

Mission:

We exist to improve the health of the communities we serve and to meet individuals' healthcare needs.

Northwest Community Hospital and Day Surgery Center are charitable organizations and provide financial assistance to those who are eligible. For more information, please call 847.618.4542 or visit nch.org.

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Community Benefit Report 2010



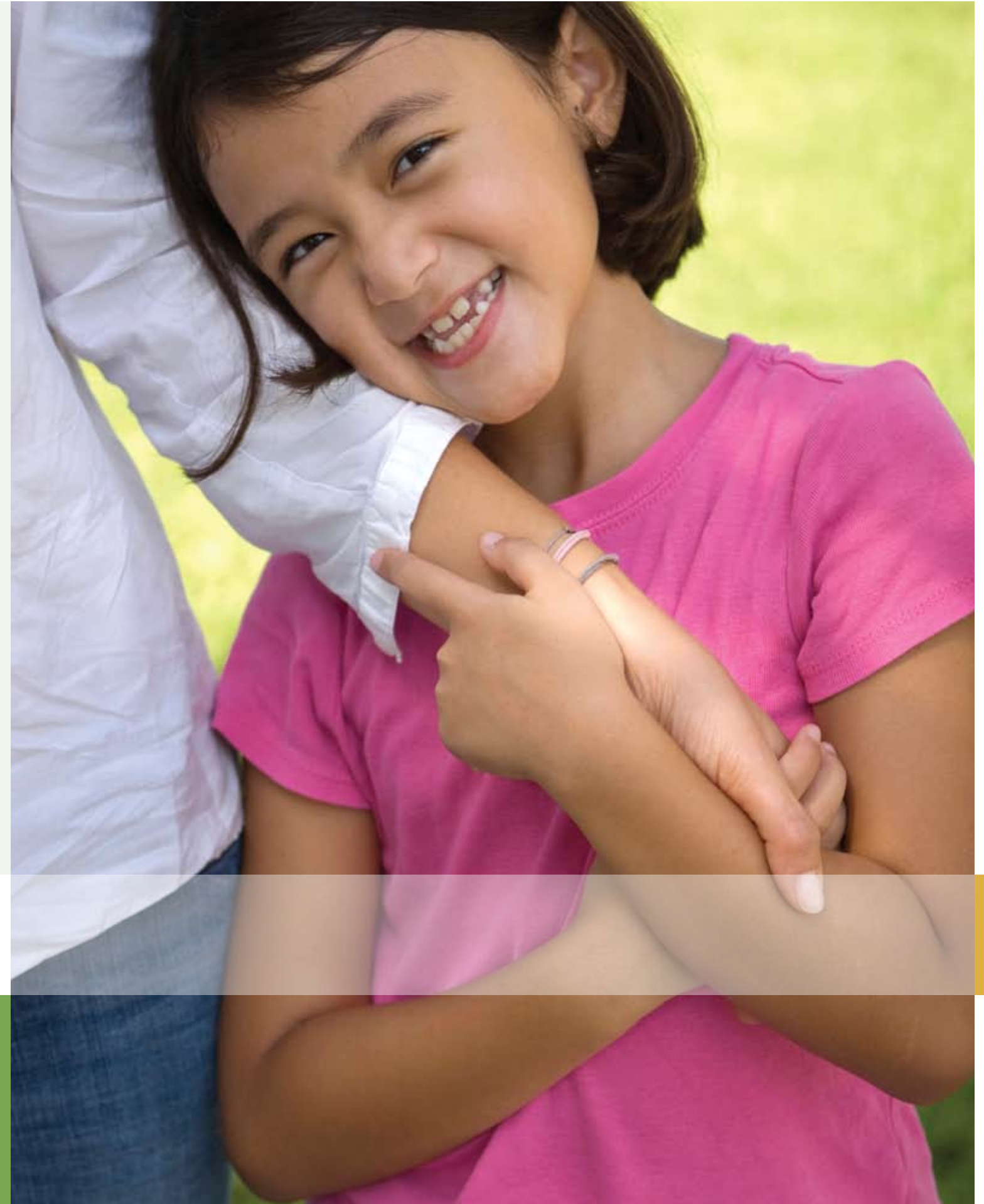
Keeping Our Promise

For more than 50 years, Northwest Community Healthcare (NCH) has been privileged to play a role in improving the health of the people of the northwest suburbs. In order to fulfill our commitment to providing excellent care, NCH has worked hard to respond to the changing needs of the communities we serve. By listening to our neighbors, we've determined where there are gaps and developed ways to improve area residents' health status, reduce disparities and increase access to preventive care.

As you will read, NCH embraces innovative strategies to serve the community. A commitment to fight the childhood obesity epidemic has led to an enhanced focus on breastfeeding. People needing behavioral health services can turn to a "navigator" to help them find responsive, affordable care. Partnerships and programs focused on education, cultural diversity, senior citizens, emergency services and charity care help us contribute to the health and well-being of the community we all call "home." We are proud that the word "community" is not just part of our name – it truly represents a promise we have made, and one we are honored to keep, on behalf of the people who live and work in the northwest community.

Responding to Our Community's Needs

Partnerships and programs focused on education, cultural diversity, senior citizens, emergency services and charity care help us contribute to the health and well-being of the community we all call "home."



Behavioral Health Navigator

Finding your way to affordable, accessible healthcare can be a daunting challenge even in the best of circumstances. For people in need of behavioral health services, it can be even more difficult, especially for those with little or no resources. That's where Liza Gutierrez comes in. As a behavioral health navigator, Gutierrez's job is to help underserved people in the community, who are in need, obtain essential mental health services through resources and referral. Her position is funded by Northwest Community Hospital, United Way and the Palatine Opportunity Center (POC).

