

2003 Annual Report



Amazing Technology. Extraordinary Care.

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Amazing care

A Message from the President and the Chairman

How would you describe great health care? How would you describe the opposite? A recent Boston Globe article about improving health care said that in an ideal world:

“You could call your doctor’s office in the morning and make an appointment for that afternoon. The appointment would start on time, not an hour and three People magazines later. Every hospital employee would be trained to have the customer-service touch of a Ritz-Carlton concierge. Waiting would be kept to a minimum, because the hospital would have embraced flow management. Medication errors would be all but eliminated by the universal adoption of computerized drug-ordering systems . . . and no one would ask you to wear one of those open-backed johnnies.”

The Globe article described one of the pioneers and heroes of health care improvement, Dr. Donald Berwick. He is a passionate advocate for the types of improvements we are making at United Health Services. New technologies and improved training and communication methods are making health institutions safer, more convenient and more comfortable than ever before, and waiting times, errors and red tape are being eliminated. That’s true around the country and right here in Greater Binghamton.

We continued with the implementation and expansion of a computer-assisted drug administration system using bar codes and automated record-checking to improve safety, an approach that other hospitals around the country will be required to adopt in the future. We made changes in primary care offices and hospital departments to give patients the convenience of faster appointments. The positive effects of our Campaign for Excellence took root everywhere in the system, creating a better work environment for our employees and a warmer, more welcoming care setting for our patients. Our quality and performance improvement efforts were aimed at reducing pain and discomfort, and treating patients with the utmost in respect and dignity. Staff members at all sites sought ways to make a person’s experience something well beyond satisfactory.

Perhaps the most striking advances in care and service were those that hinged on the combination of the latest technology and the most caring, involved health care professionals. When we look at how enthusiastically our community has embraced our new Minimally Invasive Surgical Suite, Diabetes Center, GI Lab, home care services, school-based clinics, advanced heart procedures and telemonitoring, we know that we’re enhancing the quality of life in the Southern Tier. The success of these programs and others demonstrates that providing dedicated professionals with the best tools to do their work is a great way to provide care. Or, as we like to say, “Amazing Technology. Extraordinary Care.”

Every member of the United Health Services family – employee, physician, board member, volunteer, Foundation donor – is engaged in critically important work. What we do every day takes our region’s quality of care to the next level. We can be ever more committed to making our health care system one of the best in the country. We can create an environment of care that softens pain with compassion, eases fear with reassurance and replaces helplessness with hope.

We have begun something extraordinary and can achieve something amazing.



Peter V. McGinn, PhD
President and CEO



James E. Lee, PhD
Chairman of the Board

2003 achievements

Among the important clinical and organizational developments that took place at United Health Services during the year were the following:

- United Health Services Hospitals ranked fifth among hospitals in the Northeast for spinal fusion, an advanced neurosurgical technique, as reported in the popular national financial magazine Money. The ranking appeared in the magazine's fall 2003 special report, "The Best Healthcare for Your Family."
- A new Minimally Invasive Surgical Suite opened at Wilson Memorial Regional Medical Center. In this high-tech room, state-of-the-art equipment enables surgeons to perform the latest in laparoscopic procedures with less trauma to the body and faster healing after the surgery. Of the 15,000 surgeries performed at United Health Services Hospitals each year, about 3,000 use minimally invasive laparoscopic techniques.
- People with diabetes gained a new resource to help them cope with the challenges of their chronic, life-altering disease. United Health Services Hospitals officially opened its Diabetes Education and Management Center on Picciano 2 at Wilson on Dec. 11. The center houses clinical and educational services for patients with diabetes and other diseases of the endocrine system, such as adrenal, pituitary, parathyroid and thyroid conditions.
- To accommodate the higher demand for colorectal examinations and other gastrointestinal procedures, United Health Services Hospitals opened a new Gastroenterology Laboratory at Binghamton General Hospital. It provides state-of-the-art equipment and more than doubles the capacity for patient screenings. The new \$3 million lab opened at the end of 2002, and, in its first full year of operation, recorded more than 5,300 cases. Patient satisfaction scores for the new Binghamton General lab were the highest among all hospital departments measured.
- New York State Health Commissioner Antonia Novello presented Ideal Senior Living Center with a \$200,000 patient safety grant and special recognition for Ideal's program to reduce pressure ulcers, or bedsores, among residents. In addition, Ideal received three other regional awards during the year for its guest relations program, and two for its pressure ulcer improvements.
- The Healthcare Association of New York State (HANY) recognized Delaware Valley Hospital for its efforts with the HeartWorks Plus of Delaware County program by awarding the facility Honorable Mention in the association's Community Health Improvement Award competition. Over the past two years, more than 24,000 people were served by the program, responsible for the successful and lasting implementation of a variety of physical activity opportunities through a competitive mini-grant process. Examples of sustained success included a new playground, walking clubs, walking trails with ski and snowshoe rentals, senior exercise classes and a fitness room.

