

Fiscal Year 2019 (Second Quarter: October 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018)

Mercy Hospital St. Louis Community Benefit Report

Surviving Flu Shot Season



Mercy St. Louis collaborated with long-time community partners, Institute for Family Medicine (iFM) and Deaconess Nurse Ministry (Deaconess), to deliver 1,000 flu shots to the uninsured in October and November. The pharmacy department of Mercy St. Louis donates the flu vaccine and iFM and Deaconess provide the supplies and staffing to improve the immunization rate in underserved communities of St. Louis.

Community relationships are the key in this public health program. Although cost is a barrier, there is a large mistrust of institutions and miseducation about vaccines in the communities where the uninsured patients are. "The low-income person is likely to not go to the doctor's office or to health clinics where they perceive that they have to pay a fee," said Rev. Donna Smith-Pupillo, registered nurse and Executive Director of Deaconess, "so we come to them where they're already gathering, at churches and at food pantries."

The person is more likely to be persuaded to get the flu shot if it is administered by someone they know. "There is a huge mistrust in the medical institutions [amongst the communities that we serve] they're likely not going to let a stranger give them a shot, but if it is the parish nurse, someone they are familiar with, someone they've seen and work with on a regular basis, they are more open."

Trusted community members are also important in this process. Calvin Newberry, staff member at the St. Augustine-Wellston Community Center for over 20 years, said he gets the flu shot to be a role model. "I don't like needles. But if they see me getting the shot, they feel better [about getting it.]"

Another way that Mercy Hospital St. Louis builds community relationships is through round-table discussions between the community members and Mercy Family Medicine residents at the Wellston Center. The community members voiced their concerns regarding the flu vaccine during one of the discussions: "Why do I get sick after getting the flu shot?" "Is it safe?" "Does the flu shot actually do anything?" They build rapport during these informal sessions and the residents are able to dispel myths and provide accurate information to the community members.

The flu vaccine program between Mercy Hospital St. Louis Pharmacy and our community partners have been going for over 10 years. This year, Mercy Foundation also provides a \$2,500 grant to cover staffing hours for Deaconess.

Through this collaboration, Mercy St. Louis continues to work toward decreasing health disparities and providing access to care in the communities that we serve.

Total Community Benefit
\$32,878,000

Charity Care

Includes the actual cost of providing free or discounted care to persons who cannot afford to pay and who are not eligible for public programs. Charity care does not include bad debt.

Benefit: \$10,435,000

Community Outreach Services

Includes activities carried out to improve community health and services that are subsidized because they are needed in the community. Examples: education, support groups, health screenings, and immunizations.

Benefit: \$1,633,000

Health Professionals

Education and Research

Includes the cost of providing clinical placement for physicians, nurses and other health professionals plus the costs of the nursing anesthesia, EMS and radiology schools.

Benefit: \$3,676,000

Cash, In-Kind Donations, Workforce Enhancement and Fundraising

Includes cash, in-kind donations, fundraising costs, food & supplies to shelters, use of Mercy rooms and facilities, donated office space and recruitment of health professionals in medically underserved areas.

Benefit: \$140,000

Medicaid Subsidies

Includes the actual unpaid cost of providing care to Medicaid patients and represents the shortfall between cost of care and the payments received by the government.

Benefit: \$16,994,000.