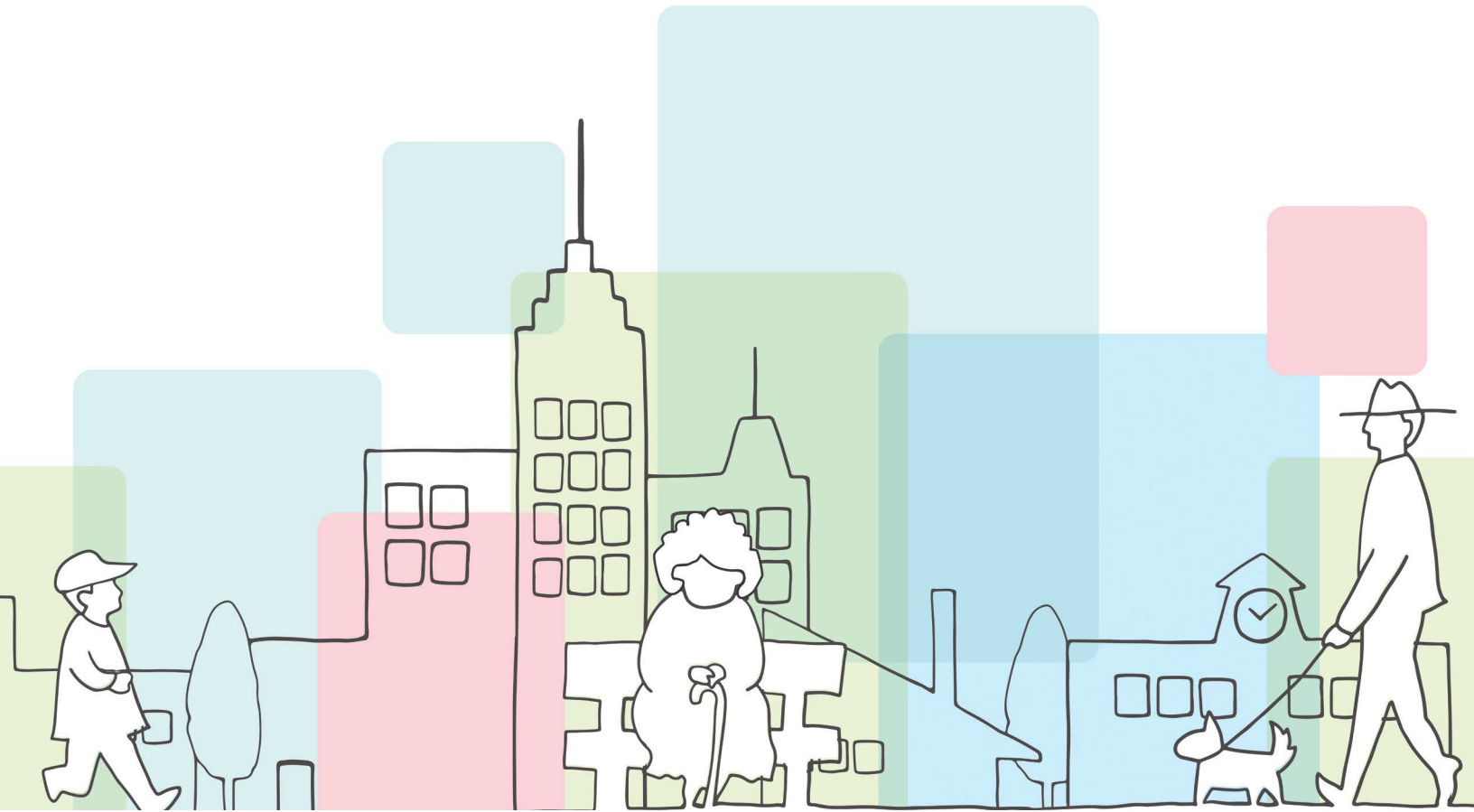


# Health & Hope

The Community Impact of New Jersey Hospitals





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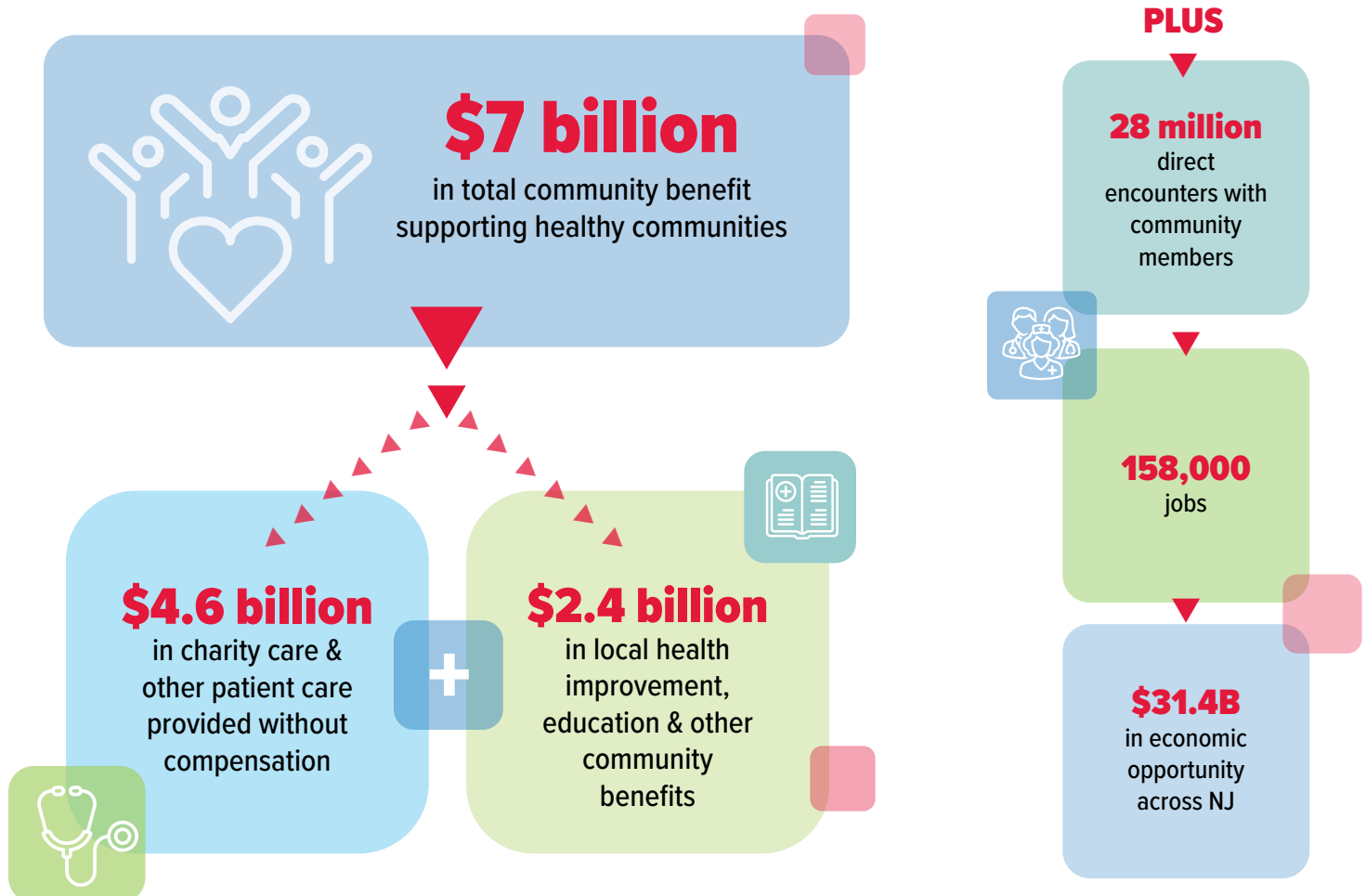
## The Community Impact of New Jersey Hospitals

New Jersey hospitals are building a healthier New Jersey – one neighborhood at a time. Hospitals hold a unique place in their communities, providing round-the-clock care, boosting local economies with jobs and working collaboratively throughout their communities to champion public health.

Hospitals' investments in community health include innovative, adaptive strategies that meet today's most pressing challenges head-on. They help ensure our neighborhoods remain healthy, safe and resilient, and their impact stretches across the state.

