



Children's National®



2023

# Community Benefit Report

## Acknowledgments

The Child Health Advocacy Institute would like to extend its appreciation to everyone who contributed to this report. We could not have gathered this information without support and guidance from many dedicated individuals across Children's National Hospital. Jennifer Stinebiser led the stakeholder interviews and report writing with substantive direction and input from Tesa White, Program Manager of Community Benefit, and Desiree de la Torre, Executive Director of Community and Government Affairs.



# Welcome Letter

Our deep commitment to the well-being of children and families in our community was instilled in us long before the idea of “community benefit” became a federal mandate for non-profit hospitals several decades ago. Finding ways to serve the communities around us in the heart of the nation’s capital is about more than meeting a requirement. It is about nurturing the belief that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive. Over the last 150 years, our hospital has become more than a medical institution to the people who live here. It is a cornerstone of compassion, commitment and connection.

That longstanding history within the Washington, D.C., community makes it challenging to capture the full depth and breadth of work going on within our walls and in our neighborhoods to impact the lives of children every day. This year’s Community Benefit Report will give you a glimpse of some of the programs and initiatives that seek to bring opportunities to the children who live here.

You will also come away with an understanding of how our latest data- and community-driven Community Health Improvement Plan guides and aligns our work to achieve measurable results across four priority areas. These are the places where we believe we can make the biggest difference in improving child opportunity and where our community has told us to focus: early childhood education, healthy food, health insurance coverage and employment rate.

The report goes beyond statistics and plans, however; it’s a testament to the boundless dedication of our staff and partners as well. In this report, we invite you to explore some of the specific efforts we have championed within our health system and beyond. These highlights show our teams coming together with unwavering focus that will help our children grow up stronger to reach their full potential. One example brings children and teens with life-altering conditions such as sickle cell disease together as one voice. Others aim to ensure children receive the care and support they need from expert caregivers long into the future.

We are pleased to share this year’s report and are hopeful that these successes might spark your own ideas to connect our pediatric healthcare experts even more deeply with our communities so that every child can thrive. Thank you for being a part of our journey, and we look forward to continuing to make a meaningful impact together.



*Michelle Riley-Brown*

Michelle Riley-Brown, M.H.A., F.A.C.H.E.  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Children’s National Hospital



*Tonya Vidal Kinlow*

Tonya Vidal Kinlow, M.P.A.  
Vice President, Community Engagement,  
Advocacy & Government Affairs  
Child Health Advocacy Institute  
Children’s National Hospital

# What is **Community Benefit?**



# 141

**COMMUNITY  
BENEFIT PROGRAMS  
& ACTIVITIES**



# 36

**HOSPITAL  
DEPARTMENTS**

Community benefit is our responsibility as a not-for-profit hospital. It is also how we quantify and track our work in the community.

Community benefit is defined as a program or activity that provides treatment or promotes health and healing as a response to identified community needs. This year, there were 141 community benefit programs and activities that addressed a broad spectrum of health topics from 36 different hospital departments.

From hosting vaccine clinics to educating the next generation of health professionals, Children's National is proud to invest in our community. We strive to create a community where families can thrive. Together with community partners, public health experts, epidemiologists and educators, the way we serve our community is continually evolving, but our commitment remains the same.



