NOVANT HEALTH

2021 Community Impact Report

Imagine Better.

01. Imagine Better.
02. What Is Community Benefit?
03. Financials.
04. Making Lifesaving Vaccines Available to All.
06. Addressing Social Conditions That Influence Health.
07. Reversing the Legacy of Swimming Disparities in Our Communities.
08. Removing Challenges to Breast Care.
09. Helping Families Prepare for Baby.
10. Mobile Care Made Easy.
11. Partnering to Provide Food in Winston-Salem.
12. Giving Back in Celebration of a Decade of Remarkable.
13. Spotlight on Northside Food Co-Op.
14. Partnering to Provide Food Options That Support Health.
15. Dream Fulfilled.
16. Supporting Safe Gathering Spaces in Our Community.
17. Connecting With Compassion.
18. Making Meaningful Connections, Virtually.
19. Transitioning to the World of Work.
20. Supporting Upward Mobility Among Team Members.
21. Leadership.

Imagine Better.

Imagine a program that helps an expectant mother without enough to eat find the nutritious food sources that are crucial to a healthy pregnancy — and delivering a healthy baby.

Now, imagine the long-term benefits of such a program. Addressing a significant public health issue of food insecurity, particularly during pregnancy, takes a step toward closing the gap of birth inequities for newborns. It enhances wellness within our communities, supports healthy behaviors and gives babies a head start toward a lifetime of healthy habits.

This opportunity is in its early stages and is happening now at Novant Health OB/GYN clinics across our greater Charlotte market. Eligible patients work with a Novant Health community health worker to connect with Loaves & Fishes food pantry and other community resources for food or other needs. The pilot program, which started late 2021, illustrates our priorities in community engagement: To work with community partners in accelerating change, together. To improve health outcomes and quality of life for people in our communities. ***To imagine better.***

When we say imagine better, we mean setting no limit to what we envision. We mean finding new ways to lift up our patients. And we mean digging deep to address root causes of health disparities. This requires tapping creativity and inventiveness to bring hope and healing to our communities through four focus areas: Access to care, food, housing and workforce development.

Our 2021 community impact report, *Imagine Better: Accelerating Change in Our Communities.*, shows how our longtime community partners and Novant Health work together to create innovative solutions that address pressing health and social needs. For example, by partnering with food pantries, healthcare career programs and community venues for mobile clinics, we're improving chronic disease management, supporting upward mobility and promoting health equity. Initiatives such as addressing food insecurity in high-risk pregnant mothers through food pantry partnerships are important to the health of our patients and communities.

This is our commitment and responsibility as a not-for-profit healthcare system: Engaging in community partnerships that magnify our overall impact in the areas we serve. The stakes have never been higher. The pandemic has made many of our communities more fragile. COVID-19 strained family resources, hurt small businesses and frayed social connections. People need help, and Novant Health and our community partners will meet them where they need us the most. Together, we work toward transforming communities into places where we don't have to imagine health equity, we can actually experience it.

Join us as we imagine better.

Carl S. Armato
President and CEO, Novant Health

What Is Community Benefit?

It's more than our responsibility — it's our commitment.

At Novant Health, we know that health starts in our families, our schools and workplaces, on our playgrounds, in the air we breathe and the water we drink. Regardless of the care we provide in our clinics and hospitals, we recognize there will always be outside factors that influence a person's health. These factors are often referred to as social determinants of health.

Healthy People 2030 defines social determinants of health as the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

"The more we learn about social determinants of health, the more we realize how influential they can be to a person's well-being," said Jerome Williams Jr., MD, Novant Health senior vice president for consumer engagement. "We recognize that we cannot begin to move the needle on health outcomes without addressing these root causes that influence health. So we're taking steps to address all of these factors."

In 2021, Novant Health reported $1.1 billion in total community benefit, including $192.7 million in financial assistance to members of the communities we serve.

That's where Novant Health's community benefit comes in. Community benefit includes programs or activities that provide treatment or promote health and healing as a response to identified community needs — and meet at least one of these objectives:

- Improve access to healthcare services.
- Enhance the health of the community.
- Advance medical or health knowledge.
- Relieve or reduce the burden on government to provide health services.

