Since our humble beginnings in 1919, Houston Methodist has been there to serve its community. While much has changed — our mission remains the same: to offer our neighbors the best health care possible in a spiritual environment of healing.

Houston Methodist has grown from a small community hospital to a leading academic medical center with eight community hospitals and a renowned research institute serving one of the largest cities in the United States.

While this has been another successful year for Houston Methodist, when I look back at 2017, our response to Hurricane Harvey will be what stands out the most. This unprecedented storm ravaged our city, left thousands homeless and caused billions of dollars of damage. Houston may have bent as a result of the torrential rain and floodwaters — but we refused to break. Our city’s spirit was evident in our hospitals where staff members worked long hours to ensure patients continued to receive much needed care. Many of these physicians, nurses and staff lost their own homes or cars, but continued to come serve our patients.

Many have adopted the phrase “Houston Strong” to speak of the character of this community. Our strength comes from our willingness to step up when we are needed and to face whatever challenges come our way. Whether Houston Methodist is treating the mind by supporting access to mental health care services, caring for the body through exceptional treatment and access, or being a part of the spirit of our city and doing all we can to help our community recover from natural disasters, we are proud to do our part to build a stronger, healthier Houston.
People expect exceptional care when they come to Houston Methodist, but I think what surprises them most is the extent to which Houston Methodist invests time, effort and care through substantial on-the-ground services in the community. We have continued to deepen our roots in the Greater Houston community by expanding and enriching our services through initiatives designed to tackle some of the greatest health issues our city faces.

A major health issue facing our community is the need to reduce barriers to accessing specialty care. We are proud of the expansion of the Community Scholars Program, designed to give our clinical fellows and residents the opportunity to learn while extending specialty care into underserved populations. Examples of expanded care provided through the program include urogynecology at El Centro de Corazón, cardiology at Denver Harbor Clinic and many others spread among community clinics around Houston.

In an effort to tackle the need for accessing primary care services, we launched the Community Network of Care. Through this program, we are able to connect patients with quality medical homes located in the patients’ community for primary care services following hospital discharge.

To help address the mental health crisis affecting our community, Houston Methodist invested $1 million via the Mental Health Innovation Grant to encourage nonprofits to develop innovative ways to promote the importance of behavioral health care among underserved communities.

Our work on behalf of the community is why we are proud of our community mantra of “Beyond Our Hospital Walls.”

Cathy Easter
Senior Vice President
Community Development

Building a Community of Care

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At Houston Methodist, we are dedicated to serving the needs of our Greater Houston community. Through our annual community health needs assessment, we identify factors that help reduce the social, economic and health struggles of our neighbors in Houston. This knowledge allows us to focus on strategic support in targeted areas that will benefit the most and develop community outreach programs with state and local groups to make sure residents get the care they need.

Houston Methodist prioritized the following initiatives:

- Increase access to **primary care services** for the surrounding community
- Reduce barriers to accessing **specialty care services** for the surrounding underserved community
- Promote **healthy living behaviors** that reduce the likelihood of chronic disease development
- Increase access to **mental health care services** within Houston Methodist Hospital’s surrounding underserved community

The estimated population of Greater Houston is **6.8 Million**

Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, Waller and Wharton counties

U.S. Census Bureau

Harris County is the largest county in Texas with estimated population of **4.6 Million** residents

U.S. Census Bureau

Statistics based on the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment conducted by Houston Methodist.
Houston is considered the most populous city in the south and the 4th most populous city in the United States.

- More than 90 languages are spoken throughout the Houston area.

- An estimated 15.2% smoking rate in Texas as of 2017.

- An estimated 11.4% of Texas diabetes prevalence as of 2017.

- 21.1% of Harris County residents were uninsured and 19.1% in the state of Texas.

- 3 leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer & stroke.

- 16.6% Harris County persons live in poverty in 2016.

- 17.2% Wharton County persons in poverty in 2016.

- 29.5% of Texas adults engage in no leisure-time physical activity as of 2016.

- 15.9% state of Texas persons in poverty.
Counseling Program Helps Trauma Victims Rebuild Emotional and Mental Health

The effects of domestic and sexual violence and abuse are not only physical. Survivors suffer emotional trauma that can often take years of counseling to overcome.

“I never thought I would be able to get past the intense pain I experienced related to my childhood sexual trauma,” said Jane*, a counseling client at Houston Area Women’s Center (HAWC).

Understanding the need to integrate physical and emotional healing for their clients, HAWC created the Psychotherapy Program to take a holistic approach to caring for victims of abuse. The Houston Methodist Mental Health Innovation (MHI) grant got the program off the ground and allowed the center to expand its counseling capabilities for clients who have experienced trauma.

