

2024 UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS

COMMUNITY HEALTH INVESTMENT REPORT

Where Care Meets Community:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4 Letter to Our Community
- 6 UH 2024 Community Health Investment
- 8 Community Health Investment Priority Areas
- 9 UH Community Health Impact By the Numbers



MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

- 10 Empowering Community Solutions Through Partnership
- 12 UH CenteringPregnancy Celebrates 15 Years of Positive Impact
- 14 Baby Café: Camaraderie Spurs Breastfeeding Confidence for New Moms
- 16 Community Rallies to Provide Free Breast Cancer Screenings for Women in Need
- 18 Collaborative Care Helps Geauga County's Amish Community Thrive



WELL-BEING

- 20 New UH Diabetes Center Brings Life-Changing Care to Cleveland's MidTown
- 22 UH Wellness Centers Bring Health, Hope and Economic Opportunity to Local Neighborhood
- 24 UH EMS Institute Empowers Everyday Heroes with Lifesaving Training – and Brings Emergency Blood Transfusions to the Field
- 26 Groundbreaking Cancer Screening for First Responders
- 28 Euclid School Gets Vital Support to Keep Kids Coming Back



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- 30 Expanding Economic Opportunity Through Healthcare Career Exploration
- 36 Pathways to Progress: UH Workforce Development Programs Pay Off
- 38 UH Invests \$3M in Affordable Housing in Hough Neighborhood

RESEARCH STUDIES AND CLINICAL TRIALS OPTIMIZING HEALTH OUTCOMES AND ACCESS TO ALL

- 40 Commitment to Heart Care in Rural Portage County Saves Lives
- 42 Northeast Ohio Team Part of National Conversation on Vaccines
- 44 Giving Vulnerable Older Women a Fighting Chance Against Breast Cancer
- 46 Community Wellness Project Drives Down Skepticism and Promotes Research Awareness



UH CAREGIVERS GIVING BACK

- 48 Leading with Heart: UH Executives Step Up to Support Neighbors in Need
- 50 Employee Resource Groups Giving Back
- 52 UH Caregivers Giving Back
- 56 Honoring Service Through Service

- 58 UH System Map



MISSION

To Heal. To Teach. To Discover.



VISION

Advancing the Science of Health
and the Art of Compassion.

CORE VALUES



SERVICE EXCELLENCE



INTEGRITY



COMPASSION



BELONGING



TRUST

DEAR FRIEND,

In 2024, University Hospitals didn't just care for patients inside our doors – we extended our hands and hearts far beyond them. This past year, our community health investment totaled \$720 million, a powerful expression of our unwavering belief that healthcare is about people, not just medicine.

That belief is rooted in a legacy nearly 160 years strong, grounded in the belief that “the needy are the most worthy.” Today, that spirit lives on in every corner of our health system as we continue to listen, learn and act on what matters most to those we serve.

As the third largest healthcare employer in the state, we recognize the responsibility – and the privilege – we have to make meaningful change. That's why we're focused on three critical areas: **Maternal and Child Health**, **Well-being**, and **Economic Opportunity**. And we're proud to share just some of the ways we brought these priorities to life in 2024.

- We stood beside new moms through Baby Café and CenteringPregnancy, now celebrating its 15th year. We reached Amish families through culturally sensitive maternal health outreach, and we made early detection possible for more women with our Free Mammogram program.
- We opened doors to healthier living through our new UH Diabetes & Metabolic Care Center and three Community Wellness Centers – creating safe, welcoming spaces for healing and connection.
- Our EMS Institute expanded its outreach, building trust and delivering lifesaving care where it's needed most.
- We helped our neighbors build better futures through workforce development and pipeline building programs – efforts that earned national recognition with the Prism Award from the American Organization for Nursing Leadership.
- And beyond the walls of our clinics and hospitals, our caregivers gave back – volunteering their time, energy and hearts to the communities they love.

We're also proud to be leading research and clinical trials aimed at eliminating health disparities and expanding access to care – because making a meaningful impact on our community's health isn't just a goal, it's a promise.

None of this would be possible without the compassion and commitment of our more than 32,000 caregivers. Their stories, their service and their impact shine throughout this report – and every single day in the lives they touch.

Thank you for trusting University Hospitals to be your partner in health. Together, we're not only caring for our community – we're helping it thrive.

Left to right:



JOHN G. MORIKIS
Chair, Board of Directors
University Hospitals



HEIDI L. GARTLAND,
MHA, FACHE
Chief Government & Community
Relations Officer
University Hospitals



CLIFF A. MEGERIAN, MD, FACS
Chief Executive Officer;
Jane and Henry Meyer
Chief Executive Officer
Distinguished Chair
University Hospitals

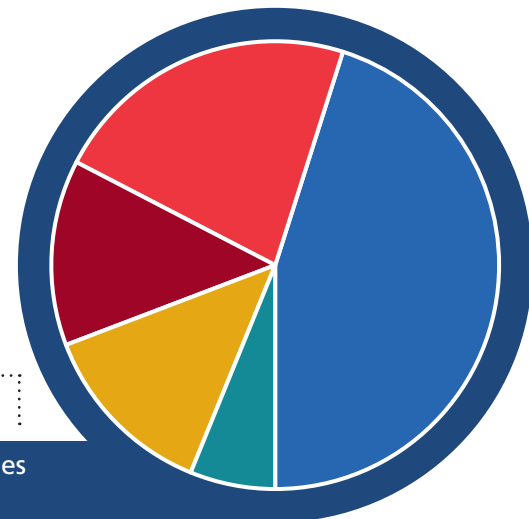


CELINA CUNANAN, MSN,
APRN-CNM, FACNM
Chief Health Impact Officer
University Hospitals



UH 2024 COMMUNITY HEALTH INVESTMENT

\$720 MILLION TOTAL IN 2024



\$209 MILLION¹

UNREIMBURSED MEDICARE COSTS

UH provides services to many patients who are insured by Medicare and Medicare Advantage payers. Because these payers reimburse at less than the cost of providing care, and at rates set by the government, they typically do not keep pace with inflation, and therefore UH sustains a loss on care provided.

\$511 MILLION²

in community benefits was for contribution categories on the IRS Form 990 Schedule H.

\$207 MEDICAID SHORTFALL³

Thousands more of our under-resourced neighbors now qualify for Ohio's expanded Medicaid coverage, yet the state and federal health insurance program reimburses providers for only a portion of the care they provide. UH underwrites the remainder of these patients' bills, reflecting our commitment to our community's health.

\$123 EDUCATION AND TRAINING⁴

UH elevates standards of healthcare here and elsewhere by preparing future generations of caregivers. In conjunction with Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and Northeast Ohio Medical University, approximately 400 medical students train here each year along with 1,200 physician residents and fellows, and thousands of nurses and other health professionals. We reach into our local community to teach lifesaving techniques and to inspire people to pursue healthcare careers.

\$74 RESEARCH⁴

UH serves our community in its broadest sense by engaging in and funding clinical research. In conjunction with Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Northeast Ohio Medical University and private-sector healthcare companies, our professionals elevate care standards and develop new ways to diagnose, prevent, treat and cure diseases and injuries.

\$72 CHARITY CARE

Some of our neighbors lack the means to pay for essential healthcare. Throughout our history, UH has always provided care without regard for ability to pay.

\$35 COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT⁴

Our outreach programs provide no-cost health screenings and help thousands of people understand their health, ways to improve and maintain it, and the resources available to them. We also invest in the community's health by supporting health-related community causes.

¹ UH estimates these losses based on available information and all estimates are subject to change. This loss is in addition to the \$511 million Community Benefit spend.

² UH's gross community benefit investment under IRS 990 guidelines for 2024 was \$640 million.

³ Under Internal Revenue Service guidelines, we subtracted \$60 million from Medicaid Shortfall to reflect net funding recorded from the state Hospital Care Assurance Program.

⁴ We subtracted \$69 million in restricted grant funding from outside organizations from Education and Training, Research and Community Health Improvement, as required by IRS reporting guidelines for nonprofit hospitals.

CARING WITHOUT CONDITIONS

At University Hospitals, community health investment is more than a line item – it's the daily reality of how we care for those most in need, even when there's no payment attached.

One of the clearest examples of this is the free care we provide to patients who cannot safely be discharged from the hospital.

Whether due to homelessness, lack of family support or gaps in insurance coverage, some patients often remain in our hospitals far longer than medically required – because it's the right thing to do.

One such patient was treated in our emergency department and needed additional non-acute care. However, she was uninsured and couldn't be discharged to a skilled nursing facility and she had no support to care for her at home. Because we couldn't send her home without support, we transitioned her care to a unit at a UH hospital that had the around-the-

clock care she needed until she could be safely discharged. We provided charity care for those days because we were committed to her dignity and safety.

This situation plays out again and again. An elderly patient is ready to be discharged, but their spouse at home is too frail to care for them. A person experiencing homelessness recovers from surgery but has no place to go – and no nursing home will accept them.

In each case, we keep them in our care, knowing that while we have to absorb the total cost of that care free of charge, their lives may depend on it.

One way we are able to make this possible is through the 340B Drug Pricing Program, which lets eligible hospitals buy outpatient medications at discounted prices. In 2024, UH saved \$255 million through 340B, resources we immediately put back into lifesaving care for patients who have nowhere else to turn.

But even with this vital source of investment, this challenge is growing. More and more procedures – including major surgeries like shoulder and hip replacements that are rising as baby boomers age – are shifting to the outpatient setting, even though some patients still require additional time to recover in a hospital inpatient setting. On average, patients who are medically cleared for discharge stay approximately 34% longer than what we're reimbursed for due to social needs, placing an even greater strain on hospital resources.

These extended stays don't just affect our bottom line – they affect our capacity.

This bottleneck of patients with social needs causes our hospitals to run out of beds. Thus, emergency rooms are impacted. With limited space to admit new patients, wait times grow longer, which directly affects access to timely care for everyone in our community.

