MERCY HEALTH FOUNDATION
FALL 2026 NEWSLETTER

CommonSpirit
Mercy Health
Foundation



Healthier, *together.*

INSIDE:

> Enhancing mental health care for our kids

> A new vision for our cancer center

> Introducing our newest Chief Medical Officer!

And more!

Healthier, *together.*

Over the past six months, I've seen those words come to life in remarkable ways.

Throughout the CommonSpirit Mountain Region, communities have come together to support one another in times of need. Mercy Hospital is rallying organizations across Durango in support of our community's kids navigating mental health struggles and crises. We're expanding mental health education and resources for parents, loved ones and mentors to erase the stigma around mental health so no child suffers alone.

Together, **we're expanding access to care**. Responding to the incredible need for local cancer treatment, Mercy Health Foundation launched Phase I of our Cancer Campaign, which addresses our at capacity infusion center.

While every community's needs are unique, our commitment to life-changing care is shared. In these pages, you'll read stories of local generosity and impact that are transforming care — and lives — here in the Four Corners region. Together, we are building a healthier future for communities across our region.



With gratitude,

Paul R. Ross
Vice President & Chief Philanthropy Officer
CommonSpirit Health® Mountain Region



Welcoming our new Chief Medical Officer!

Tierney Lake, MD, didn't have to look far to find her calling. Born and raised in Durango, she now serves as Mercy Hospital's chief medical officer, leading care for the community that raised her.

In a place where personal connection matters as much as medical expertise. **"My philosophy is that healthcare always starts with the people. It's really our people that deliver high-quality care,"** she says. "And by utilizing the latest technology, you can truly ensure personalized care."

LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY OF HOPE AND HEALING

Did you know you can make a planned gift to Mercy Health Foundation through your will? We invite you to explore FreeWill, a no-cost tool to create or update your will in about 20 minutes. You can also explore tax-wise ways to give like gifts of stock, donor-advised funds, IRAs and more.

Visit **MercyHealth.MyGiftLegacy.org** or scan the QR code to learn more about FreeWill and planned giving.





“It’s been so helpful to have something to do that is important for the community, patients and staff.”

– Bonnie Hermesman,



A LIFETIME OF CARING

Celebrating Bonnie Hermesman’s service

After 54 years as a nurse and nine years on Mercy Health Foundation’s board, Bonnie Hermesman’s is retiring. Nursing was her life, and after stepping away from the bedside, she knew she wasn’t done giving back, so she joined our board.

Bonnie is a member of Women Who Care Colorado and has a special love for mentoring young nurses. We are deeply grateful for her decades of service, leadership and dedication to our community.



Has a caregiver made a difference in your life?

Our caregivers do more than treat illness — they carry patients through life’s most vulnerable moments.

If you or a loved one has experienced exceptional, compassionate care from a Mercy Hospital team member, you can **share your story and make gift in their honor through our Honor Your Caregiver program**.

Visit **MercyHealthFoundation.HonorToday.org**, or scan the QR code to learn more.

Growing to keep cancer care close to home

Mercy Hospital is home to the busiest cancer center in the CommonSpirit Mountain Region. That's why we're launching Phase I of our Cancer Campaign, a **$5 million investment over the next two years** to expand patient support, advance surgical and clinical capabilities, and upgrade our facilities — starting with doubling the size of our infusion center.

Each year, our team provides 4,500 chemotherapy treatments, 4,900 radiation treatments and 350 surgeries for patients and families across a service area 15 times larger than the average Front Range hospital's. Our infusion room has outgrown the space it was built for, and patients receive treatment in very close quarters. A larger, more comfortable space helps us meet the need in our community.

"We know every cancer patient by name," shared infusion nurse Colleen Zemach, RN. "We know their families. We know their struggles. And we want to ensure that we are creating comfort during treatment."

That's the kind of care we're working to expand, right here in Durango.





Nutrition as healthcare

When patients come to clinic with nutrition-related disease, Roots to Health offers more than advice. Patients receive vouchers for a fresh CSA bag every week, connecting them directly to local farmers.

This Durango-born program is now part of Fresh to Flourish, a national produce prescription program. A simple idea, growing far beyond home.



Celebrating our generous community

Two community events raised nearly $40,000 for breast cancer care this year. The Dalton Ranch Women's Golf Association raised about $27,834, and Glacier Club's Stride for the Cure brought in roughly $10,900.

Thank you to everyone who golfed, walked and gave. Your support keeps care close to home!



A culture of support at Mercy

Mercy Hospital is one of only three hospitals in the CommonSpirit Mountain Region with a new Hope certification, recognizing our commitment to employee mental health and well-being.

Through the Employee Financial Assistance (EFA) program, **we're dedicated to supporting our caregivers inside and outside the workplace**. Led by our chaplain, EFA gives more than $40,000 each year for unforeseen emergencies like natural disasters, funeral expenses for loved ones and resources for mental health support. Funding for our EFA program is provided by gifts from fellow Mercy Hospital employees.

It's one way we make sure our team feels supported, no matter what they're facing.

Thank you to every employee who gives to EFA and to everyone who helps us care for the people who care for our community.





Seven health systems, one goal: Our kids

Young people in our community are struggling. The suicide rate for kids under 18 is three times higher than the national average, and our region has no psychiatrists and few crisis resources for youth. Mercy is working to change that.

We're investing $75,000 to convene seven health systems and community partners who serve youth. A facilitator will help map gaps in care, from prevention to crisis and recovery, and guide strategic investments.

We're also using a $400,000 Resilient Colorado Grant, one of 27 awarded statewide, to hire three behavioral health interns, ages 18 to 21. Trained to work in our emergency department, they'll help build a stronger workforce, and provide individualized care to youth experiencing a mental health crisis.



The sky is the limit for CommonSpirit Flight for Life®

We are beyond thrilled, and endlessly grateful, for **another season of growth at Flight for Life**! Our fleet is expanding with three new aircraft, and we're working toward a second NICU transport isolette to better serve our smallest, most vulnerable patients in rural communities.

In addition, testing is officially complete on our new **Lifeseeker technology, making Flight for Life the first program in Colorado to bring this capability on board**. Lifeseeker allows our aircraft to create a temporary cellular signal to locate an injured person carrying a cell phone.

Thanks to our donors from the Sanctuary Flight for Life Golf Classic, we're also **building a statewide Panomax weather camera network**, with more stations coming this spring. Our first responders often fly into unpredictable terrain and shifting weather with little advance information about conditions on the ground. Panomax weather station cameras will deliver real-time weather data that will improve response times and help keep our crews and patients safe.

Thank you to our generous community for making this lifesaving work possible.

"Being out there in the middle of nowhere, thinking there's no way anyone could survive — and then I'm the one who gets saved. The Flight for Life team is the closest thing to angels we've got."

– Jeremy Brinkley, paramedic and grateful patient



CommonSpirit

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Make a gift securely online in support of Mercy Health Foundation by scanning the QR code.