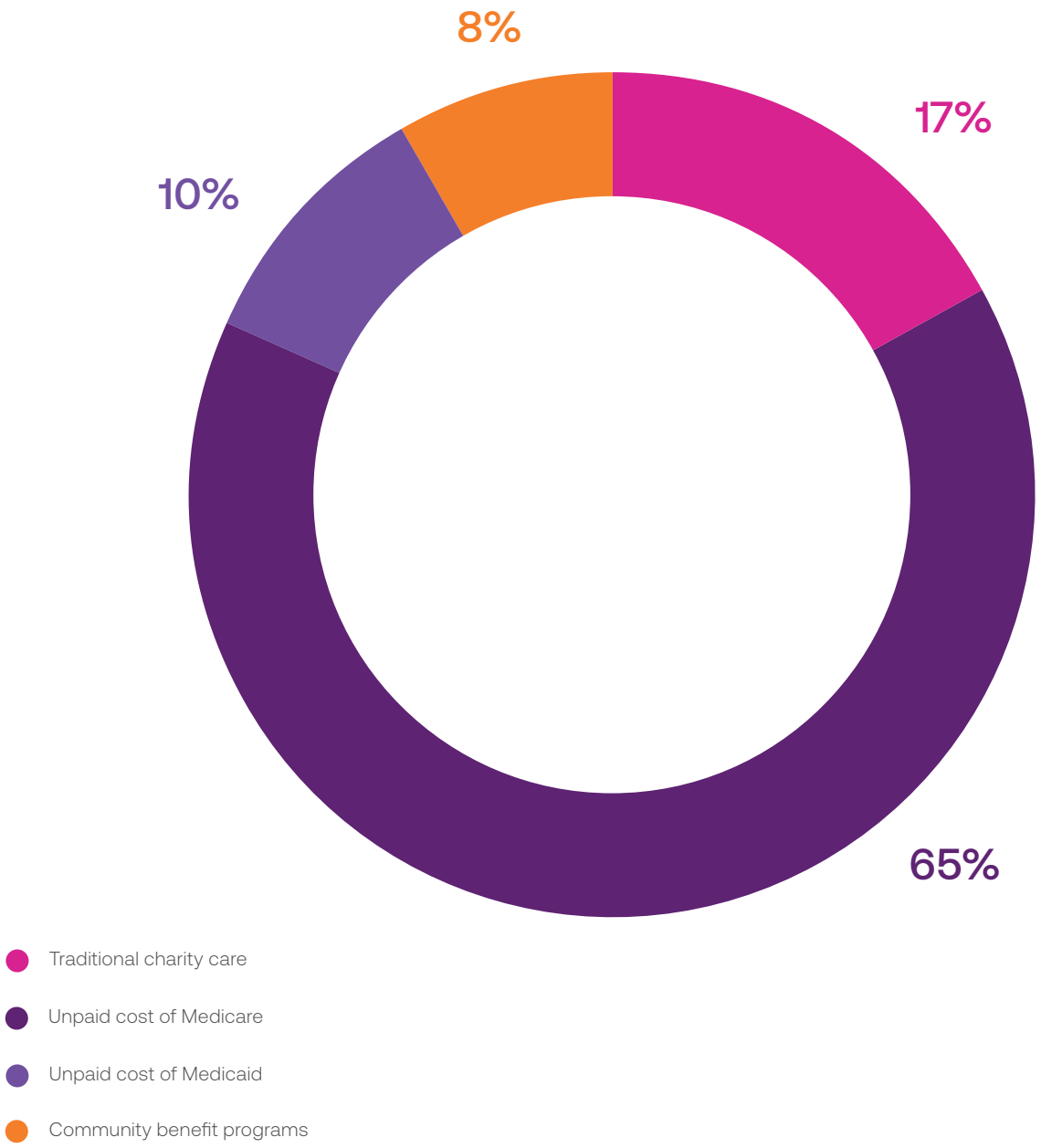
Novant Health's community benefit includes hundreds of programs that address the most pressing health needs of the communities we serve, particularly among historically excluded groups. This includes unreimbursed health services to individuals with Medicaid and Medicare coverage; free community health education and screenings; support groups; investments in health-focused community groups; and participation in medical research and academic health programs.

When you see this icon, you'll know where Novant Health is promoting health and wellness in response to each community's health needs assessment.

In 2021, Novant Health provided

$1.1 billion

in community benefit, up from $1 billion in 2020.



Making Lifesaving Vaccines Available to All.

We're working side-by-side with community partners to help end this pandemic.

The COVID-19 vaccines were newly available but some members at Emmanuel Baptist Church were worried. At gatherings, they discussed fears about the shots. Joseph Stringfellow, MD, a local Novant Health ob-gyn in Thomasville, saw an opening: "I think this is a great opportunity to engage with our community partners."

