

# FOCUS

*on philanthropy*

Fall 2023



## **A world of difference**

Local cancer care saves lives and provides relief to Northern Michigan patients.

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 **MUNSON HEALTHCARE**  
Foundations

# A Letter from the President



When I first moved to Traverse City from North Carolina in 2013, I found myself inspired by the people I met here in northern Michigan. Seeing the generosity of our community and its commitment to local healthcare services was unlike anything I had experienced before.

This summer marked my ten-year anniversary with Munson Healthcare Foundations. I am proud to say I still find myself humbled by the people I meet every day: talented healthcare professionals who provide top-quality care; selfless, compassionate donors who support our programs and services; and, perhaps most important of all, the patients and families who receive life-changing care as a result.

But I would be remiss not to mention the change I have seen in that time:

We have grown to become northern Michigan's **largest and leading healthcare system**.

We have achieved **ambitious fundraising goals** and embarked on several **major capital campaigns** to revolutionize how care is delivered.

We have seen the **construction of new facilities**, like the Cowell Family Cancer Center, and the **growth and expansion of existing facilities** through projects like Building the Future of Healthcare at Otsego Memorial Hospital.

We have invested millions in **world-class services**, like cardiac care and surgery, and launched new **lifesaving programs** like our interventional stroke program.

We have banded together to **overcome hardships** like the COVID-19 pandemic.

**None of these accomplishments would be possible without the dedication of an incredible Healthcare Team and the continued generosity of our community.**

As we look to the future, we can expect even more growth and change. And while this change is largely unknown, Munson Healthcare remains committed to evolving in a way that best meets the healthcare needs of our community.

I am proud of the amazing things we have accomplished through philanthropy in the past decade. **I look forward to seeing all that we will accomplish together in the future.**

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra".

Debra Henderson  
President, Munson Healthcare Foundations



Celebrating Munson Healthcare Manistee Hospital's ED renovation. Story on page 3.

# Celebrating Healthcare Achievements

Despite financial pressures and a challenging economy, 2023 has been a banner year for healthcare in northern Michigan. Below are some of the achievements made possible **through your support**.

- Munson Healthcare Cadillac Hospital and Munson Medical Center (MMC) received "A" grades for hospital quality and safety from The Leapfrog Group on their spring 2023 report card. This is the 4th consecutive "A" grade for MMC, and the 2nd for Cadillac Hospital.
- Cadillac Hospital was the only Michigan hospital named a 2023 Top 20 Rural & Community Hospital by The Chartis Center for Rural Health. This is the 3rd consecutive year Cadillac Hospital received this recognition.
- MMC recently applied for Comprehensive Stroke Certification through The Joint Commission, which is the highest level of stroke certification offered.



MMC was also recognized nationally by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association with the 2023 Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Gold Plus Award and the Target Stroke Honor Roll Elite Award. This is the 10th consecutive year MMC earned this award!

- 3D mammography equipment was installed at OMH Medical Group – Indian River and Prudenville Community Health Center. This cutting-edge technology provides comprehensive screenings with enhanced visual clarity, detecting small tumors more easily and with greater accuracy.
- Munson Healthcare Manistee Hospital completed a \$2.5M emergency department renovation (photos on page 2) and reopened doors to patients. Project highlights include a new layout, more private rooms, airborne isolation rooms, a decontamination area, and more. Patients and staff now enjoy enhanced comfort, safety, and privacy at this facility.
- Munson Healthcare Otsego Memorial Hospital celebrated 1,000 robotic surgeries completed by James Shurlow, DO, and over 2,000 assisted robotic surgeries performed since 2017. These procedures offer quicker recoveries and shorter hospital stays.

- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded Cadillac Hospital and MMC with 5-star ratings for quality, placing both in the top 8% of all hospitals in the nation.

Cadillac Hospital, Manistee Hospital, and Charlevoix Hospital were also recognized by CMS with 5-star ratings for physician communication.

Using data from CMS, Becker's Hospital Review compiled a list of U.S. hospitals most likely to be recommended by patients. Charlevoix Hospital was among 20 hospitals selected in Michigan.

