

Care, Comfort and Hope

Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits

Access to Primary and Preventive Health Services

Hospitals do what they can to move health care services out of the clinical setting into the heart of the community. Community health screenings and education classes help raise awareness of small, and sometimes, large steps that individuals can take to improve their health. When people learn more about how their lifestyle decisions affect their health, they make changes that ultimately lead to better health, which raises the health status of the entire community.

Prostate screening

One in six men will develop prostate cancer in his lifetime. The good news is that survival rates go up significantly thanks to a simple ten-minute screening.

Every October Langlade Hospital teams up with Urology Specialists of Wisconsin and offers a one-day free prostate cancer screening clinic. On average, 100 men take advantage of the screening.

According to the Prostate Cancer Education Council, early screening, detection and treatment have begun to change the statistics. If prostate cancer is caught early, the chances of survival are much stronger. Early screening has a high predictive value resulting in a drop in mortality from advanced prostate cancer.

Langlade Hospital - An Aspirus Partner, Antigo

Cumberland Memorial Hospital co-sponsors bone marrow drive to benefit local children

Cancer is a horrible disease and especially horrendous when it affects children. The Cumberland community currently has three children battling cancer, so a Cumberland organization decided to organize a bone marrow drive to create awareness and add to the national registry possible donors that might be able to help save these children's lives and the lives of others across the country. The Cumberland Memorial Hospital co-sponsored this event on November 15. The hope was to have 20 community members tested. The day proved to be much more successful, as over 100 people were tested and added to the national registry.

Cumberland Memorial Hospital, Cumberland

Free screening raises awareness of head and neck cancer

Shocked by a diagnosis of Stage 4 tongue cancer, survivor Jay Walt shared his story at a free head and neck cancer screening event sponsored by Froedtert & The Medical College of Wisconsin. His advice: Don't wait. Get those lumps and bumps checked out.

When money is tight, it's easy to let preventive health care slide—like routine physicals and dental visits, where oral cancer symptoms can be caught early. Head and neck cancer affects about 45,000 people in the U.S. every year. Anyone, young or old, smoker or non-smoker, can develop the disease. It's highly curable if found early, but symptoms usually don't appear until the disease is advanced. It can have devastating impact on a person's quality of life, affecting the ability to talk, eat or swallow.

That's why Froedtert & The Medical College offered the free screening in April in connection with national Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Week. Seventy-four people were checked during the four-hour event at Froedtert & The Medical College Clinical Cancer Center. One was referred for immediate consultation; 18 were advised to have further evaluation by a physician; and four were referred to a dentist. In addition to the free screening, physical and occupational therapists, an audiologist, palliative care specialist, speech pathologist, nutritionist and nurses staffed educational booths.

The monetary value of the 74 screenings is approximately \$12,200. Froedtert & The Medical College physicians, nurses, medical assistants and support staff donated time and supplies to the screening.

Beyond making care available to those who may not be able to afford it, publicity for the event helped educate a larger audience about head and neck cancer, its symptoms and the need for routine screenings.

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Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits (continued)

Thousands benefit from free prostate cancer screening

If anyone ever doubted the value of the free prostate screening clinic at Miller Park that Froedtert & The Medical College of Wisconsin sponsor with the Milwaukee Brewers and the National Prostate Cancer Coalition, all they have to do is look at the numbers.

2009 is the third consecutive year that Froedtert Hospital and its partner, the Medical College of Wisconsin, have offered the free screening at Miller Park, bringing the three-year total to more than 1,500 men who have been checked for prostate cancer—some for the first time. Many who came to the first screening in 2007 have returned in subsequent years, acknowledging the importance of an annual checkup. As with most cancers, early detection is key to surviving prostate cancer.

“I’m not here for the free Brewers tickets, I’m here for my health,” said Sam, who waited in line for more than an hour to get his free exam.

The numbers have grown steadily. In 2007, the event’s first year, 405 men were screened. Last year, 471 men were screened. And this year, perhaps bolstered by the loss of health insurance that comes with unemployment, a record 646 men completed the screening.

Though impressive, the turnout doesn’t tell the whole story. The real story is in the statistics. While final numbers for this year’s clinic are not available yet, in 2008 about 14 percent had abnormal PSA levels, while another nearly nine percent had suspicious digital rectal exams (DRE). Two years ago, results were similar with nearly 15 percent having elevated PSA levels and 10 percent had abnormal DREs.