He did just that, with an in-person presentation at the church on a Sunday in May 2021. His talk came right before Emmanuel Baptist partnered with Novant Health to sponsor a pop-up clinic where 36 people received the lifesaving vaccine. "I think he swayed a lot of people," said an organizer of the church event.

Throughout the communities we serve, Novant Health and our community engagement partners were all about seizing moments like this. Together, we hosted vaccination clinics at places of worship, delivered vaccines to people's bedsides, and created clinics in accessible locations, like the J.F. Hurley Family YMCA in Salisbury, which is along a bus route.

Doing all of this meant tapping a range of established community networks: Hindu Center of Charlotte, Paisley IB Magnet Middle School in Winston-Salem, Earl Jackson Pool in Wilmington, parking lots at Lowe's home improvement stores and Compare Foods supermarkets, Winston-Salem State University, Davidson County Health Department for a drive-thru clinic, and many other partners and places.

Equally important to this process: Proactively selecting historically marginalized communities to host vaccine clinics — and vaccinating these groups at rates at least representative of their percentage of the population. We met or exceeded that goal with members of Asian and Black communities and were progressing toward the goal with Hispanic community members at the end of 2021. Our vaccination rate for Asian and Black patients at a community event was three times that of the general North Carolina vaccination rate. By taking this approach, we also reached people who may have been unable or previously unwilling to receive a vaccine.

Outreach through a home program also became an important piece of the community vaccination plan. Bringing the vaccine to people's homes in Mecklenburg and Rowan counties, Winston-Salem and Wilmington allowed Novant Health to reach people who had difficulty navigating a clinic. Novant Health worked with primary care providers, Novant Health Care Connections and local agencies to identify individuals and caregivers who could not leave their home, bringing not only vaccines, but peace of mind, to them. "I feel more protected now," said a Charlotte patient in February, who received a vaccine at home while recovering from a stroke.

Partnering with community groups to deliver the vaccine to all who wanted it fits in with our multipronged, dynamic plan for expanding access to care. In doing so, we're also defining Novant Health as the place where community members can feel more comfortable seeking care — and improve the health of our communities, one person at a time.

That's the tone Dr. Stringfellow delivered in his Emmanuel Baptist Church presentation, which included this empowering reminder on a slide:

What COVID-19 took from us, we can take back.

Community pop-up sites

More than **28,400** vaccines were distributed at community pop-up sites throughout all Novant Health markets.

11,257 of the vaccines given in the greater Winston-Salem market were administered at 46 pop-up clinics, including:

- ★ 2,718 Winston-Salem State University and its mobile clinic
- ★ 400 Davidson County Health Department drive-thru clinic
- ★ 444 Paisley IB Magnet Middle School
- ★ 21 At home

8,185 of the vaccines given in the greater Charlotte market were administered at 68 pop-up clinics, including:

- ★ 3,464 Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
- ★ 405 Compare Foods
- ★ 144 J.F. Hurley Family YMCA
- ★ 120 Hindu Center
- ★ 29 Mint Hill Madness

Addressing Social Conditions That Influence Health.

Providing comprehensive services and next-level medical care is the focus of the Novant Health Michael Jordan Family Medical Clinics.

Not having enough food, dependable transportation or a safe place to live makes it very difficult to stay healthy. When these and other social issues go unsolved, visits to the doctor's office only scratch the surface of what patients need. Addressing this very challenge is what Novant Health and the Michael Jordan Foundation envisioned when they built two medical clinics for underserved communities in Charlotte.

These clinics not only have served thousands of patients, but have played a critical role in our COVID-19 response, including our vaccination efforts. By providing comprehensive primary care, behavioral health services and social support connections, all under one roof, the clinics bring much-needed services to patients, regardless of their insurance status.

In February 2021, Novant Health and Michael Jordan announced a $10 million gift to open two medical clinics in our Coastal region.

Now, the success of this integrated care model is leading to expansion. In February 2021, Novant Health and Michael Jordan announced a $10 million gift to open two medical clinics in our Coastal region, part of an overall $17 million Jordan has given to create such clinics. One clinic will be built in Wilmington's south side on land donated by New Hanover County, while the second clinic will be located in East Wilmington.

Philip Brown, MD, at the site of Wilmington's south side clinic.

"I am very proud to once again partner with Novant Health to expand the Family Clinic model to bring better access to critical medical services in my hometown," Jordan said in a news release. "Everyone should have access to quality health care, no matter where they live, or whether or not they have insurance. Wilmington holds a special place in my heart and it's truly gratifying to be able to give back to the community that supported me throughout my life."

