

COVID-19 Relief Grant

COVID-19 transformed the lives of millions of people worldwide. Among those most profoundly affected by the pandemic have been frontline health care workers — including those at UPMC.

The Beckwith Institute's **Frontline Innovation Program** was created to recognize and inspire the work of UPMC staff at the frontline of care. But the extraordinary circumstances of COVID-19 prompted The Beckwith Institute to seize the opportunity to respond to the pandemic in very personal and intimate ways.

From April 27 to May 11, 2020, the Frontline Innovation Program — through the support and leadership of Nick and Dottie Beckwith — launched its **COVID-19 Relief Grant** campaign. All UPMC employees were invited to submit ideas to support the physical and emotional wellness of UPMC patients, staff members, and the communities UPMC serves.

More than 80 proposals were received systemwide from hospitals and programs large and small — each reflecting compassion, creativity and innovation.

After careful review, projects in the following five categories were selected for support by The Beckwith Institute (*Note: Some reflect combined or merged projects*) Additionally, direct gifts were made to local food banks.

- **CATEGORY 1: Assisting Patients with Tablets and Technology for Telemedicine**
- **CATEGORY 2: Supporting and Enhancing Staff Morale**
- **CATEGORY 3: Creating Spaces and Opportunities to Relax and Unwind**
- **CATEGORY 4: Providing Training to Respond to Staff Burnout**
- **CATEGORY 5: Giving Back to the Community**

In all, a total of \$400,000 in Frontline Innovation funding was awarded for these one-time initiatives.

CATEGORY I

Assisting Patients with Tablets and Technology for Telemedicine

Covid Connection — I See You!

Project Owner: Mary Trost, MSN

Location: UPMC Shadyside Medical Surgical Intensive Care Unit

The COVID-19 crisis restricted visitors from entering the hospital — especially in the intensive care unit. This project is designed to alleviate worry and offer comfort by providing two iPads that families can use to see and communicate with hospitalized loved ones.

Outreach to Community

Project Owner: Devone Pepple

Location: RHSNY-Great Lakes Physician Practice, Jamestown, NY

Medicare patients who rely on durable medical equipment (DME) such as wheelchairs, walkers, and oxygen must have face-to-face appointments with medical providers every six months. During the pandemic, telemedicine provided that contact but many elderly patients lacked the proper device needed to meet with providers. Through this project, 100 tablets with data and video capabilities will be purchased for loan to patients so they can participate in telemedicine appointments.

Delivering Care by Delivering Technology

Project Owner: Benjamin Ellis, MBA

Location: UPP Department of Endocrinology

Many at-risk and COVID-19-positive patients lack the necessary technology to participate in virtual doctor visits. They must decide between missing important appointments or risking exposure to the coronavirus. This project provides tablets and 4G hotspots on loan to patients so they can make their telehealth appointments. It also allows data from a patient's insulin pumps and glucometers to be automatically downloaded for better treatment planning.

Adopt a Patient

Project Owner: Aimee Fogarty

Location: UPMC Shadyside Volunteer and Community Services

During the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitalized patients are encouraged to take part in virtual visits with family and friends. But some patients do not have such a network of support. This project aims to alleviate loneliness and provide support by having volunteers "adopt" patients. Volunteers then check in several times daily via iPads given to these patients for use throughout their stay.

TABLET: Taking SUD Treatment Access Beyond Limits by Expanding Technology

Project Owner: Amy Shanahan, MA

Location: Western Behavioral Addiction Medicine Services

The COVID-19 pandemic created barriers to services for many patients in need of substance abuse counseling. Although the outpatient clinics remained open and telehealth therapy sessions were offered, many patients were unable or reluctant to participate. Many patients chose to maintain social distancing and/or had family at home they couldn't leave. Other lacked the technology or the privacy needed to participate remotely. This project provides tablets patients can use at home for virtual face-to-face meetings. For those with connectivity or privacy issues, a tablet will be provided in a private room at the clinic where patients can safely participate in a virtual counseling session.

