

Anchored in Our Community



UMass Memorial Health — committed to improving the environmental, financial and physical health of the people of central Massachusetts

JUNE 2021

◆ FROM THE DESK OF ERIC DICKSON, MD

President and CEO, UMass Memorial Health

At UMass Memorial Health, we just launched a new Anchor Mission Volunteer Program to encourage and reward our employees' volunteerism to support the community activities that align with our Anchor Mission. Why are we doing this?

- Volunteering can have a tremendous impact on the health of our communities.
- By supporting and encouraging volunteer effort, as an employer we are able to engage the largest workforce (14,000 employees) in central Massachusetts to make a measurable impact on things that affect our patients' health before they get to us and after they leave us.
- Research shows that volunteering improves mental health and helps people find purpose and meaning in their lives, so promoting volunteering is also a way to enhance the well-being of our employees.



Through this Volunteer Program, we offer opportunities at nonprofit organizations (researched, vetted and designated by our Anchor Mission Volunteer Committee) that address the social determinants of health — things like literacy, unemployment, physical environment, hunger and education — that can adversely affect the communities served by UMass Memorial Health entities.

This program is a win-win – our caregivers give freely of their time, energy and expertise, doing something they enjoy and get satisfaction from – and local agencies and nonprofits get the benefits of an army of 14,000 trained problem solvers to help address some of society's barriers to good health for our region.

This program will show that if our UMass Memorial Health caregivers can come together as a team to address the social determinants of health, we can create a meaningful impact on the health, quality of life, and ultimately the life expectancy of the people we serve. This is what our Anchor Mission strategy is all about. We hope the new Anchor Mission Volunteer Program gives our already dedicated caregivers a clear path to engaging in the kind of volunteering that can truly help those who need us most. ◆

ANCHOR MISSION STEERING COMMITTEE

◆ CO-CHAIRS

Douglas Brown

President, UMass Memorial Community Hospitals Inc. and Chief Administrative Officer, UMass Memorial Health

Cheryl Lapriore

Senior Vice President, Chief of Staff, Chief Marketing Officer, and President, UMass Memorial Health Ventures, UMass Memorial Health

◆ COMMUNITY BENEFITS DEPARTMENT

Monica Lowell

Vice President, Office of Community Health Transformation/Community Benefits, UMass Memorial Health

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

To provide feedback or request more information, email communications@umassmemorial.org.



UMass Memorial Health

THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF HEALING

◆ VOLUNTEER MONTH PROVIDES OCCASION TO PROMOTE VOLUNTEERING INCENTIVES TO EMPLOYEES



As one of the four pillars of our Anchor Mission, volunteering is a crucial component of improving the overall social and economic health of our community members beyond our hospitals' walls.

A goal of the Volunteering Pillar is to build a team of at least 500 UMass Memorial Health employee volunteers. This spring, the Anchor Mission Volunteer Committee created a variety of incentives to encourage employees to volunteer. These incentives were introduced throughout the month of April, which is nationally recognized as Volunteer Month, to help get closer to the goal of 500 volunteers.

One initiative was the donation matching program. When volunteers serve eight hours at an Anchor Mission-approved program, UMass Memorial Health will match that generosity by donating \$100 to the Emergency Assistance Support for Employees (EASE) Fund. The EASE Fund provides grants up to \$1,500 to eligible employees to lessen the financial burden caused by an unplanned emergency.



UMass Memorial Health caregivers Kathryn Doan, Crystal Beaumont, Benjavan Upatising and HongLoan Huynh helped install a playground during the Working for Worcester volunteer event on April 24.

Another was the opportunity for volunteers to earn points in the UMass Memorial Health wellness program, myHealth Matters. Through the employee portal, employees sign up for wellness programs and other challenges that help them earn points toward health reimbursement funds and gift cards. Now, employees will earn 250 myHealth Matters points for every four hours of volunteering.

The Volunteer Committee also used the motivation of peer recognition to encourage volunteers. Working with Human Resources, they added a volunteer recognition award to UMass Central, an online employee recognition portal. Employees who log their time volunteering will automatically receive an award that will appear in the social stream on the site, allowing volunteers' colleagues to see their great work.

Additionally, each Friday in April, one volunteer was selected in a drawing to win an Amazon gift card – which provided the Volunteer Committee with four additional opportunities to thank volunteers and acknowledge their service with a token of appreciation.

