

SPARROW HEALTH - Lansing, Michigan

Covering Every Aspect of Patient Care

Not every patient gets to be equipped with a bedside, hospital-provided iPad to remain connected with family members and the world beyond hospital walls during their stay. But the pilot program initiated for patients by Lansing, Mich.-based Sparrow Health System has been a huge hit and looks to be a keeper.

The tech convenience is just one of many ways Sparrow leverages its resources as a health system to offer a remarkable range of health and wellness support to the communities it serves. From top-notch medical care to addressing social determinants of health to standing by communities in times of crisis, Sparrow finds a way to do it all. And now that Sparrow is part of University of Michigan Health it is looking to expand access to care statewide.

Effectiveness of Systems during Difficult Times

Sparrow was one of the first hospitals in Michigan to create and offer COVID tests to inpatients, and has performed more than 930,000 COVID tests throughout the health system since March 2020. Today it offers a drive-thru service hub for blood tests and COVID testing, open for daily blood draws.

As it did for nearly every health system in the nation, the pandemic severely stretched Sparrow's finances. It was able to survive the strain and remain focused on patient care in large part due to the Sparrow Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the health system, which raised and coordinated generous donations from community partners, corporations, individuals, and caregivers.

Some of the funds raised assisted caregivers in need who lost income, helping to cover their essential bills and provide some peace of mind during a tumultuous time.

Role in the Community

Sparrow reduced the chance of patients slipping through the social safety net with the September 2021 launch of a system that connects four resource coordinators with 31 of its primary care practices. A questionnaire provided at intake helps to flag potential barriers related to food insecurity, transportation, and financial instability. The centralized team receives over 300 referrals a month with increased acuity and needs identified.

The health system has also expanded its reach into the community, turning a reconditioned bus into a rolling health clinic, outfitting it with two exam rooms and a waiting area. With 56 outings in 2023, Sparrow's Mobile Health Clinic paid 26 site visits across seven counties, providing hundreds of patients who otherwise did not have access to basic care with health screenings, immunizations and access to a primary care physician directly in their neighborhoods at no cost.

At the same time and with the help of generous businesses and community members, Sparrow has also been able to launch programs like Feeding Your Growing Family, which addresses food insecurity among pregnant mothers by offering pre/post-natal nutrition counseling, monthly food boxes delivered to their homes, a healthy cooking kitchen toolkit and connection to additional support resources.

Sparrow partners with numerous organizations in support of health equity and access to care resources, including the Healthy Capital Counties coalition, Greater Lansing Food Bank, Capital Area Health Alliance, and local public health departments.

Operational Efficiencies

As a robust health system, Sparrow benefits from the work of more than 1,000 volunteers who provide service day-to-day services to patients and their families at tremendous cost savings.

On the financial side of things, the integration of fund development teams and stand-alone hospital foundations into the Sparrow Foundation over the past three years combined into one central hub for philanthropy. This resulted in 2022 being a record-setting fundraising year, expanding relationships across the region and ensuring support for key needs that may have otherwise gone unfunded.

Size, scope, vision and key partnerships are the essential ingredients in Sparrow Health System's recipe for delivering top patient care and comprehensive community support. It is a formula that not only works, but shines bright.