Joseph Novak, PsyD, director of NCH's Mental Health Network, emphasizes that providing responsive behavioral health services is an increasing challenge. "State and community-based resources have disappeared due to funding cuts," he says. "For those struggling with mental illness, this situation can be especially devastating to their well-being and recovery."

Working from her office at the POC, Gutierrez helps people with a wide range of behavioral health needs and conditions. "Many are

individuals who have been hospitalized for a mental health condition such as depression or bipolar disorder and need continued care from a physician," she says. "It's very important for these individuals to stay on the medications they have been prescribed. That's a challenge for many in our community who often don't have a primary care physician to help manage their disease or the resources to pay for the prescriptions they need."

Gutierrez works closely with such people to find affordable medications and connect them with physicians at two community clinics: ACCESS @ Northwest Community, a federally qualified health center in Arlington Heights, and the Cook County Vista Health Center at the POC, both of which provide care for uninsured and underinsured people.

In addition, John McGillen, MD, director of Internal Medicine at NCH, volunteers his time to assist with this behavioral health program. "Dr. McGillen is certified to serve as the physician of record for patients who need a doctor in order to continue getting prescribed medications," Gutierrez says. "He monitors their care, makes sure the medications are working as

they should, and adjusts the dosage when needed. His support has made a big difference to our efforts."

Gutierrez says her education in psychology and criminal justice, along with her previous work for the Rolling Meadows Police Department, has given her a useful perspective on the behavioral health services needs and resources in the northwest suburbs. "One of the things I've learned is that there are many Latinas who could benefit from support or treatment," she says. "Domestic abuse, postpartum depression, stress and anxiety issues – these are increasingly common problems in women who have recently emigrated to this community or who don't speak English. We want to get them the help they need but are sometimes too fearful to seek themselves."

She adds that group support for Latinas is a priority. "I sponsor a 'craft' time at the POC on Thursdays. Women who participate also use this time to share their stories, their fears and their dreams with one another. Often, this can be the first step for Latinas in our community to open up and get the help they need."