Connecting Juvenile Justice Involved Youth to Telehealth Counseling and Health Care

Project Owner: Deana Ekas, LCSW

Location: UPMC Children's Hospital, Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine

During the pandemic, many young people reentering the community from Shuman Juvenile Detention Center have lacked the technology needed to access behavioral health care and educational services. This makes them more vulnerable to high-risk behaviors and poor outcomes. This project provides at-risk youth with electronic notepads embedded with a data plan so they can connect to telehealth counseling and virtual education programs, such as group yoga and mindfulness training.

Safety Comforting

Project Owner: Ruth Ann Lewellyn

Location: UPMC Shadyside, Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)

This project provides iPads in the nursing units and waiting rooms so patients and their families can easily communicate with each other. Having the ability to communicate via FaceTime or Zoom will help to alleviate stress and provide comfort both families and patients.

Telehealth Technology for Members With Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Living in Community Living Arrangements During COVID-19

Project Owner: Matthew Mucci

Location: UPMC Health Plan

In Allegheny County alone, UPMC Health Plan has 486 members with intellectual disabilities and autism living in community living arrangements (CLAs) managed by 69 different providers. This project provides tablets at the CLAs, which members can use with the help of their caregivers to access UPMC telehealth services. This simple technology allows members to connect with their medical teams remotely while avoiding unnecessary trips to medical facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social Rounds: Enhancing Patient Experience with Tech

Project Owners: Chigozirim Ekeke, MD, and Alexandra Bartow, MSN, ACNP-BC, MBA

Location: UPMC Presbyterian/Shadyside

Visitation restrictions due to COVID-19 has led to a decline in patient care communication between families and hospitalized surgical patients and their health care team. This project aims to use iPads to improve the patient experience with better communication and entertainment. During doctor rounds in the mornings and evenings, the care team will use iPads to connect with the patient's family or primary contact to discuss status and care plans. Patients also will have access to iPads during a scheduled social hour to play games, watch movies, or connect with family members.

Distraction for COVID-19 Isolation

Project Owner: Beth Grabiak

Location: UPMC Montefiore, 9 North

During COVID-19, family members have not been allowed to visit the orthopaedic and urology patients on the hospital's 9 North unit. This can lead to feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety and fear for hospitalized patients. Through this project, iPads will be provided to patients for use throughout their stay for entertainment and communication with family members. The iPads also will be used by the nursing staff for patient education.

Responding to COVID-10: Remote Pulmonary Rehab

Project Owner: Kayla Kline

Location: UPMC Presbyterian

Due to the COVID-19 exposure risk, patient pulmonary rehabilitation was placed on hold. This led to decreased exercise and deconditioning in patients. Through this project, patients will be provided with an electronic tablet, portable pulse oximeter, and resistance bands they can use for safe, in-home rehabilitation sessions. Pulmonary rehabilitation patients will be monitored and coached remotely by staff during virtual visits held two to three times weekly.

iSee: The Future of Low Vision Rehab

Project Owners: Dana Aravich, Holly Stants

Location: Centers for Rehab Services
Low Vision Occupational Therapy Department

Due to their age, low vision patients are among the most vulnerable to COVID-19 infection and even death. Although telehealth visits offer a safer way for patients to be seen by providers, they lack the equipment needed for assessment or treatment. Through this project, patients participating in the iSee program will be provided high-end iPads they can use for remote occupational therapy sessions. These large-screen iPads, which are preloaded with low vision apps, serve as a mobile clinic enabling patients to participate in regular OT sessions.

Visitation Restrictions — Closing the Gap for Our Patients and Families During COVID-19 Crisis

Project Owner: Mindy Reighard
Location: UPMC Pinnacle

Visitation restrictions implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has left some patients feeling lonely and isolated. This project will provide Echo Show devices to hospitalized patients to make it easier for patients to stay in touch with family and friends. The voice-activated device can be easily used by patients for phone calls, video conferencing, education, and entertainment, including playing music or listening to the news.

Simulate to Save: High Fidelity Simulation for Critical Care Transport Providers

Project Owner: Sarah Anderson
Location: STAT MedEvac

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, STAT MedEvac high-fidelity simulation training has been put on hold to reduce exposure risk. This project aims to fill the need for critical care transport training using REALTi 360 — an innovative patient monitor simulator that mimics real defibrillators and monitors. Using the sophisticated iSimulate technology in the REALTi360 simulator will provide crucial training for medical crews.