The MHI grant was created in 2016 in response to the growing mental health needs and financial gaps that exist in behavioral health funding. MHI encourages agencies to try new approaches to addressing mental health care needs and fosters an environment for collaboration. In 2016, Houston Methodist awarded Houston Area Women’s Center a grant of $100,000. In 2017, Houston Methodist was able to renew this support.

“The center was first awarded the Mental Health Innovation Grant in 2016. With it, we were able to offer psychotherapy services to clients for the first time,” said Rebecca White, president and CEO of the Houston Area Women’s Center. “This therapy helps those who have been through trauma and require more intensive therapy than supportive counseling.”

In the first year of the grant, HAWC provided psychotherapy services to over 150 people. With the second award in 2017, they hired a second psychotherapist. These professionals have helped change the lives of more than 500 clients since the program began.

“We are so grateful to Houston Methodist for helping us bring best practices in mental health to clients who need and deserve them,” White said. “We look forward to helping others heal.”

“An incredibly caring therapist helped me process, refile and reframe negative thoughts and feelings I had been carrying around for decades,” said Jane. “I now feel so much freer to experience joy in my life.”

HEALING BEYOND COPING SKILLS
Psychotherapy is different from supportive counseling. “I describe these services in relationship to a house,” explained Laura Zavala-Membreno, MEd, LPC, a psychotherapist at HAWC. “Supportive

Soul of Service

Many in our Houston community face financial challenges. As health care providers and employees who support patient care in various ways, the Houston Methodist family remains committed to building a healthier Houston by supporting area nonprofits that provide direct medical care to those in our community without the means to pay for it.

Our community benefits grant program is providing more than $4.4 million in 2017 to support organizations providing direct access to health care, diabetes care, prenatal care, dental services, and nutrition and preventive care through direct and in-kind funding.

During 2016, more than 127,000 patients received health care services through these grants, including more than 780,000 patient visits. Delivering world-class medical care to our region’s underserved is just one way Houston Methodist cares for the mind, body and soul of our community.
counseling provides the foundation — the safety and stability. For clients, this means developing essential coping skills. Once that foundation is established, clients can begin psychotherapy.

“Psychotherapy involves evidence-based, one-on-one therapy, specifically eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) and cognitive processing therapy (CPT). Both approaches follow a specific, proven protocol to help clients manage and resolve trauma and shift unhelpful thoughts and beliefs. Most clients see rapid improvement with these interventions, even those who have been involved in traditional talk therapy for years without change.”

**COMPASSIONATE CARE**
Zavala-Membreno offers psychotherapy in the HAWC’s nonresidential facility. Clients typically meet with her once a week, and most are in therapy between four and eight months.

“Most clients who come to us for psychotherapy are living and working in the community but may not have the ability to access these services elsewhere,” said Lisa Levine, LCSW, HAWC clinical director. “With this grant, we are able to provide this specialized therapy at no cost.”

HAWC’s other psychotherapist works with clients in the shelter.

“Many of the people in the shelter have different needs,” explained Levine. “They are in transition and need to establish a foundation of safety and coping skills before they are ready for more intense therapy. A psychotherapist is there to assess their needs and provide the level of support appropriate when they are ready.”

**HOPE AND HEALING**
HAWC’s supportive counselors refer clients to the psychotherapy program. The mission is to give them hope and help them heal.

“It’s important for people to know that it is never too late to begin to heal from trauma. It doesn’t matter what an individual is going through or how long it’s been,” explained Zavala-Membreno. “Help is available from trained professionals who understand.”

The MHI Grant will enter its third year in 2018 as Houston Methodist continues its efforts to provide access to those most in need in the community.

“Client’s name has been changed to protect her privacy.”

**NEED HELP?**
Call the Houston Area Women’s Center’s Domestic Violence Hotline at 713.528.2121 or Rape Crisis Hotline at 713.528.7273.
For people with health insurance, it can be easy to take specialty medical care for granted. But for those who live in poverty, a serious health issue becomes an overwhelming crisis due to lack of funds or access to specialists whose care can dramatically improve or save lives. But Houston Methodist has been working to change that through the Community Scholars Program.

“I am very thankful for the cardiology program at Denver Harbor Family Clinic, because otherwise it would be very hard for me to have access to this type of care,” said Cayetano Araujo, who receives cardiology services there. “I have been a patient of the clinic for a long time, so having the services at a place that I know and trust at an affordable price means a lot.”

