

Health Starts Here

2026 New Jersey Hospitals Community Impact Report





Local Communities. Lasting Impact.

**Community
benefit
programming
prevents illness,
improves health
outcomes and
strengthens
communities.**



Hospital community benefit is a commitment to the people of New Jersey.

Every day, in communities across our state, that investment changes lives. It means detecting a serious health condition before it becomes a crisis. It means putting healthy food on a family's table when they need it most. It means protecting children through free immunizations, advancing life-saving medical research, creating pathways to meaningful careers and ensuring that financial hardship is not a barrier to needed care.

While these moments may happen one person, one family or one neighborhood at a time, their impact reaches far beyond a single encounter. They help prevent illness, improve health outcomes, strengthen communities and reduce strain on local and state resources.

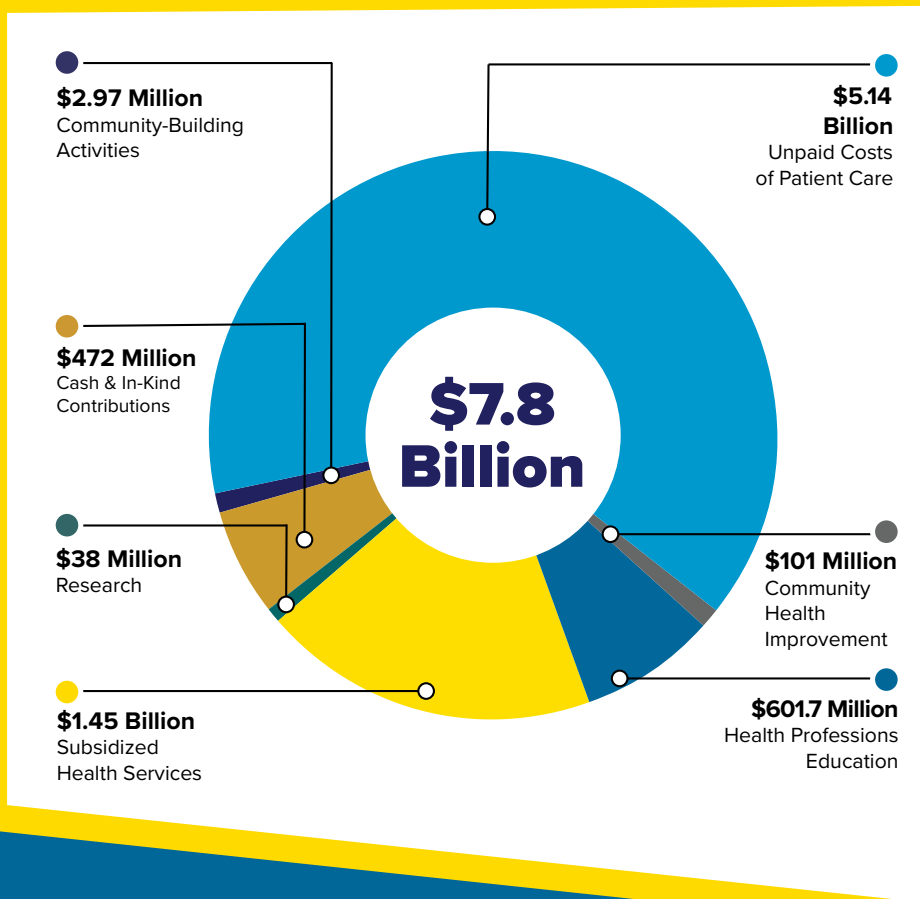


In 2024, New Jersey's hospitals invested \$7.8 billion in community benefit programs, representing approximately 21 cents of every hospital dollar. Behind every dollar is a story. Behind every program is a meaningful impact. Together, these investments create a ripple effect across the state, transforming resources into results, opportunity into well-being and compassionate service into a healthier New Jersey. ■

Health Starts Here

N.J. Hospitals' Community Benefit

N.J. hospitals provided \$7.8 billion in free care, unreimbursed care and community programs that meet local needs and keep care available to every patient, regardless of coverage.



