



MelroseWakefield Healthcare

In service to our communities

during a global pandemic



2020 Community Benefits Report

Community Benefits

Mission

MelroseWakefield Healthcare's Community Benefits program is committed to building and sustaining a strong, vibrant and healthy community. MelroseWakefield Healthcare dedicates its resources to supporting collaborations with community partners and utilizing community members' input toward improving health services. MelroseWakefield Healthcare employees act as resources and work with the community during emergencies and to improve access to care. The system identifies, monitors, and addresses the unique health care needs within its core communities and promotes healthier lifestyles for residents through health education and prevention activities. Much of the community work at MelroseWakefield Healthcare is performed through engaged, long-term partnerships in which we share resources and ideas to improve the health of our communities together in the most efficient and advantageous framework.

About

MelroseWakefield Healthcare

MelroseWakefield Healthcare is a coordinated system of hospitals, physician practices and community-based services providing care for communities throughout north suburban Boston. We are distinguished by the range of clinical care and services we provide locally for the continuum of care.



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Introduction

In the first months of fiscal year 2020, MelroseWakefield Healthcare, through collaboration and partnerships, provided the services and programs prioritized in the Community Health Improvement Plan to support the health and well-being of our communities. In early March, however it was clear that with the onset of a global pandemic, we needed to refocus our efforts to preventing community spread of the disease and saving lives. As health care providers we are trained and prepared to respond to this type of event, but we could not have anticipated what was to come.

In two short work weeks, we sent our community workers home with phones and computers, instituted safety practices inside our hospitals and off-site locations, prepared inpatient areas for a surge in illness and learned to do everything from making hand sanitizer, to appropriately allocating personal protective equipment (PPE), while also screening for symptoms and caring for staff, patients, and families with this terrible disease. Staff adapted new ways of supporting the community by pivoting our resources to best serve social needs such as ready access to food, clothing and diapers; connections to reduce isolation; and partnering with our communities to address newly identified needs. This also involved creating the system and policy changes needed to support these efforts.

The MelroseWakefield Healthcare 2020 Community Benefits report features the activities, programs and partnerships MelroseWakefield Healthcare embraced in the community in response to the pandemic while continuing to meet our service obligations to the community.

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, support the local equity-based vaccine rollout programs, and will look to strengthen its engagement with both community residents, local agency providers and other local health systems.

MelroseWakefield Healthcare, as a member of Wellforce, is also committing efforts to improving health equity, addressing structural racism, and tackling the unjust allocation of social determinants of health through policy and practice.

Looking forward, improving the quality of health care 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eileen Dern', written in a cursive style.

Eileen Dern

*Director, Community Services
MelroseWakefield Healthcare*

Community Benefits Programs

Community Benefits Programs Overview

Our Community Benefits programs promote the health and well-being of our communities. We work to identify individuals in the community who are in need, including those with complex health needs or who are facing social, economic and environmental disadvantages. We partner with community service agencies to reach out to those in need with direct services and to attend community events to provide health education and free medical screenings. Data is collected to understand and identify the needs of our communities. We report our findings and develop a formal community health needs assessment every three years. This assessment advises the development of our community health implementation plan (as required by state and federal law).

35%

Community-Clinical Linkages

Interventions that occur in community settings and that impact clinical outcomes.

27%

Total Population or Community-wide Interventions

Prevention strategies that target an entire population or subpopulation often identified by a geographic area such as a neighborhood, city, or county.

6%

Infrastructure to Community Benefits

Investments in institutions working together on planning, implementing, or evaluating Community Benefits programs.

11%

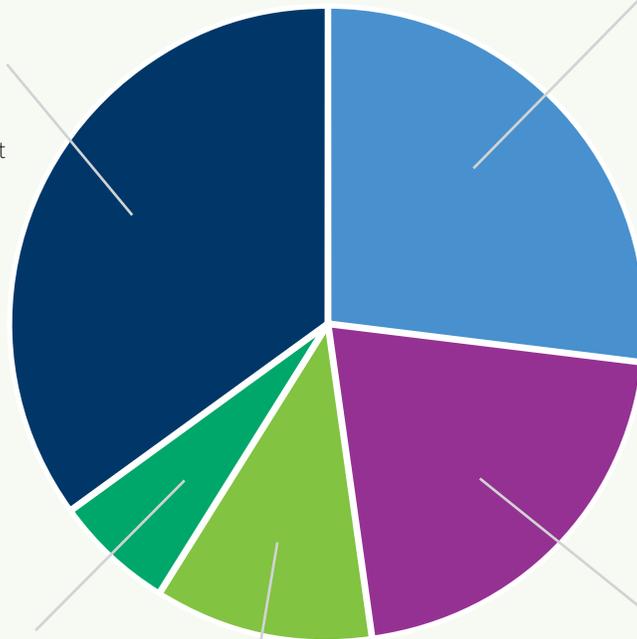
Access Coverage and Supports

Programs designed to increase access to health insurance and health care services for individuals, especially persons living in poverty and other vulnerable populations.