By providing individualized care, we are meeting people where they are in their journey to better health and improving the well-being of our communities, said Philip Brown, MD, chief community impact officer for Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center.

"By hosting and nurturing robust partnerships with community organizations, the clinics can provide the comprehensive services required to optimize health, ensuring the patient receives the right care at the right time, in the right place for the right price."

Reversing the Legacy of Swimming Disparities in Our Communities.

Swimclusion, Swim 4 Life programs aim to bring water-safety lessons to children.

Fifteen years ago, a hot summer and a rash of drownings — many involving members of the local Hispanic community — sparked an idea with staff at the High Point Swim Club.

"We have a resource," said Aaron Reeves, CEO and head coach. "Let's use that resource to impact our community and those who may not have the opportunity to take a swim lesson." That idea launched the Swim 4 Fun/Swim 4 Life program, which provides swimming lessons to children from underserved communities and minority populations in the High Point area.

In the Wilmington area, Swimclusion with NSEA Swim (Northside Elite Aquatics) has a similar goal: Providing free swimming lessons to promote water safety and increase diversity in the sport of swimming. Novant Health is a proud partner in helping support both initiatives, which aim to close the massive disparity in swimming ability among children.

The inaugural NSEA Swim Sprint for Swimclusion 5K and fun run, sponsored by Novant Health, started and finished at Earl

Jackson Pool, where NSEA Swim hosts its free community swim lessons. Participants ran through Wilmington's Northside neighborhood, a historically African American community, raising more than $20,000 to help fund swim lessons.

"As a coastal community, it is extremely important for all our residents to know how to be safe in the water," said Philip Brown, MD, chief community impact officer for Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center. "By sponsoring this event, Novant Health is showing its commitment to meeting the unique needs of our local community and addressing disparities that exist and too often result in tragic outcomes."

Stark numbers tell the story. Swimming pool drowning rates among Black children ages 5 to 19 are 5.5 times higher than those among white children in the same age group, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The disparity is even greater at ages 11 and 12, when African Americans drown at a rate that's 10 times higher than white children. Disparities in swimming pool drowning rates also exist among Hispanic persons in several age groups, including ages 15 to 19. The CDC recommends encouraging racial and ethnic minorities to gain skills needed to survive in the water.

Teachings in these programs go far beyond swimming. At Swim 4 Fun, children receive guidance on healthy eating habits (and are given an apple or other healthy snack at their swim lessons) and how to help if a friend or relative accidentally falls in the water.

Reeves said children also learn valuable life lessons. "You get challenged every day, you figure out a way to work through those challenges, you learn to be persistent and consistent in your effort, and you'll be rewarded at the end," he said. "It's all about taking something that's scary for a lot of people, showing them how to have fun with it, and providing them a skill that they can take for life moving forward."

Removing Challenges to Breast Care.

We're addressing potential cultural and language barriers that keep some women from getting mammograms.

Translating flyers into Vietnamese and Spanish, bringing mobile mammography to community hubs and inviting patients who don't have insurance to participate are the kind of details that go a long way toward encouraging women who might not otherwise get their breast cancer screenings done.

These initiatives, and many more, are helping Novant Health close the gap on mammography screenings among our Asian and Latina patients, two of our fastest-growing patient populations. We have found that Asian women and Latinas are less likely to get mammograms than their counterparts.

Our goal, as part of our commitment to health equity, is that every woman who is supposed to have a mammogram gets one. We're committed to using cultural understanding and community outreach to close those gaps. The use of two mobile mammography units in Charlotte, two in the Winston-Salem area and one in Salisbury allows Novant Health to provide outreach in historically underserved communities.

That was the strategy behind a mobile mammography clinic, held April 2021 at Light of the World Church in Lexington, and specifically promoted to reach Hispanic community members with or without insurance. (Grants secured through the Novant Health foundations and other organizations helped cover costs.) At the event, 25 patients received screenings. Helping to spread the word about the mobile clinic was the Hispanic Latino Advisory Committee, based at Novant Health Thomasville Medical Center, which promoted the mammogram screening event during an earlier COVID-19 vaccine clinic at Compare Foods.

Modesty issues, concerns about cost, anxiety about discomfort, a misperception that screenings are not needed because of no family history of breast cancer and other issues contribute to racial and ethnic disparities in breast cancer screenings.

Our goal, as part of our commitment to health equity, is that every woman who is supposed to have a mammogram gets one.

Judy Tjoe, MD, breast surgery medical director for the greater Winston-Salem market, said community partnerships can help overcome potential cultural and language barriers that keep some women, including patients from our Hispanic and Asian communities, from getting mammograms.

