

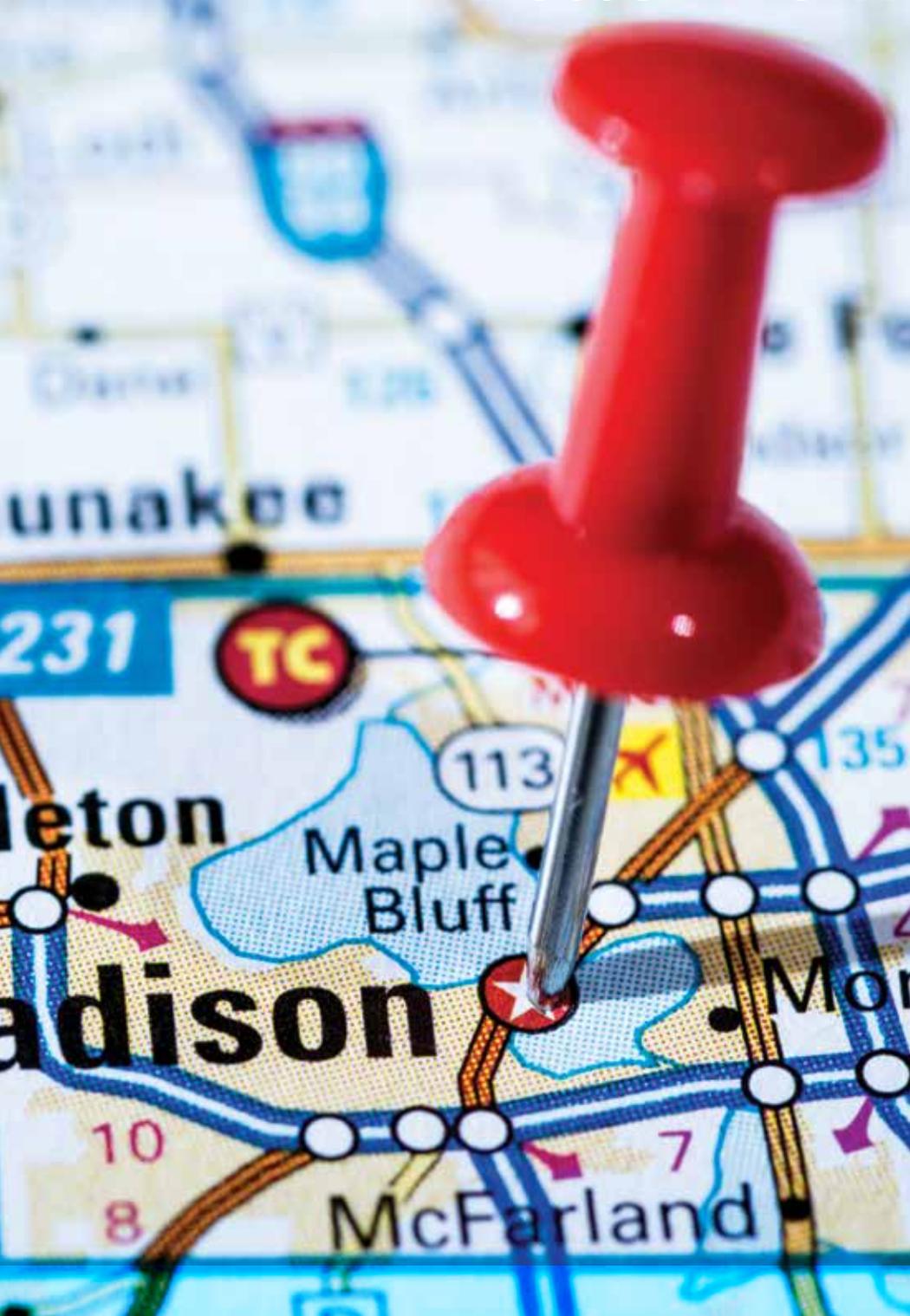


Caring for Our Community  
The 2015 Meriter Story

**MERITER**<sup>®</sup>



# Letter from Meriter's Leadership



Meriter - UnityPoint Health's commitment to the community is as strong today as it was when the doors opened over 115 years ago. We continue to provide services vital to the community's health, like Child and Adolescent psychiatry and the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program. And, we continue to partner with other organizations to address health needs in the community.