PUI Tracker

Project Owners: Deborah Scanlon, Clare Cowen
Location: UPMC St. Margaret

Patients admitted to the hospital who show symptoms or are suspected of having COVID-19 are isolated until test results are returned from the lab. All hospital staff who come into contact with the isolated patients must be tracked. Through this project, iPads will provide a paperless way to easily and efficiently document the date and time staff members enter rooms of patients requiring isolation.

Improve Hypertension Treatment in Patients During COVID-19 Social Distancing

Project Owner: Patricia Gallo, PAC
Location: GIMO South

Health coaching, along with regular blood pressure monitoring, can improve control and reduce the need for primary care visits. This project aims to ensure patients get the treatment and coaching they need while maintaining social distancing to reduce exposure to COVID-19. Blood pressure monitors and a monitoring log will be sent to patients with hypertension so they can track their blood pressure at home. Telephone or video appointments also will be used to teach patients how to use the monitor and make dietary and lifestyle changes.

The Use of Home Blood Pressure Monitoring to Improve Patient Access and Care with Telemedicine Visits During COVID-19 and Beyond

Project Owner: Antoinette Wilson, PA-C

Location: Latterman Family Health Center

This project aims to provide high-risk patients with automatic blood pressure monitors they can use at home while avoiding exposure during the COVID-19 pandemic. Kits containing an upper arm automated blood pressure cuff, monitoring log, and educational material will be sent to at-risk patients of the Latterman Family Health Center in McKeesport who have been identified as having uncontrolled hypertension or high blood pressure and other serious chronic conditions, such as kidney disease and diabetes. In addition to promoting patient self-management, the project also will provide important information needed for telemedicine visits.

CATEGORY 2

Supporting and Enhancing Staff Morale

Rain Doesn't Last Forever (9, 64, 78 Combined)

Project Owners: Lisa Keck, Christina Dauber, Tesla Mohney

Location: UPMC Kane/UPMC Kane Family Practice

The COVID-19 pandemic eliminated daily interaction and special events for employees, volunteers, patients, and community members. This project brings together UPMC Kane staff to collaborate on activities aimed at boosting morale. Activities include stress-reducing yoga, entertainment, and giveaways (such as care kits filled with hand sanitizer, hand lotion, post cards, pens, crackers, and self-care items), plus pizza and lunch pouches filled with school supplies for area children.

Holding Helpers in High Es-TEE-m

Project Owner: Mandy Fauble, PhD, LCSW

Location: UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Safe Harbor

Behavioral health staff members have played an essential role on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic providing care to patients in the field — sometimes in their homes. Through this project, special t-shirts will be presented to staff to celebrate and highlight their vital service in the community.

COVID-19 Relief Grant (16, 30 Combined)

Project Owners: Allison Hoff, Tina Brooker

Location: UPMC Pinnacle

Staff morale has been tested during the COVID-19 pandemic. This project brings together UPMC Pinnacle supply chain management staff with members of UPMC Pinnacle Fast Care and Express Care Union Deposit to plan activities aimed at boosting morale and recognizing staff.

Together We Can: Self-Care Library

Project Owner: Katie Clauss

Location: UPMC Behavioral Health of the Alleghenies — Adult and Children's
Community Health Centers

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a unique impact on the frontline staff working with the mental health and addictions programs. These professionals must daily deal with the trauma associated with the pandemic while simultaneously serving and supporting their clients. This project is designed to boost morale through a variety of staff recognition activities.

CATEGORY 3

Creating Spaces and Opportunities to Relax and Unwind

Critical Care Oasis Room

Project Owner: Holly Meier

Location: UPMC St. Margaret

The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly challenging for staff in the critical care departments at UPMC St. Margaret. This project aims to create a relaxation space where the nursing staff and other hospital personnel can go to decompress. Plans for the Oasis Room include a massage chair, relaxing music, and a coffee machine.

