2013
Community Benefit Report
Imagine What We Can Do... Together
MISSION
Health
Imagine What We Can Do... Together

Community benefit is a term used in health care to describe a variety of activities that help people, particularly those with limited or no financial resources. At Mission Health, we believe that community benefit is more than just a term. It is a way of life that began with our founding more than a century ago by the determined, some would say stubborn, Ladies of the Flower Mission.

All not-for-profit health care organizations, like Mission Health, are required to report the total cost of providing financial assistance to uninsured and underinsured patients. That's community benefit. We are also required to report how much we spent subsidizing care for Medicare and Medicaid patients and those clinical services that don't pay for themselves, like pediatrics and psychiatric care. That's community benefit, too.

Beyond the hospitals’ walls, community benefit takes many forms – research, like the work that’s being done by the Fullerton Genetics Center; medical education like AB Tech’s nursing program or the Asheville campus of UNC’s Medical School. It also includes programs and initiatives with community-based not-for-profit partners that share Mission’s vision of good health for all who call western North Carolina home. In 2013, the sum of all these activities – charity care, unreimbursed care, medical education and research – totaled an extraordinary $143.6 million. Of that, $1.2 million was invested in 23 grants to 20 community partners.

This report provides the facts and figures. It also tells the stories of individuals and organizations that are working with Mission to improve the health and well-being of our region. These are stories of vision, imagination and teamwork.

We hope the 2013 Community Benefit Report will leave you asking the question we ask ourselves every day. Imagine what more we can do...together?

Anna "Candy" Shivers, Chair, Community Benefit Committee
Mission Health Board Member, 2004-2013
Mission Foundation Board Member, 1999-2011
Working Together to Achieve Better Health

The Affordable Care Act introduced new national community benefit reporting requirements for all hospitals, requirements that only enhance Mission’s processes for community benefit assessment and reporting. These new requirements involve taking a clear-eyed, objective look at the state of health where we live and work, not every five years, as was previously done, but every three years.

In western North Carolina, hospitals and health departments work together to conduct these studies, using a standard methodology. The resulting data reveal how healthy or unhealthy we are. Hospitals and health departments then use this information to prioritize the health needs of each county. (To see the results of health assessments for Buncombe and Madison County go to buncombecounty.org/governing/depts/health/Health_Reports.aspx and madisoncountypublichealthnow.com/home/assessment/).

By using a standard survey tool, it is possible to compare western North Carolina’s data with that of other counties, regions, states and the nation. The good news is that within North Carolina, our region ranks well. The bad news is that North Carolina is in the bottom quartile of the nation. Simply put, we are the best of the worst, and that’s not good enough.

What are we doing about it? Working together with WNC Healthy Impact.
WNC Healthy Impact Planning Process

1. Identify the greatest needs
2. Award grants and build and strengthen programs
3. Learn and refine
4. Evaluate effectiveness
WNC Healthy Impact

Health care providers throughout western North Carolina are taking a collaborative approach that engages all hospitals and county health departments in WNC Healthy Impact. Considered by many to be a model for other communities and states, WNC Healthy Impact ensures that there is coordinated, integrated process for gathering, interpreting, sharing and reporting health data. The goal for hospitals and health departments is the same: to develop coordinated solutions to our region's biggest health care problems: access to care, including mental health care; healthy living; obesity; and substance abuse.

As western North Carolina's tertiary care center, Mission Hospital is home to the region's comprehensive cancer, trauma, stroke and heart programs. It is where the sickest children and the tiniest babies are cared for and where the most seriously ill psychiatric patients, from the very young to the very old, receive inpatient care.

WHAT IS WNC HEALTHY IMPACT?

WNC Healthy Impact is a partnership between hospitals and health departments in western North Carolina working toward a vision of improved community health. We are working together locally and regionally on a community health improvement process to assess health needs, develop collaborative plans, take coordinated action, and evaluate progress and impact. This innovative regional effort is supported by the hospitals and health departments in the sixteen western counties of North Carolina and coordinated by WNC Health Network and the Western NC Partnership for Public Health. Visit their website at wnchealthyimpact.com.
Mission couldn’t do its job without the region’s front line of care – our community hospitals and county health departments. They prevent communicable diseases like influenza through immunizations, treat chronic conditions, bring healthy babies into the world, aid the dying and help patients achieve better health, all close to where people live and work. Together with Mission Health’s integrated network of physician practices, outpatient and inpatient facilities, these health care providers are focusing the region’s health care resources where they are needed most.

