Ensuring access to needed resources.

An innovative program developed by MedStar Health in 2017 is successfully connecting some of Baltimore's most in-need residents to hospital-based community health advocates (CHAs) who ensure they receive not only routine primary health care but vital community services.

Called the Community Health Advocate program, the goal is to serve the needs of the community in a holistic way. The program is designed to support patients by engaging them in care and keeping them out of the hospital for chronic conditions, as well as helping them navigate the complex web of social services.

Offered at all four of MedStar Health's hospitals and affiliated clinics in the Baltimore area, the program now employs 28 full-time CHAs who live in the communities they serve and are therefore well suited to assist in-need patients with accessing resources.

CHAs are integrated into each hospital's case management teams and participate in post-discharge care planning for patients who are identified as most likely to need support after they leave the hospital.

"Many of the individuals we work with here have non-medical challenges that can interfere with and thus impact their health."
—Kristina Aquino, CCHW, Community Health Advocate at MedStar Harbor Hospital

Letter from the president.

With so many aspects of our lives disrupted due to the pandemic during FY22, the needs of area residents have never been greater. We have responded by stepping up many of our community outreach efforts.

One unique initiative is our Community Health Advocate program, which works to keep in-need patients out of the hospital by connecting them to needed social services—ultimately improving their health.

Every day, we touch the lives of area residents in many ways, but we couldn't do it alone. We are grateful for your support.

In good health,

Jill Donaldson, FACHE

President,
MedStar Harbor Hospital

Senior Vice President,
MedStar Health

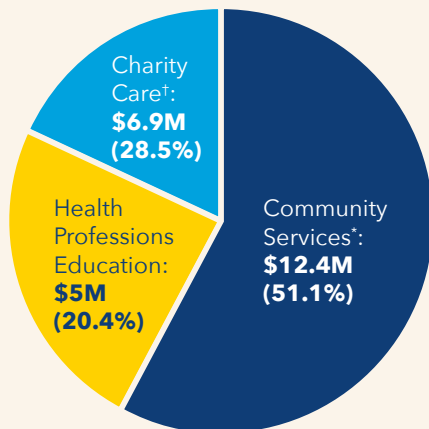## It's how we treat people.

MedStar Health

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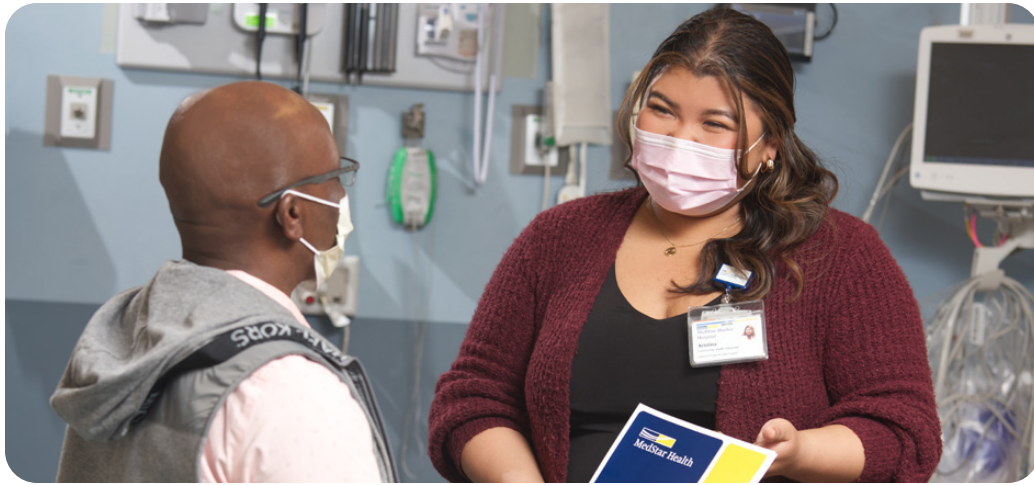
Once these patients are discharged, the CHAs help link them to community-based services that can assist with social needs such as housing, food access, and utility assistance. The CHAs also provide ongoing support during home visits, helping to ensure that patients are not faced with barriers that might interfere with their health or accessing care. They share their experiences, which are often similar, and help forge relationships with their patients.

Kristina Aquino, CCHW, a CHA at MedStar Harbor Hospital, sees the positive impact the program has on a daily basis. "Many of the individuals we work with have non-medical challenges that can interfere with and thus impact their health. A lot of them are seniors with mobility issues. We help them with anything they might need. They truly appreciate having someone they know and can trust to turn to for help."

Since the program began, the CHAs have helped patients who have been threatened with turn-off notices keep their power on. They've helped patients receive aid to retrofit homes to increase mobility and independence. They've helped patients sign up for food stamps and connected primary caregiver family members with financial resources.

"The patients we assist are so grateful and thankful. It is very heartwarming," says Aquino. "We make sure they are being helped the way they deserve."

Charity Care†:
$6.9M
(28.5%)

Health Professions Education:
$5M
(20.4%)

Community Services*:
$12.4M
(51.1%)

2022 Community benefit contribution: $24.3M

*Includes subsidies, community health improvement services, community building activities, financial contributions, and community benefit operations
†Includes Medicaid assessments

To learn more about the community health programs at MedStar Harbor Hospital, please visit **MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth**

It's how we treat people.