Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation, Citizens Bank Take Active Role in Fighting Food Insecurity

MetroHealth’s new Food as Medicine pilot program and food clinic would not have been possible without the support of two key organizations who see the value in the combined strength of MetroHealth and the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

The Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation awarded a two-year grant of $78,618 to support the program. Addressing access to healthy food directly relates to the foundation’s mission of improving the health and well-being of the Jewish and general communities.

“MetroHealth continues to push the envelope in providing high-quality care to Cleveland’s most vulnerable people,” said Mitchell Bank, president of the Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation. “What’s perhaps most exciting is the opportunity to link the outcomes of this population health effort with the evolution of clinical practice.”

The overlapping legacies of Mt. Sinai Hospital (later Mt. Sinai Medical Center, which closed in 2000) and MetroHealth is just one reason why the Food as Medicine partnership makes sense, said Daniel Cohen, Mt. Sinai’s vice president of Strategy. “Mt. Sinai has always been interested in expanding access to health care services to people who have been excluded,” he said. “In so many ways, MetroHealth picks up where Mt. Sinai left off.

“What excites us the most is looking at areas of leverage for continued health and care transformation that focus on primary disease prevention. That is, health before care,” Cohen said. “That’s what Food as Medicine is all about.”

The first of two $25,000 contributions from Citizens Bank came in 2017 when Food as Medicine was merely an idea. Fighting hunger is one of the priorities of Citizens Helping Citizens, the company’s philanthropic initiative. Through the initiative, Citizens Bank provided 3.9 million meals to people in need through local food banks and other hunger programs across the company’s footprint.

“Our Citizens Helping Citizens Fight Hunger program, we are dedicated to reducing food insecurity in our local communities,” said Ralph Della Ratta, the Ohio market president of Citizens Bank who was on hand to celebrate the food clinic’s official opening on September 19.

“The Food as Medicine program and on-site pantry makes the critical connection between hunger and health,” he said. “Citizens Bank is proud to support this innovative way to address the issue of food insecurity while also improving the health of the community.”

On September 19, with significant financial support from Citizens Bank and The Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation, MetroHealth began operating the Food as Medicine clinic on the first floor of the Outpatient Plaza on MetroHealth’s main campus. It is part of a pilot program designed to address the problem of food insecurity.

Food as Medicine will initially enroll 100 patients, all of whom have screened positive for food insecurity at the time they are discharged from a hospital stay, who have a primary care provider at MetroHealth, and who have hard-to-control diabetes, heart failure, hypertension and/or acute exacerbation of heart failure.

Food insecurity is defined as not having reliable access to a sufficient amount of affordable, nutritious food. Cuyahoga County has the highest number of food insecure residents and children in Ohio, one of 14 states with a food insecurity rate higher than the national average.

This is how Food as Medicine works: Patients will receive a food prescription before they leave the hospital. That prescription covers two visits a month to the clinic, where they can select a two- to three-day supply of healthful food for their household, at no cost.

The clinic is stocked with shelf-stable staples such as whole grains, healthy canned fruits, vegetables and proteins as well as fresh frozen produce and low-fat dairy. The Greater Cleveland Food Bank is the primary source of inventory for the clinic, says Patricia McDaniel, director of Food & Nutrition Services. “Even though we’re getting good pricing, food is the main expense of the program.” Inventory will vary from week to week, but will always have at least two choices available in each food group.

Open on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays with varying morning and afternoon hours, the clinic is run by Ellen McGlade, recently hired as Food as Medicine program supervisor. She determines what foods correspond to a patient’s dietary needs and provides additional nutrition education.

Volunteers are also essential to the clinic’s operation. They help patients “shop” for the best food selections based on their prescriptions, then pack the groceries in reusable shopping bags. If needed, patients also receive a bus or parking pass, and help scheduling an appointment with a registered dietitian.

In planning for the Food as Medicine clinic, MetroHealth sent a team to Promedica Toledo Hospital, whose Food Clinic opened in 2015. It is often cited as a national model.

MetroHealth is not only screening for food insecurity, it is tracking patient health outcomes as well, says Jennifer Bier, manager of Ambulatory Nutrition. Working with the Food as Medicine initiative are physicians James Mack, MD, and Shari Bolen, MD. Patients who screen positive for food insecurity, but do not meet the additional diagnoses criteria, will be referred to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank for help applying for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits and locating nearby programs and produce distributions.

