I am pleased to present Children’s Hospital & Medical Center’s 2021 Community Benefit Report, which highlights our commitment to improve health equity and serve the most vulnerable children through stories about our impact and community investments. 

Community Benefit expenditures represent the time, talent and resources of our incredible team of providers and staff who embody our mission to improve the life of every child through their dedication to providing the highest quality care and best health outcomes for all children.

In 2021, we had much to celebrate:

• The opening of the state-of-the-art Hubbard Center for Children to meet the growing demand for specialty pediatric care
• Our continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic through statewide school support initiatives and vaccination efforts
• The expansion of Project Austin to educate emergency response teams across the region to respond to children with special needs in their local communities
• Training the best providers in pediatric health care
• Our Community Health & Advocacy team leading our triennial process for identifying community health needs, prioritizing Implementation Strategy Plans and mobilizing stakeholders

Children’s was founded in 1948 with the intention that no child in need of medical care would be turned away because of their family’s inability to pay. This remains true today. In addition, Children’s is committed to improving health equity for all children. Our experts collaborate widely, engage our community, advocate tirelessly and invest intentionally in the future of all children, particularly those in greatest need.

This report highlights Children’s unwavering commitment to the health and well-being of children and our broader community.

Sincerely,

Chanda Chacón, MPH, FACHE
President & CEO
Children’s Center for the Child & Community was renamed Community Health & Advocacy in 2021 to better describe its work and focus and to clarify three key areas of responsibility.

Completing and publishing the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years is a key responsibility of the Community Health & Advocacy team. Following completion of the most recent CHNA in 2021, Children’s prioritized four new impact areas in response to identified needs. Children’s team members with experience in these areas are researching and developing work plans to positively impact our community. These new impact areas also align with Children’s 2021–2025 strategic plan.

“Eighty percent of child health outcomes are determined by factors outside of traditional health care settings,” says Holly Dingman, director, Children’s Community Health & Advocacy. “Our team plays an important role in helping to improve the lives of children by partnering with the community to positively influence health equity.”

Community Health & Advocacy has formally adopted the National Institutes of Health (NIH) definition of underrepresented children as the primary population of focus for programming. Underrepresented children are defined as children of color, disability and/or disadvantaged backgrounds, including homelessness, foster care and poverty/low socioeconomic status and children in rural communities designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas.

These changes are reflected in our updated advocacy mission and vision statements:

**MISSION**
Connect and empower child health advocates to drive health equity by positively impacting where children live, learn and play.

**VISION**
An engaged community where every child has the opportunity to be happy and healthy.

Recognizing Children’s Impact Through Community Benefit

Community Benefit investments are Children’s activities and expenditures to improve the health of our community. Community Benefit activities are found in programs and services throughout our hospital clinics and in the community. Annual reporting on Community Benefit expenses and impact is a requirement of the IRS for all nonprofit hospitals and a key function of the Community Health & Advocacy team. In 2021, Children’s formally established the role of Community Benefit manager to ensure continued compliance with Community Benefit reporting requirements and to elevate awareness of Children’s community health impact.

**What Is Health Equity?**
Health Equity is achieved when every child has the opportunity to “attain his or her full health potential” and no one is “disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances.” Length and quality of a person’s life, rates and severity of disease and access to medical care and treatment are influenced by health inequities.

Children’s commits to improve health equity for all children. Our experts collaborate widely, engage our community, advocate tirelessly and invest intentionally in the future of all children, particularly those in greatest need.

Read the latest Community Health Needs Assessment or Implementation Strategy Plan and learn more about Children’s Community Benefit programs by visiting ChildrensOmaha.org/CommunityBenefit.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/chronicdisease/healthequity/index.htm*
Hubbard Center for Children
Benefits Region’s Most Vulnerable

In fall 2021, Children’s opened the doors to the Hubbard Center for Children, a state-of-the-art facility that enables Children’s to continue to meet the needs of children and families in our community who count on us for care.

With the opening of the Hubbard Center, Children’s can continue to meet the demand for highly specialized pediatric care, as well as offer expertly skilled health care providers, cutting-edge equipment and the room to accommodate patients and families seeking our services right here where they live.

This expansion was vital to our mission “to improve the life of every child,” so that children across our region have access to the best pediatric care available.

The community continues to support the Hubbard Center for Children. Generous donors helped Children’s surpass the $50 million capital campaign goal, and fundraising continues for the $410 million project, which benefits countless children and families.

