A Seat at the Table

Partnering with our communities to promote health

Overview

Throughout the history of our country, being welcomed to a seat at the table was a way in which people from differing walks of life came together to share their common views and discuss the challenges they needed to solve together. Through collaboration and partnerships important information and the joint resources at the table could then be accessed to mobilize the strengths of the group to address how the resources or assets would be shared to the betterment of all member groups. From the signing of the Declaration of Independence to the current policy discussions on addressing structural racism, the best results are attained when everyone at the table has an equal voice, all parties listen to one another, and then agree to act in unity despite differences.

During fiscal year 2019, MelroseWakefield Healthcare completed its 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment and with the help of hundreds of residents and stakeholders, who sat at the table, prioritized health needs, reaffirmed assets, and identified opportunities to promote health in our communities through enhanced partnerships. This process included a collaborative effort with Beth Israel/Lahey Health to report our shared findings to the communities where we overlap service areas and in another partnership, share resources with Cambridge Health Alliance and Massachusetts General Hospital to further examine the impacts of social determinants in our largest and most diverse communities, Everett and Malden.

These efforts allowed MelroseWakefield Healthcare to improve efficiencies and shared responsibility to re-focus on our Community Benefits Mission: “MelroseWakefield Healthcare (MWHC) is committed to building and sustaining a strong, vibrant and healthy community. MWHC dedicates appropriate resources to collaborations with community partners and the utilization of community members’ input toward improving health services. MWHC pledges to act as a resource and to work with the community during emergencies; improve access to care; identify, monitor, and address the unique health care needs within its core communities; and promote healthier lifestyles for residents through health education and prevention activities.”

The MelroseWakefield Healthcare 2019 Community Benefits report features the activities, programs and partnerships MelroseWakefield Healthcare embraces to build a strong foundation for a healthy community across the continuum. In the coming year, MelroseWakefield Healthcare will continue to provide oversight and responsibility for community benefit programs addressing local health needs, ensure access to care through our Financial Assistance programs and will look to strengthen its engagement with both community residents, local agency providers and other local health systems. Together we will refocus our efforts on improving health equity and addressing social determinants of health for all members of our communities, including residents of color, through policy and practice.
About MelroseWakefield Healthcare

MelroseWakefield Healthcare is a comprehensive system of community hospitals, outpatient centers, primary care and specialty physicians, and community programs serving north suburban Boston. MelroseWakefield Healthcare is committed to its mission to provide quality care for its communities and achieve clinical excellence for the patients it serves. On January 1, 2017, MelroseWakefield Healthcare became the third founding member of Wellforce, a collaboration of academic medical and community health care providers in Massachusetts that includes Circle Health in Lowell, Tufts Medical Center in Boston. In 2018, the Home Health Foundation joined the Wellforce System. This report covers activities from fiscal year 2019 – October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019 for MelroseWakefield Healthcare.

MelroseWakefield Healthcare includes MelroseWakefield Hospital in Melrose, Lawrence Memorial Hospital of Medford, the Breast Health Center in Stoneham, the Center for Radiation Oncology in Stoneham, MelroseWakefield Healthcare Medical Center in Reading, Tufts Medical Center Community Care Physician Group, The Lawrence Memorial/Regis College Nursing and Radiography Programs, Urgent Care sites, and extensive community-based programs and services.

MelroseWakefield Hospital is a designated primary stroke service hospital, ready to provide emergency diagnostic and therapeutic services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to acute stroke patients. In 2018, MelroseWakefield Hospital received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Gold Plus Quality achievement award.

In fiscal year 2019, MelroseWakefield Hospital was also re-designated a “Baby Friendly” hospital, a program of the World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund. Baby-friendly birthing facilities create environments for parents and infants to get the best start in life, by supporting breastfeeding and best practice infant-care strategies that also focus on the new mother and her family.

MelroseWakefield Healthcare's Community Services division oversaw programs that impacted both medical and social determinants of health and are supported by a mix of federal, state and private funding. These programs include the following:

- North Suburban Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program
- Healthy Families Program and MA Home Visiting Initiative
- North Suburban Child and Family Resource Network
- The Dutton Center Adult Day Health Program
- Aging in Balance – Senior Outreach Program
- Community Health Education

About Community Benefits

The current Massachusetts Community Benefits Guidelines were developed and adopted on February 7, 2018. There was a soft launch for FY 2018 and the new guidelines were fully implemented for reporting in FY 2019.

