Commitment to Collaboration
Mission Statement

The Central Ohio Hospital Council serves as the forum for community hospitals to come together to address issues that impact the delivery of health care to central Ohioans. Through the COHC, Mount Carmel Health System, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, OhioHealth and the OSU Wexner Medical Center collaborate with each other and with other community stakeholders to improve the quality, value and accessibility of health care in the central Ohio region.
A Message to the Community

As leaders of central Ohio’s hospital systems, we share a common belief that many of the issues facing our local healthcare system can be addressed much more effectively when hospitals work in collaboration.

Our hospital systems have a long-standing history of working together on pressing healthcare challenges. In 2008, we formalized our efforts by creating the Central Ohio Hospital Council (COHC). Through the COHC, we have collaborated on a number of initiatives aimed at improving community health such as:

- Working to reduce the incidence of preterm birth and infant mortality;
- Coordinating care for patients needing inpatient psychiatric services;
- Reducing hospital-acquired infections and increasing patient safety and quality.

Our commitment to collaboration continues today through our continued focus on ongoing initiatives and identification of new opportunities. Last year our systems, in partnership with a number of community organizations, developed and released the Franklin County HealthMap, a report highlighting the health needs of Franklin County. Today, the HealthMap serves as a guide our hospital systems use to identify new areas for collaborative work.

We encourage you to read this “Commitment to Collaboration” report, which highlights initiatives being undertaken by our hospital systems through the COHC. This report serves as a testimony to the commitment and leadership of our hospitals’ associates, medical staffs, boards of trustees, volunteers and community partners, whose dedication to the highest quality health care and service makes Columbus a great place to call home.

Sincerely,

Steve Allen, M.D.
Chief Executive Officer
Nationwide Children’s Hospital
Chair, COHC

Steve Gabbe, M.D.
Chief Executive Officer
The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center
Treasurer, COHC

Dave Blom
President and CEO
OhioHealth
Secretary, COHC

Claus Von Zychlin
President and CEO
Mount Carmel Health System
Vice Chair, COHC
Quality

Preterm Birth and Infant Death

Each year, more than 2,000 babies are born too early in Franklin County. Nearly three babies every week die before their first birthday. Ohio is ranked 34th among the 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia in its efforts to reduce preterm births, and its infant mortality rate is ranked 47th out of 50 states.

Franklin County hospitals are implementing a number of clinical and quality-based prevention programs designed to reduce preterm birth and infant death.

Progesterone Promotion Project: Preterm birth – birth before 37 weeks gestation – is the leading cause of death among newborns in our community. Through the Ohio Better Birth Outcomes initiative, Franklin County healthcare providers are working together to identify pregnant women who have had a previous preterm birth and enroll them in the Progesterone Promotion Project. Clinical studies have shown that giving pregnant women additional progesterone can reduce their risk of recurrent preterm birth by approximately 35 percent.

Prenatal clinics in hospitals and throughout the community are working together to enroll women in the program and provide them with progesterone supplements. Because this is a community-wide effort, a method of keeping all participants up to date was needed. The Central Ohio Hospital Council developed a web-based reporting system and convenes clinic leaders monthly to monitor results and share best practices. Since the web system was implemented in January 2011, 514 women in the program have carried their babies on average seven weeks and one day longer than the child they previously delivered prematurely.

Breastfeeding promotion: Children who are breastfed have 20 percent lower risk of dying in their first year of life than children who weren’t breastfed. Breastfed babies also have better breathing and lung function, are less likely to develop asthma, have healthier weights and are less likely to become obese, and have less chance of developing diabetes.

Franklin County hospitals are working together to increase the number of women who are breastfeeding when they are discharged from the hospital, and
preferably for at least six months after going home. In 2013, COHC-member hospitals adopted and implemented “Community Standards on Breastfeeding Promotion.” The standards include a number of hospital practices that encourage breastfeeding, as well as an agreement among all hospitals to no longer routinely provide free samples of or coupons for infant formula to mothers. Also, prenatal clinics throughout the community have developed and are providing pregnant women with an educational brochure highlighting the many health benefits of breastfeeding for babies and moms.

Safe sleep education: In Franklin County in 2013, 145 babies died before reaching their first birthday, with 23 of those deaths (or 1 in every 6.3) being sleep related. To reduce infant mortality in our community, it is vital that parents understand how to create a safe sleeping environment for their babies.

