

2025 Annual Report to the Community



Akron
Children's



Lenora

20 months old,
Tallmadge



Dear Friends,

Our Annual Report to the Community is a testament to teamwork. It highlights how our staff members, clinical caregivers, community partners and donors come together to build a healthier future for the families we serve.

In 2025, Akron Children's invested in services and locations that made medical care more accessible. With a new Food Farmacy and mobile primary care office, we addressed social factors including food and transportation insecurity. In addition, we provided more than \$199 million in community benefit that includes nearly \$153 million in unreimbursed Medicaid and uncompensated care.

In this report, you'll learn about:

- Facility expansion that includes the new Tom and Jill Zidian Family Autism Center; Pediatric Intensive Care Unit with a dedicated heart unit on our Akron campus; Medina Health Center and multiple primary care offices.
- Industry awards that validate the exceptional patient care and workplace benefits we provide.

You'll also meet patients David and Skyy. Thanks to a growing collaboration between Akron Children's and Cincinnati Children's, cardiology specialists created a plan to save David's life before he was even born. And Skyy enjoys better health and success in school, thanks to convenient access to primary care through her school-based health center.

From expert medical care to health education and outreach programs, our work ensures more childhood for the patients we serve. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Warm regards,

Christopher A. Gessner
President and CEO
Akron Children's

Kara C. Lewis
Chair
Akron Children's Board of Directors



90% likely to recommend
patient experience



2 hospital campuses
46 primary care sites
5 leased specialty care and NICUs



~338,000 unique patients
~7,500 employees
~1,100 employed providers



Level 1
pediatric trauma center



Founded in 1890



Akron Children's at a glance

Mission: To improve the health of children, teenagers and young adults through excellence in patient care, education, research, advocacy and community partnerships.



\$1.7 billion revenue
Moody's Aa3 Fitch AA-



At-risk lives
within pediatric ACO
104,000



14 fellowship programs
52 pediatric specialties



379 beds
(registered and leased)





The Tom and Jill Zidian Family Autism Center enhances access to specialized care for families. Allison Burke, PhD, looks forward to welcoming more psychologists and mental health therapists in the center's expanded space.

New autism center improves patient care

For patients who have autism spectrum disorders, coming to Akron Children's can be loud, bright and distracting. The NeuroDevelopmental Science Center, Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics and Autism Diagnostic Clinic teams changed that experience when the new Tom and Jill Zidian Family Autism Center opened in November 2025.

The new autism center, located on the first floor of the Rebecca D. Considine Research Institute on the Akron campus, offers convenient parking and a dedicated entrance.

"We've been planning and dreaming about a new center for years," said Allison Burke, PhD, child and adolescent psychologist and director of the Akron Children's Autism Diagnostic Clinic. "We

don't have tons of bright lights and contrasting colors that can overwhelm our patients. The design includes little alcoves in the walkway for families to take a break and spaces if kids need to step out of group therapy for one-on-one time."

The larger space accommodates more caregivers, including another psychologist and mental health therapists. "Care for mental health issues like anxiety or depression is a common need among autistic individuals," Dr. Burke explained. "We have therapists within Akron Children's who have a strong

interest in working with that population — not treating their autism but their mental health needs — and these therapists are now located at the new center."

The autism center features some new services, too. "We expanded our social skills programming, adding a preschool version of the adolescent program we've been running for years," Dr. Burke said. "We're teaching 4- to 6-year-olds how to listen and follow directions; use good volume and body control; and make and keep friends."

Patients with more complex needs can get primary care such — such as sick visits and vaccines — at the autism center. "It's a collaborative effort between Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics

and Akron Children's pediatric primary care to develop this service at the new autism center," said Jessica Foster, MD, director of Akron Children's Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics. "We worked together to make behavioral health resources available at the Akron Children's Pediatrics network of offices — and now we have added primary care to the autism center. It's a truly integrated model of care, and our patients benefit from that."

“ We've been planning and dreaming about a new autism center for years.”

- Allison Burke, PhD, child and adolescent psychologist

Pediatric intensive care unit moves and adds a new heart unit

The Akron Children's Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) moved from the fourth floor of the main hospital building on the Akron campus to the sixth floor of the Kay Jewelers Pavilion. The new location modernized the unit, upgraded family amenities such as offering private bathrooms and showers within patient rooms, and added a dedicated heart unit.