Passage of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in 2010 also created requirements for not-for-profit hospitals to report their community benefits to the Internal Revenue Service along with mandates to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment at least every three years. Compliance with these requirements are documented in the hospital’s IRS Form 990 filing, on Schedule H. Final IRS rules governing requirements for community health improvement plans and reporting were published in 2017.
Oversight of Community Benefits

MelroseWakefield Healthcare Board of Trustees
- Affirms and publicly shares the community benefits mission statement
- Reviews and approves the community health improvement plan once it is recommended for approval by the Board Governance Committee
- Ensures necessary resources are allocated

Community Benefits Advisory Council
- Serves as the planning group for community benefits
- Confirms all identified health priorities are addressed (or that there is a defensible rationale for why priorities cannot be addressed)

Director, Community Services
- Manages the day-to-day aspects of the implementation plan

Manager, Community Benefits
- Submits the annual Community Benefits Report to the Massachusetts Benefits and Operations Attorney General
- Provides input to Schedule H for the hospital’s annual IRS Form 990 filing

Community Benefits Advisory Council

All aspects of MelroseWakefield Healthcare’s community benefits program – from assessing health needs and planning to the implementation and evaluation of activities – rely upon the oversight and guidance of its advisory council, a cross-section of hospital leaders, partnering agencies, and community members working together to lead and ensure the system remains responsive and effective in addressing health issues. Beginning in 2019, this Council has also been designated as the Community Health Improvement (CHI) Committee for the Determination of Need (DoN) for the Lawrence Memorial Ambulatory Surgical Center through a shared agreement with Shields Health Care Group and local physician practices.

The Community Benefits Advisory Council includes a member of the health system’s board of trustees, executive leaders, managers from clinical and administrative areas, partnering agencies and community members who represent the partners as well as the geographic, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic diversity of the catchment area. The 27 member council meets six times per year to ensure compliance with the community health improvement plan, review program outcomes, discuss important community health issues, and offer recommendations to the Board of Trustees related to community health needs and disparities. The council approves any and all amendments to the implementation plan resulting from emerging health issues or unplanned changes in capacity. The group also engages new members from the communities served to join the group; prioritizing candidates who can help the organization better understand community health needs and barriers to access. This process is ongoing since various populations experience challenges in accessing health or community-based services.

Community Teams and Civic Engagement

As part of its efforts to improve health status in its core communities, MelroseWakefield Healthcare participates in community coalitions and partnerships that address both overall and targeted health issues within its catchment area. Individually and as part of community teams, employees at all levels of the organization foster relationships with local leaders, civic groups, faith-based and grassroots organizations.

In 2019, MelroseWakefield Healthcare had six community outreach teams, representing individual cities and towns as well as the health system. Teams included Team Malden (also covering Everett), Medford, Melrose, Reading (also
covering North Reading), Stoneham (also covering Saugus), and Wakefield. Team captains take part in community building activities with members of the community, serve on local boards and councils in leadership roles, and convene with leaders from Community Services. Teams work within a charter framework, fully supported by the administration.

Community teams are a resource for residents seeking greater access to medical, behavioral and supportive services. These relationships are essential to bringing to the forefront problems that adversely impact the health of our communities, such as behavioral health, substance use disorders, overdose prevention, depression, suicide, and sexual abuse and intimate partner violence. MelroseWakefield Healthcare has demonstrated the ability to convene stakeholders on these issues from the communities it serves to reduce duplication of services and promote regional planning and solutions.

In addition to community teams’ activities, MelroseWakefield Healthcare supports partnerships and collaborations that include the following:

- Supporting membership and leadership activities with local coalitions whose mission aligns with the community benefits plan, including board-level membership as appropriate
- Subsidizing occupancy costs for not-for-profit agencies closely aligned with community benefits service populations
- Providing in-kind meeting space to agencies that are aligned with the health systems’ mission
- Supporting ongoing outreach to identify new or previously unknown community agencies working with target populations, especially grassroots and faith-based organizations
- Reaching out to other local health care systems to explore ways to work collaboratively and avoid unnecessary duplication of services
- Committing Community Services and Finance employees’ time to analyze and document value, perform monitoring, and measure the impact of programs and services to MelroseWakefield Healthcare communities
- Devoting Fund Development and Community Services employees’ time to securing operating funds for community benefits programs (grant writing, restricted donations and general fundraising).

**Community Health Needs Assessment**

MelroseWakefield Healthcare (MWHC) undertook a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) between January and August 2019. The CHNA was conducted using a mixed-methods approach in order to form a robust understanding of the needs and patterns in the communities served. The methods used included: key stakeholder surveys and interviews conducted with community stakeholders; a community survey; and the collection and analysis of secondary quantitative data. These findings were then used to prioritize the health concerns. MelroseWakefield Healthcare completed its most recent community health needs assessment (CHNA) in collaboration with the Institute for Community Health (ICH), a not-for-profit organization based in Malden, Mass.
Based on this analysis, prioritized health concerns were identified for 2020–2022 CHIP and are detailed below:

**Health priorities**
- Chronic disease with a focus on cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and respiratory disease
- Housing stability and homelessness
- Mental illness and mental health
- Social determinants of health: poverty, education, employment and food access
- Substance use disorders
- Identifying vulnerable populations
- Additional priorities identified include: access to healthcare; disaster readiness and emergency preparation; infectious disease; preventable injuries and poisonings; and violence and trauma.

