

Very Good = Good + Something Special

Getting to Very Good

From the Chairman and the President

How does a health care organization go from Good to Very Good, from being a reliable provider most of the time to being a truly excellent provider all of the time? Since we inaugurated our Campaign for Excellence three years ago, we've made some great strides in this area. In fact, we've found the key. It's called Something Special.

We first began talking about Something Special at our Excellence

Leadership Conference last June, although the basic idea has been part of our culture for years. At the conference, we defined Something Special as *that extra measure of caring, service or thoughtfulness that makes a real difference in patients' relationship with our organization* – the kind of experience that makes them say “Wow!”

At November's leadership gathering, nationally respected service expert Mary Malone talked with nearly 400 United Health Services managers and supervisors about how they and their staffs can create more “Wow!” moments. Hospitals nationwide have been successful in raising patient satisfaction scores by providing services like valet parking and communication boards, and we've had success with those ideas here too.

Best of all, we can point to

success stories in connection with our Pillars of Excellence. These include the room service dining at United Health Services Hospitals, the expansion of physical therapy at United Medical Associates, the introduction of Professional Home Care products and services in the Chenango and Delaware county areas and our devoted efforts to connect people with their Medicare and Medicaid benefits.

We also see evidence that our efforts are translating to our health care security. The Very Good stewardship of our board, managers and employees is reflected in our positive fiscal performance for 2004, as we were able to end the year with a \$2.65 million surplus on revenues of \$430 million. This is encouraging at a time when health care in New York State is facing possible cuts and taxes from government, discontent from commercial payers, the

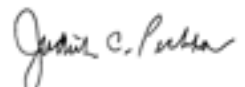
aging of the population and the challenges of new and intense consumer demands.

As we look to the future, we can build with confidence on the strengths our family of organizations demonstrated in 2004. We are proud to say that all of our members and affiliates were committed to providing that extra bit of service and thoughtfulness. In their philosophy, actions and dedication to Excellence, our people created many moments that were Something Special.

They showed the kind of commitment that can take an organization like ours from Good to Very Good in every facet of its mission.



Peter V. McGinn, PhD
President and CEO



Judith C. Peckham
Chairman of the Board



$$V_1 G_2 = G_2 + S_1 S_1$$

Bon appetit!

Not long ago, a stay in the hospital meant traditional “hospital food.” Not feeling well, you probably didn’t have your usual appetite, or weren’t hungry when your meal tray showed up. What’s more, you didn’t have a lot of say in what you were served. All that changed at United Health Services Hospitals in 2004 with the introduction of At Your Request Room Service Dining.

Now, if you’re a patient at Wilson or Binghamton General, you call in your special order and a waiter or waitress in a crisp uniform brings you what you want to eat, when you want it. It’s just like ordering room service in a hotel. Nationwide, the practice is catching on in many hospitals, and United Health Services Hospitals is proud to be the first in this region to offer it. The change didn’t occur overnight. “We started out with some people saying, ‘It will never work here,’” said Tony DeSanctis, director of Food & Nutrition. “And it was a slow process to bring it all to-

gether. It took about 22 months in total.” But, with the cooperation of nursing and excellent teamwork between food service and nursing staff, the new approach to dining is showing signs of being a real patient-pleaser.

“The new on-call meal plan was very good,” one patient commented recently. “There was a good selection and the food was hot, tasty and on time.” Other comments from patient satisfaction surveys conducted routinely in the hospitals have included: “At Your Request is the best thing we’ve seen ever. How nice to be able to choose not only what will taste good, but when.” “Choices were extensive and flavor was very good.” “The staff were always clear, polite and smartly dressed. Food and service were impressive.”



Photo above: At Your Request staff bring patients delicious meals, with a smile.

s e r v i c e



Service...

- A United Health Services employee who works hard to improve the experience of hospitalized patients is Pamela Raichlin, a physical therapy assistant at Binghamton General Hospital. Pam, who has worked on Memorial 6 and Krembs 4, was the recipient of the Sue Bakken Award for dedication to the care of orthopedic patients. Pam helped orient many new employees to the care of orthopedic patients and the complexity of the CPM machine, a device that exercises the knee after joint replacement.
- In 2004, United Health Services Hospitals hosted a workshop designed expressly for unit assistants that

Special Experiences

- featured noted motivational speaker Sid Hurlbert. The Excellence in Care workshop focused on topics related to improving the patient’s experience during hospital care. The assistants embraced the learning opportunity, providing comments such as: “The skills we learned were the kind we could take right back to our units.”
- Ideal Senior Living Center opened a new activities room expressly for nursing home residents with dementia. The room gives them the opportunity to do some tasks they remember and enjoy, like laundry, cooking and using tools.