And once patients are medically ready to be discharged, the gaps in the broader system become even more evident. In Ohio, roughly 50% of home health agencies don't accept Medicaid patients at all. And those that do, often cap the percentage they'll accept at less than 10% – and even then, they may restrict the types of therapy they're willing to provide.

At University Hospitals, our approach is different.

Even UH's own home care team doesn't cap the number of Medicaid patients it serves. Unlike many others, we accept all who need care, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.

Because at the end of the day, community benefit means exactly that: being there for the community – without conditions.

COMMUNITY HEALTH INVESTMENT PRIORITY AREAS

Improving the health and well-being of our community is at the heart of who we are at University Hospitals. Everything we do is driven by a commitment to better care for the people in Northeast Ohio. We begin by listening – learning from the voices and experiences of the communities we serve. One of the ways we do this is through our Community Health Needs Assessments. By collaborating with community partners, including local health departments, we identify the most pressing health challenges facing each of our hospital's communities. This insight allows us to focus our resources where they can make the greatest impact.

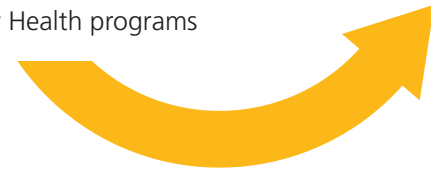
As part of our Community Health Investment Strategy, we established three priority areas: **Maternal and Child Health**, **Well-being** and **Economic Opportunity**. Our framework is designed to address the needs of those we employ, care for, insure through our Accountable Care Organization and live with in our communities.



MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Optimize women and children's health programming, including the expansion of:

- Integrated Clinical and Behavioral Health services
- Social needs navigation
- CenteringPregnancy
- Mobile Community Health programs



WELL-BEING

Enhance well-being programming, including expansion of:

- UH Wellness Center model
- UH Cutler Center for Men
- Behavioral Health initiatives
- UH Mobile Health screenings
- Nutrition programs that promote food security

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Boost economic opportunities through program enhancement, including creation of:

- UH Workforce Development and Outreach
- Youth Career Educational initiatives



IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

More than **1,950** patients were screened for social needs at the University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's Ahuja Center for Women & Children, of which 1,136 screened positive for a need and were provided resource navigation and educational material.

In addition, Rainbow Connects served **2,000+** families via the walk-in resource center, providing diapers, emergency formula and food bags.

Approximately **160** cases were handled by Medical Legal Partnership Services, which in turn helped approximately 560 people.

Nearly **200** women participated in CenteringPregnancy, with more than a quarter of them receiving intensive, one-on-one support from a mental health specialist.

During the 2024-2025 school year, UH and LifeAct provided more than **50,000** students with suicide prevention and stress management education in over 210 schools across 17 counties in Ohio.

More than **5,500** people received food via a UH Food for Life Market®.

Nearly **3,200** residents engaged in health education, fitness classes and nutrition programs through the three UH Community Wellness Centers in Glenville, Bedford and Richmond Heights

Nearly **150,000** community residents participated in early detection screenings, health education, support groups, fitness programs and other health-related events through our hospitals.

More than **3,900** children received vision check-ups through UH Rainbow Ahuja Center for Women & Children.

More than **450** community members participated in the UH Youth Summit along with 100 UH and community partner volunteers.

Nearly **80** high school students participated in the UH Future Nurse Academy.

More than **250** people were hired via community-focused workforce pipeline programs.

Approximately **60** students participated in the UH Health Scholars program.

Over **5,400** meals were served to children through the Summer Lunch Program.

Nearly **2,000** people received mammograms via the UH Mobile Mammography Unit.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

The needs in Northeast Ohio are significant, from persistently high infant mortality to the growing demand for affordable housing. The Cleveland Health Survey, for example, launched in 2024 by Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Department of Public Health, found that Cleveland residents were two to three times more likely to have unmet food, housing and transportation needs, compared to the rest of the state and nation.

UH is partnering with caring organizations across our region to tackle these problems head on and make a difference.

The Black Child Development Institute, for example, hosts a “stuff the crib” community baby shower to provide families with safe infant sleeping options in the form of portable cribs. UH helped sponsor this event at the UH Glenville Community Wellness Center. At the June 2025 event, UH caregivers provided access to mammograms via the UH Mobile Mammogram Van.

“No organization can do this work alone, and having sponsorship from UH that helps connect families to find resources, such as an OB-GYN or pediatrician who can provide lead screening or a well check, is great.”

– Gloria Blevins



At Providence House, the goal is a bit different – to help keep families together who are experiencing crisis. The organization provides free, voluntary emergency shelter for children up to age 12, while also offering support to help families prevent foster care placements and thrive together.

Children arriving at the Crisis Nursery receive a welcome suitcase of essentials – five new pairs of clothes, PJs, toiletries, underwear, a stuffed animal and a blanket to help ease the transition for the children and make them feel more comfortable in their new environment. UH has provided \$55,000 over the last three years to support these welcome suitcases, with other financial support for Providence House needs going back 15 years.

“Sometimes they don’t have any personal possessions of their own,” said Kate Malone of Providence House. “We want to just provide some comfort during that initial transition.”

Some women seeking shelter at the YWCA of Cleveland’s Norma Herr Women’s Center are also experiencing crisis. Fortunately, the staff includes people who’ve been specially trained to form a Crisis Intervention Team. They provide trauma-informed care, crisis intervention and de-escalation for a population that includes 200 to 250 women every day – a big task.



UH has helped fund the staff training behind this approach.

YWCA’s Cynthia Dailey said this method has allowed the Center to eliminate police or security guards on site. And the training has allowed the Center staff to better understand how trauma can manifest itself, both physically and mentally.

“University Hospitals allows us to focus on those special needs for this population,” she said.

UH CENTERINGPREGNANCY

CELEBRATES 15 YEARS OF POSITIVE IMPACT



Talanda Simon and her son Denver; Candice House; Kelly Griffin; Marquitta Jackson and her son Je'onnis

What happens when expectant moms receive care in a group of women just like them, rather than alone in a provider's office? Fifteen years after UH locally launched the national group prenatal program CenteringPregnancy, we now have answers. Moms who participate in Centering are at lower risk of preterm birth, less likely to have a low birthweight baby and are more likely to breastfeed. In 2024, 192 women participated in this novel form of prenatal care at UH with 52 of them receiving intensive, one-on-one support from a mental health specialist.

But that's only part of the story.

Marlina Jackson is a three-time participant in CenteringPregnancy at UH. She recalls how the program gave her comfort and confidence, especially as a young mother-to-be, but she says it's continued to be a great resource during her other pregnancies.

“CenteringPregnancy really grounded me. As a result, I was able to walk out of that hospital without feeling alone. Anything you could possibly need, CenteringPregnancy was there.”

– Marlina Jackson

How is Centering different from other prenatal care? During two-hour sessions, each woman individually sees a provider, then the women reconvene as a group. Two facilitators lead a discussion of timely topics – labor and birth, newborn care, managing stress and domestic violence.

Giancarla Gervais helped facilitate the first UH Centering group in 2010. Now, 15 years later, she’s continuing to help lead the program at UH as it celebrates a milestone anniversary. She says she especially appreciates how the program allows her to foster connections among the participants, “to curate conversations with the reception of a listening ear.” And she says she knows the team is making a measurable difference for expectant moms and their families.

“It can bring a new breath of life to what they thought was a negative or just a bump in the road, something they weren’t ready for,” she said. “This program can give them all the tools for autonomy. That’s the greatest reward.”

Marlina Jackson agrees.

“Becoming a mom is beautiful and joyful, and CenteringPregnancy helped teach me that,” she said. “I love that.”



Candice House, Kelly Griffin, Giancarla Gervais



Giancarla Gervais, Samantha Buckholtz, Tiara Colbert, Holly Pangrace, April Morton and Genevieve Birkby



Shamika Brown with her son Amari



Ariona Debase with her daughter Jazmarine



April Morton

BABY CAFÉ

CAMARADERIE SPURS BREASTFEEDING CONFIDENCE FOR NEW MOMS

Becoming a new mom is not for the faint of heart. Your tiny bundle of joy is counting on you for virtually everything – most importantly nourishment from breastfeeding. But the process doesn’t go smoothly for everyone. What’s supposed to be a source of joy can instead sometimes be filled with stress.

But it doesn’t have to be that way, said April Morton, a certified lactation counselor with UH Rainbow Babies & Children’s Ahuja Center for Women & Children in Cleveland’s Midtown neighborhood. The best policy to promote breastfeeding, she said, is to harness the power of community to provide the support new moms need.

To do this, April leads the UH Rainbow Ahuja Center’s Baby Café, which attracts 20 to 30 new moms and their babies each Thursday morning. While it sounds like pandemonium, the time together helps new and expectant moms alike, she said. Over coffee, tea and snacks, they compare notes, while getting support and advice from the UH Rainbow Ahuja Center’s dedicated professionals. The group celebrated its first anniversary in 2024, while also hitting peak attendance with 56 participants in one month.

“Our moms tell us it’s life-changing,” April said. “They have created such a community among themselves. I have moms who are done with their breastfeeding journey, but they still come. I don’t have to say a lot anymore because they love each other so much.”

Jessica Sangster and daughter Junie started attending Baby Café just over a year ago.

“Baby Café is more than a support group. It’s a safe place to express concerns and be heard, to discuss family issues and find resources, to laugh and cry.” – Jessica Sangster

In fact, Jessica is now a breastfeeding peer consultant with UH and set to complete training to become a certified lactation counselor. She points to Baby Café as one important reason why.

“It has helped me in many ways, and I am thrilled to be a part of this group to help other moms too,” she said.



Daja Chavis with her son Hezekiah

COMMUNITY RALLIES TO PROVIDE FREE BREAST CANCER SCREENING FOR WOMEN IN NEED

When a community comes together to protect its most vulnerable, amazing things can happen.

