



Introducing CHP's Community Services and Community Market

Over the summer, CHP's Family Services department underwent **an exciting rebranding and is now known as Community Services**. The choice to rebrand came from a desire to reflect that its programs and offerings are more **inclusive of the entire Berkshire community** and not limited to the traditional definition of "family."

The Family Services department at CHP dates to the 1970s when CHP was Children's Health Programs. The first executive director, Linda Small, worked to add parent support and childhood education services to the existing medical services structure. CHP continued to grow and support children and families across the Berkshires over the next three decades.

The needs of the Berkshire community continued to grow and transform. In 2000, after 25 years serving only children, CHP became Community Health Programs, a Federally Qualified Health Center providing healthcare to patients of all ages. Since then, **the services provided to the community have expanded to now include food assistance, multiple food banks and distribution programs, fuel assistance, and health insurance navigator services**. Recently, CHP staff decided that the department name felt limiting and didn't reflect the full breadth of what is offered and who it is offered to.

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John-Paul Bettencourt, D.O.

Chief Medical Officer

Eric Burton

Chief Financial Officer

Eva Sheridan

Chief Human Resource Officer

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Chief Operating Officer

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Our Mission

**To nurture and inspire
healthy lives for people
throughout the Berkshires
by delivering exceptional and
compassionate health care
and community services.**



Meeting the Moment

**How CHP is responding to change while
staying true to our mission**

Dear Friends,

I'm excited for you to read our latest news. Although this is a challenging moment for community health centers, it is also a moment when we're doing exactly the work we were built to do.

Later in the newsletter you'll read about **changes to Medicaid eligibility and coverage** that are unfolding nationally, and how our team is helping our Berkshires neighbors survive and thrive through the changes. For 51 years, CHP has been part of the County's social safety net, and as insurance coverage gets harder for many people to obtain or keep, we're doing everything we can — helping some keep their insurance, and making sure others still get the healthcare they need even without it.

You'll also read about **renaming our Family Services team to Community Services**. CHP never stands still; we keep evolving to fill as many gaps as we can. This name change reflects and honors all who walk through our doors — not only families in the traditional sense, but also individuals, elders, and neighbors navigating difficult circumstances. We'd love to show you our new Community Markets in Great Barrington and Adams where we're meeting food security needs alongside health needs — please stop by to see these new offerings!

None of our work happens without our hardworking staff, clinicians, and board members — read on to meet two of them. Chris McLaughlin, our board Treasurer, brings valuable perspective from his leadership of Elder Services of Berkshire County, along with thoughtful stewardship of our finances as our treasurer. Dr. Andrew Beckwith, a beloved physician at Barrington Ob/Gyn and our former Chief Medical Officer, is also featured — his years of exceptional patient care and clinical leadership have shaped CHP in lasting ways.

Thank you for your support and trust as we care for our neighbors. This is a challenging time for community health centers, but I remain hopeful — and I hope this newsletter leaves you feeling hopeful, too.

Thank you for being part of CHP's story and success.

With gratitude,

Bethany Kieley, CEO

Meet Board Member Christopher McLaughlin

How long have you been a CHP board member? What first drew you to CHP?

I have been a board member since February of 2022 when I was recommended by former Board member Vincent Marinaro. Vinnie believed my background in healthcare and healthcare finance would be a good fit for CHP. I had heard of CHP but honestly did not know much about it. When I learned more, its mission really resonated with me. As the child of a single parent growing up in Cheshire in the 1970's, I could not help but think about how much my family could have benefitted from CHP's services.

Why do you feel it is important to support CHP?

The older I get the more it dawns on me that this is OUR community, and that the people who are fortunate to live in Berkshire County are part of that community. It can be easy to become so wrapped in your own life that you lose sight of the fact that many people in our community are struggling and need assistance to keep moving forward. CHP is a provider of last resort for many of our neighbors and provides services that enable individuals and families to get the assistance and care they need to live their best lives.



What changes or progress have you seen since you joined the Board?

Almost immediately after I joined the board, CHP recruited an experienced FQHC leader to be the organization's next CEO. This happened at a time when CHP was experiencing significant challenges. CHP is very fortunate to have Bethany! She is committed to the mission but understands that CHP must be thoughtful and deliberate in everything it does to continue its mission. I have great confidence that Bethany and the team she has assembled are the right people to position CHP for success as we begin to move into more challenging times.

Why did you decide to become a donor as well as a board member?

I decided to become a donor because CHP's programs and services resonate with me on a very personal level. I have always felt very blessed to call Berkshire County home. Believing in our community and CHP's impact on our neighbors causes me to want to help in some way.