Improving Access, Meeting Needs
With the opening of the Hubbard Center, children no longer need to go far from home due to lack of space or specialty expertise, even for the most complex care. As Children’s expands its physical footprint, the quality and scope of services we provide is expanding to improve children’s health.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) & Fetal Care Center
- As the only Level IV NICU in Nebraska, Children’s offers the most advanced level of neonatal care available.
- With the opening of the Hubbard Center, Children’s NICU expanded to 46 larger, more comfortable rooms, doubling the square footage of the previous NICU

Cardiac Care Unit
- New care model: one highly skilled, specialized team on one floor, provides the full range of high-quality pediatric cardiac care from admission to discharge for all levels of acuity
- 32 beds in large, 265-square-foot rooms with spacious bathrooms

Surgical Services
- Seven new state-of-the-art operating rooms, including one dedicated to cardiac cases, one for trauma and one next to an MRI control room
- 33 pre-/post-surgery rooms

Hematology/Oncology Unit
- 32 rooms, including eight built for treating bone marrow transplant patients
- Unit features a dedicated MRI space for the treatment of pediatric brain cancers

Radiology
- 20 rooms, including six MRI pre-/post-operative rooms, two MRI rooms, four X-ray fluoroscopy rooms, three ultrasound rooms, one induction room, and rooms for CT imaging, DEXA imaging and nuclear medicine
- Dedicated outpatient waiting area

Emergency
- Children’s is the only Emergency Department in Nebraska dedicated solely to the care of children
- 26 patient rooms, including four behavioral health-focused/safe rooms and three trauma/resuscitation rooms

Helicopter Pad
- Equipped with a dedicated elevator to quickly transport patients to the Neonatal or Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Emergency Department or Trauma or Operating Room
- Allows Children’s to accommodate an increasing volume of patient transports
How Children’s Addressed the Pandemic with Vaccine Access, Research and Education

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, Children’s health care providers, concerned about low vaccination rates, participated in several initiatives aimed at providing information and access to increase the rate of vaccination for eligible children.

Max the Vax

In late 2021, Children’s teamed with the Nebraska Department of Education and 242 physicians and health care providers for the Max the Vax initiative to support COVID-19 vaccinations for kids and address vaccine hesitancy for Nebraska parents and caregivers. With educational materials available in four languages, this campaign focused on serving under-resourced populations throughout our state.

COVID-19 Vaccine Trials

The Child Health Research Institute (CHRI), a pediatric research partnership between Children’s Hospital & Medical Center and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), conducted COVID-19 vaccine trials in two unique, important populations. Both studies were sponsored by Pfizer.

The first trial was a randomized, placebo-controlled study evaluating the safety, tolerability and effectiveness of a vaccine candidate against COVID-19 in pregnant women and their newborns. The vaccinated mothers and their babies were followed until the baby turned 6 months old. After the child’s birth, maternal participants who received the placebo were able to receive the vaccine.

The second trial was a pediatric study evaluating a vaccine’s safety and efficacy in healthy children ages 5 to 18. CHRI partnered with Children’s Physicians primary care offices to help recruit study participants, although children who were not patients at these locations were also able to enroll. The global study involved around 6,000 pediatric participants, including around 50 children locally. Vaccines were administered by Children’s pediatric team.

Bringing Vaccine Clinics to the Neighborhood

Children’s, along with CHRI and local community support agencies NorthStar Foundation, Girls Inc., Boys & Girls Club of the Midlands and the Jesuit Academy, took part in a community engagement field day for kids and families, which featured bounce rides, games, prizes, food and an appearance by members of the Creighton men’s soccer team.

Douglas County Department of Health representatives attended the event to provide COVID-19 vaccines to eligible children between the ages of 12 and 18. A cash payment of $50 was offered for children getting a COVID-19 shot at the event or for having received one previously. Attendee family members were also able to receive the shot at no cost. Children’s pediatric team members were on hand to provide medical information and to answer any questions people had about the COVID-19 vaccine or any other health topic.

Project Austin: Bridging the Gap Between Hospital and Home for Medically Complex Children

The stress of bringing home a medically fragile child can weigh on a family, especially in rural areas.

Project Austin is named in honor of a 15-month-old boy born with a congenital heart defect and critical airway, who died after a medical emergency at home. Despite the family’s extensive training and knowledge about his condition, as well as local emergency personnel responding to a desperate 911 call, they were unable to save Austin.

