



May 2022

To our communities...

Dear friend,

Greetings from Huntsville Hospital Health System and your community hospital.

As we've moved to a different phase in the pandemic, we clearly see the terrible damage that the virus has left behind---lost lives, ongoing physical and mental health issues, families and communities changed, and an economy shaken. We could not be happier to see the COVID-19 census in our hospitals at the lowest point in over two years. But your hospitals are still recovering. For more than 27 months our staff has been on the front line, battling COVID-19 around-the-clock---testing, treating and vaccinating hundreds of thousands of people. It has been the greatest challenge our team has ever faced, and I could not be prouder of them.

One of the lingering impacts of the pandemic has been a massive reduction in the available workforce. We can debate how and why this has occurred, but the fact remains that we are at a critical point in many industries, including health care. Fulfilling our mission to provide patient care is dependent on having qualified staff on our team. We all realize that the pipeline for nurses, technicians and other health professionals is a long one. It takes years and it requires collaboration between hospitals, education and communities. We want you to know some of the things that our Health System is doing to help develop the workforce it needs to care for you and your family.

- All of our hospitals are working with their local high schools to generate student interest in health care careers through job shadowing, career fairs and presentations.
- Teachers on Tour brings school guidance counselors to Decatur Morgan Hospital so they can see firsthand the opportunities that are available for students.
- Career fairs have restarted at area high schools and at Calhoun Community College, Drake State, Wallace State, UAH, and other colleges.
- At Athens-Limestone Hospital, students age 16 and up can find age-appropriate job opportunities.
- The Work Force Development Committee in Decatur has created a "Make Your Impact" campaign to enhance the engagement of the workforce, volunteers, and donors to the hospital.
- All of our hospitals are working with local chambers of commerce in efforts that benefit the local workforce.
- Helen Keller Hospital in Sheffield provides programs at the local Career Center and

- participates with Alabama Works and the Easter Seals job coaching programs
- Financial support/scholarships are available for many of our own staff to continue their education and prepare them for advancement.
 - Helen Keller Hospital hosts test preparation luncheons for nursing school graduates who are scheduled for the national exam for nursing certification (NCLEX).
 - Highlands Medical Center in Scottsboro is working with Northeast Alabama Community College to train 10 candidates for a Certified Nursing Assistant's class to begin in July.
 - Huntsville Hospital serves as the clinical rotation site for nursing students from UAH, Calhoun Community College and Drake State.
 - Clinical rotations for pharmacy students and other health care professions are done in Huntsville.
 - A new partnership with Drake State called the LPN Launch program begins this summer with a class of 25 students. The graduates will have a job upon completion.
 - We helped Calhoun Community College expand its nursing simulation laboratory in Huntsville in order to train more RNs each year.
 - Huntsville recently began a collaborative effort with UAH's RN Acceleration Program for students seeking a second degree.
 - Huntsville Hospital operates on-campus clinical/technical schools that train students for critical positions, including Surgical Technology, Perioperative Nursing, Pharmacy Technology, and Radiology Technology programs. These nationally-accredited programs include opportunities for students to work while being trained.
 - Project Search encompasses a year-long internship-based training model for students and young adults. The program is a collaboration between ARC of Madison County, Huntsville City Schools, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Huntsville Hospital.
 - Career opportunities and training programs are also shared through Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA).
 - Most recently, a Career Ambassador program was established in Huntsville where a broad mix of employees will give presentations to elementary/middle/high school groups.
 - Madison Hospital has a unique program with James Clemens and Bob Jones high schools where students with learning challenges are trained for employment in Environmental Services and Food Services. An apprenticeship for students from the culinary programs at the high schools trains students to be cooks at the hospital.
 - Marshall Medical Centers created the position of Workforce Development Coordinator to connect the efforts of its Human Resources and Education Departments.

These are just some of the things that we are doing in communities across our region to build the team that we need to care for you and your family. Please know that we continue to work hard and it is our privilege to serve you.

Sincerely,



Jeff Samz, CEO
Huntsville Hospital Health System