What makes this organization stand out among other causes you support?

For me, CHP stands out because it is a safety net for people who often have nowhere else to turn and CHP never turns its back on anyone in need. I am always amazed at the lengths staff at CHP will go to so the people they care for have access to the care and resources they need!

What would you say to someone who is considering making their first gift?

Thank you for considering CHP! If you are on the fence or do not know enough about CHP, please reach out to us. We are very proud of the work our team does and would love to introduce you to other programs and services so you could see firsthand how CHP benefits our neighbors and how your gift could make a meaningful difference.

When you think about your donations, what CHP activities do you feel most proud to support?

I am most proud of CHP's pediatric programs and its programs that address food insecurity. Good early intervention and healthcare support children for healthy, productive lives and providing people access to food provides the basis of good medicine! I was proud to recently join other board members, State Representative Leigh Davis and others at the recent ribbon cutting for the Community Market at CHP's Great Barrington site.

What Our Patients are Saying

The nurse practitioner I see explains everything she is doing along the way which puts me at ease.

The care I get from my doctor is second to none. I'm so glad to have found her when I moved here.

I like that my appointments aren't rushed. My doctor answers all my questions and he genuinely cares about my well-being.



Family Services Department Gets a New Name and Look

Continued

The launch of the rebranding coincides with the opening of the new CHP Community Markets in Great Barrington and Adams. "Choosing the name Community Market emphasizes that the market is open to all members of our community. When the market opened in June, we realized we could use the excitement surrounding it as an opportunity to envision the entire department," said Mary Feuer, Director of Community Services.

The new name and logo will visually tie together the Community Markets with the Community Services department and strengthen the identity and impact of these programs across our Berkshire community.

"Our goal with this rebranding is to ensure that our community knows that everyone is welcome to receive our services, regardless of their age or family size," said Carrie Barth, Vice President for Advancement and Community Services. Many of our most vulnerable Berkshire neighbors are seniors living on fixed incomes and/or living alone, she explained. Single-income households face the same types of struggles as family households, and it will now be clearer that not just families with children can benefit from our programs and services.



A Community Market for All

One of the most important pieces of Community Services is food assistance for all. CHP was thrilled to recently **celebrate the opening of the new Community Market** at our Great Barrington campus. The Community Market is a supermarket-style food pantry that is open to all members of our community. Shoppers can select their own groceries that include fresh fruits and veggies, eggs, meat, milk and dairy as well as shelf stable pantry items.

This project was made possible by the donations and support of numerous local community and state partners and a large individual donation from the estate of Jane Braus. On June 24th, CHP hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to commemorate the official opening of the market with our community partners, staff, donors, and volunteers. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate everyone who made this project possible and capture the excitement of this new resource for Berkshire County. The Community Market has a new eye-catching logo that ties to the new Community Services rebrand.



Navigating Change

Helping Berkshire County families keep their health coverage

Health insurance shouldn't be something people lose because they missed a letter in the mail or struggled to understand a complicated renewal process. Yet as changes to MassHealth (Medicaid) eligibility and coverage continue to unfold nationwide, many Massachusetts residents are finding themselves navigating new work requirements and increased paperwork. The process can feel confusing and overwhelming, creating the risk of losing health insurance not because they no longer qualify, but because they don't know what to do next.

Massachusetts is preparing to implement changes to MassHealth made by the federal government over the coming months and years. Some residents with MassHealth coverage will face more frequent eligibility renewals, new work requirements, and changes to coverage eligibility. As these updates are implemented, many people will receive notices asking them to verify information or provide additional documentation to maintain their coverage.

For many families, **the greatest challenge won't be a change in eligibility, it will be navigating an increasingly cumbersome process.** Understanding what is required, responding to notices on time, and knowing where to turn for help will be essential to avoiding unnecessary interruptions in health coverage.

For over **two decades**, CHP has helped Berkshire County residents understand their health insurance options and connect to the coverage they need.

Nearly 10,000 CHP patients rely on MassHealth for access to medical care, dental care, and behavioral health services. Even a temporary gap in coverage can mean skipping a doctor's appointment, postponing treatment, or going without medications that help manage chronic conditions.

For many of our neighbors, including older adults, low-income families, immigrants, and individuals with limited English proficiency, the enrollment and renewal process can be difficult to navigate alone. In a rural community where transportation barriers and limited primary care providers already make healthcare harder to access, **this is one more obstacle to staying healthy.** That's why having trusted local support is more important than ever.

Today, **CHP's Health Insurance Navigators continue to provide free, one-on-one assistance to individuals and families** navigating MassHealth and Health Connector enrollment, renewals, and coverage transitions.