Houston Methodist’s residents and fellows, supervised by attending faculty, offer specialized care through clinical rotations in community health clinics as part of their training. “Not only does the Community Scholars Program provide a level of expertise that is not available in these communities, but it also allows our residents and fellows to experience a different side of care,” said Trevor Burt, vice president of education administration at Houston Methodist Research Institute.

SERVING THE UNDERSERVED
Because of the Endowment for Specialty Care for the Medically Underserved, funded by The Cullen Foundation, Houston Methodist was able to create the Community Scholars Program in 2013. The program quickly grew thanks to additional support from the Occidental Petroleum Corp., Houston Methodist operational support and other donations.

The program first began providing neurology services to patients in the San Jose Clinic. Since then, it has partnered with four other community-based clinics. Nine medical specialties participate in the program, providing nonsurgical care in cardiology, hematology-oncology, endocrinology, neurology, urogynecology, urology, nephrology, ophthalmology and pulmonology. For many people in underserved areas, the program offers a level of care they’ve never experienced.

“About 80 percent of people who come to our clinic for primary care are the working poor who don't have insurance,” explained Daniel Montez, CEO of Vecino Health Centers, who first started the Denver Harbor Health Clinic out of a neighborhood cantina. “With the Community Scholars Program, our patients now have access to cardiology services as well — one of this population's greatest specialty needs.”

DID YOU KNOW? Difficulty leaving work, obtaining child care, obtaining transportation and inadequate insurance are the main barriers the underserved experience when seeking out specialty care.
A Holistic Approach
In the East End

For women living in the east end community, pelvic floor problems diminish their quality of life. Because pelvic floor muscles support the bladder and other organs, these issues can cause incontinence, pain and other chronic problems that can be embarrassing for patients to discuss. It’s estimated that about 25 percent of the women in Harris County have a pelvic floor disorder. The Community Scholars Program now makes specialty care available at the east end’s El Centro de Corazón clinic to these local women who might otherwise suffer in silence.

“Since July 2017, urogynecology residents and fellows from Houston Methodist have made rotations in our clinic, providing care for women with these common, but often untreated, problems,” explained Marcie Mir, LCSW, CEO of El Centro de Corazón. The clinic expects to treat about 40 patients in the urogynecology program by the end of 2017.

“The east end is one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city with more than 70 percent of residents living far below the poverty level,” said Mir. “It’s an amazing opportunity to offer this type of care here in their medical home.”

Tristi Muir, MD, urogynecology program director and faculty member who travels to El Centro de Corazón with the fellows, believes in treating the whole woman.

“Chronic incontinence or bladder issues affect far more than just the physical. Women who suffer from these problems often are embarrassed, become socially withdrawn and are at risk for depression,” she said. “By treating the physical problem, we improve their emotional and spiritual health as well.”
The Gift of Life

When Gloria Amaro walked into the clinic for her annual mammogram, she didn’t know that her life was about to change. She hadn’t brought her husband, of course, because she had had years of normal results and expected the same this year.

Instead, she heard something altogether different — breast cancer. Additional tests that day confirmed the diagnosis. Alone at the appointment, she was overcome with worry. What would happen to her? To her family? Her two children? But Gloria had more than just breast cancer to worry about. Without health insurance, she also didn’t have the financial means to get the specialists and lifesaving health care she needed.

“I was very frightened and not sure what to do,” she said.

Staff at the imaging center where Amaro received her diagnosis provided a list of health care organizations that might offer assistance, but after four months of denials, she had still not started treatment. Finally, a nurse referred her to a Houston Methodist oncology team.

EXPERT CARE WITH COMPASSION

Once connected with Houston Methodist, Amaro began receiving expert care without regard for ability to pay. She underwent a breast MRI, and her team of medical and surgical oncologists studied her case to determine whether breast-conserving surgery or mastectomy would be necessary. Amaro also met with a genetic counselor and was tested for the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genetic mutations to determine what therapies would be most effective.

“Breast cancer is many, many different diseases, and each one requires different sequences of therapy tailored to that particular patient,” said Dr. Barbara Bass, the breast surgeon who performed Amaro’s mastectomy in June 2016.

The more than five-hour surgery also included reconstructive surgery in which tissue from Amaro’s stomach was used to rebuild her breast. The tissue flap procedure, performed by plastic surgeon Dr. Jeffrey Friedman, is much more complex than reconstruction with a breast implant. Many hospitals cannot offer the latest advances in this procedure because it involves newer vascular microsurgery techniques.

“This is a more technically challenging operation, but we have a great deal of skill and experience in this procedure,” said Friedman, chief of the Reconstructive Surgery Division at Houston Methodist Hospital. “The important thing is for the patient to make a decision that’s right for her so she can have confidence when she goes out into the world and not feel like she’s different because she’s had breast cancer.”