At United Health Services, our mission is to provide essential hospital services to those in need, regardless of their ability to pay. To help ensure that people have access to all resources for which they may be eligible, we employ a team of dedicated patient financial advocates. Their primary role is to help patients who have no health coverage but require medically necessary care.

individuals with the safety net they need. This allows them to access care from other providers as well, which in turn can prevent future hospitalizations and help patients improve their well-being.

In 2004, the Patient Financial Advocacy program at United Health Services Hospitals brought in more than \$9 million in Medicaid reimbursement that might otherwise have gone uncollected. The advocates' caring efforts assisted patients while also helping the hospitals stay financially sound.

Many patients are eligible for state or federal programs, such as Medicare, Medicaid, Family Health Plus, Healthy NY or Child Health Plus, said Mary Petko, supervisor. "Those who aren't eligible may qualify for the Financial Assistance Program available directly through United Health Services as part of our commitment to our community," she noted.

Efforts like those of the advocates are important if hospitals and other providers in New York State are to remain solvent. As declining payments from government and commercial carriers become a larger issue, these individuals will be ever more important champions of excellence in care.

By working cooperatively with the patient, the patient's family and outside agencies, the advocates are able to connect

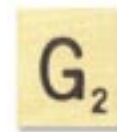


Photo above: Our financial advocates help patients access the safety net they need.

Finance...	Special Contributions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delaware Valley Hospital applied to the government to become a critical access hospital, a special designation that could bring the facility as much as \$600,000 a year in additional Medicare revenue. Critical access hospitals are recognized by the government as providing essential community services in areas that would be underserved without them, thereby qualifying for higher reimbursement. • In July, United Health Services took delivery on a new all-terrain stretcher vehicle specially equipped for urgent medical response and patient transport. The vehicle was made possible by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$37,100 in discretionary state funding arranged by 52nd district New York Sen. Thomas W. Libous. • Chenango Memorial Hospital received a \$200,000 federal grant to begin dental screening and mental health services at its school-based health sites in Chenango County. Both programs will be launched in 2005. CMH operates seven school-based centers in three school districts in the county, serving nearly 3,700 students. In 2003-2004, the sites recorded 11,365 patient encounters.

A national learning site

When a health care organization becomes known for quality care, that reputation extends beyond its own region. This year, United Health Services' quality was recognized nationally when it became one of only four institutions in the eastern United States designated as artificial disc learning sites. Wilson Regional Medical Center was one of the sites where surgeons began learning how to implant the new artificial discs, recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Doctors from the Southern New York NeuroSurgical Group were selected to train neurosurgeons and orthopedic surgeons from as far away as Maine and Ohio. The teaching surgeons are Drs. Saeed Bajwa, Khalid Sethi, John Gartman and Daniel Galyon. "We are pleased that Wilson has been selected for this revolutionary type of surgical training," said Matthew Salanger, president and chief executive officer of United Health Services Hospitals. "It's

the kind of medical advance that can vastly improve the lives of patients in our community and beyond."

Dr. Bajwa said the artificial disc is one of the most promising surgical developments in recent years for treating severe low back pain. "It is designed to replicate the movement of the patient's own disc," he said. "Following surgery, patients have less pain, greater mobility and a better quality of life."



Photo above: Surgeons from around the northeastern U.S. came to Wilson for artificial disc training.

q u a l i t y



Quality...

- Twin Tier Home Health implemented a new computer system called Point of Care. Clinicians use laptop computers at the bedside to directly enter patient information when making home visits. "This gives the clinicians the most up-to-date information about the patient's condition," said Kathy Rezeski, RN, vice president for Clinical Services. "For example, they have the patient's blood pressure and other vital signs for every home visit right there at their fingertips, and can communicate the information to physicians as needed."
- The Laboratory Department at Chenango Memorial Hospital received a near-perfect score in a survey conducted in Spring 2004 by the New York State

Special Performance

- Department of Health. The exhaustive survey examined all documentation and department policies. "The survey is a snapshot of the high-quality work and professionalism of our team," said Johneen Loftus, manager of Ancillary Services.
- At Ideal Senior Living Center, departments collaborated to ensure a higher quality of life for residents who must spend much of their time in bed or in a wheelchair. The Ideal team's goal was to significantly reduce the incidence of pressure ulcers among residents. In 2000, the incidence was 22 percent and in 2003 it was 7 percent. By 2004, it had been reduced to 3.7 percent, an extraordinary turnaround. The national average for long-term care facilities is 8 to 9 percent.

