



An Integrated
Network of Care



2020
Community Impact Report

2020: A Year of Change and Determination



Ben Hayes
Chair,
Board of Directors



Rafael J. Sciuolo
President and CEO

Dear Friends of Empath Health,

Along with the rest of the world, 2020 brought about extensive changes to the organizations of Empath Health. This community impact report highlights the many innovative services and programs Empath Health developed to continue serving our patients, families, clients and participants with the best possible care in the midst of a global pandemic.

In addition to the creative ways we continue to serve our community, we saw other major changes in our organizations.

In February, we announced the intended merger of Empath Health and Stratum Health Systems which will ultimately create the largest not-for-profit, hospice-based healthcare system in the country. Once completed, the new organization will serve more than 6,000 people a day in a nine-county region through hospice, home health, HIV, palliative care and grief services. In December, the boards of both organizations finalized their approval of the merger and created a new board to oversee the entire process. The next and final step is receipt of regulatory approvals which we expect in early 2021.

While we await regulatory approvals, we are not sitting still. This partnership has proven invaluable during the changes we encountered in 2020 as team members of both organizations worked together to purchase necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) for our employees and developed the most efficient ways of testing our patients and employees. Other major projects have already begun as well, such as working together to transfer to a new electronic medical record (EMR) system and creating our first joint strategic plan.

Another exciting change in 2020 was the announcement that Suncoast Hospice was awarded the initial approval by the Agency for Health Care Administration to expand our hospice care services into Hillsborough County. This is great news as it allows us to touch more lives and offer Hillsborough residents and their families expanded access to expert, compassionate hospice services.

We will likely all look back to 2020 as the year of change. But we also think this was the year of determination. While so much of what the world remembers might be unfavorable, we want you to know that Empath Health has risen to the challenges and we are determined to continue providing innovative, high quality, life-changing care to everyone we serve. This commitment is one thing that hasn't changed – it's only getting stronger.

With Gratitude,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is a stylized 'B' followed by a horizontal line. The second signature is 'Rafael' written in a cursive script.

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Empath Health: An Integrated Network

Empath Health is a nonprofit, integrated network of care in Tampa Bay providing expert medical, counseling and support services for anyone living with a chronic or advanced illness or who is grieving. We began our mission as the first and only hospice provider in Pinellas County in 1977 when a group of pioneering community volunteers carried out their dream of compassionate care for the dying and their families.

Today, our highly-trained staff and volunteers care for hospice, home health, palliative care, veteran and pediatric patients, aging seniors and HIV/AIDS clients. We also offer caregiver and family support, HIV/AIDS and STD testing, health education, as well as grief and crisis counseling. Services are provided wherever someone needs them – in individuals' homes, our specialized facilities or other residential and care settings.