"The new unit gives us a lot of room to grow and gives us flexibility if we have a surge in patients, such as during respiratory season," said Dr. Patricia Raimer, PICU medical director. "We went from 23 to 45 beds, including a 13-bed high-acuity PICU, a secondary unit that can accommodate an additional 23 patients, PICU or NICU beds, depending on the need, and the nine-bed Heart Unit."

Dr. Robert Stewart, chief of cardiothoracic surgery at Akron Children's, said the dedicated heart unit is a "win-win" for patients and caregivers alike. "A single private room for the entire hospital stay enhances the patient and family experience, whether the need is for intensive care or more convalescent care. We will adjust the appropriate level of care while the patient keeps the same room through discharge," he shared. "Equally critical, by concentrating

all heart patients in a single location, it helps us develop a highly specialized care team focused on the heart. This expertise extends from the bedside nursing team to the multidisciplinary staff and allows us to continue to grow as a center of excellence in caring for babies and children with congenital heart disease."

36 PICU beds



9 Heart Unit beds



Care teams safely transition a patient into the new Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, a modernized space featuring upgraded family amenities and nine dedicated Heart Center beds to support critically ill children.



Medina services available in one convenient location

Akron Children's consolidated three offices into a new regional health center, located inside the Summa Health Medina Medical Center at 3778 Medina Road.

"This new location allows us to better serve our communities by improving access to both primary care and highly sought-after pediatric specialists," said Dr. Shefali Mahesh, pediatrician in chief at Akron Children's. "The facility offers a convenient, easy-to-reach location and a modern, spacious environment designed for growth."

Specialty care at the Medina Health Center ranges from allergy and immunology to cardiology to orthopedics. Rehabilitative services, an outpatient lab and radiology are also available.

*(Top) Pediatrician Emma Raizman, MD, FAAP, examines Caden Johnson in the new Medina Health Center.
(Bottom) Physical therapist Jane Caprez works with patient Armonnee Pulphus on core strengthening.*



Akron Children's Pediatrics expands primary care network

In October 2025, Akron Children's opened a pediatric primary care location in Cuyahoga Falls. The new practice combined two independent Pediatrics of Akron offices — one on the Akron Children's campus and one in Cuyahoga Falls — into a single, state-of-the-art facility called Akron Children's Pediatrics, Cuyahoga Falls.

Located at 1625 Portage Trail, the new location strengthens Akron Children's commitment to providing high-quality, family-centered care.

Akron Children's Pediatrics also expanded its reach in Stark County by opening a Jackson Township office. The brand-new office — called Akron Children's Pediatrics, Jackson — has convenient parking, 24 primary care exam rooms and access to the organization's extensive network of pediatric specialists.



The new Akron Children's Pediatrics office brings high-quality care closer to families in and around Cuyahoga Falls.

Collaboration brings school-based care to Marietta and Belpre students

Akron Children's remains dedicated to investing in services to serve families in southern Ohio. Thanks to a collaboration among Akron Children's, Marietta City Schools and Belpre City Schools, students have access to a variety of pediatric-focused health services offered in their school buildings.

Akron Children's School-Based Health Center (SBHC) is one of the services offered. "With a parent's consent, a nurse practitioner can provide a wide range of medical exams and services in person or through telehealth," said Mary Schatz, clinical nurse manager of Akron Children's School Health Services.

For example, if a child experiences ear pain, the nurse practitioner examines the child's ear in the nursing office or via telehealth if the provider is at another building that day. If an ear infection is diagnosed, the provider will call in a prescription to a pharmacy, saving the child lost school time and the parent lost work time having to get the child to a doctor, urgent care or an emergency room. Insurance will be billed, or financial counseling is available for those without insurance.

"SBHC is a very successful and proven approach to keeping children healthy in the classroom," said Brad Cunningham, senior director of Primary Care and School Health at Akron Children's. "It is especially well-suited for addressing minor illnesses like coughs, colds, flu, fevers, sore throats, allergy and sinus issues, pink eye and rashes."

In addition, some schools will offer in-school appointments for annual well visits, screenings for hearing and vision, sports physicals and vaccinations. Students can be screened for anxiety and depression, and the nurse practitioner can refer to a mental health therapist if behavioral health services are needed.

"School nursing is a continuum of care committed to keeping kids healthy and ready to learn," Mary said. "It's a privilege to care for the students in Marietta and Belpre Schools."



Celebrating community heroes

The More childhood, please. Awards honor community members who dedicate their lives to advancing childhood across the 33 counties Akron Children's serves in Ohio.

