

A Publication of the Maine Hospital Association

F A L L 2 0 0 2

An Ounce of Prevention...

Every breath the toddler took was a struggle. She lay in her hospital bed, breathing medicine through a special machine and had an IV in her tiny arm.

"She was pretty sick," recalled Patti Roderick, RN, an asthma education specialist with MaineHealth in Portland.

Her parents were frightened by her asthma diagnosis. They lived on an island—a long boat ride from a hospital in case of a major attack.

That was four years ago. Thanks to coordinated care and asthma management education she and her par-



chronic illnesses. Often these programs are not reimbursed by public or private insurance companies at the same rate as inpatient care, if at all. Hospitals rely on grants, fundraising and money from their endowments to support these programs.

It's money well spent, because these programs ultimately prevent costly emergency room visits and hospitalizations. But when faced with budget crunches, hospitals sometimes have to cut these preventative programs to continue offering core inpatient and emergency care.

Originally, Ah! was a pilot program in Portland, Biddeford and Damariscotta, but it has now expanded to 14 communities. As a result of the pilot program, hospitalizations for asthma were reduced by 30 percent. Visits to the emergency room were reduced by 38 percent. School absenteeism was reduced by 45 percent and parental absenteeism from work was reduced by 25 percent, Deatrick said.

Financial rewards aside, those statistics represent a huge reduction in suffering for children and fear for their parents.

Asthma patients aren't the only ones benefiting from such preventative/disease management programs.



ents received from MaineHealth's Ah! Asthma Health Program, the little girl hasn't been hospitalized since.

Ah! is special because a community-based asthma educator within the hospital works with primary care physicians to coordinate asthma care, said Deborah Deatrick, vice president of community health at MaineHealth, the parent company of Maine Medical Center and affiliated with nine other hospitals.

Ah! is an example of the outreach Maine hospitals do every day to improve patient health, prevent disease and help patients manage

Working to Keep Maine Healthy

Hospitals throughout Maine are expanding the range of services they provide to meet their communities specific health needs. No longer are hospitals thought of only as a place where "you take a room when you get ill," as an old Mainer once told me.

Maine's hospitals today are at the center of a broad range of services that provide real benefits locally and throughout the entire state.

Many programs and services are dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles.

Ask your local hospital about their community services and you'll likely get a long list of free clinics, preventative care seminars and conferences, and programs focused on specific community health needs.

It's just another way our hospitals work to meet community needs and help keep Maine healthy.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Michaud
President, Maine Hospital Association



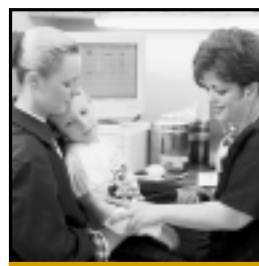
Hospitals recognize that it's never too soon to start preventative care. Healthy Families, a collaborative program from Southern Maine Medical Center (SMMC) in Biddeford and Goodall Hospital in Sanford, offers home visits to first time parents. The visits can continue throughout the child's first five years.

The idea, said SMMC Director of Community Relations Susan Hاديaris, is to provide support and

direct first time parents to resources as such as pediatricians and childcare. The goals include increasing immunization rates and pediatric medical care and preventing child abuse and neglect. The program isn't only for at-risk families, she emphasized. The program also reassures first time parents who may not have family resources to answer questions about feeding schedules, breast feeding and sleep patterns.

"Sometimes it's harder for people who are not considered at risk to ask for help because they're supposed to know this," Hاديaris said. "People deserve to be told that nobody knows how to parent from the get-go. Nobody should feel intimidated."

As important as this program is, it's

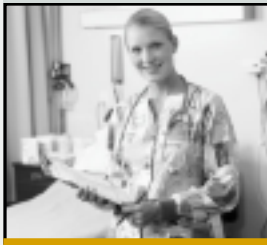


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Hospitals Work Hard to Keep and Recruit Employees

fact 1

It costs Maine hospitals between 100 and 200 percent more to fill open nursing and other technical positions with temporary workers.



fact 2

Hospitals, on average, have four open positions filled with temporary workers. Some may have as many as 26 positions filled with temps.

"Employees," says Mayo Hospital CEO Ralph Gabarro, "are what make any place work."

