

# Community Engagement

Mayo Clinic Health System – Albert Lea and Austin | December 2019

*Dear Community Partner:*

*Mayo Clinic Health System continues important work to strengthen partnerships and foster collaborations in the communities we serve. This email is being sent to community stakeholders in Albert Lea, Austin and surrounding areas and provides information and updates on community engagement activities of Mayo Clinic Health System – Albert Lea and Austin. Please share with others who may be interested.*

## **Sharing Holiday Gratitude**

As we approach the end of 2019, we extend our gratitude to our staff and communities for the tremendous generosity in making this time of year special for everyone. We know that a hospital or a medical center is more than just a building. The people, the culture and the track record of high-quality care earns Mayo Clinic national recognition. We are proud of the work provided by our staff on behalf of our patients, one another, and the community. As Albert Lea and Freeborn County's largest employer and one of the major employers in Austin, we take our responsibility to the community seriously and are honored to contribute to the vibrant communities where we live and work.

## **[Infusion Therapy patients receive “Comfort and Joy” from local quilters](#)**



“The quilters” from Grand Meadow Lutheran Church presented handmade quilts to patients at the Infusion Therapy Center at Mayo Clinic Health System in Austin. Christy Benson, nursing placement coordinator for Southeast Minnesota, and her mom, Sheila Benson, a volunteer at the clinic, offered the idea to the quilting group. “We were looking for places to donate these in Mower County,” said Dorothy Christensen, one of the long-time members of the quilting group. “We have been quilting for years, using fabric donated by others. We love it when we can turn those scraps of fabric in to something that will do someone good.”

*From L to R: Ashley Schmakel, Karen Weis, Polly Drenth, Jane McFarland, Sheila Benson, Pat Lester, Ila Johnson, Dorothy Christensen, Arvilla Boehm, Dr. Sandeep Jain*

## **Mayo Clinic Health System in the Community**

To enhance health and well-being, Mayo Clinic Health System is proud to support our communities. During the #SeasonofGiving campaign, we announced a gift of \$20,000 to the Albert Lea Family Y to support roof repairs; this is in addition to our annual \$15,000 contribution to the Fit Forever program. Read more in the [Albert Lea Tribune](#).

In Austin, Mayo Clinic Health System provided a \$7,000 Season of Giving donation to Mower County United Way to support programming that will enhance the growing diversity of the community. Watch for program details.

Mayo Clinic Health System also provides support to numerous events, activities and local efforts year-round with key community partners including, but not limited to:

- United Way of Freeborn County and United Way of Mower County
- The Blue Zones Project
- Mower Refreshed
- Austin Recreation Center
- Family Services Collaborative
- SEMCAC
- Senior Resources Center
- Riverland Community College
- Albert Lea Family YMCA and Austin Family YMCA

## Employees Go Above and Beyond

### Salvation Army Bell Ringing in Albert Lea and Austin

Sheryl Ellingson, Jeannie Tenold and Kathy Leidal, along with other Mayo Clinic Health System employees, came out on a brisk and sunny December day to ring the bell. Employees were stationed at the Hy-Vee in both Albert Lea and Austin. Thanks to the passers-by who shared in the holiday spirit by contributing. Mayo Clinic Health System matched contributions with \$1,000 to both Freeborn and Mower County Salvation Army.

### Gift of Warmth drive

Employees at Mayo Clinic Health System – Albert Lea and Austin donated over 1,664 new or gently used hats, gloves, mittens and scarves this winter. The Gift of Warmth drive collected items during the month of November. Donations were distributed to those in need at Skinner’s Hill on Dec. 7.

### Toys for Tots and United Way

Staff in both Albert Lea and Austin recently hosted a pot luck fundraiser. To enjoy the great food, participants were asked to donate cash or a toy for the Toys for Tots program. In addition to a successful employee contribution drive for the United Way, staff recently auctioned off numerous baskets and raised additional funds for important services provided in the community.



### Lloyd and Ardis Peterson Cancer Symposium hailed as ‘the best yet’



From L to R: Lola Evans, Jenni Mattson, Val Koens, Debbie Madsen, Dr. Timothy Kozelsky, Kellie Peterson

Mayo Clinic Health System hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Lloyd and Ardis Peterson Cancer Symposium on Saturday, Nov. 9. The program focused on patients and caregivers in the cancer journey. Many in attendance remarked that it was “the best event to date.” The event is made possible by the Lloyd and Ardis Peterson Family Foundation and showcases the unique resources and the high-quality care available at the Mayo Clinic Albert Lea Cancer Center.

