



Our Story

Altru Health System is an integrated health system with headquarters on a 90-acre medical campus in Grand Forks, North Dakota. It was created July 1, 1997, when the Grand Forks Clinic and United Health Services integrated.

Even though our official "date of birth" is July 1, 1997, Altru Health System came into being in April 1997 in response to the great Red River Valley flood. As a community of 60,000 people evacuated, and water and sanitary systems across the community failed, health care professionals worked together to ensure the safe evacuation of hundreds of patients. Together, providers worked to re-establish medical services at clinic branch locations in the surrounding region.

The roots of Altru Health System date back to 1892 when the first hospital was built in Grand Forks. Eight years later, three physician partners established a clinic. These pioneering physicians, and those who eventually joined the medical practice, achieved several "firsts" in North Dakota, including: the first Board Certified Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist; Radiologist; Internist; Surgeon and Obstetrician. Their practice would become known as the Grand Forks Clinic in 1940.

Over the years, the greater Grand Forks area and the medical community thrived. By the mid 1960's, the leaders of Deaconess Hospital, St. Michael's Hospital, the Grand Forks Clinic, and the University of North Dakota Medical Center Rehabilitation unit were discussing the problems of lack of space for expansion, duplication of services and a growing community and region. Their decision would be the number one strategic response to the changes and challenges in health care in the 90s.

In 1971, Deaconess and St. Michael's Hospitals became legally, but not physically, one United Hospital. The next year, plans and blue prints turned into bricks and mortar. Organizers broke ground for the first facility on Medical Park, a 90-acre campus of medical services and facilities. The medical complex grew to include an acute care hospital, a rehabilitation hospital, a large specialty clinic, an orthopedic clinic, a family practice clinic, a nursing home, a chemical dependency center and a unique senior living center.

Dedicated physicians and other medical professionals also nurtured the health care programs and services. In 1977, under the leadership of its physicians, the Grand Forks Clinic participated in the founding of the North Central Cancer Treatment Group, and United Hospital organized the first paramedic training program in the state. By 1988 cardiac services had expanded to include open heart surgery.

Over the years, United Hospital, the Grand Forks Clinic and other organizations learned to work together to meet the needs of their patients. This collaboration and trust eventually led to integrations. Partners came to the table willingly and as equals. Altru Health System is the result of that vision.