The inaugural award program — held Oct. 1, 2025 — featured dinner, a performance by the Dance Unlimited all-abilities group and the presentation of 10 awards. Categories included the family impact award, Akron Children's caregiver award and business impact award, among others.

"We take great pride in helping the kids of our region grow up safe and healthy," said Chris Gessner, president and CEO of Akron Children's. "But we cannot do it alone. We wanted to formally recognize the great work of wonderful people and organizations in our communities that partner with us to put kids and families first."



Congratulations to the 2025 award winners:

Family Impact Award

Meagen, Jeff, Owen and Emma Gries

Young Leader Award

Mackenzie Roach

Akron Children's Caregiver Award

Jack Weber

Civic Champion Award

Adaptive Sports Ohio

Outstanding Media Award

Keith Kennedy

Akron Children's Advocate Award

Melody Strait

Trailblazer Award

Beth Cardina

Community Hero Award

Brian Bidlingmyer

Business Impact Award

Birthing Beautiful Communities

Akron Children's Luminary Award

Mary Leuca



All smiles at the More Childhood, please. Awards as Birthing Beautiful Communities (above) and the Gries family (below) were honored for their dedication to advancing childhood and making a lasting difference for children and families across Ohio.



Little David undergoes big heart surgeries

More than a decade ago, Akron Children's and Cincinnati Children's joined forces to provide specialized care for patients in need of kidney transplants. The relationship expanded in 2024 to include complex care for ear, nose and throat (ENT) conditions, liver disease and bone marrow transplants. In 2025, the two health systems added cardiology and cardiothoracic surgery.

Meet David

One patient who benefitted from the world-class cardiac care is David Campbell from Brimfield, Ohio. His 20-week ultrasound showed a heart defect that rendered the left side of his heart underdeveloped. His parents, Bethany and Jimmy, were crushed.

Akron Children's Heart Center cardiovascular surgeon Dr. Tara Karamlou, who serves as the joint program surgeon for the heart collaboration, met with David's parents on the day of diagnosis. "It's the worst day of your life when you get such devastating news about your baby," Bethany said. "Getting to meet with Dr. Karamlou that day and hear her optimism was amazing."

Immediate intervention

David would need a series of heart surgeries to save his life. He entered the world Aug. 2, 2025, at Summa Health in Akron. That afternoon, he had his first heart procedure at Akron Children's. The next day, he flew to Cincinnati Children's in Air Bear®, the Akron Children's medical helicopter.

At 5 days old, David had open-heart surgery in Cincinnati. Dr. David Morales, executive co-director of the Cincinnati Children's Heart Institute, and his team performed the rare Norwood procedure. They expertly reconstructed David's aorta and used a tube called a shunt to connect the neo-aorta to his lung artery, ensuring blood flowed to his lungs.

David returned to Akron Children's a few weeks after surgery to continue his recovery, and he went home in late August. "As first-time parents, Jimmy and I were happy but terrified," Bethany said. "We'd never been more than 20 feet from a medical professional since David was born. But the Heart Center team provided great guidance, giving us red flags to look for that would require a call to the cardiologist."

The Norwood procedure kept David alive until he grew enough to have a second surgery — the Glenn procedure — at Akron Children's in December 2025. Glenn is an



David is a happy and curious baby who had his first heart procedure the day he was born.

intermediate surgery for babies like David with single-ventricle heart defects. He'll have another heart surgery, called the Fontan procedure, at Akron Children's around ages 3 to 5.

Shared strength

A patient like David highlights the strength of the Akron Children's and Cincinnati Children's relationship. "It provides opportunities for collaborative learning, as we share expertise and innovative ideas," Dr. Karamlou said. "We make both programs better, and our patients receive world-class care."

For Bethany and Jimmy, they look at their son with sheer amazement. "It's been quite a journey," Bethany said. "But we rely on our faith in God and in David's doctors."

Making care and resources more accessible

Food Farmacy expands to Boardman

Akron Children's opened its second Food Farmacy in March 2025 to support patient families on the Boardman campus who screen positive for food insecurity during their medical appointments and meet income eligibility requirements. Families receive a referral to the Food Farmacy where they can select items as they would in a grocery store — choosing from fresh, nonperishable and culturally specific foods.

The Boardman campus Food Farmacy served 1,810 households in 2025, representing 8,191 individuals. The Akron campus served 7,674 households, representing 36,810 individuals.

