COVID-19
Answering the Call to Serve

Community Health & Well-Being
COVID-19 RESPONSE
COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Trinity Health is committed to serving vulnerable communities across the United States. Many of the communities that we serve are impacted by structural racism and historical disinvestment, which has resulted in significant impoverishment and inequities.

We serve these communities by providing health care services and working to address their social and economic needs. We aim to improve equity, which requires significant investment by us and by other community partners. It is only through this work that we can work to secure our first core value, reverence: we honor the sacredness and dignity of every person.

In response to COVID-19, CHWB efforts mobilized national infrastructure to assess the most urgent needs in communities served by Trinity Health. Trinity Health ministries strengthened partnerships with community based organizations, and collaborated with medical groups and clinically integrated networks providing direct patient care to ensure that patient social needs were met in the community. COVID accounted for nearly $4.9M in programmatic Community Benefit expenses and activities, including, community testing and education, social supports (food, housing, mental health, childcare), etc.

CHWB teams across the country accelerated their social services response by launching Social Care programs, pivoting community education classes to online platforms and/or telephonic check-in. As well as ensuring those most vulnerable have access to medical services, both COVID-19 testing and non-COVID-19 medical services were provided for those who are homeless, uninsured, underinsured or with Medicaid, and/or lack the resources to obtain care.

Finally, CHWB co-led the development of a comprehensive support system for our front-line healthcare workers to build resiliency and ensure colleagues are safe and supported.

“The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated Trinity Health’s work to deepen partnerships with emergency food and shelter providers. Not only do our patients need these services, so do many of our colleagues and their families who have faced unemployment and/or illness, and need these safety net services to survive.”

-Jaime Dirksen, vice president, community health and well-being
Trinity Health’s Transforming Communities Initiative (TCI) launched in March of 2016, as an innovative funding model in eight communities to reduce tobacco use and childhood obesity, and address social influencers (determinants) of health. TCI was led by a community-based organization in partnership with a local Trinity Health hospital to advance policy, system and environmental change strategies as the key drivers to improving health. In late March, 2020, grantees were asked to pivot their resources to respond to COVID-19 needs. TCI communities swiftly shifted their focus to addressing food insecurity, healthcare worker protective equipment, supporting closed schools to effectively reach children, mental health interventions and emergency aid/financial assistance directly to individuals in need. The swift and strategic action of these communities was tremendous. Overall, TCI communities redirected nearly $520K to support COVID-19 related needs.

Without increased support from trusted community partners like Trinity Health, our patients and colleagues may not have access to the resources necessary to meet basic human needs. CHWB teams actively worked to increase local resources to respond to the pandemic. Hospitals prioritized fundraising efforts to increase capacity to respond to social needs, social influencers of health, behavioral health support, access to healthcare and reducing COVID-19 disparities. Collectively, Trinity Health hospitals raised over $6.4 million in grant funding to increase support for the people we serve, colleagues and communities.

GRANT HIGHLIGHT:
TRINITY HEALTH PIVOTS GRANT FUNDING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY COVID-19

TCI FUNDING TO SUPPORT COVID-19 RELATED

- $237,514 Food Support
- $107,019 Emergency aid to individuals/families
- $78,295 COVID Community Engagement
- $71,813 Pre-K-12 Education Support
- $13,854 Personal Protective Equipment
- $9,000 Mental Health Intervention

TOTAL Nearly $520,000

GRANT FUNDING TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO NEEDED RESOURCES

- $2,000,000 Street Medicine/Safety Net
- $1,500,000 Social Needs
- $1,300,000 COVID-19 Support
- $1,100,000 Tobacco Control
- $400,000 Behavioral Health
- $400,000 Social Influencers of Health