Community Benefit Defined

- **Unpaid Costs of Patient Care** – charity care for uninsured patients without the means to pay, unreimbursed care delivered to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries and other care provided to patients without payment
- **Community Health Improvement Services** – clinical services delivered in community settings, including health education and other support for health and social determinant needs
- **Subsidized Health Services** – clinical programs that hospitals provide at a financial loss, based on community needs
- **Health Professions Education** – clinical training sites, internships, scholarships and other continuing education for healthcare teams
- **Research** – research studies to advance clinical care, treatments and innovation
- **Cash & In-Kind Contributions** – donations of cash, equipment, supplies and staff time to support local health activities
- **Community-Building Activities** – support beyond healthcare services, including housing, workforce development, the environment and other local needs

Building Health



42 million
direct encounters
with community
members



3,775
health
programs
& events



87,148
community
health
screenings

Creating Opportunity



172,000
jobs



\$37.4 billion
in economic
impact that supports
well-being and
creates opportunity

Caring for Our Neighbors

Hospital community benefit activities are deeply personal and local but the collective impact can transform communities and improve health statewide.



Behind the \$7.8 billion in community benefit provided by New Jersey hospitals are more than 42 million individual community interactions between our healthcare organizations and the people, families and communities they serve. That's more than 115,000 individual acts every day.

Nonprofit hospitals report their community benefit activity annually to the Internal Revenue Service. It represents an expansive commitment to local health needs, access to care, workforce development and innovation that brings new treatments and opportunities to our state. Taken together, these commitments by New Jersey hospitals address unmet local needs and fill the access-to-care gap among government health programs.

Here's the breakdown:

- **Unpaid Costs of Patient Care**
– \$5.14 billion (includes charity care for uninsured patients without the means to pay, unreimbursed care delivered to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries and other care provided to patients without payment)

- **Community Health Improvement**
– \$101 million (clinical services delivered in community settings and support for social determinants of health)
- **Health Professions Education**
– \$601.7 million (support for hospital workers, including scholarships, internships, clinical training sites and other continuing education)
- **Subsidized Health Services** – \$1.45 billion (clinical services provided at a loss, based on local community needs)
- **Research** – \$38 million (studies and clinical trials to advance clinical care, treatments and innovation)
- **Cash and In-Kind Contributions**
– \$472 million (cash, equipment, supplies and staff time donated to local municipalities and organizations)
- **Community-Building Activities**
– \$2.97 million (additional support beyond healthcare, addressing needs such as housing, workforce development and the environment).

Each of these contributions is an investment in good health, with the potential to change the lives of the individual and strengthen health across New Jersey.



Focus: Early Detection and Prevention

Hospitals' community benefit drives not just activity, but impact. Community health screening initiatives are a prime example of programming that delivers meaningful health outcomes and population health results. In these case examples, two New Jersey health systems have developed programs for patient follow-through, allowing them to support an individual throughout the next part of the journey — referral to a provider and, if necessary, further care and treatment. It allows them to move beyond the initial community encounter to measure what matters — one person at a time.

Hackensack Meridian Health has taken its AngioScreen initiative directly into the community, providing comprehensive, non-invasive heart and vascular screenings. In just 15 minutes, individuals can learn more about their risks for heart disease and stroke. Depending on the results, what happens next could be critical.

Under this initiative, the encounter doesn't end at the community health screening. The HMH population health team engages individuals in follow-through testing and diagnostics. Standing with the individual through the healthcare journey supports adherence to recommended care and lifestyle changes.

The results speak for themselves: Among 915 community members screened in 2025, 66% had high body mass index and close to half showed risks associated with plaque and hypertension. From that initial community interaction, 42% brought their test results to a physician, 30% received additional testing and 23% received a prescription. A small number required surgery.

Further follow-through and education also helped community members adopt healthier lifestyles, with 42% changing their diet and 32% losing weight.

By extending care beyond the screening itself, this program is transforming community outreach into lasting health impact, helping people identify risks earlier, access needed care and make meaningful changes that support healthier lives.

At *RWJBarnabas Health*, a lifestyle medicine approach combines early detection, education, prevention and ongoing support to help individuals reduce their risk of chronic disease. Through its Community Health service, people identified at community screenings and recommended for follow-up are entered into the electronic health record (EHR), creating a clear pathway to the next steps in their care.