Akron Campus



**7,674 households,
representing
36,810 individuals**

Boardman Campus



**1,810 households,
representing
8,191 individuals**



Ben Pecchia, RN, uses a pulse oximeter to check Benjamin Fields' oxygen level.

New Ronald McDonald Care Mobile® hit the road

Akron Children's launched a fully equipped mobile clinic in November 2025, donated by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northeast Ohio. Services include wellness checkups, vaccines, sick visits and specialist referrals. The Care Mobile reduces barriers to care by visiting locations throughout Mahoning, Trumbull and Columbiana counties. In 2025, the Care Mobile team cared for 50 patients at sites including schools, libraries and metropolitan housing authority sites throughout the tricounty area.



Bringing care closer to home, the mobile clinic helps reduce barriers to care throughout Mahoning Valley.

(Right) George Wallace, food pantry coordinator, helps a child fill a grocery bag at the Boardman Food Farmacy.





Lindsay Kahlenberg, DO, examines an emergency room patient while EMS and paramedic students observe.

Training tomorrow's first responders

Akron Children's clinicians — including doctors, nurses and respiratory therapists — provide training for students who are studying to become Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and paramedics.

EMT and paramedic students complete rotations in the emergency room (ER) and with respiratory therapists. In ER triage, the students take vital signs; listen to lung sounds and count respirations; initially assess pediatric patients; and interact with patients and their families. The students spend time with ER physicians to learn how and why bodies break down when someone is sick or injured. Respiratory therapists educate the students on airway differences between pediatric and adult patients, along with familiarizing the students with pediatric equipment.

Paramedic students also rotate through the Akron Children's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Adult and Pediatric Burn Institute, and Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. They learn about caring for premature babies and newborns; what happens to critically ill patients when they are admitted to the hospital; and how to assess, clean and dress wounds while managing a patient's pain.

In 2025, Akron Children's educated 58 emergency medical services students from Stark State College, 55 from Cleveland Clinic Akron General and 25 from Summa Health.

Akron Children's team offers asthma and diabetes education

Akron Children's actively participates in community initiatives that improve the health and wellness of kids and families. An example is collaboration between Akron Children's Population Health and the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA).

Certified asthma educators and a certified diabetes educator from Population Health's Chronic Care Education and Support Center, along with community health workers, offer ongoing education for the AMHA Summit Lake community. Summit Lake is the nearest AMHA property to Akron Children's, located just 2 miles from the hospital campus.

The Population Health team provided asthma education at a nearby Head Start day care center, along with AMHA and Summit Lake Touch-a-Truck events, in 2025. The education reached a total of 810 residents.

The Population Health team's education reached a total of 810 residents!

Primary care office opens at Warren G. Harding High School



Akron Children's relocated its downtown Warren pediatrics office to the Warren G. Harding High School campus in June 2025. The move enables Akron Children's to meet families where they are: at school and the student recreation and wellness center. School-based health services and an athletic trainer are also available — enabling students to receive high-quality care without leaving campus. Akron Children's had a total of 4,611 patient visits on the school campus in 2025, including primary care, school-based health and integrated behavioral health.

Nurse practitioner Mercedes Randolph, MSN, APRN-CNP, captures the attention of patient Sebastian Pierson during a checkup.



Skyy's care team includes Community Health Worker Melody Strait (left) and Certified Nurse Practitioner Allison Lantz (right).

Care team helps Skyy stay strong

Akron Children's School Health Services has School-Based Health Centers (SBHC) at 20 school districts, including Warren City Schools. SBHCs offer sick visits for minor illness, ongoing care for conditions like asthma and annual wellness checkups. For Jaelyne Edmonds and her 13-year-old daughter, Skyy Davis, the in-school healthcare provides medical resources and a safety net of emotional support.

Skyy started having health problems — strep throat, weight loss and joint pain — in the fall of 2024. She had a follow-up primary care visit. “She ended up going to the Akron Children's Emergency Room (ER) three times,” said Allison Lantz, nurse practitioner at the Warren SBHC. “Skyy initially was thought to have a kidney condition. She had ongoing issues with diminished breath sounds — which turned out to be blood clots in her lungs — and missed school because she couldn't walk.”

After many tests and hospitalizations, Skyy received a diagnosis of lupus in November 2024. Lupus is a complex condition when the body's immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissues and organs.

