements to federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) policy, guided by local partners' priorities

This approach also helped deepen relationships with regional food partners and grassroots organizations, such as the Worcester County Food Bank's Center on Food Equity and the United to Feed North Central Massachusetts initiative. Just as important, it has reinforced what communities have been saying: lasting solutions require fewer barriers, more trust, careful listening and investment in the ideas communities are already working on. Noted Casey Burns, the Executive Director, of the Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester, Co-chair for the Center on Food Equity and a partner in this work, "Through this partnership, we've been able to build stronger relationships with residents, grassroots organizations, healthcare partners and the regional food system while ensuring that community priorities help shape solutions. The FEAST initiative reinforces an important lesson: communities already have the knowledge and ideas needed to improve food security — they simply need trusted partners willing to listen, invest and remove barriers to action."

Next steps include expanding investment in local food-related businesses and farmers through local food aggregators like Leominster-based nonprofit Growing Places (page 3), expanding opportunities for patients to provide input to programs and advocating for laws that reflect peoples lived experiences. By removing barriers and lifting the voices of those most affected, FEAST is helping build a regional food system rooted in equity, resilience and shared leadership.

"Working together, we are helping to consistently provide food that benefits people's health, reflects cultural preferences and comes from stable, sustainable systems that support community well-being, equity and food security," said Mario Florez, Vice President, Community Benefits and Caregiver Belonging at UMass Memorial Health.

Community Health Equity Team co-leads Patricia Pistone, AVP of External Affairs, HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, and Mario Florez, VP of Community Health and Caregiver Belonging, UMass Memorial Health, pick corn during a tour of Pine Ridge Farm in Boylston.

Food Access and Equity Highlights

Growing Places Partnership

A partnership between Growing Places, a nonprofit food aggregator serving North Central Massachusetts, and UMass Memorial Health connects more families with fresh, locally grown food. Through mobile markets, home delivery and neighborhood-based outreach, Growing Places brings nutritious options closer to residents facing food insecurity or diet-related health challenges.

This partnership strengthens access and invests in the regional food network behind it. Growing Places' work has supported mobile markets at UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital and fresh food deliveries for patients and families in Fitchburg.

"By partnering with Growing Places, we're supporting both the people who need food and the farmers and organizations that make healthy food possible in our communities," explained Patricia Pistone, Associate Vice President, External Affairs, HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital.

Local Apple Straws Support Food Equity

What might seem like a simple snack is part of a larger strategy to advance food equity at UMass Memorial Health. Through a partnership with FEAST (page 2), Sodexo Food Services and Leominster-based nonprofit Growing Places, locally sourced apple straws (pictured above) made from Central Massachusetts apples were introduced in 2025 into patient meals and hospital cafeterias at the UMass Memorial Medical Center and UMass Memorial-HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital.

This approach aligns UMass Memorial's food purchasing with its commitment to supporting local farms, reducing food waste and building a more just and sustainable food system in the region. "We're using our role as a major purchaser to support local agriculture, strengthen community partnerships and advance health equity at the same time," said Mario Florez, Vice President of Community Health and Caregiver Belonging at UMass Memorial.

Working with Sodexo, UMass Memorial is continuing to source local products to meet the safety, consistency and volume needs of a large healthcare system while creating reliable demand for area farmers and food producers.

Food is Medicine: Expanding Access Through UMass Memorial's Rx Food FARMacy

At UMass Memorial Health, the Rx Food FARMacy program helps patients facing food insecurity access nutritious food and supportive services that can improve health. As part of a broader Food is Medicine approach, the program connects clinical care with community-based resources, recognizing that healthy food can help prevent and manage chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

Through screening for social drivers of health — such as food insecurity, housing instability and transportation barriers — UMass Memorial identifies patients who may need extra support. The program connects people to helpful resources, improves referral pathways and strengthens partnerships with local food systems. Together, these efforts help patients receive fresh, culturally appropriate food where and when they need it.

"When we connect patients with healthy food and the right support, we're helping them manage their health in a meaningful and lasting way," said Patricia Pistone, Associate Vice President for External Affairs, HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital.

Piloted at HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, the Rx Food FARMacy program puts this approach into action by helping patients connect with benefits education, fresh produce and local food resources. For example, when patients identify as food insecure or report other economic insecurities, they are introduced to Rx Food FARMacy and are offered the opportunity to enroll. Through the program, patients can learn about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) benefits and access fresh produce through local mobile food markets or home delivery. They also receive recipes and referrals to other community resources that can provide additional support. During fiscal year 2025, 167 patients were referred to the Leominster-based nonprofit Growing Places to learn about SNAP/HIP benefits, community-supported agriculture shares, home delivery options and mobile markets. Of those patients, 51 enrolled in the home delivery service, and eight enrolled in SNAP and learned about HIP benefits.

Hospital-Wide Food Drives

Each year, holiday food drives across UMass Memorial Health help support local families and community members facing food insecurity. In fiscal year 2025, UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional's Season of Giving Holiday Drive collected food and other needed items. The drive also provided supplies to patients during their hospital stay and when discharged.

Beginning in November, holiday-decorated donation boxes were placed at hospital entrances and off-site locations, making it easy for caregivers to participate. Caregivers donated nonperishable food items and essential supplies such as toiletries and socks, which are often needed by individuals and families with limited resources.

Through the effort, Volunteer Services coordinated the collection, sorting and delivery of approximately 1,000 donated items to the Daily Bread Food Pantry in Milford.

Caregivers also contributed onesies, diapers and wipes for maternity patients in need, as well as crossword puzzles and word search books to support patient comfort during hospitalization.

Leaders from eight Milford area food pantries and UMass Memorial Health - Milford Regional Community Benefits Committee gather to discuss food access and partnerships.

Community Forum with Food Pantry Leaders

On August 13, 2025, UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional's Community Benefits Committee brought local food pantry leaders together for a community forum to discuss local food access and ways to support one another better. The conversation gave participants an opportunity to share what was working, exchange resources and ideas and talk through common challenges. Eleven leaders representing eight food pantries in the Milford area participated.

The group discussed topics such as partnerships with local businesses and farms, food sourcing and ways to encourage donations. Participants also raised shared concerns, including potential federal funding cuts, seasonal fluctuations in donations and the growing need for food assistance in the community.

The forum supported Milford's 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment (page 22) priority to reduce food insecurity and improve access to healthy foods. It also served as a first step toward building stronger connections among local food access partners and shaping future Community Benefits efforts.

World Farmers

In 2025, UMass Memorial Health, food service provider Sodexo and Lancaster-based nonprofit World Farmers began developing a partnership to expand access to locally grown, culturally meaningful produce while supporting small local farmers.

"UMass Memorial recognizes that food is deeply connected to culture, health and community. Partnering with World Farmers provides the opportunity to offer culturally meaningful foods that reflect and celebrate the diverse populations we serve," said Jessie Curran, RDN, Sodexo's Sustainability and Wellness Manager.

The partnership also supports World Farmers' broader work to mentor growers, provide hands-on training and connect farmers with institutional market opportunities. "World Farmers is grateful for UMass Memorial's dedication to introducing local foods into their spaces. It is exciting to see institutions intentionally shifting their markets and partnering with Sodexo to make it happen," said World Farmers Program Director Jessy Gill. "We look forward to seeing what markets can emerge from this partnership, and the corresponding benefit to the farmers."

Plans moving forward include a pilot offering World Farmers community-supported agricultural shares to caregivers at one of the Medical Center campuses, and for Sodexo to purchase and feature World Farmers produce in select system hospital cafeterias.