- Twin Tier Home Health celebrated a milestone – one million home visits. Twin Tier provides nurses, aides and specialists to meet the needs of homebound patients in the Southern Tier, 24 hours a day.

january

- Delaware Valley Hospital converted to a new business system that makes billing more efficient.
- North Tower 2 at Wilson was the first unit to pilot the Medication Administration Check (MAK) system.
- Pediatric Telemedicine at the Binghamton Pediatrics Center began a six-month project funded by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

february

- Gov. George Pataki named United Health Services CEO Pete McGinn to two high-ranking state councils that shape health policies.
- The United Health Services Foundation exceeded its community campaign goal by 13 percent, raising \$220,650. It also exceeded its goals in the physician and employee fundraising campaigns.

march

- The Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program and the New Horizons chemical dependency treatment program celebrated their 20th anniversaries.
- United Medical Associates' Endwell Internal Medicine practice moved to new offices on Hooper Road.

april

- Professional Home Care launched "Breathing Easy," an innovative program to make life easier for patients with a chronic obstructive breathing disorder.
- Beth Crenshaw, RN, nurse manager of the Sandiford Rehabilitation Center, received the 2003 Mark T. O'Neil, Jr. "Open Door" Leadership Award.
- The first total hip replacement using a ceramic-on-ceramic joint that produces less friction and is useful for many younger, more active patients was performed at Binghamton General.

may

- The highly successful B.C. Walks program to promote simple regular exercise was launched by the Center for Community Health.
- United Health Services celebrated the first anniversary of the Campaign for Excellence, the system-wide endeavor to make the organization a great place to work and a great place to receive care.
- The annual Emergency Medicine Teaching Day was named in honor of Patrick O'Hara, MD, a pioneer in the field of emergency medicine and EMT training.

june

- United Health Services Hospitals' Emergency Preparedness Committee held a successful drill to improve their response to a Code Green hazardous-materials emergency.

july

- Deaf-Talk, an audiovisual communication system for the deaf and hearing-impaired, was brought to the Emergency Departments.
- United Medical Associates streamlined services, offering patients more access to same-day appointments, consolidating walk-in care at one location and reducing operational costs.

august

- Chenango Memorial Hospital enlarged its surgical capabilities with the addition to its medical staff of a new general surgeon, Allan Converse, MD.
- United Health Services hosted a regional M.A.S.H. Camp, a two-day, hands-on hospital camp for secondary-school students interested in the medical and health professions.
- Around the system, employees pitched in and rallied to cope with the effects of the largest electrical blackout in North American history.

september

- More than 150 United Health Services employees volunteered their time to do cleaning, repairing and painting at local charities on Sept. 11, United Way's Day of Caring.
- UMA set new goals for expanding its clinical capabilities, recruiting physicians and bringing more providers together in a single location.
- The Minimally Invasive project got a boost when the Decker Foundation gave the United Health Services Foundation a \$225,000 challenge grant for completion of the surgical suite.

october

- New, sophisticated CT scanners, producing superior three-dimensional images of the body, were introduced at United Health Services Hospitals.
- Ten physicians were honored for their outstanding care and service during the 2003 "You're the Best" physician recognition awards.
- United Health Direct, a new health coverage program, was offered to employees.

november

- Doctors in the United Health Services Hospitals' Emergency Departments began using a new electronic documentation system, featuring palm digital assistants, to more quickly and accurately fill out patient charts.
- Wilson Family Practice resident Marita Powell, DO, made news when she published "Just a Glance Through the Window," a book based on her day-to-day experiences and perspectives as a medical resident.
- United Health Services Hospitals piloted new methods of providing consistent standards that ensure accurate patient identification during the person's entire stay.

december

- The governor's office informed CMH that it would receive \$87,000 to benefit its school-based health centers, which the hospital expanded in 2003 to new locations in Norwich and Oxford.
- UMA began offering physical therapy services at its Johnson City Circle location.
- United Health Services employees donated more than \$125,000 to the United Way giving campaign, setting a new system-wide record.

