



Live – Without Limits



WESTERN NEW YORK
BloodCare
SPECIALISTS • LAB • PHARMACY

Live – Without Limits

Worldwide, more than 380,000 people have been diagnosed with some type of bleeding disorder. If you were one of them, life used to be quite precarious. You sat inside at recess. You avoided crowds. Physical sports were off-limits. Certain careers were unthinkable.

Not Anymore. Today, Western New Yorkers with these disorders usually lead normal lives – because WNY BloodCare helps them live theirs to the fullest.

As the region's premier Hemophilia Treatment Center, we provide a state-of-the-art diagnostic, clinical and pharmaceutical team who work together – under one roof – to best manage your health with comprehensive, efficient and compassionate care.

We treat the entire patient, including their physical, nutritional and emotional needs. We guide families on the best ways to support their loved ones. We train future practitioners and educators. We sponsor innovative research. We advocate for patients at local, state and national levels. We raise awareness about the spectrum of blood disorders – and the funding needed to help treat and manage them.

So, chances are, if you have these conditions today, they no longer rule your life. Instead, they're inconveniences... and together, we work to ensure they don't limit your dreams.

WNY BloodCare is a separate, not-for-profit, New York State-licensed diagnostic and treatment center offering a variety of specialized diagnostic and health maintenance services for those with blood disorders that require lifelong medical management. Through its clinical services, advocacy, education, and research initiatives, WNY BloodCare strives to improve the quality of life for people affected by these conditions.



Mission

WNY BloodCare was founded as the Hemophilia Center of WNY in 1969 within the E.J. Meyer Memorial Hospital — now ECMC. In 1984, a pediatric satellite was established at Children's Hospital of Buffalo. In 2009, both the adult and pediatric sites merged, enabling all patients to be treated at one site. **Our comprehensive care model for treatment and disease management has been used since our inception, as we've served patients and their families across WNY's eight counties for nearly 55 years.**

History

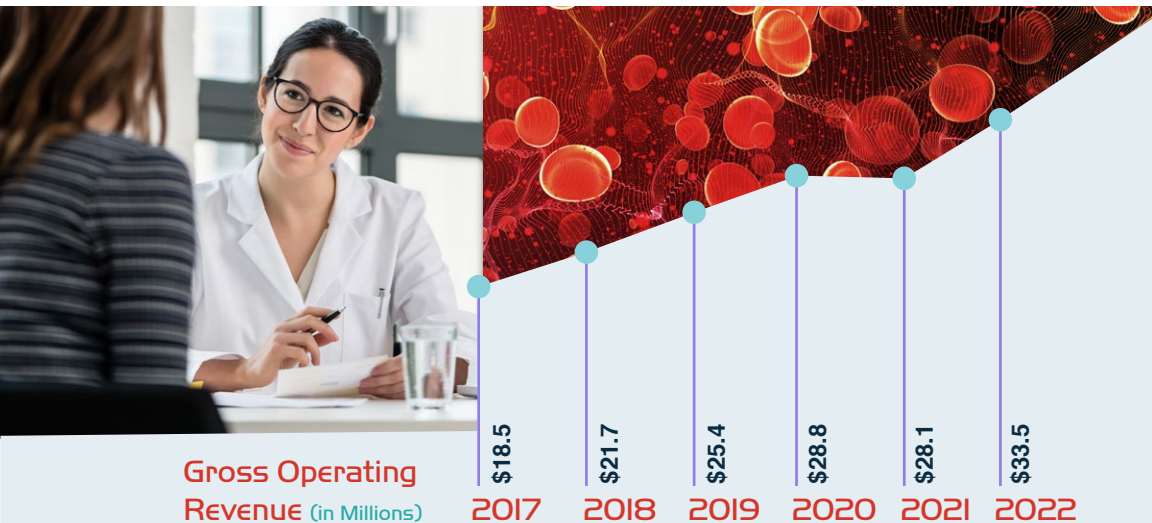
Dear Patients, Partners and Supporters,

I am honored to share this letter with you as our new CEO, following the well-earned retirement of Laurel Reger, our longtime leader. Laurie did a remarkable job growing and diversifying this organization into the healthcare gem it's become over the last decade. You can review some of those highlights in the back of this report, and I'm fortunate to follow in her footsteps, leading this amazing team in its continued evolution as we strive to move from gem to crown-jewel status.