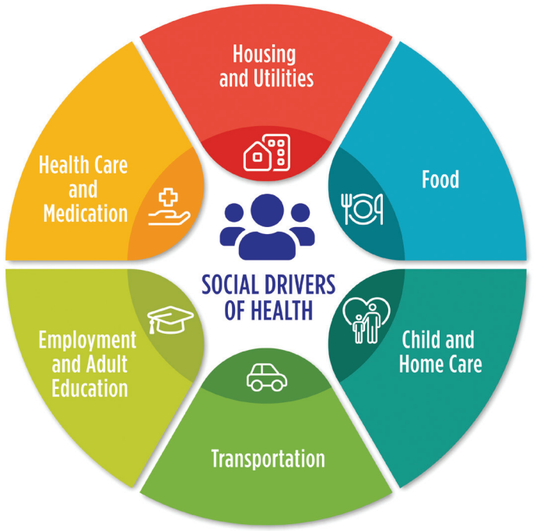
Social Drivers of Health Screenings

In 2024, UMass Memorial Health focused on screening patients for social drivers of health (SDOH): nonmedical factors such as food insecurity, housing instability and transportation barriers that may affect a patient's health and well-being.

In fiscal year 2025, the Office of Clinical Integration (OCI) partnered with the Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester — with funding support from UMass Memorial Determination of Need Funding — to develop surveys in the patient portal, MyChart. The surveys collected patient insights to enhance SDOH referrals and address barriers to care. Feedback came from 122 MyChart surveys and 73 patients across seven focus groups for a total of 195 patients.

Based on feedback from the surveys and focus groups, UMass Memorial has:

- Created an internal UMass Memorial webpage for easier access to food resources for providers and caregivers
- Simplified the design of regional resource one-pagers for improved legibility and overhauled CommunityHELP's curated community-based organization folders
- Expanded caregiver communication and training on SDOH and health equity
- Developed clearer explanations for patients about why SDOH screening is part of patient care
- Collaborated with social workers to develop a workflow for referral pathways for community health and social needs



Addressing the social factors (graphic above) that influence a person's health sets patients and communities up for improved health.

"Patient feedback has helped us better understand both the value and challenges of social needs screening from the patient perspective. These insights are guiding improvements in how we communicate about screening, connect patients to resources and strengthen partnerships that support whole-person care," said Jennifer Delaney, PhD, Manager, OCI's Social Health Programming & Partnerships, UMass Memorial Health.

UMASS MEMORIAL HEALTH IN ACTION: ADDRESSING THE SNAP CRISIS

In the fall of 2025, when disruptions in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) occurred, UMass Memorial Health provided policy and investment support to community organizations and coalitions focused on the social driver of food, which included:

- Deploying $170,000 to Worcester United Way, Worcester County Food Bank and Worcester Community Action Council
- Advocating for SNAP policy changes with the Make Hunger History coalition
- Donating $6,000 to Leominster-based nonprofit Growing Places to continue to support 274 households receiving community supported agriculture boxes from local partner farmers
- Sponsoring hospital-based food drives and supporting community giving efforts

These efforts reflect UMass Memorial's commitment to addressing food insecurity as a critical social driver of health.

Tackling Substance Use Disorder & Mental Health

Milford Addiction Care Team

In 2023, UMass Memorial Health - Milford Regional Medical Center was one of 15 hospitals awarded funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Bureau of Substance Addiction Services through the statewide Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund. This initiative directly supports the hospital's Community Health Needs Assessment priority area of increasing access to more substance use providers.

Milford Regional utilized its grant funding to establish the Milford Addiction Care Team (MACT), which provides bedside assessments, counseling and care coordination for patients with alcohol use and substance use disorders. The program connects patients to appropriate treatment and recovery resources while supporting their immediate clinical needs.

Like healthcare systems across the country, Massachusetts hospitals continue to grapple with the ongoing addiction crisis. Evidence shows that integrating addiction care specialists into hospital settings can reduce hospital readmissions and increase patient engagement in treatment.

Traditionally, addiction treatment services are delivered outside of the hospital setting. The creation of MACT represents an important advancement in care, allowing Milford Regional to provide timely, compassionate, and patient-centered intervention at a critical point in care. Throughout fiscal year 2025, the MACT program served an average of 40 patients per month.

From left: Lisa Shaw, MSN, PMHNP-BC, Manager, Behavioral Health and Addiction Services; Lisa Antonio, LMHC, Addiction Care Clinician; and Kieran O'Sullivan, Recovery Support Navigator.

Marking International Overdose Awareness Day with Powerful Community Gatherings

UMass Memorial Health hosted its annual International Overdose Awareness Day event on the UMass Memorial Medical Center - University Campus Green, drawing approximately 70 attendees on August 27, 2025, for a moving tribute to lives lost and a renewed commitment to prevention and healing.

Guests participated in Narcan training and visited resource tables hosted by UMass Memorial, Community Healthlink and Harrington Hospital. Purple flags planted across the green served as visual tributes to those lost.

Other system remembrances included one at the Marlborough Campus, where caregivers planted 1,341 flags in memory of lives lost in Massachusetts in 2024 to an opioid-related drug overdose. This represented a significant decrease of about 36% compared to the 2,104 confirmed opioid-related deaths in 2023.

Milford Regional's Baby Steps Program

Pregnant patients with substance use disorder may avoid prenatal care due to the stigma, which can lead to worse health outcomes for both the birthing patient and infant. UMass Memorial Health - Milford Regional Medical Center's Baby Steps Program takes a holistic approach to caring for these patients, building trust and setting them on a path to success.

"Many patients feel that they're going to be judged," said Amy Madden, RN, who coordinates the program. "We are here as a team not to judge but to help them and provide a 'toolbox' to take home to best care for their baby."

Madden first meets patients at the hospital's birthing unit for a tour, introduces them to the caregiver team and familiarizes them with a delivery process that includes a three- to five-day additional hospital stay to support their newborn who has been exposed to medications, drugs or alcohol. During that time, babies "room-in" 24/7 with an emphasis on skin-to-skin contact, which is more calming for their nervous system.

Baby Steps, which launched in 2015, uses a new, evidence-based care model called "Eat, Sleep, Console" that focuses on an infant's ability to feed well, sleep undisturbed and be easily soothed while prioritizing parental involvement and comfort measures over medication. Caregivers come alongside families, guiding them in ways to calm their baby, ensure the baby feeds properly and soothe them to sleep. Thanks to these efforts, none of the nine infants over the past several years received pharmacological intervention.

Explained Maternal Child Health Director Rose Galimi-Hayes, "Encouraging and teaching birth parents how to comfort and console their baby strengthens the parent-child bond, promotes parental confidence and can reduce the need for medical interventions."

Before discharge, families receive additional instruction in both infant and postpartum care, and caregivers make sure they have the necessary supplies for home. Once they are discharged, Madden can connect them to additional resources, such as a lactation consultant, social worker and recovery support.

"I've loved building trust, teaching and answering questions," said Madden, "as we help create a positive outlook for these patients, moving forward."

Road to Care Mobile Addiction Service

Reducing Barriers to Addiction Treatment and Primary Care

The Road to Care Mobile Addiction Service works to reach those experiencing homelessness and substance use disorders and mitigate barriers such as lack of transportation or mistrust in healthcare. Services include vaccinations; primary care management; acute illness care; opioid addiction treatments; Naloxone counseling and distribution; screenings for sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis and cancer; chronic disease (e.g.; diabetes, HIV, hepatitis C) screening and management; case management (housing, insurance, food and other needs); psychiatric screening and referral; and referrals to social support services. The program partners with AIDS Project Worcester, Eliot Community Human Services, the Worcester Public Library and others.