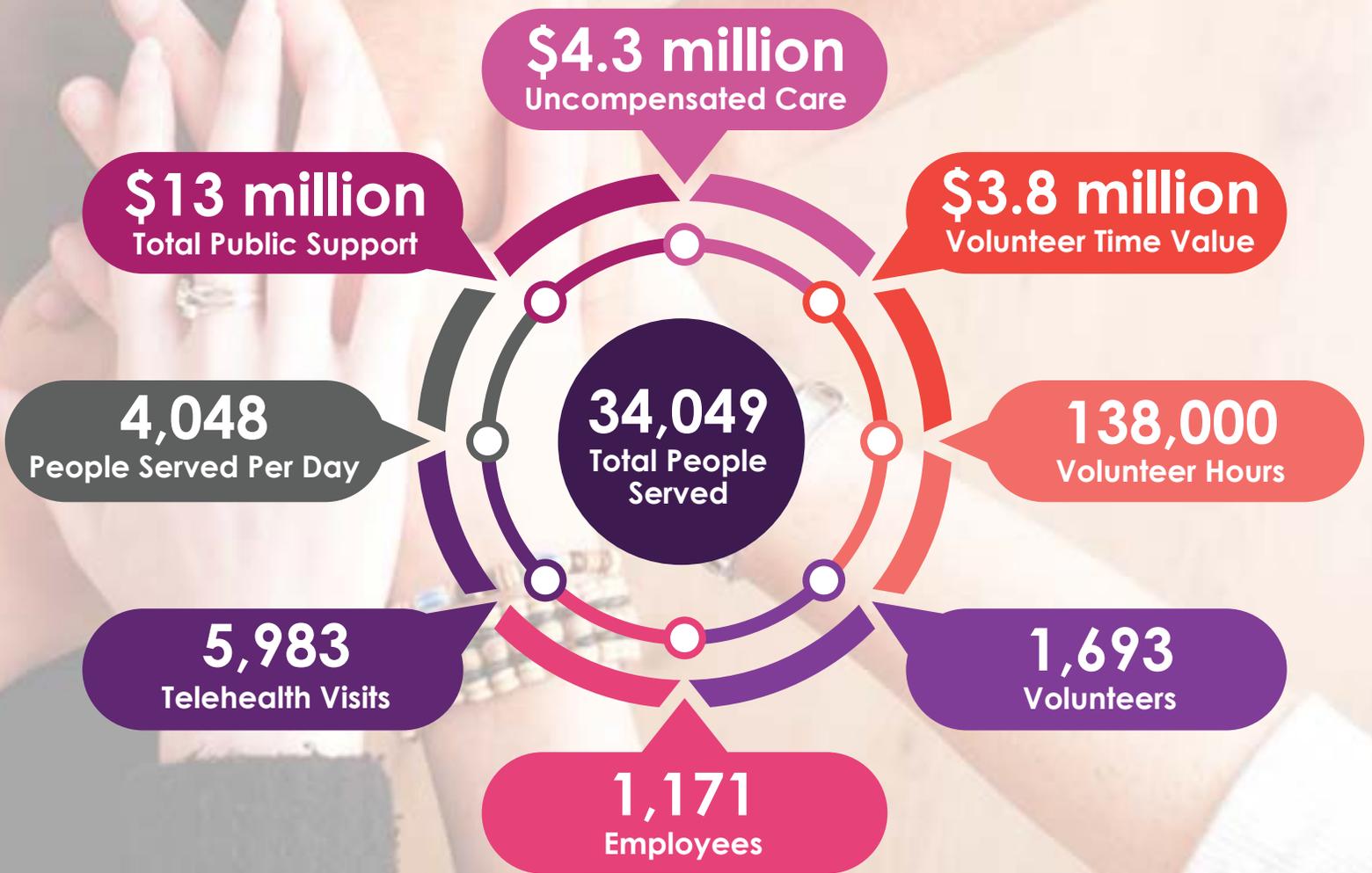
Every program or service we offer was impacted by the pandemic in 2020 and finding ways to continue our care in the highest quality ways became a focus. Those efforts are apparent in that we provided nearly 6,000 combined telehealth visits this year, through our hospice care, grief support, elder care and palliative care services.

We are a community-based organization, dedicated to helping everyone who needs care and support, regardless of their ability to pay. This is made possible through support from community donors and volunteers along with our partnerships with more than 800 care partners and community organizations.

In addition to treating physical pain, our goal is to enhance whole comfort for those we serve, according to their beliefs and wishes. We help nurture emotional, spiritual and social well-being, coordinate resources, educate caregivers, guide in healthcare decision making and other support. In 2020, Empath Health touched the lives of more than 34,049 individuals through our fully-integrated network and provided \$4.3 million in uncompensated care to the community.



By the Numbers





Empath Health Employees: Working Together, Providing Hope

Perhaps those who experienced the most changes – presented with the most harrowing challenges, were our employees. Not only did they have to manage the constant fluctuations and rising fears in their personal lives, they were on the frontlines, caring for those who needed us. And if they weren't on the frontlines, they were putting in extra hours to support those who were.

Committees were formed with representatives from across the organization, figuring out the best ways to get all the additional PPE needed for our staff; monitoring the constant updates from the CDC and state and local governments; communicating all new policies and procedures with patients, family members and staff; redeploying available support staff to areas with the most need; and determining how best to get staff tested so they could keep caring for patients. Our HR staff found unique ways to orient new hires and provide necessary ongoing training and education without being able to meet in groups. Our IT department quickly figured out how to accommodate all the new virtual requirements of staff and how we could help our patients and families stay connected when they couldn't be together. And the hardest: being with

people when they die alone because loved ones couldn't be there. The list truly goes on and on. But they were determined to step up. And they did just that.

