

Anchored in Our Community



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

December 2020

◆ FROM THE DESK OF ERIC DICKSON, MD

President and CEO, UMass Memorial Health Care



As I mentioned in my last message for the Anchor Mission newsletter, we at UMass Memorial Health Care continue to address the racial disparities that affect the health and welfare of the communities we serve. I'm proud of the work we're doing in this area that speaks to our Anchor Mission. Here are a few updates:

Community Testing

UMass Memorial Health Care has launched a comprehensive COVID-19 testing program that includes processing 5,000 tests per day at our hospital and outpatient locations. In addition, we've participated in the state's "Stop the Spread" testing campaign, with a series of one-day "pop-up" testing sites in Worcester neighborhoods-in-need and at UMass Memorial – Marlborough Hospital. By far, we're conducting more community testing than any other health care organization in the state.

First-Ever Health Equity Open Forum

We hosted our first-ever, community Health Equity Open Forum as a Facebook Live event on Thursday, October 29. I was joined by a distinguished panel of community members and elected officials to talk about racial disparities and injustice in health care, in our region and beyond. If you missed it, you can log on to the UMass Memorial Health Care Facebook page to view the video.

Taking Action to Address Systemic Racism

We can't stand silent while racism and racial disparities in our country and in our communities persist. Meaningful action can only come from confronting the problem. I'm encouraged by the national dialogue and the meaningful action steps we're taking in our region.

Mahatma Gandhi said: "Be the change you wish to see in the world." While ending racism seems like an impossible dream, just think of what we can accomplish by taking actions – big or small – that we develop together. For our community here in Central Massachusetts, I'm confident that we can be that change we want to see in our part of the world. ◆

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

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

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

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



UMassMemorial
Health Care

◆ VOLUNTEERING PILLAR ANSWERS CAREGIVER QUEST FOR INVOLVEMENT

When UMass Memorial Health Care committed to becoming an Anchor Mission Institution, the system agreed to adopt the initiative's three pillars: investing, purchasing and hiring. However, as word began to spread about this new promise to our communities, interest quickly grew among system caregivers and a desire for involvement soon became evident. In response to this new-found excitement, leadership decided to add a fourth pillar to its Anchor Mission work in the form of volunteering.



“As employees started learning about the Anchor Mission and its goals, we heard from so many people asking how they could get involved,” said Kate Behan, Director of Clinical Affiliations, and Investment and Volunteering committees Co-Chair. “Because things like investing, hiring and sourcing

didn't lend themselves to mass involvement, the steering committee agreed that adding volunteering as a fourth pillar would be a great way for employees to get involved and contribute to the mission of the organization.”

Kate and Becky Martella, Operations Project Manager, Medical Group, and Volunteering Committee Co-Chair,

quickly set to work recruiting committee members from across the system. Together, the team wasted no time in identifying a framework for the pillar and an infrastructure to create a database of volunteers and activities.

Just as the program launched, the state began seeing a surge in COVID-19 cases putting a wrinkle in their plans. “Unfortunately, we had to cancel our first event which was to volunteer at Earth Day clean ups throughout the City of Worcester,” said Becky. “And although we were sidelined for a few months during the height of the pandemic in Massachusetts, we're now picking up where we left off.” In September, the team linked arms with UMass Memorial's Community Benefits Department to recruit volunteers for the Commonwealth's Stop the Spread events, which are being held in some of the highest-risk neighborhoods throughout the city.

Kate finished, “We so proud to see our caregivers signing up to help out at these extremely important events and we look forward to adding similar meaningful events moving forward.”



UMass Memorial employees interested in joining as an Anchor Mission volunteer are invited to go to www.umassmemorialhub.org/departments/anchor-mission to register. Volunteers will be notified of upcoming events and will receive a free t-shirt at their first engagement! ◆

◆ LAW AND MEDICINE PROVE NATURAL PARTNERS IN HEALTH

When primary care providers at four UMass Memorial clinics in Worcester examine their pediatric and adult patients, they rely on their medical training to diagnose and treat illness. But they also tap into legal training they've received to help their patients remain well. How does learning something about the law improve health? The Community Legal Aid Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) can count the ways.

