How Hospitals Care for their Communities
Investing in New York & the Future of Healthcare

New York’s suburban hospitals care for a diverse population, offering specialized programs, targeted interventions, and innovative health solutions, every day, 24 hours a day. They expertly meet patients’ varied needs because they listen to what the community says is important to its health and well-being. In 2021, there were 5,536,974 visits to hospitals.¹ The majority were insured by Medicare and Medicaid, government payers.

Community Investment Highlights

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH Millions are invested each year in training physicians, nurses, and other health professionals through residency programs, internships, and clinical rotations to prepare the next generation of healthcare workers for the region. New York’s suburban hospitals also participate in cutting-edge research, clinical trials, and other evaluative studies for the benefit of the broader provider and patient communities.

CHARITY CARE/BAD DEBT New York’s suburban hospitals exceed federal and state charity care requirements, offering free care for those with incomes up to 300% of the federal poverty level, and discounted care ranging from 400-500%.² Hospitals also absorb losses, classified as bad debt, which are bills that remain uncollected from those who have the ability to pay and/or have insurance.

COMMUNITY HEALTH ACTIVITIES Every hospital provides programs and services to the community in response to an assessment of the community’s needs. These include free screenings, mobile health vans, free disease-specific education, and partnerships with community-based organizations to provide a range of social and behavioral determinants of health interventions, such as food assistance, transportation services, and mental health counseling.

Regional Health Priorities
Chronic disease, which affects one in every two adults according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drives much of healthcare delivery. Community health assessments reveal this time and time again. Concerns about cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and mental health are top of mind for New Yorkers. In response, our region’s hospitals support centers of excellence in diagnostics, treatment, and prevention for a range of both chronic health conditions and acute diseases and injuries.

Ensuring Access for All
Our hospitals work collectively with community-based organizations, providers, school systems, and regional planning organizations to reduce health disparities and ensure that all have access to quality care. Between 2012 and 2020, the percentage of uninsured individuals dropped from 11.42% to 5.22% in the nine counties within the Suburban Hospital Alliance region.² Our region is committed to fulfilling the state health department’s ambitious Prevention Agenda, which seeks to dramatically reduce health disparities and improve the health of all New Yorkers. Prevention Agenda priorities for the region include preventing chronic diseases, promoting well-being and preventing mental and substance use disorders, and preventing communicable diseases.

¹ Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System (SPARCS) Data; ² PHL 2807-K; ³ US Census;

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Suburban hospitals are committed to investing in the health of their communities, despite financial challenges.

Inpatient Payer Mix

- Medicare: 43%
- Medicaid: 23%
- Commercial: 30%
- Self-Pay/Other: 4%

2021 Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System (SPARCS) Data

Operating Margins

New York hospitals’ operating margins are razor-thin and have been that way historically. Mounting equipment, supply, and workforce costs due to the pandemic continue to make the situation worse.

Hospitals in the suburban regions had an average operating margin of 0.48% in 2021, barely breaking even. This includes temporary federal pandemic relief that has now expired. Without the COVID aid, suburban hospitals’ average operating margin would have been in the red, -2.58%. This is unsustainable—industry experts say that a positive margin of at least 3% is necessary in order to keep wages, technology, and facilities current. As nonprofit institutions, all hospital net revenue is reinvested back into their operations and communities.

Despite these financial pressures, New York’s suburban hospitals provided $1.3 billion in community health benefits, including $185 million in charity care in 2021.

Care by the Numbers (2021)

- 8,300,000 Outpatients Provided Care
- 1,634,000 People Treated in the Emergency Room
- 521,000 People Admitted to Hospitals
- 47,000 Babies Delivered

Hospitals are Economic Engines

- $36,497,000,000 Economic Activity
- $5,654,000,000 Tax Dollars Generated
- 165,000 Jobs Generated

Suburban hospitals in New York experienced a Medicaid shortfall of $1.1 billion in 2021.

Medicare pays 92 cents on the dollar, and Medicaid pays 60 cents on the dollar.

66% of hospital inpatient services were covered by Medicare or Medicaid.

4 2021 Medicare Institutional Cost Reports; 5 Healthcare Association of New York State Analysis