# Community Health Improvement Plan Strategies Informed by Data and Community Voices

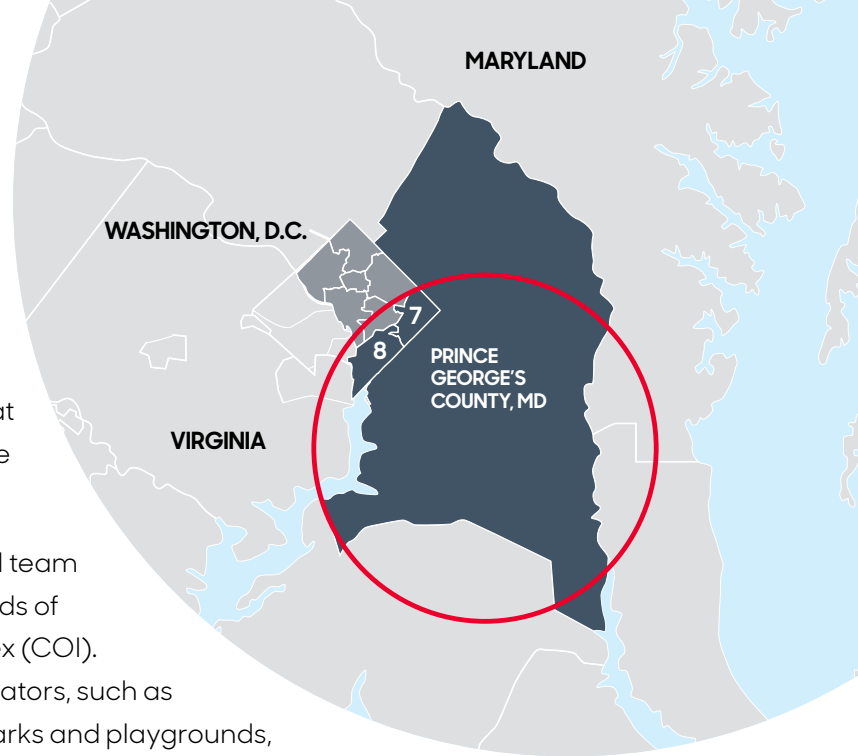
The Child Health Advocacy Institute (CHAI) at Children's National conducts the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and develops a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), in response to the profound disparities and inequities confronting children living in Washington, D.C. area communities.



The CHNA captures a cross-section of communities' self-identified needs and measurable data, and the CHIP identifies strategies for tackling some of the deep-seated inequities that prevent children from thriving. Both the CHNA and CHIP are coordinated by the CHAI, the advocacy arm of Children's National that focuses on policy and systems changes to achieve health equity for all children.

The 2022 evidence-based CHNA helped the CHAI team identify health priorities and specific neighborhoods of greatest need through the Child Opportunity Index (COI). The COI looks across 29 neighborhood-level indicators, such as access to healthy food, high-quality education, parks and playgrounds, to assess the level of opportunity for children to develop in a healthy manner. Through these measures, we were able to narrow our focus to Wards 7 and 8 in Washington, D.C., and Prince George's County, Maryland, for our community benefit efforts.

The CHIP, released in late 2022, is our roadmap for 2022 to 2025. It outlines nine specific strategies aligned across the CHNA's four priority areas and how we will measure progress over time.



***Community engagement is more than a one-time activity; rather, it is a lens through which we do our work.***



## Community Health Improvement Plan Strategies Informed by Data and Community Voices

Before actual implementation, however, the CHAI team ensured that the work we undertake is truly what people need. Only the people who live and work in these communities can tell us about the challenges, barriers and opportunities that exist for them. To make sure the CHIP reflected the true viewpoints and priorities of the children and families we serve, the strategies were both informed by and validated by people from the neighborhoods we planned to work with. Some of the ways we engaged included:

- Virtual and in-person town halls gathering more than 60 key stakeholders including hospital staff and community organizations, where people were asked to give feedback on proposed strategies, community partners and funding sources.
- Youth engagement activities that captured the viewpoints of the young people we care for, an important and often overlooked group.
  - An eight-week Photovoice program that asked more than 20 high schoolers to capture images with their cell phones showing assets and challenges that affect health in their communities.
  - Eight adolescents within the hospital's summer internship program used artistic expression to show the impacts of important health issues ranging from community violence to access to healthy foods.

In addition, we engaged with the Community Health Advisory Council who reviewed and responded to proposed strategies during CHIP development. The advisory council, formed in 2022, meets monthly with members of the hospital's staff. The council includes parents and caregivers of children we care for from our priority neighborhoods.

## THE COMMUNITY HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL: ONGOING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The Community Health Advisory Council played a key role in the development of the most recent Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Made up of parents or caregivers of children we serve at Children's National and/or the HSC Health Care System, council members provide feedback and input about their experiences receiving care, especially focused on how community challenges, family barriers and cultural traditions affect their ability to get their children the care they need.

The council meets monthly with staff from Children's National Community Affairs, Patient Experience and Social Work teams to provide this feedback and also to weigh in on our hospital's community health priorities, proposed initiatives

and ongoing practices. In 2022 and 2023, the council provided input on topics including principles of trustworthiness, hospital diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, social determinants of health, the CHIP, and patient experience data.