These partnerships and collaborations are ways that Meriter - UnityPoint Health can make a larger and more significant impact on the health of the community. We are able to work together to build stronger and more robust programs, as well as increase capacity and expand the reach of numerous efforts. Some of our partnerships are described in this report, but this is only a sampling of the work we do. As a community health system, Meriter - UnityPoint health has connections with many organizations and other partners. Sometimes our work is very public, and other times, our efforts are quieter but the work is not any less significant.

In 2014, Meriter invested over \$37 million in services to improve the health of the community, efforts that were both large and small. This total represents our financial assistance and charity care program, our subsidized services, our partnerships and other work we do to positively impact the health of Dane County.

We know that these funds are making a difference and we are proud of our role in the community. We also know that there is much work to do, and we are eager to find ways to make Dane County healthier.

**Art Nizza**  
President & CEO  
Meriter-UnityPoint Health

For more than 110 years, Meriter Health Services has been privileged to serve residents of Madison, Dane County and surrounding counties. This report gives you a glimpse of the breadth of Meriter's services and the people served as Meriter carries out its mission on a daily basis.

*To heal this day*

*To teach for tomorrow*

*To embrace excellence always*

*To Serve our communities*

*For a lifetime of quality health care*



## Meriter's History

In 1898, Madison General Hospital Association articles of incorporation were signed in 1898, creating the first hospital in Madison. A permanent hospital was built five years later with funds raised by the City of Madison and local philanthropists. On October 20, 1903 the first baby was born.

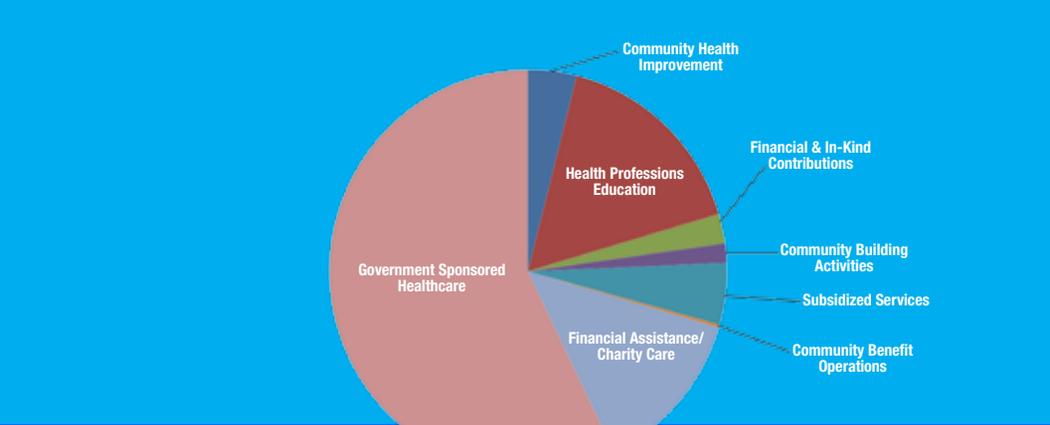
Soon after the hospital opened, it reached its capacity of 30 patients. By 1912, Madison General expanded to 85 beds. That same year, Wisconsin Methodist Hospital opened with 12 beds. In 1987, Methodist Health Services and General Health Services merged to become Meriter Health Services and Madison's two oldest hospitals became Meriter Hospital. The hospitals completely consolidated in 1990.