The goals of Food as Medicine are:

- Improve providers’ ability to identify patients who experience food insecurity.
- Improve the Greater Cleveland Food Bank’s goal of distributing more food to those in need and understanding its impact on health.
- Measure impact of decreasing food insecurity on chronic health conditions.
- Measure impact of decreasing food insecurity on health care utilization and costs of care.
- People have to make decisions daily about where to put their resources,” McDaniel says. “It’s not always that easy to buy fresh fruit or vegetables if you have a utility bill to pay. You can get more for your dollar with a less nutritionally dense food. Food as Medicine removes barriers to healthier food access.”

If you are interested in making a gift to the Food as Medicine program, please contact Kathy Plummer, Director of Foundation Giving, at 440-862-1380 or kplummer@metrohealth.org.
Redefining the Word ‘Survivor’

When Andrea Hope Rubin stepped onto the stage at GALA 2018 on October 6, 2018, to receive flowers from MetroHealth President and CEO Akram Boutros, MD, FACHE, nearly 600 people gave her a sustained standing ovation. Twice.

They had just viewed a short video recounting Andrea’s story and her subsequent five-month stay at MetroHealth’s Burn Center and months of rehabilitation and recovery at the MetroHealth Rehabilitation Institute of Ohio at the MetroHealth Old Brooklyn Health Center.

Andrea’s story began dramatically one night in October 2014 when she shifted back and forth between forward and reverse, trying to rock her car out of the ditch it had gotten trapped in.

Andrea doesn’t remember what happened after that, not the car catching fire, not rescue workers pulling her free, not Metro Life Flight helicoptering her to our Level I Adult Trauma Center or doctors and nurses caring for the third- and fourth-degree burns that covered more than 50 percent of her body.

The MetroHealth burn team had never seen facial burns as bad as Andrea’s. Not on anyone who had survived. Her ears, right eye lid and parts of her nose and scalp were burned away. She spent weeks in a coma, months more in rehab and has endured more than 50 surgeries.

Andrea has redefined the word survivor.

One of Andrea’s greatest fears about sharing her story, she said, was that people would only think of it as sad or tragic. “But that’s not what my story is about,” she said. “My story is one of hope. It’s a story of love and gratitude. It’s a story of incredible transformation and determination in so many different ways.”

Instead of talking about herself, Andrea chose to focus on the team of people who made it possible for her to be alive today.

“Tonight, I’m here to talk about the unparalleled determination of the Burn Team at MetroHealth who are, in every sense of the word, my family — my friends.”

She credits that team, the people who treated not only her physical needs but the ensuing psychological and emotional trauma.

Because of the care she received at MetroHealth, Andrea says she’s the best version of herself that she has ever been.

“Today I decided to let go of all of my sadness and fear of all that I had lost — and choose instead to embrace all that I still have — my entire world changed,” she said. “I am truly living my best life yet.”

Go to https://bit.ly/2QDSmdv to watch a video about Andrea and her recovery. To learn more about how you can help support The MetroHealth Transformation in a meaningful way, please contact Kate Brown, President of The MetroHealth Foundation, at kbrown@metrohealth.org or (216) 778-7509.

Thank you to everyone who supported GALA 2018 and GALA AFTERDARK with your attendance, sponsorship and generous donations. GALA 2018 raised nearly $1.2 million for The MetroHealth Transformation.

And to all of our valued sponsors, guests and supporters.
Year-End Giving Can Make a Big Impact

A gift to The MetroHealth Foundation of appreciated stock you have held for more than one year can be more beneficial to you than a cash gift. You can take a charitable deduction for the stock’s fair market value on the day you give it away. You also will avoid capital gains taxes on the increase in value over time, which you might have paid if you sold the stock and then made a cash donation. Should you choose to make a gift through the transfer of stock — thank you! — here is our specific information:

Broker: KeyBank
DTC: #2205
Account #219073

The MetroHealth Foundation, Inc
2590 MetroHealth Drive
Cleveland, OH 44109

Tax identification number: 34-660795

If you would, please let us know when you transfer stock.
Contact Michelle Wood at 440-582-1388 or mwood@metrohealth.org.

Also, if you are older than 70 1/2 and have a retirement account with a minimum distribution (RMD), a gift to The MetroHealth Foundation from your retirement account counts toward your RMD for the year but is not included in your adjusted gross income. This can provide tax relief on your RMD and is a great way of supporting MetroHealth!