Since its formation in 2022, the council continues to provide opportunities for community members, many of whom are not often represented in these efforts, to engage in decision making, program design and/or evaluation, community partnerships and delivery of health care services. The Community Health Advisory Council and the families who routinely participate in it have forged a powerful, sustainable connection between our hospital and the surrounding community.

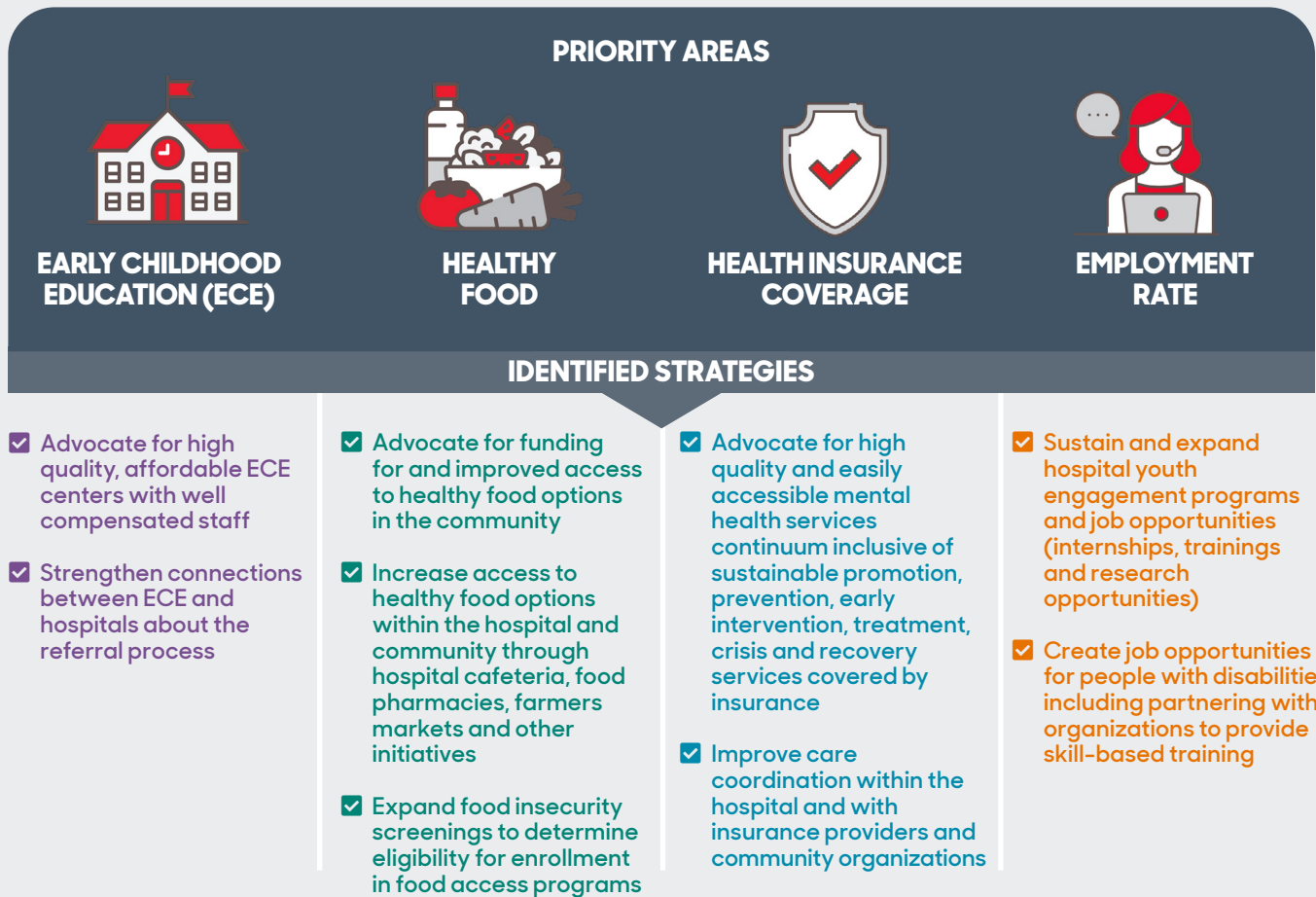


The final CHIP includes nine strategies spread across four priority areas of focus. The CHIP's momentum is maintained through two main structures: the CHIP Steering Committee and CHIP workgroups for each priority area. Both are made up of employees from Children's National and the HSC Health Care System who agree to serve for a specific term. The Steering Committee provides strategic guidance and advocacy for the CHIP by tracking progress toward goals, encouraging coordination between working groups, identifying and analyzing any changes to program plans and how those will impact success.

