

Anchored in Our Community



UMass Memorial Health Care – committed to improving the environmental, financial and physical health of the people of Central Massachusetts.

March 2020

◆ FROM THE DESK OF ERIC DICKSON, MD

President and CEO, UMass Memorial Health Care



One of the four pillars of our Anchor Mission work is investing in local projects to improve the welfare of our community. From addressing homelessness to food insecurity, to unemployment and affordable housing, these investments are truly making a difference in the lives of the people we serve. In this issue of *Anchored in Our Community*, you'll read about Creative Hub Worcester and NewVue Communities, two examples of the four initiatives we're currently investing in that are helping people in our community who are most in need. Additional investments

include Worcester Common Ground, which you'll read about in a future issue, and the Finally Home Loan Fund.

I'd like to highlight the Finally Home Loan Fund since it was the very first project we helped finance last year and is now coming to fruition. The project was created by a citywide task force in Worcester to have a meaningful impact on chronic homelessness.

Together with several community partners, UMass Memorial Health Care made a significant investment to help incentivize local developers to build affordable housing for those who need help getting back on their feet again after spending a year or more without continuous housing. In addition to the community partners, six local banks pooled together funding to secure loans for the developers at lower rates.

The developers have been pursuing some innovative ideas, such as building modular units and the now trendy "tiny houses" to get the units built quickly and at the lowest cost possible for individuals who simply need a helping hand but can't afford regular housing.

I'm pleased to share that with our commitment to this project, the task force now is moving forward with the goal of completing the first housing units by this summer. This project is a great example of how our Anchor Mission strategy works. We provide outstanding medical care at all of our facilities, but if the people we serve don't have their basic needs met, such as simply having a roof over their heads, then the odds they can stay healthy and out of the hospital are significantly lower. These community investments we make help to prevent illness and are a different kind of healing. ◆

ANCHOR MISSION STEERING COMMITTEE

◆ CO-CHAIRS

Douglas Brown

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

Cheryl Lapriore

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

◆ COMMUNITY BENEFITS DEPARTMENT

Monica Lowell

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QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

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



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◆ OUT OF THE ASHES, NEW HOMES IN FITCHBURG

It seems fitting that an old, vacant building in Fitchburg, an eyesore scarred by fire, will undergo a transformation into affordable housing for artists inspired to create beauty in unlimited forms.



With an infusion of \$750,000 from UMass Memorial Health Care, representing front-end capital to spur construction and additional funding from state and private sources, the BF Brown complex of two historic schools and a former carriage house will be remade as part of the future Fitchburg Arts Community. NewVue Communities, a regional community development corporation, and Fitchburg Art Museum will establish the enclave, featuring apartments and amenities for artists with a range of incomes.

Marc Dohan, executive director of NewVue, calls the BF Brown project a “giant jigsaw puzzle” that UMass Memorial is helping piece together. “We receive a real boost when a local hospital invests in such a project. Others begin to believe it can be done,” Marc said.

Rather than demolition, NewVue’s specialty is renovating vacant yet structurally sound properties. “UMass Memorial’s investment makes people appreciate Fitchburg’s existing assets,” Marc explained. “This support will inspire filling up more of our vacant buildings, bringing vibrancy and vitality to our city.”

The funding is part of a \$4 million investment commitment UMass Memorial made to fulfill its Anchor Mission, according to Christopher Hendry, senior director of external affairs at UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital. “The Fitchburg investment is the largest the system has made to date and our community hospital’s first foray into changing lives in this way,” said Chris. “We trust NewVue with its great track record and focus on unoccupied buildings, so people are not displaced — one of the downsides of gentrification.”



Artist’s rendering of Fitchburg Art’s Community provided courtesy of ICON Architecture.

Housing and health are connected; affordable, modernized housing improves health among current residents by providing safer neighborhoods and reducing asthma and lead poisoning, to name just a few benefits. And this first NewVue-UMass Memorial partnership is destined to promote future healthful collaborations through the nutrition, smoking cessation and wellness programs HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital offers. ◆

◆ THE HEALING ARTS IN MAIN SOUTH



Artist’s renderings of Creative Hub Worcester provided courtesy of Studio Draw.

Back in the day, the Boys Club at 2 Ionic Avenue in Worcester was buzzing with activity, offering energizing programs for body and mind. Since then, the abandoned building — and its surrounding Main South neighborhood — have faced harsher realities. Almost a quarter of individuals residing in Main South live below the poverty line, and more than 50% of households earn less than \$25,000 annually. The effects of these socioeconomic factors on residents’ mental and physical health are significant, in some cases impacting life expectancy.

But for Creative Hub Worcester (CHW) and its partners, including UMass Memorial Health Care, there's nothing that the arts can't help heal. With a \$500,000 Anchor Mission investment from the health care system to leverage additional investment, as well as support from Arts & Business Council, Inc., Greater Boston and others, the old club will become Creative Hub Community Arts Center and once again be a place to create, learn and interact.

CHW founders Laura Marotta and Stacy Lord anticipate that programming will engage an estimated 1,500 people per week. "We'll have space for artist studios, classes, childcare and events, providing access for all local residents to healing arts experiences," Laura said.

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As experienced art educators, Laura and Stacy know firsthand that art can transform lives, including those who have faced adversity or trauma as children. Such distress can lead to chronic disease and mental illness later, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ACE Study, Laura explained. Research continues to show that art aids in repairing these ailments. "An Arts Education Partnership study shows programs that build self-confidence, positive interactions, strong community, civic pride, and involvement in enriching extracurricular activities lead to better grades and attendance, and higher rates of college acceptance and job readiness."