Last year, lawyers from the MLP trained 125 UMass Memorial Medical Center caregivers to screen patients for social factors that could be impairing their health. As a result of their referrals, 174 patients and their families gained access to free legal services focused on stable, safe and affordable housing, education, public benefits, health coverage, and guardianships.

“Even the best clinical team can't address all the issues facing their patients. There's a role to play for lawyers as their partners,” said Kate Eshghi, UMass Memorial Senior Vice President and General Counsel, who helped to establish the Medical-Legal Partnership in Worcester alongside colleague, Monica Lowell, Vice President, Office of Community Health Transformation/Community Benefits, UMass Memorial Health Care. For this work, Kate was named a 2020 In-House Lawyer of the Year by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly.

“Our private volunteer lawyers from the local community are busy, but this is incredibly professionally and personally rewarding for them,” Kate said. “Most impactful for me is the



Kate Eshghi, pictured third from right, celebrates with her colleagues at the Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly award ceremony.

engagement of our clinical staff, who recognize how social determinants of health affect their patients, and that health is improved when they're addressed.

"We are now starting the second year of a pilot within our Medicare ACO to see if our Medical-Legal Partnership model can reduce costs and improve outcomes and caregiver-patient experience," Kate said, adding, "My dream is to expand the partnership beyond our Medical Center clinics and include our community hospitals and Community Healthlink, which serve so many of our patients and clients who face barriers to good health which legal advocacy can address."

Reflecting on the Lawyers Weekly recognition, Cheryl Lapriore, Senior Vice President, Chief of Staff, Chief Marketing Officer, and President, UMass Memorial Health Ventures, UMass Memorial Health Care, noted, "Every health care system should have a champion like Kate! Not only does she clearly see the how the law can improve health, but she makes that connection real for our system by personally leading this effort within our organization in every way possible." ♦

◆ WORCESTER COMMON GROUND INVESTMENT TO HAVE POSITIVE IMPACT ON PIEDMONT NEIGHBORHOOD

When Yvette Dyson reached out to UMass Memorial Health Care with an investment proposal earlier this year, the health care system's Anchor Mission Investment Committee couldn't say yes fast enough! You see, Yvette is the Executive Director of Worcester Common Ground, Inc. (WCG), a group whose mission it is to promote and develop permanent and sustainable improvement in the neighborhoods of Central Worcester through affordable housing, community activism and economic development — a mission that is in perfect alignment with UMass Memorial's Anchor Mission.



"Affordable housing contributes to significant economic impacts, including increases in local purchasing power, job creation and new tax revenues," wrote Yvette in her proposal. "Affordable housing initiatives often impact communities in other ways, too. They can lead to more green space, a stabilization of housing values and spur other economic investments in a neighborhood. They can inject new life and energy into an area and these ripple effects can all have a positive financial impact in a community."

These points echo the philosophy of the Anchor Mission, making Yvette's proposal a no-brainer for the Investment Committee, which quickly agreed to a \$400,000 investment in acquisition funding for WCG. This funding will allow the group to further its work in the Piedmont Neighborhood by providing immediate access to capital so they can make bids on property and compete on offers in that neighborhood.

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The first project underway, thanks in part to UMass Memorial's investment, is the purchase and new construction of a two-family home located at 33 Merrick Street in the Piedmont neighborhood of Worcester. "We're hoping to model our development of the lot after the success we have had with 20 and 24 Merrick St., both first-time homeownerships developed in a unique partnership we created with St. Gobain and YouthBuild Worcester, a division of Training Resources of America" explained Yvette. The duplex, complete with two three-bedroom units, will be sold to one or two first-time homeowners (potentially a UMass Memorial Community Healthlink employee) whose family/families are at or below 80% American Median Income. Upon completion, the home will be added to the WCG Community Land Trust Ground Lease model which currently consists of 27 affordable homes.