"Any opportunity we have to convey the importance of a screening mammogram for a patient is an advantage — particularly if you have the opportunity to do this alongside a community member where the patients live and congregate," Dr. Tjoe said. "Delivering that message while a mobile mammogram is right there on-site provides even more encouragement to have the mammogram done that same day."

Helping Families Prepare for Baby.

New parents receive free diapers and other supplies at annual community shower.

Being able to get a large supply of diapers, a stroller, clothes and more through a free baby shower at Novant Health Brunswick Medical Center in April 2021 made a world of difference to Rachael Wildman and her family.

Rachael Wildman

"We have a lot of diapers that we did not need to buy, so we got to save a lot of money," said Wildman, who attended the drive-thru baby shower four months before the birth of her daughter, Kenleigh. "The stroller will come in handy when she's bigger and we go to the beach. And we also got thermometers that did come in handy because I've used them a couple of times … The shower helped us out a lot."

Team members, the Novant Health Foundation and a range of community partners helped support nearly 125 expectant parents with donations. By hosting the baby shower and investing in the communities where we live and work, we're ensuring that household family income isn't a barrier to getting babies off to the best start possible.

By the numbers: Community baby shower

- ★ 14,000 diapers
- ★ 160 gift bags
- ★ 13 car seats
- ★ 10 umbrella baby strollers
- ★ 4 breastfeeding pillows
- ★ 130 Novant Health bags

Mobile Care Made Easy.

Through the Novant Health Community Care Cruiser, we're bringing immunizations and health assessments directly to patients.

What difference does it make to bring next-level medical services to school children and families right in their neighborhood?

For over 1,200 school children in 2021, it's a difference that helped them receive immunizations required by state law in order to enroll in school or child care. It made a difference to their parents, too, who learned about resources they might have needed for food, rental assistance and clothing.

Through the Novant Health Community Care Cruiser, Novant Health Michael Jordan Family Medical Clinic and a partnership with Novant Health Medical Group pediatricians and providers, we successfully meet the needs of our families who otherwise have gaps in care and services.

We're bringing health assessments and health education directly to our patients, providing no-charge access to high-quality medical services for families in our community.

By the numbers in 2021

x 100 — **1,288** number of children receiving school vaccines

3,930 total vaccines administered

302 total health assessments

600+ referrals to community resources

Partnering to Provide Food in Winston-Salem.

Pop-up pantry event combined free meals and vaccines.

One of the ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is food insecurity within many households in communities we serve. Changes in job status, limited household finances and children not attending child care or in-person school, where nutritious meals are served, are all contributing factors that add up to families without food.

In June, Novant Health and Trane Technologies partnered to host a pop-up food pantry and COVID-19 vaccination event at Old Town Elementary School in Winston-Salem. The Novant Health team used the mobile health cruiser from Winston-Salem State University to store and deliver vaccines on location.

Inside the 75 meal kits — distributed through a partnership with Trane and Second Harvest Food Bank — were nourishing foods, including fresh produce, bread and healthy shelf-stable options.

At the event, 81% of attendees identified as members of a racial or ethnic minority. This statistic is important to us. At Novant Health, it's our priority to deliver lifesaving vaccinations to those with limited access to care to ensure no one is left behind. It is also our priority to reach families in communities identified as being food insecure. By addressing access to care and other social disparities, we're living our mission to improve the health of our communities, one person at a time.

By the numbers

75
meal kits distributed

Enough food to feed a family of 4 for up to 3 days

74
people vaccinated

Giving Back in Celebration of a Decade of Remarkable.

Novant Health Kernersville Medical Center team members mark anniversary with food drives.

When team members at Novant Health Kernersville Medical Center wanted to commemorate a decade of nurturing the community, they chose an equally nurturing theme: Supporting their town through food drives and volunteerism.

It was team members' way of marking the 10-year anniversary of the medical center, which opened in 2011 with the mission of providing exceptional care.

Throughout a decade of momentum — establishing specialty clinics, launching hospital innovations and courageously fighting a pandemic — focus remained on providing patients and families the expert, next-level care they deserve.

Boosting food security and volunteering were causes that fit this mission.

Here's a look at what was done throughout 2021.

Kernersville Medical Center team members volunteered at Crisis Control Ministry in Kernersville and Winston-Salem.

Novant Health Neurology and Headache & Sleep clinics hosted a canned good drive and collected over **300** canned goods.

