Altoona Hospital Campus
620 Howard Avenue, Altoona, PA 16601

Station Medical Center
17th Street and 9th Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602

Altoona Regional Health System
A nonprofit community health care system
814.889.2011
www.altoonaregional.org

Exceptional people.
Exceptional community service.
Welcome to Altoona Regional’s Community Benefit Report for fiscal 2012.*

We are a nonprofit health care organization dedicated to providing tangible community benefit. Our goals are to:

- Increase health care access
- Reduce disparities in the local health care system
- Champion the causes of those who face obstacles in their daily lives

We feel it is our obligation, given our tremendous people and resources, to reach into the community to meet the needs of those we serve. And we serve all, regardless of ability to pay.

To qualify as community benefit, all programs and services included in this report must meet at least one of the following universally recognized criteria. They must:

- Generate a low or negative margin
- Respond to the needs of special populations, such as people living in poverty and other disenfranchised persons
- Supply services or programs that would likely be discontinued or would need to be provided by another nonprofit or government provider if the decision was made on a purely financial basis
- Respond to public health needs
- Involve education or research that improves overall community health

Altoona Regional exists solely for the well-being of the communities and people we serve. All funds left after expenses are used to improve and/or expand local health care services.

I am happy to report these results to you and provide information on some of the many important community services we provide.

Sincerely,

Jerry Murray
President/CEO

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We support people and groups in the community.

In addition to contributing to events and organizations that improve the community’s health, we allow them the use of our meeting rooms, supplies and parking areas. We donate food to the local food banks. We provide assistance to important community services like the homeless shelter, domestic abuse shelter, CONTACT Altoona and many more, and provide people who need these services with information and referrals. Some of the organizations whose events we sponsor include the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, United Way, Southern Alleghenies EMS Council and Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation.

**Community Benefit** $133,977

We help make our community a better place to live and work.

In big and small ways, we support causes that, although not always directly related to health care, provide chances to address the root causes of health problems, such as poverty and homelessness.

We also show our dedication to the community through our efforts in disaster preparedness and local, state and national support for better access to health care.

We offer regular sign language classes to break down communication barriers among community populations.

**Community Benefit** $36,837

We supply the staff and funds necessary to ensure exceptional service to the community and its people.

As a health care system and one of the area’s largest employers, we are committed to providing value to the region we serve. Therefore, we dedicate staff time to ensuring that we provide high quality services and programs toward the betterment of the people of our area, collectively and individually. As examples, we maintain full-time staff to help people find doctors, provide community education, and make our children safer and our older people more independent and secure.

**Community Benefit** $154,980

**Subtotal** $37,039,063

**Bad debt/Uncompensated care** $7,828,182

(Some or all could be classified as charity care)

**Medicare shortfall** $4,183,768

(Difference between cost of care and reimbursement)

**Total** $49,051,013

**Number of people served:** 103,580
No matter what name they have gone by for the past 15 years, community fitness classes for area senior citizens have remained popular. Now called Healthy Steps In Motion (once called PEPPI, for Peer Exercise Program Promotes Independence), the free classes are fun, peer-led, weight-resistance and strength-training sessions designed for people 55 and older. HSIM is a state Department of Aging program.

Offered by Altoona Regional’s Healthy Living Club in cooperation with Blair Senior Services, classes meet every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8:15 and 10 a.m. at Abundant Life Assembly of God Church in Altoona.

Their sustained popularity stems not only from their proven ability to enhance strength, flexibility, balance and muscle tone, but also from the social benefits for participants. “Our Healthy Living Club remains committed to helping seniors stay active and fit,” said Dana Shade, Altoona Regional’s Community Education coordinator, who partnered with Blair Senior Services to begin the classes in 1997. “Studies prove physically active seniors are mentally and socially more fit, and engaging in classes like these adds social companionship and networking.”

The social connection participants make can’t be over-emphasized, said original class leader Bob Beirlair. His 10 a.m. class has about 30 attendees, including two other original participants: his wife, Marg, and Mary Ostrum. Another original participant, Agnes Dinicola, attends the earlier class.

“We care about each other,” he said. “We check in on each other when someone misses a class.” He also testifies to the physical improvements he’s seen in many members. “Men who couldn’t reach behind their heads to comb their own hair, now can,” he said. “Or, women who couldn’t lift a gallon of milk, now can.”

More information is available by calling 889.2630 or 1.888.313.4665.