Caring Connections

"Domestic abuse, postpartum depression, stress and anxiety issues – these are increasingly common problems in women who have recently emigrated to this community or who don't speak English," says Liza Gutierrez, behavioral health navigator.

Liza Gutierrez, behavioral health navigator, and Dr. John McGillen help the underserved with a wide range of mental health needs.

Breastfeeding Initiative

Sometimes it's best to begin at the beginning. That's the idea behind Northwest Community Hospital's Breastfeeding Initiative, which aims to play a role in fighting obesity in the community. "It has been documented that breastfeeding – especially when it's the sole form of nutrition for the first nine months – reduces a baby's odds of becoming overweight by more than 30 percent," says Karen Baker, director of Community Services at NCH. "In addition, we've learned that peer counseling is effective in increasing breastfeeding rates among women in underserved populations. With both of these insights in mind, we developed a two-part approach to increasing the rate of breastfeeding in our community."

This new initiative aims to change the hospital environment to more actively encourage exclusive, long-term breastfeeding. And, it especially targets the high risk of obesity in the Latino population by offering breastfeeding education and support to the underserved population served by NCH.

Patricia Tomlinson, Lactation Services manager at NCH, explains that the hospital-based component of this initiative includes training all nurses who care for moms and their newborns. This educational component is one of the 10 steps in the Baby Friendly Hospital initiative created by the World Health Organization/UNICEF in 1991 and endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

"For breastfeeding mothers, the hospital experience is critical," she says. Tomlinson adds that when hospitals have more of the 10 steps in place, including initiating breastfeeding within the first hour after delivery and giving no food or drink other than breast milk, then mothers breastfeed longer, giving infants an excellent start in achieving a healthier lifestyle, including reducing obesity. "Most of the nurses are well aware of the benefits of breastfeeding," she says. "Training empowers them to share their knowledge with patients and support the mother's choice to breastfeed."

The community-based component of the initiative focuses on the growing Latino population served by NCH. "Latina moms who give birth at NCH breastfeed their babies at a

lower rate than non-Latinas," Baker says. "We believe there are a number of factors that contribute to this. For example, many of these moms must return to work within just a few weeks and may not know how to obtain a breast pump or feel confident about asserting their rights."

To help, the initiative has built on the success of NCH's Promotoras de Salud Program – a nationally recognized model in which women from the community are trained to deliver important health information in Spanish. The initiative is training six bilingual community women as breastfeeding counselors. They will provide free prenatal breastfeeding education, conduct post-delivery support groups, and offer telephone and face-to-face peer support for underserved Latina mothers. One of the counselors, Rosa Vazquez, who works in the Promotoras de Salud program, is expanding her training to become a breastfeeding peer counselor. "The women in our community want to do what's best for their babies," she says. "It is a privilege for me to help them."



An Early Start on Healthy Futures

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Pat Tomlinson, manager of Lactation Services at NCH (standing), looks on as Rosa Vazquez provides breastfeeding peer counseling to a mom.

A Safety Net for the Community

In FY 2010, NCH continued to fulfill its mission through the following community outreach activities.

Community Clinics

A growing problem in our community is access to affordable medical care. NCH is addressing this need by supporting two primary care medical clinics: ACCESS @ Northwest Community in Arlington Heights and the Vista Health Center in Palatine. Combined, both clinics provided over 30,000 adult and pediatric visits in FY 2010. Services offered include internal medicine, pediatrics, OB/GYN, chronic disease management, and pediatric ophthalmology.

Mobile Dental Clinic

Now in its seventh year of operation, the NCH Mobile Dental Clinic brings preventive and restorative oral health services to individuals and families who are without dental insurance and who live at less than 200% of the federal poverty level. While many dental clinics focus on treating emergencies, NCH's program emphasizes the importance of overall oral health so patients develop a habit of regular cleanings and exams, while striving to provide a dental "home" for their patients. There were 2,800 patient visits in FY 2010.