21%

Charity Care

Financial assistance to patients to provide care to all in need.



Community Programs that Support the Current Attorney General's Guidelines

In 2018, The Massachusetts's Attorney General's Office updated the Community Benefits Guidelines to reflect the significant changes in health care and underscore the continued value of Community Benefits programs since the last set of guidelines were released.

According to the Massachusetts Attorney General, "In the last decade, evidence has become even more clear that the utilization of medical services is not the primary determinant of community health. Rather, the social conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age play a key role in determining health outcomes and health disparities. As the health care system shifts to a 'population health' framework for payment and delivery system reform, hospitals and HMOs are working hard to engage in new opportunities to keep patients healthy by addressing social and environmental factors. The role of effective Community Benefits programs in addressing such unmet public health needs and promoting health equity has never been more critical."

MelroseWakefield Healthcare proudly supports the guidelines by offering the following community benefits programs and services.

Summary of FY20 Community Benefits Programs

Access/Coverage Supports

- Transportation assistance
- Behavioral health community phone line
- Patient financial navigators
- GI navigators
- Breast health navigators
- Interpreter services

Community-Clinical Linkages

- Continuing medical education (CME)
- Blood drives (*paused*)
- EMT education (*paused*)
- Internships (*paused*)
- Student placements (*paused*)
- Center for Professional Development
- Support groups
- Cancer registry
- High school athletic training program (*paused*)

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
- In-kind space (*paused*)
- 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 (*online*)
- Creative Coping: New Mothers' Group (*online*)
- Baby Care programming (*online*)
- Breastfeeding classes (*online*)
- Parenting education (*outside live & online*)
- Safe at Home (*online*)
- Safe Sitter (*online*)
- CPR/First Aid training (*paused*)
- Diabetes education (*paused*)
- Nutrition education (*paused*)
- Cancer education and health screenings (*paused*)
- Bone and Joint Camp (*paused*)
- Health Minutes and Blog
- Shadow/mentoring programs (*paused*)
- Community health lectures (*online*)
- Baby Cafes (*online*)
- Senior citizen lunches (*paused*)
- Community dinners (*paused*)
- Healthy Families/Mass Home Visiting Initiative (*online*)
- North Suburban WIC (*by phone*)
- Aging in Balance (*online & by phone*)
- Mothers Helping Mothers Closet
- Food drives (*paused*)
- Holiday donation drives (*delivered*)
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in Harmony (*online*)
- North Suburban Child and Family Resource Network (*outside live & online*)
- Mobile Food Market (*delivery*)

Programs added

- Covid-19 testing
- Preparations for vaccine rollout
- How to Zoom and other classes

2020 Community Benefits Highlights

Mission Aligned Community Benefits Advisory Council Membership

The MelroseWakefield Community Benefits Advisory Council added four new members in FY 2020 to meet current engagement standards set by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Attorney General's Office. New members represent Housing Families, Greater Boston Food Bank, Hallmark Health Visiting Nurse Association and MelroseWakefield Healthcare Board of Trustees.



Mystic Valley Regional Behavioral Health Coalition

The continuing need for coordinated services to address behavioral health needs in the community prompted the launch of a Regional Behavioral Health Coalition in December 2019. The Regional Behavioral Health Coalition convening partners include Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan, MelroseWakefield Healthcare, the Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Member agencies include local police, fire and municipal leaders, as well as many organizations. The membership reflects the ongoing need for addressing behavioral health needs in our community.

Medication Assisted Treatment

Employed physicians in Tufts Medical Center Community Care practices continue to offer a Medication Assisted Treatment program for substance use treatment 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. MelroseWakefield Healthcare was mentored in this work by providers at Boston Medical Center and Cambridge Health Alliance.

Unfortunately due to the pandemic, the Group OBAT component of the program was not able to start. We hope to offer the group option in the coming year.



Free Pop-Up Clothing Closet

The North Suburban Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program has offered a lightly-used clothing and baby care closet for families in need. During the pandemic, the closet became a delivery service in collaboration with community partners to serve more than 50 families monthly.