Each screening is valued at approximately \$240, representing nearly \$100,000 in free care to the community over the past three years. Froedtert & The Medical College absorbs the cost of physicians, phlebotomists, nurses and support staff who work at the eight-hour event. This year, Froedtert Hospital Foundation donors provided funds for a second clinic van, allowing more efficient, faster screening of the participants. Men who are unable to come to the Miller Park event can make an appointment at Froedtert Hospital, where free screenings are offered year-around.

Men who complete the ballpark screening are rewarded with a voucher for two tickets to a Milwaukee Brewers home game, but they and their families receive additional benefits – the peace of mind that comes from a clean screening or early detection of potential disease, when the likelihood of curative treatment is far greater.

Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital, Milwaukee

Breast Cancer Awareness – Langlade Hospital Pink & Denim Day

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, and hopefully for most women, it’s a reminder to practice regular breast self examination and schedule a mammogram.

The third Friday of October, the Langlade Hospital family rallies together to participate in a special event called Pink and Denim Day. Employees are invited to make a voluntary donation to wear denim and pink to work to raise money for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, to increase awareness and celebrate the progress made in the battle against breast cancer.

Langlade Hospital – An Aspirus Partner, Antigo

St. Nicholas Hospital holds free skin cancer screening



Jeffrey Herold, MD, examines Cyndi Timm’s arms for any possible signs of melanoma.

In recognition of Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month®, St. Nicholas Hospital co-sponsored its first free skin cancer screening in Sheboygan County with The Regional Cancer Collaborative, Mary Hendrickson Johnson Foundation, and the American Cancer Society in May.

More than one million new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year. The most serious skin cancer—malignant melanoma—will kill nearly 8,420 people this year.

Fortunately, most skin cancers, including melanoma, can be cured if detected early. According to a survey by the American Academy of Dermatology, most Americans don’t know the warning signs of melanoma and only about one-third examine their skin for signs of skin cancer.

Jeffrey Herold, MD, and Kevin Myers, MD, volunteered their time to provide screenings to 67 people. Each screening consisted of an educational session and examination of a person’s specific area of concern. Twenty-eight people were referred to see a dermatologist for further evaluation.

St. Nicholas Hospital, Sheboygan

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Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits (continued)

Free mammography program for underserved women

It is common knowledge that many women put off getting their annual mammogram screening for a variety reasons. This year, at Ministry Sacred Heart in Tomahawk and Ministry Saint Mary's Hospital in Rhinelander (SHSMH), affordability could no longer be used as an excuse.

From October 1 - 30, 2009, SHSMH offered free mammogram screenings to women 40 years and older who resided in the SHSMH primary service area which includes Oneida, Lincoln and Forest counties. To qualify for this free service, women needed to be over 40 years old, live in one of the three counties and not have had a mammogram in the previous 12 months due to no insurance or lack of other financial resources to acquire this service.

This program helped determine the extent of a very important unmet health care need for women in the hospital's service area.

"Too often, women do not get screened," shared Sue Kirby, Community Link coordinator. "In fact, only about 65 percent of women in Wisconsin have annual mammogram screenings. We hear many reasons for not getting a mammogram; most often it is for financial reasons."

Thirty four women contacted the Health Access office to see if they qualified for the hospital's free mammogram screening. These women were screened and given resource information about community programs and services to help meet their concerns.

Ministry Sacred Heart Hospital, Tomahawk and Ministry Saint Mary's Hospital, Rhinelander

Girl Scouts from local communities learn about breast cancer while earning a patch

Girls from Osseo, Eleva, Strum and other communities attended an educational session at Luther Midelfort Oakridge on October 17 to learn about breast cancer and how to prevent the disease through early detection.

Ten Girl Scouts attended the 2 ½-hour program which consisted of a video on the importance of breast self-exams, and how to detect breast abnormalities. A breast cancer survivor also shared her story.

The girls toured the mammogram suite at Luther Midelfort Oakridge and made a scrapbook page as a memory of their day learning about the importance of early detection.

In addition to learning about breast health and breast cancer, the event also gave the Girl Scouts valuable information they could share with other women in their lives, while also helping them earn their breast cancer awareness patch.

Luther Midelfort Oakridge-Mayo Health System, Osseo



Erin Betcher, Mammogram Technician at Luther Midelfort Oakridge discusses with Girl Scouts how digital mammography detects abnormalities in breast tissue.

Submit community benefit stories to Mary Kay Grasmick, editor, at mgrasmick@wha.org.



Read more about hospitals connecting with their communities at www.WiServePoint.org.