Open Table Comes to MetroHealth

In April 2018, MetroHealth adopted the Open Table model designed to address relational and economic poverty. MetroHealth has committed to 15 Tables over the course of a year, each with anywhere from 6-12 volunteer members who will share their professional expertise, their network of colleagues and friends, and their knowledge. For one full year each table will meet each week to work collectively to help an individual or local family living in our West 25th Street neighborhood, or one of our patients or employees in need of support. MetroHealth is the first health system in the country to adopt the model that is typically used by churches and businesses.

Four Tables will launch this fall. The remaining Tables are planned for late winter and spring 2019.

If you are interested in sponsoring one of the Tables, please contact Eduardo Munoz at opentable@metrohealth.org. More information on the program is available at www.metrohealth.org/opentable.

Stay up to date with The MetroHealth Transformation at metrohealth.org/transformation

New Staff Members

Lauren M. Gulley, Gift Officer: Lauren earned a bachelor’s degree from The University of Toledo and an executive certificate in Nonprofit Management from Georgetown University. She most recently served as the Annual Fund Manager at Sibley Memorial Hospital.

Steve Ostronetzki, Corporate Officer: Steve earned a bachelor’s degree from Ohio State University. He has worked in fundraising in various capacities at several organizations, including the Cleveland Clinic and the former Horseshoe Casino Cleveland.

Carol Green, Data Assistant: Carol returned to the Foundation and System Philanthropy Department after five years as a staffing specialist in Academic Medicine. She joined MetroHealth in 2011 as a development assistant.

New Board Leadership and New Board Directors

Brian M. O’Neill, chair of The MetroHealth Foundation Board of Directors. O’Neill is chair of the Business Department of the law firm of Tucker Ellis LLP, which comprises all of the firm’s business and transactional lawyers. He joined the firm in 2012. He is a graduate of Ohio State University and Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. O’Neill has been a member of the Foundation Board since 2009. He was elected chair during the Foundation’s annual meeting on May 31, 2018.

Jon W. Grace, partner at the law firm of Kuhman Jackson & Krantz. He is a graduate of Miami University and Case Western Reserve University School of Law.

Joseph Hanna, MD, chair of Neuroradiology at MetroHealth and an associate professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Dr. Hanna joined MetroHealth in 1996.

Jay Lucarelli, president and CEO of Minute Maid Staffing and HR Services. His civic involvement includes being a member of the Cayuga Community College Foundation Board of Directors.

James E. Misak, MD, vice chair of Community and Population Health in the Department of Family Medicine at MetroHealth and an assistant professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Dr. Misak joined MetroHealth in 1990.

Kathryn Teng, MD, division director, General Internal Medicine and Community Medicine at MetroHealth and an associate professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Dr. Teng joined MetroHealth in 2015.

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Thank you to everyone who advanced MetroHealth’s mission of improving the health of the community by organizing, sponsoring or attending a fundraising event in 2018.

The Delta Delta Delta Cleveland West Side Alumnae Chapter Mad for Metro fundraiser.
10th Annual Hy-5 Race, Hyland’s annual 5K run and 1-mile walk
American Cruisers’ 26th annual MetroHealth Burn Center Car Show
4th Annual NICU Benefit Golf Outing organized by the DiMarino family
2nd Annual Resiliency Run
3rd Annual Steve Dohm Dice Motorcycle Run organized by Ginell Santavicca
7th Annual Altieri Memorial Golf Outing
5th Annual Raising the N.E.T.’s Volleyball Tournament
5th Annual Marc Kiszak Memorial Golf Outing organized by the Kiszak family

20th Annual John A. Gannon Memorial Golf Tournament
Major sponsors: Boyd Watterson
Ohio Council of Community Schools
Zenith Systems

Inaugural John Patrick Carey Foundation Golf Outing
23rd Annual Central Basin Bass Club Tournament

More than 250 people supported the second annual
Resiliency Run, held Saturday, June 23, 2018, at
MetroHealth’s main campus. The 5K Run and 1-Mile
Walk raised money for the John A. Gannon
Trauma Center and the Comprehensive Burn Care
Center at MetroHealth.

A special thank you to the event sponsors:

Courage Sponsor: Donley’s Inc.
Forward Sponsor: Mark Kalina, Jr. Foundation
Dream Sponsors: Drs. Anjay and Cathleen Khandelwal
Bravo Wellness
Forward Sponsor: Cleveland Water