These opportunities were promoted throughout the organization in April. Each week, an article featuring one of the incentives was published on the Hub, UMass Memorial Health's employee intranet site. Links to those articles were also shared via email throughout the organization.

Kate Behan, Senior Director, Clinical Affiliations and Anchor Mission Strategy at UMass Memorial Health, and co-chair of the Anchor Mission Volunteer Committee, said that creating the incentives was twofold. First, the committee wanted to encourage caregivers who had not volunteered before to get started, but second, Behan explained, was to ensure that the many caregivers who already volunteer were recognized. "We wanted to start rewarding and celebrating the activities we know are already happening," Behan said. ◆

◆ UMass Memorial Health MAKES SIGNIFICANT PLEDGE TO PURCHASE LOCALLY



UMass Memorial Health is joining the nation's leading health care organizations in a pledge to use their purchasing power to promote equity, encourage sustainability and build wealth in their local communities. The initiative began in May and will continue for five years.

As an early-adopter member of the Healthcare Anchor Network (HAN) and its "impact purchasing commitment," UMass Memorial Health underscores its unique position to "lead in building healthy, equitable, and climate-resilient local economies, with a moral and economic imperative to do so.

“We’re now taking those spending opportunities that will move us back toward local businesses and contractors as we respond to inequities that organizations are discovering to be systemic.”

...The result is prosperity and health for all, especially those affected by long-standing disinvestment and discrimination.”

“By taking the HAN pledge, we join other hospital systems concerned about these issues to help each other and bend the curve in purchasing,” said Associate General Counsel Frank Smith, vice president of Strategic Business Transactions.

UMass Memorial Health has committed to increasing its general purchasing spend with minority- and women-owned businesses and locally owned businesses, at the service area or target neighborhood level. This level is defined by UMass Memorial Health as economically disadvantaged and a focus of its Anchor Mission efforts. The health system will also increase spending with cooperatively owned and employee-owned businesses, and contract with those vendors making impact hires and paying a living local wage.

“We’ve spent the last few years giving our departments a comprehensive view of their purchasing in our effort to go local,” said Ed Bonetti, vice president of Supply Chain Operations. “Although complicated and challenging at times, this review has helped us develop a uniform, impactful approach to fulfilling our pledge.”

As Bonetti and his team painstakingly identified the organization’s spending patterns, he said they became aware of UMass Memorial Health’s gradual move toward larger, national firms in order to consolidate and standardize purchasing. “We’re now taking those spending opportunities that will move us back toward local businesses and contractors as we respond to inequities that organizations are discovering to be systemic.”

Another component of the pledge is known as environmentally preferable purchasing, and UMass Memorial Health is dedicated to reducing the waste associated with the purchase, use and disposal of goods, as well as the purchase of goods containing chemicals of concern. According to Bonetti, this “sustainable procurement” includes increased recycling and fleet management to reduce the organization’s carbon footprint.

As the HAN initiative unfolds, Bonetti and his team continue to educate department professional and clinical staff in what he calls Supply Chain 101. “This is really rewarding in supply chain, when clinicians, for example, learn about what they can change to meet these goals,” Ed explained. “Of course, they are focused on providing quality and safe patient care, but when we talk about Anchor Mission, they make time to understand. There is a common enthusiasm.” ◆

◆ **UMASS MEMORIAL HEALTH PILOTS A PRESCRIPTIVE PANTRY**

Nutritious food is a proven prescription for long-term health. In September, UMass Memorial Health will pilot a medically tailored food pantry in hopes of establishing a scalable program to eventually reach all the communities it serves.

“Using the concept of ‘food as medicine’ is a key feature of the pantry, according to the Anchor Mission team developing the pilot. “Patients will not only receive a personalized prescription for the healthy food they need, but also education to self-manage their chronic disease,” explained Director of Clinical Nutrition Katherine Saunders, RD, LDN, CNSC.

The six-month pilot will aim to enroll approximately 150 oncology patients under the care of Jonathan Gerber, MD, chief of hematology-oncology, and team. “They are vulnerable to malnutrition because of their illness and effects of treatment,” said Saunders.

A food pantry also responds to concerns dietitians, social workers, nurses and physicians have when caring for patients without the financial means to purchase healthier foods. “Patients will say they want to provide their families better food choices, but money is short,” said Clinical Dietitian Jose Yarzebski, MS, RDN. “This program will give us a resource to offer them.”

