UCHealth, Colorado

Advancing Health Patient by Patient

From to an account posted to UCHealth's web site: "David Shue was sleeping on cardboard behind an Aurora strip mall and drinking more than half a gallon of vodka and several beers a day last fall when he agreed to accept help from a kind hospital social worker. Months earlier, Dave lost six toes, three on each foot, after spending hours outdoors during a frigid, wet spring snowstorm."

Life has improved dramatically for the 52 year-old, thanks to help from a UCHealth social worker and the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. Today, Dave no longer lives on the streets, and after getting a roof over his head, his health has improved significantly.

This success story is among countless examples of lives made better by UCHealth, a not-for-profit health care system headquartered in Aurora, Colo. with hospitals and facilities throughout Colorado and affiliated hospitals in Wyoming and Nebraska.

As UCHealth has grown as a system, its services to patients and the communities it serves has kept pace.

Positive Effects of New Affiliates
Yampa Valley Medical Center is among the most recent members, joining UCHealth in 2017. YVMC's patients have reaped immediate benefits from the expanded capabilities and resources of a health system, including:
  o New, lower-priced care options.
  o Additional access to specialists and advanced treatments (both in-person and virtual visits.)
  o New payers offering insurance plans, and discounts provided to payers to help them reduce insurance premiums.
  o Grants provided for local nonprofit organizations to help improve community health.

In addition, patients served by Memorial Health System, which became part of UCHealth in 2012, have realized many of the same benefits and expansion of specialty services, including the designation of UCHealth Memorial Hospital as a Comprehensive Stroke Center and a Level I Trauma Center.

Community Benefits
UCHealth provided $1.1 billion in total community benefits in FY22 including $388 million in uncompensated care. An outside audit firm that examined its 2021 data found UCHealth's community benefits were almost $400 million *more* than the total value of its nonprofit tax exemptions.

UCHealth is a nonprofit organization, completely separate from the University of Colorado, and it receives no taxpayer funding from the Colorado general fund. As part of its community benefits, it supports the University of Colorado School of Medicine with almost $300 million each year. The funding provided to the university supports education, training, research and clinical trials, and it helps recruit providers to increase access for patients. UCHealth's support of the university is expanding the health care workforce by helping to train more physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses and others.

The health care system also funds programs to address social determinants of health, provide behavioral health co-responder programs with local law enforcement agencies, and expand access to behavioral health care.

UCHealth is the largest provider of Medicaid care in Colorado and has been ranked by the Lown Institute, a nonpartisan health care think tank, as among the nation's best health systems in social responsibility, community benefit, value and patient outcomes.

Value of Health Systems
As an integrated health system, UCHealth has been able to achieve progress across a variety of fronts that would be much more challenging for an individual hospital. Examples include:

- Broader availability of clinical trials. UCHealth provides advanced treatments and clinical trials in numerous sites throughout Colorado, leading to excellent patient outcomes.
- Efficiencies and savings on IT services. Numerous IT systems are provided broadly to all UCHealth hospitals, eliminating the need for each hospital to have their own contract for various IT services.
- Centralized business services. Medical leadership, human resources, communications, finance and other services are provided for all hospitals and clinics, leading to significant efficiencies, shared expertise and more uniform approaches to providing care and education.

- Greater quality and safety through innovations. UCHealth has a single Virtual Health Center that provides virtual ICU monitoring, sepsis, decompensation, safety watches, telemetry and other services. They are available for all its hospitals, leading to improved quality and safety for all patients.

For Coloradans and patients in nearby states, UCHealth is proof of the value of amplifying quality patient care through a wide system of affiliated hospitals, clinics and virtual health services.