In the program's first year, 57 individuals completed recommended follow-up appointments. Tracking every referral through the EHR shows the system where people fall off. To raise that number, community health workers provide ongoing education and support to connect residents with resources and help them navigate the healthcare system. That ongoing support fosters a patient-provider relationship built on trust, particularly among marginalized populations.

By transforming community screenings into ongoing, personalized support, this outreach is helping bridge gaps in care, improve access to preventive services and turn prevention into progress.

Local Screenings, Systemwide Impact

Multiplied across communities, local health screenings like these initiatives can improve access to care, reduce healthcare costs and create a healthier population — as confirmed in numerous peer-reviewed studies.

Managing chronic conditions:

A 2025 systematic review of 68 studies on community-based interventions for high blood pressure (or hypertension) showed the power of these efforts to improve health status. As published in *BMC Public Health*, researchers concluded that community-level hypertension prevention and control programs in both the U.S. and abroad achieved measurable reductions in participants' blood pressure, compared with usual settings of care. Interventions delivered directly in communities — through health education, screening and referral in locations such as health fairs, places of worship and other trusted community spaces — proved effective in the large majority of studies reviewed. The evidence reinforces what hospitals' community-based outreach demonstrates every day: Meeting people where they live, work and worship, then connecting them to follow-up care, is a proven path to better chronic disease management.¹

Improving access: Efforts by hospitals and health systems to take care directly into the community have proven results in overcoming access barriers. In a seminal 2017 study from the *International Journal for Equity in Health*, a review of U.S. mobile health clinics showed that these community engagements addressed both medical and social determinants of health, establishing a connection to needed clinical care. The analysis further found a link to fewer hospitalizations, shorter hospital stays and no increase in readmissions. The evidence is clear: These community access points create pathways to care that lead to measurable improvements in access, affordability and outcomes.²



Reducing out-of-pocket costs:

A 2025 study published in *JAMA* found that privately insured cancer patients diagnosed at Stage 4 faced monthly out-of-pocket costs about 56% higher than those diagnosed at Stage 0. Earlier diagnosis is often associated with less intensive treatment, lower healthcare utilization and reduced costs for both patients and the healthcare system. Because screening remains the most effective tool for detecting many cancers at their earliest, most treatable stages, hospitals' community-based education and screening initiatives can deliver benefits that extend far beyond clinical outcomes. By helping people access preventive services and timely follow-up care, these programs can reduce financial strain, avoid more costly interventions later and improve the overall value of care.³

1. Azami-Aghdash, Saber; Joudyian, Nasrin; Jafari, Sahar; Karami, Shahim; Rezapour, Ramin (2025) "Assessing Community-Based interventions effectiveness on hypertension prevention and control: a Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *BMC Public Health*.
2. Yu, Stephanie, W.; Hill, Caterina; Ricks, Mariesa L.; Bennett, Jennifer; Oriol, Nancy E. (2017) The scope and impact of mobile health clinics in the United States: a literature review, *International Journal for Equity in Health*.
3. Rose, Liam; Rajasekar, Ganesh; Nambiar, Anjali (2025) Estimated out-of-pocket costs for patients with common cancers and private insurance, *JAMA Network*.

Listening to Communities

Community benefit is not one-size-fits-all. Hospitals' commitments are tailored to local needs, and it all begins with a **Community Health Needs Assessment** in partnership with local stakeholders.



Hospitals' commitment to healthy communities begins with a Community Health Needs Assessment, conducted every three years. Through active listening sessions with area residents, community surveys and collaborations with local nonprofits and other organizations, these assessments help identify the most pressing local health challenges and guide the development of targeted programs and partnerships. Community Health Needs Assessments help ensure that community benefit dollars are invested where they will have the greatest impact – for individuals, for communities and for local and state budgets that benefit from hospitals' focused programming.

The following areas were identified as key areas of need in the latest assessments performed by New Jersey hospitals in conjunction with community partners:

- Mental health
- Access to care
- Chronic disease
- Social determinants of health
- Healthy aging
- Maternal & child health

Here are some of the stories emerging from communities across the state as hospitals turn data into action.