- U.S. News & World Report ranked MMC No. 7 in its Best Hospitals rankings for the entire state. This demonstrates a strong commitment to quality care across 10 procedure and condition areas.

- Munson Manor Hospitality House resumed its volunteer dinner program this spring after a hiatus due to COVID-19. Through this program, community members can volunteer to prepare and serve home-cooked meals to Munson Manor guests.



Munson Manor therapy dog Decker and guest Aria.

- Munson Healthcare is working with several community partners to expand mental health services in northern Michigan. Grand Traverse County awarded \$5M in American Rescue Plan Act funding to develop the Grand Traverse Center for Mental Wellness.

An additional \$5M from the Michigan Health and Hospital Association was awarded to MMC to address pediatric behavioral health needs.

Munson Healthcare Grayling Hospital also received \$2.5M to expand Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) for individuals with substance use disorder. This funding will help to establish new MAT access points in Cadillac, Grayling, and Charlevoix.



Kris Elbert at the Cowell Family Cancer Center.

## Local Care Makes a World of Difference

### An Unexpected Discovery

An estimated one in eight women will receive a breast cancer diagnosis in her lifetime, according to the American Cancer Society. Kris Elbert became part of that statistic when she found a lump on her breast in January 2022.

An active and healthy woman, Kris was shocked by her discovery. Just three months prior, her routine mammogram had detected no abnormalities.

"I was in Florida when I got my cancer diagnosis, so we did the surgery and chemo in Florida," Kris explained. "But we were thrilled to discover we could do radiation up here and not miss a summer in northern Michigan."

### A Jewel in the Community

Kris didn't hesitate when deciding where to seek care upon her return to Michigan.

"Munson's always been our medical home," Kris shared. "We used to live in Chicago, too, and even in those days, we would come up to Munson for our physicians. We've had nothing but good experiences here."

Kris's experience at the Cowell Family Cancer Center was no less. She found the staff to be incredibly kind, and every one of her radiation appointments was quick and efficient.

**"It was such a positive experience and I've told so many people 'what a jewel we have here in our little community,' Kris said. 'We're very lucky.'"**

## From the Beginning

Kris and her family have lived in several different states. She currently splits her time between Florida and Michigan with her husband, Phil, although they both consider northern Michigan their true home.

"We miss it when we're not here, and we're thinking about it all the time," Kris said.

Their love for northern Michigan is one of the reasons the Elbert family founded the Blue Waters Foundation in 2011.

Kris is passionate about supporting her communities through philanthropy, and operating the foundation allows her to do just that. Kris currently serves as president and is proud to have her husband, two children, and their spouses join her in this work.

**"We really wanted to get our kids involved in charitable giving," Kris said. "It's been very valuable to all of us to really think through and focus on what our objectives are and who we want the beneficiaries to be."**

Munson Healthcare has been part of the Elberts' charitable giving from the beginning. But supporting local healthcare became much more personal after Kris received her diagnosis in 2022.



When the Elberts heard Munson Healthcare Foundations was seeking funding for a Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scanner, the entire family was on board. This critical piece of equipment detects small cancerous tumors that are often missed with other radiological technology and can help monitor the effectiveness of cancer treatment.

Through the Blue Waters Foundation, Kris and her family committed \$350,000 to support the purchase and installation of a PET scanner at the Cowell Family Cancer Center.

"I've had 3 PET scans now, all in Florida, but my most recent one was completely clear," Kris shared. "I think that really hit home for me when thinking about the PET equipment – what an enormous relief that test can provide to individuals."



**The Elberts' incredible generosity will transform care for thousands of patients at Munson Healthcare each year.**

## Grateful for Every Day

A fixed PET scanner was installed at the Cowell Family Cancer Center in November 2022, replacing the facility's previous mobile unit. At the time of installation, only four other facilities in the entire state of Michigan offered this level of cancer care.

Kris now has peace of mind knowing that should the need arise, her loved ones will have nearby access to the care they need.