Meriter has maintained many of its traditions for more than 110 years, including a focus on women's services with the busiest birthing center in Wisconsin. Meriter also has a history of providing medical education, including a partnership with UW Medical School that has existed since the 1950s,

nurse training programs, and mental health services since the 1960s. Today, Meriter serves the health care needs of families in south central Wisconsin through Meriter Hospital, a not-for-profit community hospital providing a wide-ranging scope of medical and surgical services; Meriter Medical Group, a growing primary and specialty care practice serving Meriter Hospital, Meriter clinics and Physicians Plus. Meriter clinics provide easy access to health care at locations in downtown and southwest Madison, Fitchburg, Middleton, Monona, Stoughton and DeForest-Windsor; and Meriter Foundation, a not-for-profit, tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization raising, investing, granting and stewarding gifts on behalf of Meriter Hospital.

Meriter has been recognized three times as a 100 Top Hospitals® by Truven Health Analytics.

We are proud to be part of UnityPoint Health, one of the nation's most integrated health systems. UnityPoint Health provides care throughout Iowa and Illinois through more than 280 physician clinics, 32 hospitals in metropolitan and rural communities and home care services.



# What is Community Benefit?

Meriter and many other health care systems around the country voluntarily subscribe to a common definition of community benefit developed by the Catholic Health Association.

Community benefits are programs or activities that provide treatment and/or promote health and healing as a response to community needs; they are not provided for marketing purposes.

Community benefit:

- Responds to needs of special populations such as persons living in poverty and other disenfranchised persons
- Supplies services or programs that would likely be discontinued - or would need to be provided by another not-for-profit or government provider - if the decision was made on a purely financial basis
- Responds to public health needs
- Generates a low or negative financial return
- Involves education or research that improves overall community health

Community benefit programs address the health needs of the community. It is about creating a healthier community, especially for those who lack access to services.

It means doing the right thing, for the right reason.

Meriter continues to provide a considerable amount of Community Benefit programs from healthy parenting classes, medical education training, subsidized services like the only Child and Adolescent Psychiatry inpatient service in Dane County, and many more programs and services.

## 2014 Community Benefit Investment

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>Community Health Improvement</b> .....  | <b>\$1,477,427</b>  |
| Health education classes, health related screenings  |                     |
| <b>Health Professions Education</b> .....  | <b>\$6,151,784</b>  |
| Medical students, residents, nursing students, respiratory therapists, radiology technologists   |                     |
| <b>Subsidized Health Services</b> .....  | <b>\$1,844,000</b>  |
| Services that are provided at a financial loss to the organization but are needed by the community. Some of these services include the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program, NewStart and Child & Adolescent Psychiatry |                     |
| <b>Financial &amp; In-Kind Contributions</b> .....   | <b>\$883,630</b>    |
| Financial and In-Kind contributions as well as staff time to support health improvement activities   |                     |
| <b>Community Building Activities</b> .....   | <b>\$580,873</b>    |
| Support and involvement in activities and programs to increase the safety, security and economic health of the community   |                     |
| <b>Community Benefit Operations</b> .....  | <b>\$85,274</b>     |
| Cost of maintaining community benefit programming and support  |                     |
| <b>Financial Assistance/Charity Care</b> .....   | <b>\$4,987,880</b>  |
| Cost of free or discounted health services provided to those who cannot afford to pay and meet specific financial assistance criteria  |                     |
| <b>Government Sponsored Health Care</b> .....  | <b>\$21,368,216</b> |
| Costs related to government health programs such as Medicaid programs  |                     |
| <b>Total</b> .....   | <b>\$37,379,084</b> |

# Allied Wellness Center



The Dane County Community Health Needs Assessment showed that the diabetes health outcomes for African Americans are much worse than the county's white population. In order to help the community improve these outcomes, Meriter partnered with a community organization the Allied Wellness Center, as well as a grassroots group Mothers in the Neighborhood, to understand some of the community's needs. Involving community organizations and members in this process, there is a greater chance of getting to the source of an issue and creates a deeper commitment by all involved.