For hospitals in particular, having a stable, satisfied, well-trained workforce is vital for effective care of patients. Every day, Maine's hospitals keep a fundamental promise to their communities: to be there, to provide care whenever they are needed. The people who staff our hospitals around the clock are the key to delivering the right care at the right time in the right setting.

More than 22,000 full- and part-time employees work in Maine hospitals, making hospitals one of the state's largest employers. Some 6,200 registered nurses make up about 28 percent of the total hospital workforce.

But, in a trend that's seen all over the country, 9.4 percent of registered nurse positions in Maine are unfilled, according to a 2001 survey by the Maine Hospital Association.

Maine's hospitals have taken a leadership role in recruiting new nurses and other health care professionals. Just as importantly, hospitals are working hard to retain the employees they have. So hospitals are using a number of different strategies to keep employees.

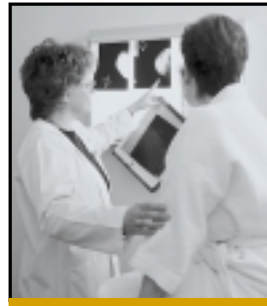
During exit interviews at Mayo Regional Hospital in Dover-Foxcroft, administrators heard over and over again that a staffing policy called

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X-time was driving away workers. Under the X-time policy, staff were paid for the hours actually worked. Worked hours were determined by patient volume and care needs. Employees found it hard to anticipate their income because actual worked hours could vary from scheduled hours.

"It was demoralizing," Gabarro said.

Now, the hospital gives employees the option of taking the day off or staying and working on some other project, like continuing education or quality improvement efforts. The policy shift, along with other pro-



grams, helped reduce turnover from 17 percent to 11 percent last year, said Ken Proctor, Mayo's director of human resources.

Acadia Hospital, a psychiatric hospital in Bangor, is taking a different approach to retaining employees. The hospital is applying for Magnet Recognition for Excellence in Nursing Service, which gives national recognition to health care organizations that demonstrate sustained excellence in nursing care.

According to Acadia CEO Dottie Hill, if the hospital is awarded this recognition it will be the first free-standing psychiatric hospital in the country given this honor.

Hill, who is also the hospital's chief nursing officer, said completing the application has energized and excited her staff at time when nurses are in demand. The process has helped reinforce that Acadia is a good place for nurses to work, she said.

"It's really about the nursing staff sharing in decision making," Hill said. "When you have a powerful nurse executive, the nurses feel empowered."

Hospitals also go out of their way to reward good employees. At Miles Memorial Hospital in Damariscotta, the Webster & Elise Van Winkle Excellence in Health Care Award goes to an employee who goes above and beyond the call of duty. In addition to a plaque and \$100, the employee is given money to spend on equipment for his or her department, said hospital spokesman Scott Shott. As a result, the award boosts the morale of both the winning employee and his or her co-workers.

This year's recipient purchased a new music system for the internal medicine office building to help promote patient privacy and confidentiality. She also purchased an ear washing system, some expensive thermome-

ters, two grills for employee appreciation cookouts and had sound-proof glass installed in a door in the internal medicine office, Shott said.

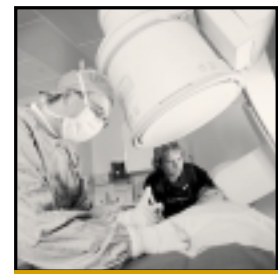
Hospitals are also working hard to recruit new employees. In September, the Maine Hospital Association, the Maine Society for Healthcare Human Resources Administration and the Maine Department of Labor/CareerCenter hosted a career fair attended by more than 30 hospitals and their subsidiaries to recruit new employees.

In a trend that's seen all over the country, 9.4 percent of registered nurse positions in Maine are unfilled.

A number of hospitals encourage students in their own communities to choose health care as a career. Houlton Regional Hospital, for example, provides job shadowing for students interested in health careers. Students can spend the day in the emergency department or observing operations, said Ann Joy, director of community relations.

The program opens the student's eyes to the rewarding careers in health care she said.

"The kids love it," she said. "They say 'We had no idea what cool things nurses could do. We thought nurses brushed teeth and gave baths.'"



The hospital offers scholarships to students who promise to come back and work there for three years. As a result of the shadowing program, the hospital has 10 scholarship students

"We knew we had to be proactive," she said. "If we didn't, we'd be in serious trouble."