Financial Navigators

Financial counselors at MelroseWakefield Healthcare recorded a total of 24,824 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, and MelroseWakefield Healthcare Financial Assistance Program; 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.

Community Health Initiative Behavioral Health

In March 2020, Shields Surgery Center Medford in a joint venture with MelroseWakefield Healthcare announced that it would award \$120,000 in grants during the initial year of a four-year grant allocations program to eight Massachusetts-based programs as part of their Community Health Initiative.

The eight recipients include: the Medford Board of Health, the City of Melrose and the Town of Wakefield Board of Health, the NAN Project, MetroNorth YMCA , the Joint Committee for Children’s Health Care in Everett, the City of Malden, the Boys & Girls Club of Wakefield/ Stoneham, and Riverside Community Care.

This is the first set of Community Health Initiative (CHI) awards that will be made under the *Determination of Need Program* from the state. The CHI Funds provide an opportunity for Massachusetts organizations to address the root causes of health inequities in communities across the state. The funds are committed to disrupting and removing barriers to equity in health care such as racism, poverty, and power imbalances. Through community-centered policy, systems, and environmental change approaches, the grants help provide resources to engage residents and enhance the quality of access to health care in Massachusetts.

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“We are thrilled to be partnering with MelroseWakefield Healthcare and the physician community to provide these grants to the deserving recipients...Enhancing equity and access to quality health care is one of our goals so we are excited to help enable the initiatives put forth by the eight recipients.”

Tom Shields
Chief Executive Officer, Shields Health Care Group

In Service to the Community

The Community Benefits activities of MelroseWakefield Healthcare are anchored in the roots of the health system and have been for more than 35 years. We are committed to our community residents and groups finding 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. This was especially true in 2020 as we pivoted to address community needs in unique ways.

Pandemic Response: Addressing Community Hunger

Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, in eastern Massachusetts, one adult in 13 and one child in 11 were food insecure. With the economic downturn and rise in unemployment, food insecurity has risen by 59% in this area with one in eight adults and one in six children food insecure. During this same period, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) applications rose by 360% in Massachusetts and The North Suburban Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program, administered by MelroseWakefield Healthcare caseload increased by more than 9.7%.

We continue to address community hunger as a health improvement strategy. Over the past ten years the WIC program has opened a small food closet, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard to serve immediate food needs



Malden Mayor Gary Christenson with volunteers and MelroseWakefield Healthcare staff at the monthly Mobile Food Market.



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 Food Market serves hundreds of families each month.

With the physical distancing requirements of COVID-19, by April 2020 the Mobile Food Market was no longer able to operate as a fresh air distribution site for food.

Despite the restrictions, our community needed food and our health system needed to seamlessly pivot to create a new service delivery model. Supported by the City of Malden Board of Health, a new service model was developed — packing bags of ten to twelve non-perishable and lightly perishable foods that we began delivering to individuals and agencies in the community.

Since April 2020, we have partnered with local housing sites, senior centers, immigrant service agencies, faith-based organizations, and many others to deliver 400–650 bags of nutritious food each month. More than 3,700 families have been served since the beginning of the pandemic.

Vaccine Response

- Supported Wellforce’s Vaccine Hesitancy Campaign
- Delivered vaccine education to more than 25 organizations serving vulnerable populations
- Provided education with Cambridge Health Alliance through Zoom for the City of Medford
- Supported the Greater Malden Asian American Community Coalition providing vaccine outreach in the community
- Worked with the local Board of Health Directors for vaccine distribution to the most vulnerable, some examples:
 - Registration/transport for Medford elders
 - Provided vaccinators to Malden health clinics
 - Offered multiple vaccine clinics at a Malden Church serving the Haitian community, providing over 100 vaccines.



At a vaccine clinic serving over 100 Haitian community members, our volunteers worked with our community partners to remove barriers to vaccination for at-risk community members.

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
Bridge Recovery Center
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
Community Servings Inc.
Communitas
Criterion Early Intervention
Cross Cultural Communications Inc.
Customized Communication Inc.
Doucet's Remodeling
Elder Services of Merrimack Valley
Eliot Community Human Services
Everett CFCE Grant Program
Faith-based organizations
Families First
Friends of Middlesex Fells Reservation
Friends of Oak Grove
Greater Malden Asian American Community Coalition
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
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 YWCA
Mystic YMCA and Mystic Market
Mystic Valley Regional Behavioral Health Coalition
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.
Riverside Community Care
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
Zonta Clubs of Malden and Medford
Zoo New England — Stone Zoo

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