> "This year showed us how much trust matters in this work — it's the thing that gets someone to say yes to care they've been avoiding for years."
>
> Jillian Joseph, MPAS, PA-C, Director, Road to Care Addiction Service

With the departure of Kavita Babu, MD, the Medical Director for the UMass Memorial Medical Center Community Benefits Department and Co-director of Road to Care, the program has transitioned from the Community Benefits Department to the Department of Family Medicine, where existing team members are now located, including Road to Care Addiction Service Director Jillian Joseph, MPAS, PA-C. "Transitioning Road to Care to the Department of Family Medicine & Community Health is a natural fit. Not only are most of our clinicians Family Medicine physicians, but our goals and mission are aligned with the Department's focus on caring for the most vulnerable populations who are most at risk, Joseph explained.

Between 2023-2025, patient volume remained steady in most areas, with over 4,000 visits and nearly 900 individual patients year to year. Through 2025, Road to Care has provided 16,300 clinical encounters with nearly 2,500 patients, with more than half returning for follow-up visits. Also, Road to Care has provided buprenorphine treatment to nearly 900 individuals through 2025. Buprenorphine is the first medication to treat opioid use disorders that can be prescribed or dispensed in physician offices, significantly increasing access to treatment.

In 2025, the addition of opioid specialist paramedics (the team now has three) increased and enhanced the capacity for hepatitis C and HIV screening and treatment. In previous years, Road to Care screened between five and 20 hepatitis C patients per year. That jumped to nearly 100 patients in 2024 and nearly 170 patients in 2025. During 2025, Road to Care also added a dental fluoride varnish service, acquired clean snorting supplies, and collaborated with UMass Chan Medical School on community health needs assessments for the region. In response to the growing need identified by needs assessments, Road to Care added two additional clinics: one at AIDS Project Worcester and the other at the Pentecost International Worship Center in Worcester.

Noted Joseph, "This year showed us how much trust matters in this work – it's the thing that gets someone to say yes to care they've been avoiding for years. That's why we are expanding our impact by offering mental healthcare directly on the van, adding an in-person psychologist and telehealth psychiatry consults, and growing our team with another physician or advanced practice provider. Growth for us doesn't mean serving more people from farther away – it means being able to do more for the people already walking up to our door."

From left: Laurel Banach, MD, Family Medicine & Community Health; Jillian Joseph, MPAS, PA-C, Director, Road to Care Addiction Service; and Brian Rettger, NREMT-P, Emergency Medical Services, greet patients.

From left: Brian Rettger, NREMT-P; Laurel Banach, MD; and Jillian Joseph, MPAS, PA-C.

Increasing Access to Healthcare

Worcester RISE for Health

Worcester RISE for Health provides culturally responsive primary, behavioral and maternal healthcare and support services to refugees and immigrants in the Worcester area, funded in part by a three-year, $660,000 grant from UMass Memorial Health through its Determination of Need Funding (page 16) to help build and staff its 7,000-square-foot medical office. Founded in 2023, RISE expanded its team to nine full- and 10 part-time staff who speak 14 languages and serve more than 500 patients in fiscal year 2025. Its community health workers provided over 4,000 hours of service assisting families in navigating the healthcare system.

"Worcester RISE really aims to re-envision healthcare delivery for new and recent arrivals, building capacity for people who find it challenging to navigate the healthcare system," said Olga Valdman, MD, Founder and Executive Director of Worcester RISE for Health and an Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Community Health at the UMass Chan Medical School. "We think in a holistic way, supporting their physical and mental health in a manner that is respectful of their culture, partnering and collaborating with communities and community-led organizations on a common goal to prevent this vulnerable population from falling through the cracks."

Growing UMass Memorial Medical Center Doula Program Empowers Patients and Families

Since launching in 2024, UMass Memorial Medical Center's Doula Program has continued to grow and thrive in its mission to improve health and wellness outcomes for birthing patients. By the end of fiscal year 2025, 35 doulas from the Worcester area had been trained to provide expert, compassionate and personalized care.

Doulas complement the medical care team by providing physical, emotional and informational support before, during and after childbirth. Research shows that patients who work with a doula have lower cesarean section rates, are more likely to breastfeed and are better satisfied with their overall birth experience.

"This year marked a culture shift as the medical team and doulas began working more collaboratively," noted Cherise Hamblin, MD, who leads the program. With doulas now covered by MassHealth insurance, and the hospital expanding promotion of the program to affiliated medical practices, awareness has grown as both caregivers and patients better understand the value of doula care at UMass Memorial.

Fiscal year 2025 saw an increased focus on patients who had just delivered, who were encouraged to use up to eight hours of available postpartum doula services, even if they did not have a doula during pregnancy. The program team also helped connect patients to newly created postpartum and breastfeeding support groups.

"I've seen firsthand how this support helps families feel more confident, empowered and prepared as they welcome their babies and begin their parenting journey," said Doula Yolanda Ramos. "This program bridges healthcare and community support, ensuring families receive not only information and resources, but also compassion, advocacy and human connection."

> "I've seen firsthand how this support helps families feel more confident, empowered and prepared ..."
>
> Yolanda Ramos, Doula

Grants Enhance Perinatal Support for At-Risk Families in North Central MA

Approximately $400,000 has been committed by UMass Memorial Health - HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital to help several local nonprofit organizations collaborate with the hospital to address the prenatal, postnatal and infant needs of at-risk families in North Central Massachusetts.

The first year of grant funding in 2024 went to the Leominster-based nonprofit Growing Places (in partnership with Ginny's Helping Hand Food Pantry & Thrift Store and the Health Equity Partnership of North Central Mass) and Make Opportunity Count (partnering with the Spanish American Center) to fund research and develop multiyear action plans. As a result, at the end of 2025, several initiatives were launched:

- Maternal care patients referred to Growing Places will receive monthly deliveries of fresh produce and shelf-stable maternal and infant care items for up to one year.
- Communities will have better access to coordinated, culturally responsive perinatal supports to improve maternal and infant health outcomes through support from Make Opportunity Count. This includes pre- and post-natal workshops provided in Spanish, improved behavioral health resources, access to infant supplies such as diapers and formula, and vouchers for those needing transportation.

Funds were directed based on the needs and priorities from community feedback.

Ronald McDonald Care Mobile – Celebrating 25 Years

> "For many families, the Care Mobile is their front door to healthcare, providing not only clinical care, but also connections to resources that support long-term health."
>
> Michelle Muller, NP, Program Manager, Ronald McDonald Care Mobile

In 2025, UMass Memorial Health and Ronald McDonald House Charities of New England celebrated a remarkable milestone: 25 years of the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile serving Worcester County. Since its launch in 2000, the Care Mobile has been more than a clinic; it's been a lifeline for tens of thousands of people who face barriers to healthcare.

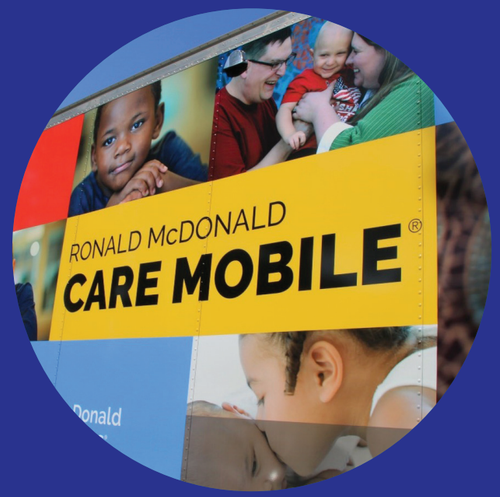
Recognizing that transportation, health insurance and limited knowledge of local resources often prevent access, the 40-foot mobile clinic brings care directly to vulnerable neighborhoods, visiting 29 schools and 11 community locations, including shelters, churches, food pantries and housing complexes.

