



## Commitment to Community Engagement

# COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

*Kathleen Matt, Dean*

### What community engagement means for the College of Health Sciences

The College of Health Sciences (CHS) works on the principle that health is determined by many factors in your environment—not just by your physiology. Health is also affected by behavioral, cultural, environmental and societal factors. This holistic approach to health is the approach that

CHS leads in working to improve health outcomes for the state. This holistic approach underscores why we are so excited to play a leadership role in the Community Engagement Initiative and the Partnership for Healthy Communities.

Just as health is shaped by our surroundings—where we live, work, play and pray—so must our commitment to health education go beyond the classroom and the clinic. By creating educational opportunities that are inherently interdisciplinary, interprofessional and intertwine our students and our community together, CHS is preparing the next generation of healthcare workers.

Placing emphasis on the Triple Aim—improving the patient experience of care, improving the health of populations and reducing the per capita cost of healthcare—while also improving the work life of healthcare providers allows the College of Health Sciences to take on the health challenges of tomorrow ... today.

CHS distinguishes its three components of community engagement in the following ways:

- **Research** is community-based and innovative, translating our discoveries into the latest diagnostics and treatment plans that will improve health outcomes for patients and their families. With our clinics we can explore ways to transform healthcare delivery in a way that positively impacts our society and economy. The community helps to drive our research and inspire innovation. Through collaboration with partners across campus, in the community and in the Delaware Health Sciences Alliance, CHS is accelerating advancements in biomedical research and bringing the best care and bridging the divides between classroom, clinic and community.
- **Education** is an important role that CHS plays in terms of educating the next generation of healthcare workforce. We work with the community to educate our health professionals in a team-based environment that includes simulation, healthcare theatre and clinical training. Our care is strongly grounded in the concept that health is determined by the social determinants of health, which is why community engagement is so important in the further development of care models. In addition to training the future workforce, CHS also helps retrain the current healthcare workforce through partnerships with our neighboring hospitals and local clinics. Our training of the next generation healthcare workforce is focused not only on understanding both genetic code and zip code.
- **Community** is defined by more than an address. As an Academic Health Center for the state of Delaware, we seek sustainable development and inclusive, collaborative approaches to increase the capacity and accessibility of health care service across the state; address health issues across the spectrum; and educate the next generation of health leaders. We support efforts with the highest potential to reduce health disparities, advance health equity, decrease costs, prevent disease and improve the health and wellbeing of the populations we serve.

## How community engagement relates to the mission and responsibilities of CHS

The University of Delaware designation as a land-grant institution emphasizes its mission to serve the people of Delaware in impactful ways. Open and welcoming, the Health Sciences Complex is a testament to the power of community. It's a space where people, ideas and resources come together, where partnerships bring power, innovation thrives and research is a collaborative enterprise.

Our building is buzzing with activity, with more than 1,700 faculty, staff, students, patients and visitors inside each weekday. They may be participating in a symposium in the atrium, attending a faculty lecture in one of the classrooms or being seen in the Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic and #1 Delaware Physical Therapy Clinic. From the first day our doors opened in 2014, STAR Health has engaged our local community to assist in education, research and clinical care efforts, always with the goal of improving population health.

Not all of our work takes place on campus. We build on the positive relationships and alliances developed throughout Delaware and beyond. Students in the College of Health Sciences undertake internships and research experiences at health-related agencies and partner with organizations throughout the state and even across the globe. Telemedicine makes it possible for our Parkinson's clinic to interact with out-of-state clinicians who might not otherwise be able to come to our facility. The GoBabyGo! program counts more than 40 affiliated sites across the globe where people are increasing mobility options for children.

A critical goal is to identify and meet the needs of the community. The College of Health Sciences partnered with the state of Delaware to create a Communications Sciences and Disorders graduate program at the University of Delaware in order to address a shortage of speech pathologists in the state. The program aims to address the needs of some of the most vulnerable and under-served populations in the state. The First Step Grand Challenges program, spearheaded by the College of Health Sciences and the Horn Program in Entrepreneurship, is an interdisciplinary competition that tasks students with developing novel solutions to important societal and environmental challenges both here in Delaware and around the globe. Service further embeds the College of Health Sciences within the community. Our students, faculty and staff serve the community they are rooted in, whether it's working the griddle at Pancakes for Parkinson's to raise money for the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research or pushing someone in a Fusion Inclusion adaptive chair at a local 5K. Being in the community offers an opportunity for direct impact and authentic connection, like the health screenings offered at Bethel AME Church in Wilmington through the Medical Laboratory Sciences department or the student volunteers who spend time helping people with chronic disease through Lori's Hands. By creating opportunities for faculty, students and staff to be present, connect and learn in spaces that shape the health of many of our community members, the College of Health Sciences is closing the care gap, eliminating barriers and creating context for the design of healthy, equitable and thriving communities.

## How community engagement relates to the strategic priorities of CHS

Community engagement is a part of the Strategic Plan for the College of Health Sciences.

### The four goals are:

1. Improve the health of all Delawareans through education, research, care, service and innovation.
2. Be a trusted and respected partner/workforce development thought leader for community members, community organizations, support groups and health professionals.
3. Drive population health and well-being practices in the local, regional and global community and workplace.
4. Drive policy in state government and insurance companies through developing research and innovation with biopharmaceutical and other industry partners for economic impact and workforce development.

All community outreach efforts are aligned around these three main goals. Research efforts are enhanced through care. The work being done in the research labs at the STAR Health Sciences Complex translates into the care received in our clinics open to the public. Both are driven by community for impact on the international, national, regional and local level.

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