



Penn Medicine  
Chester County Hospital

# 2020 HEALTH EMPOWERMENT PARTNERSHIPS

CHESTER COUNTY HOSPITAL COMMUNITY BENEFIT REPORT

## ABOUT US

Chester County Hospital provides quality medical care without discrimination based upon age, sex, race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, ancestry, national origin, marital status, familial status, genetic information, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, culture, language, socioeconomic status, domestic or sexual violence victim status, source of income or source of payment. Although reimbursement for services rendered is critical to the operation and stability of Chester County Hospital, it is recognized that not all individuals possess the ability to purchase essential medical services. Therefore, in keeping with this hospital's commitment to serve all members of its community, it provides:

- Free care and/or subsidized care;
- Care at or below costs to persons covered by governmental programs;
- Health activities and programs to support the community are considered where the need and/or an individual's inability to pay co-exist. These activities include a wide variety of wellness programs, screenings, support groups and services that address specific life cycle needs and chronic health conditions.

EMERGENCY CARE IS PROVIDED 24-HOURS-A-DAY AND IS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL REGARDLESS OF A PERSON'S ABILITY TO PAY.

Chester County Hospital provides care to persons covered by governmental programs at or below cost. Recognizing its mission to the community, services are provided to both Medicare and Medicaid patients. To the extent reimbursement is below cost, Chester County Hospital recognizes these amounts as charity care in meeting its mission to the entire community.

## 2020 FACTS AND FIGURES

**Beds: 309**

**Adult and Pediatric Admissions: 13,728**

**Outpatient Tests and Procedures: 420,188**

**Emergency Department Visits: 39,884**

**Births: 2,850**

**Employees: 2,697**

**Physicians: 780**

CHESTER COUNTY HOSPITAL, WHICH IS PART OF PENN MEDICINE, IS AN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE PEOPLE IN CHESTER COUNTY AND SURROUNDING AREAS.

# VISION

## TO BE THE LEADING PROVIDER OF CARE IN THE REGION AND A NATIONAL MODEL FOR QUALITY, SERVICE EXCELLENCE AND FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

Chester County Hospital is committed to identifying, prioritizing and serving the health needs of our community. In fulfillment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the hospital performs a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years. In 2019, a group of local hospitals and health systems, including Chester County Hospital, convened to develop the first-ever Southeastern PA Regional CHNA. From this needs assessment, a corresponding Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP) specific to Chester County Hospital was written and put into action.

The hospital's many established and long-standing community partnerships inform the work that is to be done for the CHIP, with the common goal to help Chester County become a community in which all individuals can be healthy and empowered to manage their health.

**Chester County Hospital's Community Benefit Report 2020—Health Empowerment Partnerships—** shares a few of the ways we are partnering with these local organizations to create new possibilities for wellness and good health among our neighbors of Chester County.

Visit [ChesterCountyHospital.org](https://www.ChesterCountyHospital.org) to learn more about the Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan.

# CREATING A “SAFE SPACE” WHEN IT COMES TO RACE

*In partnership with community leaders, CEO Mike Duncan guides the hospital in taking the lessons of Black Lives Matter to heart.*



With the rise of social unrest after the death of George Floyd in May 2020, CCH physicians organized a silent protest at the hospital in collaboration with White Coats for Black Lives.

Timmy Nelson of West Chester, PA, is a former UPS executive and the newest member of the Chester County Hospital Board of Directors, he is also a long-time member of the Patient and Family Advisory Council and the Turk’s Head Board, which advises the hospital on real estate matters. He also serves on the board of The United Way of Chester County.

As a Black man in America, Nelson has been subject to racial profiling. There was the policeman who regularly patrolled his neighborhood and stopped his car outside Nelson’s house, one day asking, “You live here?” He has been pulled over without cause and told it was part of a routine traffic stop. He has given his own children, especially his sons, “the talk” about how to interact with the police.

Such injustices have always been part of the lived experience for Black Americans. Yet the nation could no longer look away on May, 25, 2020, when George Floyd was slowly suffocated to death in Minneapolis by a police offer. That same day, in Central Park, an individual called the police on a Black birdwatcher who asked her to leash her dog. There have been numerous incidents since then which, thanks to bystanders’ smartphones, have revealed unjust and inhumane actions targeting Black Americans.