"This program is about access and trust," said Michelle Muller, NP, Program Manager, Care Mobile, UMass Memorial Medical Center, who oversees the Care Mobile operations. "For many families, the Care Mobile is their front door to healthcare, providing not only clinical care, but also connections to resources that support long-term health."

Since 2000, the Care Mobile has provided nearly 120,000 patient visits and placed over 100,000 dental sealants (dental services were added in 2003). In 2025 alone, it held over 4,300 patient visits, with 82% for individuals under 18. Services range from physical exams and immunizations to dental screenings and fluoride treatments provided by a dedicated team of nurse practitioners, dental hygienists, a clinic coordinator, a medical assistant/outreach liaison and clinical directors.

The Care Mobile's commitment was especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when it pivoted to provide more than 114,000 tests, over 12,000 vaccinations and over 101,000 masks to communities disproportionately affected by the crisis. More recently, the Care Mobile has supported migrant families in emergency shelters, providing over 1,000 visits since July 2023. During the past two years, the Care Mobile expanded its service area to include Clinton and Marlborough.

As the world's first Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, the Care Mobile remains a global model for mobile health innovation. Now on its second-generation vehicle, it continues to expand, with new initiatives like lead testing in collaboration with local schools.



Pictured top from left than clockwise, Rafael Gonzalez, Care Mobile Coordinator; Stacy Hampson, RDH, Dental Program Coordinator; Nardy Vega, MA, Outreach Liaison; Brianna Soares, FNP; and Michelle Muller, NP, Care Mobile Program Manager.

"The excellent work our Care Mobile team has done for decades is a testament to how important having a program like this in our communities is," said Lauren Schmieg the CEO of Ronald McDonald House Charities New England. "We have been honored to launch this very first innovation 25 years ago and are looking forward to the next 25 years of care, compassion and collaboration with the UMass Memorial medical team and all our partners."

Building Bridges to Better Health: Marysol Cruz

"We want people to know we're here for them and meet them where they are."

Marysol Cruz, Outreach and Inclusion Manager, UMass Memorial Health - Harrington Hospital

For Marysol Cruz, serving the community isn't simply her job; it's a way of giving back to the place she has always called home.

Born and raised in Southbridge, Cruz, is a Business Administration graduate from Southern New Hampshire University. She began her healthcare career in 2013 when she joined the Human Resources team at UMass Memorial Health - Harrington Hospital. In 2022, Cruz transitioned into the newly created role of Outreach and Inclusion Manager, where she helped build the community outreach program from the ground up.

Today, that department serves as a bridge between the hospital and the communities it serves, connecting residents with healthcare, education and essential resources outside the hospital walls. "Our goal is to be visible, accessible and responsive," Cruz said. "We want people to know we're here for them and to meet them where they are."

That philosophy has transformed Harrington's community presence. What began as a fledgling outreach effort has expanded into monthly educational programs at schools, libraries and community centers, covering topics such as stroke prevention, fall prevention, financial literacy and UMass Memorial Health's MyChart patient portal. Community members receive valuable and practical health information at no cost and can ask questions and connect directly with healthcare providers.

The hospital's outreach extends far beyond classroom presentations. Clinical staff volunteer at monthly blood pressure clinics and health fairs throughout the region, while Cruz's team helps eligible patients enroll in programs such as MassHealth, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Healthy Incentives Program and Women, Infants and Children. The hospital's food pantry and seasonal drives, including collections of coats and school supplies, help address basic needs that directly affect health and well-being.

The outreach effort continues to grow. Harrington participated in 88 community events last year, including hosting its first Cancer Survivor Resource Fair, and is on pace to exceed 120 this year. More than 110 employee volunteers support the work. At the same time, partnerships with local schools introduce students from kindergarten through high school to healthy habits and careers in healthcare through career days, internships and the hospital's Healthcare Exploration Program.

For the community partners in the region, Cruz and Harrington Hospital are having a measurable impact on the quality of healthcare and life in the region. "Marysol Cruz embodies what true community partnership is all about. Through the Outreach and Inclusion program at Harrington Hospital, she has created opportunities for organizations like Kind Hearts of Southbridge to work together in ways that directly impact the lives of individuals and families throughout our community," said Charles Diaz, Co-founder of Kind Hearts of Southbridge. "Marysol doesn't simply connect people with resources — she builds relationships, inspires collaboration, and reminds us that when organizations come together with a shared purpose, we can accomplish far more than any of us could alone."

Top from left: Marysol Cruz, Outreach and Inclusion Manager, Harrington Hospital, accepts a food donation from Charles Diaz, Co-founder of Kind Hearts of Southbridge.

Bottom from left: Jose Machado, Co-founder of Kind Hearts of Southbridge; Marysol Cruz, Outreach and Inclusion Manager, Harrington Hospital; Aida Sagastibelza, Area Administrator, Catholic Charities, Southbridge; and Charles Diaz, Co-founder of Kind Hearts of Southbridge.

For Cruz, seeing those partnerships flourish is especially meaningful because they benefit the community that shaped her.

"Seeing how willing our leadership and employees are to step up whenever there's a need inspires me every day," she said. "Whether it's a food drive, a school supply collection or helping someone navigate healthcare resources, we're making a difference in both small ways and big ways for our own community."

Training Partnership Empowers Worcester Residents to Save Lives

In 2025, a $9,000 financial contribution from UMass Memorial Medical Center's Community Benefits Department supported a partnership between the Medical Center's Injury Prevention Center and the Worcester nonprofit Legendary Legacies to offer free Stop the Bleed training in neighborhoods affected by violence, equipping residents with practical skills to help save lives.

Led by Dominick Dunbar, an injury prevention specialist at UMass Memorial Medical Center who focuses on community education, the classes teach participants three basic actions for controlling life-threatening bleeding: applying direct pressure, packing wounds and using a tourniquet. These skills can be critical in everyday emergencies, as well as during human-made or natural disasters.

"You don't necessarily need a medical degree to save a life," said Curlisa Henry, Community Resource Coordinator at Legendary Legacies. "Learning just three basic steps can make a difference."

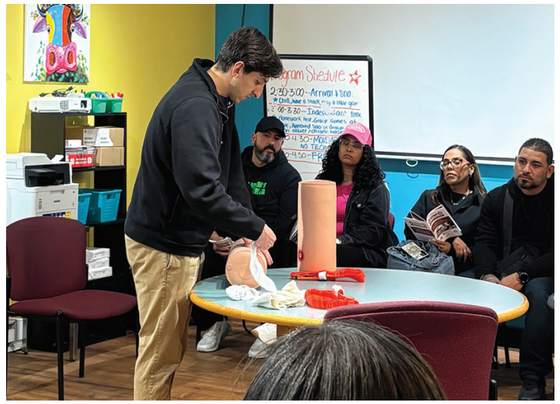
Legendary Legacies recognizes that violence is preventable when communities invest in trusted relationships, opportunity and early intervention. The organization supports people affected by violence, incarceration and substance use through mentorship, workforce development, reentry services and community violence intervention. Its Youth Crisis Response Team builds trust, connects residents to resources, helps prevent violence before it occurs and interrupts cycles of retaliation when violence does happen.

Building on that community-based approach, the partnership creates an opportunity for the Medical Center to bring lifesaving skills directly into neighborhoods where trusted community connections are already in place. Asia Simpson, Injury Prevention Supervisor at the Medical Center, helped launch the partnership two years ago as part of the Injury Prevention Center's ongoing commitment to keeping communities healthy and safe.

Trainings take place in neighborhoods impacted by violence, with evening classes easily accessible in locations in community centers, churches and other local facilities. In an era of increasing gun violence and other violent crime, participants learn how to keep themselves safe in an emergency while helping to sustain a life until paramedics arrive.