Each workgroup provides subject matter expertise and leads activities across the four priority areas identified in the CHIP. This work includes the creation of a logic model for each priority area that details how CHIP strategies are implemented. The CHIP Steering Committee and the Community Health Advisory Council reviewed the logic models.

As the work moves forward, the team will continue to engage with members of the community on progress and use their input to help identify areas where strategies may need shifting or adjustment over the three years the plan is in place. Their input will also be included in the final analysis of outcomes, to identify both successes and barriers the workgroups experienced.

## Community Health Improvement Plan Strategies



Aligned with the four priority areas from the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment, nine strategies were selected for focus over the next three years.

# Clinical partners help families raise their voices for sickle cell disease awareness and advocacy

As one of the largest sickle cell disease programs for children and teens in the country, the Children's National Comprehensive Sickle Cell Disease Program has spent years learning firsthand what children with sickle cell disease need in order to thrive.





In addition to world class care to manage their complex, chronic condition, clinical social worker Lisa Thaniel, D.S.W., says that many need better supports beyond the clinic.

"We have a lot of families who live in our area, especially in Washington, D.C., and in Maryland who struggle day-to-day to make ends meet," she says. She notes some of the challenges, things like food or housing insecurity, are difficult on their own but made even harder when one or more family members also have a chronic, sometimes unpredictable health condition like sickle cell disease.

**"There are some chronic illnesses that people hear a lot about," says Dr. Thaniel. "But there's still a lack of awareness about sickle cell disease."**

The Comprehensive Sickle Cell Disease Program, which has cared for families in the community for more than 20 years, celebrated World Sickle Cell Day at the hospital in June 2023 with the goal of increasing public knowledge and understanding of sickle cell disease.

Speakers and participants emphasized the real-life challenges faced by children and teens living with the condition and their families. More than 50 patients and their families participated virtually and in person. Researchers from the National Institutes of Health, community partners and policymakers from the federal government also

attended to connect and collaborate. The event bridged gaps between research, policy and the true lived experiences of the thousands of people in our communities with sickle cell disease.



“World Sickle Cell Day has really brought a sense of community,” says Deb Cromer, mother to 12-year-old Kendric, who has sickle cell disease.

"I've been able to connect to other moms, and now we reach out to each other and give each other a boost. It also gives Kendric an opportunity to hear from and see some sickle cell warriors speaking up for their own rights." Mrs. Cromer adds that her whole family, including Kendric and her husband, Keith, have become better advocates for themselves and for others through events like these.

In addition to that annual event, the sickle cell disease program holds quarterly support group meetings for parents and caregivers of young people with sickle cell disease. Participants, about 20 in each session, share their stories and advise and support each other.

The support group also serves as another critical connection between families and hospital-based clinical experts. Dr. Thaniel and a nurse practitioner from the clinic join each meeting, giving families the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns outside the hustle and bustle of a medical appointment. Sometimes this includes conversations about the barriers to care that families routinely encounter.

For example, many families continue to have difficulty making sure their child's pain is appropriately addressed in an urgent or emergency department setting. Program staff work with the families to create a quick reference guide for parents and caregivers. The guide outlines who and what to request from care providers and empowers families to serve as strong advocates for the needs of their children.

Many families from the support group have taken their advocacy for their children to the next level. At events at the White House and World Sickle Cell Day, they speak out about the need for better access to care and understanding about people who live with sickle cell disease.

Dr. Thaniel sees these efforts as part of her team's responsibility in providing care for children and teens with sickle cell disease. "We need to raise awareness about sickle cell disease and ensure that patients and families receive optimal care," she says. By empowering families with the tools to advocate for themselves and their communities, they emerge as advocates for change in the Washington, D.C., region and beyond.

***World Sickle Cell Day gives patient Kendric Cromer an opportunity to hear from and see sickle cell warriors speaking up for their own rights, according to his mother.***

# Growing compassion, commitment and connection in tomorrow's pediatric nurses

Children's National is ensuring that the upcoming generation of pediatric nurses experiences the distinctive aspects of pediatric nursing and immerses themselves in a culture of excellence and safety, all while benefiting from unparalleled mentorship at one of the nation's best children's hospitals.