The Allied Wellness Center and Mothers in the Neighborhood serve the Allied Drive Neighborhood, an ethnically diverse, low-income community. The Allied Wellness Center provides social support, assistance with medical co-pays, transportation to medical appointments and health information education, and Mothers in the Neighborhood is a social support group that engages in community projects.

Once understanding some of the barriers facing the community, Meriter connected the Wellness Center and Mothers in the Neighborhood to the American Diabetes Association to identify and train community members on an American Diabetes Association educational program known as Project Power.

Once trained, community members facilitated community classes on awareness about type 2 diabetes, and how individuals can help manage or even prevent diabetes through diet and exercise. Meriter supports the program in a number of ways including providing content experts to answer questions. One of the most popular experts is a dietician who helps prepare recipes from an American Diabetes Association cookbook, giving residents an opportunity to taste recipes before trying at home and learn how to make little tweaks to recipes.

"So many people in my family have diabetes," said Carmela a program participant, "I want to learn what I can do to help keep myself healthy. And these classes have given me information that I can share with my family, so that they can be healthier." Not only is Carmela grateful for the information she has learned but she is also pleased that the class is run by community members. "Experts can provide a lot, but I really liked that our own community members led the class. We are helping each other live healthier lives. Meriter has made this possible."

*"I want to learn what I can do to keep myself healthy."*

# PEAT Program

Challenging the idea that teenagers only love food that is bad for them, the Program for Entrepreneurial Agricultural Training (PEAT) gives young teens experience with food systems and opens the doors to not just an appreciation for healthy food, but actually changes what they want to eat. “Every year, I hear from parents that their kids actually refuse to eat some foods they used to crave,” recounts Robert Pierce, founder of the South Madison Farmer’s Market, the non-profit organization that developed and runs the PEAT program.



Each summer, Meriter partners with the South Madison Farmer’s Market to help make the PEAT program possible. As many as ten students can be found, early on a summer morning, planting and weeding their own garden plot and planning their next steps, including budgeting, marketing and more. “The students are literally getting their hands dirty in developing their entrepreneurial skills. Because of Meriter’s commitment, we have been able to bring more kids in to the program and expand what we can do with them,” says Pierce. “Beyond financial support, Meriter staff connects with our students and is helping them develop professional interpersonal skills. As students start to understand what goes in to creating healthy food and how good something you have grown yourself tastes, their interest in heavily processed foods seems to take a back seat. Basically, between the kids’ desire to eat healthier foods and their budding business skills, I think we are really growing a healthier community.”

*“The students are literally getting their hands dirty in developing their entrepreneurial skills”*

# NewStart



**Niko’s Story:** “When I was in high school, I was a pretty good athlete; I had a knee injury and I was prescribed pain killers. I wasn’t a partier, drinker or anything – but I was a typical teenager and I did like to have fun. A friend told me that if I took a few extra pain pills, I would get a good high off of it. So, on occasion, I would do that. It seemed innocent enough.”

My senior year in high school, another powerful prescription pain medication hit the scene in my hometown. So, I started recreationally using like a lot of people I knew. That year, my long-time girlfriend committed suicide; it was a very hard time. I had just turned 18, heading off to college to play football. So, I was faced with a lot of new things, a lot of emotions and stresses I didn’t know how to handle. And, pills were my outlet. Over the next few years, my use really amped up. After some time, prescription pills were just not enough so heroin became the choice. I couldn’t afford my use. I started taking out loans, then pawning items. Eventually I ended up stealing things to sell just to continue my habit. I got caught up in this circle but that abruptly stopped when I was arrested and charged with 4 felony counts of burglary. It was at this point that I began to see all the damage I caused and I was just 22 years old. After I got out of jail, I decided I needed to turn a new leaf.