Caring expertise leads to patient satisfaction

As patients become more knowledgeable about health and medicine, gain access to more choices in diagnosis and treatment, and learn to expect more from their health care providers, United Health Services must offer better service than ever before. What is our goal? To provide very good service always, every time we interact with a patient or visitor. This commitment will help us achieve the highest patient satisfaction and the most enduring patient loyalty. So how do we consistently provide very good service and earn patients' trust, respect and loyalty? "We have to continue to treat people as if they are guests in our house," said Peter V. McGinn, PhD, president and chief executive officer. "People often judge a health organization on the cheerful attitude displayed by its staff and the way they work together." By providing measurably superior service, the organization will continue to achieve excellence in service and satisfaction.

Service Success: Rollout

If you're a resident of Ideal Senior Living Center, the facility isn't just a nursing home. It's your home. So the high resident satisfaction scores recorded recently at the center are particularly meaningful. An impressive 96 percent of residents said they were happy with the facility. Similarly, the vast majority of skilled nursing facility and assisted living residents also said they were pleased with their care. Since Ideal has rolled out its RED CARPETSM guest relations program, it has vastly improved its scores in many areas. In 2002, staff "friendliness" was seen as very low. In 2003, it soared to the top 2 percent of nursing homes nationwide. Likewise, residents' perception of staff skill jumped from the bottom quarter to the top 3 percent of nursing centers. "Responsiveness" was at an all-time high, among the top 5 percent. Not only have residents and their families noticed the outstanding care at Ideal, but the center has received state and national recognition for its innovative approaches. In 2003 alone, Ideal won two Press Ganey awards and an Iroquois Healthcare Alliance recognition for its guest relations program, plus one award each from a nursing home association and the state health department for its work in reducing pressure ulcers.



Great service yields healthy financial performance

In the past few years, Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements to health care systems have been increasing at a rate of 2 to 3 percent. But the actual cost of providing care has been increasing by 5 to 6 percent at most hospitals. What's more, patients and insurers are becoming more selective about which facilities they use, and are basing their decisions on a provider's price, service, convenience, safety and reputation for quality. This means we have to earn revenue by attracting more patients to our facilities and developing innovative services. In a region with a shrinking population, that won't be easy. So we have to maximize what we already have and find new opportunities. United Health Services is working to increase referrals from physicians throughout the region. We also are developing new clinical programs and centers of excellence. And we're recovering dollars through efforts like the Denied Claims Performance Improvement Team, which has brought in more than \$5 million in third-party payments that otherwise would have been denied.

financial financial financial



Financial Success: Top Billing

Patients of United Medical Associates are cheering the services provided by UMA's account specialists. These representatives give patients at UMA a way to promptly and conveniently pay their bills or set up payment plans. "The account specialist approach has been very successful," said Mitzi Sherba, manager of Patient Accounting at UMA. "The specialists answer billing questions, set up plans on the spot and obtain third-party payer information." During 2003, a total of 30,000 patients consulted with specialists. In that time, the representatives collected \$480,000 in unpaid bills and \$371,000 in other payments at time of service. The 11 account specialists, located at offices around UMA, set up hundreds of payment plans for patients. Said one specialist, "Our patients are very appreciative that they have a place to come to and a smiling face to deal with when they need to pay their bill."

Ensured accuracy brings higher quality

When it comes to quality and safety, we want United Health Services to be among the best health care organizations in the country. So we have adopted the National Patient Safety Goals throughout the system. Developed by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, these goals encourage adherence to best practices in the delivery of care for specific illnesses. "They provide a diagram for how health care institutions and providers can dramatically decrease adverse incidents affecting care," said Laura Kushner, RN, nurse coordinator in Quality Management at United Health Services Hospitals. "They include improving the accuracy of patient identification, eliminating errors, reducing infections and improving communication among caregivers." We're committed to doing everything in our power to make our community's experience with our facilities one they can count on for safety and quality. Through the Campaign for Excellence, Environment of Care, Emergency Preparedness and Performance Improvement endeavors, United Health Services is working every day to improve quality, effectiveness and safety.