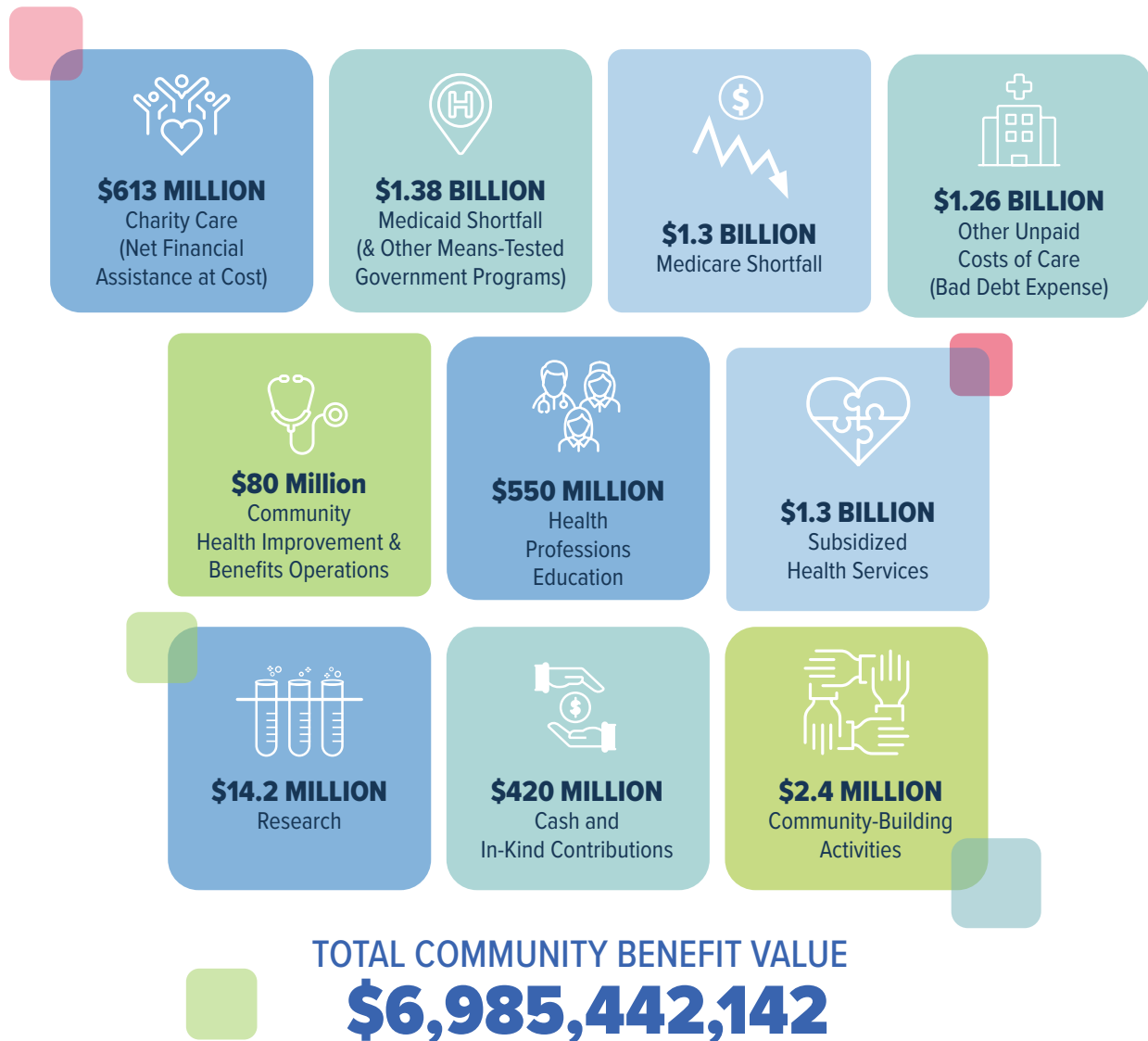
In 2023, New Jersey's hospitals contributed a remarkable **\$7 billion in community benefit investments**. That means about 20 cents of every hospital dollar went toward addressing vital community health needs, such as food access, housing, education, health screenings, support groups and free or discounted care for vulnerable populations. These efforts resulted in 28 million direct encounters with individuals and families across the state. Beyond healthcare services, hospitals continue to serve as a cornerstone of income and opportunity for New Jerseyans – providing 158,000 jobs, commerce with other businesses, taxes and generating a total economic impact of \$31.4 billion statewide. Hospitals' unwavering commitment addresses local priorities, fosters health and wellness and reduces the strain on public services.