**Chester County Hospital CEO Mike Duncan says the incidents of last May shook him to his core.**

**“My management philosophy is ‘love people, expect excellence.’ When Mr. Floyd was killed, I could tell our Black front-line employees especially were deeply affected by it—angry, fearful, traumatized. I didn’t know what to do.”**

As many white CEOs issued statements supporting Black Lives Matter, Duncan was at a loss. What could a statement really do? This led to another question: As the leader of a hospital with many Black employees and a duty to care for the community, what could he do to understand the situation and use it as an opportunity?

### **Start by Listening**

Duncan called Timmy Nelson for advice and asked him to serve as his mentor. (Nelson notes he was “honored to play that role.”) He in turn connected Duncan with other Black leaders in the West Chester community: educators, pastors, local NAACP Directors. One such leader was Pastor Kyle Boyer of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Coatesville, who is also a middle school teacher in Norristown, a Tredyffrin/ Easttown School Board member, and past president of the West Chester NAACP. Black leaders from the hospital’s staff also made some introductions for Duncan. For example, Rhonda West-Haynes, MHA, BSN, RHIA, CCDS, CCS, CPC, Director of Revenue Operations, introduced him to Richard Roberts, III, founder and CEO of Young Men and Women in Charge in West Chester. This organization partners with area school districts to immerse low-income and minority K-12 students in a STEM-based curriculum, expose them to STEM professions, and pave their way toward college.

These leaders became a kind of informal advisory group for Duncan—people he could call for advice and counsel. “Initially I said the same thing to all of them: ‘Tell me what my Black employees need to hear from their white leader.’”

He went on to invite about 50 Black staff members from across the hospital into his office for what he describes as “unfiltered” one-to-one discussions. “I asked them if they’d be willing to share their experiences with me, and how they were feeling as a result of the current events,” Duncan explains.

What he heard really changed him. “Honestly, like many people, I thought we had made much more progress than we had,” Duncan says.

Those listening sessions led to a series of first steps this fall and winter to root out any forms of systemic racism—no matter how subtle — at the hospital. In a way, this is a continuation of the work already started by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. An example of this initiative is the Legacy Builders Breakfast series for Black women and men from throughout Chester County Hospital and Penn Medicine. But now the work is more intentional, more visible, and focused on raising everyone’s awareness.

#### Taking the First Steps

Duncan asked an executive who had met one-on-one with him to consider sharing her story more widely. That led to small-group presentations with roughly 100 members of the management team. “Many said, ‘I had no idea they were having this experience,’” Duncan says.

He and his Executive Team appointed Timmy Nelson to the Board of Directors. The hospital will continue efforts to make sure that Black voices are represented in senior-level positions. Pastor Kyle Boyer also presented a workshop on understanding white privilege to members of the Patient and Family Advisory Council, with plans to present to other groups in the future.

The hospital has also committed to mentoring Black



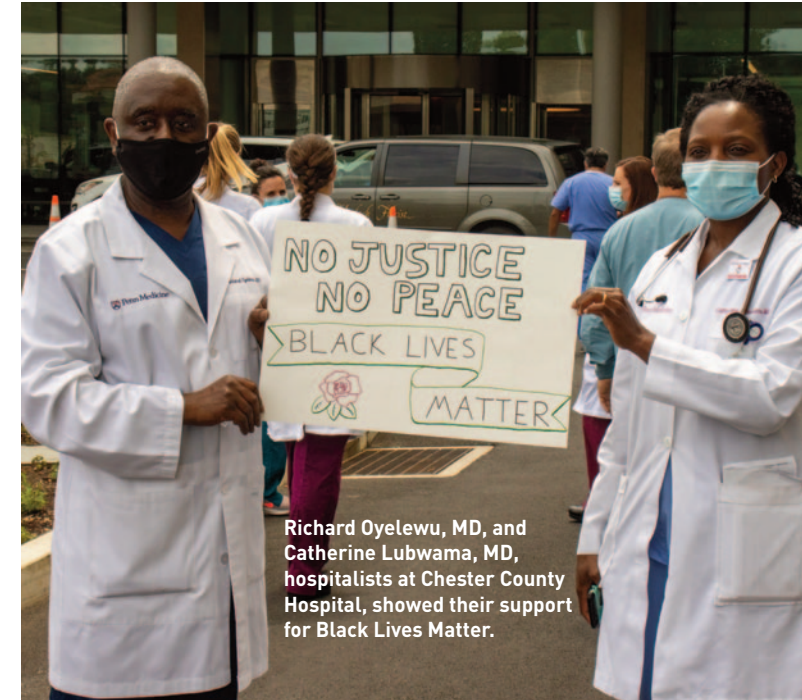
Sharayne Mark Coffin, MD, cardiologist at Chester County Cardiology Associates joined the White Coats for Black Lives silent protest.

employees more proactively. An Environmental Services staff member who expressed interest in a clinical role is now working as an Emergency Department technician. A tech aide has moved to a new role as a sterilization processing tech.