"Many nursing students don't receive a lot of clinical pediatric learning through their nursing school curriculum," says Simmy King, DNP, MBA, NI-BC, NE-BC, CHSE, FAAN, chief nursing informatics and education officer, who oversees the long-running Leading the Advancement of Undergraduate Nurses at Children's National (LAUNCH) nursing internship program. "Our goal is to bridge the gap in learning and prepare them earlier for their future career in pediatric nursing."



LAUNCH, founded in the 1980s as the nurse internship program, now recruits 40 to 50 students every year with interest in pediatric nursing for summer or winter internships from nursing schools across the country. Everyone selected to participate has a connection to Children's National and our core values (compassion, commitment, connection), has a desire to be a pediatric nurse in the future, and has expressed interest in working at Children's National. These connections mean that many successful applicants also have existing ties to the Washington, D.C., area.

The program goes beyond learning the clinical role of the pediatric nurse at the bedside. A lecture series helps participants learn more about social determinants of health, health equity, evidence-based practice, and the importance of delivering equitable care to everyone by being aware of and understanding their unique needs. Dr. King also provides

wellbeing content to address what she calls the "social determinants of life" - elements that can impact a young nurse's success, such as healthy eating, sleep hygiene and managing stress. At the conclusion of each summer cohort, LAUNCH students make presentations that showcase what they learned, and how they will apply this learning to their future career as a nurse.

Addressing "social determinants of life" is also a vital component of the Conway Nursing Pathway Program, which provides additional supports for a small number of future nurses from the Washington, D.C., region. The program's goal is to identify promising young people who may face financial and other challenges that could prevent them from starting a rewarding pediatric nursing career. For those students, program director Mourine Evans, MS, RN, notes that, "wraparound services are critical, especially when it comes to relationships and connections in a professional environment."

**"Having somebody in my corner and really pushing me, knowing it's hard but also knowing what I'm capable of, that's what my mentor did. I hope to inspire the same thing in my mentee."**

*Maya Kidane, RN, Nurse in Children's National Emergency Department and former Conway Pathfinder*

## Growing Compassion, Commitment and Connection in Tomorrow's Pediatric Nurses

Conway Nursing "Pathfinders," as they are called, receive all the clinical and educational components of the LAUNCH internship program. This program additionally offers scholarships or funding support to its students as needed. But the most important part, according to Evans, is long-term mentorship with an experienced practicing pediatric nurse. That relationship begins when the student enters the program and carries on through their first year as a practicing nurse.

Former Pathfinder Maya Kidane, RN, BSN, now an emergency department nurse at Children's National, agrees that her mentor nurse kept her on the right track. That relationship continues to influence her, including in her recent decision to return to school and study to become a family nurse practitioner.

"Having somebody in my corner and really pushing me, knowing it's hard but also knowing what I'm capable of, that's what my mentor did. I hope to inspire the same thing in my mentee."

Now in her third year as a full-time pediatric nurse, Kidane is giving back to the nursing programs that guided her by serving as a Conway Nursing Pathway mentor herself. And she credits her early exposure to the positive nursing culture at Children's National, through both LAUNCH and the Conway Nursing Pathway, for a large part of her success. "All the nurses and staff that work at Children's National bring a different level of care. That is really inspiring and something I try to emulate as a nurse."

Creating opportunities for aspiring pediatric nurses to undergo comprehensive training and secure employment within their own community is paramount, particularly for students with deep connections to the communities we serve. The invaluable knowledge and skills acquired from these programs profoundly impact the trajectory of all future pediatric nurses. King says, "even if they may not work at Children's, we know that we have supported their journey in becoming pediatric nurses and they will apply their learning to improve the health of pediatric patients wherever they may work."



***All the nurses and staff that work at Children's National bring a different level of care. That is really inspiring and something I try to emulate as a nurse.***

***Maya Kidane, RN, nurse in Children's National Emergency Department and former Conway Pathfinder***



# Ensuring short- and long-term health care access for immigrant children and families

In response to the pressing needs of immigrant families, especially children, arriving in Washington, D.C., after entering the United States by way of the southern border, Children's National has worked to find solutions for their immediate healthcare needs.



Children's National is looking "upstream" for policies to help the hundreds of families who continue to arrive in our community.

