



# MEMORIAL HEALTH SYSTEM

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Jennifer Offenberger, Associate Vice President of Service Excellence - [joffenberger@mhsystem.org](mailto:joffenberger@mhsystem.org);  
(740) 374-1797**

## **Peoples Bank Announces \$100,000 Matching Gift to Memorial Health Foundation**

**(Friday, December 18, 2020, Marietta, Ohio)** – At a press conference held Friday, December 18, Peoples Bank President and CEO Chuck Sulerzyski, announced a \$100,000 dollar Matching Gift to the Memorial Health Foundation for Memorial Health System for COVID-19 Relief.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has surged in our region the last several weeks. We are so lucky to have a great health system to provide the care we need during this battle. The challenges being faced today by our local health system providers are straining despite their preparedness and management of resources. People’s Bank and its employees wanted to make a financial commitment that could have a meaningful impact in this fight to help our health system in its fight. By offering the match incentive, it is hoped other businesses and individuals, who have the financial strength to do so, will donate to support this need.

In addition to Peoples Bank, several other area businesses are announcing their pledge to help. According to Memorial Health Foundation president David Haas, “Bank of America, Williamstown Fund for Excellence at Marietta Community Foundation, Par Mar Oil, PROMANCO and the Lehman family, Solvay, and McDonough Corporation have also committed an additional \$30,000 with gifts to date totaling \$330,000”

Jarrett Stull, Memorial Health Foundation director, expressed his thanks to these businesses and others who have supported the health system since the beginning of the pandemic. “Many individuals and businesses have been instrumental in providing support to our team members and system and we are grateful. From feeding team members to sending notes of support to helping secure additional ventilators and other necessary equipment, the outpouring from our community is strong.”

The COVID Relief fund provides urgent and vital resources where they are needed most on the

front lines in caring for patients and the people who care for them as we address and work to stop the spread of COVID-19.

“At times of crisis, this fund allows us to immediately deploy resources where they can make the most impact to support patients and frontline caregivers,” said Dr. Dan Breece, vice president of physician services and chief medical officer. “We are grateful to Peoples Bank for leading the community response with this incredible match incentive.”

If you are interested in participating in the COVID Relief challenge, or donating any amount to the fund, please visit [mhsystem.org/covidrelief](https://mhsystem.org/covidrelief).

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **COVID-19: The Unexpected and Pressing Financial Burden on Our Local Health System**

As the region’s not-for-profit healthcare provider, we continue to be prepared to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as cases continue to rise, needs evolve daily that place significant new demands on our health system and valued workforce. This includes adding additional intensive care unit (ICU) bed capacity, developing COVID-19 units to isolate and treat patients, additional staffing, new policies and procedures, increased medical equipment and supplies and support we provide those working the front lines. Here’s why your help is important:

1. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)
  - Marietta Memorial now operates four COVID inpatient units which requires more PPE than used on non-COVID units. We are also experiencing unique PPE related expenses. For example a part on the CAPR helmets continues to break. We are using a 3-D printer to fabricate repair parts. The printer will need to be replaced with continued frequent use.
  - Individuals other than our clinical staff require PPE to see patients. For example, local clergy rely on PPE when seeing patients in end-of-life circumstances as they minister to their parishioners.
2. ICU Capacity
  - Our ICU unit contains 11 beds. Our patient volume required we open a second ICU unit with 16 beds. ICU rooms require specialized equipment and technology to adequately care for patients.
3. Technology
  - To best protect patients and staff we have stopped visitation. We now connect patients to their family and loved ones through the use of technology, such as iPads. It is more important than ever to equip our staff with technology patients to continue a sense of connection. Unfortunately,

we do not have the quantity of iPads to meet the demand. When we do not have iPads available our nurses are using their own devices to allow patients to connect with family and loved ones.

#### 4. Staff support

- Employees working on COVID units cannot leave during their shifts. We are providing meals to them and have provided meals to the entire hospital on a variety of occasions during especially difficult times since spring.
- Our team members are working long hours to safely care for our community during a stressful time. The longer hours, the additional burden on their families, and the emotional toll can be overwhelming. Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides services to help our staff deal with the emotional and psychological impact of caring for extremely sick patients and the impact of losing so many. They are not used to having to participate in end-of-life situations of this magnitude.
- We also have many staff who themselves are COVID positive and are off work. Many have family who are sick. They are stretched in ways they have never been stretched before.

#### 5. Recruiting Enough Staff

- Like other health systems, a portion of our workforce is made up of travel nurses. A travel nurse costs us about \$150,000 for a 13 week contract. Our current staffing requires team members work extra shifts, and we pay significant bonuses to cover the open shifts that we have. We are currently paying up to \$15,000 in commitment bonuses to recruit nurses to join our team. Similarly we have staff needs in other areas, such as Respiratory Therapy to care for our COVID patients.
- To help meet the demand, we are deploying staff, appropriately trained and credentialed, from other parts of the organization to assist on the nursing units as sitters, patient care technicians, and nurses. These staff normally fulfill other roles in the organization but we are deferring their work or paying overtime so they can perform both responsibilities.
- We have added new roles, such as staff to reprocess our N95 masks so that we can extend the life of PPE and safely protect our team.

#### 6. Sistersville General Hospital

- We recently acquired Sistersville General Hospital. When there is no capacity at Marietta Memorial Hospital we triage COVID patients ready to return to nursing homes and send them to Sistersville for the remainder of their hospitalization. This has required more PPE and the need ensure Sistersville General Hospital have all the equipment required to care for these patients.

**Memorial Health System:** Memorial Health System is a not-for-profit integrated health system lead by a volunteer board of community members committed to providing comprehensive care services that meet the needs of our region. We are comprised of a network of locations and specialties provided by over 3,000 employees that include three hospitals (Marietta Memorial Hospital, Selby General Hospital and Sistersville General Hospital), outpatient service sites, and provider clinics. Memorial Health System strives to deliver quality care and service with an additional focus on medical education and community service. We invest in the most advanced technologies and treatments today, giving our patients the care that they need, so they can stay close to home.