

July 12, 2022

The Honorable Adam J. Bello
Office of the County Executive, Monroe County
110 County Office Building
39 W. Main Street
Rochester, NY 14614

Dear County Executive Bello:

I am writing to strongly support Lifespan of Greater Rochester's proposal to serve at-risk older adults and expand the Community Care Connections Program. This project works to address the social determinants of health so that vulnerable individuals can connect to needed benefits and other health services.

Community Care Connections integrates systems of care. We know that siloed care is detrimental for older patients. In 2011, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation study called it "Health Care's Blind Side." The foundation concluded, "85 percent [of physicians surveyed] believe that unmet social needs—things like access to nutritious food, reliable transportation, and adequate housing—are leading directly to worse health for all Americans. This is health care's blind side: Within the current health care system, physicians do not have the time or sufficient staff support to address patients' social needs."

Since this report, a lot has been written about the social determinants of health. We know that housing, food, transportation, safe neighborhoods, etc. impact the health of an individual. For many older adults, it is daunting to navigate the social service system and health care systems of care, so they go without, and their conditions deteriorate over time. If we do not intervene, most of these individuals require more expensive long-term care alternatives. And while URMC is working hard to identify the social issues that impact our patients' health, we need partners who can make a difference in addressing those issues.

The Community Care Connections (CCC) program has proven that integrating traditional community-based aging services with medical systems of care positively affect the cost, quality, and physician & patient satisfaction. They have hired an independent evaluator, the New York Academy of Medicine, to show that value of this service. Through this evaluation, Lifespan has proven reduced hospitalizations, emergency room visits and observations by supporting the social needs of older adults. They have also surveyed older adults, their family caregivers, and the medical community. All three groups of individuals indicate this program is making a positive difference in the lives of the older adults.

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We should expand programs that work. I offer my full support and assistance to Lifespan in this effort.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vicky Hines". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Vicky" being more prominent than the last name "Hines".

Vicky Hines MHA
Chief Operating Officer
University of Rochester Medical Faculty Group
Vice President
University of Rochester Medical Center