### New Jersey hospitals' community impact includes:



# N.J. HOSPITALS' COMMUNITY IMPACT: By the Numbers

Hospitals across New Jersey are invested in improving health and well-being in their communities. Each year, they report these efforts to the Internal Revenue Service, which classifies them as a “community benefit.” Here’s an overview of these critical investments in a healthier New Jersey:



Additional benefits not reflected in these numbers include: hospitals' collaboration with government agencies on public health priorities; hospital jobs and other local economic investments; innovations that give New Jerseyans greater access to clinical trials, technology and other clinical advances; and support of global issues, such as climate change and sustainability, that impact health.

**NOTE:** The community benefit totals presented in this report are based on data collected from IRS filings. Previous NJHA community benefit reports incorporated additional sources, including hospital cost reports and hospital surveys. Due to this shift in data sources, the figures in this report should not be directly compared to those from prior years.

Hospitals' commitment to community impact begins with a Community Health Needs Assessment, conducted every three years. This assessment helps identify the most pressing local health challenges and guides the development of targeted programs and partnerships.

Yet, community needs don't always follow a predictable path. Hospitals must remain agile – ready to respond to emerging issues such as threats to food access, surging demand for mental health services and ensuring equitable access to care during times of crisis.

## Guided by these evolving needs, hospitals focus their community efforts on key program areas, including:

Program	% of Hospitals Delivering This Benefit
Health screenings	100%
Health education/classes	100%
Health & wellness fairs	100%
Transportation	98%
Support groups	98%
Food pantries	96%
Healthy eating & cooking education	96%
Community-based mental health services	92%
Career development	92%
Youth programs	88%
Literacy/health literacy	88%
Community-based vaccination clinics	85%
Violence prevention	83%
Housing support	81%
Human trafficking detection & prevention	71%

The social contributions of New Jersey hospitals are broad and varied – as distinct as our individual communities and the unique needs of their residents. To help share their stories, we've organized this report into the following critical areas where New Jersey hospitals are re-envisioning what it means to create health, well-being and opportunity.





## Access to Care

New Jersey's charity care program provides a unique level of access for patients who lack the resources to pay for their hospital care. Unlike most other states, every N.J. hospital provides charity care services – not just in the emergency department but in every unit throughout the patient's journey. This service comes at a significant loss for hospitals, as the State of New Jersey's subsidy for these services falls short of the actual costs of caring. That shortfall reached more than \$613 million in 2023.

In addition, the Medicare and Medicaid programs also pay hospitals at rates that fail to cover the true costs of the services provided. Medicaid covers 1 in 3 children in New Jersey, 1 in 3 people with disabilities, nearly 1 in 3 pregnant women and 4 in 7 older adults in long term care. In addition, 14% of the state's population – 1.29 million residents – is enrolled in Medicare. These two essential programs cover nearly 65% of all New Jersey hospital patients.

For all three government programs, New Jersey hospitals absorb losses when caring for their beneficiaries. New Jerseyans also are impacted, as government underfunding shifts costs to healthcare consumers' insurance premiums.

New Jersey hospitals stand ready to serve all patients regardless of their financial situation. All told, N.J. hospitals' total unpaid costs of patient care reached more than \$4.6 billion in 2023.

- Having a “medical home” provides individuals a coordinated and holistic approach to healthcare, leading to improved health outcomes, reduced costs and better patient experiences. The Community Outreach Team at Hunterdon Health embarked on a comprehensive effort to connect community members to a medical home, after local data revealed that certain populations were lagging behind in preventive care. Barriers included lack of insurance coverage, difficulties getting time off work for appointments, language differences and a general lack of understanding of the important role of a medical home. Through a communications campaign, webinars and direct outreach to members of the community, Hunterdon Health helped more individuals find a primary care medical home and benefit from affordable, accessible preventive care.



- Health screenings are one of the most effective and efficient tools to catch illness early. When cancer and other conditions are found and treated at earlier stages, there's a greater chance of survival and better overall quality of life. Yet, many people in the community don't have access to these simple and vital tests due to obstacles like lack of transportation or scheduling conflicts due to job demands or childcare. Virtua Health is closing the health screening gap in South Jersey by driving its Mobile Health and Cancer Screening Unit into the communities where it's needed most. The state-of-the-art, 40-foot vehicle is staffed by a board-certified clinician and a technologist who provide onsite screenings and health education for breast cancer, cervical cancer, colorectal cancer and more.