*“Since I found NewStart, I have been led down a great path.”*

Meriter’s New Start was highly recommended and I spent 11 weeks in the Outpatient and AfterCare program. This was over 4 ½ years ago. A lot of people tell me I should celebrate all the work I have done to get well. But, since I found New Start, I have been led down a great path. I have been given lots of opportunities and feel blessed. When I came in to the program, I didn’t think I was worth much. But, everyone welcomed and greeted me with a smile. They exposed me to all of these programs, these wonderful things; in essence, this new way of life that I didn’t know was even possible. They have instilled “hope” in me. There was a time when I couldn’t image ever feeling that again. I can never thank Meriter’s New Start for what they have given me; they gave me a second chance at life.

# Million Dollar Baby

“The excitement & anticipation we felt before the birth of our fourth child was dampened when I went in to labor at 23 weeks,” recalls Gina. Having just moved to the area, Gina and her husband Jay had not contacted a local obstetrician. Luckily, they found themselves at Meriter. The physicians were able to stop Gina’s labor but within a week, she had to have an emergency cesarean. When their daughter, Liza, was born 15 weeks early, she weighed a meager 1lb 5oz. “We were told to expect her to be in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for over 3 months, her original due date. How could we handle the enormous hospital bill?” As an Amish family, Gina and Jay do not have insurance. Medical bills are paid in cash, sometimes with help of their community. Gina and Jay’s faith kept them supported during these challenging times. “God didn’t provide us with answers all at once, but he did provide grace, peace and strength for each day.” The family



and their church prayed for the health of their daughter and for help through their financial troubles. “Knowing our funds were limited, we thought it only right that Meriter give us a lower level of care. What if this was God’s will? But, the medical team did not care about our ability to pay; they would give us their best.” The day Gina and Jay walked in to the financial assistance department they were greeted by staff who let them know they were here to help. Soon,

they were approved for total financial assistance, nearly \$1million. Now, they could focus solely on their daughter and her health.



Although Liza’s time in the NICU was a roller-coaster ride, she began to grow and her condition stabilized. On the day Liza was released, she surprised everyone by passing her oxygen tests. “We were thrilled to take our precious daughter home after 16 weeks in the NICU- no oxygen - no handicaps - 8 whole pounds of baby to love and cuddle! A normal, happy baby; nothing short of a miracle straight from God!”

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*“Luckily they found themselves at Meriter.”*

# Safe Communities



In partnering with community organizations, Meriter is able to help make a difference in significant health issues. Some problems are complex that they require a multi-level approach. Prescription drug misuse is one of those issues. Deaths caused by misuse and abuse of prescription opioids tripled between 2000 and 2010. In fact, in Dane County, drug poisoning deaths is now the leading cause of injury related death, exceeding motor vehicle crashes.

Safe Communities Madison-Dane County convenes multiple community collaborations to address safety and injury concerns, including drug poisoning.



“We could not do our work alone,” notes Cheryl Wittke Safe Communities’ Executive Director, “Working with many community partners, we certainly get a better understanding of complicated issues. They are able to better define upstream and downstream factors that just one or two partners might not realize.” When Safe Communities learned that 75% of those in recovery began their opioid use from prescription drugs and 55% of prescriptions in Dane County contained opioids, Wittke knew that healthcare providers were an important piece of the puzzle.

Dr. Geoff Priest, Meriter’s Chief Medical Officer, signed on as one of the co-chairs of the Medical Task Force on Safe Opioid Prescribing. Addressing how and when physicians prescribe pain medications is a challenge. No physician wants their patients to suffer. They must strike a delicate balance between reducing and eliminating pain and keeping the patient safe. Dr. Priest helped lead a panel of physicians who were committed to educating themselves and others about safe prescribing practices. With Dr. Priest’s and Meriter’s involvement in the Trask Force, Safe Communities is confident that together this collaborative can help reduce the toll that opioid injury and deaths is having in Madison and Dane County.

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