All essential workers, especially on the frontlines in healthcare, have experienced the exhaustion and the feeling that 2020 would never end. As an organization, we tried to honor them with things like catering lunches for "drive-through" pick-ups; and hosting Empath Together Week with treats and items each day. But no amount of recognition could truly represent just how much we appreciate our employees. We are truly honored to work with the most compassionate, dedicated and hard-working people anywhere. They fully epitomize the statement: when the going gets tough, the tough get going.



Volunteers: Supporting and Inspiring

Volunteers have been an integral part of our story from the very beginning. They work with us to provide companionship, comfort and respite for patients and families; recreation and support for aging seniors; computer or maintenance work; customer service in our Resale Shops and service centers; support for fundraising events; assistance with food and personal care pantries; honor and support for veterans; and more. Clearly, they are a part of everything we do.

Our nearly 1,700 volunteers are so dedicated that many continued to serve throughout the pandemic. All hospice organizations in the country are required to maintain a 5% “match” of services provided by volunteers (and some struggle to reach that under normal circumstances), but the regulatory agency put that on hold this year due to the pandemic. However, we still had a 7% match in 2020, thanks to the commitment and hard work of our beloved volunteers. No one understands the complex needs of our patients, clients and participants better than our volunteers so those who could continue to help, really stepped up.

Empath Health has approximately 300 teen volunteers who really made their presence known

to our patients and staff in 2020. They spent many hours going to various facilities where our patients reside creating “chalk the walk” events, where they displayed their creativity through colorful drawings and phrases for all to enjoy. They also held these events at Empath Health locations, cheering on staff who have been working so hard during these times.

We couldn't do what we do without the volunteers who support us – from board members to greeters to office workers to patient companions. Every bit of what each one contributes makes an important impact on the lives of those we serve.



1,693
Volunteers

297
Teen
Volunteers

138,000
Volunteer
Hours

\$3.8
million
Volunteer
Time Value

Suncoast Hospice: Expert Care, Compassionate Hearts

Suncoast Hospice continues to be the cornerstone program of Empath Health, caring for more than 8,838 adult and pediatric patients each year. We are honored to be Pinellas County's only community-based hospice provider, caring for our community since 1977.

While many things have changed in hospice since those early days, 2020 brought about some of the most challenging times for our patients and their loved ones. Along with lockdowns and quarantines came families not being able to visit their loved ones and patients sometimes cautious about letting us into their homes. As hospitals and long-term care facilities dealt with new rules and regulations about visitors, it became more challenging to see patients. But we were determined. Determined to continue providing our much-needed holistic care.

We worked with families, physicians and facility partners to help patients through telemedicine visits and to keep patients connected with loved ones who couldn't visit. We monitored ever-changing rules and regulations for hospitals and long term care facilities to determine how to

best partner with them so patients could continue to receive care. As regulations around staff

testing changed, we kept pace so we didn't miss a beat with caring for our patients wherever they were located.

The compassion in our care has always been dependent on smiling, friendly faces and warm touches – sometimes even embraces. The changes brought about by the pandemic made those aspects less obvious as we donned our masks and gloves full-time in order to best protect the people we are so honored to serve. But we were determined. Determined to continue making our patients feel comfortable and cared for – so we learned to smile more with our eyes and our voices and find other meaningful ways to best communicate our care and compassion.

The Suncoast Hospice Care Centers where 3,674 of our patients were treated, were also greatly impacted by the pandemic, as visitor regulations continually changed; common areas had to close; and with staff constantly donning full PPE. Operations were reimagined by designating specific areas for COVID-positive patients and initiating our infectious disease protocols to best keep everyone safe. But we were determined. Determined to keep our patients connected with their loved ones when they couldn't visit, through video conferencing calls or telephone calls. Determined to spend more time with patients who couldn't receive visitors; listening to stories about their grandchildren or favorite memories – or whatever they wanted to talk about. One nurse even brought a patient coffee and pastries in the morning because she found out how much he loved them. These are the compassionate hearts that provide our expert care.