**"I'm just so thrilled that it's available," Kris said. "I hope that none of my friends and neighbors have to have PET scans or have any reason to have PET scans. But to be able to have that locally and not travel... it would make a world of difference."**

Kris has completed her cancer treatment and is celebrating remission by doing more of the things she loves: traveling, riding her e-bike along the beautiful trails in northern Michigan, boating on Torch Lake, and spending time with family.

"I'm grateful for every day," Kris said. "I was really lucky to have the care that I had."

# You Provide a Lifeline to Patients in Need

Donald Benjamin always took care of himself. He worked hard to pay his bills and sustain himself financially, until a cancer diagnosis changed his life.

Donald underwent three surgeries beginning in 2022 to remove a mass on his spine. In a complication resulting from one of these procedures, Donald suffered damage to his vocal cords.

Now faced with an immense physical recovery, chemotherapy treatment, and a significantly reduced ability to speak, Donald found himself unable to work. **But his bills didn't stop coming.**

"I couldn't go back to the job I had," Donald shared. "And until [Social Security] Disability came in, I had nothing."

## Staying Afloat

Colleen Marvin, an oncology nurse and patient navigator at Munson Healthcare Otsego Memorial Hospital, worked with Donald to find and apply for financial assistance.

"I had applied to several local Michigan charities and several came through, but it was not enough to sustain him for his course of therapy," Colleen explained.

While assistance with rent and groceries provided some relief for Donald, he still had additional expenses.

"I couldn't even make it back and forth to my oncology appointments," Donald said. "I didn't have enough money for gas to get back and forth, let alone anything else."



**Support through Munson Healthcare Foundations' Cancer Patient Needs Fund provided the lifeline Donald needed to make it through his first course of treatment.**

**"Every little dollar joined together with other dollars helped save Don's life," Colleen shared. "He worked to stay afloat, but he was sinking at several times and needed a lifesaver."**

Eight months after initially applying, Donald was finally approved for Social Security Disability. But Donald likely wouldn't have survived those eight months without assistance from the Cancer Patient Needs Fund.

"Without help, I wouldn't be where I'm at now," Donald said. "I'd probably be [living] in my car."

"All of us at the Cancer and Infusion Center at OMH are grateful for the help," Colleen added. **"I hope you understand how vital it is to helping our patients."**

## Your Generosity in Action

In Fiscal Year 2022 (July 2022 – June 2023), gifts to the Cancer Patient Needs Fund assisted 117 patients across 18 northern Michigan counties. These patients ranged in age from 33 to 89, received treatment for 23 different types of cancer, and received over \$85,000 in financial assistance from Munson Healthcare Foundations.



Your continued support of the Cancer Patient Needs Fund extends a helping hand to members of our community during times of medical and financial strain. By reducing the financial burden they face, these individuals can be more present during treatment and throughout their healing journey.

**Scan the QR code to learn how you can make a difference for patients during their time of need.**



Photo of Carol Gunderson.

## You Positively Impact Lives

At Munson Healthcare, patients and their families receive comprehensive, seamless care from all facilities and service providers in our healthcare system. This approach to healthcare delivery enables Munson Healthcare to offer elevated specialty care throughout northern Michigan, reducing the need for patients to travel downstate.

Brittany Walton, an employee at Munson Healthcare Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital, experienced this collaborative approach to care when her mother became ill in 2021. The following is a letter she shared in gratitude:

In January 2021, the Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital Emergency Department cared for my mother, who wasn't feeling well, which started her cancer journey. She had been sick for months and this was missed many times by her primary care provider. She battled cancer for 15 months.

**My family and I are forever grateful for the care she received with the oncologist and team at the Cowell Family Cancer Center, Infusion Suite, and most importantly, to the team at Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital. She was a warrior and the providers, nurses, aides, lab techs, and registrars showed nothing but excellent care and compassion those 15 months. She praised them.**

Her final days were spent at Paul Oliver Living and Rehabilitation Center. What a blessing. **The care my mother and our family received was phenomenal.** That team is magical.

Thank you, Cowell Family Cancer Center, Infusion Services, Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital ER, Lab, and Paul Oliver Living & Rehab. Her journey is over, but you gave us the best and most memorable 15 months with our mom, Carol.