Last year, COHC-member hospitals developed and adopted “Community Standards on Safe Sleep Environments.” The standards are designed to help ensure that central Ohio maternity units consistently follow safe sleeping practices for newborns, and that they teach parents about safe sleep practices for their child at home.
Access

Placement of Psychiatric Patients

Facing fewer available beds and higher demand for behavioral health services, central Ohio psychiatric providers are working together to ensure access to care for patients in need of inpatient services. Franklin County’s three adult hospital systems – Mount Carmel Health System, OhioHealth and The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center – are partnering with Netcare, the local crisis intervention facility; Twin Valley Behavioral HealthCare, a state psychiatric hospital; and Dublin Springs and Ohio Hospital for Psychiatry, two freestanding psychiatric providers, on local mental health issues. This group of dedicated providers, known informally as “the bedboard group,” shares a common goal: Place patients needing inpatient psychiatric care in the right bed as quickly as possible.

Working with COHC and the Columbus Foundation, this group has developed a secure, web-based listing of open and soon-to-be open beds – the bedboard – and a corresponding list of psychiatric patients needing inpatient admission. Representatives from each entity then communicate daily by conference call to place patients, most of who are in an emergency department, in a mental health bed as quickly as possible. Since this work began in May 2009, the number of patients needing inpatient placement has nearly tripled. Nevertheless, the time it takes to place these patients in a mental health bed has decreased by 29.7 percent.

Cost

Joint Committee on Local Accountability

In the early 2000s, prices charged by the American Red Cross for blood products rose dramatically. There was little communication between the Red Cross and the hospitals about the situation. In 2006, the Red Cross and local hospitals formed the Joint Committee of Local Accountability (JCOLA) to improve communication and to provide a forum for the region’s hospitals and the Red Cross to work together. Today, the committee continues to meet quarterly to share information and allow hospitals to have input into decisions about the supply and price of blood products.
COHC-member hospitals are joining with the Central Ohio Trauma System and Franklin County ADAMH, with support from the Columbus Foundation, to coordinate a broader community discussion regarding Franklin County’s mental health system and its ability to provide quality, comprehensive care to residents throughout the community in a timely manner. Planning for this series of facilitated discussions is underway, with work scheduled to begin in the fall.

**Vendor Interaction**

In late 2012, representatives from the four Franklin County hospital systems developed and implemented the “Community Standards on Vendor Interaction.” The standards promote appropriate interactions between vendors and hospital personnel, help ensure hospital policies are followed, and reinforce patient safety and privacy best practices.

While each hospital has developed its own specific vendor interaction policies, these standards ensure a consistent approach to the way vendors and their representatives interact and work with central Ohio hospitals and their associates. The four hospital systems have reached agreement that all vendor representatives wear a red scrub hat in patient care areas, ensuring quick and easy identification of individuals who are in patient care areas for non-patient-care purposes. Hospital representatives continue to meet regularly to discuss and implement the standards.
Franklin County HealthMap

The federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires tax-exempt hospitals to conduct community health needs assessments and implement strategies that address the findings. The hospital system CEOs agreed that a single assessment, conducted jointly by the four local hospital systems, would be more efficient and serve the community better than four separate assessments. In Franklin County, the effort has grown into a multi-stakeholder collaborative, whereby a broad range of local organizations, including local health departments, community health centers, the United Way and The Ohio State University, have worked together to develop and release the Franklin County HealthMap 2013. The needs assessment includes over 300 indicators in 12 categories, and compares Franklin County health data with state and/or federal data. The HealthMap allows hospitals and other health organizations to better understand issues such as the prevalence of chronic health conditions in our community and barriers that prevent some people from accessing health care. Hospitals are using the data to guide them in meeting the community’s health needs, and to direct resources where they will have the biggest impact.

Work is underway by the Franklin County Need Assessment Steering Committee in planning for the development of the Franklin County HealthMap 2016, which will be released in January 2016.

Central Ohio Health Information Exchange

Electronic health records allow physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals to access patient information quickly and efficiently. Electronic records can improve quality and convenience of patient care, increase patient participation in their care, improve accuracy of diagnoses and health outcomes, improve care coordination among various providers, and increase efficiency and cost savings.