The past year was significant for WNY BloodCare. From staff additions and promotions to new services and partnerships, we fostered improvements in virtually every segment of our organization. Each has the potential to make an even bigger difference, for even more people, to live – without limits.

Topping this list was the promotion of Dr. Beverly Schaefer to Medical Director. Her knowledge of bleeding disorders is matched only by her dedication to our patient population – and her colleagues' success. Her leadership in our S.H.E. (Specialized Hematology Experts) Clinic has been transformational for those suffering from heavy menstruation and underlying disorders. She has also been a driving force behind three interdisciplinary partnerships with the University at Buffalo's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Through these, students are trained and mentored by our staff – and in one case, our patients – so that they're more cognizant of the many issues in the field of bleeding and clotting disorders. Dr. Schaefer is also active in the scientific community, as shown by her advisory team role with CSL Behring, producers of the new gene therapy product, Hemgenix.

Another major milestone was recruiting Ryan Hare, PharmD BCOP, as a full-time clinical pharmacist. His addition has also allowed us to expand into new types of infusions and treatments for autoimmune and inflammatory diseases. He has also helped us expand our practice and broaden our expertise in medication interaction combinations. Dr. Hare is leading the charge to pursue new accreditations as well, giving us even more credibility and options for external collaboration. All of this is accelerating our growth, increasing our pharmaceutical capacity, and providing a new





layer of organizational and administrative leadership, such as improved inventory systems and ordering processes.

We also welcomed Lalaruhk Khan Aftab, M.D., to our board. Dr. Aftab is an Assistant Professor of Pathology and Anatomical Sciences at the University of Buffalo, and we're fortunate to have added her experience and counsel.

These and other additions give us not just more hands to do more work, but fresh perspectives and ideas to view opportunities in exciting new ways. For instance, we're exploring ways to reach further across Western New York and serve residents in outlying counties who have difficulties traveling to Buffalo. That may be accomplished through partnerships with providers in those municipalities, or via the launch of a mobile unit, for which we're in the planning stages.

However, the best perspectives often come from the people we serve. Thus, we've rekindled our patient focus group so they can share their thoughts not just on their courses of treatment and other services received, but also on our events, programming, advocacy and other happenings. Many of our wrap-around services were born from this kind of feedback. From nutrition and genetic specialists to physical therapists

and dentists, we pride ourselves on taking care of the whole patient, so they can lead the most normal, fullest lives possible.

We support them at every stage of life, too. We meet with teachers, nurses and guidance counselors, helping them understand the challenges our pediatric patients encounter and the adjustments they can make to increase their feelings of inclusion and belonging. We provide college scholarships, having given more than \$100,000 just last year to 12 students hoping to earn advanced degrees. We work with HR teams, sharing tips to keep our patients healthy and reliable at work. We work with HMOs and other insurers, to advocate for and ensure fair, affordable and accessible medications and treatment. We even work with nursing homes and assisted living facilities, to guard against misinformation and prejudice when our patients apply for residency.

Similarly, we foster a communal environment for patients and their families. One example is a Family Day we host at Cradle Beach, to give people the chance to make friends and share stories, struggles, and best practices.

Exploration in our field is vital as well. That's why we held our second annual research symposium earlier this year, bringing in national speakers to discuss up-and-coming research. It shines a light on our local research too, further positioning our region among the nation's leaders in these advancements. An example is our translational research grant program, through which we fund bleeding and clotting disorder research happening right here in WNY.

Lastly, we generate funding for these initiatives. We held our first 5K fundraiser in September at Buffalo's Outer Harbor, and we routinely apply for grants and seek sponsors and partners for a variety of programs.

The question I've received most often since starting is, what drew me to this opportunity, versus another healthcare entity. Despite all the amazing capabilities, services and advances I just shared, I always say, "It's the culture." Our team is extremely talented and equally passionate. Having worked at several healthcare and related organizations, I assure you, finding this is not the norm; not anymore. We have strong values, a thirst for collaboration, and a genuine unity in our dedication to our patients and one another. It makes it easy to jump out of bed each morning, knowing I'm going to work with people of such high caliber and character.