As new federal requirements take effect, our Navigator team is here to help community members. Rather than allowing confusing paperwork or missed deadlines to become barriers to care, Navigators walk each person through the process, helping them understand their options and giving them the support they need every step of the way. **Through personalized guidance and trusted relationships, CHP is helping Berkshire County individuals and families** stay connected to the healthcare they need to thrive.



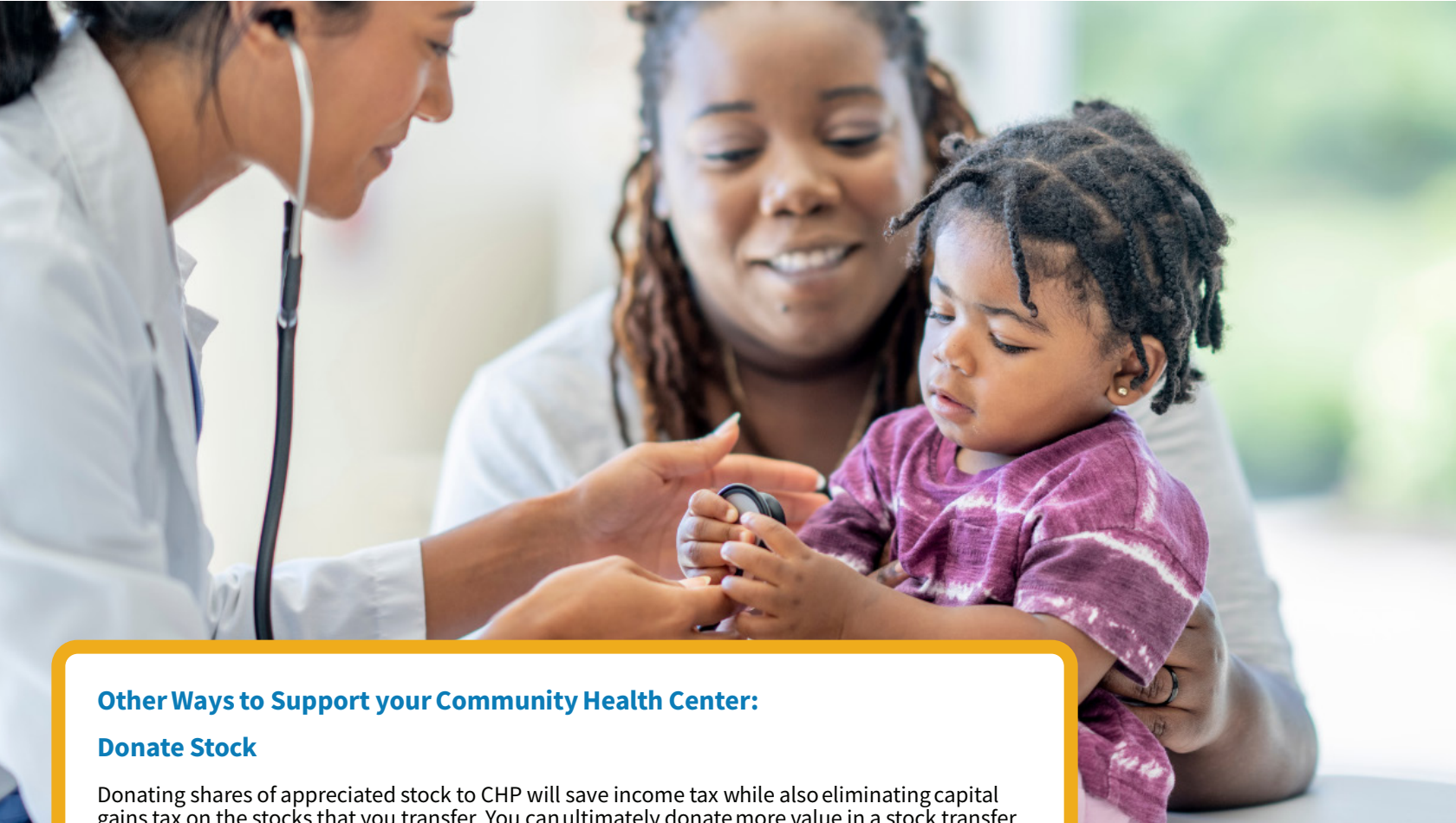
Advocating for Community Health Centers

As federal Medicaid changes unfold, CHP, alongside the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, is **advocating for policies that protect access to care** for people in rural parts of the state.