Each attendee receives a free kit with supplies, including a tourniquet. Nearly 80 community members have taken the class, including almost 20 in 2025. One attendee later shared that she used what she learned to care for a family member who had fallen through a plate-glass door, potentially saving their life.

"To see people come to these classes incredibly focused and wanting to learn, and then to hear follow-up like this, is incredibly validating," Dunbar said. "I'm proud to be making a positive difference in our community."



Dominick Dunbar, left, Injury Prevention Specialist, Injury Prevention Center, demonstrates live saving skills to Stop the Bleed training participants.

A Stop the Bleed training participant practices applying direct pressure to a wound, one of the three life-saving actions taught in Stop the Bleed training.

"You don't necessarily need a medical degree to save a life. Learning just three basic steps can make a difference."

Curlisa Henry, Community Resource Coordinator, Legendary Legacies

UMass Memorial Health Community Outreach

UMass Memorial Health is proud of the many community outreach efforts to address health inequities, racial disparities and other barriers our community members face. Caregivers throughout the system help connect and collaborate with local partners to provide care, services and financial support where they are needed. On this page and the next, we highlight a few of these many efforts.

Care Mobile Children's Vaccine Clinic

The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile Children's Vaccine Clinic at HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital opened in fiscal year 2025 and offers free vaccines for children who may not have health insurance or are waiting for it, have limited health insurance, or do not have a pediatrician or primary care provider. The clinic, run by the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile team (page 9), is open one to two times per month, depending on the need, and works in partnership with the Clinton Public Schools.

UMass Memorial Health Injury Prevention Center

Guns 2 Gardens
In 2025, the Community Benefits Department contributed funding to the gun buyback program in partnership with the City of Worcester Department of Health and the Injury Prevention team at the Medical Center. Participants receive grocery gift cards in exchange for unwanted firearms, which are repurposed into gardening tools. The annual event collected 151 firearms on December 13, 2025.

Child Passenger Safety
This educational program teaches proper car seat installation and provides car seats to parents with financial need. In 2025, approximately 350 car seats were provided free of charge, and 150 car seats inspected and safely installed.

Marlborough Campus Outreach to Seniors

Providing education and resources for individuals of all ages, caregivers at the Marlborough Campus participated in the City of Marlborough's Senior Resource Fair, educating seniors on enhancing their mobility and healthy eating. They also provided cholesterol and glucose testing and guidance on how to fill out healthcare proxy forms — available in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

At the Marlborough Senior Center and New Horizons Assisted Living Facility, they offered educational Lunch and Learn programs on "Stroke Awareness" and "Strength Training and Healthy Aging." Physical therapists also conducted education programs on healthy aging, joint health and fall prevention at the Senior Center.

Top: Members of Milford Regional's Patient Family Advisory Council sponsored a Senior Wellness Fair. Nearly 130 seniors and caregivers connected with 20 vendors, including senior agencies and healthcare professionals. Bottom: caregivers from the Marlborough Campus shared important tips on bicycle and helmet safety at the Hudson Public Schools. Health and Wellness Fair.

North Central MA Rides Transportation Management Association

In 2025, the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce formed the North Central MA Rides Transportation Management Association (TMA) to improve mobility, reduce congestion and expand equitable access to healthcare and employment by creating a more comprehensive transportation system.

With an $8,000 commitment, UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital (HA-C) became an inaugural member of TMA, helping with governance, strategic planning and coordination with stakeholders. Patricia Pistone, Associate Vice President of External Affairs at HA-C and TMA Founding Board Chair, said of UMass Memorial's involvement, "Transportation barriers not only impact our workforce, but also the health of our community. Our region's employers have taken on this challenge together to create sustainable transportation solutions that not only benefit employees and patients but also strengthen the economic vitality of our region."

"Outreach efforts ensure that the community feels connected to UMass Memorial Health by informing them about what we do and learning how we can better serve them."

Mario Florez, Vice President, Community Health and Caregiver Belonging, UMass Memorial Health

UMass Memorial HealthAlliance - Clinton Hospital Simonds-Sinon Cancer Center caregivers offer a community education program on the dangers of tobacco, including what a healthy versus tobacco-exposed lung looks like.

UMass Memorial Health - Harrington's Community Education Series offers 45-minute free health education sessions on topics from depression and healthy aging for adults to internet safety, healthy relationships and nutrition for younger audiences.

Worcester Free Care Collaborative

The Worcester Free Care Collaborative (WFCC) provides free medical care and social support services at no charge. All residents of Greater Worcester are eligible regardless of income, insurance or housing status. A team of more than 280 volunteers, including UMass Memorial Health caregivers and UMass Chan Medical School students, care for over 6,500 patients a year. The WFCC hosts six medical programs in women's health, diabetes education, oral health, ophthalmology, dermatology, podiatry, physical therapy and orthopedics. A seventh program is an eye and ear clinic.

UMass Memorial Medical Legal Partnership

This program, in partnership with Community Legal Aid and the UMass Memorial Health Legal Department (MLP), addresses social/health factors among socially complex patients. MLP received and processed 290 case referrals and conducted over 100 legal consultations with medical teams at clinical sites during fiscal year 2025. They also collaborated with Worcester County private bar attorneys to take on pro bono MLP legal cases, allowing them to assist more patients. MLP legal aid attorneys meet on-site with chronically ill patients and medical providers to reduce barriers to legal health concerns by meeting patients where they receive care.

Promoting Positive Youth Development

Milford Youth Center Fitness and Nutrition Programs

In 2017, UMass Memorial Health - Milford Regional Medical Center's Community Benefits Committee established a partnership with the Milford Youth Center to provide free fitness and nutrition programming for youth enrolled in the Center's after-school program.

The Milford Youth Center serves youth ages 8 to 18 at no cost, eliminating financial barriers and offering a safe, supportive environment for underserved community members.

Through Community Benefits funding, participating youth gain access to structured fitness and nutrition education programs designed to promote overall health and well-being. The program aims to support improved mental health outcomes through increased physical activity while fostering awareness of healthy nutrition practices.

"This programming has made such a positive impact on our fitness, nutritional and social-emotional programs at the Center. We have not only been able to purchase supplies, hire instructors, etc., but we have been able to expand our programming offerings significantly," said Jen Ward, Director, Milford Youth Center.

Adds Joanna Abrantes, Program Coordinator, "The funding allows us to purchase ingredients for the nutrition program while also providing safe, supervised weight room activities that might not otherwise be possible. These programs encourage healthy habits, build confidence and give our youth meaningful opportunities to learn and grow."

In 2025, a total of 315 youth participated in these fitness and nutrition programs.

Youth participate in one of many activities offered through the after-school program at the Milford Youth Center.

During the Recreation Worcester six-week program, nearly 11,000 meals, including breakfast and lunch, were provided to youth participants and staff under the age of 18.

Free Summer Program a Vital Support for Worcester Youth and Families

During the summer of 2025, nearly 1,000 Worcester children ages 7 to 12 had the opportunity to learn, be active and have fun with peers by participating in Recreation Worcester, a free program offered at five neighborhood parks. UMass Memorial Medical Center Community Benefits Department continued its long-standing partnership with the program through a $60,000 grant that provided participants and staff under 18 two free meals a day.

"Recreation Worcester provides a respite for families during the summertime," said Program Coordinator Kwame Marshall. Offering a free childcare option with meals included helps reduce stress and pressure in the home while allowing kids access to our local parks in a safe environment."

The program launched 11 years ago and coincided with the city's efforts to renovate playgrounds and invest in local green spaces. Special offerings each year range from soccer to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) experiments, musical performances and art projects as children engage both their bodies and minds while developing social skills.