They know it's true at UH Conneaut and UH Geneva medical centers. The community outreach team there has hosted an annual "Walk for the Cure" breast cancer fundraiser for more than two decades, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund free mammograms for local residents who are uninsured or under-insured. Since the program began in 2000, it has provided more than 800 free mammograms and ultrasounds to women who might not have been able to receive these services any other way. Additionally, in 2024, the UH outreach team and the national organization Remote Area Medical hosted the UH Mammography Van, where women could get free mammograms.

Not surprisingly, sometimes these scans have identified breast cancer.

One woman from Conneaut, for example, was ultimately diagnosed with bilateral breast cancer at age 43 after receiving a free mammogram.

Community outreach nurse Lori Vencill, RN, says she still vividly remembers this patient, even many years later, but says there are many more stories like hers.

Amy Rice is one. The Painesville resident was uninsured, without access to mammography. "However, through a UH community outreach program, I realized I was eligible for a free mammogram," she said. "What a blessing! Not only did I receive a screening mammogram at no cost, but because there were areas of concern, I also received a free ultrasound. I'm so, so thankful to the staff and UH!"

Community outreach nurse Kellie McGinnis, RN, and outreach nurse supervisor Denise Brown, RN, are also both breast cancer survivors, a distinction they say motivates them with even more urgency to reach women in need.

"If you can't afford a mammogram, there's no reason why there shouldn't be help for you," Kellie said.



UH Mobile Mammography team

“This is a work of heart and passion for all of us. We do love our community members, and we want to be there for them and their families during these tough journeys.”

– Denise Brown, UH outreach nurse supervisor



800+

free mammograms
since 2000

COLLABORATIVE CARE HELPS GEAUGA COUNTY'S AMISH COMMUNITY THRIVE



When there was an outbreak of chickenpox in 2024 in Geauga County, the Amish community there knew exactly where to go to get their children vaccinated. University Hospitals collaborates with the local health district to offer free vaccination clinics in the community for people who don't have traditional health insurance, many of whom are Amish. It's part of community outreach from UH Geauga Medical Center that goes back many years.

“It’s taken years to build relationships with the Amish community and gain their trust, allowing us to provide the best care.”

– Kara Berigan, RN, UH Geauga community outreach nurse

The UH outreach team also frequently sets up shop at auctions and other Amish events to offer blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol screenings. But this is not a one-way street. The Amish community collaborates closely with the UH team to help determine how best to meet their care needs. Four Amish leaders meet regularly with the UH outreach team to set priorities.

“We meet with our Amish friends to discuss what needs are in the community and identify any barriers they have within the hospital,” Kara said. “They’re very open and honest about what they’re seeing in the community and gaps we need to fill.”

One issue that has emerged from these conversations, Kara said, is the continuing need for primary care access.

“We help connect them with providers and make sure that they’re getting the appropriate care,” she said.

The most satisfying part, both for her and her Amish patients, she said: “When I’m able to help set them up with provider, whether that be a primary care physician or a specialist, they end up with better outcomes than if they were to wait and then have to go to the emergency room.”



A DREAM REALIZED:

NEW UH DIABETES CENTER BRINGS LIFE-CHANGING CARE TO CLEVELAND'S MIDTOWN

For some physicians, the summer of 2021 was a time of thinking back on all that COVID-19 had brought about, and what medicine could glean from the experience.

Betul Hatipoglu, MD, Medical Director of the UH Diabetes & Metabolic Care Center, located in Cleveland's Midtown neighborhood, was one such doctor, and her thoughts were about how patients' difficulty with access to healthcare could lead to discomfort and a lack of trust in its efficacy. Dr. Hatipoglu is also the Mary B. Lee Chair in Adult Endocrinology.

"I began to believe, and studies elsewhere had shown, that if care was provided closer to the places where patients lived, it might change the way they see healthcare and the way they take care of themselves," Dr. Hatipoglu said. She also knew that Cleveland's MidTown neighborhood had one of the highest rates of diabetes in Cuyahoga County.

Months later, she was at a dinner meeting when the topic of healthcare access came up. "I was telling them about a dream I had that we could provide care closer to where people lived, and how it would create more holistic and warmer interactions between patients and doctors," Dr. Hatipoglu recalled. "And how it could then prevent many of the complications of diabetes."

Some leaders from the Cleveland Foundation were also present and shared plans to build a community-focused collaboration center in MidTown. They encouraged her to apply for a grant, suggesting her idea of incorporating diabetes care could be a valuable part of the project.

That was just the beginning. Dr. Hatipoglu eventually presented her vision and plan to a larger group at the Cleveland Foundation, backed by data showing an urgent need for intervention: in Cuyahoga County, which includes the MidTown neighborhood,

13% of the population have been diagnosed with diabetes and another **33%** are living with pre-diabetes

— making it one of the hardest-hit areas in the state.

Diabetes is a growing national epidemic and the seventh leading cause of death in the United States. Recognizing the need to bring services directly to communities with the highest disease prevalence, the American Diabetes Association recommends expanding care access in socioeconomically disadvantaged regions — exactly the gap this new center was designed to mitigate. As such, the Cleveland Foundation provided a \$1 million startup grant, and agreed that the new UH Diabetes & Metabolic Center would be built as part of the

collaboration center in MidTown. With that, UH moved quickly to plan, build and staff the new 1,700-square-foot clinic, which opened to its first patients in January.

In addition to providing more local access to high-quality diabetes care, the center offers a wide variety of community health events that promote education, prevention and overall well-being. Any adult patient diagnosed with type 1 or type 2 diabetes can receive care, regardless of ability to pay, as UH covers those costs as part of its commitment to the community. The center is staffed by a multi-disciplinary team that includes an endocrinologist, a full-time nurse practitioner, a diabetes care and education specialist, a nutritionist, a medical assistant and reception staff.

"The new UH Diabetes & Metabolic Care Center will be an anchor in the MidTown Collaboration Center and in the Health Tech Corridor," said Lillian Kuri, Cleveland Foundation President & CEO. "It is a bold investment in community healthcare that will be centered in and with the residents of the east side. The Cleveland Foundation is proud to support this new transformative, groundbreaking model of community-engaged healthcare."

Dr. Hatipoglu said the center is the culmination of UH's mission and long-standing commitment to help our community.

“Barriers to access can have an enormous impact on people’s health. At this location, many patients will be able to walk to their appointments from their homes – making it easier to get the care they need. This is key to helping people live healthier lives.”

– Betul Hatipoglu, MD



Left to right: Lillian Kuri, President and CEO of the Cleveland Foundation; Betul Hatipoglu, MD; Stathis Antoniadis, MPH, President of UH Cleveland Medical Center; Daniel I. Simon, MD, President, Academic & External Affairs and Chief Scientific Officer, Ernie and Pattie Novak Distinguished Chair in Health Care Leadership



UH COMMUNITY WELLNESS CENTERS

BRING HEALTH, HOPE AND
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
TO LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD

University Hospitals has opened three new community wellness centers in the past two years, which are designed to provide access not only to health and wellness resources, but also to offer economic opportunities in surrounding neighborhoods.

The UH Glenville Community Wellness Center was the first to open, located on Orville Avenue in the Glenville neighborhood of the city of Cleveland as part of The Davis apartment development. It was followed by the UH Bedford Community Wellness Center in the city of Bedford, which is housed in a medical office building. While the UH Richmond Heights Community Wellness Center does not yet have a permanent physical location, it offers its programs and services through a partnership with the City of Richmond Heights, operating out of the community center.

All three of them have become a source where residents seek out a variety of programs – for example, yoga and Tai Chi – as well as classes on such topics as financial literacy.

The centers also serve as a trusted clearinghouse for guidance that helps people navigate or find health, social or economic resources.

The UH Glenville Community Wellness Center also has a teaching kitchen and a UH Food for Life Market®, where qualifying UH patients can select healthy foods for themselves and their families at no cost and receive nutrition education from a registered dietician. Fresh produce, whole-grain foods, lean protein, low-fat dairy options abound, and those choices can help people control chronic health conditions, such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

Another immensely popular draw is the center's line dancing and ballroom dancing classes, which offer movement and exercise, but which are beloved as much for social reasons, said India Robinson, Supervisor of the UH Glenville Community Wellness Center, noting that men and women easily find dance partners there.

Even better: The various instructors of those classes all live nearby. "It is helping them grow their own businesses and economic opportunity," said Robinson.

In many of the neighborhoods surrounding the UH community wellness centers, residents have said they'd like to learn more about matters such as budgeting and saving, and financial literacy in general, said Anita Lane, Supervisor of the UH Bedford and Richmond Heights Community Wellness Centers.

"So we have created partnerships with various financial institutions, including Bank of America, to offer classes that help community residents with developing stronger personal financial skills, or learn how to get on the path to becoming a homeowner," she said.

The community wellness centers' staff are also there to provide more immediate assistance when it is needed, such as in November, when the centers offer an Outreach Holiday Food Distribution.

The types of offerings available at the wellness centers will keep evolving to some degree, said Robinson.

"Wellness Center participants are very good at telling us what they need," she said.
"And we do listen."



Crystal Perez; Albert Benjamin

STOP THE BLEED

UH EMS INSTITUTE EMPOWERS EVERYDAY HEROES WITH LIFESAVING TRAINING – AND BRINGS EMERGENCY BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS TO THE FIELD

Since 2018, University Hospitals has been delivering a life-saving service to the community through its UH EMS Training and Disaster Preparedness Institute by offering the “Stop the Bleed” course.

Provided free of charge as a public benefit, this 30-minute hands-on training empowers everyday people with the skills to control life-threatening bleeding in an emergency.

As part of a national awareness campaign, the course has been made widely accessible – taught in schools, hospitals and workplaces across Ohio – underscoring UH’s commitment to public health and safety.

