



**Improving
Care
for Moms
at Risk**

IMPACT

YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE | FALL 2023

Foundation Secures Grant to Support Safe Pregnancy for High-Risk Mothers



Among developed countries, the U.S. has the highest rate of maternal deaths.ⁱ Not only that, we're the only developed nation in which that rate is increasing. Within the U.S., Indiana ranks as one of the highest states in both infant and maternal mortality.^{ii iii}

Most of these deaths are considered preventable. Improving maternal health is, therefore, a key priority for Beacon Health System. One of our top focuses is addressing severe hypertension, which

puts women at risk of developing other health conditions that can lead to lifelong disability or death for the mother or baby.

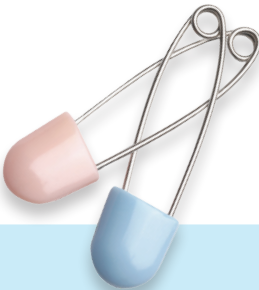
In August, Beacon Health Foundation helped secure a \$100,000 CareSource Foundation grant for Beacon Health System that will support care coordination services for expectant and new mothers who are at high risk for developing or have been diagnosed with high blood pressure. The Community Impact team will lead efforts to help these pregnant mothers at Memorial Hospital, Elkhart General Hospital and key Beacon Medical Group practices.

The grant will fund take-home devices that enable health care providers to monitor vital signs remotely. It will also help provide supplies for Beacon's B.A.B.E. Store, which offers a variety of resources for mothers and infants, such

as safe sleep supplies and diapers. The devices, care coordination services and resources will be provided at no cost to patients.

Beacon Community Impact supports programs that seek to save lives and nurture families by improving care for women and babies in our region. With the CareSource grant, critically important prenatal care will be more accessible and affordable, enabling Beacon Health System to offer a new level of care to the families in our community who most need our support.

i <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2020/nov/maternal-mortality-maternity-care-us-compared-10-countries>
ii <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/maternal-mortality-rate-by-state>
iii <https://www.in.gov/health/mch/program-initiatives/safety-pin/>



Maternal Health in Indiana

Addressing the needs of women also improves the health of their babies and creates a foundation for families to thrive.

DID YOU KNOW >>>

- 1 in 9 babies in Indiana are born early
 - 39.1% of mothers in our region had no early prenatal care
 - Infant mortality rates in Elkhart and St. Joseph counties are higher than in the state of Indiana and nationally
 - 10.8% of mothers in our region smoke, which can harm the baby and increase the risk of miscarriage
 - Non-white, non-Hispanic women—and their babies—are two to three times more likely to die of pregnancy-related causes than white women
- Beacon partners with other community organizations, as well as companies like CareSource, to more effectively address non-medical issues that affect health, such as a lack of transportation to appointments.



Our Approach to Improving Maternal Health

Creating
**Mother-Centered
Care**

Supporting
**Mothers’
Mental Health**

Leveraging
**Technology &
Community-Based
Supportive Care**

❖❖ Care for Caregivers ❖❖

Licensed Clinical Social Worker Supports Beacon Associates

Even without the added stress that all health care workers felt during the pandemic, health care jobs—especially caregiving roles—can be emotionally demanding. An effort that started at Beacon during the pandemic continues to provide vital emotional support to our associates.

Generous and visionary donors saw the need to support the long-term mental health of our associates and provided funding for a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW). This LCSW is dedicated to providing quick, on-site therapy for Beacon staff.

Feedback for the services, provided by Sarah Rulli, LCSW, has been amazing, with associates recommending her and saying she was “a great help,” that she truly cared, and even crediting her with helping them return to work.

**“I think the opportunity is a
blessing for Beacon employees.”**

—Beacon associate



Sarah Rulli, LCSW

Spreading Smiles, One Chocolate Bar at a Time



As the longtime chaplain at Memorial Hospital, Rev. Sarah Samson, MDiv., BCC, often looks for ways to boost morale. During the pandemic, social distancing prevented Sarah from using her favorite tool, hugs. But by sharing miniature Hershey's bars, a 'dad joke' taped to each piece, she could still personally connect with hospital teams when they needed comfort and kindness more than ever.

"Just try not to laugh reading a goofy dad joke out loud," said Samson, manager of Supportive Services at Memorial Hospital. "And it's something not related to medicine. It's not connected to an IV pole or a medical diagnosis. It's a break in someone's day."

Sarah says it all ties into our Beacon Health System mission: to deliver outstanding care, inspire health and connect with heart. After all, kindness can be much deeper than a wave or a candy bar. And we're thankful to our donors for helping support Sarah and the entire spiritual care team as they bring comfort and smiles to colleagues, patients and families.

In November 2022, Sarah was the one to receive a sweet surprise: Hershey's chose her story as part of its mission to 'Heartwarm the world,' sending a video crew to shadow her as she interacted with nurses, staff and patient families —chocolate in hand— at Beacon Children's Hospital.



Three Rivers Hospice Supports Families Through the End of Life

"Don't do it on your own."

That advice comes from Douglas Warner, whose wife was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia in 2010. He promised himself that he would not move Barb to a nursing home.

As her disease progressed, Barb experienced forgetfulness and confusion. Though she had always been a kind, gentle person, she began lashing out at Douglas. She started leaving their home alone, despite locks on all the doors.

Douglas was able to care for Barb with some support from family, but in October 2021 he accepted help from the home hospice team at Three Rivers Health. They showed him how to administer Barb's medications, and they bathed her. They

sat with Barb while Douglas went to the grocery store and ran errands. During the last six months of Barb's life, they became friends of the family. Their support was invaluable.

"I cannot say enough good about them. They're just so awesome," Douglas said. He still stops by the hospital and visits with them, taking in gifts of homemade treats like kettle corn.

Three Rivers Hospice has been helping people like Douglas for thirty years. Many of their hospice patients have cancer, heart failure or chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder. All are in need of comfort, as well as practical assistance.

Thanks to support from generous donors in our community, the hospice program can meet their needs with custodial care such as laundry help, and with caregivers to stay with patients overnight so that their family members can rest.

It's all about connecting with heart to help patients experience the best possible quality of life during the time they have left.

"Beginning your hospice journey can feel overwhelming. Our team is dedicated to providing personalized care to every patient and family. We spend quality time to get to know you and understand your wishes. Connecting with heart and compassion is at the core of what we do."

*—Cara Fries, RN, hospice manager,
Three Rivers Health Hospital*





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Faster Images for Cancer Patients

Thanks in part to nearly \$400,000 in community support, Elkhart General Hospital has a new tool to benefit cancer patients: an on-site PET/CT system.

The PET/CT system provides incredibly detailed, three-dimensional images showing a patient's cancer and how far it has spread, providing care teams with the information they need to develop the best possible treatment options.



The new PET/CT system will be available three more days a week than the current system, so patients won't have to wait as long to be scanned. Until now, the hospital has had a mobile unit available for patient imaging two days a week.

The previous mobile unit was far from the radiology department, and patients had to go outside to enter the trailer. However, the new unit is located within the radiology department, saving patients the discomfort of walking a long distance or having to go outdoors.