"Programs like this create a connection to community," said Raquel Castro-Corazzini, Youth Opportunities Director. "For kids to see their neighborhood park as a welcoming and secure place, to give them that 'third space' apart from home or school where they can go and have fun, is so important."

As many families have faced economic stressors in recent years, the program has grown in popularity, with enrollment skyrocketing in 2025.

"Recreation Worcester helps address many of the factors that foster a healthy community beyond healthcare," said Marshall. "Whether that's food security, childcare, safety, or mental health. We're grateful for partnerships like the one we have with UMass Memorial Health that help us take steps to make that a reality."

UMass Chan Medical School Pipeline Dreams Program

UMass Chan Medical School launched the Pipeline Dreams program on January 15, 2025, to introduce Worcester-area high school students to careers in medicine, science, research and public health, with support from UMass Memorial Health, the Greater Worcester Community Foundation and the Schwartz Charitable Foundation.

Led by the UMass Chan Collaborative in Health Equity, the 12-week program engaged 33 juniors and seniors from 11 area schools, learning in person and virtually with scientists, clinicians and undergraduate teaching assistants (photo below). The curriculum focuses on racial health disparities research, health equity and pathways into health professions.

By helping students see themselves in health and science careers, Pipeline Dreams strengthens the local workforce pipeline and expands opportunities for students who may have limited exposure to careers in medicine. Participants gain exposure to local resources, professional role models and long-term support designed to continue beyond the program and into college.

This article is an abridged version of "Pipeline Dreams Program Primes High School Students for Health, Science Careers," from the UMass Chan Medical School website, umassmed.edu.

Vaping Awareness Program

In 2025, UMass Memorial Health Cancer Center continued its outreach on the harmful effects of vaping, nicotine and tobacco use through an educational presentation for middle and high school-aged students at the Challenge and Reach Academy in Worcester.

Led by UMass Memorial Radiology caregivers, the session addressed the links between smoking and cancer, the financial costs of tobacco products and the harmful chemicals found in combustible and non-combustible products. Students also compared computed tomography scans of healthy versus diseased lungs. Funding from the Medical Center Community Benefits Department supported this prevention-focused education.

Supporting Marlborough Children and Families

In 2025, UMass Memorial Medical Center – Marlborough Campus supported several youth- and family-focused community initiatives, highlighted below:

- Partnered with Marlborough-based "Kits for Kids" to assemble 300 goody kits for children in foster care or medical facilities. On Giving Tuesday, caregivers and community members filled the kits with stuffed animals, socks, hand-knit items and toiletries; 150 of the kits were distributed to pediatric patients in the Emergency Department.
- Collaborated with the United Way of Tri-County through the "Tools for School" program to donate and fill 24 backpacks with school supplies for Marlborough children in need.
- Partnered with the Hudson Public Schools Health, Wellness and Safety Council to host a community health and wellness fair promoting healthy choices for families through fun, educational and interactive activities offered in multiple languages.
- Sponsored 18 local children during the holidays through the campus's "Sponsor a Child" program, with gifts selected and purchased from each child's wish list.
- Stocked the Little Free Library with 200 books provided by the hospital, along with additional books donated by caregivers, patients and community residents. The books, available in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole, help bring health and wellness resources to patients with limited English proficiency and those who may not have access to books.

Together, these efforts reflect Marlborough Campus's commitment to supporting children, families and inclusive access to health and wellness resources for the community.

Determination of Need Funding

Under Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations, healthcare 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 2025, 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 needs in the community.

UMass Memorial Medical Center DoN Funding

Fiscal year 2025 marked the end of the first year of project implementation for grants awarded 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.

Fiscal year 2025 marked the first year of implementation for seven one-year projects and eleven three-year projects ranging from additional respite beds at South Middlesex Opportunity Council's Medical Respite Program to training teens to serve as "near-peer" mentors and role models for members ages 8-12 at the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester.

Below is a list of organizations being supported through this funding:

Boys & Girls Club of Worcester

Catholic Charities Diocese of Worcester

Center for Health Impact

Central Mass Housing Alliance

Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester

Court Appointed Special Advocates Worcester County

Iglesia Cristiana de la Comunidad/ Christian Community Church

Latin American Health Alliance

Regional Environmental Council (REC)

Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services

South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC)

Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts

The New England Center for Family Connection

Trustees of Clark University

Worcester Refugee Assistance Project

Worcester RISE for Health

Worcester State Foundation

YMCA of Central Massachusetts

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION FUNDING STREAMS

UMass Memorial Medical Center Community Benefits Department has four funding streams to support community-based partners. These funding streams consist of the following:

DoN/CHI Funding Opportunities:
Grants distributed and administered in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines for capital projects that are accompanied by a Determination of Need/Community Health Initiative approval.

Mini Grants:
Small grants to support small projects/expenses by organizations in alignment with UMass Memorial Health's and Community Health Assessment priorities.

Donations:
Charitable contributions for organizations/projects/events that include responses to community needs, events that benefit vulnerable populations, and community crises.

Medical Center Community Benefits contributions were close to $300,000 in fiscal year 2025, supporting youth services, outreach education, events, medical supplies and more.

Explained Mario Florez, Vice President of Community Health and Caregiver Belonging, UMass Memorial Health, "Diversifying our funding streams helps us serve an array of organizations that differ in size, scope, capacity and the communities and people they serve."

UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance -Clinton Hospital DoN Funding

HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital invested more than $915,000 from fiscal year 2023-2024 in Tier 1 (awards up to $10,000), Tier 2 (awards up to $50,000) and final funding to Tier 3 (awards up to $300,000) to local nonprofit organizations working to improve health outcomes for communities in the region. Several community organizations in North Central Massachusetts received funding in fiscal year 2024, which was implemented in fiscal year 2025 to support initiatives across social, economic, health and behavioral priority areas. These projects addressed diverse needs including childcare training, homelessness, local food access, youth mental health and healthcare services. Below is a list of the Tier I, II and III recipients. There were no new Tier III recipients in fiscal year 2025.

Tier 1 Recipients (up to $10,000)

Community Health Connections

Friends of Sterling Seniors

LUK, Inc.

RFK Community Alliance

Tier 2 Recipients (up to $50,000)

City of Fitchburg Health Department

Clear Path for Veterans

Ellie Fund

Growing Places Garden Project, Inc.

Leaders for Equitable Local Economies Fitchburg Initiative

North Star Family Services, Inc.

Rise Above Foundation

United Way of North Central Massachusetts, Inc.

Leominster Playground for Children in Foster Care

A $47,500 Community Health Improvement Grant from UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital helped make possible a new playground at the Massachusetts Department for Children and Families' (DCF) Leominster Area Office. Developed by the nonprofit Rise Above Foundation in collaboration with DCF, the playground gives children in foster care and their families a welcoming place for safe reunification and healing.

The Leominster playground is the second DCF office playground UMass Memorial Health has supported; the first was in Worcester in 2021. "As part of supporting children and their families, UMass Memorial recognizes the importance of supporting active play for youth and our commitment to supporting children and their families in our community," said Patricia Pistone, Associate Vice President of External Affairs for HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital.

The effort also received support from individual donors, community partners and state funding. According to the Rise Above Foundation website, the Leominster office serves approximately 2,000 children annually, including over 400 in foster care, from eight surrounding cities and towns.

The playground provides a safe, welcoming outdoor space for children and parents to play and connect during visits.

Anchor Mission

Pursuing an Anchor Mission expands our community benefit work beyond hospital walls by leveraging and redirecting our organization's full economic and intellectual power to improve community health and well-being. This approach focuses on areas affected by persistent inequity and social disadvantage, helping community members access resources that support their social, physical and financial health. The Anchor Mission is guided by four pillars: Investing, Hiring and Workforce Development, Purchasing and Sustainability and Volunteering. On this page and the next are examples of this work in fiscal year 2025:

North Pavilion Project Directs Millions Back into the Community

The opening of the North Pavilion in January 2025 at UMass Memorial Medical Center - University Campus immediately expanded critically needed access to healthcare in Central Massachusetts. This new inpatient acute-care medical-surgical facility also represented the health system's first major capital project to specifically support local business through our Anchor Mission.