Twin Tier Home Health

“Your ability to treat Mom as a person, not just a patient, was extremely meaningful to all of us.”

Cindy Gitchell, Binghamton

Professional Home Care

“You have served me well and with a lot of compassion and understanding. You have certainly enriched my life, not only medically, but you have touched my heart.”

Marguerite Clark, Endicott

United Medical Associates

“Your physician assistant treated me with gentle kindness and a little bit of humor, and by that time all my anxiety was gone.”

Pauline Buchta, Binghamton

United Health Services

“United Health Services is definitely the hospital of choice. I just love that place.”

Jordan Masciarelli, age 15

**“The good that we do b
when we add that extra tou**



Becomes truly Excellent much of warmth and caring.”

and CEO, United Health Services

United Health Services Hospitals

“Congratulations on the outstanding, professional way you do your jobs, and the patient care advocacy you display.”

Lori VanVleck, RN

Ideal Senior Living Center

“You have a gold mine in the Rose Court employees. They have become part of our family.”

The Family of Julia DeVillano

Delaware Valley Hospital

“You are an outstanding family of caregivers. You show kindness, compassion and genuine caring.”

*Mary M. McPhillips,
Middletown*

Chenango Memorial Hospital

“We feel very fortunate to live in an area with such professional ER staff – caring, thoughtful and very thorough.”

Tom and Mary Davis, Norwich

United Health Services Foundation

“The new van you have funded is just what we need. It’s very practical and comfortable for our residents.”

Steve Slater, Director of Facility Services, Ideal





Growth...

- *United Medical Associates announced a plan to move the Sleep Disorders and Neurodiagnostic Center, now located in the Summit Building east of Binghamton General, to new space in the former Giant Market on Pennsylvania Avenue west of the hospital. The center will expand from a four-bed to an eight-bed facility. A 10-exam-room clinic will be added.*
- *The community got its first look in 2004 at the amazing technology of Greater Binghamton's most advanced Minimally Invasive Surgical Suite. An open house was held for the new high-tech operating room at Wilson, which specializes in the latest laparoscopic procedures. Advanced telecommunications*

Special Developments

- capabilities in the suite allow doctors to conduct live videoconferences with other clinicians outside the room. The new suite helps to reinforce United Health Services Hospitals' reputation as a regional referral location for some of the most advanced types of surgery available in upstate New York.*
- *Professional Home Care expanded to improve home health care services in Chenango County, opening a home health and durable medical equipment store at Chenango Memorial Hospital, and providing at-home respiratory therapy to patients. PHC also provides medical equipment services to Delaware County residents through its new site at Delaware Valley Hospital.*

As the demand for high-quality physical therapy services grows in the Southern Tier, United Medical Associates has successfully expanded its Outpatient Physical Therapy program to serve more patients. Launched in 1996, PT opened its first major office at the United Medical Associates-Endicott site in 1997. This office also houses the new Sports Medicine Clinic.

In 2003, the medical group contracted with the respected Drayer Physical Therapy Institute for management of the PT program and opened a second location at the Johnson City Traffic Circle site by year end. In 2004, PT began planning to launch a third site, to be opened in 2005.

“Contracting with Drayer helped us become what we’ve always wanted to be,” said Jim Lane, director of Planning, Marketing and New Business Development for the group. “We’ve made a lot of progress in less than 10 years,

and especially in the last three years. PT is one of our fastest-growing units.”

“When you look at the volume of activity, the extended hours of operation, the consistency of treatment outcomes and the satisfaction of patients, we have seen substantial growth in PT activity,” said Floyd Metzger, executive director of United Medical Associates. Patient visits jumped from 57,874 in 2003 to 101,361 in 2004, a 75 percent increase. The number of patients saying they would “recommend” or “highly recommend” the service soared from the 54th percentile to the 90th in 2004.

The practice’s leaders also decided to further expand PT by creating the third site in a portion of the building formerly occupied by the Chenango Bridge Medical Group on Route 12A. Renovation work has begun, and is expected to be completed in early 2005.

Photo above: Patient visits to United Medical Associates Physical Therapy increased by 43,487 in a year's time.