Emergency medical personnel have the desire to provide excellent care to children with complex medical needs but may lack essential support, education and resources to do so. The Project Austin program at Children’s Hospital & Medical Center was created to help prevent such catastrophic outcomes for families and emergency medical providers by providing education, preparation and skills on how to best care for medically fragile children within their communities. In addition to emergency medical services (EMS), primary care providers and other caregivers are provided information regarding care for the child.

The mission of Project Austin is to foster continuity of care for children with medical complexity by collaborating with local emergency medical services and hospital emergency departments to build community awareness, provide education and devise an emergency plan for the child.

Project Austin provides peace of mind to nearly 1,300 families of children with medically complex conditions.

Project Austin families are located across eight states, collaborating with 423 EMS and 166 emergency departments. Program managers Natalie McCawley, MSN, RN, and Tiffany Simon, MSN, RN, were pivotal in launching the program. They offer individualized education, community awareness and emergency plans to local medical communities for these children and families.

For Tiffany Simon, it is more than a professional responsibility; it is a labor of intense love, as she is also Austin’s mother. Austin’s tragic had become plugged, which prompted an immediate call to 911.

"When EMS responded, they had a desire to help Austin but did not have the training to care for a child with a trach," she recalls. “Only about 10 percent of EMS calls are pediatric. And then when you have a pediatric critical patient with special needs, a rural EMS team can really be out of their scope of expertise. They did absolutely everything they could, but ultimately, a couple of days later, my husband and I had to remove him from life support. Project Austin is as much about providing support and education to EMS and emergency department health care staff as it is about the kids and families.”

Project Austin celebrated its sixth anniversary in December 2021.

Parents can enroll their children by contacting the Project Austin team at ProjectAustin@ChildrensOmaha.org or by calling 402-955-5733.
Children’s Office of Education: Training the Best in Pediatric Health Care

The goal of any pediatric hospital is to provide the safest, highest quality care for children and their families. At Children’s Hospital & Medical Center, we know that type of care requires an excellent team of providers. Children’s is committed to exceeding the ongoing educational, training and professional needs of our current and future health care providers, offering the latest advances in medicine, nursing and patient care.

The Office of Education leads this commitment through three main functions:

1. **Academic Programming**
   - Scheduling, onboarding and supporting all academic programs, including graduate medical education, undergraduate medical education, ancillary, nursing, perfusion and surgical technology.

2. **Continuing Education**
   - Accrediting and facilitating continuing medical education (CME), continuing nurse education (CNE) and other educational events for Children’s teams throughout the region to meet training requirements and receive continuing education credits, thus completing a major requirement for ongoing credentialing and licensure.

3. **Virtual Library**
   - Curating and managing Children’s virtual library of resources and services for pediatric health care providers and patient families.

“We have a special responsibility to train our providers and health care workforce, as well as the next generation of pediatric caregivers, to care for the needs specific to pediatric patients. This is accomplished only by the entire hospital working together to support this mission,” says Russell Buzalko, Ph.D., MAS, director of Children’s Office of Education.

Restrictions on in-person events and the elevated strain on the health care workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic challenged Children’s Office of Education to innovate by offering virtual events, both live and recorded. The team leveraged existing resources and experience to further evolve its online educational offerings. They hosted speakers from various time zones, utilized online audience engagement techniques and expanded their audience in education to health care professionals across the country.

**Office of Education – 2021 Impact**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuing Medical Education (CME)</th>
<th>Continuing Nurse Education (CNE)</th>
<th>Virtual Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>311</strong> Unique Learning Activities</td>
<td><strong>357</strong> Unique Learning Activities</td>
<td>Direct access to approximately 12,000 high-quality peer-reviewed and open access journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1,420</strong> Hours of Training</td>
<td><strong>770</strong> Hours of Training</td>
<td>Interlibrary loans made virtually all printed resources available to Children’s staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>900</strong> Medical Staff Served</td>
<td><strong>694</strong> Certified Nurses</td>
<td>Support to every clinical and nonclinical profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>27</strong> Regional and National Conferences</td>
<td><strong>15</strong> Regional and National Conferences</td>
<td>Access to research librarians and services through a partnership with UNMC McGoogan Library</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**90+ ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS WITH COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES**

- 843 Undergraduate Nursing Clinical Residencies and Internships
- 649 Other Future Clinical and Ancillary Professionals
- 428 Medical Residents and Fellows
- 221 Medical Students
- 55 Graduate Nursing and Nurse Anesthetist Clinical Residencies

**311 Unique Learning Activities**

**1,420** Hours of Training

**900** Medical Staff Served

**27** Regional and National Conferences

**357** Unique Learning Activities

**770** Hours of Training

**694** Certified Nurses

**15** Regional and National Conferences
2019–2021 Area of Focus: ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

Overarching Goal: To improve access to children’s health care services, especially for those in underserved communities.

