

The Columbus Dispatch

Columbus area hospital workers care deeply about the community and deserve thanks

Jeff Klingler Guest columnist

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Jeff Klingler is president and CEO of the Central Ohio Hospital Council.

Key Points:

- Hospital workers are passionate and dedicated to a common goal: improving the health and wellbeing of every patient who are in their care.
- There's no better time than now to find your future in health care.

In our work at the Central Ohio Hospital Council, we facilitate the collective work of our hospital systems to address our community's most pressing health issues, such as infant mortality, drug overdoses and overdose deaths and our psychiatric crisis system of care.

I could give you a lot of data that describe the work of our hospitals to address these important issues. And the work is impressive. But instead, I'd like to shift the spotlight onto the people who do the work every day that makes our hospitals great.

National Hospital Week ends tomorrow. It is an opportunity to recognize the many contributions of our community hospitals to improve the health and wellbeing of central Ohio residents.

Mount Carmel Health System, Nationwide Children's Hospital, OhioHealth and The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center collectively employ more than 50,000 of our neighbors, friends and relatives in a variety of jobs.

Hospital workers care deeply about the community

Many people think of the clinical roles, such as doctors, nurses and therapists, but there are so many others, such as technology specialists, software coders, teachers, cooks, transportation and loading dock workers, writers and receptionists.

Hospital associates possess remarkable skills, and many have worked hard to achieve the educational and licensure or certification requirements needed to practice their professions. But hospital workers are also extraordinarily kind and wonderful people.

It's not just what they do each day that's worthy of celebrating during Hospital Week; it's also how they do it. I've personally experienced all four health systems in Franklin County, either as a patient or as an advocate for my sons, wife or parents, and I always come away awed not only by the quality of care, but also in the quality of the caring we receive.

Hospital workers care about their patients. They care deeply. They are passionate and dedicated to a common goal: improving the health and wellbeing of every patient who are in their care.

In my job of managing the Central Ohio Hospital Council, I bring together leaders from various hospital service lines to address our community's most pressing health care needs. Our obstetrics leaders work together to reduce the number of babies who die before their first birthday.

Our psychiatric leaders work to improve the system of care for our residents who are experiencing a mental health crisis. Our emergency department and addiction medicine leaders work to reduce the use of opiates in hospital surgical sites and the number of residents who present at the hospital with an overdose. Our patient education leaders work to provide thousands of free health-information documents for our community's limited-English-speaking patients in more than a dozen languages.

Improve the system of care is the goal



Jan. 30, 2024; Grove City, Ohio, USA; Mount Carmel Nurse Manager Jatu Boikai demonstrates the assessments an infant would receive after being born. Barbara J. Perenic/Columbus Dispatch

Regardless of the issue these hospital leaders are working to address, they share common traits: passion and compassion for their patients and their community. In every Zoom call or in-person meeting we convene; I am reminded that these individuals are doing this work because they want to improve the system of care for their patients. I believe this passion for helping and improving the lives of others was nurtured in their upbringing and their training, but it's deeper than that. It's part of their fabric.

Central Ohio is experiencing what many regions would consider “a good problem to have.”

The region is growing fast, and the demand for health services is growing fast with it.

It is a challenge for our hospitals to hire and retain the staff needed to meet this growing demand for healthcare services. To any young person exploring careers or to seasoned workers who want to make a career change, let me say there's no better time than now to find your future in health care.

Jobs are abundant, and the pay and benefits are very good. And if you like building relationships with other people, helping them through tough times and celebrating their successes with them, you will find a career in health care to be personally rewarding.

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