Team members completed landscaping projects at Caring Services Inc., a treatment center in High Point, and New Arrivals Institute in Greensboro, which assists refugees and immigrants.

Team members volunteered at water stations for the Go FAR children's race in High Point.

Team members conducted a kids coat drive with the Kernersville Police Department.

CoreLife Novant Health and Novant Health corporate health team presented at Business High Point - Chamber of Commerce.

FOOD SECURITY

Spotlight on Northside Food Co-Op.

Bringing healthy food to communities where access is limited.

Wilmington's Northside community has long been shut out of the economic growth enjoyed by other areas in the city. As a result of neighborhood conditions, residents living here have limited physical access to food. One major way this is evident: There is no grocery store in the community.

At Novant Health, we know there's a direct connection between access to affordable and nutritious foods and overall health outcomes. That is why we led the movement to create the Northside Food Co-Op, an upcoming grocery store that is owned and operated by the community. A $15,000 gift from Novant Health created a farmers market in the area of the future store, and that market's success has reinforced to the community that a permanent food source is on the way.

Today, the Northside Food Co-Op has city, county and donor support to build a new permanent store in the community. Novant Health Foundation also committed $200,000 to accelerate this project.

The goal is not only to bring healthy food options to an overlooked community, but to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to removing economic and social obstacles and building a culture of health and wellness in our communities — moving us closer to achieving health equity.

Partnering to Provide Food Options That Support Health.

Huntersville Growers' Market thrives on the Novant Health Huntersville Medical Center campus.

Fresh local produce, freshly baked goods and fresh air. This proved to be an unbeatable combination for hundreds of patrons drawn to the Huntersville Growers' Market every Tuesday from May to August at Novant Health Huntersville Medical Center.

> "I really love the market. It is fun to see what fruits and vegetables there are each week. They are always good quality and taste great. It is also easy and convenient."
>
> — Huntersville Medical Center team member Lori Robinson

The seasonal market is not only a source of income for local farmers and vendors, but a source of nutritious, affordable foods for attendees. Participants in SNAP, the supplemental nutrition assistance program for eligible residents in Mecklenburg County, can use this financial benefit at the market — providing even greater access to fresh foods that can be used in everyday cooking.

Nearly 250 patrons visited the market each Tuesday. Huntersville Medical Center team member Brianna Janel McKnight was a regular.

"I loved going out to the growers' market when they were here on Tuesdays. It was a time to get fresh air and see

all the local produce and goods they offered," McKnight said. "I think it's wonderful that the community can come together right outside of Huntersville Medical Center; it's a time we all look forward to. We appreciate all the effort that the growers' market does to serve Huntersville!"

Using food as medicine can be a powerful tool. Providing access to fresh and healthy foods is one of our community engagement priorities to address food insecurity. Through this collaboration with Huntersville Growers' Market, we're helping people in our communities lead healthier lives.

Nearly 250 patrons visited the market each Tuesday.

Tia Reaves with her children

HOUSING SECURITY

Dream Fulfilled.

Completing her family's path to homeownership included the help of our community partners.

For Tia Reaves, who works in environmental services at Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center, the thrill of coming home to the house she helped build in 2021 never gets old.

"What I love about my house is just a feeling I get once I get off work," said Reaves, who built her home through Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity, which partners with local families to build, and then purchase, affordable homes. She pursued this opportunity after learning about it through a housing fair at work that included the hospital's longtime community partners, including Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity.

Her home's exterior — gray vinyl, burgundy shutters, a porch and green lawn — is perfect for seasonal decorating. "I go home, and I'm like, 'Wow, this is my house!' I remember when there was nothing on the inside when we were first building," she said. "It didn't look as big as it does now that it's up. It's big and spacious."

Reaves approached the homeownership process with hard work and confidence, knowing she had the support of Novant Health and community partners. At Novant Health, we recognize that well-being starts at home. That's why we are steadfast in our commitment to addressing social determinants of health, like housing, in our coastal region.

This housing opportunity opened a new door for her family — her son, Justice, and daughter, Amiyrah. It meant the very first place of her own, after apartment living. And — the best part, as far as her children were concerned — it meant outside playtime, which they didn't have before. Their home includes a huge backyard and sits on a cul-de-sac, where Amiyrah can roll on her wheels of choice — her skates one day, her scooter or hoverboard the next.

We know that a safe, stable living environment can have an enormous impact on our health. Connecting our people and our patients to important health and social resources remains a top priority for Novant Health.

Supporting Safe Gathering Spaces in Our Community.

Team members give beloved community center a much-needed facelift.

