

# BUSINESS LEDGER

## DuPage Medical Group's fund magnifies giving to those in need

BY CHRISTOPHER CUDWORTH  
Contributing Writer

When DuPage Medical Group began making plans for its Charitable Fund, they wanted to be more than a one-way street.

"We wanted to create an organization that could do more than simply give grant money," said Peri Todd, director of the DuPage Medical Group Charitable Fund. "And that meant finding ways to coordinate volunteerism. Many medical groups have foundations, and our motivation was to find ways to magnify the impact of our donations by providing grant money while promoting and coordinating volunteerism."

One example of those efforts was a commitment of volunteers to the Westmont Food Pantry.

"We wanted to do something in our immediate community," Todd said. "And this effort illustrates the alignment of our first financial donation with one of the greatest needs in DuPage County: providing food to those who most need it."

Other top needs in the county include shelter and health care. Working through a nonprofit organization known as People's Resource Center, the group not only donated money to the Westmont Food Pantry, but also set up a staff of 6 to 8 volunteers to work the food pantry every Saturday, all year. Physicians and employees can access an easy-to-use online system allowing them to sign up to volunteer online.

"We've had whole departments sign up," Todd said. "The CFO signed up with his son. Physicians and staff sign up their family members. So far, we have provided more than 150 volunteers this year."

Employees got so enthused by their volunteer work, they began to organize food drives in addition to working at the food pantry.

"That meant we set up food collection bins in our offices," Todd said. "Some of the 20 bins are stationed strictly for employee contributions. but others are posted in our reception areas where visitors and patients we serve can donate as well."

The group has donated more than 150 bins of food since November.

"We wanted to create a fund where everyone in the organization has an opportunity to contribute," Todd said. "We host two large fundraisers such as the golf outing and gala

each year, but not everyone has the financial means to participate in those events.

"It is important to be able to find ways for all to participate by giving what they can — their time, talent or treasure. This is our way of magnifying our donations."

DuPage Medical Group, one of Illinois' largest multi-specialty practices, employs 2,500 people. More than 330 physicians in both primary care and specialty branches of medicine see patients at 40 locations in DuPage, Will, and Kane counties and serve all the largest hospitals in the region. That range of influence is perhaps why the Fund is determined to take such a broad-based approach to caring for the community beyond its clinics and service to hospitals.

"Having the Fund enables us to be there when needed," Todd notes. "But it also enables us to make some institutional investments in public health as well."

In 2011, the DuPage Medical Group Charitable Fund made the commitment to provide significant financial assistance to one of the region's most progressive health organizations, the Living Well Cancer Resource Center. As a result of such support, Living Well is rapidly growing organization, extending its services from its home office in Geneva to outreach programs and support for cancer patients, caregivers and families in DuPage and the western suburbs. These services are free to cancer patients and their families.

"All 55 of our programs and services at Living Well are provided free to the cancer community," says Nancy Vance, executive director of Living Well Cancer Resource Center. "And that means we are dependent on the community for support. We are grateful for DuPage Medical Group's leadership and deep commitment to our mission, recognizing the positive impact we have with both cancer patients and caregivers. We look forward to continuing to meet the psychosocial support needs of patients getting care at DuPage Medical Group and beyond."

Another primary initiative for the DuPage Medical Group Charitable Fund is providing doctors and nurses for specialty care clinics to the DuPage Community Clinic.

"DuPage Medical Group provides more than \$2 million in medical care for people that do not have medical insurance," Todd says. "Access DuPage basically matches people in need with a medical home, such as DuPage Community

Clinic or a private physician's office so that people do not go without care. But there is still a need for more access, so we have set up specialty care clinics to see a backlog of patients."

DMG's volunteer doctors and nurses also address needs such as gynecology, wound care and neurology. In these cases, their staff do not provide a direct financial contribution, but instead volunteer their time and donate medications samples and materials at the DCC or in their offices to meet the medical needs of the community.

"Before our involvement, some patients had been waiting for two years to see a dermatologist," said Dr. Ashish Bhatia, a dermatologist and chair of the DuPage Medical Group Charitable Fund.

Hunger. Cancer support. The uninsured. These are just some of the problems addressed by the DuPage Medical Group Charitable Fund.

"But our work is just beginning," Todd said. "The effects of our economic crisis are increasingly apparent in our clinics and in our community. Service agencies are seeing record numbers of new clients, and no longer just the working poor, but solidly middle class families in crisis, having lost or fearing the loss of their jobs, their insurance, and their homes. "This year the Fund plans to grow our endowment to continue to serve those in need as part of its legacy," Todd added. "Our goal is to become a full-fledged foundation. We're working toward that as our mission."

For more information or to see how you can help, go to [www.DMGcharitablefund.org](http://www.DMGcharitablefund.org).

### DuPage Medical Group CHARITABLE FUND



1100 W. 31st Street, Suite 300,  
Downers Grove, IL 60515  
630-942-7956 • [dmgcharitablefund.org](http://dmgcharitablefund.org)

*The DMG Charitable Fund was founded in 2010 to serve as a vehicle to magnify the charitable contributions and volunteerism of physician, staff and our community supporters allowing us to continue to care for our community beyond the clinic.*