Reflecting UMass Memorial's commitment to leveraging business, economic and intellectual resources to improve the health and economic well-being of Central Massachusetts communities, Medical Center planning teams were transparent in how they evaluated contractor proposals, with a thoughtful and intentional focus on local hiring and collaboration with smaller businesses in the area.

As a result, the project created nearly 500 jobs, directed millions locally and today showcases more than 200 works by Central Massachusetts artists in the new facility. About 60% of contracts went to Worcester-owned businesses, and more than 20% of the construction workforce live in Worcester.

Medical Center - University Campus North Pavilion Entrance

From left: Tim Garvin, Executive Director, United Way of Central Massachusetts; UMass Memorial caregivers Roshonda DeGraffenreid, Workforce Development Consultant, and Mario Flórez, Vice President, Community Health and Caregiver Belonging; and Alyssa Dancause, Director of Community Engagement at Jeremiah's Inn.

UMass Memorial Caregivers Refresh Space for Residents at Jeremiah's Inn

What began as a United Way Day of Action volunteer project for UMass Memorial Health caregivers in the fall 2024 grew into a resident lounge refresh and renaming.

After caregivers helped paint the resident lounge at Jeremiah's Inn, a nonprofit residential treatment center for men recovering from substance use disorder, the Medical Center Community Benefits Department supported a full redecoration of the space.

The refreshed lounge was renamed the UMass Memorial Resident Lounge and provides a comfortable, welcoming space where residents can relax, connect and continue their recovery with dignity.

Workplace English Program Helps Caregivers Build Essential Skills

Over the last two years, 40 caregivers from 13 countries have completed a nine-month Workplace English program offered by UMass Memorial Health to help build essential skills. Of the first cohort of caregivers, 93% remain at the health system one year after graduating, and two have advanced to higher positions. Additional courses offered, include Introduction to Healthcare Careers and U.S. Citizenship Interview Preparation. "The Workplace English program creates opportunity for caregivers while strengthening the quality of care we provide. When caregivers build confidence and communication skills, patients benefit from better experiences, stronger connections and more equitable care," said Kelly Aiken, Director of Workforce Development, UMass Memorial Health.

The first class of graduates of the Workplace English program.

Frontline Scholars Program Helps Caregivers Advance in Their Careers

As the healthcare workforce faces ongoing challenges, including widespread shortages, UMass Memorial Health's Workforce Development Team is building a robust pipeline of qualified staff by empowering caregivers to grow in their careers within the health system through free training and education for career development and paid learning to gain new skills and knowledge. "Caregivers want to grow their careers here at UMass Memorial Health but tell us how challenging it can be to balance work, life and school," said Kelly Aiken, Director of Workforce Development & Planning, UMass Memorial. "Our programs are designed to provide holistic support while strategically focused on advancing caregivers into positions that are hard to fill. It's a win-win for everyone."

Recent graduates of the Frontline Scholars Program for Surgical Technologists.

The Frontline Scholars Program, for example, supports caregivers returning to college to pursue education in one of UMass Health's 'hot jobs' such as surgical technologists. Over the last two years, the program has trained 19 caregivers. Eight caregivers passed the national exam and advanced to surgical technologist positions, while 11 continue to study.

As caregivers advance their careers within UMass Memorial, this in turn helps continue the mission of improving the long-term health and economic well-being of Central Massachusetts communities.

NextGen Workforce Internship Program

The NextGen Workforce Internship Program offered through UMass Memorial Health's Workforce Development Department is a six-week, paid summer employment opportunity for regional high school students interested in exploring healthcare careers while building essential workplace skills. Host managers provide meaningful work assignments, supervision and mentorship. The program helps cultivate a future workforce pipeline and builds long-term relationships that encourage students to return during their senior year or after graduation.

In 2025, UMass Memorial hosted 25 students at sites across the system, including Harrington, HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital and the Medical Center.

To learn more about this Workforce Development program and other career opportunities, visit ummhealth.org/careers/workforce-development.

Anchor Mission Cont.

Eat Like a Local Prioritizes Local and Sustainable Food

In 2025, The "Eat Like a Local" initiative at UMass Memorial Health continued to expand its impact, benefiting patients, caregivers and the local food economy. Eat Like a Local focuses on bringing fresh, locally sourced food to hospitals and medical centers across New England, including some UMass Memorial Health hospitals, in partnership with Sodexo Food Services.

Jessie Curran, Sodexo Food Services' Sustainability and Wellness Manager, emphasized the importance of "impact purchasing," a practice designed to prioritize local and sustainable vendors. "We are making permanent swaps from national to local suppliers wherever possible," Jessie explained.

Sodexo provides food services for the Medical Center's University, Memorial and Marlborough campuses; and HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital's Leominster and Clinton campuses. Key 2025 Eat Like a Local highlights across these sites included:

- Directing approximately 10.5% of food spending to Central Massachusetts vendors, doubling local procurement compared to 2022
- Adding 18 new Central Massachusetts food vendors, for a total of 45 local food producers and farms supplying ingredients
- Sourcing 17% percent of food purchases from within 250 miles of UMass Memorial Health.

UMass Memorial Health's New England Healthcare Region award winning photo from Sodexo's Eat Like a Local Week.

In September of 2025, UMass Memorial Sodexo system accounts participated in the Sodexo Eat Like a Local Week and received two New England Healthcare region awards: Most Local Vendors and Best Photo. During the week, UMass Memorial sites used nearly 1,200 pounds of locally grown produce and locally sourced, minimally processed food.

ANCHOR PILLARS

INVESTING: Redirecting $10 million of our long-term investment portfolio to invest in local projects to improve the welfare of the community through low-interest loans.

HIRING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: Help caregivers build new skills, grow their careers and move into critical roles across our organization.

PURCHASING AND SUSTAINABILITY: Support local small businesses by buying locally whenever possible, with a focus on areas of social disadvantage or ongoing inequality within our community.

VOLUNTEERING: Offer our caregivers volunteer opportunities where they can get involved and contribute to the mission of our organization outside of their traditional roles.

UMass Memorial Medical Center at Nashoba Valley

Soon Providing Much Needed Emergency Care In North-Central MA

Rendering of the new UMass Memorial Medical Center at Nashoba Valley scheduled to open in February 2027.

When Nashoba Valley Medical Center closed in Ayer in August 2024, it created a healthcare void in North Central Massachusetts, increasing emergency medical services transport distance from approximately two to 15 miles and significantly impacting emergency department patient loads at the nearest hospitals. UMass Memorial Health is helping to ease this crisis with the opening of a new stand-alone emergency care facility (SEF) in Groton in 2027: UMass Memorial Medical Center at Nashoba Valley.

Following the Nashoba Valley Medical Center closing, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts commissioned a work group to find ways to address gaps in essential healthcare services in the area. The group included Patricia Pistone, Associate Vice President, UMass Memorial Health – Health Alliance-Clinton Hospital, which involved extensive community engagement and collaboration among healthcare providers, local leaders, elected officials, fire chiefs labor and community organizations. With the need for emergency services in the region, UMass Memorial leadership decided to commit resources to make it happen.

"For too long, patients across the Nashoba Valley have been left without access to critical emergency care. We've heard from patients, local leaders and caregivers alike about the gaps faced by the region and knew our system had to step in," said Justin Precourt, RN, DPN, President, UMass Memorial Medical Center. "It has been wonderful to partner with this community as we work to make this facility possible and offer the essential services people need."