She adored everyone she encountered during her journey. **You lifted her, cared for her, and positively impacted our lives.** We are forever grateful for our small-town heroes.

– The Children of Carol Gunderson

Whether seeking specialty care at an outpatient facility or a hospital, our dedicated Healthcare Team is committed to offering high-quality care close to home. **Your support of programs, services, and equipment needs makes this possible.**



Todd and his father, Cecil, shared a remarkable bond.

## Helping Loved Ones Pass with Dignity

When asked to describe his dad, Todd Roy will tell you he was one of the greats. That's why Todd wanted the best care for his father when he approached the end of his life.

**“He deserved to pass with as much dignity as possible because he gave so much of himself to people,” Todd said. “I knew Munson [Healthcare Hospice] was the way to go.”**

### An Extraordinary Man



Cecil E. Hendershott, Jr., was many things.

A hardworking businessman. A loving, doting husband. A supportive father and family man. A great friend and neighbor.

When Cecil's wife, Judy, became chronically ill, Cecil stepped into the role of caretaker with no complaints. Between work and parenting their eight children, Cecil still

found time to write Judy love notes, buy her flowers, and shower her with love.

When Todd joined Michigan State University's cheerleading team, Cecil – a proud University of Michigan football fan – never missed a game. And although he was usually listening to the U of M game through headphones, he was always there in the stands for Todd.

When Cecil retired from his nearly 40-year career at Consumers Energy, he started a lawn care business, which allowed him to serve his community for another 26 years. Cecil was especially passionate about serving neighbors and individuals who needed assistance.

Cecil battled multiple myeloma for several years before his family moved him into an assisted living facility. When the cancer spread and he began to decline, they requested the services of Munson Healthcare Hospice.







Cecil was a loving and supportive husband, father, and friend.

## Above and Beyond

Munson Healthcare Hospice's strong reputation is why Todd chose their services for his father. His expectations were exceeded after seeing this care in action.

"Munson Hospice went above and beyond most hospices," Todd said. "I was thoroughly impressed."

Losing a loved one is an already difficult process, made even more challenging by worries about comfort and care. But Munson Healthcare Hospice helped to relieve Todd and his family of some of this burden.

**"It's always good to bring professionals in that can help you not have to wear so many hats," Todd shared. "I got to be the son. I didn't have to worry about the nuances of care; I got to grieve."**

After Cecil's passing, Munson Healthcare Hospice stayed in touch with Todd and his siblings to ensure they had the bereavement resources they needed.

"That made the biggest difference – how they circled around our family after the death. Because it's easy to move onto the next patient, but we're still out there grieving."

Todd expressed his gratitude to the following hospice staff members who cared for his father:

Angie and Amanda, the nurses who provided loving care to Cecil and kept Todd informed of his condition. Mark, a spiritual care advisor who visited with Cecil to chat and play guitar. Erin, a bereavement coordinator who provided Todd with grief support resources after Cecil's death. And Roman Barazza, MD, medical director for Munson Healthcare Hospice, who exuded warmth and confidence in his work and kindness with his staff, patients, and Todd's family.

**"The bottom line is hospice played a huge role for a man that deserved to be treated well because he treated so many people well over the years," Todd shared. "I wouldn't have had it any other way with Munson. They did a wonderful job and I'm very grateful."**



## You Keep Hospice Strong

Todd and Cecil's story is a testament to the important role Hospice plays in supporting patients and families through the end-of-life journey. Your generous support ensures Munson Healthcare Hospice can offer services to everyone in Northern Michigan, regardless of a patient's ability to pay.



# 2023 Community Events: Making a Difference Together



## 13th Annual Fifth Third Bank Leapin' Leprechaun 5k

The National Cherry Festival hosted its 13th Leapin' Leprechaun 5k, presented by Fifth Third Bank, on March 18. A portion of event proceeds will support our littlest patients and their families at Munson Medical Center.

## 9th Annual Hospice Breakfast

The Munson Healthcare Hospice Breakfast took place at the Park Place Hotel on May 9. More than 180 people attended and \$45,000 was raised to support palliative, hospice, and bereavement care for northern Michigan patients and families.