## Social Determinants of Health

Studies suggest that 80% or more of a person's health status is influenced by social, environmental and socioeconomic factors – beyond healthcare services. Consider these facts from the N.J. Department of Health's State Health Assessment Data:

- Nearly 1 million New Jerseyans, including 262,260 children, are food insecure. That means 10.7% of individuals and 13.2% of children live in homes without consistent access to adequate food to be healthy and active.
- Roughly 22% of New Jersey households lack a vehicle to support daily tasks, including going to work, accessing healthcare services and obtaining groceries.
- 1 in 10 New Jerseyans, and about 13% of children, are living in poverty without the financial resources to meet basic daily needs.

The impact of these challenges – poor health status and sicker patients – land at hospitals' doorsteps. N.J. hospitals invest heavily in community health programming to address these "social determinants of health" to help people be well in their communities. Among N.J. hospitals surveyed, 96% provided food pantries to support local residents, 98% provided transportation to medical care and other essential services, and 92% provided career support to help residents pursue jobs and achieve financial security.

These programs span an array of needs that are outside the traditional definition of healthcare, but support daily basic needs and a pathway to further well-being and opportunity.

## Community Impact in Action

- AtlantiCare recognizes the tremendous impact that school gardens can have on children and their community. School gardens provide a wealth of learning experiences as the "outdoor classrooms" enhance and strengthen the learning process, while encouraging healthy eating and physical activity. To date, AtlantiCare has provided mini-grants to over 52 schools to support school gardens. Preschool children are harvesting and eating carrots grown at their center; elementary school students are preparing meals with spinach, basil and beets; and high school students are learning the numerous health benefits to be derived from eating the plant-based foods which they grew from seeds. Through these efforts, AtlantiCare promotes healthy lifestyle behavior changes to help build healthier school communities – one child at a time.

- In the midst of a health crisis, having a stable roof over your head is a critical part of healing and recovery. Through its Healing Homes initiative, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset provides two homes in Somerville for area individuals or families facing a major illness and unable to afford housing. A case manager works with the families to refer them to resources to help them manage their health issues and address needs such as employment, transportation and social services, with the goal of helping them transition to permanent housing within 18 to 24 months. "Through Healing Homes, we not only offer a stable, safe place to live but are helping participants become financially independent and giving them the tools to take care of their health," said Deirdre A. Blaus, the hospital's chief administrative officer.





## Public Health

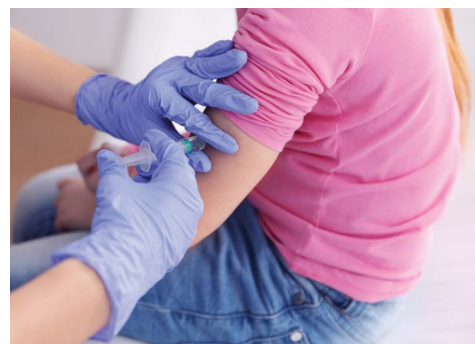
Hospitals are critical partners with public health agencies in protecting the population from threats ranging from infectious disease outbreaks to rising cancer rates. New Jersey's vulnerabilities include:

- Just 70% of New Jersey children have received the recommended doses of universally recommended vaccines, according to State Health Assessment Data.
- The percent of New Jerseyans receiving recommended cancer screenings falls short, including cancer of the prostate (14.7% screened), colorectal (68%), breast (77%) and cervix (79%).
- The 2024-2025 flu season brought very high levels of influenza to New Jersey, filling hospital emergency rooms and inpatient beds. Infectious respiratory illnesses are a significant seasonal threat, especially for older adults, young children and those with compromised immune systems.

Hospitals are constant collaborators with government in meeting the public health needs of their communities. Examples of hospital efforts that ease government's burden in protecting public health include:

- Daily data reporting that supports disease and illness surveillance
- Vaccination clinics for seasonal influenza and recommended immunizations for infants and school-aged children
- Health screenings for early detection of cancer and other diseases
- Preventive screenings such as blood pressure and blood glucoses levels
- Emergency planning and preparedness for emerging diseases, outbreaks and natural disasters
- And health awareness campaigns that reach millions of New Jerseyans with education and information.