Mindfulness in Mental Health (65, 87 Combined)

Project Owners: Kelly Geis, Scott Lewis

Location: UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital

COVID-19 has had a tremendous impact on mental health — including those focused on the mental health needs of patients at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital. These projects are designed to relieve stress and promote relaxation. One provides support to hospital staff in emergency services through mindfulness instruction and activities they can share with patients. The other provides staff with self-care carts stocked with relaxation tools — including iPods with headphones, essential oils, water and tea, coloring pages, markers, and pencils — as well as disposable wipes and other cleaning supplies.

Mocktail Hour

Project Owner: Amy Sue Lillie

Location: UPMC Passavant

During the COVID-19 pandemic, frontline health care providers at UPMC Passavant often have had to quarantine at the hospital, away from family and friends. The goal of this project is to relieve staff stress by hosting a fun but safe “mocktail hour” with an evening of music, dancing, non-alcoholic drinks, and appetizers.

Staff Support

Project Owner: Megan Barone

Location: UPMC Chautauqua

Staff members at UPMC Chautauqua have experienced challenges at home and work during the COVID-19 pandemic. As an expression of thanks for their hard work, this project will provide all 800 staff members with supportive compression socks.

CATEGORY 4

Providing Training to Respond to Staff Burnout

You Are Not Alone: Supporting and Enhancing Staff Resiliency During COVID-19

Project Owner: Jeffrey Magill

Location: UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital

The goal of this project is to provide training aimed at supporting staff resiliency at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the hospital’s As Soon As Possible (ASAP) support team will offer 30-minute training sessions on resiliency and stress management. Using the “train the

trainer” model, the ASAP team will instruct staff about the tools and resources available and help them build their own resiliency plan.

Stress Management to Improve Personal Resilience and Reduce Burnout Among Physicians and Nurses Caring for Patients with COVID-19

Project Owner: Rabih Chaer

Location: UPMC Presbyterian

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented challenges and stress for frontline doctors and nurses. Using the “train the trainer” model, this project provides mindfulness and stress management training to a group of champions from internal medicine, critical care, and emergency medicine who would then share skills within their departments.

Fostering Post-Traumatic Growth After COVID

Project Owner: Julie Childers, MD

Location: UPMC Presbyterian/Shadyside

Frontline nurses and doctors are experiencing stress and trauma similar to levels experienced during wartime as a result of COVID-19. This project will bring in an outside professional therapist with experience in trauma therapy to lead small-group trauma counseling sessions for hospital staff. The therapist will help them understand their stress and anxiety and teach them coping mechanisms.

UPMC Shadyside Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM ASAP)

Project Owner: Kathleen Finn

Location: UPMC Shadyside Medical Intensive Care Unit

COVID-19 has exacted an emotional toll at work and at home among hospital and health care workers on the frontline. This project aims to increase staff support by providing CISM ASAP training for an additional 10 people. CISM team members are trained to provide rapid and effective intervention in response to critical incidents. The project also strives to increase staff awareness of the program and its benefits.

CISM/ASAP Awareness Project

Project Owner: Jacquelyn Baker, LCSW

Location: UPMC Susquehanna

This project focuses on increasing awareness of the services offered by UPMC Susquehanna’s Critical Awareness Incident Stress Management (CISM) ASAP team and the emotional and psychological support available to staff throughout the hospital system. Training also will be provided to add up to 10 additional team members at the various campuses.

Cardiothoracic Surgery Trainee Wellness Program

Project Owner: Rajeev Dhupar

Location: Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery

During the COVID-19 pandemic, cardiothoracic surgery trainees report experiencing high levels of stress both as frontline providers and future surgeons faced with uncertainty about job prospects and educational opportunities. This project provides support for an existing wellness program for trainees, including funding for guest speakers. Program goals include preventing trainee burnout, fostering personal wellness, and promoting a healthy transition from trainee to surgeon.

Physician Commensality Groups

Project Owner: Eva Szigethy

Location: Department of Psychiatry, Medicine, and Pediatrics

Physician burnout, which affects as many as half of all doctors, is expected to accelerate due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this project, virtual educational support groups will be held for small groups of doctors with discussions aimed at identifying stress sources and strategies for dealing with them. The goal is to prevent or reverse burnout through a support network that encourages collegiality and well-being.