## 20th Annual Cadillac Hospital Golf Ball

This fun golf outing, held on June 2 at the Cadillac Country Club, raised nearly \$27,000 to help bring a state-of-the-art CT scanner to Cadillac Hospital.



## 25th Annual Otsego Memorial Hospital Golf Outing

Despite the rainy weather, over 100 people joined us for a fun day on June 15 at Treetops Resort! The event raised over \$49,000 to support critical equipment needs at Otsego Memorial Hospital.

## 33rd Annual Grayling Hospital Golf Classic

One hundred golfers joined us on June 23 at the Grayling Country Club for the Golf Classic. Nearly \$20,000 was raised for equipment and technology upgrades and enhancements at Grayling Hospital.



## Tee Off for Benzie

The Crystal Downs Women's Auxiliary hosted their annual golf outing on July 18, raising \$8,325 for the Journey Program at Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital.

## Crystal Downs Country Club ProAm

The 2023 ProAm Golf Outing was held on August 14 at Crystal Downs Country Club. Over \$22,000 was raised for patient care at Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital.



## 11th Annual Power of the Purse

Over 200 community members gathered on August 10 at The Truck Stop in Cadillac for an evening of purses and celebration. More than \$39,000 was raised to support the purchase of ultrasound equipment for women's health services!



## Annual Hospice Memorial Butterfly Releases

Munson Healthcare Foundations partnered with Munson Healthcare Hospice in August 2023 to host memorial butterfly releases in Cadillac, Grayling, and Traverse City. These heartwarming events celebrated the lives of those loved and lost.

## Boyne Angels Annual Cancer Fundraiser

The Boyne Angels Ladies' Golf League hosted an outing on August 16 "Under the Big Top" at Boyne Resort. These ladies raised over \$4,000 to support Cancer Patient Needs at Munson Healthcare.



## Benefit Concert for Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital

A benefit concert featuring Michigan-based talent Breathe Owl Breathe was held on August 24 at Iron Fish Distillery. All proceeds supported the expansion of primary care services in northern Michigan.

## Traverse City West High School Pink Out Football Game

The TC West Titans hosted their annual football Pink Out game on September 22. Over \$5,500 in proceeds from the game supported Cancer Patient Needs. Way to go, Titans!

## Mio Au Sable vs. Fairview Pink Out Volleyball Game

Mio-Au Sable and Fairview High Schools came together on October 10 to raise funds for cancer patient needs on behalf of Grayling Hospital. We are humbled by the support of these communities, who have raised over \$75,000 since 2016!

## Traverse City Central High School Dig Pink Volleyball Game

The Traverse City Central High School Trojans hosted their annual volleyball "Dig Pink" game on October 25. Proceeds from the event supported the Cancer Patient Needs Fund.



## Pitching for Good

As a professional softball player for Athletes Unlimited, Haylie Wagner has the opportunity to give back to causes and organizations she is passionate about. This summer, Haylie – who also works at Munson Medical Center's Child Care Center – chose to give back to the Child Development program at Munson Healthcare.



**“We’re not only playing pro softball and hoping that the younger generation gets to be at this level one day, but we also get to impact something that is outside of softball and is something that we love,” Haylie shared. “I think that’s important.”**

Photo courtesy of Jade Hewitt Media

## Upcoming Events

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### **100 Women Who Care - Cadillac Area**

Women in the Cadillac community gather three times each year to support local charities. A portion of members' donations from each event support Cadillac Hospital! Past gifts have supported equipment purchases, hospice services, and nursing education.

### **Shop Your Community Day**

Fifteen percent of sales made at participating Downtown Traverse City businesses on November 11 will support the shopper's organization of choice. We are thrilled Munson Healthcare Hospice has been selected as a benefitting organization!

### **Giving Tuesday**

Join us on November 28 for a worldwide day of giving back! Giving Tuesday takes place on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving and Black Friday to harness the power of collective good in your community.

Visit [munsonhealthcare.org/foundationevents](https://munsonhealthcare.org/foundationevents) to view additional community events.



Interested in hosting an event to support your local hospital? We love assisting with these initiatives! Please contact Kira Walkup at **231-213-1161** for more information.