My role is to preserve that culture – but to also find ways to expand our geographic footprint, penetrate new markets, and serve new communities. You can expect announcements in the coming months that will address these very objectives. Until then, we appreciate your support as we follow our mission of improving the quality of life in the bleeding and clotting disorders community, helping our patients to live – without limits!

Sincerely,

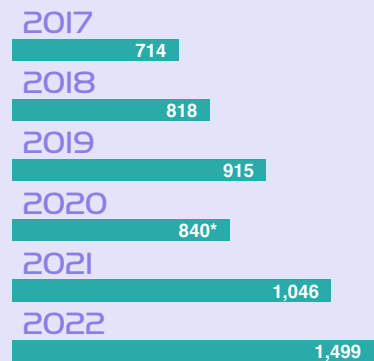


Thomas V. Greico
Chief Executive Officer



Thomas V. Greico, CEO

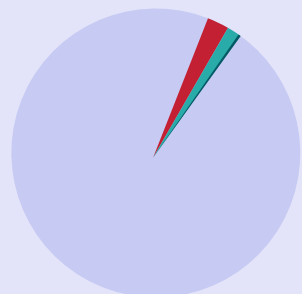
Patient Threshold Visits



*COVID impacted.

Operating Expenses

Cost of Factor 92.5%
HTC Operating Expenses 4.4%
 Management 2.2%
 Public Education/Other 0.9%



Niagara Falls was illuminated red to raise awareness on World Hemophilia Day this past April.



Complete Comprehensive Care

When a patient walks through our doors, we're ready to help. People come to us not because they want to tolerate their conditions – they want to live with them.

Our team of specialists are ready to make their lives better. From physicians, nurses, dentists and pharmacists to physical therapists, social workers, geneticists and nutritionists, we have knowledgeable experts at every phase of the medical spectrum, trained to improve a patient's quality of life.

Many bleeding disorders result from the body's inability to produce a blood protein called "factor," needed for the clotting process. There are various factor proteins and the absence of any is dangerous for patients. The most common condition is Von Willebrand Disease (vWD), which affects 3% of people in the U.S. The most severe is hemophilia, which can cause internal bleeding, pain, swelling or tightness in joints, blood in the urine or stool, and nose bleeds. It can damage organs and even be life-threatening. We treat patients with platelet disorders, anemia and Gaucher's disease as well.

Also, many people suffer from Thrombophilia – a group of conditions which are essentially the inverse of hemophilia. These patients develop venous and arterial blood clots, which can cause cerebral and vascular strokes.

"There are roughly 900,000 patients diagnosed annually with (DVT) Deep Vein Thrombosis or a pulmonary embolism. That's considerably larger than the bleeding disorder community," Dr. Schaefer explains. "Tragically, sudden death is the first symptom for close to 25% of this population, so any advances we make in this field may literally save lives."

Thus, we work with patients, post-diagnosis, to prescribe blood thinners as well as dietary and exercise recommendations to prevent reoccurrences. We've also expanded the services we provide to stroke patients, collaborating with area neurology and cardiology practices. Similarly, we've begun treating extremely rare vascular anomalies, including patients with hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia who are at-risk for bleeding and clotting.

We also give them the opportunity to be included in national patient registries. These offer patients a chance to participate in research studies that follow the natural course of their disease, thus helping the bleed disorder community learn more about these rare disorders and complications over a life span. Patients also might participate in clinical trials, offering access to a new therapy or one in which they may help providers learn more about their disease.



In addition, we focus on preventive methods – which means collaborating with other physicians and organizations to assist their patients as well. We reach out to primary care providers and OBGYNs across the region, as well as general hematology practices, to work with their patients and help change behaviors before a thrombotic episode occurs.

“Best of all, we’re a one-stop shop,” adds Chief Operating Officer Jessica Wulf, LMSW. “Think of how it goes when you see a specialist. We’re the opposite of that.”

Of course, we’ve all experienced what she describes. Start with your primary care doctor. Get the referrals. Set up those appointments – often weeks or months apart – and travel all over WNY to see everyone you need.

We offer all these services under one roof at our Buffalo Medical Corridor facility. Patients schedule one visit and see as many staff members as needed. Not only does this save patients and families valuable time and money, it increases the likelihood of quality care, as our onsite caregivers communicate in real time and collectively review symptoms, medical histories and other factors in their diagnoses, prescriptions and recommendations.