The symposium honors the couple where they lived and worked while simultaneously recognizing the quality care they received from the medical center in Albert Lea. The Petersons were both raised in Albert Lea and in turn, married and raised their family here until they passed away, Lloyd in 1973 and Ardis in 2001. Both believed strongly in being an active part of the community and in giving back. The family established the Lloyd and Ardis

Peterson Family Foundation with all grants directed to the Albert Lea-area to continue their legacy. As both were cancer patients, the Peterson family – Val Koens, John Peterson, and Steven Peterson – along with Mayo Clinic Health System – Albert Lea and Austin created the Lloyd and Ardis Peterson Cancer Education Symposium.

## Integration Update – New Caesarean Section Suite Now Open

Most patients will never need to know why the location of the caesarean (C) section suite matters or what it means to have an updated, well designed space to treat mother and baby. However, those patients who do need these services will benefit from the new and enlarged C-Section Suite which opened in early December in the Family Birth Center. On both campuses, Mayo Clinic patients are able to access outpatient pre- and postpartum care, a critical factor in keeping both mom and baby healthy throughout the pregnancy and beyond. We will keep you posted on construction progress as it continues through 2020 to fully modernize the Family Birth Center. Read more [here](#).

The newly renovated Express Care in Albert Lea is now open inside the Hy-Vee. An open house and ribbon cutting was held Dec. 11 from 10 a.m. to Noon. With increased exam space, you can get in, get out and get back to your day faster. Just one of the many [convenient care options](#) available to our communities:

- [Express Care in Albert Lea](#)
- [Express Care Online](#)
- [Same Day Clinic](#)
- [Express Care in Austin](#)
- [Nurse Line](#)
- [Patient Online Services](#)

[Learn more](#) about services available at Mayo Clinic Health System – Albert Lea and Austin. *Also available!* An easy-to-use guide to health care resources in [Freeborn County](#) and [Mower County](#).

[SMART Transit](#), available in both Albert Lea and Austin, offers an option for patients to obtain rides to medical appointments, reducing the need to park a car and walk to the entrance. For more information, call SMART Transit's dispatch line at 855-762-7821 (855-SMART-B1).

## Meet Dr. Bob Bonacci, the new primary care lead for Mayo Clinic Health System–Albert Lea and Austin



Bob Bonacci, M.D., is the new Primary Care physician lead for Albert Lea and Austin. He works with internal medicine, family medicine and pediatric providers in Albert Lea and Austin to create an integrated practice that exceeds patient expectations. Working with the community to understand their needs will be a part of that process. Dr. Bonacci attended medical school at Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia, which emphasizes the impact that community has on health and well-being. During that time he participated in a rural health immersion rotation in Albany, Georgia. Some of his career highlights to date include:

- Ten years at the Mayo Clinic Northwest clinic in Rochester, including obstetrics, prenatal and delivery care
- Curriculum development and teaching residents and medical students
- Program Director for the Family Medicine residency in Rochester
- Partnered with the Hawthorne Education Center to develop the first Mayo Medical School service learning experience to train medical students to work as teaching assistants in the English as a second language (ESL)
- Board certified in [Lifestyle Medicine](#), promoting behaviour change to treat the cause of many chronic diseases

In Dr. Bonacci's spare time, he and his wife, Kerrie, devote much of their time to a church housed at the YMCA in Rochester which they helped develop and launch. He also serves as the medical director for [WellConnect](#), a southeast Minnesota community partnership that coordinates and supports evidence-based and research-tested programs that help people manage their health and prevent disease.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in our work over the last year. We look forward to continuing to enhance the health and well-being of residents in our communities. For questions or comments about our Community Engagement activities, please contact any member of the [Mayo Clinic Health System Community Engagement team](#).

Sincerely,

Mark Ciota, M.D., CEO, Mayo Clinic Health System — Albert Lea and Austin  
Sumit Bhagra, M.D., Medical Director, Mayo Clinic Health System — Albert Lea and Austin  
Kristin Johnson, CPA, M.B.A., Vice Chair Administration, Mayo Clinic Health System — Albert Lea and Austin  
Lori Routh, R.N., Nurse Administrator, Mayo Clinic Health System — Albert Lea and Austin  
Tricia Dahl, M.A., M.B.A., Operations Administrator, Mayo Clinic Health System — Albert Lea and Austin  
Melissa Barr, M.A., Operations Administrator, Mayo Clinic Health System — Albert Lea and Austin

For up-to-date information, visit [mayoclinichealthsystem.org/albert-lea-austin-facts](http://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/albert-lea-austin-facts)