**Community Resources and Assets**
- Diverse populations of the communities
- Collaborations between different sectors and the involvement of local government in supporting community well-being as some of the greatest strengths of the service area.
- MelroseWakefield Healthcare participates in a variety of broad-based community coalitions and initiatives that work towards addressing the specific and general health needs in the nine cities and towns.

**The goals for the 2019 CHNA:**
- Identifying major health concerns and vulnerable populations in the MWHC service area
- Identifying unmet needs and gaps in service
- Gathering recommendations for programs and partnerships to address needs and gaps
- Defining priority focus areas for programming to improve population health and meet the priorities set by the MA Attorney General, the MA Department of Public Health for Community Health Improvement projects (CHI), and the IRS
- Identifying opportunities to reduce health disparities and structural racism

The report details insight into the current health status of the nine communities in the community benefits service area, defines MelroseWakefield Healthcare’s health priorities to be addressed, and identifies opportunities for optimizing population health improvement. It was used to guide planning and development of a new 2020–2022 community health improvement plan, which the Board of Trustees approved in February 2020. The complete assessments for both 2016 and 2019 are available on the MelroseWakefield Healthcare website, https://www.melrosewakefield.org/in-the-community/community-benefits/, and are located in hard copy at several system and nine community locations identified on the health system’s web site.

**Multi-year Community Benefits Plan**

*The FY 2017–2019 community benefits implementation plan aligns activities to specific health concerns, to ideally address both the Massachusetts Attorney General and IRS guidelines for community benefits. Some initiatives are led solely by MelroseWakefield Healthcare, although the system has made collaboration a priority, wherever possible, to engage local stakeholders and residents and ensure their critical feedback informs its efforts.*

The 2017–2019 implementation plan includes input from residents reflecting broad community concerns, input from officials with public health expertise, and feedback from representatives of medically underserved, low-income and minority populations. The Plan was amended in 2019 and the amendments are listed on the health system website and in paper at nine community locations.
Access/Coverage Supports:

Transportation assistance
Behavioral Health Community Phone Line
Patient Financial Navigators
GI Navigators
Breast Navigators
Interpreter Services

Community-Clinical Linkages:

Continuing medical education (CME)
Blood drives
EMT education
Internships
Student placements
Center for Professional Development
Support groups
Cancer Registry
High School athletic training program

Direct Clinical Services:

Adult Day Health Center

Infrastructure to support Community Benefits collaborations across institutions:

Housing organizations/coalitions
Substance use disorder coalition support
Attendance at District Attorney, Marian Ryan’s Safe Babies, Safe Kids Task Force
Cultural Conversations
Support to CHNA 15 and 16
In-kind space
Support for Mass in Motion
Malden’s Promise
Wake-Up-Wakefield
Portal to Hope
Support to Melrose, Stoneham and Wakefield Alliances
Against Violence (MAAV, SAAV and WAAV)

Total Population or Community-Wide Interventions:

Mental Health education
Creative Coping: New Mothers’ Group
Baby Care programming
Breastfeeding classes
Parenting education
CPR/First Aid Training
Diabetes education
Nutrition education
Cancer education and health screenings
Bone and Joint Camp
Health Minutes and Blog
Shadow/mentoring programs
Community health lectures
Baby Cafes
Senior citizen lunches
Community dinners
Healthy Families/Mass Home Visiting Initiative
North Suburban WIC
Aging in Balance
Mothers Helping Mothers Closet
Food drives
Holiday donation drives
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in Harmony
North Suburban Child and Family Resource Network
Mobile Food Market
2019 Community Benefits Highlights

Mission Aligned Community Benefit Advisory Council Membership
The MelroseWakefield Community Benefits Advisory Council added five new members in 2019 to meet current engagement standards set by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Attorney General’s Office. New members represent The MWHC Board of Trustees, the Asian American Civic Association, the Wakefield Public Schools, the Joint Committee for Children’s Health care in Everett, and the Home Health Foundation.

Medication Assisted Treatment
Several employed physicians in Tufts Medical Center Community Care practices developed a Medical Assisted Treatment for substance use treatment for their own patients and have finalized plans for the implementation of a pilot program for a more comprehensive Group OBAT (office based addiction treatment) program. The program is multi-disciplinary including primary care physicians, a nurse, and a licensed clinical social worker and has support from an employed psychiatrist. MWHC was mentored in this work by providers at Boston Medical Center and Cambridge Health Alliance.