It's a space described as "the soul of the community." Creekwood Community Center in Wilmington is a gathering place for the Creekwood public housing neighborhood, offering community meeting space, an outdoor area for cookouts and a playground, and computers for students to do homework. But signs of neglect were evident at the community center in 2021.

A COVID-lockdown-related closure led to trash buildup in the community center. A leak in the computer room ruined the floor. The Wi-Fi signal was weak. Creekwood Community Center needed cleaning, purging, some touch-ups and a technological upgrade.

That's when Novant Health stepped in to help prep the community center for renovation. On April 8, a group of Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center team members worked all day to remove a bin full of garbage, rearrange the rooms and clean the floors. The following day, team members from environmental services placed a new floor in the computer room. Team members from information technology services followed up by installing a new Wi-Fi network. A vendor later donated new laptop computers.

> It's a space described as "the soul of the community."

Because of these efforts, residents can continue using the community center for activities and recreation in a safe, inclusive environment — right where they live. Through this work of creating healthy, safe and clean spaces where people are, Novant Health is working toward its mission of improving the health of our communities, one person at a time.

Connecting With Compassion.

From providing housing opportunities to job leads, Novant Health community health workers forge deep connections with patients.

There is always a story behind a story.

This is how the Novant Health community health worker approaches each and every patient. By seeing patients as people and looking deep into their situations, the community health worker gets to the social issues behind each person's story.

Consider these instances:

- When community health worker William White met a man living in a makeshift tent inside a Charlotte storage unit, he set out to find out why — and to help. White wound up helping the man get critical medical treatment for a lingering health condition that contributed to being homeless.
- By staying plugged into Winston-Salem outreach programs, community health workers Pamela Mathis and Maria Rebella can share needs with these social services groups that benefit clients. This led to Winston-Salem Rescue Mission committing a monthly donation of up to $300 worth of goods to a participant in the community health worker program.
- Donna Greene, a community health worker based at Novant Health Rowan Medical Center, knows that some patients visiting the emergency department need more than medical help. Some are homeless and seeking shelter from the elements. Greene works with these patients to help find them places to stay once they are discharged from the hospital.

Examples like these illustrate how Novant Health leverages our community health workers as trusted neighbors. They connect one-on-one with patients and serve as a liaison between the patient and healthcare system, as well as social and community services in their county. They assist clients with finding medical care, housing, food, transportation services, job or college options, and more.

Patients who are government-insured or uninsured are eligible for the community health worker program, which

Laurie Andary, left, of the Winston-Salem Rescue Mission, with community health worker Maria Rebella

spans 90 days and includes comprehensive medical, mental health and social needs screenings for participants. This approach has helped community health workers successfully address health disparities and socioeconomic drivers of disease among patients.

A chance encounter between White, who was checking on his own rental storage unit, and his future client led to the community health worker connecting the man with medical and financial assistance from Novant Health. Following a doctor's visit at Novant Health Michael Jordan Family Medical Clinic, the man was referred to a surgeon to correct his medical condition. He later recovered at a hotel.

Today, he is renting a room at a boarding home and no longer lives in the storage facility — in part due to the help and encouragement he received from the community health worker team.

"He not only needed help to find the appropriate medical resources, which he did not believe were available to him without insurance — he needed a helping hand, a little encouragement and someone to believe in him," White said. "He needed someone to help navigate him back to a positive place and let him know that he mattered."

And today, White said, "He is one of the most promising patients I have seen."

Making Meaningful Connections, Virtually.

High school students learn about medical careers through career discovery program.

Learning about healthcare careers outside of the roles some people typically think about, such as nurses and doctors, can make a lasting impression on high school students. Juniors and seniors participating in the Novant Health Career Discovery Series receive an introduction to a range of medical jobs — from a sports medicine physical therapist to a pharmacist, and more.

Using a virtual class format in 2021 due to the pandemic, nearly 120 students participated in the greater Charlotte and Winston-Salem markets. Students attend eight monthly class sessions. When needed, the small enrollment fee is waived for students.

The series goes a long way toward not only introducing students to careers, but also influencing the future workforce in our communities. Getting students interested in medical careers at an early age can lead to them pursuing these professions and returning to Novant Health or another healthcare organization.

Career exploration

A look at some of the healthcare jobs and topics covered in the series.

- Anesthesia
- Surgical services
- Genetic counseling
- Oncology
- Emergency department
- Cardiac cath lab
- Respiratory therapy
- Community partnerships

Transitioning to the World of Work.

Through Project Search, students with developmental disabilities build job and life skills — as well as confidence — while working at Novant Health Brunswick Medical Center.

