**COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

**Communications Toolkit**

**OVERVIEW**

It is more important than ever to ensure community and state leaders understand and appreciate the local impact of hospitals beyond caring for the injured and sick. Your hospital’s communication about this critically important initiative will improve the visibility of unique community health programs throughout the state and serve to greatly enhance statewide advocacy on behalf of Colorado hospitals.

This toolkit provides a variety of communication pieces to help your hospital discuss community benefits. The following tools are included:

* **Advocacy checklist** – which includes recommendations on how to communicate about community benefits to your local legislators and community
* **Talking points** – to help your team communicate about community benefits to your employees, medical staff, community and board of trustees
* **Sample website copy** – to be posted on your hospital’s website
* **Sample social media posts** – to be used on your hospital’s social media pages

The toolkit also includes two PowerPoint files (available online and linked below):

* [**Infographic**](http://cha.com/Colorado-Hospitals/Community-Benefits.aspx) – to be displayed via your hospital’s social media pages or on your hospital’s website
* [**PowerPoint presentation**](http://cha.com/Colorado-Hospitals/Community-Benefits.aspx) – to be used for your board of trustees, medical staff, employees and community

**This communications toolkit uses fiscal year 2015 data that was collected in 2016.**

Colorado hospitals and health systems are providing invaluable services to our communities each day. Please take action to ensure that patients, families, local officials, business leaders and other stakeholders know just how impactful those efforts are!

Questions? Contact the CHA Communications Team at 720.330.6073 or cha.communications@cha.com.

**TALKING POINTS**

In addition to delivering lifesaving patient care, Colorado hospitals and health systems provide essential benefits that enrich lives and improve the overall health and wellbeing of their communities. Hospitals are driving change by expanding care beyond the walls of the traditional health care setting to play a broader role in managing the health needs of patients and communities. The most recent community benefits survey by the Colorado Hospital Association, with fiscal year 2015 data, highlights the following:

**Community Benefits:**

* Colorado hospitals as a whole provided more than **$2.2 billion** in total community benefits that year.
* Community benefits are those voluntary programs and services provided by a hospital which improve the overall quality of life in a community.
* Statewide, Colorado hospitals combined provided more than **$1.9 billion** in unpaid costs of patient care in 2015, which is care provided at a free or reduced rate for those who are unable to pay.
* Combined, Colorado hospitals serve more than **1 million people** every year through community benefits such as free or low-cost immunizations, charitable contributions, family support services, health education and community building activities provided voluntarily at a cost of **$299 million**.
* In order to be considered a community benefit, the program or service must respond to an identified community need and meet at least one of the following criteria:
	+ Improves access
	+ Enhances health
	+ Advances medical or health knowledge
	+ Relieves or reduces the burden of government

**Social/Public Health Impact:**

* Colorado hospitals are trusted local resources that are integral to our communities. In addition to caring for the sick and injured, they address the unique health needs of our populations by voluntarily providing health improvement services and programs.
* Colorado hospitals provide many voluntary, free or low-cost services and programs to community members who need it most including children, the elderly and the sick.
* Colorado hospitals provide high-quality training and education for medical professionals; ensuring populations have access to the best possible health care providers and support staff. This is especially important in rural areas where it can be challenging to attract and retain certain resources and specialists.
* Hospitals are community conveners that bring public health stakeholders and other community leaders together to pool resources and collaboratively address health challenges and opportunities for improvement.

**Patient Care:**

* Colorado hospitals and health systems are committed to caring for all patients, regardless of their ability to pay, even though the burden of charity care has been great. As a result of the Affordable Care Act and patients’ expanded access to health care coverage, total uncompensated care provided by hospitals statewide and across the country has begun to lower.
* A reduction in charity care and bad debt for hospitals means these funds can be reallocated to other important community programs and services.

**Economic Impact:**

* Colorado hospitals and health systems invest in their local communities in ways beyond helping to restore and support good health.
* Hospitals are major drivers of economic activity; providing jobs, contributing to charitable causes and reducing overall community health costs.
* **75,000** people are employed by hospitals statewide.
* Colorado hospitals gave more than **$108 million** in charitable and in-kind donations to other non-profit organizations.
* By providing much-needed preventative health services and programs, Colorado hospitals are helping to reduce the need for more costly emergency treatment and acute care.
* In many communities, especially in Colorado’s rural areas, hospitals and health systems are the largest employers, providing stability and economic benefits for their communities.