“These efficiencies are even enjoyed by our payers, who are charged a single co-pay for the visit,” Wulf adds. “It makes you wonder why more providers don’t do the same.”



*Marilyn and
Michael
Tuberdycy*

Growing up and having a Hemophilia Center in WNY, along with the treatment I received over my youth through my senior years, has allowed me to have a high-quality life. Year after year, having top medical teams and support from social workers and physical therapists gave my life with hemophilia a more even playing field. The doctors and staff would listen to my concerns, and I could trust in the care I was given. I can’t say enough about how fortunate we are to have WNY BloodCare in our region. We have the top medical care here that other cities wish they could have.

*Michael Tuberdycy
Factor VIII severe*



Pediatric Services

Decades ago, our team recognized the unique challenges which bleeding and clotting disorders present to children and teens. From activity-based limitations to emotional trauma, these conditions have the potential to create long-lasting physical and mental health issues if not managed early and expertly.

That's why we've invested in child specialists. In addition to pediatricians, our team includes pediatric dentists, pharmacists, nutritionists, geneticists, social workers and physical therapists, each with an extensive understanding of youth concerns. Our decades of experience and knowledge of many family histories help us recognize early symptoms, and our state-of-the-art medications and mental health focus help establish the proper attitudes in patients and families to limit the impact these conditions may have on most children as they develop into young adults.

Early detection ensures that kids can manage their condition at an early age, giving them the greatest chance to participate in athletics and outdoor activities, and limiting the chance that they will feel or be perceived as different.

Recent developments are making life with bleeding disorders considerably better for children than their previous generations' experienced. One example

is the launch of Hemlibra, an alternative to traditional factor infusions which deliver a peak dose that diminishes over time. Instead, Hemlibra keeps patients at a steady plateau, which results in more predictability and fewer complications for patients and providers.

Another new advancement is the subcutaneous delivery method. Hematologists used to put mediports in the majority of children. Now, it's so much easier to administer medications.

We also work closely with school nurses, teachers and counselors, as well as day care centers, after-school programs and other youth services providers to educate and train their staff on what to look for in patients, and how to ensure they are included and not singled out.

Yet, the greatest benefit we offer our pediatric patients is perhaps the promise to be with them, forever. Because so many patients are diagnosed when they're children, they come to us throughout their lives. Our staff gets to really know them and becomes highly invested in them. It increases patients' levels of trust, and it allows us to give very personalized, caring service to them, often until they become senior citizens. This lifelong bond is unique among most patient-provider relationships, and it's a point of pride for all our colleagues.

WNY BloodCare has educated and strengthened our family. Anytime we need care, we are called by the nurses and care is set up. Having a procedure, but not sure if you need pre-treatment, WNY BloodCare is on top of it. We feel like we are not alone in this bleeding community. Every staff member is talented, committed, kind, patient and communicates most effectively. We are healthy and continue to be educated during every visit. Thank you WNY BloodCare!!

- The Randle Family

*Simon Blu Randle
with his mother,
Suzy.*



For decades, our organization was called the Hemophilia Center of WNY. It makes sense, as it was formed in 1969 to primarily care for males with the condition. Yet, it did not take into consideration the fact that many women can be affected by hemophilia as well as other serious bleeding disorders. As the years went on, the team recognized that women and others suffered from similar disorders, yet they were not being prioritized and our team was not adequately prepared to support their unique needs. It ultimately led us to expand our services and rebrand in 2018.

Woman, young girls and persons who menstruate face a unique set of challenges among bleeding and clotting disorders. From physical dangers to emotional embarrassment, the potential exists for significant trauma as well as missed academic, career and social opportunities. Pediatric Hematologist Beverly Schaefer, M.D., our medical director, leads this team, along with Gynecologist Shaveta Malik, M.D., and Family Nurse Practitioners Andrew Wurster and Emily (Diaz) Skinner.

“The S.H.E. Clinic is a unique model which has earned the Women and Girls Bleeding Disorder (WGBD) clinic of excellence designation, giving Western New Yorkers access to unique and valuable resources, confidants and advocates,” Dr. Schaefer attests. “It’s a point of pride for our colleagues and another example of our comprehensive approach to clinical care.”