WHOLE PATIENT CARE

The total cost of Amaro’s treatment topped $122,000, which was covered by Houston Methodist’s charity care program. Each year, the program provides more than $175 million in annual charitable assistance to patients as part of the system's focus on compassion, respect and giving back to the community. Patients who benefit from the program include those whose income is below federal poverty guidelines as well as those who may earn more but are unable to afford medical bills when a costly condition strikes.

Now, Amaro only requires a daily dose of the breast cancer drug tamoxifen.

In addition to being grateful for the financial assistance that allowed her to receive world-class treatment and return to caring for her husband and kids, Amaro is thankful for the kindness she experienced.

“From beginning to the end, the care and service I received were excellent,” she said.

Houston Methodist is always there for patients. They provide support beyond the physical need of patient care to understand and support the patient and the patient’s family.”

— Gloria Amaro, patient
Medical Homes: Keeping Patients Healthy

More than 100,000 people are admitted each year to Houston Methodist, and many of those admissions could have been prevented if patients had access to primary care homes. A new program, the Community Network of Care, aims to reduce that number by connecting vulnerable patients with medical homes and the doctors they need to stay well.

Houston Methodist’s strong partnerships with community-based health care clinics through the Network of Care Program mean that patients who are without a medical home and lack the traditional means to pay for primary care services can still leave the hospital with a follow up appointment with a primary care physician (PCP) of their choice at a convenient location.

“We want all patients to have the same dignity and access to high-quality care, regardless of their financial situation,” said Ryane Jackson, Houston Methodist’s director of community development.

Patients also can get help with transportation, food and paying for medicine through Houston Methodist’s Golden Care Ministry Program, a collaboration with faith communities. “To keep patients out of the emergency room, we have to go beyond immediate medical needs and treat the whole person,” said Dr. Charles R. Millikan, vice president of spiritual care and values integration at Houston Methodist Hospital.

Since its inception in 2016, the Network of Care Program at Houston Methodist has referred more than 800 patients to agencies, such as Legacy Community Health, Interfaith Community Clinic, and Spring Branch Community Health Center.

DID YOU KNOW? 126 of 254 counties in Texas experience limited access to primary care services.
When nurse Ludy Saint Germain saw the news of widespread flooding and road closures after her shift at Houston Methodist Hospital’s dialysis unit the night after Hurricane Harvey made landfall, she knew that meant a scramble for her colleagues at work the following day to help an influx of patients with limited staff.

When she arrived the next morning — she wasn’t scheduled but had a clear path from home to the hospital — she certainly didn’t expect to see a dozen of her colleagues preparing for a full schedule of patients on a Sunday, when there is normally only an on-call and backup nurse assigned and few patients. They had all spent the night from their shift Saturday and were preparing to treat inpatient cases to make room — and time — for the urgent cases they knew would come.

This scenario played out across Houston Methodist when Harvey reached the city overnight Aug 25. As the hurricane parked itself over the city, flooding low-lying areas of the city and cutting off much of the hospital staff from their own homes, the health care professionals and staff at Houston Methodist’s eight hospitals kept their doors open to emergency and specialty care patients who needed care.

And in return, the community came to our aid — with offers of shelter and food so we could continue caring for patients despite the disaster, in the true spirit of “Houston Strong.”

Every day brought new challenges — from Friday’s hurricane winds, to Sunday’s catastrophic rain, to the controlled flooding and mandatory evacuations midweek — but all eight Houston Methodist locations remained operational thanks to employees who were either already positioned at our facilities or braved flooded streets to voluntarily report for work.

Every department found ways to triage patients, expedite lab processing, help employees get home from and return to work safely so they could care for their own families, and in countless ways support those who rode it out for as long as four- or five-day stretches.

Employees from across the organization served food, did housekeeping and even set up a temporary day care center for staff children so that caregivers could do their jobs. Donations of toilet kits that were waiting to be delivered to a local clinic became the bare essentials for staff in makeshift sleeping arrangements throughout the hospital’s conference and meeting room spaces. They came together in a way no team-building simulation at a department meeting could do.

“We have an incredibly selfless group of doctors, nurses and staff who gave their all and a community that responded in kind,” said Dr. Marc L. Boom, president and CEO of Houston Methodist. “Houston can be proud of how residents came together during a time of need.”

When staff needed a break, the community came through.

While floodgates installed after Tropical Storm Allison kept Houston Methodist Hospital’s main campus in the Texas Medical Center dry, many employees could not return home because of high water. Neighbors took in families of evacuated staff, while several restaurants donated meals for more than 1,500 Houston Methodist employees.