TOTAL Over $6.4 Million
Communities of color, and people who are poor and underserved, have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 infections and death. The nature of how COVID-19 spreads makes it important to understand patients’ social circumstances. For example, living and working situations impact patients’ exposure, contraction and the spread of the virus. Awareness of social influencers of health (SIOH) helps to protect our most vulnerable communities. To ensure patients and colleagues are supported, Trinity Health launched social care at nearly every ministry. Social care is a virtual and/or physical location connecting patients, colleagues and/or community members to local social services such as:

- Food
- Housing
- Financial assistance
- Medication assistance
- Access to medical care

Social Care also regularly monitors the availability of ministry and community-based social care resources by maintaining the accuracy of Trinity Health’s Community Resource Directory (communityresources.trinity-health.org), an online portal to find local resources to meet the needs of our patients, colleagues and those living in the communities we serve.

These services and tools provide a tremendous amount of support to those living in our communities who are struggling to meet their basic needs.

SOCIAL CARE MADE OVER
185,000 CONNECTIONS* TO FOOD, HOUSING, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND PRIMARY MEDICAL CARE

SOCIAL CARE CONNECTED WITH NEARLY
26,000 PATIENTS* CONFIRMED OR SUSPECTED TO HAVE COVID-19

COVID-19 GUIDANCE CREATED
• SOCIAL CARE AND COMMUNITY RESOURCE DIRECTORY OVERVIEW
• SOCIAL CARE TOOLKIT
• SOCIAL NEEDS SCREENING ADAPTATION GUIDANCE HTTPS://BIT.LY/SOCIALNEEDSSCREENINGADAPTATIONGUIDANCE

*DATA FROM MARCH-SEPTEMBER 2020
St. Joseph Health System, Indiana was one of the first hospitals to launch Social Care. Their program offers a wide array of services, including outreach to patients under investigation for COVID-19, connection to social services in the community, access to community health workers for the most vulnerable patients and nurses offering community (and sometimes home-based) COVID-19 testing.

“To address patient needs, the CHWB team created partnerships with local churches and charities,” said Latorya Greene, manager, community health & well-being and tobacco initiatives. “As a result, we have personally delivered hundreds of food boxes as well as tote bags filled with disinfectant cleaning supplies, masks, hand sanitizers, paper towels, toilet paper and toys donated by local churches. Our CHWB team delivered food and supplies to families needing them to survive in quarantine while not working.”

Holy Cross Health Hospital Holy Cross Health in Ft. Lauderdale has a robust CHWB team of nurses, nurse practitioners, and community health workers responding to the pandemic. The team is responsible for following up on all individuals seeking testing at Holy Cross Health’s emergency and ambulatory locations who are not insured or a member of the APM. These individuals often need connection to primary care, medications, assistance with public benefits, and food resources. Additionally, the team is responding to COVID-19 positive patient needs, providing comprehensive care management – bringing food, sanitation, and personal protection supplies to individual homes and providing medical consultation – to ensure those who are COVID positive can protect their family members and get healthy themselves. Discussions and guidance about current research studies being conducted at Holy Cross Health and plasma donations are woven into conversations with positive patients during their healing process, enabling them to contribute towards the well-being of others in the community. Not only is the team responding to the needs of those in the community, they are also leading the collection and distribution of frontline worker food and personal protection equipment supply donations. The combined team efforts have led to more than 48,000 social care and PUI encounters.
Saint Alphonsus Health System (SAHS) in Boise, Idaho, launched Social Care in mid-April, conducting outreach to patients under investigation, connecting patients to social services and assisted the City of Boise to transition a 106-bed hotel to isolation units for those who are unsheltered and/or unable to isolate in their current living situation.