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8,838

Hospice Patients Served

3,674

Hospice Patients Served in Care Centers





Suncoast PACE: Senior Independence and Wellness

Each year, Suncoast PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) helps Pinellas County seniors with chronic health conditions remain independent. Our team does this by helping participants stay healthy, socially connected and functioning well. One of the main components of our program is the PACE Adult Day Center and Medical Clinic where participants can come for two meals a day and join in social activities and light exercise; as well as receive routine medical care.

When the pandemic began, we had to close our Adult Day Center and create new ways to connect with our participants and keep them engaged. We had home health aides available to go to participants' homes to assist with medications that would normally be managed at the center and to provide support to caregivers who may have needed some extra help. Participants also received shelf-stable supplementary food items like fruit cups, granola bars and bread.

The Suncoast PACE team created socialization kits that included home versions of activities participants may enjoy while being at the center,

like word games, puzzles and arts and crafts. We also made available aromatherapy kits program assistants took to participant homes to help reduce stress and anxiety.

Another innovative way to stay connected and help our seniors feel special in 2020 is our "Birthday in a Box" celebration. Working with our participants and their families, volunteers don PPE and deliver a personalized birthday cake along with a crown or tiara, balloons, flowers and a handmade blanket to the participant's home. On an iPad, a group of teen volunteers sing happy birthday to the participant. This small gesture has touched the lives of many participants and helps them feel remembered and less isolated on their special day.

As we all know, seniors – especially those with chronic health conditions are the most vulnerable population during this pandemic. But we were determined to help participants continue to stay connected and receive the medical care they need. Our care delivery methods may have changed, but our commitment to those we serve is still our priority.

HIV Services: Connecting Care to Community

Empath Partners in Care (EPIC) works to improve the lives of individuals, families and communities, regardless of HIV status, gender or sexual identity. Our teams provide seamless care and support for people living with HIV in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties, helping them stay healthy, housed and in medical care. We also provide assistance for families; free and rapid HIV, hepatitis and syphilis testing; HIV prevention services; and HIV/AIDS education for the community.

Services support clients' unique needs, and may include medical case management, full-service pharmacy, mental health counseling, support groups, housing assistance, emergency financial assistance, food and personal care pantries, transportation support, medical home and day center.

The pandemic significantly affected our ability to go into the communities we serve with testing and education services. But we were determined to continue helping as many people as possible. In order to help us do this, we began providing free at-home testing kits. Tests can be requested online or via telephone and can be shipped or picked-up by the requestor. Staff are available to walk the person through the entire process and immediate counseling is offered should someone test positive. Education is offered for those testing negative on how to maintain that status.

This year also brought about expansion of Empath Health's full-service pharmacy into Hillsborough County and saw the creation of the EPIC Generations "Friendly Caller" program, which supports isolated LGBTQ+ elders. Additionally, since we know stable housing is key to health and HIV prevention, we started a new rental assistance program for homeless individuals, regardless of their HIV status.

Another way we connected with the community was to provide COVID Safety Bags to 462 people.

These included paper towels, toilet paper, a thermometer, hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies.

Through our outreach program, we provided essential items, such as food, blankets, clothes, flashlights and tents for 777 homeless individuals in our community.

Once again, our standard modes of reaching people in the community changed, but our determination to serve did not.



Empath Home Health: Being Well at Home

In addition to all of the care delivery changes brought about by the pandemic, 2020 brought other changes at Empath Home Health.

We are proud to have received a 5-star rating in Patient Satisfaction through the Medicare patient survey rating. This score comes from asking patients (or their families or friends) about their home health care and if they would recommend us to someone else.

Empath Health's commitment to building new, high-quality programs didn't waiver in 2020. We introduced and are growing a new, specialized Home Health program called Cardiac CareConnections, working with doctors and patients with congestive heart failure to improve their home health care and reduce hospitalizations. This team is led by a certified heart failure nurse practitioner and includes nurses specially trained in the heart failure disease process and advanced in-home treatments for symptom management. Home care therapists and home health aides are also

trained to preemptively identify subtle changes in a patient's physical condition that could lead to symptom exacerbations or patient hospitalizations.