Like the rest of our organization, this team is multi-disciplinary, with geneticists, pediatricians, dieticians, physical therapists, pharmacists and more playing unique roles in patient success. It’s also always looking to grow and evolve. We continue to provide high-quality care for pregnant women, including prenatal counseling, management of a bleeding disorder around delivery, or management of a blood-thinner therapy.

“Our goal is to help menstruating persons of all backgrounds live high-quality lives,” adds Andrew Wurster, F-NP. “This means removing as many barriers and risks as possible, and freeing them from inconvenience, danger and pain, so that they may live their lives to the fullest.”



S.H.E. CLINIC
Specialized
Hematology
Experts

Specialty Pharmaceutical and Laboratory Services

Our greatest strength is the ability to address multiple patient needs under one roof, during one visit. After patients meet with our doctors and specialists, they can immediately get prescriptions filled and lab work completed. Thus, if there's ever a question, conversations happen in real time between patients and staff to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Our federally designated 340B pharmacy has been vital to WNY BloodCare for decades. Last year we invested in it further by adding Ryan Hare, PharmD BCOP, our first Director of Pharmacy. He brings expertise in malignant hematology, lymphoma and multiple myeloma, and he's accelerating our benign hematology expansion with his anti-coagulation management and investigation pharmacy experience.

Dr. Hare is part of our comprehensive clinic team too, focusing on patient and family education. He's also improved our ability to educate staff on pioneering medications, drug monographs and best practices.

"When we introduce new drugs and therapies, we make sure our team is educated," he explains. "We must know about potential risks, compatibility issues, side effects, regulatory requirements and lifestyle recommendations."

For example, some newer, slow-release medications last longer in some patients. Theoretically, this makes them far more convenient, moving from daily or even thrice-weekly injections to potentially just once a week. However, they don't mesh with everyone.

"We must evaluate and scrutinize these new medications to ensure they will work for each patient," he advises. "Do they truly improve the patient's life – and is

it worth a change? As we expand into benign hematology, our whole team needs to know what these drugs and therapies can do, as well as their limitations."

Speaking of expansion, pharmacy accessibility is also top-of-mind as we reach further across Western New York. We use tools like telemedicine when possible, positioning us to explore mobile units, office sharing and more, to effectively counsel patients, whether they're in our office or their own homes.

Hare, who is board-certified in hematology, is also leading our efforts for our pharmacy to become accredited. With a goal of earning URAC (Utilization Review Accreditation Commission) accreditation in mid-2024, this will provide another sign of quality and peace-of-mind for patients and insurers.

Our in-house laboratory is equally critical to our patients and team. As a CLIA-certified lab, it provides state-of-the-art services and evaluative turnaround times in as little as two hours. This is advantageous for physicians and patients, because bleeding and clotting tests are time-sensitive and specialized. Our capabilities are unmatched in the region, and this team keeps costs low and test accuracy high for patients and providers.





Physicians are most critical to anyone struggling with a bleeding or clotting disorder. Yet, many struggles can be limited and managed effectively with proactive management. That's why our comprehensive approach to care includes so many other healthcare specialists among our team. Our patients have regular access to dietitians, physical therapists, dentists, social workers and genetic counselors. Many of these professionals also have pediatric focuses, making them ideally suited to care for kids and teens.

For instance, diet can play a substantial role in the health of someone with a bleeding or clotting disorder. Foods high in iron, for example, often present risks due to their anti-coagulation effects. Weight gain can cause other complications, especially for thrombosis patients. Our dietician works with patients to ensure they're putting the best foods into their body while staying active to the best possible extent.

Of course, to stay active, it helps to have strong muscles, bones and joints. Thus, our physical therapists are on-hand to help patients remain limber as they age and recover from surgeries or other traumas as they maintain a healthy level of strength and flexibility.

Dental care can be especially challenging for our patients, as common gum or mouth

bleeds – minor for most people – can be troubling. Therefore, we provide dentists who are deeply versed in our patients' challenges and ready to handle nearly any complication.

There are times when managing one's condition can feel overwhelming, especially when coupled with external factors like insurance battles, transportation access, family strife, substance abuse, behavioral health or job/housing instability. That's why we offer licensed medical social workers (LMSW) who meet with patients and provide support and guidance through assessments and community referrals.