Additionally, Social Care leveraged data collected to impact public policy and public funding. SAHS shared 2020 community health needs assessment data and information on how many SAHS Social Care calls and Community Resource Directory searches were housing-related with state legislators. The data shows that not only is affordable housing a top need pre-COVID, affordable housing has become a top need among residents across the service area since the pandemic began. SAHS focuses on housing as a health care concern because of the many implications unstable housing can cause. In early June, the Idaho legislators voted to approve up to $15M for rental and utility assistance to be disseminated through the Idaho Housing and Finance Association.
The COVID-19 crisis presents unprecedented potential for post-traumatic stress (PTS) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among our colleagues. Led by Tom Peterson, vice president, safety, and co-led by Julia Kyle, director, safety net strategy & performance, and Kelly Putnam, director, culture change and engagement, the Colleague Care program kicked-off system-wide in June based on the Journal of the American Medical Association’s (JAMA) Five Requests. The program includes Colleague Care Teams to ensure that all colleagues, and particularly those working in highly stressful and demanding units, are supported during the COVID-19 crisis through a wide range of onsite, supportive and comfort services designed to alleviate some of the emotional and physiological stressors that could negatively impact our caregivers.

Two CHWB leaders, Deb Welch, vice president, mission and community health & well-being at St. Joseph Health System in Syracuse, NY as well as Brian Pierson, vice president, community health & well-being at Mt. Carmel Health System, are the accountable executives for the colleague care program at their respective hospitals along side Safety and Total Rewards Benefits & Well-Being.

Several Trinity Health hospitals are actively engaged in Resiliency Rounding on colleagues in high-volume, high stress areas either in person, virtually or telephonically. The main purpose of Resiliency Rounding is to provide Trinity Health colleagues with a real-time human connection that delivers purposeful active listening and empathy. Colleagues requesting additional resources or support are referred to the Trinity Health Resource Directory, Employee Assistance Program (Carebridge), Behavioral Health Services, Human Resources or other available resources, per his or her request.
RESPONDING TO FOOD NEEDS

As of early June, more than 21 million people (13.3% unemployment rate) have lost their jobs – leading to a dramatic increase in demand for emergency food and resources like shelter, medication and social support. According to United States Department of Agriculture, in 2018, 14.3M households were food insecure. At times during the year, these households were uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources for food.

Since COVID-19 requests for emergency food assistance are only increasing, food banks across the country are reporting shortages in staffing, supply and funding necessary to support the increase and states are struggling to process emergency enrollments in public benefits like unemployment, Medicaid and SNAP. In response to this crisis, CHWB teams across the country have expanded or launched new food programs.

The CHWB team at St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne, PA opened the HELP Center, a 8,000 sq ft facility that stores non-perishable foods and goods. Through a coordinated funding model, multiple non-profits, including St. Mary, contribute financially and organizationally to the HELP Center ensuring that basic needs of Buck’s County residents are met. Additionally, St. Mary’s spearheads weekly food distribution events serving nearly 1,500 households weekly.

“People in this situation don’t have the luxury of just going to the store or ordering food online whenever they want,” said Joann Dorr, manager, community health & well-being, St. Mary Medical Center.

“I would have nothing without this program right now,” said one community member. “Please keep it going. I can’t stock up because I don’t have enough money to do that.”

St. Mary’s Social Care made over 60,000 connections since the pandemic began.
Proviso Partners for Health (PP4H), in partnership with Loyola Medicine, Maywood, Illinois responded to the communities’ rapidly growing COVID-19 related food access crisis by expanding and scaling its proven VeggieRx model with its partner Chicago Botanic Garden - Windy City Harvest (WCH). PP4H also initiated The Emergency Food Access Initiative that procures, assembles and delivers no-cost 10 lb. bags of fresh produce sourced from local farms as well as pantry staples and dry goods, to 200 families weekly in May. Since the program launched, PP4H distributed a total of 1,520 bags of high quality food to over 800 Maywood households. PP4H has relied on our volunteers to drive and deliver produce bags to the doorsteps of our Maywood recipients.

