

Media contact:

Laura Fleming
lfleming2@partners.org
978-825-6252

Mass General Brigham donations benefit North Shore

Investments focus on food security, healthcare workforce development

Salem, MA – Nearly \$3 million of the \$50 million in community, mental health and educational grants announced by Mass General Brigham in October will directly benefit North Shore organizations and initiatives. Programs being developed by the City of Lynn’s Food Security Task Force, [Lynn Community Health Center](#), [My Brother’s Table](#), [Greater Lynn Senior Services](#), [Salem State University School of Social Work](#), and [North Shore Community Health](#) will receive support to improve nutrition security, equity, mental health, chronic disease management, and workforce development.

“The pandemic shined a light on long-standing barriers and inequities in healthcare. At the same time, the mental health system across Massachusetts reached a breaking point with dramatically increased need for care,” said **Anne Klibanski, MD, Mass General Brigham President and CEO**. “This new community health strategy will address mental health, chronic disease, and food and nutrition insecurity and directly benefit patients and families on the North Shore.”

A Healthy Food Hub in Lynn

From 2019 to 2020, local food pantries in Lynn reported a 400 percent increase in demand for assistance, as many in the community lost jobs and income due to the COVID-19 health and economic crisis. To address this continuing crisis, a grant of \$1.85 million will support an innovative plan being spearheaded by the Lynn Food Security Task Force -- a coalition of 14 Lynn organizations including the Lynn Community Health Center, My Brother’s Table, Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS) and other advocates. The Task Force is based out of Lynn’s Department of Public Health and led by Public Health Coordinator Norris Guscott, who was appointed by Mayor Thomas M. McGee to lead this vital effort.

The coalition will use the funding to create a one-stop resource that addresses key social determinants of health related to nutrition and includes a first-of-its-kind data center related to food security. The facility will be centrally located in downtown Lynn where individuals and families can access healthy food and nutrition support on foot or by car. Located on first floor of the GLSS building at 8 Silsbee Street, the **Phoenix Food Hub** will include a state-of-the-art teaching kitchen, nutrition screening and counseling, food distribution, meal delivery, healthy cooking classes and a variety of other culturally sensitive support services for the community.

“Phoenix Food Hub hopes to help break the generational cycles of poverty and hunger by providing the all-important bag of healthy food and also other vital nutrition-related and wrap-around services that can have a broader impact on an individual’s overall health, well-being, and quality of life,” notes Kathryn C. Burns, CEO of GLSS.

Capital funds will also go to My Brother’s Table, which will use the grant to renovate its dining services facility to improve service and offer alternative meal choices and nutritional coaching that align with guests’ medical needs.

“The grant funding from Mass General Brigham will be transformational for families who experience hunger and insufficient nutrition in our City,’ says Mayor Thomas McGee. “We have an extraordinary team that has been working diligently behind the scenes in planning this project and will now have the resources to make it a reality. Residents who need to adopt healthier nutrition habits to manage medical conditions will have accessible resources to support them.”

North Shore Community Health Center Support

In addition to funding in Lynn, a Mass General Brigham grant of \$500,000 has been awarded to North Shore Community Health (NSCH), to enable the expansion of clinical space at the Peabody Family Health Center to include a walk-in urgent care clinic. Funding will also support implementation of the Epic electronic health record that will better connect NSCH clinicians with affiliated hospitals and care providers.

“Expanding urgent care and our electronic infrastructure greatly enhances access and will improve patient’s health,” says Margaret Brennan, President and CEO of NSCH. “Having the Epic system in place will promote stronger collaboration and communication with our hospital partners. Our patients will have easier access to their medical records and be able to connect directly with their care teams. The NSCH staff, Board and patients are extremely grateful to Mass General Brigham for its support of these critical projects.”

Building the Health Workforce Pipeline

The pandemic also exacerbated the need for healthcare support in our communities, especially in mental health. Emergency departments are overwhelmed by the number of individuals seeking psychiatric care, and many patients are experiencing unacceptable delays in receiving treatment. Mass General Brigham is partnering with community-based agencies and schools of higher education including **Salem State University** to create scholarship and loan repayment programs, fellowships, stipends, and salary supplements for those in the mental health field.

At **Salem State University**, a grant of \$300,000 will provide scholarships to students in the university’s healthcare studies, occupational therapy and social work programs who are completing behavioral health

internships and fieldwork in Massachusetts. As such placements are often unpaid, scholarships of \$2,000 will be provided to approximately 140 students to help ease the pathway to graduating with first-hand experience in the behavioral health field.

“Through this new and innovative partnership, we will join a consortium of educational organizations that are committed to addressing the behavioral health workforce shortage,” says John D. Keenan, president of Salem State University. “We are extremely grateful that Mass General Brigham has made a substantial and needed investment in behavioral health, and that they recognize the value of helping our talented and dedicated students prepare for careers in this field. Our alumni serve the North Shore and beyond in countless ways and these scholarships will help to build on this service in an area of great need.”

A Commitment to Community Health

Mass General Brigham’s \$50 million investment supports a new, comprehensive community and mental health strategy that works with health centers, educational organizations and more than 20 community-based organizations across Eastern Massachusetts to address chronic health management, mental health, nutrition security and workforce development.

“Our investment strategy and intended impact would not be possible without the strong partnerships we have with community-based organizations,” noted Elsie Taveras, MD, MPH, Chief Community Health Equity Officer for Mass General Brigham. “On the North Shore, Mass General Brigham, Salem Hospital and North Shore Physicians Group colleagues have worked together with community advocates throughout the pandemic to make the greatest impact we could for the communities we serve. By significantly increasing our efforts, we can continue to help address the challenges and barriers that many patients and families are facing.”

About Mass General Brigham

Mass General Brigham is an integrated academic health care system, uniting great minds to solve the hardest problems in medicine for our communities and the world.

Mass General Brigham connects a full continuum of care across a system of academic medical centers, community and specialty hospitals, a health insurance plan, physician networks, community health centers, home care, and long-term care services.

Mass General Brigham is a non-profit organization that is committed to patient care, research, teaching, and service to the community. In addition, Mass General Brigham is one of the nation’s leading biomedical research organizations and a principal teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School.

About Salem Hospital

Salem Hospital is a member of Mass General Brigham, an academic healthcare system founded by Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women’s Hospital that is uniting great minds to make life-changing impact for patients in local communities and around the world. Serving the North Shore community for more than 100 years, Salem Hospital provides innovative medical, surgical and psychiatric care through an array of inpatient, outpatient and virtual settings including Salem Hospital, the Epstein Center for Behavioral Health, North Shore Physicians Group and a medical staff of nearly 700 physicians practicing in a wide range of specialties. For more information, please visit nsmc.partners.org. For information about Mass General Brigham, visit massgeneralbrigham.org.

###