North Suburban Child and Family Resource Network Grandparent Support
In partnership with the Wakefield Public Schools, the North Suburban Child and Family Resource Network was awarded the John Lepper Advocacy Award from the Commission on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in June 2019. The program serves more than 80 grandparents raising their grandchildren.

Healthy Families Program Metrics
In FY 2019, 94% of Healthy Families participants had a primary care provider; 97% of children had a primary care provider; 100% of children were fully immunized by 2 years of age; the program administered ASQ developmental screens to 85% of all children; 82% of participants initiated breastfeeding; and 100% of Home Visitors received weekly supervision lasting a minimum of 1.5 hours. Additionally, the program administered ASQ:SE developmental screens to 94% of all children; and the program screened 100% of participants for depression and offered referrals for follow-up services when indicated. There were 55 referrals to the program and 91 families were served.

Financial Navigators
Financial Counselors at Melrose Wakefield Healthcare recorded a total of 26,543 encounters with and for members of the communities we serve. The total number of encounters comprises a variety of services rendered such as: applications for Masshealth, the Health Connector, Health Safety Net, Long-Term Care Applications, Hardship, MWHC Financial Assistance; collections for billing issues; co-payment collections; advocacy with other providers for financial assistance; helping patients access medical care with other providers; counseling on benefits for Medicare, Disability, WIC and DTA services. The substantial increase in FY19 numbers may be attributed in part to more stringent reviews of all accounts, and some instances, after completing an application for MH/Health Connector, there may be a need to file a Hardship application, an MWHC Financial Assistance application, or develop a payment plan.

New Baby Bundle App
MWHC has been utilizing on-line prenatal instruction to supplement our childbirth and family education for many years. In 2019, we transitioned to a newer and more modern web-based and mobile app tool powered by YoMingo. The updated Baby Bundle content is available in multiple languages and allows us to respectfully serve patients of color and from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The content also meets Baby Friendly@ guidelines and is available free of charge on the MWHC website and as a downloadable app.

WIC Program-Meeting the "Top Five" measures
In FY 2019, the average program caseload was 2,600 participants (98% of assigned caseload). The program’s breastfeeding exclusivity rates at 3 and 6 months were 14.2% and 12.7% respectively, and the program maintained the breastfeeding rates for 3 and 6 months at 54.8% and 37.4% respectively (All breastfeeding rates are above the state average). The percentage of children at healthy weight is 74.7%, above the state average. The percentage of retention in the program at 14 months was 59% in September 2019, and increased to 74.6% in early FY20.
A SEAT AT THE TABLE:

The community benefits activities of MelroseWakefield Healthcare are anchored in the roots of the health system. Many of the programs and services began at the legacy hospitals and have continued for more than 35 years. From the late 1980’s to the present, we have always made room for residents and community groups to share their story and find help through our health system. We listen, we identify the strengths and challenges for that individual or group, and we find solutions. The answers often come from our partner agencies and colleagues in health care. Many times these individual and group stories inform practices and policies in the community.

LISTENING TO OUR COMMUNITIES

In FY 2019, as a component of our Community Health Needs Assessment, MelroseWakefield Healthcare hosted a breakfast for the local Board of Health Directors. MWHC shared our past and present community benefits efforts and asked the Health Directors to provide feedback on what was working well and where we could improve our work. They provided honest opinions and advice on ways to improve our community health impact.

The system also held six Listening Sessions in partnership with the community. For each Listening Session, food was provided, interpreters were hired, and care was offered for both elders and children. One session, covering three communities was held in collaboration with Winchester Hospital, a member of Beth Israel/Lahey Health and two sessions, covering two communities were held in partnership with Cambridge Health Alliance and Massachusetts General Hospital. Each session was offered at different times of day, in different cities and towns, and with different local hosting partners.

In addition, community and stakeholder surveys were translated into the most common languages spoken in the community and were available both on-line and in paper. Paper copies and drop boxes were placed in each of the communities served at fifteen convenient locations such as public libraries, senior centers, and a family center. Other surveys were distributed through community coalitions such as the Middlesex County District Attorney’s Regional Opioid Task Force and through community events such as a teen advocacy session in Malden and at the MWHC Mobile Food Market. Stakeholder phone interviews were also conducted.

In Everett and Malden, additional data was collected prior to the listening sessions using the THRIVE: Tool for Health & Resilience in Vulnerable Environments. THRIVE allowed the three health systems to share the more traditional format of the 2019 MWHC Community Health Needs Assessment and to dive deeper into the root causes of health and safety, while promoting health equity. A report was developed by the three systems and a new task force was convened late in FY 2019. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the development of Community Health Improvement Plan strategies to address the community determinants was postponed and will reconvene as the community re-opens to business again in FY 2020.