A key challenge for these newly immigrated families is access to healthcare, especially outpatient specialty care, without health insurance. Hospital medicine doctor Kathy Ferrer, M.D., and her colleagues found that families needing outpatient follow-up care after inpatient treatments had limited options available if they lacked health insurance. Without coverage, their only recourse often involved agreeing to pay out of pocket for these appointments. The alternatives were prolonged hospital stays or visits to the emergency department or a federally qualified health center.

Dr. Ferrer and her colleagues quickly worked to find ways to help these families, including identifying an immigrant health coordinator, Melissa Herrera, to assist families with navigating bureaucratic hurdles and completing the multi-page applications necessary to secure long-term healthcare coverage. Herrera and social worker Alison Page also connect families with supports they need to address housing or food insecurity.

Over time, the hospital introduced several additional programs aimed at preventing children from falling through the cracks. The Immigrant Health Clinic, held weekly at the Children's National Health Center Columbia Heights with provider Elizabeth Ireson, M.D., and social worker Jennifer Robles, offers timely follow-up medical care and access to other social supports for children who were recently discharged from the hospital and have complex medical needs. Routine meetings between inpatient and outpatient teams help facilitate safe handoffs for the most medically fragile children.

The number of newly arrived families who benefitted from these programs grows each year. This year, 67 families with children who have complex medical needs received hands-on assistance.

Additionally, in close collaboration with the city's Office of Migrant Services (OMS), the Children's National Mobile Medical Program, directed by Hope Rhodes, M.D., is now routinely deployed to hotels and respite centers where the city houses immigrant families. The mobile unit conducts health screenings and takes the initial steps to link families with medical and social services through social worker Heidi Colbert. Importantly, the mobile unit also provides children with routine required vaccinations, meaning they are qualified to enroll in school, an important milestone for their wellbeing.



## Ensuring Short- and Long-Term Health Care Access for Immigrant Children and Families

"The Mobile Medical Program has been nimble to address acute needs as well," adds Padma Swamy, M.D., associate director of the program. A varicella vaccination drive, for example, addressed a sudden varicella outbreak at the sites. A bilingual-bicultural community health worker, Cynthia Ortiz, is also embedded on the unit to work with families who need to integrate into the U.S. health care system.

Simultaneously, the hospital's Government Affairs team has collaborated with local and state authorities to provide expert testimony and recommendations for policy changes to alleviate some of the challenges faced by immigrant families. Examples include advocating for legislation to allow immigrant families to purchase health insurance through the Affordable Care Act's marketplace in Maryland and supporting the DC Council's creation of the OMS to assist immigrant families in accessing essential city and federal services and resources.

Clinicians play a crucial role in bridging the gap between individual assistance and systemic change. Equally vital is the immigrant health coordinator, Herrera, who navigates the complex bureaucracy on behalf of families, documenting challenges and barriers to share with leaders, thereby catalyzing policy change.

"The population we're serving doesn't have a voice," says Herrera. "They can't say what could be better for them, so we try to make a space where they can do that. The work we do with these families reminds me of what the hospital's mission and purpose is really about."

By elevating the struggles faced by immigrant families, our pediatric experts can coordinate and collaborate with policymakers to remove barriers at both local and federal levels, ultimately benefiting families and health systems across the country dealing with similar situations.

Overall, the hospital's approach emphasizes a combination of immediate assistance, long-term support and advocacy for systemic change to ensure immigrant families receive the care and resources they need to thrive in their new communities. Through collaboration with both partners and policymakers, this is one more way Children's National works to establish sustainable systems of care and prioritizes the well-being of all families.

**"The population we're serving doesn't have a voice," says Herrera. "They can't say what could be better for them, so we try to make a space where they can do that. The work we do with these families reminds me of what the hospital's mission and purpose is really about."**

*Melissa Herrera, Immigrant Health Coordinator*

## PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

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From the halls of the U.S. Congress to the chambers of the D.C. Council and the meetings of advisory neighborhood commissions, the Government Affairs team within the Child Health Advocacy Institute brings the expertise of a health care system dedicated to children to bear on vital issues extending beyond clinical medicine to help children grow up stronger.