Building further on the program expansion goal, Empath Health announced the creation of a new private duty organization in 2020 called Empath For You. We know caregiving for a family member or loved one with full-time care needs can be overwhelming. Often, service gaps are created when insurance companies don't cover or no longer pay for services. Our private home care services can assist with filling in those gaps to ensure the highest level of care possible. These services include personal assistance like bathing, feeding, dressing and respite care for caregivers; and companionship, homemaking and support for everyday living.



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Home Health Compare 5-Star Patient Satisfaction



Palliative Care: Improving Quality of Life

Palliative care, also known as “comfort care,” is specialized medical care and support for patients living with a serious or life-limiting illness. The focus is to relieve pain, symptoms and stress at any time during a serious illness and to support patients and families as they work through difficult medical decisions.

Our palliative care team assists patients and families with identifying and creating goals of care that honor each patient's and family's goals and wishes. They also help manage challenging symptoms associated with a serious illness through collaboration with patients' primary care providers and other specialists. Our practitioners can prescribe for cancer-related pain and may make recommendations for pain management related to other serious illnesses (though we do not manage medications for chronic pain conditions).

Specialized support teams of board-certified physicians, specialized advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), licensed social

workers and non-denominational spiritual care coordinators provide education, counseling, help identify goals and facilitate connections with community resources. The team also helps with navigation of the health care system, including transitions between homes and hospitals and other facilities; and coordination of all providers involved to ensure a patient's personal plan of care is followed.

Even with the challenges 2020 presented, we were determined to get palliative care to more people who needed us. We are thrilled to have grown our palliative care program significantly – providing more comfort care than ever to people in our community who might otherwise suffer without it.



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2,641
People Served

Grief Care: Touching Lives, Finding Hope

Empath Health provides a comprehensive program of support to help individuals in our community who are dealing with grief. This includes bereavement counseling for those whose loved ones died in our care; community counseling for those grieving a traumatic death or dealing with a newly-diagnosed illness; and perinatal loss support for families who are suffering from a pregnancy loss, stillbirth or death of a baby shortly after birth.

20,042

People Directly Served Through Our Grief Care Programs



There were so many additional losses people suffered as a result of the pandemic – whether it be losing loved ones or other losses like not being able to have a funeral or memorial service; or the loss of a job; or even the loss of socialization. The grief brought about by these other losses created an even greater demand for our bereavement and grief counseling during a time when we couldn't see people in-person. But our grief care teams were determined to find ways to continue helping everyone who needed it.

While we had to stop holding support groups in-person, we quickly transitioned to online formats like Zoom, so we could keep supporting the community's bereavement needs. In the spirit of helping as many people as possible, we filmed

our bereavement counselors presenting content to put on our website with topics like Grief in Times of Uncertainty and Self-Nurturing. Our spiritual, bereavement and community counseling team members also participated in Facebook Live sessions to interact with our followers. Topics included Messages of Hope; Acknowledging Stress and Anxiety in the Midst of COVID-19; Staying Spiritually Grounded in the Midst of a Pandemic; and others.

As we saw the demand for grief support related to the pandemic increase swiftly and dramatically, we sought and received additional community funding to provide free counseling services to Pinellas County Seniors impacted by COVID.

Perhaps one of the biggest adjustments we made this year in grief care was how we conducted Community Memorial Services. Typically we do these three times a year, once in each of the northern, middle and southern parts of Pinellas County. Obviously we couldn't do that in 2020 so we held two virtual Community Memorial Services where individuals from anywhere could honor and celebrate their loved ones with readings, bell tolling and special music. In all, we were able to reach nearly 40,000 individuals with the virtual grief care events provided in 2020.

Empath Health Pharmacy: Serving All

Empath Health takes great pride in our nonprofit, full-service pharmacy with on-site, local services, where we focus on medication management and increased comfort for everyone throughout our network. We also provide pharmacy services to our employees, which can reduce their costs and increase convenience. In 2020, we added pet medications to this offering.

Many healthcare providers and hospice organizations contract with third-party pharmacy management programs that may be in distant locations, using mail order operations to support thousands of patients nationally. Empath Health Pharmacy only serves our patients, clients, participants and employees, helping ensure personal service and rapid response.