Community Resource Centers

Palatine Opportunity Center

For over 10 years, the Palatine Opportunity Center has provided direct services, referrals and other assistance to individuals and families who are faced with cultural and economic challenges. NCH owns the building and provides free or low-cost rent to local agencies who have services within the community center. Some of the programs offered at the center include GED and citizenship courses, library access, computer literacy, after-school youth program, bilingual counseling, parenting classes, job placement, career education and recreation. It's also home to Cook County's Vista Clinic.

Community Connections Center

In 2010, NCH continued to expand its relationship with the Village of Mount Prospect through its support and participation in the village's Community Connections Center. This center serves as a resource in a predominately Latino area of Mount

Prospect. It provides health education, advocacy, case management, counseling, financial assistance, and much more to under-resourced individuals and families in the area. Other center partners include District 214 Community Education, Community Consolidated School District 59 and the Mount Prospect Public Library.

Both centers house the Promotoras de Salud program, which provides health education and screenings to the Latino population.

Little City Foundation

In collaboration with the Little City Foundation, a local not-for-profit that works with intellectually and developmentally disabled individuals, NCH supports the Center for Health and Wellness. Here, over 300 Little City clients receive immediate care, primary care and chronic disease management, along with dental care, in a familiar and caring environment on their campus. This center is one of the first of its kind in Illinois.

Homeless

The homeless population in our community continues to be a concern and NCH lends its support in a variety of ways. In addition to absorbing costs associated with inpatient and outpatient hospital visits, NCH also has a charitable prescription program in place for these individuals and provides laundry service at 14 of the area's shelters.

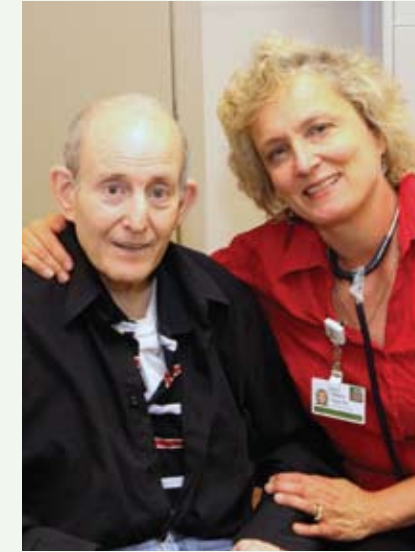
The Cost of Caring

Recognizing our role as a vital healthcare resource, we actively pursue opportunities in the community to support a wide variety of initiatives.

Charity Care

Given the current economy and the fragile nature of employment, many patients continue to experience a diminished ability to pay for the healthcare they need. Northwest Community's financial assistance program provides help to those with limited financial resources who are unable to access entitlement programs. The financial assistance program calculates benefits based on both the previous year and current year's income to give the most generous assistance possible. NCH has also integrated the components of the Illinois Uninsured Discount Program into its own program to complement and enhance our ability to provide assistance to the community.

In fiscal year 2010, NCH provided \$8.9 million in unreimbursed charity care, measured as the cost of services provided.



Language Assistance

We provide interpretation services in 45 languages in-person, by phone interpretation, and using sign language. In 2010, language assistance services cost \$338,000.

Government-sponsored Healthcare

With an aging population come more chronic conditions and multiple health problems. Reimbursement by Medicare and Medicaid programs is much lower than the actual cost of care. NCH has absorbed the excess cost of caring for these patients in the amount of \$81 million: unreimbursed Medicare costs of \$53 million and Medicaid costs of \$28 million.

Donations

We are committed to supporting our community by providing financial support to organization and agencies that address a number of priorities, including domestic violence, child abuse, and equal access to social

services. In fiscal year 2010, Northwest Community made financial donations totaling \$315,000 to community partners that met specific criteria. These donations went to more than 40 community agencies with donations of \$100 to \$15,000 to support their health and human services missions. In addition, another \$152,000 in supplies and equipment was donated to medical mission teams for their work around the country and the world.