Maine Hospitals Deliver Benefits to Their Communities

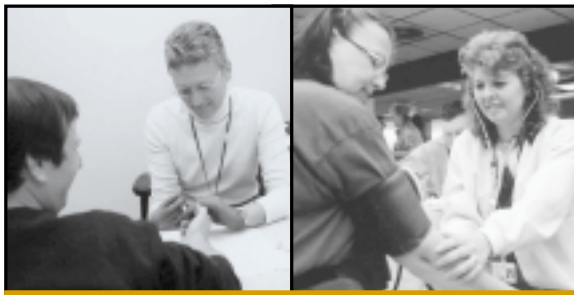
Every community has a particular set of health care needs. Maine's non-profit, community-governed hospitals are in a unique position to understand and develop programs and services to meet those needs.

When community benefits and hospitals are discussed, most people think of a hospital's commitment to provide needed health care services to everyone in the community, regardless of their ability to pay. Maine hospitals provided \$146 million in uncompensated care (charity care and bad debt) last year—by far the largest contribution of its kind in Maine.

Other community benefits are designed to improve health status and increase access to care in the community.

Inland Hospital in Waterville, a member of Eastern Maine Healthcare, holds separate men's and women's health fairs each year. September's men's fair featured a variety of health screenings and presentations like "How to age like fine wine—slowly and well" and "It takes more than a

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motorcycle to ride through mid-life."

"We have over 500 women in attendance for the women's health fair held in May and the men's fair is growing in popularity," said Terri Hibbard, director community relations at Inland Hospital.

At Sebasticook Valley Hospital in Pittsfield, each baby born at the hospital receives a free reading library. The hospital-managed program helps encourage parents to read to their children from birth and instill a love of reading and learning. Each year, the program distributes 150–200 libraries to newborns.



Mid Coast Hospital in Brunswick reaches out to its community through a cable TV show, *The Family Tree*, now in its 11th year. This show, focused on healthy living and real life family issues, reaches more than 16 towns in the hospital's service area. And for those who don't watch TV, Mid Coast Hospital joined with neighboring Parkview Hospital to sponsor the Community Health Information Partnership, providing a collection of the latest health and wellness information through print, audio-visual and electronic (web-based) resources for public use at Curtis Memorial Library and on loan to other libraries on a regular basis.

There are literally hundreds of ways Maine hospitals provide programs and services focused on improving health and increasing access to care in communities throughout Maine. Ask your hospital what community benefits they provide and be ready for an impressive list!

fact 3

Hospitals are very labor intensive. In 2001, 50.2% of hospitals costs were attributed to payroll and benefits. With nursing vacancy rates at 9.4%, hospitals are having to pay more and more to recruit and retain direct care workers.

Speakers Available

Have a question about hospital costs? Wondering why health insurance premiums keep rising? Need an informed person to speak at your next service club meeting?

Hospital leaders and representatives from the Maine Hospital Association are available to speak to your organization.

Contact the public information office at your local hospital or Mark Ishkanian at the Maine Hospital Association at 622-4794 to arrange for a speaker.

An Ounce of Prevention...

Continued from page 1

not reimbursed by private or public insurance programs. Parents are never asked to pay. The hospitals have sought grants and community funding to pay for program expenses,

Hospitals recognize that it's never too soon to start preventative care.

es, which are also supported in part by hospital endowment funds, individual gifts and auxiliary fund raising efforts.

"If you don't have a positive operating

margin," Hadiaris said, "it's difficult for a hospital to continue to fund a staff-intensive outreach program that requires money that would otherwise go to inpatient care and other clinical services that the community needs. It's a dilemma hospitals are faced with when Medicare and Medicaid don't match our costs."



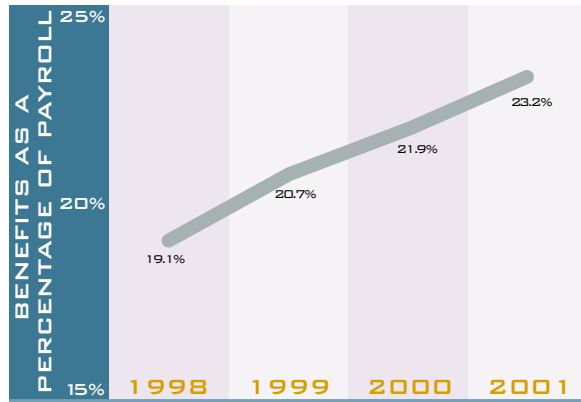
fact 4

Statewide, hospitals employ more than 22,000 full- and part-time employees. That number doesn't include those workers employed by hospital affiliates.