**“We advocate on behalf of children and their families to advance public policies that give children the opportunity to live up to their fullest potential,” says Tonya Kinlow, Vice President for Community Engagement, Advocacy & Government Affairs.**

The Government Affairs team diligently monitors local, state and federal legislation, striving to ensure that any policy or regulation affecting the children and families we serve reflects their true needs. The team also connects Children’s National experts with opportunities to share testimony on health-related topics, ranging from concussion safety to healthy foods.

Through robust connections with officials at the local, state, and federal levels, Children’s National is positioned to communicate critical challenges and barriers directly to the decisionmakers who can collaborate in finding solutions that benefit even more children in need.



# Community Benefit Highlights 2023



**\$211+**  
**MILLION**

In Community  
Benefit to Improve  
Community Health



**141**

Community  
Health Improvement  
Programs and  
Activities



**200+**

mental health professionals, early childhood educators and family members trained in Early Childhood Mental Health Awareness Training (EC-MHAT) through the Early Childhood Innovation Network.



**67**

newly-arrived families with children who have complex medical needs were connected to the Immigrant Health Program to coordinate health coverage and/or pay for essential outpatient subspecialty care and treatment.

# 50

aspiring nurses were provided clinical immersion experiences in pediatric nursing through the Leading the Advancement of Undergraduate Nurses at Children's National (LAUNCH) Program.



# 50

families learned about sickle cell disease, its symptoms, treatments, and management strategies during the Sickle Cell Family Education Symposium.

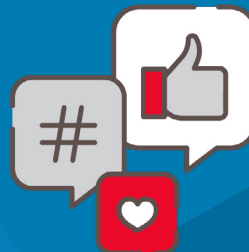


# 430

Prince George's County, Maryland, paramedics completed annual pediatric competency validations facilitated by Emergency Department physicians and nurses.

# 36,517

families were reached through the Burn Prevention media campaign led by the Trauma and Burn Services department.



# 200

D.C. Public School students were served by the Collaborative for Attendance Resources in Education and Health (CARE-H) Program, with more than 2,600 minutes of phone outreach provided, including connections to medical appointments and social resources.

# Community Investment

Total Community Benefit  
**\$211,275,196**

Medicaid Shortfalls  
**\$145,455,911**

Health Professions Education  
**\$49,756,587**

Charity Care at Cost  
**\$7,613,697**

Subsidized Health Services  
**\$3,397,042**

Medicaid Shortfalls.....	\$145,455,911
Health Professions Education.....	\$49,756,587
Charity Care at Cost .....	\$7,613,697
Subsidized Health Services.....	\$3,397,042
Community Health Improvement Services.....	\$3,342,651
Cash and In-Kind Contributions .....	\$1,206,928
Community Building Activities*.....	\$946,626
Community Benefit Operations.....	\$502,380

\* Community building activities are part of our community investment, but are not recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as community benefit. Therefore, the financials associated with community building activities are not included in the number for total community benefit.



# Community Benefit Programs and Activities

In partnership with community organizations, government agencies, national associations and individuals, Children's National supported the following programs and activities in fiscal year 2023:

- Advocacy Education
- Advocacy and Public Policy
- Burn Prevention Education
- Camp Accomplish
- Census Education
- Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Education and Trainings
- Child Health Advocacy Institute (CHAI)
- Community Benefit Operations
- Community Care Coordination Programming
- Community Health Advisory Council
- Community Health Education and Events
- Community Health Improvement Plan Steering Committee and Workgroups
- Community Support Activities
- Conway Chair Conversations
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities
- Early Childhood Innovation Network (ECIN)
- East of the River Lactation Support Center
- Emergency Preparedness Activities
- Food Pharmacy Program
- Health and Education Cross-Sector Collaborations
- Health Care Access Assistance
- Health Care Support Services
- Health Educational Summits, Lectures and Trainings
- Health Fairs and Community Outreach
- Health Literacy Workgroup
- Health Professions Education
- Immigrant Health Programming and Activities
- Injury Prevention Outreach and Education
- Intern Advocacy Day at Capital Area Food Bank
- Mentorship Activities
- Nurse Exchange Program
- Oral Health Initiatives
- Pediatric Fall Prevention
- Safe Kids District of Columbia
- Sickle Cell Support and Education Programs
- Social and Environmental Improvement Activities
- TOMODACHI J&J Disaster Nursing Training Program
- Workforce Development Programs
- Youth Engagement Programs
- Youth Violence Intervention Program



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