In September 2025, UMass Memorial broke ground on the SEF, which is slated to open in February 2027. The facility will offer adult and pediatric emergency services with treatment rooms, imaging and lab services and a helipad for rapid medical transport.

Additionally, with the construction of the facility, in fiscal year 2026, UMass Memorial Medical Center contributed approximately $92,000 in the form of grants to local nonprofit organizations to support community health initiatives.

Pistone noted she is proud of not just the speed with which the new building is becoming a reality, but also the workgroup's exploration of overall needs in the region, including access, transportation and other factors that impact a community's health.

"We're not just opening buildings and investing in brick and mortar," she said. "We're working to impact the heart and soul of our communities."

> "It's been wonderful to partner with this community as we work to make this facility possible and offer the essential services people need."
>
> Justin Precourt, RN, DPN, President, UMass Memorial Medical Center

Turning Community Health Needs into Action

As part of a not-for-profit healthcare system, each hospital within UMass Memorial Health conducts a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years, tailored to its specific region. Developed with input from local stakeholders, residents, social service providers, advocates and community organizations, the CHNA documents key health-related needs and service gaps. Its results inform each hospital's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and three-year Community Benefits Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP), ensuring local strategies are grounded in documented community needs.

Michelle Sanford, Community Benefits Manager at Milford Regional Medical Center, explained, "A CHNA provides hospitals with their best opportunity to understand the health challenges facing the communities they serve. Its findings help guide community benefit programs and partnerships toward identified priorities, enabling hospitals to focus resources strategically and develop initiatives that improve health outcomes, advance health equity and enhance quality of life."

Because each hospital serves a distinct geographic area, follows different regulatory requirements and have unique partnerships, they are on varied reporting timelines. For 2025, Harrington Hospital completed its 2025 CHNA and 2025-2027 SIP, and HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, the Medical Center and Milford Regional completed their 2025-2027 SIPs.

Visit the Community Benefits page of www.umassmemorial.org to read more about each hospital's assessments and plans.

Expanding Community Engagement

UMass Memorial Health Community Benefits has long engaged in community coalitions and committees to advance shared community health priorities across food security, oral health, health equity, child health and regional planning. Through these partnerships, Community Benefits staff serve as active committee members, support collaborative planning and help secure funding to launch or strengthen special initiatives. In 2025, UMass Memorial, through its Community Health Equity Team, committed to enhancing active participation in food-related community task forces and coalitions, including joining the Make Hunger History Coalition, a statewide initiative to make Massachusetts the first state in the nation to end hunger.

Through these partnerships, UMass Memorial Health is working alongside community organizations to support local priorities, connect resources and strengthen ongoing efforts. Casey Burns, Executive Director of the Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester and Co-chair of the Center on Food Equity, described UMass Memorial Health's involvement as bringing clinical expertise, community health data, advocacy, leverage and a long-term commitment to collaborative problem-solving to its coalition work. "Just as importantly, they recognize that lasting change comes from working alongside community partners and residents rather than in isolation."

Coalition and Committees

Along with having relationships with Central Massachusetts health departments, chambers of commerce, schools and other city/town governance below is a partial list of the many community-based groups that UMass Memorial Community Benefits teams participate in:

- Center for Food Equity Steering Committee
- Central Mass Oral Health Initiative
- Central MA Regional Planning Commission's - Food Policy Council
- Central Mass SNAP Coalition
- Child Health Equity Summit
- CHNA 6 (Milford Area)
- Coalition for Healthy Greater Worcester
- Community Servings Synergy Group
- Health Equity Partnership of North Central Mass
- Healthcare for All
- Hudson Public Schools Health, Wellness and Safety Coalition
- Local Food Works Coalition – Growing Places
- Make Hunger History
- Marlborough Alliance for Prevention
- Milford Regional's Patient Family Advisory Council
- Nashoba Valley Health Planning Working Group
- North Central MA Rides TMA
- Regional Environmental Council
- United to Feed North Central Massachusetts Worcester Access to Grocery Stores Working Group
- Worcester Community Action Council
- Worcester Community Foundation DEI Committee
- Worcester Food Policy Council
- Worcester Working Together
- Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Program (Town of Hudson)

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

communityHELP
Health and Everyday Living Programs

CommunityHELP connects area residents and their healthcare providers to free and low-cost services for food, housing, transportation, healthcare, education, employment and legal resources. Built on the multilingual search platform, FindHelp.org.

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.

For more information, visit communityhelp.net.

Awards & Recognitions

UMass Memorial Hospitals Earn Prestigious Health Equity Certification

UMass Memorial Health has achieved a landmark milestone: all of our hospitals – Harrington Hospital, HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, Milford Regional Medical Center and the Medical Center, including the Marlborough Campus – earned the Join Commission's Excellent Health Outcomes for All certification. This advanced certification recognizes hospitals that demonstrate a strategic commitment to health equity and patient safety. It evaluates how acute care hospitals implement policies, processes and procedures to ensure every patient receives equitable, high-quality care, regardless of background, identity or circumstance.

This milestone reflects the continuous efforts of caregivers, leaders and community partners across the health system. It also supports our participation in the MassHealth Hospital Quality and Equity Incentive Program, which rewards hospitals for reducing health inequities and improving outcomes.

UMass Memorial Medical Center - Marlborough Campus

To enhance healthcare services and facilities at Marlborough Hospital, the hospital has moved onto UMass Memorial Medical Center's medical license through a corporate merger, which required approval from the Department of Public Health through the Determination of Need program.

This change strengthens the healthcare resources for Marlborough and the surrounding community. As a Medical Center campus, Marlborough will be better positioned to manage patient care, improve health outcomes, drive quality improvement initiatives, and build a more responsive, patient-centered healthcare environment. Under a single, coordinated clinical team, patients will gain greater access to community-based specialty care and specialty consults, cutting-edge technologies, and tertiary services available through the Medical Center – keeping more care local.

Newsweek Honors Two UMass Memorial Hospitals as Best-in-State

Newsweek recently named two UMass Memorial Health Hospitals – UMass Memorial Medical Center and Milford Regional Medical Center – to its Massachusetts list of America's Best-in- State Hospitals 2025. The rankings, which are applied in all states across the country, landed our two hospitals in the Massachusetts top 10.

Rankings were based on four criteria: hospital quality metrics, a nationwide online survey of medical professionals who rated hospitals on quality of care, patient experience data and how well a hospital implements patient-reported outcome measures.

The Medical Center also appeared for the seventh time on Newsweek's World's Best Hospitals list as one of the best medical institutions across 30 countries.

The rankings, developed by data-gathering platform Statista with a global board of medical experts, are based on hospital recommendations from peers, patient experience and hospital quality metrics.

Our System

- Largest healthcare 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

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 healthcare, education and resources to those most vulnerable in Central Massachusetts. Our partners include:

- 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

The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile visits the Groton Fall Festival.

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Page 3: (Elvira Guardiola) Robert Carlin Photography
Page 4, 6, 12: UMass Memorial Health - Milford Regional
Page 4: World Farmers
Page 11: Legendary Legacies
Page 13: UMass Memorial Health - Harrington Hospital
Page 13: UMass Memorial Health - HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital
Page 14: Milford Youth Center
Page 14: Recreation Worcester
Page 15: UMass Chan Medical School Office of Communications
Page 17: Rise Above Foundation

Caring for Central Massachusetts

UMass Memorial Health

UMass Memorial Health is the largest not-for-profit healthcare system in Central Massachusetts with more than 20,000 caregivers and more than 3,800 providers, many of whom are members of UMass Memorial Medical Group along with additional local providers. 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 – 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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