“We want to help Black employees grow into these roles and pull them forward,” Duncan stresses.

#### Forging Community Partnerships

The hospital realizes it can’t do this work alone, and the partnerships Duncan forged have led to productive collaborations. Physicians, nurses, and other staff members are volunteering with Young Men and Women in Charge (YMWIC) to educate young people about health and science careers. Some hospital staff served as judges for YMWIC’s Annual Science Expo in March (held virtually). Others have made virtual presentations to students and their families on topics such as COVID-19 and mental health. Post-COVID,



Richard Oyelewu, MD, and Catherine Lubwama, MD, hospitalists at Chester County Hospital, showed their support for Black Lives Matter.

students will be able to come in for job shadowing. On Martin Luther King Day, with Timmy Nelson’s help, the hospital invited 10 members of St. Paul’s Baptist Church to receive their COVID-19 vaccine and take part in a panel discussion with family medicine physician Dr. Lisa Croft, whose husband is the church’s pastor. The event was recorded so it could be shared with the congregation and other Black churches. Black Americans understandably have been reluctant to take vaccinations, given the history of medical experimentation on Black populations. “The idea was, ‘Here is something you can take back to your churches to try to move the needle for healthcare equity,’” Duncan says. Timmy Nelson is now inviting other churches and community groups to participate in similar COVID-19 vaccination events.

The hospital also prepared and recorded a Zoom event about the COVID-19 vaccine and presented it to the West Chester NAACP. Other area NAACP chapters were invited to attend

the presentation and given the recording for future use. The hospital also shared it with area churches.

For Black History Month in February, the hospital hosted an online speaker series for its workforce featuring 12 influential voices in the Black community. Among them was Pastor Kyle Boyer, who talked about the history of African-American progress in Chester County. Richard Roberts III of YMWIC spoke about his organization and brought in one of his senior scholars to share her experience.

“Mike Duncan seems to have this vision, which is very much aligned with our vision,” Roberts says. “Societal change of this kind is not an overnight thing here. There is an old way of thinking that gets handed down from generation to generation. I am looking to have resources to be on the ground floor to begin to make change. And you have the Mike Duncans of the world who feel the same way.”

**“I am supportive of the hospital’s commitment to equity,” says Pastor Boyer. “People may not know the hospital well, but they expect it to be there when they are sick. But, underneath that terracotta roof is a leadership team committed to making the world a better place.”**

#### Looking to the Future

Duncan is adamant that these efforts will go on far beyond Martin Luther King Day and Black History Month. “A Black pastor was in the hospital recently visiting some of her parishioners, and she told me, ‘You have to keep this going and make sure it’s not just a one-time event.’ I agree, and we plan to keep making progress over time in various ways.”



John Mokonyama, Medical Librarian, Timmy Nelson, Board Member, Rhonda West-Haynes, Director of Revenue Operations, and Jacqueline Felicetti, Chief Human Resources Officer, honor Michael Duncan, President and CEO for his servant leadership in diversity & inclusion on behalf of the hospital and community.



Still, the community is taking notice. Duncan was invited to talk about the hospital's efforts at a Penn Medicine forum as part of its Action for Cultural Transformation (ACT) initiative, focused on ensuring equity and eliminating racism. Black leaders at Chester County Hospital created a new award, the *Spirit of Belonging Award*, which they gave to Duncan during the hospital's service awards ceremony on January 14.

"I have never received an award that meant more to me," he said.

Mike continued, "We have five values here: innovation, collaboration, accountability, respect, and excellence. Respect is the most important. There is an expectation that everyone is going to be treated with respect. We have a lot to learn about how we are going to do that."

"Still, no matter what is going on in the world, when you get to campus, I want you to sigh and feel you are in a safe place," he added. "You have a voice and you are respected."

"There are several hospital employees at my church and many have told me they know I am working with Mike on diversity issues," Timmy Nelson adds. "And they say 'thank you—I think we are going to be better than we are now.' And that's really a driving force for me."

## IN THE MIDDLE OF A PANDEMIC, A LIFELINE TAKES THE FORM OF A DELICIOUS, HOT DINNER

One of the most devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the sharp increase in food insecurity. In response, a new partnership facilitated by Chester County Hospital is feeding dozens of food-insecure families across Chester County each week.

