

Dr. Susan Turney
Nominated by Melissa Breen and Patti Bell

Dr. Susan Turney has been, and continues to be, one of the most influential people in the history of Marshfield, Wisconsin. Her impact is indelible, from the 22 years she spent as an internal medicine physician at Marshfield Clinic, to her current role as CEO of Marshfield Clinic Health System (MCHS).

In her time as CEO of MCHS, Dr. Turney has initiated the largest period of growth in the organization's history. During her tenure the Health System has grown from owning one hospital, to owning 11 hospitals, with continued growth on the horizon. In that same period of time, the workforce of MCHS has doubled.

Dr. Turney has recognized the unique challenges rural communities face in accessing health care, and has worked to transform MCHS so it can meet these challenges and serve patients, families and communities with excellent care close to home. She also has used her platform to become a national voice, advocating for the needs of rural patients and communities.

Her influence is beyond doubt, as she has been honored multiple times by Modern Healthcare as one of the 100 most influential people in health care nationwide, one of the top 50 most influential clinical executives in America, and as one of the top 25 women leaders in health care across the country.

Dr. Turney has achieved this recognition, and grown MCHS, despite navigating the biggest challenge in the history of the organization, the COVID-19 pandemic. The organization not only continued to grow and evolve during the pandemic, but played a central, statewide and even national role in addressing COVID-19 head on.

During the pandemic MCHS: dramatically expanded our hospital presence, led perhaps the largest and most comprehensive pandemic response in rural Wisconsin, transformed how we work and provide care with an emphasis on telehealth, played a leading role in COVID research and invested more heavily than ever in our communities and staff.

It should be noted that all of this was achieved despite the fact that rural health care has been in crisis for two decades, long before the pandemic began. A record 20 rural hospitals closed in America in 2020, and this trend has been accelerating at an alarming rate for over a decade. Just since 2010, 136 rural hospitals have closed across the country.

This context makes the growth and evolution of MCHS all the more impressive and important to the patients, families and communities it serves. Dr. Turney has also put a strong emphasis on reaching outside the clinical space, and into our communities.



MCHS worked hand-in-hand with community partners during COVID to provide financial support to community organizations, address food insecurity, housing, technology support for schools, and other needs highlighted by the pandemic. Some examples:

- MCHS was one of the first organizations in Wisconsin to offer a COVID-19 Community Support Fund, totaling \$400,000. Funds were used by more than 70 local organizations to fill dire community needs.
- MCHS launched an IPAD donation program where used IPADs are collected from our communities, repurposed by our IS department, and distributed to patients suffering from social isolation who may be home-bound.
- MCHS created COVID-19 regional liaison positions to assure a single point of contact for community partners on all things COVID related.

This community-based work did not start with the pandemic. Dr. Turney has been focused on building fundamentally healthier communities from her first day as CEO. Here are a couple examples of the community-based work she has overseen:

- MCHS has over 50 school districts engaged in our Behavioral, Emotional, Screening, Traits Program. The program helps schools reinforce positive behavioral development and build in classroom interventions for students who need more focused attention.
- MCHS partnered with our local YMCA in Marshfield on a major expansion of their facilities and programming. This facility is now a community health hub with new offerings including: after school programming for at-risk youth, a new fitness center, new child care facilities, a new multi-generational community room and a new 20,000 square-foot fieldhouse.

Inside and outside the walls of MCHS, Dr. Turney has been a historic catalyst for change and progress. That evolution has greatly benefitted Marshfield, and every community MCHS serves.