- When mobility challenges prevented homebound residents from getting critical vaccinations, Bergen New Bridge Medical Center took the vaccines to them. Since 2022, the hospital's Community Health team has administered over 550 vaccines to homebound individuals, focusing on flu and COVID protection for the most vulnerable residents. In addition, the hospital provided nearly 550 vaccines to veterans through targeted outreach at VFWs and veteran events and provided pop-up mobile clinics in schools and day programs, creating familiar, supportive settings for individuals with special needs to receive vaccinations comfortably. In three years, Bergen New Bridge Medical Center has delivered more than 35,000 vaccine doses at sites ranging from churches to college campuses, protecting individuals – and the broader community – from preventable disease.



- More than 2,800 New Jerseyans lost their lives to drug overdose in 2023. While an improvement from the 3,100 OD deaths recorded in 2022, illicit drug use continues to take a terrible toll on New Jersey families. Inspira Health's approach to substance abuse prevention employs community outreach and proactive intervention to empower individuals, families and organizations with the knowledge and tools to prevent and mitigate harm from substance use disorder.

By providing free drug deactivation pouches to community partners, Inspira facilitates the safe disposal of unused prescription drugs, reducing the risk of misuse and substance abuse. The pouches are also made available to hospital inpatients upon discharge. Additionally, Narcan is made available to eligible ED patients upon discharge; and, through New Jersey's Naloxone365 program, at Inspira's Behavioral Wellness Centers. Access to Narcan empowers patients to respond effectively to opioid emergencies and potentially save lives.





## Workforce and Employee Wellness

New Jersey—and the nation—is facing a critical shortage of healthcare professionals. To sustain the state's high-quality hospital care and meet the needs of an aging population, strategic investments in education and workforce development are essential.

In the present, New Jersey hospitals are actively supporting their current workforce through wellness and resiliency programs, continuing education, scholarships and other forms of professional support.

They also play a vital role in training future physicians by offering robust graduate medical education programs that transform classroom learning into hands-on clinical experience.

In 2023 alone, hospitals invested more than \$550 million in professional development and career advancement – demonstrating a deep, ongoing commitment to the people who power healthcare.

## Community Impact in Action

- Project SEARCH at Atlantic Health System is helping young people find what they're looking for: an opportunity to pursue a meaningful career. It's part of a nationwide employment preparation program for young adults with intellectual and developmental differences. Since 2016, Atlantic Health has helped nearly 100 neurodiverse young people gain the skills and confidence they need to be employable. In fact, 80% of the program's graduates are gainfully employed — with one-third of them working within the Atlantic Health organization. "The main goal of Project SEARCH is to help students with varying disabilities develop transferable and marketable job skills — but it does more than that. The program empowers our students to become more independent and self-determined," said Program Director Josh Bornstein at Overlook Medical Center.
- Capital Health's EMT Academy is a first-of-its-kind in New Jersey, training future EMTs and transitioning them to become full-time employees. The EMT Academy addresses multiple community health needs, including an EMT shortage and a pathway to give Capital Health employees professional development opportunities. The academy enrolls, trains and outfits a new class of trainees roughly every 12 weeks. The program is open to anyone who wants to pursue a new career or those who are just starting out. Those who participate in the training are paid as Capital Health employees and can move on to a full-time job with the hospital following certification.





## Education & Learning

Community health education empowers individuals to take an active role in their health and wellness. It is a vital component of hospitals' community benefit efforts, with programs offered at every hospital in New Jersey. From classroom instruction to community outreach events, these initiatives promote positive health outcomes by:

- Encouraging healthy behaviors to prevent chronic disease and improve overall well-being
- Helping individuals protect themselves through vaccinations and preventive measures
- Enabling informed healthcare decisions and fostering active patient participation.

By improving health literacy, community education enhances quality of life and contributes to lower healthcare costs across the system.