IN ALL, 100 PREPARED FAMILY MEALS

—each of which serves five people—

are distributed in West Chester and Coatesville

over the course of Thursday and Friday nights.

Chester County Hospital supplements the dinners, which are cooked from scratch and shared by the West Chester-based Filet of Soul Culinary Institute, including a family-friendly handout that offers basic tips on different wellness topics. Recent tips have included grocery shopping on a tight budget and staying physically active during the pandemic.

Launched in November, the program, which will continue through May, is funded in part by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

"Foremost, we wanted to try to lend our support to the families in Chester County who are enduring some of the greatest challenges during the pandemic. Very quickly, we realized we could have the greatest impact on that front if we joined forces with our community partners," says Michele Francis, MS, RD, CDCES, LDN, the Director of Community Health & Wellness Services at Chester County Hospital. "Everyone involved in this undertaking has a large presence in our community. We felt a great responsibility to meet the growing needs caused by the pandemic."



### Joining forces

Last April, Francis was contacted by Falguni Patel, MPH, the Manager of Community Impact Initiatives at CHOP. CHOP was seeking to support organizations throughout Greater Philadelphia to build capacity to meet the emerging needs. Its focus was on those organizations that were helping to fill in the gaps that were always present but had become much more prominent over the first several weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Early in the pandemic, one of the things we prioritized was communities that often experience the greatest need, but are not usually quickly supported,” Patel says.

Francis, in turn, reached out to Lisa A. Morris, the co-founder and CEO of Filet of Soul, Executive Director of the Filet of Soul Culinary Institute, and a Development Consultant to the Charles A. Melton Arts and Education Center, where the culinary institute is based. The center was founded to help meet the needs of West Chester’s marginalized populations. Its namesake was a prolific civil rights activist in West Chester in the sixties and seventies. Morris ultimately submitted a proposal to CHOP for \$36,000 to support the program.

She estimates that it costs about \$16,000 a month to fund the prepared meals program. In addition to the support from CHOP, Morris has also secured funding from the Department of Environmental Protection and the Brandywine Health Foundation to support the program. Participating families mostly are referred from CHOP’s

primary care practices in West Chester and Coatesville. Nurse Wanda Serdich, LPN, informs families that are covered by Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) about the free meals. Others are identified by the Melton Center, which serves as the West Chester distribution center for the program, and the Bridge Community Center, in Coatesville.

“Convenience is one of the biggest benefits of this program. These are hot meals that families can pick up locally and take home to eat together, without any further preparation,” Patel says. “There’s also tremendous value in supporting the students at the culinary institute. This pandemic has devastated the hospitality industry. For it to recover in a meaningful way, it’s going to require everyone’s support.”

### Meeting the need

In 2015, Morris and her husband, Traci, opened a restaurant in Thorndale. While the menu—which sampled from barbeque, Caribbean, and soul food cuisines—was enthusiastically embraced, it was what was occurring behind the scenes that distinguished the restaurant. The Morrises staffed their restaurant entirely with people who traditionally face significant barriers to employment: single mothers, veterans with disabilities, people with criminal records, economically disadvantaged teens.



**Lisa Morris, Co-founder and CEO of Filet of Soul, Executive Director of the Filet of Soul Culinary Institute, and Development Consultant to the Charles A. Melton Arts and Education Center, and the Filet of Soul team deliver hot meals to Chester County families in need.**

Admirable as their intention was, the restaurant was too expensive to sustain. So, in 2017, they closed it and opened a catering kitchen at the Melton Center. Shortly thereafter, their operation grew to include the culinary institute, with funding from Chester County’s Department of Community Development. In the first year, 22 aspiring chefs enrolled. Such an opportunity likely would have been difficult to impossible to come by for most of them in the absence of Filet of Soul.

They were trained at the hand of a professional chef and paid throughout their training. Upon graduation, some were hired by Filet of Soul’s catering arm. Others were placed at local restaurants.

A \$200,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency in 2019 enabled the Morrises to expand the culinary institute, both in terms of its physical resources and its outreach. They established the institute’s first formal partnership in January 2020, with Chester County Hospital. Filet of Soul students and staff provided healthy meals and recipes for the hospital’s diabetes prevention program and health check clinics.

“Our partnership with Chester County Hospital was a real springboard for us,” Lisa Morris says. “Once we had a credible partner, it became that much easier to find others to work with.”

Just as the culinary institute was beginning to gather momentum, the first cases of COVID-19 emerged. “It was very natural for us to pivot quickly and start making charitable meals for our community members in need,” Morris says.

