

UMass Memorial Health Care: *We Can Slow the Growth in Health Care Costs*

"... we can slow the growth in health care costs significantly. And knowing we can count on the creativity, civic responsibility and partnership of those who work in and lead our health care industry ... I am confident we can do this the right way."

– Governor Deval Patrick in his January 23, 2012 State of the State Address

UMass Memorial Health Care values your trust in our physicians, staff and services. And we agree with Governor Patrick's position on lowering health care costs. As a leader in the health care industry we can, and we are, working to make health care more affordable.

A reader of our community message in last week's newspaper once again brought this need home. She said: "We can no longer go to your hospital because we will have to pay a much higher copay if we do."

We want this to change by acting locally to help reduce our nation's health care expense. Here are a few things we've done recently.

- By changing the way we contract for electricity at all our facilities, we save \$1.3 million a year.
- Standardizing our medical and office supplies across all our hospitals cut expenses by \$8.4 million — last year alone.
- Moving women's imaging and endoscopy care from our Marlborough Hospital campus to a community setting made care more convenient in a location where our expenses are lower.
- Training our staff in process improvement principles; for example, this work resulted in a \$5 million improvement in pharmacy operations and accounts for more than \$12 million in system savings to date.
- Moving from paper to electronic medical records, though costly to launch, allows our staff more time with their patients while our organization earns federal dollars for accomplishing this work.

Like all hospitals responding to health reform legislation, some changes we must make will not be easy. We are reviewing some services to see if they are better offered by more affordable community resources. We want to match our staff to the kind of care you need today and in the future. And we are committed to working closely with the unions representing our employees to partner for what is right for our employees, our patients and their families, and for UMass Memorial.

While we work to be more affordable for you, we are still growing and changing. We're expanding our cancer care at both our Marlborough and HealthAlliance Hospitals. We're updating our radiology services at our Medical Center. We will never skimp on the care our community deserves.

We are optimistic about our future. Your trust in us inspires our work. And the commitment of our physicians and staff to be part of the change process assures our success.

Read last week's message and our answers to your questions: www.umassmemorial.org/loweringcosts.



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