

The Value of the 340B Program: Trinity Health Grand Rapids Case Study



Trinity Health

As one of the country's largest Catholic health systems with hospitals ranging from small, 25-bed

critical access hospitals to large academic medical centers, Trinity Health provides care to all patients across the full care continuum. An integral part of their national system, Trinity Health Michigan is an essential health care provider across Michigan, operating nine hospitals that serve approximately 800,000 patients across 29 counties and employ over 26,000 full-time staff.

Trinity Health Michigan is a particularly important source of care in the western side of the state. One of its primary sites of care, Trinity Health Grand Rapids, has been providing care to the Grand Rapids community, with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities, since its inception in 1893. Trinity Health Grand Rapids — anchored by a 283-bed hospital — operates two freestanding emergency departments, two urgent care clinics, three public health centers, a large HIV clinic and 57 outpatient clinics. Trinity Health Grand Rapids is committed to community wellness and educational outreach, operating the only acute care psychology medical unit in Michigan, infusion services, a psychological emergency center, women's health services and the only pharmacies in the area for at-risk patients. These pharmacies dispense nearly 1,700 prescriptions every month to patients who cannot afford

"It is very difficult to predict what would happen without 340B savings, but we know it would create a negative domino effect. Widespread, public access to primary and specialty care would likely become financially prohibitive for safety-net hospitals and result in narrowed access favoring those who can afford it. There is no denying, a lot of patients across Michigan would be hurt."

Terry Kirkpatrick, MSc, RPh

Director of Pharmacy Services



their medications.

All these critical patient services are supported by the hospital's participation in the 340B Drug Pricing Program. The 340B program is particularly important in West Michigan because it gives qualifying hospitals the ability to purchase certain drugs from drug companies at a discounted price. In turn, the savings generated from the discounted pricing allow hospitals like Trinity Health Grand Rapids to extend access to high-quality, patient-centered care to all patients, no matter their ability to pay.

Who Trinity Health Serves



The Grand Rapids community is vibrant with a wide variety of employers and great variation in income. Trinity Health serves the whole community, but many neighborhoods right around the hospital and clinics, such as the Heartside Health

district, have faced sustained socioeconomic hardship — many patients either live below the poverty line or are lower income, are living with multiple chronic conditions, and are often uninsured or underinsured. Many patients are covered under Medicare and/or Medicaid, programs that traditionally reimburse providers well below the cost required to care for them. Many hospitals within Trinity Health Michigan — like Trinity Health Grand Rapids — are dependent on the 340B Drug Pricing Program to

maintain, improve and expand access to care particularly for disadvantaged patients.

Despite facing many financial challenges, Trinity Health is committed to providing patients with financial assistance, social care programs and initiatives to tackle the many social determinants of health. Providing more than \$176 million in community benefits last year, Trinity Health Michigan plays an unparalleled role in the health and well-being of Michiganders.

"The 340B program allows us to be a family and spend time with each other... without the 340B program I honestly do not know how I would be able to get my husband the medication he needs to survive."

Trinity Health Grand Rapids Patient

340B Program Benefits Patients

The 340B Drug Pricing Program is crucial for providers like Trinity Health Michigan because it helps offset some of the costs associated with providing care to the disadvantaged patient populations served by Trinity Health. Without hospitals like Trinity Health Grand Rapids, many patients would not receive the medical care they need, leading to worse health outcomes across West Michigan. Participating in the 340B program ensures that Trinity Health's hospitals can continue to serve its community, which is exactly what Congress intended for the program to do when it was created over thirty years ago. **The system's participation in 340B allows it to:**

Lower Prescription Costs. Through its Prescription Access Program, Trinity Health Grand Rapids' pharmacies provide thousands of prescriptions to patients at little or no cost. This program offers essential aid for many community members who cannot afford costly prescription medications. This program allows Trinity Health Grand Rapids to save its patients more than \$3 million annually on prescription medications. It also offers free drug delivery services for more than 1,300 underserved patients. If it weren't for the hospital's 340B savings, Trinity Health Grand Rapids would not be able to offer these vital services and would likely be forced to close pharmacies in the region as it would simply not have enough resources to keep the doors open.

Patient Story Highlight: A single mom who was prescribed Strattera to treat her ADHD was ready to forego treatment. At \$300–\$500 per month, she couldn't afford the drug. She researched getting the drug from Canada, which would have been \$160 for a three-month supply at an incorrect dosage. Thankfully, her primary care physician suggested she check with Trinity Health, and she was able to get a three-month supply of her prescription for just \$64 through one of the system's community access programs made possible by 340B.

Specialty and Infusion Care. Trinity Health Grand Rapids is proud to offer a range of specialty services to patients. These include access to OB/GYN services, neurology, pulmonology, cardiology, gastroenterology, rheumatology, HIV care and endocrinology with a special focus on diabetes. In addition, many patients in the area require life-sustaining infusion, chemotherapy and dialysis services that are expensive, but provided to them at reduced or no cost. Without savings from the 340B program, these services would not be available to the extent they are today, meaning patients would have to travel much further for access or possibly forgo treatment altogether.

340B Hospitals like Trinity Health Grand Rapids Need Support

Hospitals that participate in the 340B program continue to face severe financial pressures and the constant threat of program cuts. As costs for labor, supplies and equipment continue to rise, health care systems — like Trinity Health — need the support of the 340B Drug Pricing Program to help defray these high costs and ensure access to essential care is protected for the communities it serves.

Despite repeated efforts by Big Pharma to curtail the 340B program, Trinity Health is proof that the program is working as Congress intended. Without access to 340B, Trinity Health Grand Rapids and many other hospitals like it would be forced to scale back certain costly services and reduce the scope of important patient programs. Lawmakers can prevent this from happening by maintaining their strong support for 340B and protecting the interests of patients over the interests of drug companies.