Working with different organizations in West Chester, the culinary institute made and delivered meals to seniors in low-income housing at the onset of the pandemic. Over the summer, with funding from CHOP, it ran a paid internship program alongside another program that trained (and paid) people who lost their jobs during the pandemic. All the while, Morris was exploring new avenues to grow the institute’s reach even further. That’s when she was contacted by Francis, who told her about the opportunity to partner with CHOP to support families in need of access to food in Chester County.

“This program really benefits everyone, from the food-insecure families who have quickly come to depend on our fresh, hot meals to the people we’re employing who lost their job during the pandemic or who may have had a hard time getting hired in the first place,” Morris says.

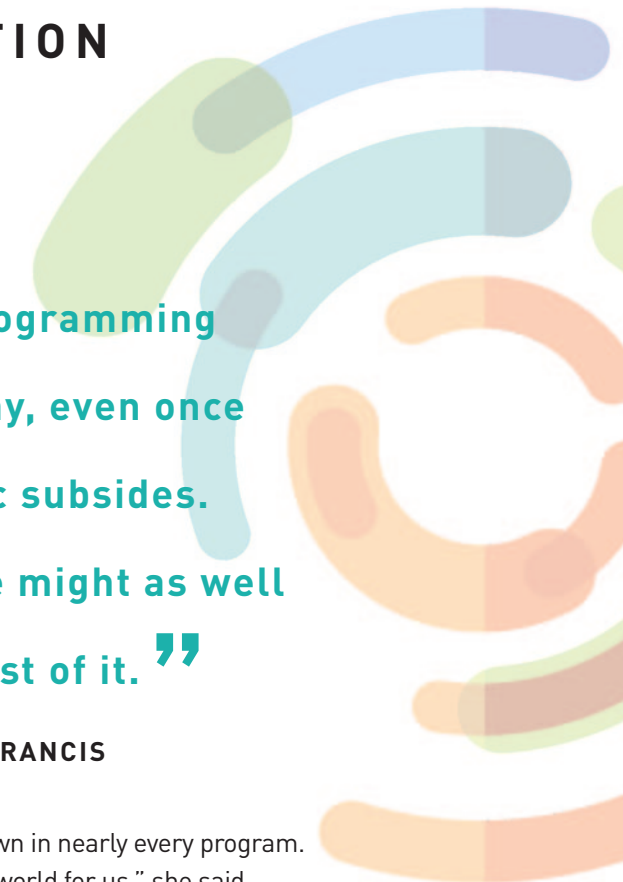
“And the families are just so grateful,” she continues. “My cell number’s on the flyer if people have any questions. I get so many grateful texts about the service, the fact that there are no strings attached, and the quality of the food. It’s been pretty overwhelming.”

## A NEW VIRTUAL PRESENCE INSPIRES A DEEPER CONNECTION WITH THE COMMUNITY

Last spring, when seemingly everything abruptly stopped in response to the pandemic, the Community Health & Wellness Services Department at Chester County Hospital followed suit. On March 10, the department's Director, Michele Francis, MS, RD, CDCES, LDN, cancelled all of its programming for the foreseeable future. But only a week later, it was online again.

A year-long diabetes prevention program had begun meeting only two weeks earlier. "I didn't want to just cancel it. We had a lot of people counting on it. So we thought we'd try to do it virtually," Francis said. The group's next meeting was the department's first experience into virtual programming. Within the next two months, all of the originally scheduled programs were moved to Zoom. And in the months since, Francis and her dedicated team have managed to grow and diversify the department's public programming using the online platform. "We're offering some things in Spanish now, which we never did before the pandemic," she says. "We're also doing more with mental health. In light of the toll this pandemic is taking on so many people, we thought that was important."

Some of the new programming also reflects new community partnerships. A NARCAN tutorial was presented in conjunction with Chester County Drug and Alcohol Services. The department has cohosted other sessions with the West Chester ShopRite (Cooking in Color), West Chester University (Mental Health First Aid USA), the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (Talk Saves Lives), and the Alzheimer's Association (10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's).



“Virtual programming isn't going away, even once the pandemic subsides. So we figured we might as well make the most of it.”

**MICHELE FRANCIS**

Even more, enrollment has grown in nearly every program. "Zoom opened up a whole new world for us," she said.

No longer limited by physical space constraints, Francis has seen registration improve dramatically in some instances. "Before the pandemic, if a room held 30 people, we might register 35 and consider it a big success," she says. "For one virtual nutrition class, we registered more than 140 people. We never had more than 30 people for an in-person nutrition class."