Cooking for Health

Project Owner: Michelle Thompson

Location: Hermitage Community Medicine

The spread of COVID-19 and social distancing — including the closure of physician lounges — have led to increased isolation and a higher risk of burnout among practicing doctors. This project tackles both this challenge — and the lack of nutritional education provided in medical school — through virtual cooking classes. Participating doctors will learn about nutrition and healthy lifestyle tips they can share with patients while networking with other doctors. If possible, classes will be offered on-site at the Phipps Conservatory's state-of-the-art teaching kitchen.

CATEGORY 5

Giving Back to the Community

"We've Got Your Back"

Project Owner: Dawn Clarke

Location: Hampton Outpatient Center

Due to COVID-19 and social distancing precautions, appointments for spine health patients at the Hampton Outpatient Center have been reduced or conducted via telemedicine. The goal of this project is to show patients they are appreciated by giving them a UPMC Clear Cinch bag with a card saying, "We've Got Your Back."

Popping In to Show We Care

Project Owner: Holly Hunter

Location: UPMC Hillman Cancer Center Erie

During the COVID-19 pandemic, patients at the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center have had to undergo treatment without a relative or friend at their side. Through this project, patients there and at the Infusion Center at UPMC Hamot will be given a bag of popcorn with a sticker on it stating, "Popping in to show we care!"

Together We Can

Project Owner: Polly Hoover

Location: UPMC Altoona

Although children and families continue to receive community/behavioral health services via telemedicine, they have missed the critical human touch due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This project aims to re-establish that connection with families by delivering mental health drop-off bags to their homes. The bags include information on COVID-19 and coping strategies, local resources, and UPMC services, plus interactive games and coloring activities for families.

Cards Against COVID-19

Project Owner: Kelly Wilson

Location: UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside Transplant Department

During the COVID-19 pandemic, patients have been hospitalized without loved ones present due to strict distancing precautions. The goal of this project is to provide local students and other community members with a way of sending encouraging messages to hospitalized patients. Uplifting cards and pictures sent via email will be printed and distributed to patients on their meal trays.

Outdoor Mindfulness Space and Garden

Project Owner: Kathleen Beauchamp

Location: UPMC Behavioral Health of the Alleghenies, Lakemont Facility

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased feelings of stress, isolation, and loneliness. Through this project, an outdoor mindfulness area will be created as a calming refuge for children and parents returning to the Lakemont Facility for services as things reopen. Plans include flower and vegetable boxes, an outdoor swing, a new basketball hoop, and games.

A Mindful Hike

Project Owner: Kimberlee Mudge, MD, FACS

Location: UPMC Memorial

The new UPMC Memorial campus is built on the site of an old golf course. This project aims to transform the 3.5 miles of cart paths into a refuge for staff, patients, and community members to enjoy fresh air, exercise, soulful reflection, and nature during the COVID-19 recovery phase. Plans include installing picnic tables, benches, exercise stations, educational signs, sunflower field and pumpkin patch along the pathway.

The Impact of Implementing a Peaceful Area/Garden Within a Long-term Care Facility During COVID-19

Project Owner: Christina Wilhelm

Location: Cumberland Crossing Manor

Residents of Cumberland Crossing Manor have been isolated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This project aims to beautify an existing outside garden and activity area. The goal is to generate feelings of happiness and hope by encouraging residents and staff members to join in planting flowers and vegetables and setting up bird feeders, bird baths, and other decorative items.

Ekram: A Love That Cannot Be Extinguished — Only Flamed

Project Owner: Kaya Kikan

Location: UPMC Montefiore Garden

In the spirit of Ekram, a Hindu term for unity, this project is designed to foster a spirit of connection during a time of uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans include renovating the existing UPMC Montefiore Garden with plantings, benches, and stone to create a place of solace and resilience.