## Community Impact in Action

- The Center for Discovery, Innovation and Development at Children's Specialized Hospital, part of RWJBarnabas Health, offers a disability education service called IncludED. With over 20% of the nation's population living with a disability, IncludED collaborates with national disability leaders, people with disabilities and members of the hospital team to provide training opportunities for area businesses and community organizations. Through disability awareness building and an accessibility evaluation, the IncludED team helps organizations reimagine their offerings, create more inclusive environments and establish a high standard of trust, equity and respect for people with disabilities.
- Your eyes are not deceiving you. That is indeed a giant inflatable colon at Saint Peter's University Hospital. Colorectal cancer is the 4th most commonly diagnosed cancer in the U.S. and the second leading cause of cancer death. But this particular cancer can be prevented with screening and is highly treatable when detected early. Enter the super-sized colon – a central part of Saint Peter's Colorectal Cancer Education and Awareness Program. With Saint Peter's gastroenterologists on hand to answer questions, members of the community can walk through the colon to learn more about human physiology and the importance of identifying and detecting pre-cancerous polyps. The medical team also discusses the importance of early screening, the impact of family history and other factors that contribute to optimal colon health. And before they head home, attendees at these learning sessions can make an appointment for their next colonoscopy.





## Innovation

Healthcare today is both high-tech and high-touch. Cutting-edge technologies are revolutionizing care delivery, while medical breakthroughs are opening new doors for patients and communities alike.

New Jersey, long known as a hub of innovation, is leading the way. Hospitals and health systems across the state are embracing tools like augmented reality, artificial intelligence and 3D printing to enhance care and improve outcomes.

Meanwhile, advances in science – from laboratory research to clinical trials – are bringing new treatments and renewed hope in the fight against life-threatening diseases.

## Community Impact in Action

- Hackensack Meridian *Health* is innovating to give patients convenient, connected healthcare access in the palm of their hand. Its HMH 24/7 app is an AI-driven solution that connects patients to primary care through a seamless integration of virtual and in-person care – one that meets the shift in how patients connect with healthcare. HMH 24/7 offers patients quick and easy access to clinicians for all their primary care needs—sick, chronic and preventive care—right from their phones. Patients receive a dedicated clinician on the platform to oversee their care journey, with every touchpoint captured in the medical record, resulting in a truly connected, personalized primary care experience. It also streamlines tasks for healthcare teams. Automating intake and data entry frees doctors to focus on what matters most: personalized patient care.
- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States, but Atlantic Health is driving critical advancements — in diagnostics, intervention and treatment — that offer new hope for patients. With an ultrathin maneuverable catheter, new bronchoscopy technology called Ion uses robotics to help surgeons reach small lesions anywhere in the lungs for a minimally invasive biopsy. Building on the technology, Morristown Medical Center became the state's first hospital to utilize Ion robotic bronchoscopy in conjunction with the Aliya Pulsed Electric Field Energy Platform for a less invasive treatment for advanced lung cancer. The regimen uses electrical pulses to remove soft tissue tumors, but unlike traditional methods that rely on extreme heat, this novel treatment uses a lower temperature, minimizing damage to surrounding tissue, reducing inflammation and lowering the risk of lung collapse and bleeding. It's now also offered at Overlook Medical Center and Centra-State Medical Center.







## Global Citizenship

Today's challenges extend far beyond traditional healthcare. New Jersey communities face the impacts of climate change, environmental sustainability, human trafficking and emerging infectious diseases.

While hospitals tailor their community benefit programs to meet local needs, the realities of our interconnected world demand a global perspective.

New Jersey hospitals and health systems are rising to this challenge—investing in environmental stewardship, advancing sustainability efforts and protecting the health and safety of diverse populations across the state.

## Community Impact in Action

- St. Joseph's Health has adopted the Blue Campaign, a national awareness and education initiative designed to prevent human trafficking and protect exploited persons. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, team members in the hospital's Emergency Department receive training and implement protocols on detecting and preventing human trafficking, protecting victims and prosecuting traffickers. Human trafficking affects an estimated 27.6 million people worldwide. Many trafficked persons in the United States may interact with the medical system, especially in the Emergency Department, because they lack medical insurance or access to other care. With the fourth busiest ED in the country, the Blue Campaign at St. Joseph's provides clinicians and other staff the tools to engage with victims and get them the help they desperately need.
- The healthcare field accounts for nearly 9% of the nation's carbon emissions – a fact that inspired Hackensack Meridian *Health* to become the first in the nation to achieve Sustainable Healthcare Certification from the Joint Commission. This designation includes rigorous standards and elements of performance to prioritize greener practices and lead the way in sustainability by inspiring and guiding others. As one of the original signatories to the federal government's Climate Pledge, Hackensack Meridian *Health* has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and to achieve net zero by 2050. The system's leadership in sustainability reflects "our dedication to protecting the health of our patients, communities and planet for generations to come," said Hackensack Meridian *Health* President and CEO Robert C. Garrett.





