

MEDARVA Healthcare  
(Richmond Eye & Ear Healthcare Alliance, Inc.)  
Report on Implementation of the 2017-2020  
Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan

In 2017, MEDARVA Healthcare identified five priorities in the Greater Richmond area where MEDARVA could have an impact. The following is a report on MEDARVA's efforts and implementation.

**Access to Affordable Healthcare:**

For the last three years, MEDARVA has provided financial support to Goochland Cares (free clinic) in Goochland, VA. The MEDARVA funding is underwriting the creation of an endowment, designed to help Goochland Cares continue to operate during financially difficult times. MEDARVA has also supported a partnership between Goochland Cares and CrossOver Healthcare Ministry for the provision of eye care services to the residents of Goochland.

MEDARVA has provided funding to Challenge Discovery Projects (Richmond, VA); supporting their efforts to work with deaf children and their families to learn sign language, provide support groups and educational opportunities. The funding was for the past three years.

The Virginia Home (TVH), a private, nonprofit 130-bed home that provides nursing, therapeutic and residential care. TVH community remains the only one of its kind in the Commonwealth – a unique model of both compassionate care and a comforting place to call home for adult Virginians with irreversible physical disabilities. Dependent upon mostly Medicaid reimbursement, without outside financial support, TVH would not be able to provide the full range of services to its residents. MEDARVA provides funding to TVH to assist in fulfilling its unique mission. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, MEDARVA provided Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) supplies to the Home as an extension of our mission.

Believing in early detection and finding solutions, MEDARVA has operated the Pre-K Vision and Hearing Screening program for the past three years. Partnering with Pre-K educational centers in the Richmond Public Schools, Henrico Public Schools, Goochland County, Petersburg, Hopewell and numerous private schools, MEDARVA provided screening services to over 5,000 children. Our research has demonstrated that many young children have undiagnosed vision and hearing issues, which negatively affects their ability to learn.

MEDARVA partnered with a community based primary care group to recruit two new primary care physicians to the area. In exchange for financial support, the newly recruited physicians agreed to remain in the area for at least three additional years. This effort expanded access to primary care in significant ways.

### **Access to Specialist Healthcare:**

MEDARVA and its related organizations provided direct funding to the CrossOver Healthcare Ministry, underwriting the costs associated with operating the Eye Clinic at CrossOver. Funding covered the costs of operating the clinic as well as providing two Ophthalmologists who saw patients two days a week for all three years.

MEDARVA's two outpatient surgical hospitals – Stony Point Surgery Center and West Creek Surgery Center are active participants in the Richmond Academy of Medicine Access Now referral program. Over 150 patients have been treated at the two facilities through this program. This is in addition to patients who fall under MEDARVA's Charity Care Policy.

The Charity Care policy for the two centers provides assistance up to 300% of the poverty level. Patients who have coverage under Medicare, but cannot afford to purchase supplemental insurances (Medicare by definition is an 80%/20% plan, where the participant is responsible for 20% of the payment), may qualify under our charity care policy.

In partnership with community based health care clinics and organizations, MEDARVA has provided free colonoscopies to underserved populations during the past three years.

MEDARVA partnered with the Virginia Otolaryngology Society to provide ENT screenings to underserved populations across the state.

In MEDARVA's efforts to increase access to specialty care to children, MEDARVA provided funding to the Scottish Rite Speech Language Center and Virginia Special Olympics. The Speech Language Center diagnoses and treats speech and hearing issues throughout the greater Richmond area. Special Olympics provides vision and hearing testing to their athletes each summer and when necessary, provides glasses to the participants.

In 2017, MEDARVA published a report entitled, "Don't Let Anyone Label Your Child." The report provided information, research and education on the

mischaracterization of children as slow learners, ADHD, spacey, etc., when in fact the children may be suffering vision or hearing issues, sleep apnea, or other medical conditions that affect a child's ability to pay attention and learn. The report was well received and recognized as an important contributor to the discussion.

MEDARVA operates the MEDARVA Low Vision Center, focusing on Macular Degeneration and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). In our research, we learned that many people suffering from TBI have significant vision issues. Their recovery will not be successful if the vision issues are not also addressed and return to a normal state. The MEDARVA Low Vision Center is the only program of its kind in Central Virginia.