- In partnership with Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare, Children’s defined and adopted a framework for “Access to Care” in 2019. Eighty-seven mental health services were identified across five levels of care and five sectors: Health, Education, Mental Health, Community, Justice.
- Early Dental Health Starter Kit Project launched with a goal to distribute 25,000 kits through pediatric primary care offices throughout the state in partnership with the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s Pediatric Dental Program.
- Unite Nebraska’s bi-directional referral platform was implemented in the Care Coordination department in August 2021, achieving 21 referrals through the end of the year.
- The Hubbard Center for Children opened, expanding access to care for children and families throughout the region.
- More than 30,000 students were screened through Children’s Vision Screening program. Children’s Visionmobile provided more than 3,500 comprehensive eye exams during 2019, 2020 and 2021.

2019–2021 Area of Focus: MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Overarching Goal: To improve access to quality child and adolescent behavioral health care services, especially for those in underserved communities.

- The Patient Assistance Team at Children’s Hospital & Medical Center (PATCH) program was piloted in 2019 and expanded in 2020. At the end of 2021, PATCH had created individualized care plans for 777 patients, most of whom are on the autism spectrum.
- Telehealth services and telementoring supports were developed and expanded in 2021:
  - 75 percent of telepsychiatry appointments were consistently filled.
  - 182 patients with insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus and cystic fibrosis received telepsychology services, resulting in reduced stressors.
  - Children’s Physicians hired a telepresenter to create more options to support primary care providers and facilitate mental health care.
  - Two child and adolescent psychiatrists within Children’s Behavioral Health provided 10 to 12 real-time psychiatric consults with Children’s Physicians providers each month.
- In 2020 and 2021, a Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) series on addressing anxiety and depression in the primary care setting trained 74 unique providers.
- A new public service announcement promoted ongoing autism screening before age 2, identifying 16 early signs of the condition.


Following the completion of the 2018 Pediatric Community Health Needs Assessment (P-CHNA), Children’s created a three-year Implementation Strategy Plan (ISP) to be carried out from 2019 through 2021. This ISP was developed with dedicated and intentional collaboration between our community’s pediatric and adult hospital systems and was designed to serve the specific needs of the pediatric population. The ISP addressed four areas of focus, each highlighting a strategic priority across the continuum of care, and identified appropriate resources. Following is a summary of accomplishments and key evaluation outcomes.
2019–2021 Area of Focus: SEXUAL HEALTH

Overarching Goal: To improve adolescent sexual health care and education through clinic-to-community collaboration. Continue to support and participate in the Adolescent Health Project, primary care and community collaboration.

- Children’s Adolescent and Young Adult Clinic opened in 2021. Nebraska’s first board-certified Adolescent Health specialists joined the team to address the complex needs of teens and young adults.
- Since the Adolescent Health Project began, more than 4,200 chlamydia/gonorrhea tests were administered within Children’s Physician’s offices. This increased the annual rate by more than 1,100 tests, expanding access to testing and treatment.
- More than 25 million student activity minutes were completed on GoNoodle, an online physical activity platform for classrooms, during the 2021–22 school year, with an increase of more than 80,000 students and 4,000 teachers from the previous school year.
- More than 525 early care and education professionals received Go NAPSACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity for Child Care) training and technical assistance in 2019, 2020 and 2021.
- Children’s invested in expansion of Nebraska’s Double Up Food Bucks program for underserved populations by providing matching funding for two USDA GusNIP grant awards for families to maximize SNAP benefits with double the purchasing power for fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Four YMCA branches in Lincoln delivered the Children’s ENERGY Fitness program to overweight and obese youth ages 6 to 12.
- Children’s hosted the 2021 Nebraska Healthy Kids Summit, held virtually for a statewide, cross-sector audience focusing on health equity. The summit included a research fair highlighting local and state research and evaluation projects for nutrition, physical activity and obesity.
- ENERGY Nutrition workbooks and videos were created and distributed in English and Spanish in cooperation with Children’s Weight & Wellness clinic.