Quotes about the partnership with Cambridge Health Alliance and Massachusetts General Hospital:

“Our three institutions have overlapping service areas where we are all working toward the same goal (improving the health of the community) using limited resources. Especially in this unprecedented time, there is more need than ever in our communities. We know we can’t go it alone. It is in the best interests of all three institutions’ departments of Community Health, and the communities we serve, to ensure we’re doing all we can to move the needle on challenging issues like access to healthcare, food and housing insecurity and mental health and substance use disorder.”

Renée Cammarata Hamilton MSW, MPA | Director, Health Improvement Team & Clinical Instructor Community Health Improvement Department | Tufts University Family Medicine Residency
“By partnering and working together, we were able to leverage each other’s capacity to create a more holistic needs assessment that listened and took into account the community voice. It allowed us to identify groups who are often ‘hidden’ and engage as many residents as we could in order to have a complete picture of the community, its challenges, as well as its strengths.”

Danelle Marable, MA/Sr. Director, Evaluation, Assessments, and Coalitions
MGH Center for Community Health Improvement
TRANSITIONING ELDER PROGRAMS

In recognition of the greater availability of robust programs and services for elders now accessible in the community; MelroseWakefield Healthcare evaluated opportunities to transition our long-term elder care programs to other community agencies that share our values, commitment to community, quality and expertise. This allowed MWHC to prioritize existing resources on short-term care models to better serve the communities’ aging population such as the Aging in Balance - Elder Outreach Program. The Hallmark Health Lifeline Program was transferred to Philips Lifeline in early FY19 and the Dutton Center Adult Day Health Program later that year.

“In the fall of 2018, to better serve the future needs of those in the community, Melrose Wakefield Healthcare Lifeline decided to transfer all their business operations to Philips Lifeline. This was an easy transition for both parties as Philips Lifeline already answered incoming help signals in their Response Centers from those who had the medical alert service through Melrose Wakefield Healthcare. Philips Lifeline and Melrose Wakefield Healthcare are excited to continue their relationship which helps seniors and fall-risk individuals in need.”

Tom Crossman, Key Account & Market Expansion Manager, Philips Aging and Caregiving

In 2019, MWHC continues to offer a One Source Lifeline program to the community in partnership with Philips Lifeline. Referrals are made to the program to allow for community elders to be served. The program outreach is done by the employees in the MWHC Aging in Balance Program. The total number of subscribers monitored in 2019 was 363, with 12 new installations. There were 179 – total incidents: in 95 of those incidents a subscriber fell and needed assistance, 39 of the incidents required emergency assistance and 25 required responder assistance.

After an intensive and thoughtful process, in March 2019, MelroseWakefield Healthcare also transferred ownership of the Robert Dutton M.D. Adult Day Health Center in Wakefield to The Community Family. With the transition of services, there was no interruption in care or services for the participants and families of the Dutton Center.

The Community Family (TCF) is a non-profit adult day health organization with state-of-the-art centers located in Everett, Medford, and Lowell, MA. TCF’s mission is to provide high-quality services and care that keep adults in their homes as long as possible. Their mission and vision aligns seamlessly with that of MelroseWakefield Healthcare.

Adult day health offers a low-cost option for the care of elderly and disabled adults, offering nursing care, therapeutic activities, nutrition and socialization opportunities, as well as much-needed respite for their care providers. We are excited that these services continue to be offered, and will continue to work closely with the program, including referring patients. The Community Family provides all of those wonderful services as the new owner of the Dutton Center. MWHC remains involved making referrals to the program and as a member of the Patient/Family Advisory Council.

“The Community Family and Melrose Wakefield Healthcare worked together collaboratively to ensure that quality adult day health services would continue to be available to those individuals enrolled in the Dutton Center. Both The Community Family and Melrose Wakefield Healthcare focused on the larger picture of insuring that adult day health services would continue to be available to all adults needing support in order to maintain their lives in the community. All of the families stayed with the program as did most of the staff. The Dutton Center continues to provide the same compassionate care that it is known for. The transition could not have gone any smoother.”

Anne Marchetta, Executive Director of The Community Family (TCF)
Aging In Balance—Preventing Injury and Managing Chronic Disease for Better Health

The “Baby Boom” generation reflects many diverse life experiences and viewpoints—ones that continue to redefine what it means to age in the world today. Around the topics of health and wellness, this includes the hope and expectation of living active lives and being engaged well into the future. However, maintaining a positive outlook when facing the physical and emotional health effects of aging, for one’s self or a loved one, can be a challenge.