A happy team

When employees in 2004 were asked their opinions about working at United Health Services, they showed up in large numbers to let their views be heard. The result was that 84 percent of employees system-wide – 4,082 individuals – took the survey administered by the firm of Baird & Borling Associates. That's well above the average response rate of 56 percent among similar large health systems nationwide. At systems across the country, both general satisfaction and survey participation scores have been falling since 1988, while ours have steadily risen.

And how did we do? "In terms of general satisfaction, employees' opinions were so positive that they placed United Health Services among the top 10 percent of all systems in the United States," said Michael McNally, vice president for Human Resources. "When asked to rate overall job satisfaction, employees turned in a score of 5.76 on a 1-to-7 scale, well above the national norm of 4.59. This also

is an improvement over our 2003 score of 5.67."

Notably, Professional Home Care's score of 6.25 was the highest ever recorded by Baird & Borling among home care agencies, and Ideal Senior Living Center's 5.96 was the second-highest ever among skilled nursing facilities. At United Health Services Hospitals, all departmental scores were above the national norm. Because such a high percentage of staff took the survey system-wide, the results are considered a reliable indicator of actual satisfaction.

In the coming months, all team members will be involved in using the survey results to build on our best attributes and seek to improve those areas needing attention.



Photo above: Rewards, recognition and fun can be part of a great place to work.

p e o p l e



People...

- Jessica Underwood, a speech pathologist at Wilson Regional Medical Center, gained media attention when she helped one of her stroke patients, Bill Mack of Binghamton, reunite with long-lost family members in the Philadelphia-New Jersey area. She conducted Web searches until she was able to find his sons and former wife, who had given up hope of seeing him again.
- An employee with a warm touch, soft voice and great smile was the winner of the 2004 RED CARPETSM Award at Ideal Senior Living Center. Carol Blazey, RN, case manager in Assisted Living, was praised for her

Special Colleagues

"cheerfulness and genuine thoughtfulness." Carol's supervisor, Brenda Papa, RN, said, "Since Ideal opened its doors, Carol has been a really caring person who goes out of her way for our residents. She has a positive attitude that has never changed."

- Martin Masarech, MD, a United Medical Associates family practitioner in Greene, was named Citizen of the Year by the Greater Greene Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Masarech, who was featured in one of United Health Services' "Amazing People" advertisements, is active in the medical and the civic life of his community.

For a worthy cause



When teams line up to participate in charitable walks, runs and other activities around Greater Binghamton, you can be sure United Health Services will be well represented. As one of the community's largest employers, it might be expected that we would turn out large contingents. But this year we had especially high levels of participation in such events as the United Way's Day of Caring, the Heart Walk, Relay for Life and Making Strides Against Breast Cancer.

corporate group, with 170 United Health Services walkers turning in \$10,700 in pledges.

Calling themselves "tribes" and sporting a "Survivor" theme, our teams raised \$10,280 for Relay for Life, the around-the-clock walk that benefits the work of the American Cancer Society. The amount was over \$4,000 more than the previous year's contribution. In another impressive showing, 120 walkers raised over \$15,000 in pledges for the Heart Walk, our best results ever as an organization. Employees from all over the system, including many from Ideal, United Medical Associates, Wilson, Binghamton General, PHC and Twin Tier, joined in the effort.

During a multi-week drive, United Health Services staff donated \$126,192 toward the United Way's annual campaign in the community. A total of 180 employees took part in the United Way's third annual Day of Caring, rolling up their sleeves to clean, paint, cook and landscape at 13 charity venues on Sept. 11. And, for the first time in Making Strides history, we raised the most money of any



Community...

- A team of physicians, nurses and allied health professionals joined forces to provide medical care to Mohammad Karime, a 5-year-old boy from Iran who was born without a nose or right eye. With the help of an Albany Rotary's "Gift of Life" program, the boy was brought to the United States for surgeries and follow-up care provided by plastic surgeon Lawrence Kerr, MD, neurosurgeon Saeed Bajwa, MD, and other members of the United Health Services team.

- As part of a \$19.7 million funding program for a comprehensive anti-smoking, tobacco-control initiative, United Health Services was designated as one of 19 cessation centers in New

Special Commitment

York State. The centers train and support health care organizations in implementing federal guidelines for treating nicotine addiction. As leader of the four-county "TEAM-ACT" coalition, the Center for Community Health had been working on cessation efforts for three years.