Saint Agnes Medical Center partnered with Fresno Metro Ministry, the TCI lead community agency, to support Food to Share, a community food partnership that provides unique opportunities to address both food insecurity and environmental solutions. Food to Share partners with local farms, schools to collect uneaten food to redistribute to organizations to ensure families in need have access to nutritious food. This program combats hunger and increases access to healthy food in underserved neighborhoods that are represented by high concentrations of poverty and communities of color. Since the pandemic started, Food to Share has been able to deliver 18 organizations reaching approximately 1,800 households per month.
GROUP EDUCATION

Trinity Health hospitals offer a variety of group based education ranging from prenatal classes to senior fitness to diabetes prevention and tobacco cessation. These classes were originally designed as in-person sessions to allow for peer support and social connection, however when the pandemic hit, CHWB teams rapidly assessed how to offer these important classes virtually. Participants were engaged to see if they had the technology and interest to do virtual or on-line classes. Overwhelmingly, participants were interested and began engaging in these courses virtually. Our hospitals now continue to offer these classes to provide the engagement that our patients and community members desire thus reducing social isolation.

TOBACCO CESSATION

“Individual actions, particularly pertaining to smoking and vaping (e-cigarettes), can make a difference in the susceptibility and severity of COVID-19. Now is the time to act; we urge individuals to begin cessation programs for smoking and vaping, and to avoid secondhand exposure,” said Mike Slubowski, president and chief executive officer, Trinity Health.

As the world combats COVID-19, it has never been more important to keep our lungs healthy. One of the best ways to do this is to quit smoking and vaping – and to prevent young people from ever starting in the first place. CHWB has always had a focus on reducing tobacco use as tobacco use is the number reason one for preventable deaths in our country. As COVID-19 attacks the lungs, those who are smokers are at greater risk.

St. Joseph’s Health in Syracuse partnered with St. Peter’s Health Partners, in Albany, and other community partners to launch a virtual version of “The Butt Stops Here” tobacco cessation program. The free seven-week group program is led by a trained facilitator and meets one hour each week.

St. Peter’s has been offering this course in person for years and the pandemic presented an opportunity to expand the use of this evidence-based program across the state by offering it virtually. The virtual experience allows more participants to have access and to increase the opportunity to quit.

“While smoking cessation has long been important for improving health, it is perhaps even more timely now, given our current public health crisis,” said Chris Owens, director of the CNY Regional Center for Tobacco Health Systems. “Experts have suggested that smokers – with their compromised respiratory systems – may face increased risk of developing a serious infection from COVID-19. Quitting now decreases your vulnerability to the disease.”

ENGAGEMENT

Low-income communities and communities of color have limited access to factual information about COVID-19. CHWB teams worked with trusted community partners to develop and deliver materials directly to the community to ensure accurate information and advise is provided.

Loyola University Health System, in partnership with Proviso Partners for Health, offered virtual town halls in both English and Spanish on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 as well as “how to wear a mask” and why we need to social distance.

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Trinity Health has been a national leader in offering the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) at nearly all of our hospitals. NDPP is an evidence based lifestyle change management program, consisting of a year-long group education facilitated by lifestyle coaches. NDPP has screened over 1,000 people for social needs through group and individually modified COVID response strategies.

In March, with the surge of COVID-19 spreading across the country, Trinity Health hospitals transitioned nearly 90% of all in-person cohorts to an online version of the lifestyle change program. Hospitals provided technical assistance, body weight scales and webcams to participants, as needed, demonstrating our commitment to making it easy and creating a successful learning environment. In addition, video recordings of cooking lessons and yoga segments were created to keep participants engaged and on track with their personal goals. As a result of these adaptations, weight loss and physical activity has continued throughout the pandemic.

St. Joseph’s Health System in Indiana noticed a disproportionate number of Latinx being infected with COVID-19. This drove Elizabeth Trevino, NDPP coordinator, to include COVID-19 awareness as part of her participant outreach efforts, including dissemination of bilingual education flyers about how to prevent the spread of COVID and how to access local COVID resources. This also included the inclusion of translation support available to each testing site (provided by a real person – not a translation line), and partnering with local agencies that are widely accessed and trusted within the Hispanic community.