**SAMPLE WEBSITE COPY**

**Community Benefits**

[HOSPITAL NAME] is committed to the health of the [TOWN/REGION] community. The hospital provides a number of services outside of the traditional hospital setting, called community benefits, in order to improve the health of the community we serve.

Community benefits programs are designed to provide increased access to care and address population health inequalities for vulnerable patients. [HOSPITAL NAME] provides a variety of services, including: [LIST OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS EXAMPLES, SUCH AS IMMUNIZATIONS, NONBILLED AND REDUCED-FEE CLINICS, IN-HOME SERVICES AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES].

Statewide, Colorado hospitals provided more than $2.2 billion in community benefits in 2015, including more than $198 billion in unpaid costs of patient care, $299 million in voluntary community benefits and $108 million in charitable donations. For more statewide impact, visit [www.cha.com](http://www.cha.com).

Learn more about the impact of community benefits here:

[POST INFOGRAPHIC]

**SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS**

Facebook

* Colorado hospitals and health systems annually provide more than $1.9 billion in voluntary programs and services at low or no cost to improve your health. [HOSPITAL NAME] has been involved in helping our community by [LIST ACTIVITIES]. Let’s build a stronger, healthier community together!
* Did you know we provide [LIST OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS SERVICES] at low or no cost to all community members to help keep [TOWN/REGION] healthy and strong? Learn more at [WEBSITE].
* [HOSPITAL NAME] is committed to the health of our community, along with the other hospitals around the state! That’s why together we provided more than $1.9 billion in community benefits services in 2015! [POST INFOGRAPHIC]

Twitter

* How are we improving the health of our patients and community? Visit [WEBSITE] to learn more.
* Colorado hospitals provided more than $1.9 billion in community benefits services in 2015. Learn more: [INFOGRAPHIC].
* Did you know that we provide [LIST 1-2 COMM BENEFITS SERVICES]? It’s just part of our voluntary commitment to our community.

**ADVOCACY CHECKLIST**

Colorado hospitals and health systems are providing invaluable services to our communities each day. It is imperative that patients, families, local officials, business leaders and other stakeholders are constantly aware of how these efforts continue to positively impact and shape your community!

Please use this checklist to engage and educate the media and state leaders on the benefits your hospital provides in your community, beyond routine patient care.

Community Leaders and Elected Officials:

* Call, write, email or meet with your [federal](http://www.cha.com/Policy-Advocacy/Federal-Policy-Issues/Colorado-Congressional-Delegation.aspx) and [state](http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/cslFrontPages.nsf/HomeSplash?OpenForm) legislators to discuss the value of your hospital in terms of essential health services, jobs, economic activity, community benefits and uncompensated care. It’s helpful to prepare and share the following information:
	+ The critical role your hospital serves for vulnerable populations.
	+ The size and scope of the Medicaid and uninsured population your hospital serves and how protecting the [Hospital Provider Fee](http://www.cha.com/Colorado-Hospitals/Colorado-Hospital-Provider-Fee.aspx) can result in more patients getting the care they need, when and where they need it.
	+ How the continued elimination of hospital funding, at the federal or state level jeopardized patient access to care. Be specific about the impact that funding cuts have on your services, jobs or community investments.
* Invite elected officials to tour your hospital, to attend a hospital event or to observe a board meeting when you present the[community benefits presentation](http://cha.com/Colorado-Hospitals/Community-Benefits.aspx).
* Share the [infographic](http://cha.com/Colorado-Hospitals/Community-Benefits.aspx) to show how your facility’s health care initiatives extend beyond the traditional hospital care setting to include prevention and wellness activities and other community benefits aimed at improving overall health.

Media:

* Inform local media about how your hospital is investing in the community – whether it be improved services, facility renovations to improve quality or efficiency, prevention and wellness efforts, etc.
* Highlight performance improvement initiatives that your hospital is pursuing to increase quality and safety for patients.