In rural areas where there are fewer healthcare providers to choose from, community health centers tend to see a larger percentage of patients with commercial insurance funded by individual or employer premiums. Yet commercial insurance plans reimburse CHP an average of **\$133 less per visit** than MassHealth (Medicaid), even though every patient receives the same comprehensive, high-quality care. Forty three percent of CHP patients have commercial insurance coverage, meaning that low commercial reimbursement rates have a significant impact on CHP's financial health.

This funding gap makes it harder for rural community health centers like CHP to sustain the services the community depends on, especially as federal Medicaid changes and the potential loss of Marketplace subsidies could increase the number of uninsured patients seeking care.

That's why CHP is **advocating for a Commercial Rate Floor in Massachusetts**. This policy would require commercial insurance plans to reimburse community health centers at fair, consistent rates similar to the standard already used for MassHealth patients. By ensuring reimbursement better reflects the true cost of care, it would strengthen our ability to provide accessible, comprehensive care to all for years to come.



Other Ways to Support your Community Health Center:

Donate Stock

Donating shares of appreciated stock to CHP will save income tax while also eliminating capital gains tax on the stocks that you transfer. You can ultimately donate more value in a stock transfer than if you were to sell the stock and donate the cash value. Complete a stock transfer form from your financial institution and include the information about which stock you would like to donate and CHP's information.

Donate From Your IRA

For donors over certain ages, Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from your IRA to CHP are tax-free and can satisfy your distribution requirements. For those above the age at which you are required to make withdrawals from your 401(k) or IRA, a QCD can count but would not be considered taxable income.

Commercial insurance plans reimburse CHP an average of **\$133 less per visit than MassHealth (Medicaid)**

In Their Care

Meet the doctors, nurses, and care providers making a difference every day, one patient at a time



Dr. Andrew Beckwith

Can you tell us a bit about your interest, career background, and history as a physician?

I wasn't planning on becoming a physician in college and did not take any premed courses. After I finished college and was working for the United States Department of Energy (I thought I wanted to go into public policy), I started to think about what I really wanted to do in life and that was when I decided to pursue medicine. I went back to school for a postbaccalaureate premedical program then entered med school. After med school I moved to Boston for my residency, then took my first job as an OB/GYN in Pittsfield. I then became Director of OBGYN at Berkshire Medical Center until I joined CHP in January 2018.

What is your favorite thing about working at CHP?

My favorite thing about working at CHP is the commitment of the organization to caring for underserved populations

What are some of the biggest challenges facing CHP patients and how is CHP addressing them?

I think it's safe to say that the business of healthcare is ailing tremendously right now, and all of the pressures that have led to the ailing healthcare system apply directly at CHP. As a result, our patients are challenged with increasing difficulty in obtaining appointments and diminishing financial coverage for their care as assistance with obtaining insurance dwindles. CHP continues to do yeoman's work at all medical sites, in dental, behavioral health, and nutrition to provide access as resources shrink and it becomes increasingly difficult to recruit providers by constantly improving efficiency, thinking creatively about how to support our teams, and trying to create a positive work environment.

What are you most excited about right now in your role?

Now that I have stepped down from the role of Chief Medical Officer (that I held for almost 4 years), I'm excited to be able to focus on site-specific projects at Barrington Ob/Gyn to capitalize on our strong team in the office who are anxious to "work at the top of their skills."



What is your favorite local Berkshires attraction?

I've always loved going to MassMoCA. It was a lifesaver when I had young children—they loved the kids' space and all the interesting modern art. I've seen amazing concerts and performances there over the years. It truly is a world-class venue.

What are you currently enjoying watching or reading?

Watching: I missed *Breaking Bad* when it originally aired so I'm finally catching up with that and seeing what all the fuss was about.

Reading: I just finished *John of John* by Douglas Stuart (it was fantastic) and am about to start *The True True Story of Raja the Gullible (and his Mother)* by Rabih Alameddine.





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 Community Health Programs

Through personalized guidance and trusted relationships, CHP is helping Berkshire County individuals and families stay connected to the healthcare they need to thrive. (See Page 5)



Ready to make your impact go further?

Did you know that you can set up a monthly gift to CHP? Our online donation form lets you set up a recurring payment so that you can give any amount you choose each month to CHP automatically.

Why give monthly? Monthly giving enables your generosity to extend beyond a single act of kindness and become an ongoing commitment. When you give monthly, you help provide certainty and stability to our fundraising efforts by creating a **dependable stream of support rooted in an ongoing commitment to CHP's mission.**

Ready to make your impact go further? Become a monthly donor to provide ongoing support to your community! Establish a monthly donation by visiting our website.

To make a donation,
visit chpberkshires.org/donate
or call (413) 528 - 9311 x 1179