To help healthcare providers make the switch to electronic records, the Central Ohio Health Information Exchange (COHIE) was created to serve the 14-county Central Ohio region. Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, COHIE’s mission is to assist nearly 1,400 primary care providers through the process of selecting and implementing electronic records technology. The four Franklin County hospital systems have worked with COHIE since 2010 to expand the use of electronic health records in our community.
Commitment to Community

Supplier Diversity

The four Franklin County hospital systems are working to support minority- and women-owned businesses. Through their collaborative efforts, local hospitals will assist diverse suppliers in navigating the hospital contracting process, resulting in increased opportunities for diverse business entities to work with our local hospital systems. The four systems share a common goal: To establish and build business relationships with qualified diverse suppliers that positively impact patient care, community relations and social economics in the community.

Last year, the four hospital systems jointly sponsored and staffed an information booth at the Opportunity Fair of the Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council, where hundreds of minority business owners were able to learn more about working with the hospital systems. This year, the group’s efforts turn to constructing a common database of minority- and women-owned companies with which each hospital system has worked. The database is designed to share information among the hospital systems, and assist them in identifying minority- and women-owned business owners to whom they can contact.
Central Ohio Hospitals’ Commitment to Collaboration

Health Information Translations

More and more individuals in our community have limited English language skills or a low literacy level, which could be a barrier to their ability to fully understand healthcare-related information. Recognizing this, in 2005, the Franklin County hospital systems launched a web site, www.HealthInfoTranslations.org, to address the lack of patient education materials for low-literacy and limited English-speaking patients.

HealthInfoTranslations.org includes more than 3,000 free resources to help clinicians teach patients with complex communications needs. The patient educational materials are available in 17 languages, including Arabic, Bosnian, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Hindi, French, Russian, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Somali, Marshallese, Portuguese and Tagalog. Health topics on the site include diagnostic tests, diseases and conditions, exercise and rehabilitation, food and diet, health and wellness, home care, pain and comfort, pediatrics, pregnancy and baby care, safety, stress and coping, and surgeries and treatments.

Patient education representatives from the four hospital systems continue to regularly update the site’s content, addressing new language needs and pertinent health issues. The site not only benefits the residents of central Ohio, but is also regularly accessed by individuals in all 50 states and nearly 100 countries around the world.

Caring for the Indigent

In Franklin County, all residents — regardless of their ability to pay — receive the same quality of care at the community’s acute-care hospitals. Unlike other communities, which have passed a special tax for care of the indigent or established separate, public charity hospitals, central Ohio has a long-standing “equal access” healthcare system.

The ability of central Ohio hospitals to sustain this system is in part due to their unique agreement to follow the same inclusive guidelines when providing free and significantly discounted care to the indigent. Franklin County hospitals provide free, medically necessary hospital care to all residents with family incomes under 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), or $47,700 for a family of four. Hospitals also provide significant, individually determined discounts on medically necessary hospital care for patients with family incomes up to 400 percent of FPL, or $95,400 for a family of four.
Franklin County hospitals are an integral part of the central Ohio community, and they are committed to partnering with other local organizations to improve the lives of central Ohio residents and the community as a whole. Through the COHC, the hospitals systems are:

- Assisting in the development of a campaign to lure national healthcare groups to Columbus for their conventions and annual meetings. Hospital marketing and communications representatives are working with Experience Columbus, Columbus’ convention and visitors’ bureau, to develop strategies that would assist them in successfully marketing the city to national healthcare organizations. Besides boosting our local economy, attracting medical conventions to Columbus makes educational sessions more readily available to area healthcare practitioners, expanding their knowledge base and benefitting patient care.

- Assisting Franklin County Recorder Terry Brown, who is developing an online storage system for individuals’ living wills and healthcare power of attorneys, so that doctors and hospitals may access these documents. These legal documents that deal with end-of-life decisions give patients and their families both comfort and control, but they must be readily accessible when needed in order to serve their intended purpose. The hospital systems are helping the Recorder’s office better understand the needs of hospitals and their patients as it develops its web-based system.

- Working with TechColumbus to provide local entrepreneurs with an opportunity to present their products to the Franklin County hospital systems in a collaborative manner, rather than having to navigate the health systems independently. A subset of Tech Columbus’ “First Connect” program, this initiative benefits local companies, as they look for feedback on their development strategies and potentially to expand their business. The initiative also benefits hospitals as they are exposed to new technologies that could improve patient care or increase efficiency.