



Expanding medical respite program for the homeless.

Healing from an acute illness or surgery can sometimes be difficult, even in the best environment. Imagine trying to heal and recover while also being homeless.

In 2017, MedStar St. Mary's Hospital teamed up with community partners to create a medical respite program for the homeless. Working in cooperation with the Three Oaks Center, a local nonprofit that provides services to the homeless, the six-bed facility was expanded in 2022 to 16 beds.

The medical respite center is located in Lexington Park, Maryland, which had previously been recognized as a medically underserved area and included in the state of Maryland's Health Enterprise Zone (HEZ) grant program. Administered by the Community Health Resources Commission and Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, one of the main goals of the HEZ program was to improve healthcare access and health outcomes in underserved populations. The medical respite program was a natural outgrowth of the HEZ work in Lexington Park.

"These individuals are very grateful and appreciative of this program. It really is a community lift for many of these patients."

—Brenda Wolcott, MPH, director of Population & Community Health, MedStar St. Mary's Hospital

Letter from the president.

Our care doesn't stop when a patient leaves our hospital. The follow-up care offered by case managers in our Population & Community Health department not only keeps patients on the healing path, but it can also be life changing.

Featured in this report is our medical respite program, designed to give homeless patients a safe place to recover. This program also has the potential to connect these patients to services that could help them move out of homelessness, ultimately creating a healthier future. It is healing that goes beyond medicine.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mimi Novello, MD".

Mimi Novello, MD, MBA, FACEP
President and Chief Medical Officer,
MedStar St. Mary's Hospital

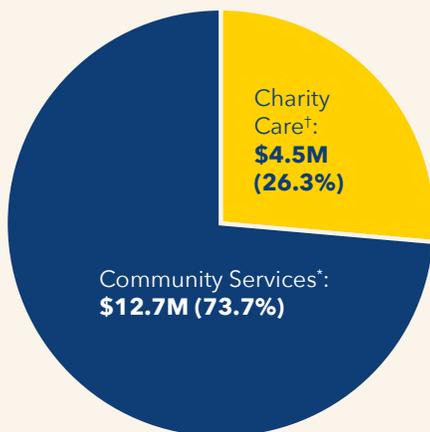


The medical respite program allows patients to be discharged from the hospital following an injury, surgery, or treatment of acute illness into one of the beds at the respite center. The program added 10 beds in 2022 to accommodate an even greater number of patients.

“A car or tent is not a safe place for anyone to try to recover from a serious illness,” said Brenda Wolcott, MPH, director of Population & Community Health, MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital. “Eligible patients who qualify receive wrap-around services that address clinical and social needs.”

Having the time and space needed to heal can be difficult for many homeless patients. Shelters typically require individuals to leave during the day. The medical respite center allows patients to stay at the center while they heal, and a nurse case manager can help organize their care and monitor their progress. As they recover, patients are introduced to other services that may help them come out of homelessness.

“Without a safe place for them to go, these patients most likely would return to our hospital for readmission, sicker than when they left, due to lack of care,” said Wolcott. “These individuals are very grateful and appreciative of this program. It really is a community lift for many of these patients.”



2022 Community benefit contribution: \$17.2M

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

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Program statistics.

- **1,255** patients received care coordination services through Outpatient Nurse Case Managers.
- **4,451** follow-up encounters, such as visits or phone calls to these patients.
- **329** patients were served by Community Health Advocates who help address social barriers such as transportation, food insecurity, insurance, and more.

To learn more about the community health programs at MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital, please visit [MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth)

It’s how we treat people.