With our Tampa location now fully-operational, Empath Health has three locations in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties. The Empath Health Pharmacy team is always looking for ways to increase service offerings and build on the high-quality care and assistance they provide everyone we serve.

All services are coordinated for care and convenience:

- Home delivery, including same-day delivery for urgent needs
- On-site pharmacist assistance with counseling and questions
- Custom packaging for improved medication adherence
- Assistance to providers with insurance denials
- Assistance enrolling patients in copay programs
- Medication management and synchronization
- On-site sterile compounding for IV infusions



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54,000
Home Deliveries

330,000
Prescriptions Filled

Empath Health DME: Right Equipment, Right Time

Another on-site service we're very proud to offer our patients and families is Durable Medical Equipment (DME). Ensuring that our patients

have the most appropriate medical equipment benefits our patients, staff and caregivers. Whether it be electric hospital beds for easier transfer and positioning; complex medical pumps; oxygen and oxygen supplies; or

10,457
Orders Filled

shower chairs and commodes, our DME staff deliver necessary equipment 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Like our pharmacy, managing our own DME (versus contracting with another company) allows for greater control of timing and more flexibility to work directly with our clinical staff to ensure patients have exactly what they need, when they need it. We even have a Certified Biomedical Technician who performs any necessary equipment repairs, allowing for faster turnaround times.

Veterans: Honoring Our Heroes

Veterans sign up to protect our country and our freedoms. Oftentimes, they end-up making unthinkable sacrifices to do so. Empath Health teams understand the unique needs of veterans and provide special care for veteran patients, including those with service-related health conditions and disabilities, as well as those who may be distressed by traumatic service and combat-related experiences. Additionally, these teams recognize and support family members who have also sacrificed so much.

Specialized staff and veteran volunteers sharing a common bond assist with needs, companionship, certificates of appreciation, pinning ceremonies and more. Our goal is to bring veterans comfort, peace and honor and help their families with emotional and spiritual support, health care decision making and accessing available veteran resources in the community.

Under more normal circumstances, Empath Health staff and volunteers spend a lot of time pinning veterans and honoring them with special certificates at our long-term care facility partners, at community events or through events we specifically host. COVID would not allow that for most of 2020. But yet again, our

staff and volunteers were determined to find unique ways to keep honoring veterans.

One such occasion was in July 2020 when a Suncoast Hospice nurse thought her veteran patient seemed down. Wayne Barnes, U.S. Army Veteran and a St. Petersburg Police retiree was spending his days at home. With the help of Rudy, a Veteran Serving Veterans volunteer, Suncoast Hospice and Wayne's wife planned a parade to honor Wayne, while promoting social distancing. As part of the celebration to uplift Wayne's spirits, our teen volunteers made signs and participated in the parade. The Pinellas Park Police and Fire departments joined the festivities with their vehicles, and Wayne's retired police co-workers participated in the parade and presented Wayne with a special Tampa Bay Rays jersey and a St. Pete Police Department shirt.

Empath Health is honored to work with our veteran patients, families, participants and clients and will continue to find ways to celebrate and honor them.

Suncoast Hospice is a Level Five Partner, the highest attainable level of the We Honor Veterans (WHV) program. WHV is a National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) initiative in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).





Embracing and being committed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is vital at Empath Health; it helps us provide compassionate care and cultivate meaningful community partnerships.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Our Commitment

We recognize the collective power of diversity and inclusion, which allows us to leverage employee talent and create a sense of belonging, to ensure that we attain our vision and mission. We also recognize that addressing health inequities is a crucial part of providing extraordinary care that meets the needs of our community. We support everyone with compassion, openness and understanding regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or ability to pay.

Honoring and respecting the unique cultural differences of those we care for is our ongoing focus. Our award winning “Traditions/Tradiciones” program implements specific strategies that respect and honor our diverse communities, in order to ensure access to our care programs. Our Certified Diversity Professionals and team of Community Partnership Specialists are available to engage with our community members.

In 2020, Empath Health received the SAGECare Platinum Credential, the highest possible level, through SAGE (Services and Advocacy for

GLBT Elders), a national advocacy and services organization providing training and consulting in order to improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender seniors.

As members of the National Diversity Council and Florida Diversity Council, our memberships provide opportunity for ongoing training and best practices of DEI implementation, which is critical to our mission and vision.