This pilot addresses food insecurity, which is a social determinant of health. The pilot will make screening for food insecurity a part of standard workflow and care for patients. If found to be food insecure, a patient will receive a prescription to the food pantry that will provide access to medically appropriate foods and enough food to last a family of four for a week.

The pilot is modeled after the 20-year-old Boston Medical Center (BMC) Preventive Food Pantry, which serves individuals and families with nutrition-related illness and under-nutrition and has grown to include a rooftop garden, kitchen and grocery tours.

“The BMC pantry is our North Star,” said Yarzebski. He and Saunders are working with UMass Memorial Health Vice President of Facilities and Support Services Kathleen Hylka to establish the pilot’s physical space at the Medical Center’s Hahnemann Campus, with its available kitchen and cafeteria and potential garden area. ◆



◆ COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROVIDE COVID-19 VACCINES TO A COMMUNITY IN NEED – UMass Memorial Health – Marlborough Hospital partnered with the City of Marlborough Board of Health and the UMass Memorial Mobile Vaccine team to conduct a COVID-19 vaccine clinic at the Bethel Presbyterian Church in Marlborough on April 23. This church is closely linked to the local Brazilian community. First doses were administered to 157 members of the community and their second doses will be administered on May 21. This was an effort to vaccinate residents of the local community, particularly those who may have had trouble accessing other vaccine sites.



“FRONT DOOR” EXPANDS ACCESS TO CARE, ELIMINATES BARRIERS

– A tangible result of UMass Memorial – Community Healthlink’s designation as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration is the creation of a new Access Division, led by Vice President Shelly Yarnie. The Access Division allows Community Healthlink to deploy its resources in a meaningful way to meet the increasing demands for behavioral health services, and is responsible for the “front door,” which is the first line of engagement for people accessing services. The Access Division is responsible for connecting individuals with urgent requests to services within twenty-four hours, and individuals with routine requests within ten business days. People can access the “front door” by phone call, email or text, or by walking into one of Community Healthlink’s clinics. “In order to improve health equity, we need to eliminate barriers and expand access to care,” says Shelly. “Our Access Division is making that happen. I’m excited about where we’re heading.”



MOBILE COVID-19 VACCINE CLINIC HAS MAJOR IMPACT ON IMPROVING HEALTH EQUITY – In February, UMass Memorial Medical Center launched its Mobile COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic to improve access for underserved and isolated populations. The program utilized the knowledge gained through UMass Memorial Health’s COVID-19 “Feet on the Street” Education and Outreach and “Stop the Spread” COVID-19 testing site at Mercantile Center, the only free testing site in the area. The Medical Center developed the mobile outreach program to address barriers such as transportation, mobility, language and technology access. The vaccination program serves specific neighborhoods throughout the community working in partnership with employers, community organizations, houses of worship, public housing complexes, food pantries and other venues where populations of color have connectivity. Between February and April, under the leadership of Provider Champion John Broach, MD, the mobile program distributed a total of 1,975 vaccines, more than half to people of color. Most recently the program has partnered with employers to distribute vaccinations onsite at workplaces.



BRINGING COVID-19 VACCINES TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN WORCESTER COUNTY

– The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital is working in partnership with several towns in north central Massachusetts to get COVID-19 vaccines to individuals who are unable to travel to mass vaccination sites. On February 17, the hospital partnered with the Clinton Senior Center as well as fire and EMS personnel in Clinton to operate a mobile vaccine site at the Clinton town hall. Eighty vaccines were administered that day, including eleven doses given to homebound individuals. On April 21, the hospital partnered with the Spanish American Center to administer close to 200 vaccinations to Leominster residents who lack access to transportation. The individuals who received their COVID-19 vaccines at these sites were extremely grateful for this opportunity.



◆ UMASS MEMORIAL HEALTH

UMass Memorial Health is the largest not-for-profit health care system in Central Massachusetts with more than 14,000 employees and 1,700 physicians, many of whom are members of UMass Memorial Medical Group. We are the clinical partner of the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Our comprehensive system includes UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, UMass Memorial Health – Marlborough Hospital, UMass Memorial Medical Center 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, 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.

To find a physician in your community, call 855-UMASS-MD (855-862-7763). ◆