Through it, people learn how to use their hands, dressings and tourniquets to control traumatic bleeding and reduce the loss of life. Those classes continue, said Dan Ellenberger, Director of the UH EMS Institute, as they teach the lay public – the true first responders – how to stop uncontrolled bleeding before professional help arrives.

Without these techniques being applied, victims can die within five to 10 minutes.

In 2024, Stop the Bleed training was offered to 410 participants, both youth and adults, in such locations as the Beachwood Library and Park Synagogue, Onaway Middle School in Shaker Heights and the Orange Village Library.

“There will always be new groups of people who have not yet taken this training,” Ellenberger said.

Other lifesaving practices the UH EMS Institute has rolled out include providing EPI pens to rescue squads who may find victims in anaphylactic shock from an extreme allergic reaction, and who could die in minutes; and the distribution of naloxone kits, an antidote that can save the life of someone overdosing from opiates.

Over the past year, the UH EMS Institute has expanded its lifesaving efforts by supporting a groundbreaking initiative already in use by the Westlake Police Department and the city’s SWAT team. In collaboration with UH St. John Medical Center in Westlake, the program enables specially trained paramedics to perform blood transfusions in the field for individuals experiencing life-threatening blood loss. The transfusions use O negative blood – the universal donor type – so it can be safely administered to anyone, regardless of blood type.



“We’ve officially completed the activation process with Westshore Enforcement Bureau (WEB) and UH St. John,” said Joe Schuerger, a supervisor with UH EMS, who explains the process: If WEB alerts responders to a situation involving potentially severe blood loss, their paramedics contact the blood bank at UH St. John. The blood is then prepared, placed in a temperature-controlled cooler and delivered to the scene, where a specially trained paramedic can administer the transfusion if needed. If the blood isn’t used, it’s returned to the blood bank and safely re-entered into circulation.

There have already been four successful ‘callouts’ in situations where a blood transfusion may have been needed, Schuerger said.

Ultimately, the use of lifesaving blood transfusions could expand and save more lives, among members of law enforcement and the public.

UH PARTNERS WITH FIRE DEPARTMENTS TO OFFER GROUNDBREAKING CANCER SCREENING FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

Obvious on-the-job risks for firefighters include falls and injuries from falling debris and over-exertion, among other causes. But firefighters also are exposed to hazardous smoke, chemicals and environmental toxins, including those found in firefighting foams.

University Hospitals Chief of Surgical Oncology Jordan Winter, MD, Director of Surgical Services at UH Seidman Cancer Center, the John and Peggy Garson Family Endowed Chair in Pancreatic Cancer Research, and the Jerome A. and Joy Weinberger Family Master Clinician in Surgical Oncology, explains that due to regular exposure to hazardous chemicals on the job, firefighters face a 10 to 30% increased risk of developing cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control, they also have a 14% higher risk of dying from the disease.

"This has to do with the breakdown of certain chemicals and the heat," Dr. Winter said. "Fire converts these chemicals into agents that can actually manipulate DNA in cells when they are inhaled or get into the bloodstream."

In 2024, the UH EMS Training and Disaster Preparedness Institute began partnering with Northeast Ohio fire departments to offer a groundbreaking new blood test to firefighters and first responders, one that screens for the presence of cancer. Early detection of cancer dramatically improves the odds of survival.

The Galleri® test is a first-of-its-kind multicancer early detection blood test, which tests a person for 52 types of cancer, including many without recommended screenings, potentially helping to detect a cancer signal before symptoms appear.

The test is offered at cost to first responders, though UH covers the cost of collection, assessment and administration, as well as a biometric screening. Both are offered as part of our community benefit to the 310 first-responder departments. UH also provides medical direction and oversight for each department.

Some screening or results may be shared with individuals the same day. The Galleri® test, which takes longer, may also indicate the need for additional cancer screenings.



Galleri® tests for
52
types of cancer



Bill Bernard, Assistant Chief at Highland Heights Fire Department;
Eddie Young

EUCLID SCHOOL GETS VITAL SUPPORT TO KEEP KIDS COMING BACK



Photo submitted by the Cleveland Browns

Kids who miss more than 10% of their school days each year are considered chronically absent – with undeniably negative effects on their achievement, self-esteem and mental health. But a program launched by the Cleveland Browns Foundation, Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, Harvard’s Proving Ground and Battelle is moving the needle on this persistent problem. The group’s Stay in the Game! Attendance Network is working to reduce school absenteeism across Ohio, one school at a time, with University Hospitals serving as the Cleveland Browns Network’s first signature partner, supporting partner districts in Northeast Ohio.

As part of the Browns Stay in the Game! partnership with UH, the organizations work together to tackle health-related barriers to attendance. Euclid’s Arbor Elementary School, for example, is now equipped with a Wellness Room converted from a classroom to encourage relaxation, stress relief and a space for de-escalation for students during the school day. Also included: a Care Closet filled with toiletries, clothing and other necessities to equip students with necessary resources to attend school regularly.

The spaces also feature posters and pamphlets from UH on managing stress, expressing feelings and eating right.

Since health-related issues can significantly impact attendance, resources like these can have a great impact.

In April 2025, the Stay in the Game! Attendance Network unveiled the newly renovated Wellness Room and Care Closet addition with the help of UH. As part of the launch, Dr. Kevin Turner—UH pediatrician and Senior Director of the Rainbow Primary Care Institute at UH Rainbow Babies & Children’s Hospital—led a group of fourth-graders in a journaling activity designed to help manage stress. Also attending: Browns mascot Chomps and Browns long snapper Rex Sunahara.

“The journal was a way for them to talk about their feelings and get their feelings onto paper, so that if they’re happy, they can say it there,” Dr. Turner said. “If they’re frustrated or angry, they can put it on a piece of paper so they can see it, and that can help. It’s an example of how they can improve their own mental health and mindfulness.”



UH and the Stay in the Game! Attendance Network are currently exploring future programming opportunities and extensions to ensure Arbor Elementary educators are equipped with the resources and knowledge they need to address attendance barriers.

“We want to be involved as physicians. We know that kids staying in school is so important. It’s something that transcends ZIP code.” – Kevin Turner, MD



EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY THROUGH HEALTHCARE CAREER EXPLORATION

At University Hospitals, we recognize that introducing young people to careers in healthcare is a powerful way to create economic opportunity. By providing hands-on learning experiences and mentorship, we help students envision a future in healthcare – one that may not have seemed accessible before. Through multiple programs, we are making a lasting impact on students across our region.

OPENING DOORS FOR EASTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Since 2012, our high school program on the Eastside has been giving students an in-depth look at the healthcare field. This initiative is now managed by Andreea Widlak, RN, UH Community Outreach Coordinator, who took over leadership in 2021. The program partners with seven local high schools and includes two immersive days onsite at UH Ahuja Medical Center, allowing students to experience various roles within a hospital setting. Students explore a wide range of healthcare careers through discussions with leaders in nursing, sports medicine, radiology, hospital operations, emergency room care, volunteer services, ENT, plastics, ultrasound, cardiology, trauma and robotic surgery. They also engage with specialties like music therapy, pharmacy, speech therapy and occupational therapy – and some sessions even include CPR training to round out the experience.

Andreea has seen firsthand how this exposure can change career aspirations. “When I was in high school, we didn’t have opportunities like this to see what a healthcare environment is like,” Andreea shared. “We always ask the kids at the start of the program what kind of career are they interested in, and then we ask them again at the end. It’s fascinating to hear their responses because so many times, it’s entirely different. I love that we are able to expose them to so many different kinds of careers and introduce them to people who can become great contacts for the future. Many of the kids will also come back as volunteers.” Since Andreea took over management, more than 450 students have participated in the programs, with many continuing their journey into healthcare careers.





Dillon Cox, RN

HEALTH EDUCATION AND CAREER READINESS IN LAKE AND GEauga COUNTIES

A second initiative extends our outreach to schools in Lake and Geauga counties, focusing not only on healthcare careers but also on critical public health education. Led by Jessica Matthews, RN, UH Community Outreach, this program covers health screenings, health education, vaping diversion, the DARE program, mock interviews and career fairs.

The career readiness component has opened doors for students like Dillon Cox, RN, now working on the orthopedic trauma unit at UH Cleveland Medical Center, and Aubreigh Kitzmiller, who served as a 2024 summer intern at UH Geauga Medical Center and started working as a Patient Care Nurse Assistant there after graduating from Cardinal High School in May 2025.

Dillon first got involved in 2019 through the mock interview program at Chardon High School, which led to a volunteer position at UH Geauga Medical Center. As a volunteer, he gained experience across all nursing floors and participated in community outreach programs, including the free Amish baby clinic and CPR education for kids. These hands-on experiences deepened his passion for nursing and gave him valuable exposure to various healthcare roles.

In 2024, Dillon returned to UH Geauga as a nursing intern, this time working on the ortho-bariatric floor. The network he built through volunteering and interning proved invaluable. Not only did those connections help him land a job at UH Cleveland Medical Center, but they also gave him meaningful examples to draw from during his interview.

“Volunteering and shadowing gave me a real look at how all the departments work together to care for patients – not just in the hospital, but in the community too. Jessica is amazing at connecting kids to experiences that match their interests. They don’t just talk about careers – they help you find your place in healthcare.” – Dillon Cox, RN



Aubreigh Kitzmiller, Patient Care Nurse Assistant

For Aubreigh, the experience was just as transformative. While in high school, she attended a career fair at Kent State where she first connected with Jessica at the UH Geauga table. Aubreigh had always dreamed of becoming an obstetrics (OB) nurse, and she was thrilled to learn about the University Hospitals internship program – not only would she get experience in community education, but she could also shadow in multiple departments aligned with her interests.

During her internship, Aubreigh helped coordinate several community events and had the opportunity to shadow in the OB department at UH Geauga and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at UH Ahuja medical centers. Each experience helped validate her decision.