For more than 30 years, MelroseWakefield Healthcare and its clinicians have believed in the value of helping older adults achieve their goals of aging well and living well in their communities, supported by a mix of outreach and programs designed to help improve health, independence and quality of life, and providing them and their families with the knowledge and access to resources they need to remain vibrant citizens.

To serve the next generation of older adults requires new methods that meet their expectations and emphasizes evidence-based approaches that help them manage chronic illness (arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, asthma) as they age. Developing skills to manage these conditions can be among the most effective strategies to strengthen an elder’s ability to stabilize health, reduce injury, and improve emotional outlook and wellbeing.

The Aging in Balance- Elder Outreach Program blends traditional efforts to monitor health in vulnerable elders through Blood Pressure/Ask-A-Nurse clinics at housing and Council on Aging sites with fresh, interactive approaches to learning that help older adults proactively address chronic disease, pain, and the progressive impacts of aging on the body and mind (i.e., loss of sleep, cognitive issues, risks of falls).

Aging in Balance also takes a strength-based approach to health education. Lectures offered at elder housing sites and community centers include “Sunny Side Up”—a program to improve positive thinking to manage stress and improve relaxation; “Health and Wellness BINGO”—an interactive BINGO game to learn with peers about high blood pressure and stroke; and “Sleepless in New England”—offering helpful tips on improving sleep hygiene. Working with trained facilitators from other MWHC departments and partner agencies, the program offers six-session workshops on Chronic Disease and Chronic Pain Self-Management, using evidence-based curriculums developed by Stanford University Medical Center. These programs give those living with chronic conditions as well as their care givers knowledge and skills needed to take a more active role in their health. The Aging in Balance staff includes two compassionate and skilled elder care nurses and an experienced caring innovative leader who is an occupational therapist by profession.
Successful Strategies to Address Community Hunger

Over the past 35 years, the legacy hospitals of MelroseWakefield Healthcare (MWHC) have partnered with other local agencies to address community hunger as a health improvement strategy. The North Suburban Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition program has been successfully administered by MWHC for more than 35 years and in the last ten years the WIC program has opened a small food closet, Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard and provided a national award-winning monthly Mobile Food Market through a partnership with the cities of Malden and Medford, the Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) and a local chapter of an international service agency, ZONTA. The free Mobile Market serves hundreds of families each month. One of MWHC leaders was also invited to join the Greater Boston Food Bank Food Security Task Force to address food insecurity at a regional level. Through this committee, MWHC offered mentoring which has supported the GBFB in developing fresh fruit and vegetable markets in eight additional communities in MA.

To address concerns about access to healthy foods, MWHC is also employing strategies designed to address upstream issues such as policy development through partnering with the Food is Medicine Massachusetts (FiMMA), a state-led committee which is striving for a hunger free MA in 2028. In November of 2019, the Hunger to Health Collaboratory (H2HC) awarded a $5,000 Mobilizing Health Care for a Hunger Free Massachusetts grant to MelroseWakefield Healthcare at the inaugural Hunger to Health Summit held at the Boston Museum of Science. H2HC is a cross sector collaboration of stakeholders committed to reducing the health consequences of hunger. In July 2019, H2HC announced this new grant program to advance partnerships between the health care industry and community-based organizations to address the health consequences of hunger in order to create a hunger-free Massachusetts.

Addressing system change will allow MWHC to build an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) tool to allow employed primary care physicians to screen for food insecurity in their patients and to develop simple ways to enhance referrals to congregate meal sites, food pantries, community gardens, mobile markets and other food resources. This model can be shared with affiliated provider groups as well. In FY 2020 MelroseWakefield Healthcare will convene a group of health care providers and community members to serve as an advisory group to find ways to best connect food insecure individuals and families to needed resources. MelroseWakefield will train their staff to screen patients for food insecurity and connect these patients to the appropriate resources in the community. The food insecurity rates are between 5.5% and 6.5% in the Melrose and Wakefield areas.

MWHC is also promoting registration in government sponsored food programs through Mass in Motion local food plans and food assessments to address the SNAP GAP and challenges to enrollment in other government programs such as WIC, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), School Meals, Summer Meals, and commodity distribution. MelroseWakefield Healthcare is an active participant on the Medford Food Insecurity Task Force, the Bread of Life’s Hunger Network, the Malden Food Security Task Force, and is supporting Melrose and Wakefield in the development of their Food Plan through Mass in Motion.

The health system supports GBFB, the Malden YMCA, the Hunger Network, local congregate meal sites, and the Malden Bread of Life by donating, helping to raise funds and implementing strategies such as local school food pantries and Breakfast after the Bell to build a more extensive infrastructure for food access in the high risk communities of Everett, Malden, and Medford. In 2019, MWHC partnered with the GBFB and the Malden YMCA to address college food insecurity for nursing students and their families at the Lawrence Memorial Hospital/Regis School of Nursing.