Susan Pizzi, MS, RN, the Community Health Education Coordinator for the hospital, says that the staff's willingness and ability to pivot online so quickly is a main reason for the achievement. And by staff, she means hospital-wide, because

the programming draws on contributors from throughout the organization. "Our staff immediately accepted the challenge and recognized its importance in supporting our patients and remaining connected with the larger community," she says.

### Seizing the opportunity

As of March 2020, all Wellness programs are available online. Topics cover a broad spectrum that includes nutrition, lifestyle, mental health, heart health, cancer care, diabetes prevention and management, fall prevention, senior health, support groups of various kinds, and spotlights on new, advanced treatments provided by the hospital.

Before the pandemic, the programming cycled by season, and there was no discussion of embarking on virtual programming. Francis started in her position in July 2019 and expected to take a year observing how the department operated before she began tinkering with anything. But as soon as the prospect of moving the department's programming online cropped up, she very quickly said, "Let's do this." Upper management and the educators were just as eager to get behind the new approach.

Rather than simply building new bridges to the community at a time when they were desperately needed, Francis seized the occasion to better align the programming with what the community wanted. To do that, her department teamed up with the hospital's Marketing Department to create a survey that was emailed to more than 10,000 community members. Francis admits that she's still trying to pinpoint what exactly the community wants. But the overwhelming response to many of the new offerings that were added over the second half of 2020—which were influenced, in part, by the feedback provided in the surveys—tells her she's on the right track.

The future evolution Francis envisions takes more advantage of the technology. Now that most are comfortable using Zoom, she wants to experiment with breakout rooms and webinars.

She's also making a concerted effort to attract more young and middle-age adults, whose participation has traditionally been lacking in the department's programs, in-person and online.

### Improvising with paper towel rolls

Sudden as the transition online felt at the time for those within Community Health & Wellness Services, it was for the most part remarkably seamless. Some programs needed to be entirely redesigned. Pizzi said that she held numerous practice sessions with staff to ensure that the demonstrations for the Hands-Only CPR class were properly presented and framed, with the mannequins and automatic external defibrillators positioned and repositioned in front of a webcam.

And then there was the matter of how the participants could simulate the act at home. Pizzi discovered that a roll of paper towels rolled up in a bath towel adequately mimicked proper body mechanics during a series of hard and fast compressions.

"Once those wrinkles were ironed out, the class became every bit as interactive as it usually was in person," Pizzi said. Participants were encouraged to have their cameras turned on and their microphones unmuted so that they could ask questions in real time. Class sizes were also intentionally kept small.

"Our shift to virtual programming may have come out of necessity, but I think it will remain an integral part of our community-based programming and outreaches," Pizzi said. "There are many positive aspects, but perhaps the most important one is that it's improved access to our programs. So it's not just the quantity of connections that have increased through our new virtual presence but also the impact of those connections."



## VIRTUAL TRAININGS GET NARCAN INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO NEED IT

**Overdose is a term whose familiarity has grown in direct proportion to the opioid epidemic of the last several years. Yet relatively few people have ever actually witnessed an opioid overdose. It can be shocking and deeply unsettling.**

The person's face will be pale and their body limp, so much so that they may look dead at first glance. But they'll still be breathing. Their breath, however, will be erratic and faint. And it will grow fainter by the minute, the longer they go unattended. The person's face and fingertips will turn blue because they're not getting enough oxygen. Eventually, they'll stop breathing altogether. Then their heart will stop.

But bystanders, if properly trained and equipped, can step in to reverse these overdoses using NARCAN, also known as Naloxone, a medication that counters the effects of prescription painkillers, heroin, and other opioids.

### Empowering a Community

Between January 1, 2018 and July 18, 2020, 26,335 emergency room visits for opioid overdoses were recorded across Pennsylvania. And this is not just an issue in major urban centers like Philadelphia. In Chester County, 282 people died from opioid overdoses over roughly the same period. Over the last five years, opioid overdoses have claimed the lives of 622 people in Chester County alone.

The statistics are sobering, but another set of data demonstrates the power of bystanders to save lives. In 2015, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that from the more than 152,000 NARCAN kits that had been distributed nationally by community organizations to friends and family to reverse opioid overdoses between 1996 and 2014, nearly 27,000 lives had been saved. In other words, about one out of every six kits is used to save a life.