CHW envisions the Creative Hub Community Arts Center's positive impact in Main South. "Other long-standing centers in Providence, Rhode Island, and Alexandria, Virginia, are seen as pillars of cultural and creative expression and representing the true impact of the arts," said Laura. ◆

References:

Preparing Students for the Next America: Benefits of an Arts Education: <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America.pdf>

Centers for Disease Control ACE Study: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fviolenceprevention%2Facestudy%2Findex.html

◆ HOPE COALITION IMPROVES YOUTH ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Healthy Options for Prevention and Education (HOPE) Coalition, now in its 18th year, is a Worcester-based, youth-adult partnership created to reduce youth violence and substance use (alcohol, tobacco and drug), and promote adolescent mental health and a youth voice. Recognizing a critical need for accessible mental health support for youth, the HOPE Coalition also established this as a separate program in 2002 called the HOPE Youth Mental Health Model.

Developed by peer leaders, the goal of this model is to reduce the stigma and barriers associated with mental health services, as identified by youth. Through the incorporation of mental health counselors into the staff at the Boys & Girls Club, Worcester Youth Center, Girls Inc., Friendly House and YouthConnect, youth have improved access to mental health support, and counselors are able to connect with young people where they are.

"One of the sites implementing the HOPE Model conducted a study using the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) questionnaire, and found that 70% of their kids have three or more ACEs," shared Laurie Ross, PhD, professor at Clark University and member of the UMass Memorial Medical Center Community Benefits Department. She added, "Another site reported having seen an increase in girls dealing with anxiety and depression and not having the coping mechanisms to handle their depression. Putting mental health support in the places young people hang out increases their access to this vital service that they so clearly need."

In 2019, the HOPE Youth Mental Health Model served 850 youth through one-on-one counseling, therapeutic groups and crisis intervention delivered by You Inc. Since inception, the model has served nearly 8,000 youth. UMass Memorial Health Care provides financial support for this program in partnership with the United Way of Central MA and the Fallon/OrNda Community Health Fund from Greater Worcester Community Foundation.



◆ COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS

CAREGIVERS SUPPORTING CAREGIVERS AT MARLBOROUGH HOSPITAL FOOD PANTRY

– One of the keys to good health is access to nutritious food. Recognizing that some of their own caregivers are sometimes unable to provide healthy meals for their families, UMass Memorial – Marlborough Hospital is opening a food pantry. “There are times when a caregiver



may face unexpected expenses – a family member loses a job or becomes seriously ill, or they need to care for a grandchild

or aging parent,” said Ellen Carlucci, vice president, Development, Marketing and Communications Department, Marlborough Hospital. “We firmly believe that no one who works at Marlborough Hospital should have to struggle to eat or to feed their family.” To address this need, the food pantry will be stocked with a variety of food and items such as laundry detergent, paper products, toiletries and other items requested by staff. The pantry is being organized and run by hospital caregivers or “food pantry champions” who truly want to help other hospital caregivers at a time of need, and are volunteering their time to stock shelves, collect and discreetly distribute food to those in need.

CENTRAL MASS ORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE – To ensure preventive dental services are available to at-risk children in 40 Worcester public and charter schools, the UMass Memorial



Medical Center Community Benefits Department, in collaboration with six local oral health providers, assists in offering services to 17 schools as part of the Central Mass Oral Health Initiative. “The need for oral health care is always there, and the providers work together to see that students who need the services can obtain them at their schools,” explained Ellen Sachs Leicher, project manager of the Central Mass Oral Health Initiative. “It’s the willingness of the providers to collaborate and learn from each other, and the commitment of the school administration, particularly the

School Nursing and Health Services Department, that continues to strengthen the program and serve the students in need.” As the result of the initiative, 2,184 students were screened, 2,290 students received at least one fluoride treatment, and 1,241 children received sealants.

DAY OF CARING ALLOWS CAREGIVERS TO GIVE BACK

– The United Way of Central Massachusetts “Day of Caring” brings hundreds of volunteers together to share their valuable time while addressing community needs. Our very own UMass Memorial Health Care caregivers, who have been participating in the event for the past 17 years, deployed multiple teams to three separate events across the city, including painting a family recreational room and building a swingset at the You Inc. Teen Parent Program, and cleaning out a storage area at the Worcester East Middle School. Thanks to all of our team members for taking the time to get involved and make these wonderful improvements in our community!



Pictured, staff from the UMass Memorial Office of Capital Planning build a beautiful swingset at You Inc.

ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS THROUGH ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

– Every three years, each hospital in the UMass Memorial Health Care system undergoes a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHA) to determine the most prevalent areas of need within the communities we serve. Based on the findings of the CHA, a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is then developed in cooperation with local health departments and community partners to ensure each hospital’s plan is aligned with the needs identified in each hospital’s regional area. UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital completed their CHIP in 2018, and UMass Memorial Medical Center and UMass Memorial – Marlborough Hospital are currently working to update their CHIPs. Anyone interested in joining a CHIP workgroup for the Medical Center is invited to contact Monica Lowell, vice president, Office of Community Health Transformation/Community Benefits, at 508-334-7640.



The Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester convenes the CHIP working groups with the Worcester Division of Public Health. Pictured is the Coalition’s annual meeting attended by more than 200 members.

◆ UMASS MEMORIAL HEALTH CARE

UMass Memorial Health Care 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. Our member hospitals and entities include UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, UMass Memorial – Marlborough Hospital, UMass Memorial Medical Center and UMass Memorial – Community Healthlink, our behavioral health agency. With our teaching and research partner, the University of Massachusetts Medical School, our extensive primary care network and our cancer, diabetes, heart and vascular, orthopedic and surgery programs, UMass Memorial delivers safe, high-quality and compassionate care. Visit www.umassmemorialhealthcare.org.

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