Our National Institute for Jewish Hospice accreditation is critical for our staff to receive the necessary education to ensure we are providing exemplary care to our Jewish patients, respecting Jewish culture and religion.

These memberships and certifications exhibit Empath Health's commitment to providing our staff with in-depth, on-going training that helps offer meaningful ways to provide support and create genuinely inclusive and welcoming services to everyone we serve.



PROUD PARTNERS OF THE



Suncoast Hospice Foundation: Caring Support

The ability of Empath Health to continue expanding and creating more programs and services depends on assistance from Suncoast Hospice Foundation. Thanks to the generous support of our community through donations, grants, gifts and fundraisers, we continue to serve more people through more programs.

This was certainly a challenging year in how we delivered fundraisers and special events but the Foundation staff was determined to stay connected with our community. We had several virtual events; and a variety of socially-distanced fundraisers throughout the year. And because our sponsors and other supporters are so generous, we continued to receive their backing – even during a pandemic.

The Suncoast Hospice Resale Shops, run by the Foundation and community volunteers, also had to make major changes in 2020. After being shut down for about a month, the Resale Shops slowly reopened following all CDC guidelines. But along with the uncertainty came amazing support. People who stayed home during the lockdown really spent time cleaning out their closets and generously donated to our stores.

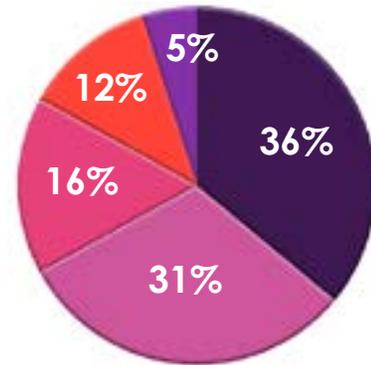
We heard from many people while we were closed and feel so fortunate to know how much the Shops are cherished and supported by our local community. They play a vital role in our charity efforts as not only do the dollars raised from your donations to the stores help people, we also provide any Empath Health patient, client or participant with an unmet need to get items free-of-charge from our stores.



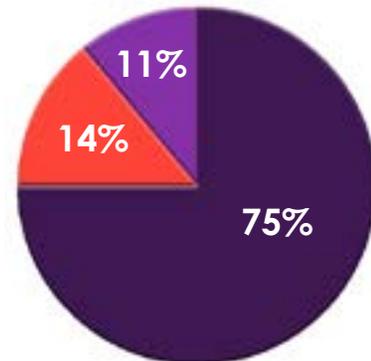
\$13 million
Total Public Support

As a nonprofit, community-based foundation, every dollar donated stays close to home and helps directly improve comfort and life for someone served by Empath Health. While 2020 presented all of us with major challenges and changes, we are so honored that the community is determined to continue supporting Suncoast Hospice Foundation – even through the toughest times.

2020 Fiscal Year



FUNDS RAISED		\$13,049,088
Special Events	\$667,683	5%
Resale Shops	\$1,573,962	12%
Contributions	\$2,090,535	16%
Grants	\$4,074,254	31%
Planned Gifts	\$4,642,654	36%



EXPENSES	
Program Services	75%
Administrative Costs	14%
Fundraising Costs	11%



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About Empath Health

Empath Health is a leading Tampa Bay, Florida nonprofit, integrated network of care that provides expert medical, counseling and support services to comfort anyone facing chronic or advanced illness or grief. We began as compassionate community volunteers who came together to care for our Suncoast Hospice patients and families in Pinellas County in 1977. Today, our care teams serve hospice, home health, palliative, veteran and pediatric patients, aging seniors, HIV/AIDS clients, families and caregivers. We also provide advance directives assistance, HIV/AIDS prevention and education, as well as grief and crisis counseling.

Empath Health Members and Service Lines Include:

- Suncoast Hospice
- Suncoast PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly)
- EPIC (HIV Services, Prevention and Support)
- Empath Home Health
- Empath Health Palliative Care
- Empath Health Community Counseling
- Empath Health Pharmacy
- Empath Health Durable Medical Equipment (DME)
- Suncoast Hospice Foundation



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