Volunteer Services

We could not effectively pursue our mission without the sustaining services of our volunteers. That community support and the spirit of volunteerism has sustained NCH for over 50 years and culminated in 2010 with over 850 individuals contributing 110,000 hours of volunteer service. While their service is priceless, at the Hospital's minimum wage, the value of the volunteer program to the community is a little over \$1 million.

Education

As the Emergency Management Services (EMS) System resource hospital, NCH provides education for emergency medical dispatchers

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(EMDs), emergency medical responders (EMRs), emergency medical technicians (EMTs), paramedics and emergency communications registered nurses (ECRNs) within a 375-square-mile area. The system is a coalition of seven hospitals and hundreds of emergency medical personnel.

The NCH EMS System continually strives to achieve an EMS best practices environment as measured against national benchmarks. In addition, we assist community agencies and the federal government in conducting mass casualty drills to improve emergency response preparedness. The net cost for EMS Resource hospital activities in 2010 was \$368,000.

Our high school shadowing program helped eight students from District 214 explore jobs in healthcare and refine their goals. Students had the opportunity for one-on-one shadowing experiences in 24 different departments at NCH. The program cost was \$4,400.

At NCH, our commitment to professional education is demonstrated by our nursing staff that



volunteers its time and expertise as clinical preceptors for more than 350 undergraduate nursing students who rotate in and out of the Hospital throughout the year. We also provide clinical rotations for Lab, Pharmacy and Radiological Technology students, as well as offer internships and vocational information for area junior high and high school students. Costs related to these programs were \$214,000 in 2010.

Northwest Community invested more than \$90,000 in a state of Illinois grant program to help fund health profession education at William Rainey Harper College in FY 2010. This is part of NCH's ongoing effort to address the current and projected nursing workforce shortage.

Research

NCH is committed to bringing its patients better options in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease. Our Institutional Review Board (IRB) conducts careful review of all proposed research protocols and provides oversight for clinical trials and other research initiatives. In 2010, NCH spent \$28,000 in direct support for its Institutional Review Board.

Subsidized Health Services & Other Community Benefits

Support for community-based health and dental clinics, along with specialized services for senior citizens, brings NCH's commitment to the community beyond its walls. In fiscal year 2010, the cost of programs and services provided was \$1.56 million.

Some of these services included:

- ACCESS @ Northwest Community, a federally qualified health center (\$180,700); the Vista Health Center of Cook County (\$188,000), and the Mobile Dental Clinic (\$82,000). In addition, the organization initiated several programs related to nursing inpatient care for the frail elderly by making improvements in the patient experience, as well as increasing staff awareness and understanding of this population.



- HealthConnection at NCH provides callers with information and referrals on over 1,000 medical staff members, and access to resources available from NCH's community education, support group and health screening programs. Specially trained representatives also answer questions and process online registrations. HealthConnection's services cost \$145,000 in 2010.
- The Illinois Poison Center (IPC) serves the state of Illinois 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. Staffed by nurses, physicians, pharmacists and other poison specialists, the IPC receives over 90,000 poison-related calls each year. In 2010, NCH contributed \$21,000 to the IPC program.

Our Commitment to Community Benefit

Charity Care (unreimbursed):	\$	8,900,000
Language Assistance Services:	\$	338,000
Government-Sponsored Healthcare (excess cost over reimbursement):	\$	81,000,000
<i>Medicare:</i>	\$	53,000,000
<i>Medicaid:</i>	\$	28,000,000
Donations:	\$	467,000
Volunteers:	\$	1,072,000
Education:	\$	587,000
Research:	\$	28,000
Subsidized Health Services & Other Community Benefits:	\$	1,560,000
Total Expenditures:	\$	93,952,000

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