**MISSION HEALTH COMMUNITY HOSPITAL MEMBERS (2013)**

- **Angel Medical Center**
  Serves Macon County (Franklin)
  angelmed.org

- **Blue Ridge Regional Hospital**
  Serves Mitchell and Yancey Counties
  (Burnsville and Spruce Pine)
  blueridgehospital.org

- **McDowell Hospital**
  Serves McDowell County
  (Marion and Old Fort)
  mcdowellhospital.org

- **Transylvania Regional Hospital**
  Serves Transylvania County (Brevard)
  trhospital.org
Identifying Western North Carolina’s Greatest Health Needs

The counties in our region differ in size and history, topography and population. When it comes to health care, however, we have a lot in common. Too many of our friends and neighbors don’t have access to care for their physical and mental illnesses. Too many of us suffer from chronic diseases like diabetes, asthma, depression and high blood pressure that limit our ability to live long, productive, happy lives. We turn to tobacco, drugs and alcohol too often to ease our pain.

That is why Mission and our partners in WNC Healthy Impact are united in our commitment to increase access to medical care for the residents of western North Carolina. When we do that, three things happen:

- We can often prevent life-limiting and life-threatening diseases from developing.
- We can diagnose and treat patients earlier, before complications occur.
- We can manage care more effectively in ways that allow patients to receive care close to home where they have the support of family and friends.
Identified Community Health Needs by County

- Access to Care
- Healthy Living
- Obesity
- Mental Health
- Tobacco
- Substance Abuse
Mission Health Total Community Benefit Investments

Like other not-for-profit health systems, Mission Health cares for all patients, regardless of their ability to pay. Unlike systems in other parts of North Carolina, Mission treats an unusually high number of self pay/charity care, Medicare and Medicaid patients, leaving the health system and its member hospitals with millions of dollars of unreimbursed care. These financials reflect the estimated cost of that unreimbursed care, along with the Mission Health’s investments in unreimbursed medical research/medical education and its support of community-based health improvement programs, like those highlighted in this report.

Mission Hospital: $129 MILLION
Angel Medical Center: $1 MILLION
Blue Ridge Regional Hospital: $5 MILLION
McDowell Hospital: $7 MILLION
Transylvania Regional Hospital: $1 MILLION

MISSION HEALTH TOTAL: $143 MILLION
Community Benefit Grants for Fiscal Year 2013

23 grants
$1,213,791 awarded
Thousands of lives changed
Hospitals are well-equipped to take care of us when we are sick. But what happens when we go home? How can we manage chronic conditions or even prevent them from occurring? That requires the involvement of patients and clinicians, families and friends, as well as community-based organizations that can help us embrace new behaviors on the road to good health. At Mission, we call these organizations our Community Benefit partners. From offices in Asheville and the region, they help us move beyond the walls of our physicians’ offices and hospitals to help people find and maintain good health. Our community would be a poorer, unhealthier place without them. In 2013, Mission Hospital awarded 23 grants totaling $1,213,791 and helped change thousands of lives thanks to the following community partners:

- Buncombe County Department of Health | 2013 Community Health Assessment
- Buncombe County Department of Health | School Health
- Child Abuse Prevention Services, Inc. | Crisis Intervention/Counseling for Children Who Have Experienced Abuse
- Community Care of Western North Carolina | Community Care of Western North Carolina Emergency Department Diversion
- Girls on the Run of WNC, Inc. | Girls on the Run/Girls on Track Program
- Homeward Bound | Chronic Homeless Housing Program
- Homeward Bound | Women at Risk
- Mountain Area Health Education Center, Inc. | Implementation of the Centering Pregnancy Model in MAHEC OB/GYN Services
- MANNA | MANNA Packs for Kids
- Memory Care | Community-based dementia management
- Verner Center | Rainbow in my Tummy
- Pisgah Legal | Health Education and Legal Support Project (HEALS)
- The Arc of Buncombe County | Health and Wellness Initiative
- Council on Aging | Project Continuum Care (Coordinating Care to At-Risk Elderly)
- Three Streams Family Health Center | Access4All
- WNC Medical Society | Project Access Community Transitions (PACT)
- Western North Carolina AIDS Project | HIV Case Management
- YMCA | Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)
- YMCA | Childhood Obesity Prevention Program (YFFL)
- YWCA of Asheville | Diabetes Wellness and Prevention
Stories from the Front Lines of Prevention and Care
Homeward Bound

PATHWAYS TO PERMANENT HOUSING

Homeward Bound’s Pathways to Permanent Housing works with chronically homeless individuals and moves them into housing before they have achieved sobriety or accessed treatment for mental or physical health. Once in housing, these individuals begin to stabilize as they work with Pathways to Permanent Housing case managers on the root causes of their homelessness.