Mental health

True North for Veterans

The True North program at *Atlantic Health* helps men and women who have served in the military readjust to civilian life, whether it has been days, months or years since their discharge. Licensed clinicians help veterans and their family members overcome challenges affecting their goals, daily life and relationships. Therapy is available on an individual, couples or family basis in safe and confidential settings. And, through an extensive referral and patient advocacy service, Atlantic Health helps veterans and their loved ones navigate additional resources among local governments, schools, nonprofits and faith-based organizations — creating a powerful behavioral health ecosystem built on compassion and collaboration.

Through this program, True North helps remove barriers to care, improve access and inspire hope and healing while strengthening collaboration among veteran service providers throughout the community.

Shining a Light on Mental Health

Mental health needs are too often shrouded in stigma, but *Hackensack Meridian Health's* Jersey Shore University Medical Center is bringing mental health into the sunlight. Its annual Community Mental Health Fair, held in a local park, welcomes individuals and families to embrace their mental health. The hospital brings together 40 different community organizations in an event that's equal parts health fair and block party, with food, music and vendors. Community members have opportunities to engage with community health workers and clinicians from the Psychiatry Residency Program at HMH in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

This event demonstrates how physician- and community-led outreach can help reduce stigma, normalize conversations about mental health and connect local individuals and families with resources — before they reach a crisis.



Access to care

Mammography in Motion

University Hospital's Mammography in Motion (MiM) is a community-based program that improves healthcare access through meaningful partnerships, trusting relationships and a mobile unit that meets community members where they live and work. Serving Essex County and neighboring municipalities, MiM focuses on uninsured and underinsured communities where language access, affordability and trust barriers contribute to delayed screening and follow-up.

MiM's outreach model is built on a deliberate partnership strategy: health education and screening opportunities are placed within trusted community settings where residents already seek essential services and support. Partnerships are intentionally developed across three community access points: municipal health departments, faith-based organizations and food distribution sites and other community-based organizations.

From the hospital's mobile mammography center, community members receive culturally responsive, multilingual education through one-on-one conversations; health screenings; and assistance from nurses and lay navigators for any recommended follow-up care. Approximately 21%

of individuals screened require additional diagnostic testing, with a follow-up completion rate of nearly 90% — moving residents from uncertainty to informed action and ongoing engagement in their health.

Dispensing Hope in South Jersey

South Jersey residents who don't have prescription coverage or cannot afford out-of-pocket medication costs have a place to turn through the Dispensary of Hope program at *Inspira Health*. The program helps bridge medication-access gaps for South Jersey residents who may otherwise struggle to obtain needed prescription medications.

Inspira partners with the non-profit Dispensary of Hope to provide eligible patients access to free medications through Inspira's retail pharmacies at Mullica Hill and Vineland. Individuals who meet program eligibility guidelines and lack adequate prescription coverage can receive medications from a defined formulary of available drugs.

The health system launched the program after its Community Health Needs Assessment identified medication access challenges, including medication-access deserts in some communities across Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland counties. By addressing financial barriers to medication access, the program supports continuity of care, advances health equity and may help reduce the risk of avoidable hospital readmissions and emergency department visits associated with patients being unable to obtain needed medications.



Chronic disease

Caring for Our Brothers

Engaging men in preventive health can be challenging, which is why trusted community partnerships play such an important role in reaching those who may be less likely to seek routine care. [Valley Health System](#) joins with Agape Christian Ministries Church in Paterson for an annual men's health event — providing education, conversation and connection.

Valley team members share practical information on stroke prevention, cancer screenings, diabetes prevention, mental health, stress management and sleep health. Through interactive activities and one-on-one discussions, attendees learn about stroke warning signs, recommended screenings, healthy lifestyle habits, sleep apnea and ways to better manage stress and overall wellness.

The event also highlights the importance of routine screenings and early detection, particularly for conditions that disproportionately affect Black men, such as prostate cancer.

By partnering with trusted community organizations, Valley is helping expand access to culturally responsive health education and empowering men to take steps toward preventing chronic disease, improving health outcomes and living healthier lives.

Diabetes Support, Close to Home

In New Jersey, an estimated 37% of adults are living with pre-diabetes — and most of them do not know it.

To help address this chronic disease, [Bergen New Bridge Medical Center](#) has partnered with the Diabetes Foundation to expand access to education, resources and support for underserved residents throughout Bergen County. Through this partnership, patients living with diabetes or prediabetes receive guidance and tools to better manage their health, make informed lifestyle choices and prevent complications.