Chester County Hospital took the lead in a similar effort. Twice over the past six months, the hospital's Opioid Use Disorder Task Force partnered with Chester County Drug and Alcohol Services, Good Fellowship Ambulance & EMS Training Institute and Kacie's Cause to host a public Zoom presentation and discussion about opioids, overdoses, NARCAN, and local treatment resources. Participants were then invited to pick up a NARCAN kit the following evening at a temporary station set up outside of the hospital.

**"I think we may actually have had greater success with it as a virtual event because participants were able to listen without being seen, which helped with some of the stigma that can surround opioid use disorder and even NARCAN,"**

said Heather Teufel, a pharmacist at Chester County Hospital. Teufel also has led the hospital's multi-disciplinary Opioid Use Disorder Task Force since its inception, in 2018.

In addition, as September was National Recovery Month, the team also held a (virtual) Voices of Recovery Panel where individuals in recovery themselves as well as a family member of an individual in recovery, shared their stories of hope.

**IN 2015**  
**THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL**  
**AND PREVENTION (CDC) REPORTED**  
**152,000**  
**NARCAN KITS HAD BEEN**  
**DISTRIBUTED NATIONALLY**

**BETWEEN 1996-2014**  
**27,000**  
**LIVES**  
**HAD BEEN SAVED**

**1** OUT OF **6**  
**KITS IS USED TO SAVE A LIFE**





The group was established to improve the care delivered to patients with opioid use disorder in Chester County. “Early on, that entailed addressing barriers to treatment and changing perceptions among the hospital’s clinicians,” Teufel informed. More recently, the task force has helped grow the hospital’s Medication-Assisted Treatment Program (MAT) and partnered with community organizations to facilitate warm hand-offs, which are meant to bridge the gap between an ER visit, or hospitalization, and long-term treatment, and other evidence-based practices that increase the likelihood of someone seeking and staying with treatment.

With this latest endeavor, Teufel and the task force are attempting to get NARCAN into the hands of those who need it urgently. This movement began in earnest a few years ago, when it started to become clear that opioid use was in fact an epidemic. The program is slated to continue on at least a quarterly basis going forward.

In October 2015, Pennsylvania’s Physician General issued a standing prescription for NARCAN. Essentially, anyone can walk into a pharmacy anywhere in the state and get it without an individually written prescription from their own family doctor. (This includes CCH’s own outpatient pharmacy, which opened in January.) About a year earlier, then-Governor Tom Corbett signed into law legislation that provides immunity to anyone providing care to someone suffering from an opioid overdose.

NARCAN is covered by most insurance plans. For those without insurance and who are unable to afford the \$150 cost, the hospital has worked with Chester County Drug and Alcohol Services and Department of Health to be able to provide the drug at no cost.

Teufel reported, the cost, however, is only one of the potential obstacles that can keep those who need it, including friends and family of someone with a substance use disorder, from getting it. She explained, “Many are concerned about how they’ll look asking the pharmacists for it; and even getting to a pharmacy can be a challenge for some.”

Erasing the stigma and removing barriers to picking up the lifesaving drug are a priority: Only about half of the 50 participants in the hospital’s June forum came to the hospital’s out-patient pharmacy the next night to collect their NARCAN kit.

“I think everyone who came showed a lot of courage,” says Karen Novielli, BSPHarm, MBA, the Director of the hospital’s pharmacy. She is also a member of the task force, and she helped distribute NARCAN kits as part of the June and September community outreach events. “And I think we were able to break through the barrier and let them know that picking up naloxone is a benign process. They didn’t even have to get out of their car for it.”

## CHESTER COUNTY HOSPITAL LOOKS TO HELP CLEAR THE PATH FOR LOCAL MINORITY STUDENTS

**Last summer, Chester County Hospital began a partnership with a local nonprofit called the Young Men and Women in Charge (YMWIC) Foundation. The alliance is meant to erect bridges between the two organizations.**

Founded in 1998 by Richard Roberts III, YMWIC was initially dedicated to growing the number of Black and Hispanic men who enrolled in a four-year college or university and majored in a science, technology, engineering, math, or law (STEM/L) discipline. It accomplished this through a robust menu of academic, mentoring, tutoring, and financial assistance programs.

In 2014, YMWIC expanded its mission to include women of color, too. Today, it serves any interested fifth through twelfth grade student in Chester, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties who’s economically disadvantaged and/or historically underrepresented.

At the start of the year, eight members of the hospital’s staff helped 40 YMWIC students, or scholars, as they’re called, develop their PowerPoint presentations for the Foundation’s Annual Science Expo in March, which was held virtually. Ten hospital employees also participated in a virtual job shadowing program, where 19 scholars connected weekly via Zoom for three months

to learn about the various roles in a healthcare organization. The hospital is also providing ongoing partnership and support by joining in keynote presentations on COVID and mental health. President and CEO, Michael Duncan, was also featured as the Foundation’s keynote speaker at their annual Scholarship and Awards Banquet.