RESULTS: As a result of Mission’s community benefit grant, Homeward Bound has been able to move 75 people from homelessness into permanent housing. It has assisted those who can work to find it and ensured that those eligible for public benefits such as Medicaid, Food Stamps and Unemployment receive them. For those clients with addictions, mental health illnesses and physical health issues, Homeward Bound has secured the appropriate medical care for these clients. Among Homeward Bound clients, emergency room visits have decreased by 50 percent.
Women At Risk keeps women out of jail and prison by linking them to services that address the root causes of their criminal behavior so they can stay in the community and out of the corrections system. Women At Risk advocates for treatment as an alternative to jail and prison, providing clinical outpatient substance abuse and mental health treatment that helps women overcome self-destructive and abusive behaviors. The program offers case management, court advocacy and therapy groups that provide education, treatment and relapse prevention. Like Homeward Bound’s other programs, Women At Risk is relationship-based, spending time with women who are at their most vulnerable, treating them with respect, meeting them where they are and valuing them for who they are.

RESULTS: 90 percent of Women At Risk graduates successfully complete probation and stay out of jail and prison.
Since its inception in 2007, the YWCA’s Diabetes Wellness and Prevention Program has grown from a small pilot program to one that engages more than 100 people and their families. It has also become a model for other communities looking to engage low income, uninsured individuals in managing their chronic diseases.

Through weight loss, exercise, nutrition education and diabetes management, the program promotes healthy lifestyle changes that stick with participants and their family members. It’s not unusual for program participants to reduce medications or go off them entirely. In 2013, the YWCA was recognized by the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce for its innovation and excellence in community-based health care with the Good Health Good Business Award.

RESULTS: Through the support of their care counselor, fitness coaches and other participants, over 90 percent of the program’s participants “graduate” and achieve their wellness goals.
Addressing the Needs of a Special Group of People

THE ARC OF BUNCOMBE COUNTY’S HEALTH AND WELLNESS INITIATIVE

This 19-month program promotes healthy weight through healthier living habits in a population often overlooked – mild-to-high-functioning individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The 2010 census estimates that there are almost 30,000 children and adults with a disability living in the Asheville metro area (includes Buncombe, Madison, Haywood and Henderson counties). An increasing number of them suffer from chronic diseases such as diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure due in part to sedentary lifestyles.

Participants in Arc’s Health and Wellness Initiative participate in physical activity three days a week. They also attend nutrition and food preparation classes and learn about healthy food choices.

RESULTS: Program participants have lost weight, lowered their cholesterol and/or their blood pressure. Teachers report an added benefit: significantly fewer outbursts from program participants as a result of the relaxation and self-control techniques they have learned in yoga class.
Rainbow In My Tummy® is a comprehensive, nutrition-enrichment program developed by the Verner Center for Early Learning (formerly Mountain Area Child and Family Center) that is improving the quality of food served to young children and the overall food culture in child care centers in our community and across the nation. Not only does the program provide the tools needed to improve the quality of food served, it also trains early child care and education professionals in ways to incorporate nutrition into their curriculum and classrooms. In 2013, the Rainbow In My Tummy® team trained staff at 22 centers in Buncombe, McDowell, Mitchell and Yancey counties.

**RESULTS:** Consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables by children and teachers has increased by 80 percent, with a corresponding decrease in the amount of processed foods served. Menus no longer include fruit juice, trans fats, high fructose corn syrup, MSG and artificial sweeteners. Teachers report improved behaviors and better naps.
A third grader raises her hand in a child abuse prevention/personal safety education program at a local public school and discloses abuse so horrific that she is immediately removed from her home. That’s one of many stories Bill McGuire, executive director of Child Abuse Prevention Services, Inc., recounts when asked what makes his agency so important. In Buncombe County more than 4,000 children are abused every year. Some find their way to his agency through another social service agency, observant teacher, caregiver or family member. Through a community benefit grant from Mission Health, Child Abuse Prevention Services is able to provide these children with crisis intervention and counseling. “Because of Mission Health, we are able to address the hurt and start the healing,” McGuire says.

