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For Immediate Release

Memorial Hermann Joins the Healthcare Anchor Network; Increases Investment in Community to Address Housing, Employment and Other Social Determinants of Health

HOUSTON (Oct. 25, 2021) – As one of the largest employers and the largest healthcare provider in Greater Houston, [Memorial Hermann Health System](https://www.memorialhermann.org) proudly announces it is expanding its commitment and efforts to support some of the area’s most vulnerable communities through a multi-million dollar investment that will focus on housing instability, food insecurity, transportation, access to health care, income, and employment in neighborhoods in Southwest Houston and Greater Heights.

As a system, Memorial Hermann already contributes more than \$410 million annually through supporting the uninsured and underinsured, school-based health centers, neighborhood health centers, community resource centers, park revitalization projects, mental health crisis clinics and more.

Through an initial investment of an additional \$10 million, the system aims to make an even greater impact within the neighborhoods of Greater Houston by venturing into a new community effort: addressing essential needs such as housing and employment. Looking forward, Memorial Hermann is actively pursuing opportunities to continue investing in these efforts.

“We have a huge footprint in these neighborhoods, and we want to see them thrive and we want to see our vision of healthier communities come to reality,” said Dr. David Callender, President and CEO of Memorial Hermann. “When we say we are creating healthier communities now and for generations to come, we mean that we want to impact social determinants of health, target communities in need, and provide financial and social impact returns. This focus on social and economic factors will be a turning point for ultimately improving community health.”

Joining more than 65 leading hospitals and health systems throughout the U.S., Memorial Hermann’s latest initiative leverages the “Anchor Mission” model championed by the [Healthcare Anchor Network](#), a growing national collaboration of health systems building more inclusive and sustainable local economies.

At its core, the Anchor Mission model is built upon a belief that sustainable community health can only be achieved by meeting essential needs and addressing factors that affect social determinants of health. Healthcare anchor institutions can improve residents’ financial security, strengthen the local economic ecosystem, and address the community conditions that drive poor health outcomes. Memorial Hermann’s decision to join the Healthcare Anchor Network is part of the system’s ongoing commitment to further build upon its equity, diversity and inclusion efforts and the understanding that it serves different communities with varied social, economic and health needs.

“Each year, Memorial Hermann invests millions back into our community, but we want to take this a step further and align our resources with these neighborhoods through an intentional and comprehensive program that can help us achieve sustainable health improvements,” said Carol Paret,

SVP and Chief Community Health Officer for Memorial Hermann. “We have a large physical footprint, a huge employee base, and millions in investment dollars—and we want to use these resources to benefit neighborhoods and improve lives.”

Building on the foundation of four intersecting pillars—access to health care, emotional wellbeing, food as health, and exercise as medicine—[Memorial Hermann’s Community Benefits Corporation](#), a dedicated program focused on transforming population health, works year-round on initiatives to improve the overall quality of life in communities throughout the area.

As an Anchor Institution for the Greater Heights and Southwest Houston areas, Memorial Hermann will focus on four key initiatives:

1. Hiring individuals who live in these specific communities
2. Key investments in these neighborhoods, including in housing and food insecurity programs
3. Mindful purchasing from local businesses to further support the local economy and infrastructure
4. Leveraging the system’s 29,000+ employees as a volunteer force to positively impact neighborhoods and communities

“We have already examined some of our hiring strategies and are beginning to implement changes that we hope will directly impact individuals and families in these zip codes,” Paret said. “For example, we are re-examining whether a high school diploma is really required for some entry-level roles, such as a Patient Care Assistant. We are also working with community colleges to help people earn a certificate to be a Patient Care Assistant or get the skills needed to be a Surgical Technician.”

In the Southwest and Greater Heights areas, Memorial Hermann set a 10 percent hiring increase goal for the first year and has already achieved a 15 percent growth. Paret said her team is also working to establish scholarships in addition to tuition reimbursement options, which will further expand access to these career opportunities.

In addition, Memorial Hermann will be investing in local infrastructure, including affordable housing in these same zip codes. Through impact investing strategies, Memorial Hermann will work to improve living and working conditions to advance health equity and bolster the foundation of good health. The system is also re-evaluating its procurement strategies, sourcing locally for goods and services, including landscaping needs, produce, baked goods and more.

“When people can earn a living wage and make enough money for decent housing, food or clothing, their health is improved monumentally,” Paret said. “Even more, if you purchase locally, you can help businesses grow, which allows them to hire more people in the community—as they strengthen, so does the community and so does their health.”

Volunteers made up from Memorial Hermann’s 29,000-strong workforce will further strengthen these neighborhoods through service projects designed in collaboration with key stakeholders in the community.

Through this multi-pronged approach, Memorial Hermann hopes to serve as a literal anchor, helping to close the economic, racial and health disparity gaps that prevent the creation of healthier communities—both today and for generations to come.

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