The collaboration also strengthens community outreach efforts by bringing diabetes education and screening resources to health fairs and local events, helping reach people where they live and work. As a safety-net hospital, Bergen New Bridge recognizes that strong community partnerships are essential to improving health outcomes. Together with the Diabetes Foundation, the Medical Center is making a meaningful difference in the fight against chronic disease and building a healthier community for all.





Social determinants of health

Feeding Young Minds

More than 40,000 Newark students now enjoy healthy fresh foods in the school cafeteria, thanks to a community collaboration from [RWJBarnabas Health](#), Newark Public Schools and the food service company Brigaid. Now in its second year, the initiative embeds highly trained professional chefs directly into Newark school cafeterias to work alongside district food service teams. The program is designed to provide more opportunities for nutritious, appealing meals prepared from scratch using fresh, New Jersey-grown fruits and vegetables, whole grains and high-quality ingredients.

The program ensures that all Newark students are now offered fresh, healthy, scratch-cooked meals at least once per week, with the goal of expanding to daily offerings.

Child food insecurity remains a significant public health challenge nationwide, particularly in underserved communities, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, with more than 13 million children lacking consistent access to enough nutritious food. About 84% of the district's students rely

on free and reduced-price school meals — which often make up half of their daily calories during the academic year.

Stable Housing, Better Health

Stable housing supports health, stability and long-term well-being and is a key priority within AtlantiCare's Vision 2030 *Serving Community* strategic pillar. [AtlantiCare's](#) strategy addresses immediate needs and expands long-term housing availability.

AtlantiCare is the state's first and only health system credentialed through the Housing Supports Program. The health system works with all five of New Jersey's Medicaid Managed Care Organizations to help individuals with Medicaid find and sustain secure housing. And it's producing early impact: Since April 2026, the program has served more than 115 people in Atlantic and Cape May counties and helped 15 secure stable housing. Trained care managers provide similar support for people without Medicaid.

Additional housing support services include navigation, application assistance, employment and financial resource connections, utility referrals, budgeting and home-maintenance education.

AtlantiCare also expands local housing by supporting rehabilitation and construction through a community development corporation and partnerships with developers on larger projects. And, to support its own team members, the health system provides a down payment assistance program to help employees pursue homeownership.

Food for the Soul

After a hospital stay, proper nutrition is vital for healing and recovery, but nurses and social workers at [Hunterdon Healthcare System](#) identified a gap in food access for discharged patients. That discovery launched a new community partnership: the Food2You program.

Hunterdon works in tandem with the Flemington Area Food Pantry to identify homebound individuals in need of nutrition support and package nutritious groceries and personal care items, specifically tailored to the individual's health needs.

Pantry volunteers, who refer to the clients as "neighbors," deliver the food directly to the patient's home. Over time, these volunteers build meaningful relationships, fostering trust and a sense of community. As a result, the program's impact extends far beyond nutrition. Social isolation is a significant concern in rural Hunterdon County and is associated with increased stress, worsening vital signs and higher rates of depression and cardiovascular disease. The consistent presence of a trusted volunteer provides companionship, reassurance and a sense of belonging when it's needed most.





Healthy aging

Supporting Informed and Empowered Seniors

Healthy aging is a choice that requires nurturing of the body, mind and spirit. That's the premise behind the Better Health Program at [Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton](#). This free membership for individuals ages 65 and older offers an array of programs that combine health education with social interaction for a coordinated approach to wellness.

Lunch-and-learn events, led by geriatric and internal medicine clinicians, address issues such as heart health, memory exercises, healthy eating and the popular Medication Brown Bag – a personalized safety check review to ensure proper usage of prescriptions and other meds. The program also empowers seniors in their daily lives, with programs on computers, devices and technology, along with ways to spot common scams that target older adults.

Healthy aging is more than growing older. For participants in this vibrant program, it means staying connected, informed and empowered to live life to the fullest.