When Kianna Bardon checks in via FaceTime every morning with her mother, Keya Clemmons, the 20-year-old is all business.

Kianna Bardon, right, with her mom, Keya Clemmons

Mom leaves for work before daughter. So Bardon confirms that she's awake and ready to go to work, too — and Clemmons can see for herself through the video call that her daughter is neat and prepared. *I'm up*, Bardon says. *I made my lunch. You OK? Have a good day at work. I love you.*

"That's it," Clemmons said. "It's none of that repetitive 'What are you doing, when are you coming home?' It's not five or 10 minutes, where she has to know everything I'm doing. She just does that quick check-in."

Clemmons credits Project Search for building her daughter's independence, confidence and job skills to the point where Bardon now works for a manufacturer in Leland. Bardon, along with four other students, graduated in 2021 from the first Project Search class at Novant Health Brunswick Medical Center. The program provides internship experience for students ages 18 to 21 with developmental disabilities. The partnership is a collaboration of Novant Health, Brunswick Community College, Brunswick County Schools and the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

During her internship at Brunswick Medical Center, Bardon rotated between environmental services, guest services and supply chain. She learned to prepare patient rooms for discharge, followed COVID-19 cleaning procedures, cleaned patient rooms, escorted patients to hospital registration and delivered supplies to various departments.

"When she was in those classes, she would tell me, 'No mom, that's not the way you clean, that's not the way you do the bed,'" Clemmons said. "I could tell she was actually enjoying what she was learning and doing."

Project Search instructor Tianna Buie said Bardon changed impressively from the once-shy student visibly overwhelmed with the pressures of transitioning from high school to the workforce. With the guidance and support from her instructors and Novant Health mentors, Bardon emerged as a hard worker who learned how to advocate for herself and appropriately interact with others.

This became clear when Bardon was presented with a job lead through her vocational rehabilitation services contact. With no hesitation, Bardon carried out the introduction to her potential new supervisor independently. He was so impressed, Buie said, that he immediately offered Bardon her position to start after graduation.

By helping our Project Search interns make successful transitions to productive adult lives, Novant Health is helping to create a local workforce that reflects the communities and people we serve, which consists of many dimensions of diversity. When Bardon walked down the red carpet during the outdoor graduation ceremony on a sunny May morning, Clemmons reflected how far her daughter had come.

"Project Search did wonders for my daughter. I know it can help others, and parents as well."

Supporting Upward Mobility Among Team Members.

Nursing scholarship program boosts RN ranks.

In 2021, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic intensified the nursing shortage in ways felt not only within our Novant Health footprint, but well beyond. What became most evident is the need to continue building a workforce pipeline that supports our organization in delivering remarkable care to the community.

That's why the expansion of a successful nursing scholarship program, initially launched through ONE Charlotte Health Alliance, offers the promises of increasing our nursing ranks, improving economic mobility for our team members and growing diversity within our workforce. Through this initiative, nearly 50 Novant Health team members have received, or are receiving, opportunities to become a registered nurse through its nursing scholarship program.

At Novant Health, the initiative is called the Upward Mobility RN Scholarship Program — and it's a way for our organization to invest in our team members and provide professional advancement opportunities. Due to the success of the program in Charlotte, Novant Health has since expanded the scholarship opportunity to every community we serve. Some of the program graduates now hold leadership positions across Novant Health.

The scholarships provide up to two years of upfront coverage of tuition and fees for nursing school, leading to licensure as a registered nurse. Participants are offered the flexibility of working a reduced schedule without a reduction in current compensation and benefits to meet academic requirements and also are paired with a mentor for career coaching.

Why it matters

Lifting the financial burden of a nursing program for our team members juggling work and school allows those with a passion to become RNs a pathway to success. By addressing future nursing needs in this way, we're engaging team members, supporting internal advancement and building loyalty and commitment to a profession critical to health systems nationally.

By the numbers

Novant Health Upward Mobility RN Scholarship Program

2018 year launched

21 currently enrolled in the program

25 completed the scholarship program

*Numbers reflect year-end 2021

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The community impact report prepared by Novant Health is a systemwide report that includes qualitative and quantitative information. Please note that the numeric data in this report are not based on the IRS Form 990, Schedule H criteria, but rather it has been prepared in accordance with the North Carolina Hospital Association reporting guidelines. It should not be relied upon as the organization's Form 990, Schedule H Community Benefit Report, its Community Health Needs Assessment or Community Benefit Implementation Strategy.

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