## Jobs and Other Economic Investments

A hospital's presence in the community provides a major shot in the arm for local economies, providing multifold benefits including jobs, salaries and support of other businesses. For every \$1 that a hospital spends on services to patients, \$2.24 ripples through the rest of the economy. New Jersey hospitals employ nearly 160,000 individuals, and each of those jobs supports 2.3 jobs in other businesses and industries, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. In total, N.J. hospitals bolster the New Jersey economy with \$70 billion in economic activity and 347,000 jobs via these multiplier impacts. The opportunities created by hospitals extend to other industries including pharmaceuticals, building trades, utilities, retail and more.

### Community Impact in Action

- The HELIX is coming to New Brunswick, and two New Jersey healthcare systems are among the first partners helping to make the New Jersey Health + Life Sciences Exchange a reality. The HELIX will bring together New Jersey's public, private, and academic sectors to create a world-class hub of innovation and talent pipeline to attract investment and jobs to the Garden State. RWJBarnabas Health and Hackensack Meridian *Health*, along with Rutgers University, are anchor tenants for this ambitious initiative. The project positions New Jersey as a top destination for clinical researchers pioneering transformative approaches to life sciences and creating countless opportunities for a healthier New Jersey.
- Cooper University Health Care's Project Imagine is the largest expansion in Camden County history dedicated to the region's health needs, and it comes with an added bonus: an apprentice opportunity for Camden residents to learn a trade and be part of the construction team. Cooper is partnering with labor unions for carpenters, electricians, sheet metal workers, plumbers and pipe fitters, painters, laborers, tile setters, drywall finishers, operating engineers, roofers, iron workers, masons and glazers in a program exclusively for local residents. Project Imagine is designed to meet the needs of an aging population and a growing demand for healthcare services – while also creating job opportunities in a city with a poverty rate of 35.5%.





“Community benefit” is defined as a planned, managed, organized and measured approach by hospitals to meet community health needs. It includes collaboration with the community to benefit its residents – particularly the poor, disenfranchised and underserved groups – by improving their health status and quality of life and enhancing the overall health and well-being of local communities.

Under reporting guidance from the Internal Revenue Service, these programs generally meet at least one (or often more than one) of the following objectives:

- Improve access to healthcare services
- Enhance the health of the community
- Advance medical or healthcare knowledge
- Relieve or reduce the burden of government or other community efforts.

## The IRS collects hospital data in the following categories:

- “Charity Care” reflects the cost of hospital care delivered to uninsured patients without the means to pay.
- “Medicaid Shortfall” is the difference between hospitals’ cost in caring for Medicaid beneficiaries and the payment received from Medicaid.
- “Medicare Shortfall” is the difference between hospitals’ cost in caring for Medicare beneficiaries and the payment received from Medicare.
- “Other Unpaid Costs of Care” includes bad debt and other expenses in which hospitals provide patient care without receiving payment.
- “Community Health Improvement Services” include community health education, community-based clinical services, healthcare support services and social and environmental improvement services.
- “Community Benefit Operations” refer to activities associated with Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA), community benefit program administration and hospitals’ activities associated with fundraising or grant-writing for their community benefit programs.
- “Health Professions Education” includes clinical settings, internships and programs to provide training opportunities for health professionals, scholarships for health professional education and continuing medical and nursing education.
- “Subsidized Health Services” refers to clinical programs that a hospital provides despite experiencing a financial loss.
- “Research” encompasses studies shared with individuals outside the organization on healthcare delivery; unreimbursed studies on therapeutic protocols; evaluation of innovative treatments; and research papers prepared by staff for professional journals.
- “Cash and In-Kind Contributions” include monetary donations to support community benefit activities and donations of goods, services or resources that support community benefit activities; this may include medical, surgical and pharmaceutical supplies or providing staff to other organizations to conduct training or provide services.
- “Community-Building Activities” include physical improvements/housing, economic development, community support, environmental improvement, leadership development/training for community members, coalition-building and workforce development.

Nonprofit hospitals report their community benefit activities to the Internal Revenue Service annually, as required by federal rules. This report reflects New Jersey hospitals’ 2023 community benefit commitment, as reported on the IRS Form 990 Schedule H.