Maternal & child health

Stopping Stillbirths

New Jersey loses 633 babies a year on average to stillbirth. To help educate expectant parents, [Saint Peter's University Hospital](#) has embraced Count the Kicks, an evidence-based stillbirth prevention program that educates expectant parents about the importance of paying attention to their baby's movements in the third trimester of pregnancy. As a *Count the Kicks Champion*, Saint Peter's educates expectant parents and community members — in coordination with their healthcare teams — on how to track their baby's "normal" movement in the womb. If the baby's pattern changes in the last months of pregnancy, this could be a sign of potential problems, and parents are encouraged and empowered to report it to their healthcare provider.

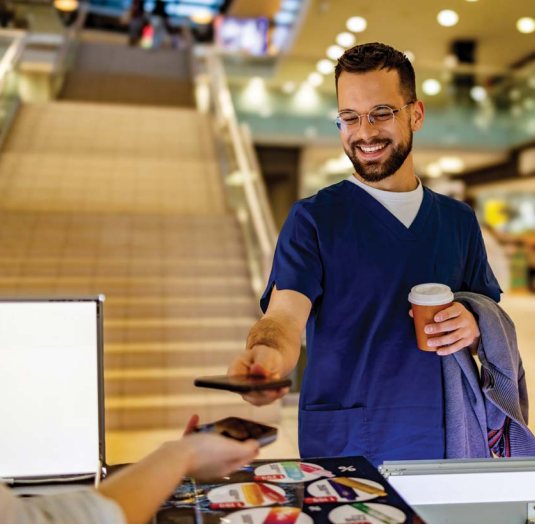
Count the Kicks is just part of a full slate of education programs Saint Peter's provides to new and experienced parents — and grandparents and siblings as well. It's all part of the hospital's commitment "to welcome healthy babies into the arms of their loving parents," said Pam Harmon, DNP, RN, director of the Women and Children's Division.

Help for Opioid-Dependent Women

For My Baby and Me is a specialized opioid treatment program to support opioid-dependent pregnant women and their infants — developed by [Capital Health](#) in a true community collaboration with partners from Catholic Charities Diocese of Trenton, HomeFront, Inc., the Rescue Mission of Trenton and The Trenton Health Team. The program provides a comprehensive range of services encompassing substance use disorder treatment, prenatal and postpartum medical/obstetric care and recovery support.

But the support doesn't stop there. The program offers a myriad of services aimed at addressing social determinants that would otherwise act as barriers to these women successfully obtaining treatment. Beyond direct medical care, the partnership helps participants access temporary housing, education support, employment readiness and training, food, clothing and childcare to ensure a holistic approach to recovery and support.





Creating Opportunity

As vital sources of jobs, salaries, taxes and other economic activity, hospitals' contributions support the well-being of individuals and communities, beyond community benefit programming.

A hospital is more than a healthcare provider. It is a cornerstone of economic vitality in the communities it serves. Hospitals create jobs, generate income and help sustain a network of local businesses and industries that help New Jersey thrive.

Beyond the community benefit totals in this report, hospitals contribute to New Jersey's economic well-being through jobs creation, taxes and commerce with other

businesses both large and small. This direct economic impact reached \$37.4 billion statewide in 2024. And, every hospital dollar spent produces an additional \$1.27 in economic activity across the region. New Jersey hospitals employ nearly 172,000 people, with each position supporting an additional 1.5 jobs in other parts of the economy, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. The result is a statewide

economic impact of roughly 254,000 additional jobs, or 426,000 total jobs. From pharmaceutical manufacturers and construction trades to utilities, retail businesses and service providers, hospitals help drive growth across a broad spectrum of industries — and jobs, stability and economic opportunities for individuals and families.

New Jersey hospitals directly contributed **\$37.4 billion** to the state's economy during 2024.

Hospitals create economic opportunity by providing **172,000 full- and part-time jobs.**

Hospital employees earn **\$13 billion** in salaries, creating spending power statewide.

Hospital salaries provide **\$718 million** in income tax revenue to State government.

Other businesses in New Jersey and beyond benefit from **\$5.8 billion** in commerce with hospitals.

Defining Community Benefit

Bringing consistency and transparency to the community benefit process, nonprofit hospitals publicly report their efforts annually under guidance from the IRS.

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 and Catholic Healthcare Association, these programs generally meet at least one (or often more than one) of the following objectives:

- Improve access to health-care services
- Enhance the health of the community
- Advance medical or health-care 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' 2024 community benefit commitment, as reported on the IRS Form 990 Schedule H. ■



