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A Commitment to Local Investment

Newark Beth Israel's effort to source and recruit area talent is paying off.

The National Academy of Medicine defines social determinants of health as all the health-related behaviors, socioeconomic and environmental factors that impact the health outcomes of a community. The academy also notes that 80% of health outcomes are impacted by social determinants of health. That is why Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, a 665-bed regional care teaching hospital and a vital economic engine in the city of Newark, N.J., is committed not only to delivering world-class care to the patients it serves but also addressing those social determinants of health and improving the socioeconomic status of its surrounding communities.

As one of the largest employers and an anchor institution in Newark, Newark Beth Israel has been serving the city since 1901 and, specifically, the city's South Ward, which is where the organization has been located since 1928. To create a healthier community, Newark Beth Israel goes beyond what its physicians and clinical teams offer inside the hospital to address the social determinants of health for people in the community. To accomplish this endeavor, it's important that the CEO works closely with the senior leadership team to develop initiatives that address a range of social

determinants, including job creation, career advancement, local investment and procurement, and food security programs.

Hiring Local

Unemployment and underemployment are two social determinants of health that the organization has committed to addressing through local hiring, creating career development opportunities and supporting local businesses.

Working in partnership with the community relations department, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center's human resources team identifies opportunities to participate in local health and job fairs. The organization also hosts weekly open house sessions, where residents are encouraged to walk into the hospital to interview for a variety of open positions such as registered nurses, nursing assistants and roles in environmental services. In addition, Newark Beth Israel collaborates with its healthcare system, RWJBarnabas Health, the largest and most comprehensive academic healthcare system in the state of New Jersey, to participate in job fairs across greater Newark.

Newark Beth Israel Medical Center has also created initiatives to help employees advance their careers.

For example, it is partnering with Fairleigh Dickinson University, which has campuses in northern New Jersey, to offer qualified candidates a Master of Public Administration degree with a specialization in health-care management. To increase access to this program for all interested employees, the courses are offered on weeknights and on-site at the hospital. Although it is a two-year program, employees can enhance their resumes with an MPA certificate after completing the first six courses in the program.

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The Career Ladders initiative also provides Newark Beth Israel Medical Center employees with free education and training opportunities at colleges across New Jersey. Through this program, employees may earn an associate degree from an accredited New Jersey community college of their choice.

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Newark Beth Israel is also creating a pipeline for young local residents to join its team. Partnering with the city of Newark and the local high school's Allied Health Program, the organization is facilitating summer youth employment opportunities at the hospital. The program provides high school students with short-term, meaningful work assignments designed to enhance their employability skills.

Investing in the Community

Newark Beth Israel provides world-class care close to home for thousands of Newark residents. It is home to one of the nation's top 15 heart transplant centers, which has performed more than 1,100 heart transplants. It is also home to New Jersey's only advanced lung disease and transplant program and a valve center that performs complex cardiac valve procedures, including minimally invasive transcatheter aortic valve replacements.

In addition, *Newsweek* has named the organization "World's Best Hospital" five consecutive times as well as a "Best Maternity Hospital."

However, until recently, the outward, brick façade of the hospital did not truly represent the excellent care being delivered within the hospital walls.

In 2021, Newark Beth Israel embarked on a transformative expansion of its facility. Dubbed the Newark Strong Project, it is the largest investment in the facility and local community in the last 50 years. Through the project, the organization is investing \$150 million in physical improvements to support the delivery of excellent patient care and an enhanced experience for both patients and

visitors, such as a new 17,500-square-foot, glass-enclosed lobby; expanded adult and pediatric EDs; new operating rooms and cardiac catheterization labs; a new, state-of-the-art geriatric unit; and a new cardiothoracic ICU.

Furthermore, the project is also generating economic growth and creating opportunities for local, small and minority-owned businesses.

For example, the organization contracted with a construction firm committed to engaging with the community, including hiring local Newark residents and contracting with local vendors for daily lunch service and large-scale special events.

In addition, Newark Beth Israel has invested 30% of its entire investment into local businesses owned by women, minorities and veterans. In fact, all the glass in the new lobby was installed by a local women-owned business.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Newark Beth Israel and RWJBarnabas Health have also initiated several groundbreaking programs to address food insecurity.

For example, the Beth Greenhouse is the only hospital-based hydroponic greenhouse of its kind in New Jersey to offer fresh, locally grown produce to nearby residents. Hydroponic farming is a highly productive, environmentally friendly and space efficient means of farming, saving water, eliminating agricultural runoff and chemical pesticides and offering year-round food production.

The Beth Greenhouse produces more than 5,000 pounds of fresh produce

every year using a continuous flow of nutrient-rich water that is recirculated in the system. The produce is then sold at the greenhouse during a weekly farmer's market, delivered to the hospital's Women's Wellness Pantry and used to teach healthy cooking at the Reverend Dr. Ronald B. Christian Community Health and Wellness Center.

In addition to providing fresh food access, the greenhouse serves as an educational space where local schools can host field trips and community groups can offer tours.

The Women's Wellness Pantry, which Newark Beth Israel and RWJBarnabas Health opened in 2019 at the Reverend Dr. Ronald B. Christian Community Health and Wellness Center, aims to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women, new mothers and their families. The pantry provides a variety of healthy food items, fresh produce, and personal hygiene products and diapers. Families also receive health and nutrition education.

Newark Beth Israel's concerted effort to source and recruit local talent is paying off. To date, approximately one-quarter of the 3,300-employee workforce is local hires.

The organization remains committed to continued investment in its family: the employees, patients and community members who call Newark Beth Israel home. ▲

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