“I thought I wanted to be an OB nurse, and after shadowing – it absolutely confirmed it for me,” Aubreigh said. “The internship gave me such great exposure, and I really want to work for UH. I like how they run things – they’re very organized and seem to have so many opportunities to advance within the organization.”

Equally impactful – the public health education aspect has proven its worth. Because Ohio law prohibits the sale of tobacco products to anyone under 21, students caught vaping at some local high schools must complete a vaping diversion program.

The program, led by the UH Geauga Outreach Team, takes a science-based approach that helps students understand the full impact of nicotine use. It covers how nicotine affects brain development and brain chemistry, the development of tolerance, withdrawal and addiction, and the dangers of e-cigarettes – including the harmful chemicals in both the vapor and flavorings. The program also stresses that what’s being inhaled isn’t “just water vapor,” but a mix of substances that can damage the lungs, heart, and even affect those exposed to secondhand aerosol.

While Jessica and her team emphasize that all addictive substances are harmful, they focus on nicotine as a pressing concern in their targeted program. One encounter in particular reminded Jessica just how meaningful their work can be. “Once, when I was at a restaurant, one of my former students who had gone through the vaping diversion program came up to me and thanked me,” Jessica recalled. “He said the program not only helped him quit vaping, but the information he learned also helped his dad stop smoking. They even picked up a new hobby together to stay focused, and he credited all of it to our program. He also told me that the mock interviews gave him the confidence to land a really good job.”

HANDS-ON LEARNING THROUGH AMHERST HIGH SCHOOL’S MED TECH PROGRAM

A third initiative involves a partnership with Amherst High School’s Med Tech Program. Through this collaboration, students gain firsthand experience at UH Elyria Medical Center, learning about respiratory therapy, physical therapy, nursing, speech therapy, pharmacy, lab services, radiology and emergency care. They attend presentations, tour different departments, and have the opportunity to ask healthcare professionals about their careers.

This program, now in its third year, allows students to return for job shadowing, providing deeper insight into potential career paths.

“By fostering direct engagement, we are ensuring that students not only learn about healthcare but also see a place for themselves within it.” – Mary Rodal, UH Elyria Patient Experience Manager

BUILDING A STRONGER FUTURE THROUGH PIPELINE PROGRAMS

Understanding the critical role that early engagement plays in shaping future healthcare professionals, UH developed additional programming that engages students at various educational stages. The UH Youth Summit (grades 3-12) and Health Scholars (grades 8-12) programs focus on engaging students in medicine and healthcare. These programs, which have connected hundreds of students to healthcare careers, are supported by local schools and community organizations and are designed to influence the next generation of healthcare providers.

More than **450**
students took part in the
Youth Summit in 2024,
up 50% from the
previous year.

UH Youth Summit

To promote career readiness and economic opportunity for Northeast Ohio high school students interested in nursing careers, we created the **UH Future Nurse Academy**. This two-week, hands-on learning program includes visits to nursing schools and skill-building exercises such as taking vital signs, drawing blood (on simulated arms) and performing CPR. In addition to learning nursing skills, one of the modules focuses on social determinants of health, including a field trip to a healthcare facility in a traditionally under-resourced community and a poverty immersion experience presented by area food banks. The program's success is evident in its rapid expansion – it has grown from 25 students in its first year to 78 students in 2024, with participants hailing from 43 different high schools across 45 cities and 10 counties. Several graduates from the inaugural class are now starting nursing school, further solidifying the impact of these programs.



SHAPING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

At University Hospitals, we believe that economic opportunity starts with access to knowledge and experiences. These pipeline programs are helping shape the next generation of healthcare professionals, inspiring students to explore careers they may never have considered. By investing in our youth today, we are building a stronger, more diverse, and passionate workforce for the future.



PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS:

UH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS PAY OFF

At University Hospitals, workforce development is more than a strategic initiative – it's a lifeline for community members looking to grow, thrive and build sustainable careers. Through innovative programs like UH's Pathway Programs and Earn & Learn initiatives, including the creation of apprenticeships for LPN, Medical Assistant, Pharmacy Tech and Community Health Worker, the health system is driving real economic opportunity.

In 2024 alone, University Hospitals' workforce development programs helped **256** individuals obtain new jobs or advance their careers within the system – an impactful testament to the



health system's commitment to investing in people and growing talent. It's also one of the reason's Forbes named UH among the top 10 Dream Employers in 2024, along with iconic brands such as Microsoft, Google, Apple, NASA, Nike and Bank of America. According to Forbes, Dream Employers offer people the chance to "pursue their passions through engaging career development programs," among other things.

Jasmine Adams' story is a powerful example of how University Hospitals' programs are changing lives.

Before joining UH, Jasmine was a teller at a local bank. She had a natural talent for connecting with others and spotting potential, which led her to an administrative role in human resources. Her passion for helping people find their path brought her to UH in 2012, where she became a Recruitment Representative.

As a single mother, Jasmine knew the importance of education. When her daughter was old enough, she tapped into UH's tuition reimbursement program to pursue her bachelor's degree in

business administration and organizational development from Tiffin University. She took online classes at night while balancing work and parenting and in 2015, she graduated.

A few years later, UH received a grant that allowed Jasmine to transition into a new and impactful role as a Coach within the Pathway Program. In this role, she worked one-on-one with employees to help them better understand their career goals, align their interests with available opportunities and connect with the right training and support to take the next step. For example, she helped our environmental service caregivers move into patient care roles by preparing them for interviews, linking them to certification programs and coaching them on how to showcase their transferable skills.

"The most rewarding part was seeing people gain clarity about their goals and discover opportunities they hadn't ever considered," Jasmine said. "Helping them build their confidence, communication skills and mindset was incredibly fulfilling. Watching that spark of excitement and empowerment – it brought me so much joy."

“The most rewarding part was seeing people gain clarity about their goals and discover opportunities they hadn’t ever considered. Helping them build their confidence, communication skills and mindset was incredibly fulfilling. Watching that spark of excitement and empowerment – it brought me so much joy.” – Jasmine Adams



Yahya Muti; Jasmine Adams, Pathway Program Coach

What surprised her most? “It’s one thing to know about barriers people face in advancing their careers, but it’s another to witness them firsthand. I am so impressed by the resilience of our caregivers – some facing significant challenges in their personal lives – who still show up to work with such passion. It shifted how I think as a recruiter. Sometimes it’s not about pushing someone into a new role quickly but about helping them build a more secure foundation first.”

Her proudest moment was helping an employee who was ready to leave the organization. “They felt stuck. I coached them on how to talk with their manager about gaining new skills and exposure. The conversation went better than they imagined. The employee stayed, felt renewed, and the manager was thrilled to help. It was a win-win for everyone.”

Today, Jasmine serves as a Workforce Development Specialist, a role she stepped into after progressing through UH’s own career advancement programs. Her journey is a reflection of the very pathways she now promotes – providing program support, connecting with community and educational partners, and helping caregivers navigate opportunities that maximize their potential. Her success in guiding others, combined with her own growth, continues to open new doors. With plans to pursue a master’s degree, Jasmine is advancing her personal mission to identify, educate and elevate the talent that exists within the system and the community – proof that University Hospitals’ Pathways to Progress are working.

UH INVESTS \$3M IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN HOUGH NEIGHBORHOOD

University Hospitals is investing \$3 million in a new mixed-income housing development in Cleveland's Hough neighborhood – supporting stable housing, economic vitality and community well-being.

The development, Gateway66 at League Park, is led by Frontline Development Group, a minority- and female-owned real estate firm. The project will offer at least 80 rental units across two four-story buildings, with a majority of units designated

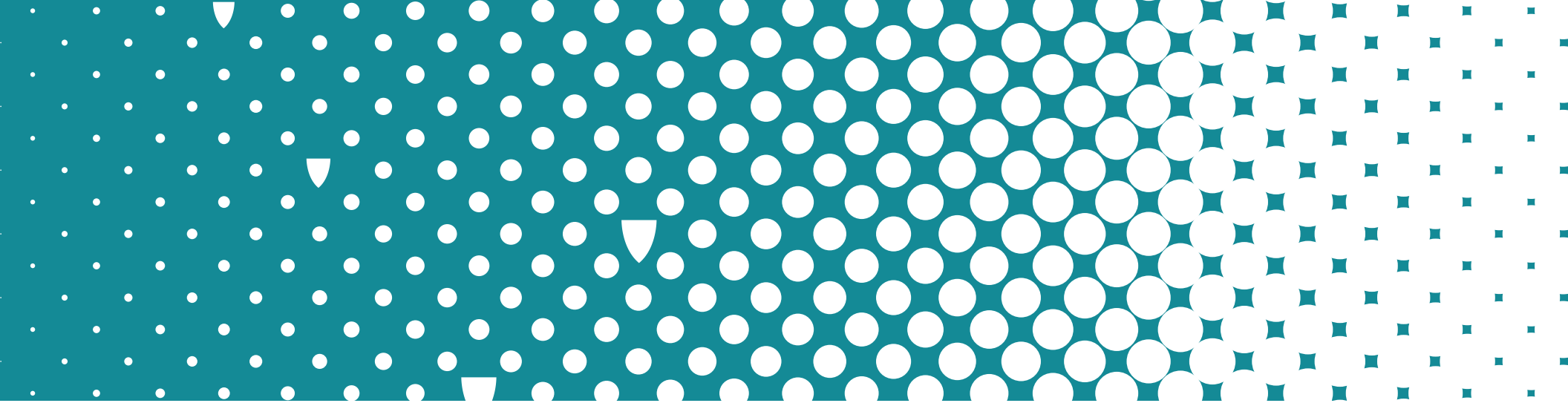
as below-market affordable housing. Amenities will include an on-site management office and community room with kitchenette. Gateway66 is designed to serve a diverse mix of residents, including seniors, young professionals, single-parent households and small families.