Quality Success: Getting It Right

All around the United Health Services system, organizations and departments are improving quality and performance with concentrated efforts that address specific challenges. At Delaware Valley Hospital, an effort to improve the quality and safety of care in the Emergency Department paid off with patient satisfaction scores that fall within the top 4 percent nationwide. At United Health Services Hospitals, the Patient Identification Performance Improvement Team developed a plan to require two forms of identification – name and birth date – every time a patient receives treatment. The Specimen Labeling PI Team at the hospitals has been successful in analyzing how specimens are collected and using the data to create a policy governing every inpatient and outpatient collection point. When it comes to identification, medications and every aspect of care, patients expect that health care organizations will put a high value on quality and safety. They trust us with their lives, and our goal is to be ever worthy of that trust.



Growth results from regional referrals

As a tertiary-care center, Wilson Memorial Regional Medical Center offers some of the most advanced diagnostic and treatment options available. We are a regional referral center for heart, vascular, brain and reconstructive surgery, as well as for trauma, cancer, diabetes, renal care, behavioral health, neonatal intensive care and medical rehabilitation. But we must expand our patient base. So members of our medical staff offer specialty care in towns such as Norwich, Walton, Ithaca, Sidney and Harris. "We want to build strong relationships between physicians' offices and United Health Services Hospitals," said Linda Dean, physician representative in Community Relations. And many cardiology, gastroenterology, pulmonary, orthopedic, oncology and surgical patients who might otherwise go elsewhere are now coming to Wilson and Binghamton General, thanks to referrals. We expect to further increase the number of referrals per month in 2004, notably in the area of heart care.

growthgrowthgrowth



Growth Success: Branching Out

When a patient is discharged from the hospital, he or she often needs some help to get around – equipment like a wheelchair, walker, hospital-type bed, oxygen or any number of medical supplies. When a person lives in a comparatively rural area like Chenango County, getting these services isn't always easy. So Professional Home Care of Vestal has launched a branch site to serve the Chenango County region. It's right on the campus of Chenango Memorial Hospital. "We are starting out with respiratory therapy and medical equipment and supplies," said Greg Rittenhouse, vice president for Operations at PHC. "In time, we plan to further develop our high-tech nursing service." People who live in Chenango County have long benefitted from the wide array of inpatient and outpatient services provided by their community hospital, Chenango Memorial. With the arrival of PHC at this convenient, central location, residents now have access to an important range of post-hospital services, giving them a more complete continuum of care.

Valued people get a warm welcome

At United Health Services, our people make the difference between adequate care and outstanding care. Throughout the system, we're making great progress in ensuring that new hires get a warm welcome, have access to the resources they need to work productively and receive the orientation and training that will help them do their jobs well. After a person is hired, we ask managers to conduct follow-up interviews at 30 and 90 days just to see how the new colleague is getting along. We feature "Turn Me In" postcards, so that patients and employees can recognize staff members when they "catch" them providing exceptional service, and "Helping Hands," a program to provide new employees with a warm welcome and helpful orientation to the workplace. By taking these steps, we're lowering recruitment and turnover costs while improving productivity and job satisfaction. As we look to the future, one of our goals is to create peer interviewing for all positions, with employees trained in how to interview candidates and evaluate them on both technical and interpersonal skills. People who choose to work in health care have a special devotion to helping others, to making a positive difference. We're committed to helping them do just that.

People Success: Staying Power

We're turning the corner on turnover. In 2001, United Health Services' turnover rate was 23.78 percent, exceeding the national average. The year before the Campaign for Excellence was launched, 1,119 employees left the system, 53 percent of them before completing one year, said Michael McNally, vice president for Human Resources. "But then the Helping Hands program and improvements to orientation, interviewing and performance evaluations all became part of our Excellence culture." For 2003, the turnover rate dropped to 16.38 percent. Moreover, only 39 percent of departing employees left with less than a year's service, and the total number of terminations dropped to 815. Five of our member organizations – Chenango Memorial, Ideal, Twin Tier, UMA and United Health Services Hospitals – recorded two consecutive years of declining turnover. All of this speaks to the success of our focus on truly making United Health Services a great place to work and a great place to receive care.