Another key way to address community health and hunger is to promote breastfeeding and to maintain the standards for a Baby Friendly designation at MWH, the birthing facility of MWHC. The system sponsors three licensed Baby Cafés
in Everett, Malden, and Melrose to support breastfeeding mothers to initiate breastfeeding (exclusively when possible) and to continue nursing their infants through one year. To ensure providers are well-versed in breastfeeding education, MWHC continues to offer ongoing free on-line CME Education on breastfeeding that is available to health care professionals worldwide.

One exciting example of this integrated community partnership is the recent opening of the Mystic Market in Medford. For more than four years, leaders at the Malden YMCA, the Greater Boston Food Bank, the Medford Food Insecurity Task Force and MelroseWakefield Healthcare came together to discuss strategies to reduce/eliminate food insecurity in Medford, the community with the highest percentage of food insecurity in our service area. In 2019, the Medford Food Plan was developed to highlight policies and strategies for reducing and sustaining efforts to decrease hunger long-term in Medford. With tremendous effort by the Malden YMCA and the Greater Boston Food Bank, a site was identified and an amazing program was developed https://ymcamalden.org/food-programs/mystic-community-market. The Market is open to all area residents five days weekly and serves healthy fresh and frozen foods, cleaning supplies, and personal care items. It is making a huge impact on food insecurity in Medford and the rest of our service area.

“MelroseWakefield Healthcare is a true champion of addressing food access to improve health in the communities of Melrose and Wakefield. For the past eight years, the health system has offered a free monthly Mobile Food Market for community members, promoted local Farmer’s Markets, and is currently taking a lead role in the development of the Mass in Motion-Melrose/Wakefield Community Food Assessment. Thank you for supporting the health of our local communities MWHC!”

Kara M. Showers, MPH, CHES, Mass in Motion grant coordinator, Wake-Up youth coordinator, City of Melrose & Town of Wakefield Health Departments

“MelroseWakefield Healthcare (MWHC) has been an active member of the Medford Food Security Task Force since its inception. The health system has participated in the development of the Medford Food Plan and in widely sharing the plan with the community. Addressing food insecurity and hunger is a key priority for the city of Medford; we appreciate the efforts MWHC has taken to support the city in concentrating on this important initiative.”

Syrah McGivern, MS, RD, Mass in Motion Coordinator, Team Medford, Medford Board of Health

“The Mobile Market in partnership with the Greater Boston Food Bank is an integral part of the food assistance network and serves as a reliable source of nutritious food for hundreds of residents of Malden and surrounding communities each month. The dedication of so many staff and volunteers to the running of this market truly underscores MelroseWakefield’s commitment to serving the community.”

Christina Peretti, Senior Manager of Community Initiatives at The Greater Boston Food Bank
Health priorities

**Chronic disease with a focus on cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and respiratory disease**
- Cancer screenings and education
- Healthy nutrition education
- Blood pressure screenings and education
- CPR training in area high schools
- Health Minute video series
- Support to local flu clinics
- Chronic Disease Self-Management Program
- Diabetes screenings and education
- Diabetes support groups and events
- Diabetes Self-Management Program
- Integrated breastfeeding services
- Weight-management support groups
- Healthy eating habits and cooking lectures

**Social determinants of health: poverty, education, employment and food access**
- Allied health professional student training
- Nursing student training
- Pharmacist residency and student training
- Social work student training
- Support to area Mass in Motion Food Plans
- Mobile Food Market
- Promote the Mystic Market
- Support the Malden’s Promise Coalition

**Identifying Vulnerable populations**
- North Suburban WIC Nutrition Program
- WIC/Maternal Child Health Baby Cafés
- WIC Family Support Program
- Mobile Food Market
- Mothers Helping Mothers Closet
- Healthy Families and MA Home Visiting Program
- North Suburban Child and Family Resource Network
- Dutton Center Adult Day Health Program
- Aging in Balance: Senior Outreach Program
- New mothers programs

**Substance use disorders**
- Local substance abuse prevention coalitions
- Regional coalitions – Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition
- Medical Assisted Treatment in Primary Care pilot

**Mental illness and mental health**
- Behavioral health community phone line
- Mental health community education
- Bereavement and caregiver support groups

**Access to care**
- Financial counseling/patient access services
- Transportation assistance programs

**Other areas of Concern:** Disaster readiness and emergency preparation; Infectious disease
- Preventable injuries and poisoning; and violence and trauma prevention
- Bone density screenings and risk assessments
- Osteoporosis screenings and education
- Bone and joint camp
- Concussion screening program
- High school athletic training program
- Safe Sitter® babysitting training program
- Promote regional tuberculosis clinic
- Promote vaccines as a prevention strategy
- Training for local first responders
- Act as a resource during emergencies or acts of terror
- Community blood drives
- Sexual assault and domestic violence prevention education
- Support local domestic violence prevention coalitions
- Intimate partner violence support groups
Key Partners

Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)
American Cancer Society
American Diabetes Association
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Red Cross
Asian American Civic Association
Baby Café USA
Baby Friendly America
Boys and Girls Clubs of Middlesex County
Bread of Life
Burbank YMCA of Reading
Cambridge Health Alliance
Catholic Charities
Children’s Trust of Massachusetts
Chinese Culture Connection
Community Family Human Services, Inc.
Community Health Network Areas 15 & 16
Community Servings Inc.
Communitas
Criterion Early Intervention
Cross Cultural Communications Inc.
Customized Communication Inc.
Doucet’s Remodeling
Elder Services of Merrimack Valley
Elder Services of the North Shore
Eliot Community Human Services
Everett CFCE Grant Program
Families First
Friends of Middlesex Fells Reservation
Friends of Oak Grove
The Greater Boston Food Bank
Health Care for All
Health Care Without Harm
Home Health Foundation
Housing Families Inc.
Immigrant Learning Center of Malden
Institute for Community Health (ICH)
Jewish Family and Children’s Service
Joint Committee for Children’s Health Care in Everett (JCCHE)
Local arts councils
Local boards of health
Local chambers of commerce
Local civic groups (Rotary, Kiwanis)
Local councils on aging
Local early intervention (EI) programs
Local faith-based organizations
Lowell Community Health Center
MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs
MA Health Policy Commission
Malden Early Learning Center (CFCE)
Malden Homelessness Task Force
Malden’s Promise Coalition
Malden YMCA
Massachusetts General Hospital
Massachusetts Department of:
Children and Families (DCF)
Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Early Education and Care (EEC)
Public Health (MDPH)
Transitional Assistance (DTA)
Massachusetts Hospital Association
Massachusetts Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative (MOAPC)
Mass in Motion (Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose/Wakefield)
Medford Big Table
Medford Connects
Medford Family Network (CFCE)
Medford Health Matters
Medford HUB
Medford Substance Abuse Task Force
Melrose Alliance Against Violence
Melrose Community Coalition
Melrose Family YMCA
Melrose Human Rights Commission
Melrose Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition
Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Middlesex County District Attorney
Mystic Valley Elder Services
Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition
Mystic Valley Tobacco and Alcohol Program (MVTAP)
NAMI
Oak Grove Improvement Organization
Philips Lifeline
Portal to Hope
Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse (RCASA)
Reading Response
Regional EMS Providers
Regis College
RESPOND Inc.
The Salvation Army
The Sharewood Project
Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative (SAPC)
Stoneham Alliance Against Violence
Stoneham Theatre
Tailored for Success
Tri-City Homelessness Task Force
Tri-City Hunger Network
Tufts Medical Center
Tufts Medical Center Community Care
Tufts University
Wakefield Alliance Against Violence
WAKE-UP: Wakefield Unified Prevention
Wayside Youth and Family Services
West Medford Community Center
Winchester Hospital/Lahey Health
YWCA of Malden
Zonta Clubs of Malden and Medford

Zoo New England – Stone Zoo
In Conclusion

In FY 2020, we are facing a new reality in health care, a trend also seen in many other businesses and service providers across the world. With a world pandemic in full force and a much needed spotlight on structural racism’s impact on equity, including health equity, we must find new ways to navigate the emerging landscape before us. For MelroseWakefield Healthcare—and for hundreds of not-for-profit hospitals and community health systems across the state, including the Wellforce system, we must find more cost-effective and innovative strategies to serve our residents’ health and related social needs with dignity and respect.

MelroseWakefield Healthcare must partner with other like-minded health systems and agencies to share the limited financial resources and talented employees’ time to develop more effective ways to open the door to better health for our shared communities. This includes supporting the development of a regional Behavioral Health Coalition, partnering on the statewide efforts to eliminate hunger in Massachusetts in 2028, and striving to make the seat at the table feel like it is owned and cherished by the community member invited to sit and share his/her story.

Improving the quality of healthcare provided throughout MelroseWakefield Healthcare, in our hospitals, medical centers, the community, and home-based settings, remains a high priority, and we reaffirm our commitment to serve those who are most in need—vulnerable residents from all backgrounds, cultures, races, and creeds, who span the generations and face complex health needs and social, economic, and environmental challenges. In reporting Community Benefits for FY 2019, we respectfully submit this supporting document demonstrating the allocation of $6,050,741 (not including leveraged resources) in support to our communities.

For more information on community benefits activities, contact:

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