Skyy's lupus caused an enlarged heart and kidney damage. Because of the blood clots in her lungs, she will be on blood-thinning medicine for the rest of her life. “I give her two shots a day to thin her blood,” Jaelyne said. “There was a time I felt like I was taking Skyy to the hospital every day. It's been a long process to figure out what type of lupus she has. But now, I'm focused on keeping her comfortable and helping her when she has shortness of breath.”

Akron Children's changes how medical care is delivered

Allison has been a true advocate for Jaelyne and Skyy. “From the first follow-up appointment after Skyy's strep throat, Allison has been so helpful,” Jaelyne said. “She listened to me and understood something wasn't right. She looked at Skyy's test results, told us when to go to the ER and referred us to the right specialists.”



Having the SBHC makes life a bit easier for Jaelyne. “It’s so convenient for Akron Children’s to have care available at the school,” she said. “Skyy can get the care she needs without missing classes. I don’t need to arrange for transportation and miss a day of work to take her to the doctor.”

Akron Children’s Community Health Worker Melody Strait has been a godsend for Jaelyne and Skyy. “She gives me a shoulder to cry on when I break down,” Jaelyne shared. “She not only helps me with getting Skyy to see specialists but directs me to resources to help me pay my bills. Melody and Allison have even picked up prescriptions for Skyy when I can’t get to the pharmacy.”

Staying strong as a family

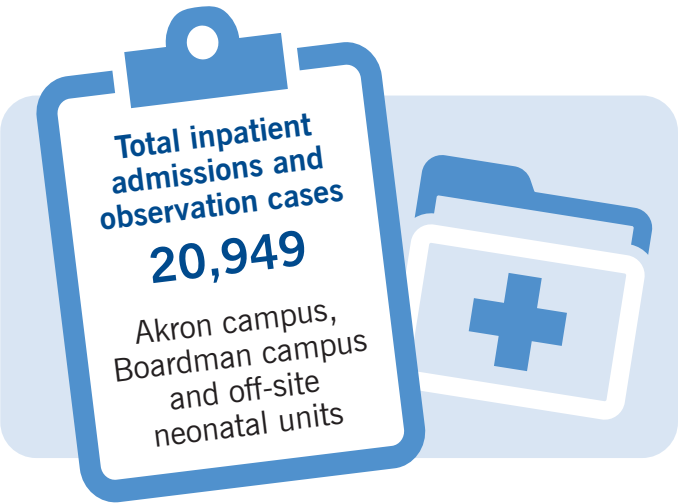
Jaelyne praises her other kids — ages 14 and 11 — for their concern for Skyy. “Some kids who have a sick sibling get mad because they’re not getting as much attention,” she said. “But not my kids. They care about Skyy and worry about her.”

Skyy hasn’t let her health challenges affect her mood. “She’s been through a lot, but she hasn’t changed as a person,” Jaelyne said. “She’s uplifting and not depressed, so I try to stay that way for her as well.”

“She’s been through a lot, but she hasn’t changed as a person. She’s uplifting and not depressed, so I try to stay that way for her as well.”

– Jaelyne, Skyy’s mother

Delivering family-centered care to our patients



Surgeries	22,630
Skilled Nursing Visits	2,657
Private Duty Nursing Hours	23,456
School Health Visits	763,854
Virtual and Telehealth Visits	84,711

Emergency Room Visits	98,179
Akron campus	59,564
Boardman campus	38,615
Urgent Care Visits	45,596
Beachwood	2,697
Boston Heights	5,943
Mansfield	9,611
Montrose	16,572
Warren	10,773

Outpatient Visits	1,482,564
Primary Care Visits	706,499
Specialty Care Visits	458,713
Other Outpatient Visits	317,352

Achieving Excellence

- U.S. News & World Report Best Children's Hospitals: Neurology, Pediatric and Adolescent Behavioral Health, Pulmonology, Orthopedics, Urology
- Newsweek Best Children's Hospitals: Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery, Endocrinology, Neonatology, Orthopedics
- Beacon Award for Excellence™ : Burn, PICU, 7 Surgical
- Forbes Best-In-State Employers
- American Medical Association Joy in Medicine® Bronze Award
- Emergency Nurses Association: Lantern Award for the Akron Children's, Boardman Emergency Room.



A young patient, Colette, age 3, visits with Dr. Natalie Jedacek at Akron Children's Pediatrics, Medina, and Dr. Sumedha Medicherla.