"This commitment builds on our long-term presence and impact in the Midtown-Hough corridor," said Heidi L. Gartland, UH Chief Government & Community Relations Officer.

"From the UH Rainbow Ahuja Center for Women & Children to the new UH Diabetes & Metabolic Care Center, we are investing in a holistic, place-based approach to improve health, build wealth and create opportunity."

– Heidi L. Gartland





The Hough neighborhood has a long-standing legacy of resilience and community pride. “It has been home to generations of families who have sustained its vibrancy despite cycles of disinvestment,” said Sheila Wright, CEO of Frontline Development Group. “The revival of Hough reflects a shared effort among residents, institutions and partners like University Hospitals to ensure that everyone has access to opportunity. We are deeply grateful to UH for their support and strategic guidance.”

Gateway66 at League Park will include units for residents earning at or below Area Median Gross Income (AMGI) including:

8
units | at or **below**
30% AMGI

32
units | at or **below**
60% AMGI

16
units | at or **below**
50% AMGI

20
units | at or **below**
80% AMGI

+ 4 market-rate units

UH’s \$3 million investment will be structured as a soft-debt mortgage through its endowment, providing a below-market interest rate and a 15-year repayment plan.

This investment complements other recent UH initiatives, including a wellness center and teaching kitchen at The Davis housing complex in Cleveland’s Glenville neighborhood and ongoing services at the UH Otis Moss Health Center in Cleveland’s Fairfax neighborhood.

Together, these efforts reflect UH’s commitment to transforming neighborhoods through targeted, sustainable investments that address root causes of health disparities and support long-term community growth.



RESEARCH STUDIES AND CLINICAL TRIALS OPTIMIZING HEALTH OUTCOMES AND ACCESS TO ALL

COMMITMENT TO HEART CARE IN

RURAL PORTAGE COUNTY SAVES LIVES

When you live in rural America, easy access to healthcare can be challenging at best. Geographic isolation may stand in the way of being healthy, delaying lifesaving treatment for heart attacks, strokes and other serious health problems.

University Hospitals Harrington Heart & Vascular Institute was determined to buck this trend in Ohio's Portage County, which has just one hospital – UH Portage Medical Center – and high rates of heart disease. In 2016, with \$2.5 million in support from the Portage Hospital Foundation, doctors in the UH Harrington Heart & Vascular Institute at UH Portage launched a local heart catheterization lab for visualizing arteries and treating heart attacks. The goal was simple – to start lifesaving treatment sooner than ever before and save lives.

And now the results are in, presented recently at a meeting of the American Heart Association.

From 2016 to 2019, UH Harrington Heart & Vascular Institute performed more than 3,000 catheterizations at UH Portage, resulting in a decline in deaths across the board from artery-blocking heart disease, especially among older adults.

Deaths among people dropped

36% in ages 65-74

21% in ages 75-84

28% in those over age 85.

"These encouraging results show our expert caregivers are saving the lives of patients in Portage County," said Anjan Gupta, MD, the Heisler Family - A. Roger Tsai, MD, Master Clinician in Cardiology and interventional cardiologist at UH Harrington Heart & Vascular Institute.

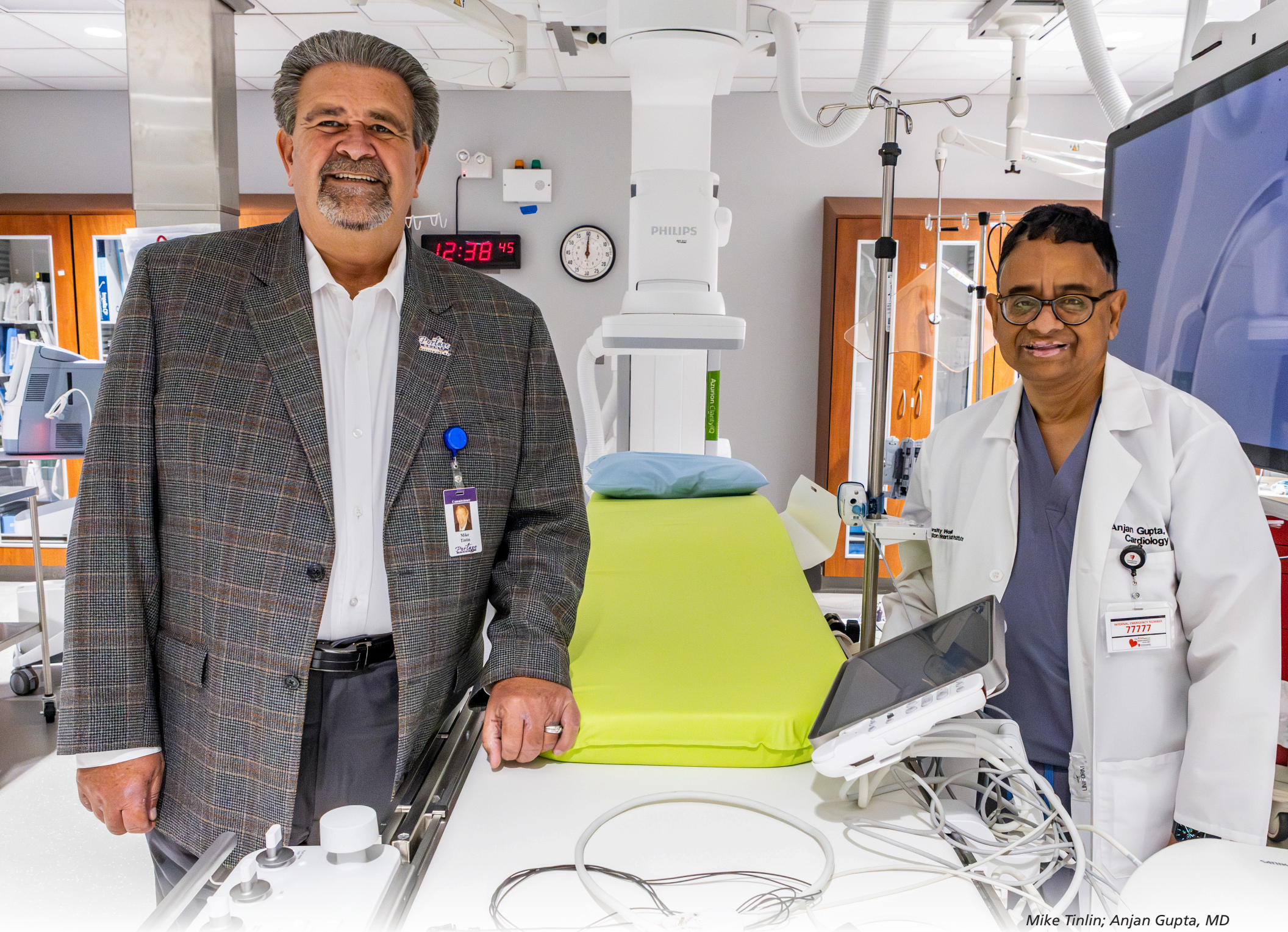
The catheterization lab at UH Portage continues to be a valuable resource for the community, performing more than 2,400 procedures in 2024 alone.

Local residents are reaping the benefits of the new services – even those not being treated for a heart attack. Dr. Gupta recommended a cardiac catheterization for Portage County Commissioner Mike Tinlin after some worrisome findings on a stress test for another heart issue. Mike ultimately didn't need any more treatment other than cholesterol medication, but he made major heart-healthy changes, nonetheless, losing 50 pounds and cutting down on coffee from as many as 30 cups a day to just three.

He says he's thankful for the enhanced cardiac care right there in his home community.

"A problem can arise anytime, anywhere," Mike said. "If a catheterization is needed, UH Portage is the best."





Mike Tinlin; Anjan Gupta, MD

NORTHEAST OHIO TEAM PART OF NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON VACCINES

Vaccines are one of healthcare's greatest triumphs, with power to prevent diseases today that were once devastating for generations that came before. That said, it's important to continually check whether vaccines are effective – and better understand who is getting them – and who is not.

UH Director of Infection Control Elie Saade, MD, MPH, is a lead researcher on a national project examining these issues. He's representing UH as one of just seven sites nationwide chosen for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's United States Flu Vaccine Effectiveness Network. The elite group is charged with providing accurate estimates of the effectiveness of flu, COVID-19 and other vaccines in people seeking care for acute respiratory illness and related problems. The group also closely monitors genetic mutations in circulating flu viruses to learn which virus strains should be included in next year's flu shots.

In Northeast Ohio, the project is an all-hands-on-deck effort. Local partners are UH Emergency Departments, UH Urgent Care centers, Case Western Reserve University Health and Counseling Services, MetroHealth Express Care and the Lou Stokes Veterans Affairs Medical Center.



And it's working. In mid-season estimates for the 2024-25 flu season, Dr. Saade and colleagues found that children who got a flu vaccine were

32-60% less likely to visit a healthcare provider because of flu and

63-78% less likely to be hospitalized, compared to children who did not get the vaccine.

For adults, those who got a flu vaccine were

36-54% less likely to visit a doctor and

41-55% less likely to be hospitalized.

Dr. Saade also shared findings in 2024 at the annual Infectious Disease Society meeting about who is getting vaccines in Northeast Ohio.

"Vaccine uptake for flu and COVID-19 and RSV is lower in areas where there's more social vulnerability," he said.

That's one reason, he said, it's so important to have many partners on the project and locations in the community where people can access vaccines.

Going forward, Dr. Saade and colleagues are working on ways to make vaccines more effective by doing a deep dive on how the body's immune system responds to them.

"We're trying to figure out the details of the immunity and how it can be affected by vaccine use," he says. "It can be an important future target for improving vaccinations."



