

HOSPITALS BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Embracing the anchor mission

**A Democracy Collaborative Report
by David Zuckerman**

**with contributions from Holly Jo Sparks, Steve
Dubb, and Ted Howard**

Detroit's "Big Three" are no longer Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler. Today, its three largest private employers are instead Henry Ford Health System, Detroit Medical Center, and Wayne State University. Detroit is but one example of a massive shift that is taking place: nonprofit universities and hospitals have become the dominant economic linchpins in many communities across the country.

This transformation brings with it important opportunities. Unlike highly mobile corporations, universities and hospitals are geographically "anchored" to their communities. America's nonprofit hospitals alone have revenues of more than \$650 billion and assets of \$875 billion and are often situated in struggling neighborhoods.

Increasingly, hospitals find that improving health is not just about treating the patients that come through their doors. By rethinking their economic and community engagement strategies, some hospitals are beginning to realize that by adopting an anchor institution mission, they can build not only more prosperous, but also much healthier, communities.

Hospitals Building Healthier Communities provides an in-depth look at six hospitals in five cities that have started to grapple with this challenge. Those case studies, and other best practices compiled from across the nation, provide a resource for—and pose a challenge to—hospitals throughout the country. Its findings expand the conversation and should spur new strategic economic approaches not just by hospitals, but also local philanthropy, community-based organizations, and policymakers.

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The Democracy Collaborative at the University of Maryland
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"As we read Zuckerman's landmark report, we can appreciate the power and possibility within a hospital anchor institution model. We can learn important lessons from those leading the effort, and share on how creativity can support models of health promotion, which promise to move us beyond the decaying economic model at present."

—Jamie Harvie, Executive Director,
Institute for a Sustainable Future

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collaborative

The Democracy Collaborative works to create new models for economic development that empower communities, build democracy, and attack the root causes of poverty and economic inequality. The Collaborative helped design Cleveland's Evergreen Cooperatives, a growing network of worker-owned green businesses in low-income neighborhoods, recognized nationally as a model for anchor institution engagement. For more information about the Collaborative's projects and research, visit community-wealth.org.