Many benefit from community outreach

Our system is more than a medical facility that people come to when they're sick. It's a community resource devoted to helping them enjoy optimal health for a lifetime. United Health Services reaches out with wellness programs, patient education, home visits and preventative medicine. We provide jobs, scholarships, grants and physician training, and engage in research projects that advance medical knowledge. We show our value and benefit to the community through financial aid for the poor and the continuation of vitally needed medical services that nonetheless operate at a deficit. Through Stay Healthy, we annually record more than 100,000 individual public contacts, such as classes, presentations, health fairs, insurance counseling sessions and Nurse Direct calls. And our informative Web site, www.uhs.net, receives nearly 700,000 visits a year. Our projects that promote walking for fitness and quitting smoking for better health are gaining national recognition. And, in a recent report by Citizen Action of New York, United Health Services Hospitals was one of only eight facilities in the state that does an adequate job of informing patients that they will be cared for regardless of income or life circumstances.

communitycommunitycommunity



Community Success: Hoofin' It

Walking may not seem like glamorous exercise. But according to fitness experts, it's one of the best. That message really took hold in Greater Binghamton in 2003, when Stay Healthy launched B.C. Walks to get people up and moving for better health. "During the eight-week program, 10,800 individuals pledged to walk," said Pat Fell, RN, director of Community Health Services. "That's a statistically significant increase. What's more, 78 percent of people surveyed after the launch of B.C. Walks said they were aware of its message." To launch the effort, the Stay Healthy team received a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant and worked hard to generate a high level of awareness and participation. They kicked it off with a "Walk with the Doc" day at the Oakdale Mall, gave physicians pads so they could prescribe walking for many of their patients, sent speakers to local schools and clubs, and generated attention among businesses and in the media. The program was one of two in the nation featured in a U.S. News & World Report article, and Pat was invited to lecture on the results at a national CDC conference on disease prevention.

2003 quotes

"Your staff not only met my expectations, but far exceeded them. You employ such wonderful people, who come to work with smiles and a desire to do their best with true devotion."

Daria A. Shierly
of Vestal
on United Health
Services Hospitals

"The doctor, nurses, aides, physical therapists, nutritionists and cleaning personnel were all friendly, caring, efficient and supportive. The care and even the food were excellent."

Betty Paulin
of Walton
on Delaware Valley
Hospital

"You have every right to be extremely proud of the dedicated, professional people who care for the residents."

**The Hays and
Harding Families**
on Ideal Senior
Living Center

"Dr. Frank Floyd treated me with the utmost kindness, sincerity and compassion.

He never rushed me. He spent time explaining the problem and what should be done, and personally contacted a specialist to assure that I would be seen quickly."

Carole Litynski
of Endwell
on United Medical
Associates

"In all of your actions, we saw that you cared about our father and us. You offer more than medical expertise - you also provide heart and support."

Heidi Hosbach Newman
on Chenango Memorial
Hospital

"I am happy to donate to the United Health Services Foundation. As a patient, I had excellent care and concerned personnel serving me. Keep up your good work."

Vera Warner
of Johnson City
on giving to
the Foundation

"When I got sick and it was hard for me to get around, the home care I received from your agencies was very special, a great help to my family and me."

James Decker
of Windsor
on Professional Home Care
and Twin Tier Home Health

2003 financials

United Health Services System Revenue and Expenses*

Operating Revenues (in thousands)

Inpatient Services	\$167,773
Outpatient Services	\$200,741
Long-term Care	\$ 15,582
Home Health Care	\$ 11,547
Other Operating and Non-operating Revenue	\$ 15,314

Total Revenues **\$410,957**

Operating Expenses (in thousands)

Salaries	\$183,660
Supplies and Services	\$130,502
Employee Benefits	\$ 50,902
Provisions for Bad Debts	\$ 19,798
Interest	\$ 6,255
Depreciation and Amortization	\$ 16,722

Total Expenses **\$407,839**

Net Operating Surplus	\$ 3,118
Net Charity and Uncompensated Care	\$21,217

*The information here is a preliminary financial draft for the year 2003. Final numbers are not expected to change substantially.

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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United Health Services' 2003 Annual Report is a publication of United Health Services. Corporate offices are at 10-42 Mitchell Ave., Binghamton, NY, 13903; Peter V. McGinn, PhD, President and Chief Executive Officer. The report is produced by the Community Relations Department: Michael Doll, Vice President; Christina Boyd, Director of Marketing; William Michael, Communications Coordinator; Carol Garrett, Graphic Designer. For more information, call 607.762.2336 or visit www.uhs.net.