Lastly, as the saying goes, "knowing is half the battle." Our geneticist can help patients understand their lineage and the likelihood of having inherited or passing down certain conditions to future generations. In some cases, they can help plan for and guard against severe impacts; in others, they can help patients avoid certain issues altogether.

Education is at the core of each of these services. Creating an understanding within patients and their families means that they become their own best planners, advocates and fighters. And, while there are clearly other providers who offer these services, none do so with the interconnectivity and experience our team has by specializing in bleeding and clotting disorder patients – together!



Research and Partnerships

As a national leader in bleeding and clotting disorder care, we've long felt the importance of extending our leadership via strategic partnerships and research. Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, Kaleida Health and Catholic Health are just some of the organizations with which we collaborate routinely. However, it was our partnership with the University of Buffalo (UB) that enjoyed the biggest progress this year. We were thrilled to launch three distinct initiatives including our WISTER, Health Mentors and Innovation Sprint programs. Each is designed to improve the quality of care for those living with bleeding and clotting disorders – in theory, in perpetuity – according to Program Administrator Jessica Kruger, Ph.D., Director of Teaching Innovation and Excellence at UB's School of Public Health and Health Professions.

Based on Jefferson University's Health Mentors Program, this is the first program of its kind in the U.S. to focus on bleeding and clotting disorders. Led by UB Professor of Nursing Kathy Mann, it has already produced posters which have been presented at the National Hemophilia Conference. The course is connected with 14 different academic programs at UB. Participating students have had such majors as medicine, nursing, public health, and social work. The first class had 29 students and seven mentors, each of whom received a stipend to help alleviate cost barriers.

Anecdotally, this has become an even greater success than we imagined. The bond our mentor-student pairings have formed is genuine, with some mentors even hosting students for dinner. The students are often humbled at their mentors' kindness and willingness to share so much of their personal lives. Some have been inspired to do additional rotations with our team, including social work interns and registered nursing (RN) rotations. One student was a hemophilia patient himself!

"You can read about things in a book, but when you see it in people and you interact with them, it has a different level of impact," explains Mary Haggerty, a WNY BloodCare board member who has also served as a mentor, along with her son. "It builds more empathy, support, and compassion – and it sticks!"

Health Mentors

This program allows students to get an up-close look at life for people with bleeding and clotting disorders. It pairs real-life WNY BloodCare patients with students, so they can see what it's like to live with a chronic illness. It also puts the patients in the role of the driver's seat, instead of the passenger, which they often find invigorating. They meet virtually and in-person, and at the end of the course, students create a wellness poster and slideshow – in partnership with their mentor – about their mentor's challenges and how they manage/overcome them.

University at Buffalo students learn onsite at our facility.



WISTER

An acronym for WNYBC's Interprofessional Student Team Experiential Rotations, WISTER exposes pre-med and medical school students to patients with bleeding and clotting disorders, so that they understand how to best treat them. Students follow patients through their entire visit at WNYBC. They watch them interact with and be treated by physicians, nurses, dentists, dietitians, physical therapists, pharmacists, geneticists, social workers and more.

"We want to make sure that when tomorrow's healthcare leaders are presented with patients like these, they have a thorough understanding for their unique challenges," says Kruger.

Another goal is to help students understand the importance of the social determinants of health to many of the individuals across this patient spectrum – factors for which we routinely screen and address.

"With at-risk populations, 40 to 60 percent of the issues affecting most cases are considered social determinants," adds Kruger, who has worked in free medical clinics since she was an undergraduate. "Understanding the healthcare system challenges they face will make our students better providers."

Innovation Sprint

Our third program is a research-focused partnership. Held annually, student investigators are encouraged to come up with ideas to solve a problem identified by our team.

Last year we worked with over 270 UB students, broken up into 40 teams of five to six. They include students from UB's School of Public Health and Health Professions, and its School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. Together, we worked on the problem of how to reach diverse patient populations and how to define those populations.

"This program really helps students think outside the box and sharpen their problem-solving skills," Wulf explains. "They see how process improvement impacts patient care. It's also great to

get the Gen Z perspective, which is often technology-based. Some ideas have included developing medical apps, creating mobile units and establishing outreach clinics."

"Each group's final product is a five-deck slide show that they record as they present," adds Kruger. "WNY BloodCare reviews and selects the winners, who receive UB 'Campus Cash' in addition to the experience they gain."