### **Pervasive Health Problems:**

MEDARVA has provided financial support and educational materials, addressing minority breast care treatments and opportunities. According to the CDC, death rates for black women are 40% higher than white women. MEDARVA is committed to providing assistance to community-based agencies, such as the Sister's Network, to increase awareness and accessibility to health care services.

Directly, MEDARVA created a 30-minute educational video featuring African American women discussing barriers to health care, particularly focusing on breast cancer issues. The discussion is re-presented on our website. Most recently, MEDARVA has sponsored educational videos on current topics of Vaccinations, treating your symptoms during COVID-19 pandemic, purpose and effect of anesthesia during surgery, and more.

Infertility continues to affect many families in the community. The MEDARVA Surgery Centers provide surgical support to physicians performing infertility procedures. Additionally, MEDARVA provides financial support to the organization, "Road to Parenthood" and has participated in their educational programs.

Many older people may feel isolated. This is compounded when they have severe vision issues. The isolation may negatively affect their health status, independence and mental status. MEDARVA works with and provides funding to The Virginia Voice, who provides online and radio reading services to its subscribers. By keeping people engaged with the external world, we help to keep them healthy.

In the past three years, MEDARVA has provided over \$3 million for research efforts at the University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University and Eastern Virginia University. The research efforts have included:

- Chronic Sleep Apnea in Pediatric Patients and developing non-evasive ways to test for it.
- Chronic Dry Eye treatment
- Restoring the sense of smell through technology
- Resident Research Efforts
- Orthopedic research and educational efforts
- Restoring the tiny hairs inside your ears that assist in hearing
- Genetic causes of hearing loss
- Postural Changes to Voice Production
- Etiology of Subjective Loss of Sense of Taste
- Recovery from COVID-19 Associated Smell and Taste Loss
- Using Zebrafish to Confirm Variants Segregating with Craniosynostosis.
- Regulation of the Usher syndrome type 1 protein protocadherin 15 by RacPak signaling

COVID-19 caused schools to close in the spring of 2019 and the cancelation of science fairs across the region. MEDARVA stepped in and sponsored two virtual science fairs – one for high school students and another one for middle-school students. The goal was to create a greater awareness and passion in young students for science and research. Fifty-six students from the region submitted science projects.

### **Need for Non-Profit Healthcare Facilities**

In the spring of 2020, MEDARVA opened a freestanding Imaging Center in the service area. MEDARVA Imaging is the only independent imaging center in Central Virginia – it is not owned by a large hospital based system or physicians. It offers lower cost alternative for MRI, CT and standard X-ray studies than the hospital based/owned facilities. As with the MEDARVA surgery centers, MEDARVA Imaging has a very comprehensive charity care policy and accepts Medicaid patients.

### **Continued Funding of Medicaid Procedures and Charity Care**

MEDARVA Healthcare Financial Assistance Policy exists to provide insure that MEDARVA appropriately serves patients in difficult financial circumstances and offers financial assistance to those who have an established need to receive emergency or medically necessary medical services. SPSC's policy is to provide emergency care to stabilize patients, regardless of their ability to pay. Emergency

and medically necessary care will not be denied for non-payment on prior outstanding amounts. The MEDARVA Charity Care policy includes patients who are up to 300% of the poverty level, increasing the range of patients who may qualify for assistance. During the four years (2017-2020) addressed in the previous Community Health Needs Assessment Plan 1,433 patients were granted Charity Care.

## **Community Participation and Support**

In addition to supporting health care focused services, MEDARVA also supported community-based organizations. In the past three years, MEDARVA has provided funding to the Children’s Museum of Richmond in support of visual activities at its museums. Funding was also provided to the Richmond Performing Arts Alliance in recognition of Women in Leadership roles.

## **Summary**

MEDARVA has worked hard to fulfill its Mission: *To restore and enrich lives through health research, technology, education, surgery, and facilitating the availability of health care.* As demonstrated in this report, MEDARVA has met and exceeded its goals as outlined in the 2017-2020 Community Health Needs Assessment.