

Greater Rochester
**Health
Foundation
Philanthropy**
Creates A
**Community
Success
Story**



The Joining of
Anthony L. Jordan
Health Center
and
Westside
Health Services





Executive Summary

For almost four decades, Westside Health Services, a Federally Qualified Health Center, had a rich legacy of providing comprehensive, high-quality medical care to 15,000 Rochester residents, regardless of their ability to pay for services. In 2011, a series of circumstances resulted in a significant financial deficit for Westside Health Services from which recovery was unlikely.

There was no single action that would reverse Westside's financial dilemma and no immediate financial relief from state or federal sources was anticipated. As the mission of Greater Rochester Health Foundation (GRHF) was consistent with that of Westside, the Foundation was approached to provide interim financial support.

As a private foundation, GRHF was in a unique position to respond to this urgent request for help to preserve the health care safety net for a very vulnerable segment of the community. After reviewing the financial assumptions and the impact on patients should Westside fail, GRHF provided guidance to Westside's leadership team and \$1 million to enable Westside to make the necessary changes to return to financial stability.

The ultimate result was the seamless transition of Westside Health Services' operations and patients to Anthony L. Jordan Health Center. The story below highlights how a local foundation intervened to help save a valuable community resource and how a community came together to take care of its own, respect the legacy of two community health centers, and find a creative way to prepare for the demands of the future.

Financial Issues Required Tough Decisions

In 2010, Westside was logging close to 43,000 visits a year at its Woodward Center and Brown Square locations and was facing a serious financial challenge. Kalam Muttalib, former Westside board chair, explained, “One of our ongoing challenges was to conform to the federal mandate that we serve everyone, regardless of their ability to pay. The reimbursement remained flat with no increase for more than a decade and did not account for the increasing cost of medical technology or the cost of doing business.”

An unforeseen vortex created by a difficult implementation of electronic medical records, large liabilities for 2008 pension fund losses and charges assessed as part of a statewide

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- Essie Calhoun-McDavid

Medicaid dental audit heightened the financial challenges. Compounding the issue was a debt owed to the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) and the lack of continuity of executive leadership that was a result of illness, retirement or relocation of prior CEOs.



“If the Westside locations closed, it was estimated that it would take two years and require six times the cost to reopen.” - John Urban

A Unique Request for Help

As it became apparent that Westside could not easily reverse its financial status, its leadership realized that Westside might have to close its doors. Greater Rochester Health Foundation was approached for emergency funding to allow Westside time to stabilize its finances by contributing \$1 million in interim funding.

Essie Calhoun-McDavid, GRHF board chair, summarized why the Foundation felt strongly that funding for Westside was an investment that would benefit the entire community: “As a community health center, Westside was committed to quality improvement, skilled at helping people with multiple chronic conditions manage their health more effectively, and dedicated to reducing

health disparities for its patients. We are very pleased to have been able to play such a significant role in successfully preserving the delivery of such high-quality health care to 15,000 of our fellow Rochesterians.”

GRHF recommended an interim CEO and Mark Puccia, CFO of the Foundation, and John Urban, president and CEO of the Foundation, worked closely with Westside’s interim CEO on operational improvements and financial management controls. The Foundation also identified and recruited new board members for Westside with specific expertise in finance and management. The board asked the challenging and realistic question, “What must change to allow Westside to be solvent?”





A Critical Decision

A transition team was created that considered the financial implications of the options to close or merge, while providing continuity of care for the 15,000 Westside patients.

“Local medical experts projected that if Westside failed, the rate of premature and low birth-weight babies would increase, amputations due to complications of unmanaged diabetes would rise,

heart attack and stroke would escalate as a result of uncontrolled blood pressure, and visits to the emergency room would increase for many chronic medical conditions, including asthma in children.

“The team was committed to identifying a solution that would provide a safety net for patients. In addition, if the Westside locations closed, it was estimated that it would take two years and require six times the cost to reopen,” said John Urban.