Committed to healthier, happier seniors

Altoona Regional’s mission is for exceptional people to provide exceptional health care, and the system’s Center for Behavioral Health Services lives that mission in countless ways. Staff continue to be proactive in addressing prevalent and serious behavioral health-related issues by reaching out to the community through a multitude of educational efforts. The Student Assistance Programs, for example, are designed to allow staff to aid local school personnel in identifying and assisting students who may be experiencing behavioral or academic problems. Training seminars on mental illness, substance abuse, depression and suicide are held regularly. Staff teach first responders and other mental health providers from area agencies about prevention, mental health first-aid and de-escalation and intervention techniques, just to name a few.

Staff also aid the community during emergencies through Altoona Regional’s Community Crisis Center. With more than 2,000 patient contacts per month, it is the fifth highest volume crisis center in Pennsylvania. The Community Crisis Team is part of Blair County’s disaster response team. If there is a crisis, the team gets the call and sends staff directly to the site to ensure prompt and effective coordination of crisis management. Responding to the Geeseytown mass shooting in 2012 or other tragic events, the Community Crisis Team’s goal is to take care of the community by stabilizing stressful situations and making helpful recommendations. The team also schedules follow-up calls and visits to those involved in a crisis. Counselors work closely with other community agencies and are able to effectively link people to the services they need.

Located in Altoona Regional’s Emergency department, the Community Crisis Center is available to all community members 24 hours a day on a drop-in basis or by telephone at 889.2141 or 1.800.540.4690.

When there’s a community crisis, we respond

Cheryl Bakale is one the many crisis counselors at Altoona Regional who help community members during difficult times.

Members of the 10 a.m. class include (from left) Mary Ostrum and Bob and Marg Beirlair

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Preparing expectant moms and dads for the miracle of birth

Since 1985, Sherry Turchetta, R.N., community education specialist, has prepared thousands of couples for childbirth at Altoona Regional.

The Childbirth and Parenting Education classes offered at Altoona Regional cover a variety of issues, including breathing and relaxation techniques, pain management, vaginal birth, cesarean birth, sibling adjustment and newborn care.

Educator Sherry Turchetta, R.N., says the classes help prepare an expectant family for many aspects of becoming parents — the changes that pregnancy brings, labor and delivery, caring for your newborn, and the adjustment to an extended family.

Participants might also find support at a childbirth class from other expectant couples, she said.

"Who better understands the ups and downs of pregnancy than couples going through them?" Sherry explained. "Many people find friendships in their childbirth class that last long past the birth of their child."

If the birth coach is the baby’s father, taking a class together can mean his increased involvement in the pregnancy and can act as a good bonding experience, said Sherry.

"Like the mother, the father can also benefit from knowing what to expect when the mother goes into labor — and how to assist in that process," she added.

Special sessions for new grandparents are offered to make sure they are aware of the latest in baby care techniques and safety.

"The common goal of all birthing classes is to provide expectant family members with the knowledge and confidence they need to give birth and make informed decisions," Sherry said. "This includes reducing their anxiety about the birth experience, as well as providing them with a variety of coping techniques to aid in pain management."

"The ultimate goal is to have a healthy mom and healthy baby."

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**Community Benefit**

**We provide free and discounted care (charity care) to the poor and people with no insurance.**

As a nonprofit community health care system, our mission is to care for everyone. We offer charity care according to a patient’s ability to pay.

**Community Benefit** $2,378,224

**We provide health care under government programs even though the government pays us less than what the care costs.**

Very often, care for low-income and uninsured or underinsured people covered by programs like Medicaid (Medical Assistance) and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) is more expensive to give than the payment we receive from the government. We receive no payment for the difference but remain committed to caring for anyone in need.

**Community Benefit** $17,960,192

**We provide programs and services to help all people lead safer, healthier, happier lives and to care for them in times of crisis.**

Space does not permit a full listing of these programs and services, but they include:

- Community education classes such as our Safe Sitter child-care courses; many programs by physicians on dealing with various conditions and diseases, as well as on achieving and maintaining better health; free child safety-seat checkups, and more.
- Support groups that help people deal with Alzheimer’s disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, grief, mental health issues, caring for an ill loved one, and more.
- Self-help programs, such as classes on exercise, nutrition and quitting smoking.
- Screenings for osteoporosis, depression, high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, colon cancer and more.
- Free health care for people with no insurance or not enough insurance through our Partnering for Health Services medical clinic.

**Community Benefit** $2,141,113

**We provide education and training programs to prepare future health care professionals for our community.**

We support the Altoona Family Physicians residency program and local universities and colleges in the training of nurses and other health professionals.

**Community Benefit** $1,861,126

**We provide the community with critical services despite a financial loss.**

Our community has distinct health care needs that only we provide. These needs include services such as trauma and emergency care, specialized women’s health care and behavioral health.

**Community Benefit** $12,372,614

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