GIVING VULNERABLE OLDER WOMEN A FIGHTING CHANCE AGAINST BREAST CANCER

Being an older woman diagnosed with breast cancer will require all your strength for the battle ahead. But UH geriatric oncologist Cynthia Owusu, MD, has found that many women in this position simply don't have the physical functioning they need to weather the considerable storm of surgery, chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

Notably, Dr. Owusu has found that this is even more true in women with lower socioeconomic status. She measured women's physical function in a study of about 200 older breast cancer patients – at the time of diagnosis, then six months and one year later.

"Over the course of the year, those who were of lower socioeconomic status were two and a half times more likely to also decline in their physical function," she said.

Something had to change.

To better serve her patients, Dr. Owusu launched a different study with this vulnerable group – this time, testing whether exercise would make a difference. Half the older women with breast cancer did supervised exercise at The Gathering Place, while the other half attended a support group.

As a whole, the exercise group improved their physical function overall, but the effect was among the biggest in women of low socioeconomic status. For women not accustomed to having access to fitness classes, physical functioning "shot up" over the 20 weeks of the exercise intervention, Dr. Owusu said.

Dr. Owusu is pursuing a new grant to delve more deeply into these issues. In 2024, she also worked with colleagues from Case Western Reserve University on a study of how Medicaid expansion in Ohio affects breast cancer treatment.

For now, however, she said her work highlights the unique needs of older women struggling with breast cancer treatment who have few resources.





“These women are a vulnerable group likely to experience functional decline during breast cancer treatment in the absence of exercise. Increasing physical activity and health-promoting behavioral interventions may really help.” – Cynthia Owusu, MD



COMMUNITY WELLNESS PROJECT DRIVES DOWN SKEPTICISM AND PROMOTES RESEARCH AWARENESS

Medical research has almost limitless potential to improve our health. But it can only go forward when people are willing to participate in studies – which isn't always an easy choice. However, lack of participation has consequences. When study populations don't accurately reflect the demographics of America, the quality of healthcare research can suffer, leaving all of us with fewer facts – and fewer breakthrough treatments.

Confronting this challenge, members of the UH Government and Community Relations department received funding from the Northern Ohio Clinical Translational Science Collaborative in 2024 to study whether they could boost knowledge and trust in clinical research with vulnerable groups. The Be INFORMED. (Individuals Necessary for Making Educated Decisions) community wellness project included four educational sessions for study volunteers focused on research ethics,

historical factors that impact trust and protections for research participants.

"It was important to understand barriers to research and provide exposure to programs that prevent chronic conditions all in the same setting," said Regime Willis, UH Community Health and Advocacy Specialist.

The group led by the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center took place at the UH Glenville Wellness Center, while the group led by UH took place at the UH Bedford Wellness Center. Study leaders also paired each education session with a wellness activity, such as yoga, mindfulness, a cooking demonstration and an art experience. For the final session, two UH clinical research nurses led the discussion, bringing the scientific aspect of research to the community.



Left to right: Kareame Cole; Rosalie Diaz; Lena Grafton; Shawn McKines; Douglas "Doug" Lon; Charles "Charlie" Gerhart; Thomas "Tom" Withrow; Vickie Williams; Tynisa "Chef T" Roubideaux; Regime Willis

And it worked.

Be INFORMED's results show that moving the needle is possible. Study volunteers showed notable increases in research knowledge. Importantly, interest in learning about research and participating in research also increased at the end of the four-session program.

"Be INFORMED has been one of the more impactful classes I have taken," said one participant. "In just a few sessions, it has made me feel more knowledgeable and motivated."

"It makes me want to become more informed and tell people about research," added another participant.

And moments like this, it seems, are sure signs of progress.

LEADING WITH HEART:

UH EXECUTIVES STEP UP TO SUPPORT NEIGHBORS IN NEED



Cliff Megerian, MD

At University Hospitals, leadership isn't just about making decisions in the executive conference room – it's about showing up, lending a hand, and standing beside the communities we serve. That spirit of compassion and action was on full display when UH CEO Cliff A. Megerian, MD, FACS, Jane and Henry Meyer Chief Executive Officer Distinguished Chair, and his leadership team volunteered at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, helping local families who are struggling with food insecurity.

Inside the Food Bank's new, bright and welcoming storefront – which looks and feels like a full-service supermarket – our leaders spent the afternoon getting to work. Some unpacked boxes and carefully stocked shelves, while others assisted shoppers as they selected food, offering guidance and support along the way.

For Dr. Megerian, even the small task of arranging cans and boxes took on deeper meaning.

"I wanted to make sure every item I stacked looked neat and orderly," he said.

The Greater Cleveland Food Bank is the largest hunger relief organization in Northeast Ohio, serving more than 424,000 people across six counties in 2024.



With **one in seven residents facing food insecurity**, its impact is felt across the region – and UH is proud to be a partner in that mission.

Through our UH Food for Life Markets®, University Hospitals provides free, healthy food and access to dietitians for patients with chronic health conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes. Last year alone, more than 5,500 people received support through the initiative, which helps improve health outcomes by addressing one of the most basic needs: food.

Volunteering is deeply embedded in our culture. In 2024, UH caregivers logged more than 1,600 hours through the system's Volunteer Time Off program, which offers four paid hours each year to serve UH-approved nonprofit partners. Whether it's stocking shelves, helping with home maintenance or organizing books, our employees continue to step up and give back.

"It may seem like a small thing, but a clean, organized space helps enhance dignity. Everyone deserves to shop in an environment that feels respectful and welcoming." – Cliff A. Megerian, MD, FACS

“This experience reminded me that showing up matters.”

– Celina Cunanan, MSN, APRN-CNM, FACNM, UH Chief Health Impact Officer

“The people we met, the stories we heard, the hands-on work – it all brought home how interconnected we are. I’m proud of UH and the heart we bring to everything we do inside and outside the walls of our system.”



Celina Cunanan, MSN, APRN-CNM, FACNM

Left to right: Harlin Adelman; Bryan McDowell; Tom Snowberger; George Topalsky, MD; Celina Cunanan; Stathis Antoniadis; Cliff Megerian, MD; Brent Carson; Jason Pirtz; Michelle Hereford, Ethel Morikis Endowed Chair in Nursing Leadership





EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS:

BUILDING CONNECTION AND GIVING BACK

At University Hospitals, we believe that a sense of belonging helps everyone do their best work. That's why we support Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) – voluntary, employee-led groups that bring people together around shared interests, experiences and goals.

These groups help foster connection, personal growth and community involvement across the UH system.

ERGs provide a welcoming space for caregivers to connect, learn from one another and contribute to causes that matter to them. While ERGs do not influence workplace policies or provide individual advantages, they offer a valuable way to strengthen bonds within our workforce and with the communities we serve.

HONORING SERVICE, BUILDING COMMUNITY: UH'S MILITARY VETERANS ERG CONNECTS CAREGIVERS THROUGH SHARED COMMITMENT AND TRADITION

The UH Military Veterans ERG welcomes anyone whose life is or has been touched by a family member in the military, or by their own personal service to the military. Not surprisingly, it has 194 members.

The group kicked things off in May 2024 with its first event, as more than 60 caregivers and their families attended a Lake County Captains baseball game.

Veterans Day in November marked a solemn and meaningful tradition at UH Geauga Medical Center: the annual flag ceremony. Veterans and caregivers gathered in front of the hospital as members of the local American Legion chapter respectfully lowered the flag and presented it to a distinguished veteran from Geauga County. The ceremony concluded with a powerful tribute – a flyover by a U.S. Air Force C-130 cargo plane – honoring the service and sacrifice of all who have served.

"It was a really nice day and the whole front of the hospital was completely full," said Geoffrey T. Patty, a U.S. Army veteran who joined UH about eight years ago. He is an RN, quality and chest pain coordinator for UH Harrington Heart & Vascular Institute, and one of the leaders of the ERG. "And while all of us veterans from UH were outside, our co-workers kindly filled in for us."

Afterward, veterans were invited to lunch in the UH Geauga cafeteria, where they caught up with acquaintances and friends, or met new ones, said Patty.

FLOURISH ERG HOSTS HEARTWARMING BABY SHOWER TO SUPPORT LOCAL MOMS

The Women's Employee Resource Group, UH FLOURISH – which stands for Uplifting Her via Fulfillment, Leadership, Opportunity, Unity, Resilience, Inspiration, Support, and Hope – brought its mission to life in 2024 with a powerful and joyful event: a community baby shower at the UH Management Services Center in Shaker Heights.

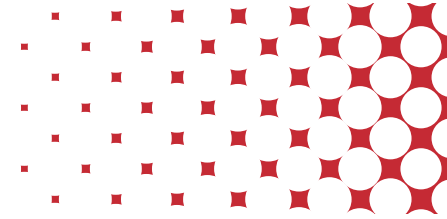
The celebration honored three expectant mothers, including a patient from the UH Rainbow Ahuja Center for Women & Children who was preparing to welcome twin girls, and two others receiving support from Young Mothers of Cleveland, a nonprofit that helps young women secure housing, employment and essential resources.

More than 100 UH caregivers came together to shower them with love, support and gifts – from adorable baby clothes and toys to essential nursery items. Guests had fun playing baby-themed games, enjoying cake and admiring thoughtful decorations. "The generosity of our UH colleagues was overwhelming," said Megan Bedo, UH FLOURISH chair elect and an administrator with the UH Primary Care Institute. "It was such a moving experience to see how eager everyone was to help. We have amazing caregivers who truly care about the people we serve."



UH CAREGIVERS GIVING BACK:

UH LEADERS LIGHTEN THE BURDEN OF OTHERS THROUGH SERVICE TO LOCAL GROUPS



At University Hospitals, volunteerism isn't just encouraged – it's exemplified by leaders at every level. Two such leaders, Tani Malhotra, MD and Lisa Riordan, bring this commitment to life by serving on the boards of local nonprofit organizations. Through their volunteer work, they're building deeper connections with the communities UH serves, gaining valuable insight into the challenges and strengths of our neighborhoods and using that knowledge to help shape more responsive, compassionate care.