As we begin helping rebuild our city, Houston Methodist is also helping employees who were affected by Harvey. More than $7 million was made available for financial support as well as programs to connect employees to vital resources as they work to get back to normal.

While our work is not over, Houston Methodist and our employees can be proud of how we worked alongside our neighbors to weather the storm together.
Hurricane Harvey flooded the Greater Houston community after reaching the area Aug. 25.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Hurricane Harvey damaged 203,000 homes and caused $180 billion in damage. That’s projected to be more than any other natural disaster in U.S. history.

Helping the Helpers

When the threat of Hurricane Harvey became a reality, one fundamental truth about Houston rose above the floodwaters: Our community comes together to help one another.

For the Houston Methodist staff and health care providers who committed to treating patients throughout the storm, a simple phone call — which led to a Facebook post by a caring community member — was all the message neighbors needed to come to our aid during this critical time.

More than 80 offers flowed in from community members willing to feed Houston Methodist employees who not only had been working nonstop but were continuing to care for patients without regard to the state of their own homes. Restaurants such as Escalante’s - Meyerland, Brennan’s of Houston, Chick-fil-A, Jason’s Deli and many others selflessly donated food, which served a morale boost during those anxious few days.

“We knew that hospital employees needed a good meal — one that revives you physically and lifts your spirits as well,” said Kopi Vogiatzis, co-owner of Escalante’s.

Escalante’s sent enough food to feed more than 500 people. Brennan’s of Houston sent jambalaya, red beans and rice, turtle soup and other delicacies for more than 1,500 employees, according to Martin Weaver, Brennan’s executive sous chef.

“We wanted to help, and the best way we knew how was by cooking,” Weaver said.

For caregivers who couldn’t leave their patients to join the lunch line, their colleagues took care of them by bringing food upstairs, sometimes heaping it family-style onto plates for sharing on the unit floors.

Despite the overwhelming challenges of caring for patients during a natural disaster, our Houston neighbors ensured our caregivers could do this vital work with full bellies and full hearts.
“Beyond Our Hospital Walls” is the mantra that has guided Houston Methodist’s I CARE in Action Program since its inception in 2012. The program allows employees time off to give back to charitable agencies in the city and serves as a reminder when they leave the hospital walls to carry the commitment to helping others with them. Whether building a home for a family or feeding community members who might otherwise go hungry, Houston Methodist employees are living proof of the adage that when you give, you get more in return from simply helping others.

Houston Methodist employees are easy to spot — they proudly volunteer in their signature red I CARE shirts, which symbolize the pledge to serve beyond our hospital walls. Volunteers hail from across the Houston Methodist family, from executive leadership and health care professionals to information technology and everyone in between.

After five years, I CARE in Action boasts a team of more than 7,000 employee volunteers. Those employees have given more than 3,000 hours of their time to more than 30 charitable organizations in and around Houston.

** DID YOU KNOW? ** The estimated national value of volunteer time is $24.14 per hour, which means that our employees have contributed $434,328,087 worth of volunteer time over the past five years.

** 2012 **
- Program is first rolled out
- 700 employee volunteers contribute their time in the first year

** 2013 **
- We got a new look!
- 1,300 volunteers participated

** 2014 **
- I CARE in Action Week was born! Over 200 volunteers built a house with Habitat for Humanity Houston
- Program grew to 3,000 volunteers

** 2015 **
- I CARE in Action Week took place at the Houston Food Bank to fight food insecurity in our community
- Program grew to over 4,400 volunteers

** 2016 **
- This year, I CARE in Action Week volunteers collaborated with Rebuilding Together Houston to restore homes of elderly Houstonians
- Program grew to over 6,000 volunteers

** 2017 **
- I CARE in Action Week took place with The Center-Houston. Volunteers interacted with adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities and restored the agency’s residential tower.
- Program now has over 7,200 participants!

To the future: 7,000 and counting
BEYOND OUR HOSPITAL WALLS

houstonmethodist.org/communitybenefits
SERVING THE COMMUNITY BEYOND OUR HOSPITALS.
THAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRACTICING MEDICINE AND LEADING IT.

At Houston Methodist, we know a healthy community requires strong partnerships. That’s why our commitment to world-class innovation is matched by our support of those who need it most. We work to ensure a healthier community by:

• Giving more than $5 million annually through the community benefits grant to local health-focused nonprofits
• Giving an average of $170 million annually toward providing charity care support to the underserved community
• Contributing an average of 2,500 employee volunteer hours annually to charitable agencies

Visit houstonmethodist.org/communitybenefits to learn more about how Houston Methodist serves the community.