RESULTS: Research indicates that without crisis intervention/counseling, 20 percent of abused children might recover. Through the intervention/counseling program supported by Mission, over 80 percent of children who come to Child Abuse Prevention Services, Inc. stabilize, recover from the trauma and improve their condition. In 2013, the agency served a total of 500 individuals (200 children plus their siblings, parents and caregivers).
In January 2008, Jim Bruckner, the Director for Macon County Health Department, had a dream: to develop a program that provided mammograms to women in the county. That’s how Angel Medical Center’s Ladies Night Out began. Today it is a thriving partnership between Angel Medical Center and Macon County Public Health Department and corporate sponsor BI-LO. The program provides monthly health education programs on different topics, always including the message about breast self-examination and mammography as important tools in the early detection of breast cancer.

RESULTS: The program has grown from one meeting a month to two with attendance ranging between 100 and 200 people per meeting. The Angel Medical Center team has helped Murphy Medical Center, Cherokee and McDowell launch their own Ladies Night Out. These successes resulted in Angel Medical Center receiving the 2013 Outstanding Contributor to Local Public Health Award from the NC Association of Local Health Directors.
In Yancey and Mitchell counties, where substance and tobacco use are high, Blue Ridge Regional Hospital is part of a dynamic program designed to develop positive life skills and healthy living behaviors in middle and high school students. The STAR program, which is a partnership between Mitchell-Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force and Graham Children’s Health Services (an outpatient service of Mission Children’s Hospital in these counties), selects motivated students who want to participate in after-school activities that teach fitness, good nutrition, life skills and contribute to their communities through local service projects.

**RESULTS:** 130 students served.

What do the students have to say?

"I like it because it is a place to relieve stress and keep in shape."

"My reason to come is to stay in a healthy condition. My favorite part is working out and being around people to motivate me. This club has helped me and given me a reason to stay away from bad things and instead help me stay on the right side and keep up the good work."

These students from Harris Middle School were selected to participate in the STAR Program.
Reach Out and Read is an exciting new initiative of McDowell Pediatrics and Dr. Maureen Ben-Davies. In North Carolina, Reach Out and Read serves more than 136,000 children through 165 physician offices. McDowell Pediatrics is the first practice in western North Carolina to participate in the program that promotes early literacy and school readiness in pediatric exam rooms. Children receive new books with each visit and parents receive information about the benefits of reading aloud to their children. The program, which begins at the six-month checkup and continues through age five, provides children with age-appropriate books and parents with the encouragement they need to make reading together a part of family life.
Mission Hospital and Pisgah Legal Services (PLS) created the Health Education and Legal Support Project (HEALS) in 2006, making it the first medical-legal partnership in North Carolina to ensure that participating patients can meet their basic needs and improve their health. Over the years HEALS has strengthened the safety net for 2,189 low-income patients including 1,244 children and educated 4,650 medical and human service providers about legal remedies for economically disadvantaged people in 17 western North Carolina counties. Through HEALS, health care professionals and poverty law attorneys work together to help patients navigate red tape to secure Medicaid or disability benefits, deal with abusive relationships, defend their rights with a disreputable landlord, preserve their housing and avoid homelessness, and avoid predatory creditors.

RESULTS: In 2013, HEALS helped 374 clients and conducted 55 training events that educated more than 550 health care professionals about the impact of poverty on patients and legal remedies for problems of poverty.
In 2012, Transylvania Region Hospital (TRH), the Transylvania County Health Department, The Free Clinic and others joined together to address the community's growing need for primary care and mental health services. The result of this collaboration is Brevard Health Center, a federally qualified health center offering a full spectrum of services to the area's neediest residents. The clinic, which is staffed with Transylvania Region Hospital physicians, offers primary care for adults and children, dental services, medication assistance and behavioral health.

**RESULTS:** Visits to TRH Emergency Department were reduced by 6.5 percent, or 1,000 visits per year.
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