

Virginia Mason Annual Report article on Community Benefit activities

Community Benefit Activities Help Improve Regional Health

Virginia Mason is committed to helping improve the health and well-being of Puget Sound-area communities where patients live and work. The organization supports these [Community Benefit](#) efforts by contributing time, energy and funding to activities that improve health and provide free and subsidized care.

In 2019, Virginia Mason served nearly 205,000 individuals in its hospital and nine regional medical centers. Virginia Mason's Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) service area encompasses the communities where its facilities are located and where 74 percent of its patients reside, which includes King, Snohomish and Kitsap counties.

Last year, much of this work involved supporting other nonprofit organizations with missions that mirror CHNA priority areas. These identified health needs, which Virginia Mason's Community Benefit activities are focused on through 2021, include:

- Access to care and transportation
- Housing and homelessness
- Access to affordable and healthy food
- Access to vaccinations and screenings
- Firearm violence prevention

Activities and support included:

Hate and gun violence summit – A day-long summit on hate and gun violence hosted by [Alliance for Gun Responsibility](#) and Anti-Defamation League at Temple De Hirsch Sinai in Seattle.

Panel discussion on vaccine hesitancy – [WithinReach](#)'s Learning Series event on vaccine hesitancy. The event was held at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Discovery Center and featured a pediatric primary care provider, naturopathic physician as well as a psychologist and public health researcher.

Lead testing – Thirteen lead testing events that [King County Medical Society](#) hosted for school-aged kids throughout the Puget Sound area, including screenings at Virginia Mason's University Village and Federal Way medical centers. In total, about 230 children were tested.

Fresh Bucks – Public Health – Seattle & King County's [Fresh Bucks](#) program, which provides food stamp recipients and other eligible Seattle-area residents easier access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Safe firearm event – A safe firearm storage giveaway event – in partnership with the [Firearm Tragedy Prevention Program at Seattle Children's](#) – in Yakima. More than 300 lock boxes, 50 trigger locks and 600 cable locks were distributed.

Project Access Northwest (PANW) – [PANW](#), which matches prescreened patients with volunteer specialty providers to deliver life-changing care, pays health insurance premiums for those unable to afford coverage on their own, and reaches out to patients at home to help improve their health and lives based on personal goals.

Solid Ground – Seattle-based [Solid Ground](#) is working to end poverty and undo racism and other oppressions that are root causes of poverty in the Puget Sound area. Virginia Mason Community Benefit supported the nonprofit's annual Building Community Luncheon and helped fund staff trainings for their launch of Foundational Community Support pilots, which help families experiencing homelessness as they work with case managers to secure permanent housing.

Plymouth Housing – [Plymouth Housing](#)'s Seattle Dances Gala, which helps bring people out of homelessness and into safe homes and supportive communities.

Refugees Northwest – [Refugees Northwest](#) provides a comprehensive continuum of care in King County for people who were persecuted and forced to flee their homes. Virginia Mason Community Benefit supported the nonprofit's bus ticket program to assist their clients with transportation to medical appointment, food banks and employment services.

Mary's Place – [Mary's Place](#) provides safe, inclusive shelter and services that support women, children and families on their journey out of homelessness. Virginia Mason Community Benefit provided a clinical education specialist at Mary's Place Northshore in Kenmore to facilitate play time activities for children and provide healthy snacks.