



Fall 2020 Newsletter

MISSION

To support Altru Health System in *improving health and enriching life.*

Update for 2020

Hello Altru Alliance Members,

We are sad to announce that we will not be hosting our annual dinner like we normally would in the fall. This is such a strange year and we are really missing all your faces!

The Altru Alliance works in partnership with Altru Health System to provide for items of comfort to patients and their families. The Alliance promotes a rapport between the health system and the communities it serves.

In 2020, the year of COVID made some of our fundraising efforts a challenge. Susan Alexander in the Gift Shop continued to share positive and creative gift shop ideas leading to an increase in online orders as well as a candy cart during the early months of COVID. She continues to search for items that will sell quickly. One of the hot items has been MASKS (and candy, of course)!

The Altru Alliance Board has also spent time studying our gifting procedures. Previously, we gifted funds before raising them, then work all year to try and earn those funds. The current board did not feel this was fiscally responsible and wanted to develop a plan where we would be gifting actual dollars earned from the previous year. We also identified five areas of giving that the Alliance would support.

- 1. Scholarships**
- 2. Community Giving**
- 3. Altru Health System** (internal departments)
- 4. Grants** (one-time gifts to internal departments)
- 5. Special Projects**

The board decided to take a year to evaluate and build up our funds. We did choose to still donate funds for scholarships for Northland Community & Technical College and Altru Nursing, Meals on Wheels, Lutheran Social Services, Safe Kids, Altru Foundation Gala and Spin For Kids. We felt it was important to donate to the Gala again this year because dollars raised are helping expand medical clinical research at Altru Health System. Never has the importance of innovation in healthcare hit us closer to home than this year.

Our Altru Alliance Gift Shop and fundraisers are what make gifting possible. The total YTD 2020 sales through September for the gift shop was \$148,399. We also tried something new and partnered with Nothing Bundt Cakes. It was a great success, especially considering it was our first pre-order type sale. We learned many things from this.

Our goals for the future include:

1. Continuing our partnership with Altru Health System.
2. Increasing awareness of the Alliance within the communities we serve.
3. Attracting new and active members who will be committed to the work of the Alliance.

We greatly appreciate the support and confidence shown to the Alliance by Altru Health System and the Board of Directors.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Wifall
Altru Alliance Board President

Join Us

For more information to become a member click [here](#) or visit altru.org/about-us/support-altru/altru-alliance

Questions and Answers with Dr. Weiser and Dave Molmen

How is Altru managing the COVID crisis? What challenges do you see?

Altru's response to the COVID pandemic has been one of the strongest in the state. We mobilized our team to quickly develop a screening hotline, as well as a curbside testing site and eventually a sick clinic for respiratory care. We've put processes in place to protect our patients, staff and community with employee daily screenings, pre-call screenings for patients, visitor restrictions and virtual waiting rooms. We've prioritized balancing safety and compassion, knowing the importance of family's role in healthcare.

Many of those innovations are now part of normal operations. We've put measures in place to ensure our facilities are safe to visit and expanded virtual care to treat more patients at home.

We're focused on caring for all patients in the hospital, both those with COVID and other needs, and have been quite busy across all spectrums. Our COVID hospitalizations have remained manageable, and our ability to close and open our COVID general medical unit allows for more efficient staffing. We were one of the first in the nation to utilize convalescent plasma therapy for the treatment of hospitalized COVID patients and have had many success stories with this treatment.

As we look ahead, we know that testing availability, especially as influenza season begins, will be a priority to address. We want to ensure safe, convenient testing remains accessible for all patients, and that they receive the proper assessment based on their symptoms. With winter looming, curbside testing faces some challenges as well. Our teams are working through these additional nuances and we're confident we'll continue to offer the care the community needs for the remainder of the pandemic.

How is Altru doing financially?

After facing challenging months during the initial onset of COVID-19, we've seen a steady improvement in our operations. This has reflected well on our finances with August year-to-date showing a positive operating margin. Our hospital and clinics have been busy and we're able to offer the full scope of care our patients expect from us. Our projections for the rest of the year are positive,



based upon our operational improvement work, and we anticipate steady increase in patient volume. We've expanded our Express services, both with our walk-in clinics and virtually through our Express Video Visits. These services offer convenient options for patients and help us reach new audiences who seek alternatives for acute care.

What are the future plans?

This is a very exciting time for Altru. Over the past few years, we've navigated many challenges that have come from a rapidly evolving healthcare industry. As a team, we've faced these challenges and they've made us stronger. We continue to innovate and adapt to create the health system of the future, continuously improving to meet our region's needs.

Earlier this year we launched a new strategic plan. This plan is a bold roadmap to our future, one that focuses on Altru becoming a regional integrator of care. In the months ahead we will move forward on several of the key aspects of this plan.

To integrate is to 'bring together or incorporate parts into a whole'. Successful integration requires partnership – we cannot do it alone. Altru has always believed in working together in the best interest of our patients and staff, as is evident throughout our history. We look forward to continuing to build strong partnerships that improve care for our patients and make a difference in our community.

When will Altru resume building the new hospital?

First – we want to assure you that Altru will complete our new hospital. While construction is not currently underway, we continue to actively work on and refine plans for the hospital's completion. Through the remainder of this year and into next year, we will remain focused on our operations, ensuring our steady financial improvement continues and is sustainable. We will continue to assess our progress and determine the right time to begin construction again and will keep the community updated as we know more. Altru is on a strong path both operationally and financially.

How does Altru respond to competition in the community?

We welcome competition and believe people should have choices when it comes to healthcare. We're focused on our unwavering commitment to delivering safe, high quality care to our region, as well as an exceptional experience for our patients. We are proud to be a community health system where our providers and team can make a direct impact on how we deliver on our mission.

What do you think is important for the community to know about Altru?

Altru is a community-based health system serving over 230,000 residents throughout the region. Our purpose is to provide exceptional care and patient experience. We are committed to our community and we will continue to invest in the things that make our region great – be it education, healthy activities or supportive programming for underserved populations. We're here to help our neighbors and understand what they need most; through our collaborative Community Health Assessment we see first-hand where our biggest gaps are and partner with entities across our community to actively address them.

We are strong and steady. Altru remains firmly rooted in our mission of improving health and enriching life. We will innovate to expand services in an ever-changing industry, while not losing sight of our commitment to the health of our community and ensuring they have access to the care and services they deserve for years to come.

Please help us spread the word

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Altru Alliance Gift Shop

Excludes: balloons, books, cards, candy, flowers & postage stamps

Upcoming Events

November 9 — Board Meeting
December 14 — Board Meeting

Board of Directors

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