The Westside/Jordan Transition Team

Bridgette Wiefeling, MD, CEO, Jordan
Buddhi Shrestha, DDS, MS, PhD, Rochester Primary Care Network
Candice Sheffer, Interim CEO/CFO, Westside
C. Bruce Lawrence, JD, Westside attorney, Boylan Code
David Broadbent, MD, Jordan
Kalam Muttalib, JD, board chair, Westside
John Urban, president and CEO, Greater Rochester Health Foundation
Mary Kay Copeland, CPA, PhD, Jordan transition director
Sam Huston, retired president and CEO, ViaHealth
Steve Goldstein, president and CEO, Strong Memorial Hospital and Highland Hospital
William Thomas, JD, Jordan attorney

“As a private foundation, GRHF had the flexibility to step in and provide interim funding and management support, and serve as a catalyst to align community resources for the preservation of a valued health care resource.” - John Urban

URMC also expressed concern about the ramifications of closing Westside. “The University has a long history of supporting the community health centers and providing primary care through our residency programs. If Westside had closed its doors, our emergency rooms could have seen an influx of families whose basic health needs would be better served in another setting, or those patients might have chosen to delay necessary treatment. The community health centers play a unique and necessary role in our community and it’s important to preserve them,” said Steven Goldstein, president

and chief executive officer, Strong Memorial Hospital and Highland Hospital.

A merger between Westside Health Services and Anthony L. Jordan Health Center was an option worthy of serious consideration. The primary service areas for both Jordan and Westside were designated as medically underserved areas with medically underserved populations.

David Huddleston, a former Jordan board member and chair, explained, “Jordan and Westside are really inextricably interwoven and always have been. They share a common goal to preserve high-quality primary care services in order to achieve better health outcomes for low-income families.”

Based on the common goals of Westside and Jordan, it was initially determined that the best option was to bring the two organizations together.





“In this unique endeavor, both Westside and Jordan boards, providers and staff came together to ensure a seamless transition of patient care.” - Buddhi Shrestha

Jordan’s CEO, Bridgette Wiefeling, MD, identified several key financial ingredients essential to make the transition a success:

- \$2,000,000 in transition funding was needed. Funding and other forms of assistance came from New York State, the Federal Government (HRSA), New York State Health Foundation, Excellus, MVP Healthcare, Monroe Plan, Rochester Primary Care Network and the United Way of Greater Rochester. NYS Assemblyman David Gantt supported a grant from the state for \$100,000 for renovations.
- \$1,000,000 line of credit was secured from Canandaigua National Bank.
- \$1,500,000 increase in annual revenue from optimization of funding sources. (GRHF supported this initiative with a \$50,000 grant for this revenue improvement project.)
- HRSA 330 grant funding from the Federal Bureau of Primary Care at HRSA was transferred to Jordan.
- UPMC forgave a financial liability.

Given the positive financial projections if Jordan were to assume responsibility for Westside's patients, a dedicated transition team dug deeper into the overall feasibility of the proposed plan and provided guidance to management throughout the process.

Also critical to the success of the plan was the expeditious approval from state and federal officials, all of whom were very supportive of the plan and moved the process along quickly to avoid any gap in care for Westside patients. NYS Department of Health granted Jordan an emergency Certificate of Need for the two Westside locations.

After the decision was made, staff and board from Jordan and Westside planned and coordinated countless transition details including: patient communication, merging electronic health record

systems, reduction in duplicative administrative overhead, integration of provider credentialing, clinical policies, operations, IT, finance and billing, and strategies for staff retention.

A Successful Outcome and the Promise of a Solid Future

The Anthony L. Jordan Health Corporation officially acquired the assets of Westside Health Services on August 26, 2011, with no disruption of care for patients at Woodward Health Center or Brown Square Health Center. Bridgette Wiefeling, MD, the CEO of Jordan since 2007, brought stable leadership to the Westside employees who became employees of Jordan. Members of the Westside board of directors joined the Jordan board, while meeting the federal requirement that 51% be patients of the Center. One year after the transition, the combined organization is serving more than 31,000 patients in seven locations and generating a modest surplus.





“As a private foundation, GRHF had the flexibility to step in and provide interim funding and management support, and serve as a catalyst to align community resources for the preservation of a valued health care resource. Jordan is in a strong position to meet the requirements of the Affordable Care Act and take advantage of its reimbursement incentives. We are pleased to have played a role in this transformation with other health care institutions in the community,” said John Urban.