Trinity Health’s NDPP is demonstrating positive outcomes and high enrollments, and a system-wide approach has allowed the development of cross functional delivery teams. For example, due to limited staffing, Iowa and SEMI teams stepped up to serve members in the Albany community through distance learning, which has been well received by participants.

Holy Cross Health in Maryland offers many group education classes with Senior Fit being one of their largest offerings. Classes feature exercise routines to help build strength, improve balance, cardiovascular endurance, and flexibility—essential ingredients to maintaining independence and quality of life. For regular participants, Senior Fit has the potential to help prevent, delay or manage many diseases and disabilities, including arthritis, heart disease, high blood pressure and cancer. It also gives older adults an opportunity to connect with other seniors and exercise their minds, spirits and bodies, which helps to minimize social isolation that is already prevalent amongst older adults and was exacerbated by the pandemic.

The program, which began in 1995, is the largest program of its kind in the region. Today, the free, 45-minute exercise class has grown to 69 classes offered at 24 community based sites each week, serving more than 1,200 seniors 55 and older throughout Montgomery and Prince George’s counties. Since this program is an important activity for the senior community, the CHWB team figured out how to offer this online and more than 800 regular participants have continued attending for social connection to their friends and the physical benefit it provides.
The pandemic has spotlighted America’s lack of affordable housing, which commonly leads to homelessness. According to a March 2020 report by The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), “No state has an adequate supply of rental housing affordable and available for extremely low-income households.” As a result, people and families are “forced to make impossible choices between shelter and food, healthcare and other basic needs.”

People and families experiencing homelessness often share space, without the luxury of extra rooms to isolate people who are sick. Temporary isolation units enable safe social distancing and access to hygiene, which helps patients heal and reduces the spread of infection.

"It’s part of Trinity Health and Saint Francis’ mission to ensure that all populations in our communities have access to care, including during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Lisa Scieffert, manager, community benefit/community outreach at Saint Francis Healthcare. Those who were tested also received multi-lingual education materials and the Mid-Atlantic Social Care information was promoted to encourage residents in need of food, shelter or access to medical care to call for assistance. The State also provided care kits that included hand sanitizer and face masks.

Saint Francis Healthcare, part of Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic in Delaware, teamed up with Recovery Innovations to host testing events for people who are homeless and other vulnerable populations to help address health disparities and educate the community.
Mount Carmel Health System’s Street Medicine Team delivers medical and mental health care on the land and at community sites, as many of the community sites serving the homeless population have significantly reduced services during this pandemic. This team has provided episodic medical treatment in addition to treating and helping people who are exhibiting COVID-19 like symptoms in Columbus. The Street Medicine team also conducts daily outreach across the county to ensure those who are homeless have access to food, clothing and resources. Through the generosity of community partners, the Mount Carmel team distributed over 20,000 free meals to the homeless, at-risk, and underserved of Columbus from April-October.

As part of Mercy Health’s “Healthcare for the Homeless” program, Trinity Health Of New England (THOfNE) worked with the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the local health department and other health care systems to establish temporary units. Of two tent houses, one was reserved for Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) for the coronavirus, while the other tent shelters patients with confirmed cases. Each holds up to 60 beds spaced six feet apart with canvas dividers hanging between each cot.

“Trinity Health is dedicated to serving those who are poor and the most vulnerable, and these facilities provide additional benefits,” said Doreen Fadus, regional executive director, community health & well-being. “The tent houses help to alleviate capacity issues and subsequent delays in care that we’re seeing in emergency rooms because of surges in volume. Having a safe place to recuperate while remaining isolated reduces the spread of the virus.”