HELPING CHILDREN DREAM AGAIN: UH PHYSICIAN PARTNERS WITH LOCAL NONPROFIT TO HEAL TRAUMA THROUGH HOPE

When Tani Malhotra, MD, FACOG, attended a gala for a local non-profit and watched a video depicting its mission, she knew instantly, "This is the organization I want to work with."

The non-profit "Believe in Dreams" was founded in 2014 by Cleveland entrepreneur John Di Julius III and his son Cal. Five years earlier, John tragically lost his wife Stacy, the mother of his three sons. Over the next few years, Cal – the middle son – became acutely aware that the support and opportunities for healing he received would likely not be there for many children who go through hardships. That realization led Cal and John to create "Believe in Dreams."

Dr. Malhotra has seen the same through her work. She is Director of Obstetric Value-Based Care Programs in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology at UH Cleveland Medical Center, and her patients and their families live in under-resourced neighborhoods, where they do not have the financial, community resources, stability – or even basic comforts – that many people take for granted.

She has seen these challenges firsthand. In her role at UH, she works with patients and families in communities that face systemic barriers to healthcare, financial stability and essential resources. Many lack access to the basic comforts that support health and well-being – resources that others may not even realize are a privilege.

Dr. Malhotra soon joined "Believe in Dreams" Board of Directors, which grants dreams for youth who have faced traumatic, non-medical events, and provides them with access to enriching

opportunities, a connection to their communities, and perhaps most significantly, hope for the future.

She began as a member of the program committee, learning about the variety of barriers children faced. For example, some children did not have a bed to sleep in, and their dream was to have one of their own.

One teen wanted to get a driver's license to find a job but needed someone to guide him in the basics, such as how or where to study or take the written exams. Another child wished to open a bank account, but wasn't sure how, as her family hadn't used banking services before.

"It is the kind of mundane nature of many of the requests that is so moving. Something we take for granted means everything to these children." – Tani Malhotra, MD, FACOG

Most have experienced some kind of trauma; some have been in foster care, and they and others have experienced or witnessed abuse. “Believe in Dreams gives them hope – it helps them understand that they are not defined by their trauma,” Dr. Malhotra said. “And in granting the requests, we make sure that they are in no way re-traumatized.”

Fulfilling a request is only the beginning.

“These young people learn that there are now other adults in their lives who will make things better for them, and that impacts their resilience.” – Tani Malhotra, MD, FACOG

Importantly, their connection to the adults in ‘Believe in Dreams’ is ongoing, and those who are helped with their requests become “alumni.”

They - and perhaps their siblings, parents or children – then become part of a community of other dreamers.

“It’s never one and done,” says Dr. Malhotra, who is now a board member. Because of that and her physician role, she adds, “I can now bring more of a global view, and a perspective on the impact of those fulfilled dreams.”



UH CAREGIVERS GIVING BACK

FROM CALIFORNIA TO CLEVELAND: ONE WOMAN'S DRIVE TO HELP NEWCOMERS THRIVE

When Lisa Riordan, University Hospitals' Director of Executive Communications, set out to find a meaningful way to serve her new community, she knew she wanted her time and talents to go toward something transformative. A recent transplant herself – having relocated from California to Ohio – Lisa experienced firsthand how disorienting it can be to leave behind everything familiar. Even with the benefit of a common language and cultural understanding, she found the transition overwhelming.

So when she learned about Re:Source Cleveland, a nonprofit dedicated to helping international newcomers – many of whom are former refugees and asylum seekers – successfully settle and thrive in Greater Cleveland, something clicked.

"I knew how hard it was for me to uproot my life," Lisa recalled. "I was simply moving states, and it was daunting. I can't even imagine what it's like to arrive in a new country under traumatic circumstances, not speaking the language and needing to start from scratch. I wanted to help make that journey a little easier for others."

Re:Source Cleveland's mission is both practical and powerful: to assist newcomers in building brand new lives marked by dignity, opportunity and stability. The organization supports newcomers from countries like Ukraine, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, offering everything from employment, teen academic support, post-secondary education support, adult tutoring and drivers' education to social services access support as well as youth mentoring, sports, arts and wellness.

As a member of Re:Source Cleveland's Board, Lisa brings not only communications and marketing expertise, but a human-centered approach rooted in empathy.

"What inspires me most is the strength of these families. They have an incredible work ethic, and their success is so clearly grounded in family. They're raising children who stay engaged in school and on track for brighter futures." – Lisa Riordan

She's particularly moved by the work Re:Source does through their Teen Response program where staff and volunteers provide academic help, mentorship and cultural navigation – everything from explaining standardized tests and social customs to helping teens apply for a driver's license or join a weekend soccer league. "In fact, in 2024, 100% of the students they mentored graduated from high school – an incredible feat when English is not their first language."





Ohio City Farm new Roundstone Pavillion

Another innovative facet of the organization is its urban farm in Ohio City. The farm serves as a unique bridge for newcomers who arrive with agricultural expertise but little or no English. There, they find dignified, immediate employment growing organic produce, which is sold to local residents via CSA shares and Cleveland restaurants.

In 2025, the Ohio City Farm opened its Roundstone Pavillion that will provide – for the first time in its 16 seasons – a professional kitchen, storefront for produce sales, refrigeration and necessary facilities for the farm staff including restrooms and lockers.

“It’s an incredible way to honor the skills people bring with them. They’re contributing to the community from day one, even as they work to learn the language and adjust to a new culture.”

– Lisa Riordan

HONORING SERVICE THROUGH SERVICE:

Nearly **3,000**
American flags were
placed on the graves of
fallen service members
and veterans

UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS' VTO PROGRAM SUPPORTS MEANINGFUL MEMORIAL DAY TRADITION

Each year, just before Memorial Day, a quiet but powerful tradition takes place at All Souls Cemetery in Chardon Township – the placement of nearly 3,000 American flags on the graves of fallen service members and veterans. Among the volunteers performing this solemn tribute are University Hospitals caregivers, many of them veterans themselves, using their Volunteer Time Off (VTO) to give back in a deeply meaningful way.

UH's VTO program provides every caregiver with four hours of paid time off annually to volunteer with a nonprofit organization approved by the health system. It's one more way UH supports community engagement – and the values of service, compassion and connection that define its mission. Geauga County Veterans Services, which oversees the flag placement effort, is one of the approved nonprofit partners.

Matt Bocian, a U.S. Marine who saw combat in two of his three deployments to Iraq, is a Med Hub coordinator in Graduate Medical Education at UH Cleveland Medical Center. Each year, he joins a group of UH volunteers at the cemetery, many of whom are also veterans.

"In our UH group at All Souls, we have many veterans who do this every year, but there are a lot of non-veterans who join us too," he said.

He and other veterans describe those hours at the cemetery as somber, especially when they find the graves of young soldiers. "I think back and really reflect on this," Bocian said. "I have a lot of appreciation for what they've done, and for me still being here and able to go on."

"We remember history, and appreciate what they did, and it's a reminder to remember how lucky we are to be here. We don't want to waste these days."

– Matt Bocian

Through VTO, UH encourages caregivers like Bocian to serve not only in the workplace but out in the community – helping to carry forward traditions of honor, healing and remembrance.



Ryan Zelna, police officer at UH Geauga Medical Center, Police Lt. Steven Kumher

ASHLAND

UH Samaritan Medical Center

UH Baney Road Health Center
UH Samaritan Health Center
UH Kettering Health Center

ASHTABULA

UH Conneaut Medical Center
UH Geneva Medical Center

UH Ashtabula Health Center

CUYAHOGA

UH Ahuja Medical Center
UH Beachwood Medical Center
UH Cleveland Medical Center
UH Parma Medical Center
UH St. John Medical Center

UH Broadview Heights Health Center
UH Euclid Health Center
UH Foley ElderHealth Center
UH Independence Health Center
UH Landerbrook Health Center
UH Mayfield Village Health Center
UH Minoff Health Center at Chagrin Highlands
UH North Olmsted Health Center
UH Otis Moss Jr. Health Center
UH Rainbow Babies & Children's Ahuja Center for Women & Children
UH St. John Health Center
UH Solon Health Center
UH Suburban Health Center
UH Westlake Health Center

UH Bedford Wellness Center
UH Glenville Wellness Center
UH Richmond Wellness Center

Highland Springs Hospital
UH Rehabilitation Hospital
Southwest General Hospital
Southwest General
Strongsville Medical Center

GEAUGA

UH Geauga Medical Center

UH Bainbridge Health Center
UH Chardon Health Center
UH Chesterland Health Center
UH Evans Middlefield Health Center
UH Geauga Health Center

LORAIN

UH Elyria Medical Center

UH Avon Health Center
UH Amherst Health Center
UH North Ridgeville Health Center
UH Sheffield Health Center

UH Avon Rehabilitation Hospital

LAKE

UH Lake West Medical Center
UH TriPoint Medical Center

UH Brunner Sanden Deitrick Wellness Center
UH Concord Health Center
UH Lake Continuing Care Center
UH Lake SOM Health Center
UH Madison Health Center
UH Mentor Health Center
UH Mentor Hopkins Health Center
UH Perrico Health Center
UH Willowick Health Center

MEDINA

UH Medina Health Center
UH Sharon Health Center

Southwest General
Brunswick Medical Center

PORTAGE

UH Portage Medical Center

UH Aurora Health Center
UH Kent Health Center
UH Mantua Health Center
UH Streetsboro Health Center

SUMMIT

UH Cuyahoga Falls Health Center
UH Fairlawn Health Center
UH Hudson Health Center
UH Twinsburg Health Center

Western Reserve Hospital
Western Reserve Hudson Health Center

RICHLAND

UH Samaritan Richland Health Center

University Hospitals MEDICAL AND HEALTH CENTERS, WELLNESS, JOINT VENTURES