"We're so proud to be part of this project," said Bob Feldmann, Sr. Vice President, Finance, Corporate Controller, UMass Memorial Health Care. "This is what the Anchor Mission is all about. Partnering with other similar-minded organizations to make our community healthier with affordable housing like this initiative." ♦



The lot at 33 Merrick St. will be developed into a duplex that will be sold to one or two first-time home owners.

◆ COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS

HEALTHALLIANCE-CLINTON HOSPITAL TO PROVIDE NEARLY \$500,000 IN COMMUNITY GRANTS – UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital recently distributed more than \$55,000 to local nonprofits as part of phase 1 of its determination of needs (DoN) funding attached to the completion of the new Emergency Department on the Leominster Campus. The hospital will be distributing \$475,000 annually through 2024 to local nonprofits via grants that tie their programming and outcomes to the

DETERMINATION OF NEEDS (DoN) RFP FUNDING LEVEL 1 - AWARDS

Congratulations to the 19 organizations who have received a collective \$56,000 in funding for their initiatives!

AIDS Project Worcester
Bigelow Free Public Library
Clear Path for Veterans
Clinton Adult Learning Center
Clinton Early Childhood Resource Center
Fitchburg Public Library
Friends of Sterling Seniors
Gimm's Helping Hand
Growing Places
MOC
Perkins School
Restoration Recovery Center
Shine Initiative
Shirley Arts!
Simply Grounded Yoga/Pilates
Spanish American Center
The Salvation Army
United Hmong of Massachusetts
WHEAT

The initiatives funded the five priority areas identified in the UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital 2018 Community Health Needs Assessment:

Organization	Amount	Date

UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital

2018 Community Health Needs Assessment. Phase 2 and phase 3 funding, an additional \$415,000, is scheduled for distribution by December 31, 2020. “We are excited to provide these grants to our community,” commented Steve Roach, Interim President of HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital. “By pushing these funds out to organizations that have already identified projects and programs aligned with our Community Health Needs Assessment, we believe we can make a lasting impact in North Central Massachusetts and ultimately invest in healthier communities.”

HOME VISITS REIMAGINED IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

– Since the introduction of COVID-19 into our communities, a day at the office looks a bit different for Magda Rodriguez, UMass Memorial Medical Center Community Health Worker (CHW) and Outreach Liaison. While asthma management remains a critical need, Magda can no longer make her usual house calls and instead had to identify other ways to get families the support they need. “I call, text and often schedule live video conferences with parents instead of the typical home visits,” explained Magda. “Working through video conferencing hasn’t always been easy, and it is limiting, but it has been effective during these unusual times.” In addition to finding new ways to engage with families, Magda also uncovered new burdens as a result of COVID-19, including difficulty providing meals with children home from school and fear of going to the hospital for medical care.

To address these concerns, Magda helped families register for food assistance



and educated families about virtual medicine so they could continue receiving timely medical care. Being directly connected to families allowed Magda and other UMass Memorial CHWs to link families to critical resources such as childcare, unemployment assistance, legal assistance, the Worcester Family Resource Center, and education and testing sites.

COMMUNITYHELP DEBUTS NEW PROMOTIONAL VIDEO – At their fall retreat, the CommunityHELP Working Committee premiered an informational video showcasing the platform’s resources and available tools designed to support the health of the community. CommunityHELP is a comprehensive, online resource connecting residents in MetroWest and Central Massachusetts with assistance to access medical care, food job training, addiction programs, and other key services. The information on the website is continuously updated and available in 104 languages. “During these challenging times of the pandemic, people need help,” explained Mattie Castiel, MD, Commissioner, Worcester Health and Human Services, in the video. “People need to figure out a place to get access to health care, to housing, to transportation, access to food. CommunityHELP is the place to help you do that.”

CommunityHELP is the result of a partnership between UMass Memorial Health Care and Reliant Medical Group. To learn more, visit www.communityhelp.net. Or view the video in English: <https://bit.ly/CommunityHelpEnglish>, Spanish: <https://bit.ly/CommunityHelpSpanish>, or Portuguese: <https://bit.ly/CommunityHelpPortuguese>.



◆ 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). ◆