“With many soup kitchens closed, these lunches are a lifeline to people living outside.”
- Jalee Helmuth, RN, Street Medicine, Mount Carmel
COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITIES TO REDUCE COVID DISPARITIES

Communities of color and people who are poor and underserved, including the elderly and those living in rural communities and communities experiencing poverty have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Trinity Health’s CHWB teams across the country are leading efforts to reduce COVID-19 disparities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one of the most effective interventions to reducing COVID-19 mortality disparities is identifying those who are infected through testing. Twelve Trinity Health hospitals are conducting community-based testing and/or are providing medical care and education directly to those who are homeless through street medicine and partnerships with homeless shelters.

COVID-19 GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT OUR HOSPITALS

• Prevent and Mitigate COVID-19 Among Those Who Are Poor and Underserved

About 10% of adults in the United States don’t use the internet, according to a Pew Research Center analysis published last year. The digital divide of those without the Internet tends to include seniors, rural residents, those with less than a high school education and households earning less than $30,000 a year.

“It’s great to say go to the computer and look at this website, but (a lot of) people don’t have computers,” said Lillian Schonewolf, vice president of community health and well-being for Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic. “You have to be out there. You can’t sit behind a desk and assume you know what people need.”

To quell fears and squash misinformation, Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic has taken a multipronged approach to provide good information to residents, particularly in neighborhoods with high numbers of older residents, minority residents and low-income households.

The CHWB team delivered over 3,000 informational flyers along with hand sanitizer and masks at laundromats, corner stores and most importantly, by knocking on doors.

“Miss Lil, I don’t like needles,” Schonewolf has heard repeatedly, so she explains to those who may need a COVID-19 test that it requires a nasal swab, which can be uncomfortable, but isn’t a needle, thus trying to make some people less anxious about the test.
Trinity Health has a strong commitment to community engagement. We can’t improve health outcomes or the conditions in our community without strong partnerships and relationships with our patients and community members. Offering services in our communities by those who live in the community and utilizing our community resources to ensure we are able to reach those who are vulnerable and/or isolated are critical elements of our CHWB strategy.

Members of the Marshallese community in Dubuque, IA reported a significant toll among their residents and barriers to traditional services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. MercyOne in Dubuque responded by hiring a Marshallese community member to create educational materials to better support their patient population.

The SAY Detroit Family Clinic, which is managed by Trinity Health, opened a free COVID-19 mobile testing center in late April and is the first testing center in Highland Park, Michigan, a particularly underserved area of Metro Detroit. The testing center, which has tested over 1,000 people, is the result of a collaborative effort led by SAY Detroit and made possible with the experience and resources of Dr. Chad Audi (Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries), Dr. Richard Keidan (EVO Detroit / Detroit2Nepal Foundation), Tawana Nettles-Robinson (Trinity Health), and Michigan Healthcare Professionals. The testing center enables community members to overcome many of the common barriers that diminish access to care, such as lack of doctor referral, transportation and insurance. Patients are accepted by vehicle and on foot. The initial testing phase is prioritizing efforts toward local residents before expanding access to the larger Metro Detroit area.

**TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE FUNDED**

Trenton Health Team in collaboration with St. Francis Hospital partnered with OutFront billboards to place prevention messages throughout Trenton, New Jersey. The COVID-19 prevention messages were developed in response to community feedback about challenges with public health guidelines in the community.
Mission

We, Trinity Health, serve together in the spirit of the Gospel as a compassionate and transforming healing presence within our communities.

Core Values

REVERENCE
We honor the sacredness and dignity of every person.

COMMITMENT TO THOSE WHO ARE POOR
We stand with and serve those who are poor, especially those most vulnerable.

SAFETY
We embrace a culture that prevents harm and nurtures a healing, safe environment for all.

JUSTICE
We foster right relationships to promote the common good, including sustainability of Earth.

STEWARDSHIP
We honor our heritage and hold ourselves accountable for the human, financial and natural resources entrusted to our care.

INTEGRITY
We are faithful to who we say we are.