Healthwatch Data Bank

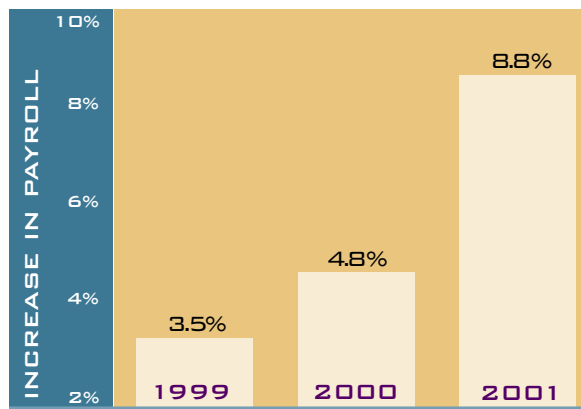
A look at how
Maine people
use health care
services

Rising Health Insurance Premiums Affect Hospitals



SOURCE: MHA QUARTERLY STATISTICAL REPORT

Workforce Shortages Drive Payroll Increases

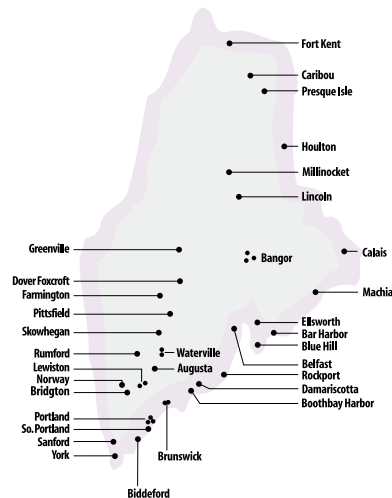


SOURCE: MHA QUARTERLY STATISTICAL REPORT

Hospital Bed Comparisons Maine vs. the Northeast and United States

	Maine	Northeast	United States
Beds per 100 square miles	10.7	51.4	21.1
Average Length of Stay	5.1	5.3	5.2
per 1,000 residents			
Beds	2.6	2.3	2.7
Admissions	113.9	107.6	116.0
Inpatient Days	584.3	575.1	597.4
Emergency Department Visits	528.5	424.9	366.5

SOURCE: AHA HOSPITAL STATISTICS, 2002 ED.



Maine's Community Hospitals

Thirty-nine acute care and specialty hospitals serve communities throughout Maine. Nearly all of Maine's hospitals are non-profit institutions with volunteer boards of directors made up of community representatives.

MHA Member Hospitals

The Acadia Hospital
Bangor

The Aroostook
Medical Center
Presque Isle

Blue Hill Memorial
Hospital
Blue Hill

Bridgton Hospital
Bridgton

Calais Regional
Hospital
Calais

Cary Medical Center
Caribou

Central Maine
Medical Center
Lewiston

Charles A. Dean
Memorial Hospital
Greenville

Down East
Community Hospital
Machias

Eastern Maine
Medical Center
Bangor

Franklin Memorial
Hospital
Farmington

Goodall Hospital
Sanford

Houlton Regional
Hospital
Houlton

Inland Hospital
Waterville

MaineGeneral
Medical Center
Augusta/Waterville

Maine Coast
Memorial Hospital
Ellsworth

Maine Medical Center
Portland

Mayo Regional
Hospital
Dover-Foxcroft

Mercy Hospital
Portland

Mid Coast Hospital
Brunswick

Miles Memorial
Hospital
Damariscotta

Millinocket Regional
Hospital
Millinocket

Mount Desert Island
Hospital
Bar Harbor

New England
Rehabilitation Hospital
Portland

Northern Maine
Medical Center
Fort Kent

Parkview Hospital
Brunswick

Penobscot Bay
Medical Center
Rockport

Penobscot Valley
Hospital
Lincoln

Redington-Fairview
General Hospital
Skowhegan

Rumford Hospital
Rumford

St. Andrews Hospital
Boothbay Harbor

St. Joseph Hospital
Bangor

St. Mary's Regional
Medical Center
Lewiston

Sebecook Valley
Hospital
Pittsfield

Southern Maine
Medical Center
Biddeford

Spring Harbor Hospital
So. Portland

Stephens Memorial
Hospital
Norway

York Hospital
York