



# Community health workers improve individual health outcomes, benefit entire communities.

For many people, health care is a complicated service that can seem inaccessible and difficult to navigate, both literally and financially. The often-complex nature of health care services leads many people to reoccurring emergency room visits, the only place where they know they can receive care. Community health workers (CHWs) at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center are actively working to change that narrative and provide people in the community with services and resources they otherwise wouldn't know about.

The CHWs are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of nearby communities. Their preexisting relationships within a community allows them to serve as a link between community members and social services in order to facilitate access to those services.

"I am very grateful for the donations that the CHWs delivered to me during this time of need near the Thanksgiving holiday," says a community member assisted by the CHWs.

## Letter from the president.

At MedStar Health, we aim to keep you, your family, and our community healthy. We strive to provide you with the best care and resources that empower you and your loved ones to live healthy, purposeful lives.

In 2019, we saw the growth of our Community Health Worker program at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. This program works with individuals in our community to facilitate access to health care and social services. Our health workers link people with the help they need to access primary care and preventative services and manage chronic conditions.

To learn more about our Community Health Worker program, and other resources, visit [www.MedStarSouthernMaryland.org](http://www.MedStarSouthernMaryland.org).

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine R. Wray".

Christine R. Wray, FACHE  
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health  
President, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center



CHWs break down barriers to these services by helping people:

- Access transportation services to get to and from doctor appointments.
- Contact pharmacies to get proper medications.
- Utilize food pantries and other services to reduce food insecurities.
- Get connected with primary care physicians.
- Understand what additional services are available to them.

The influence of the CHWs stretches throughout Prince George’s County to affect entire neighborhoods and communities. When people are linked with a CHW, they come to understand the local health care setting and how to access available services. They are also empowered to pass along their knowledge to others they interact with, creating a ripple effect that echoes out into communities.

“After we initially work with people, they become self-sufficient. They aren’t calling us back for more help or continuing to go to the emergency room, because they have a primary care doctor, they can get to their appointments, and they know where to go to get the help they need,” said Sheila Henighan-Bracey, CHW.

At the community level, CHWs are making noticeable improvements in health outcomes and cost-effectiveness; because of their work, people can get timely access to primary care, behavioral health care, and preventative services, and better manage chronic conditions. “When we link people with a primary care doctor, they gain that personal, continued care relationship with someone they trust. We hear again and again the feeling of relief people experience with our help,” said Karen Nicholson, CHW.



## Board of Directors

**Rosalind E. Bishop**

**Hon. M.H. Jim Estep**

**Thomas K. Huisman, MD**

**Tammy L. Jones**

**Antonio W. Poag**

**Clyde Pray, MD**

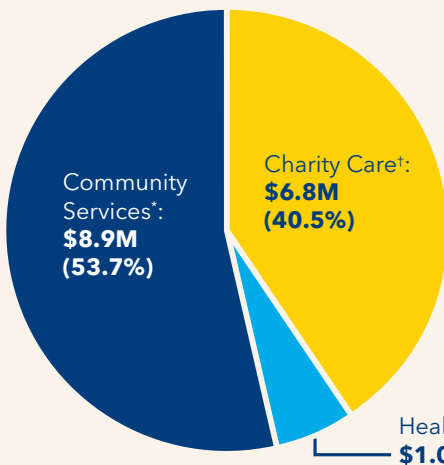
**John Rollins, Jr. Chair**

**Kenneth A. Samet, FACHE**

**William T. Tanner, MD**

**Kerry Watson, Jr.**

**Christine R. Wray, FACHE**



## 2019 Community benefit contribution: \$16.7M

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

**It’s how we treat people.**