- In recognition of October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Delaware Valley Hospital launched "Healthy Friendships," a promotion encouraging women to encourage other women to have mammograms. Women in the community were asked to talk to one or more female friends about the importance of the annual diagnostic image.

Photo above: Many employees turned out to support walks and other civic events in 2004.

2004 Stewardship

Despite an increasingly difficult financial environment throughout the health care field, United Health Services' member organizations continued in 2004 to provide outstanding care and service to tens of thousands of patients while maintaining its record for sound stewardship over the system's resources.

United Health Services finished the year with an operating surplus of \$2.65 million on revenues of nearly \$430 million, a margin of just less than one percent. With two out of three New York hospitals reporting operating losses in 2004, the system's performance was due in large measure to its ability to contain costs while expanding needed services.

At the same time, the system provided a record \$22.6 million in uncompensated care and financial aid to the medically indigent and poor, ensuring that all those in need receive essential health care.

While United Health Services' two rural hospitals – Chenango Memorial Hospital and Delaware Valley Hospital – experienced operating losses in 2004, each was set on a course that should restore their

stability in 2005. Chenango Memorial completed implementation of a turn-around plan that cut costs, improved quality and service and reconfigured key services, while Delaware Valley improved reimbursement through conversion to a critical access hospital.

United Medical Associates, Ideal Senior Living Center, Professional Home Care and Twin Tier Home Health recorded small operating surpluses, while United Health Services Hospitals continued to develop as a regional leader in tertiary care and hospital-based services.

United Health Services Hospitals also received certificate-of-need approvals in 2004 to further develop its advanced cancer treatment services and expand its renal dialysis program in 2005.

The combined hospitals of United Health Services provided in-patient care to nearly 26,000 patients during 2004, and more than 63,000 patients received emergency care. Nearly 18,000 surgeries were performed at the hospitals, and over 240,000 visits were recorded at family health centers.

Mission

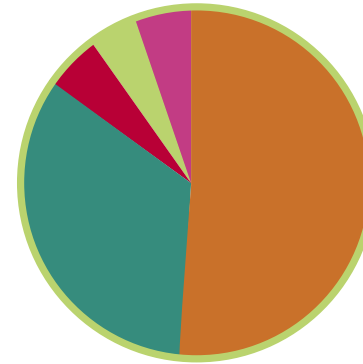
United Health Services is a family of health services organizations whose mission is to coordinate individual care and improve the health of the communities we serve through a comprehensive and cost-effective regional health system."

Vision

To be a great place to work, a great place to practice medicine, and a great place to receive care as demonstrated by quality and satisfaction results consistently among the best of comparable health care organizations nationwide."

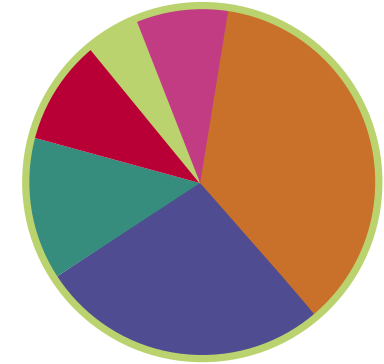
2004 Financials

United Health Services System Revenues and Expenses*



Operating Revenues (in thousands)

● Inpatient Services	\$166,559
● Outpatient Services	\$217,117
● Long-Term Care	\$ 16,334
● Home Health Care	\$ 11,752
● Other Operating and Non-Operating Revenue	\$ 17,729
TOTAL REVENUE	\$429,491



Operating Expenses (in thousands)

● Salaries	\$187,863
● Supplies and Services	\$140,489
● Employee Benefits	\$ 53,123
● Uncompensated Care	\$ 22,179
● Interest	\$ 6,087
● Depreciation and Amortization	\$ 17,093
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$426,834
NET SURPLUS	\$ 2,657
NET UNCOMPENSATED CARE AND FINANCIAL AID	\$ 22,597



* The information listed is a preliminary financial draft for the year 2004. Final numbers are not expected to change substantially.

2004 Hospital Services

Hospital Discharges	25,845
Emergency Visits	63,466
Surgery (Total)	17,964
- Inpatient	5,009
- Outpatient	12,955
Dialysis Treatments	29,982
Family Care Center Visits	242,851

Member/Affiliate Boards

United Health Services is governed by representatives from our community who volunteer to serve on its boards of directors, and on those boards' committees and work groups. These are caring, dedicated individuals who give generously of their time, energies and talents.

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