The hospital runs a well-established Allied Health Science Program that allows unique access to integral positions across the hospital for local high school seniors, though the new alliance with YMWIC will be focused on local students who are traditionally underrepresented in such programs.

“One of our goals with this partnership is to help create a pipeline for young students in Chester County, especially those of color,” says Rhonda West-Haynes, MHA, BSN, RHIA, CCDS, CCS, CPC, the Director of Revenue Operations at Chester County Hospital. She’s also overseeing the partnership on behalf of the hospital. “Many kids only think of doctors and nurses when they think of hospitals, but there are all kinds of career opportunities within a health system, and there are shortages in certain disciplines. We want to help expose the scholars to those roles. But, above all, we want to support their budding interest in the health sciences.”

West-Haynes knows firsthand the value of such support. Her oldest son was a YMWIC scholar from 2012 to 2015. Rhonda’s



Jacqueline Felicetti, Chief Human Resources Officer, Rhonda West-Haynes, Director of Revenue Integrity, and Michael Duncan, President and CEO, present Penn Medicine CAREs Grant funds to Richard Roberts, III, the CEO and Founder of Young Men and Women in Charge.

younger son, who's a high school sophomore, is currently a scholar. Her oldest son is in his final semester of graduate school, where he's studying electrical engineering.

Through YMWIC, Rhonda's elder son was able to nurture his deep interest in robotics. Even more, he was able to hone other valuable qualities that came a little less naturally to him, like organization and public speaking. He also met Black engineers and other professionals, which helped make his dream feel all the more tangible.

"Before Young Men and Women in Charge, we didn't know anyone who was an engineer," West-Haynes says. "It was good for him, and me, to see other men of color who are professionals in our community."

### Correcting an imbalance

While much of the attention over the last year has been focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, another potentially devastating storm has been looming on the horizon for years. By 2030, 20 percent of the United States population will be 65 or older, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) is projecting a shortfall of nearly 105,000 doctors by the same point. That junction is even more concerning than it first appears because seniors make twice as many visits to the doctor as those under 65.

"This makes the projected shortage especially troubling, since, as patients get older, they need two to three times as many services, mostly in specialty care, which is where the shortages are particularly severe," said former AAMC CEO and President Darrell G. Kirch, MD, in 2017.

With the recent renewed focus on racial equality in America and, specifically, systemic racism, it's important to note that there is some evidence that, amid this growing need, the healthcare workforce is diversifying, but not necessarily in meaningful ways, according to a 2020 study that was published in *Health Professions Education*, a peer-review journal.

The "overall health workforce is slightly more diverse than the overall U.S. population," the study's authors write. "However, close evaluation of occupational data reveal that the majority of people of color in healthcare jobs remain in entry-level and often lower paying jobs with little opportunity for advancement, such as aides, assistants, and technicians."

A separate report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that all professionals of color, except Asians, are underrepresented in occupations involved in diagnosing and treating patients.

Some inroads have been made toward correcting that imbalance, though. The *Health Professions Education* study's authors said the

most promising among them "tended to be comprehensive programs that include a combination of social support, academic support, and financial support."

### Eager to engage

In the vein of drawing awareness to some of the lesser-known roles in healthcare, West-Haynes says the hospital is developing a short video for the scholars that will highlight those positions. Plans are also in the works to evolve the shadowing program into a series of internships this summer.

Meanwhile, involvement in YMWIC is growing organically across the hospital. At Christmas, staff in the Radiology Department "adopted" two families through the foundation and bought the parents and children gifts from their wish lists, as well as groceries. The hospital's social workers made a presentation to scholars in February that underlines the importance of mental health compassion.

And the hospital was recently awarded \$1,000 through the Penn Medicine CAREs Grant Program, which provides funding to help support community initiatives throughout the health system's geographic footprint. YMWIC requires its scholars to wear dress shoes, khakis, a button-down shirt, and a blazer for its programs. The grant will be used to outfit 10 scholars, says Jackie Felicetti, the Chief Human Resources Officer for Chester County Hospital, who applied for the grant.

"If we can get more people interested in a variety of healthcare roles and improve diversity in our workforce, it's a win for everyone," says Felicetti. "I'm confident we'll be successful because we have the most competent professionals here to help us achieve those goals."