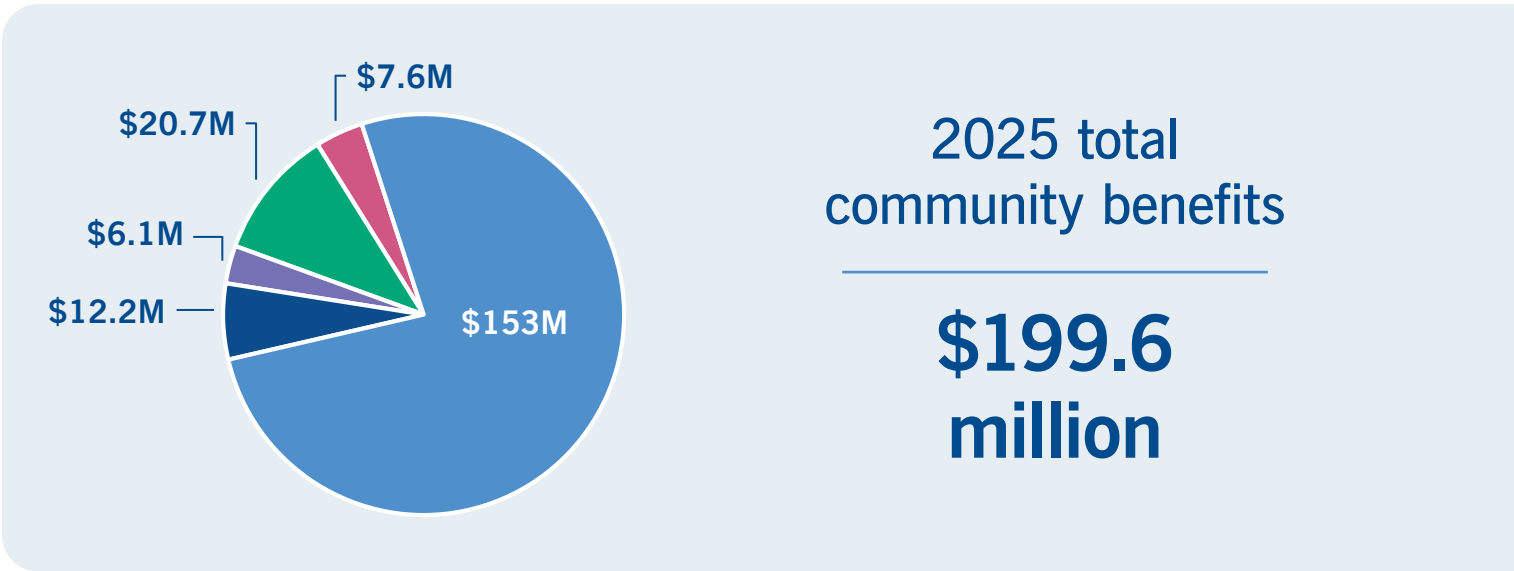
Community benefits

Community benefits are programs, services and activities that we carry out for the purpose of improving our community’s health and well-being. The Internal Revenue Service oversees community benefit reporting of not-for-profit hospitals. To qualify as a community benefit, activities must incur a cost to the hospital, address an identified community need and meet at least one of four objectives:

- Improve access to health services.
- Enhance public health.
- Advance general health or medical knowledge.
- Reduce the burden on government and community efforts to improve health.

“None of this work would be possible without the dedication of our providers and staff, the collaboration with our community partners and the trust of families who choose Akron Children’s. Together, we help families live healthier and more secure lives.”

- Bennett Williams, MPA, CDP
Akron Children’s Chief Engagement Officer



● **Unreimbursed Medicaid and uncompensated care**

- The unreimbursed portion of services for Medicaid patients and financial assistance for families who are unable to pay for all or part of medical expenses.

● **Subsidized health services**

- Clinical services that are delivered despite financial loss because they address community needs.

● **Research, advocacy and community partnerships**

- Nonproprietary research supported by internal or eligible grant funds.
- Advocacy for community health improvement and safety.
- Financial and in-kind contributions to community organizations with missions that align with our own.

● **Health professional education**

- Education and training, clinical rotations and internships for students in programs associated with a healthcare credential.
- Continuing education for practitioners in the community.

● **Community health improvement services and community benefit operations**

- Community health education, outreach programs and supports that do not generate revenue.
- Staffing, administrative supports and other resources to operate and sustain community benefit programs.

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