College Transition Before and After COVID-19 — Challenges Face and Resilience Found

Project Owner: Dawn Gotkiewicz

Location: Children's Community Pediatrics-Waterdam

High school graduates transitioning to college face a variety of stresses under normal circumstances. COVID-19 has impacted that dynamic even more. This project is aimed at reducing anxiety and depression by promoting open discussion and preparation before and during college. A special set of videos dealing with COVID-19 — including how to talk about the unknown, how to manage feelings, and how to grieve in a healthy way — will be developed to help students with their transition.

INSPIRE the Frontline

Project Owner: Melissa Jones

Location: UPMC Senior Services

Just as the airline industry teaches passengers to “put on their own oxygen mask first,” the frontline health care community and family caregivers need to learn about self-care during the COVID-19 crisis. The goal of this project is to create separate multi-week training programs for staff and family members who are caring for older adults during the pandemic. At the end of the INSPIRE series, will receive a selfcare tool kit with resources, including a gratitude journal.

Virtual Resources for Staff

Project Owner: Jennifer Chaney

Location: UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital, Women’s Health Services

During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff from Women’s Health Services worked from home. Teams shifted to online platforms to communicate and collaborate on projects. And working parents found themselves juggling work, childcare, and schooling. These two projects provide virtual resources to staff during this time:

- **Connecting Parents with Virtual Children’s Activities Amid COVID-19** aims to connect staff members’ school-aged children to virtual children’s activities produced by Flexable, a Pittsburgh-based company specializing in virtual minicamps. Geared toward children ages 3 to 10, Flexable engages children with other minicampers in 60 minutes of interactive activities involving age-relevant games and lessons.
- **Connecting Teams with Virtual Wellness Activities Amid COVID-19** is designed to foster connections through online fitness classes for Women’s Health Services staff. Teams will be given options of local studio wellness classes — yoga, meditation, boot camps, and other activities — they can participate in together.

Nesting Moms Safety

Project Owner: Michele Shimmn

Location: UPMC Horizon, Shenango Valley Campus LDRP

At UPMC Horizon’s Shenango Valley campus, new moms are allowed to “nest” at the hospital when their newborn has to remain for an extended stay due to low birth weight, neonatal abstinence syndrome, or general observation. This project aims to avoid exposure to COVID-19 by providing four small refrigerator/microwave units for use in patient rooms during the nesting phase. This allows moms to remain in their rooms with their babies.

Clinical Outreach and Care Provision for Homeless Youth and Young Adults

Project Owner: Leslie Luko Pitetti

Location: 412 Youth Zone Medical Clinic

Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine at UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh provides clinical outreach and care through the 412 Youth Zone — a drop-in center providing wrap around services for homeless youth and young adults. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the 412 Youth Zone was shut down. The goal of this project is to ensure the medical clinic has the doctors, nurses, and social workers needed to meet the pent-up demand for care via telemedicine or in-person visits.

Social and Environmental Determinants of COVID-19 Related Outcomes in Asthmatic and Healthy Populations

Project Owner: Sally Wenzel, MD

Location: The Asthma Institute and Pitt+ME Collaborative

Through this project, an asthma research study will be conducted to determine the overall risk of COVID-19 and the impact of social and environmental factors on asthma patients. The goal is to understand how health and housing issues contribute to outcomes and identify possible areas for intervention.

PICU Caregiver Journal: Emotional Support for Parents and Patients

Project Owner: Claire Hanson, MD

Location: UPMC Children's Hospital, Department of Critical Care Medicine

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased stress for families of children hospitalized in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at UPMC Children's Hospital. Through this project, parents will be given journals they can use to reflect on their child's hospitalization in a healthy and productive way. Not only does it help them process their experience, the journals also provide parents a way to explain events of the hospital stay to their child and family and friends who were not allowed at the hospital.

Critical Illness Recovery Center Journals

Project Owner: Anna Lewis

Location: UPMC Mercy

As UPMC's only comprehensive post-intensive care recover clinic, the Critical Intensive Recovery Center at UPMC Mercy is on the frontline of caring for survivors of COVID-19. To help patients understand their journey and ongoing recovery, the CIRC created journals for family members and care provider to keep a record of their care and experience. The goal of this project is to cover the printing costs of the journals.