Buddhi Shrestha, DDS, chair of Jordan’s corporate board of directors, sums up the outcome of the transition: “In this unique endeavor, both Westside and Jordan boards, providers and staff came together to ensure a seamless transition of patient care under the leadership of Dr. Bridgette Wiefling. We truly believe that their dedication and commitment makes us what we are today and what we will become tomorrow. Anthony L. Jordan Health Center also recognizes the outstanding community support led by Greater Rochester Health Foundation, along with support from the New York State Department of Health, the HRSA Bureau of Primary Care and the University of Rochester Medical Center, that was critical in achieving our goal.”

Bridgette Wiefling notes, “With the successful completion of the transition by Jordan and Westside, we hope to move forward with vision, compassion and strength to continue to serve the people of our community with respect regardless of their ability to pay. The finances of our organization are stable and the original projections have been met. In addition, Jordan and Westside are stronger together than they were as independent centers. We continue to have a strong board of directors made up of patients and other community members, all of whom respect the legacies of Jordan and Westside.”

“While the former Westside locations now bear the Jordan name, the staff and board commitment to the neighborhoods we serve has been unwavering, and together we strive to be more efficient in our delivery of care.” - Bridgette Wiefling

The phrases “Patients First” and “Same Faces at the Same Places” were two of the guiding principles in the transition of patients from Westside to Jordan. Both boards of directors

acknowledged the need to respect and build upon past successes and to establish long-term financial stability by which to create a better future for the community.



“Jordan and Westside have a deep civic history of serving complex patients who otherwise might not receive care outside of the emergency room. Their staff and board members are committed to, and passionate about, their mission.” - David Huddleston

Dr. Anthony L. Jordan and Dr. Kenneth Woodward — Pioneers in Community Health

The origin of Anthony L. Jordan Health Center dates back to the early 1900s and the establishment of a Settlement House by Temple B'rith Kodesh. In 1968, with a grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity, it became a community health center providing medical, psychiatric and social services to families 24 hours a day, and using the nation's first sliding fee scale.

In 1972, then-Monroe County Legislator David Gantt recommended that the new health center be named for Dr. Anthony L. Jordan, who grew his practice in the Seventh Ward area of Rochester and gave unselfishly of his time and financial resources. Frances Johnson, a patient of Dr. Jordan and board member of Jordan Health Center for almost 30 years, referred to Jordan as a "people person." "He was consistent, genuine and grounded and had a special place in his heart for people living in poverty. He served all patients with equal respect, regardless of their financial status."

Jordan's legacy lives on through the health center and his family. Daughter Mildred Jordan-Reynolds said, "My father believed that education was the



Dr. Anthony L. Jordan

great equalizer; it gave the individual the ability to control his/her fate. He took pride in educating his children and because of my father's profession, nine others have pursued a career in

the health professions, including eight physicians, and his great-granddaughter is a first-year medical student."

Dr. Kenneth Woodward was a pioneer in the community

health center movement and helped found Westside Health Service Centers in 1973 to provide health care to patients based on need, not ability to pay. The location of the centers near schools, shopping centers, churches and playgrounds put medicine where the people are, gave people a say in their health status through representation on boards and endeavored to throw off the image of "poverty" medicine by offering high-quality health care to all of their patients.

Woodward said, "We wanted to destroy a myth of how people felt about health. There was a belief that the poor were disinterested in their health, that they wouldn't show the same level of interest in health care that other people would." According to Dr. Walter Cooper, a long-time friend of Woodward, "Ken had a firm belief in the talent, vision, and integrity of people and the innate worth of all human beings. From his pioneering work in testing children for lead poisoning to his development of community health centers, Ken knew that a healthy body was essential to a healthy mind. He was a humanitarian deeply committed to bringing about change and giving minority communities a new vision of themselves." In 1983, a newly built center was named after Dr. Kenneth Woodward as part of Westside Health Services, now part of the Anthony Jordan Health Center.



Dr. Kenneth Woodward



The mission of Greater Rochester Health Foundation (GRHF) is to improve the health status of all residents of the Greater Rochester community, including people whose unique health care needs have not been met because of race, ethnicity or income. Visit www.thegrhf.org.



The mission of Anthony L. Jordan Health Center is to provide high-quality health care with dignity and respect to all regardless of ability to pay. Visit www.jordanhealth.org.



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