Innovation Sprint is conducted in partnership with LaunchPad, Blackstone Charitable Foundation's signature program. Its goal is to close the opportunity gap by equipping university students with entrepreneurial skills to build lasting careers.

Chapter Services and the WNYBC Foundation

Comprehensive care means treating the whole patient and supporting numerous facets of their lives. Thus, our Chapter Services team focuses on those external components of a patient's life that go beyond a physician's domain but are still important for a happy, healthy life.

Chief among these is family support. Whether the patient is a child or an adult, there are common if not universal needs for family members, from education and empathy to physical and financial assistance. Our colleagues help them form care plans, schedules and routines. We serve as sounding boards in moments of frustration and lead brainstorming sessions to overcome barriers. From a child's desire to participate in a high-risk activity to a young adult's determination to have a certain career, our team provides the environment and encouragement needed to have those conversations.

Our educator role extends beyond the patient's home. We connect with schools and employers so that patients have understanding advocates in class and at work. We also work with local, state and federal officials so that vital funding and legislation can benefit patients.

"We host patient focus groups as well, to get their perspectives on programming and changes within the center," adds Community Outreach Coordinator John Alduino. "We also host social events that bring patients and families together to share experiences and find strength in numbers."



State Senator Tim Kennedy took time to learn about the patients we serve.

Our "It's In My Blood" 5K run/walk fundraiser was held at Buffalo's Outer Harbor in September 2023. Celebrating the resilience of the region's bleeding disorder community, it raises awareness and funds for our education, support services and advocacy efforts.

The WNYBC Foundation works in concert with our Chapter Services team to provide support through financial and educational assistance to the bleeding and clotting community. Established in 2014, these funds allow patients to attend such events as the National Hemophilia Foundation Annual Meeting, as well as advocacy meetings in Albany and Washington, D.C.

The foundation also provides college scholarships, so patients can achieve the career of their dreams.

"This past year, we distributed a total of \$100,000 to 12 amazing students," Wulf says. "They're attending institutions such as the University of Connecticut, the University of Buffalo...one is even determined to work for NASA!"

Your Generosity Matters

We've evolved into the wonderful resource we are today because people like you have supported us for decades. Your financial support allows us to add expertise and depth. With each gift, we can consider more services, initiatives, advocacy campaigns and solutions. Please, visit wnybloodcare.org/wny-foundation today and see the impact your gift will have.

Volunteers Welcome!

Our events are a key component of our success and that of our patients! Would you like to help? We're always looking for new committee members and volunteers. You'll be amazed at the impact a few hours of your time can have. Email getinvolved@wnybloodcare.org to learn how you can make a difference!

A Salute to Laurel Reger

This past year, we said goodbye to Laurel Reger, our Executive Director of 10 years. She capped off her 35-year career by leading WNY BloodCare through a pivotal decade that featured numerous expansions, a physical relocation, a successful re-branding, the launch of our foundation, and a global pandemic.

Through it all, “Laurie” kept the well-being of our patients, along with the tight-knit culture of our team, at the forefront of every decision.

Indeed, when asked what she’s most proud of, Laurie finds herself reflecting on things that meant the most to her patients and team. She lists the ability to begin funding research in the community, including the foray into benign hematology. She’s also thrilled to have added students, who now learn onsite and see what patients experience first-hand.

“I think about our mentors’ program, which provided a voice to patients and put them in the position to teach tomorrow’s healthcare leaders,” she says. “Many were long-term patients who were finally able to share what they’ve been wanting to for years.”

She’s also incredibly appreciative of the Board of Directors, who listened to her recommendations and supported her whenever possible.

“The board allowed me to create a true leadership team. They trusted me to delegate some work, which enabled us to do much more,” she adds. “In essence, they strengthened our vision.”

Retirement hasn’t come easily for Laurie, who still talks about all the exciting things on the horizon for patients, like new gene therapy treatments. Yet, as the weeks have passed, she’s come to appreciate her newfound freedoms. It helps, too, that she loves and trusts the team she helped build.

“They are wonderful, caring individuals,” she attests. “I’m very confident that things are in good hands.”

They are, Laurie – thanks to you. Here’s wishing you a long and fun-filled retirement!



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