

# MERCY

Chesterfield, Missouri



DEEPLY COMMITTED TO ADVANCING FRONTLINE WORKERS

Serving millions of patients each year, Mercy is the country's fifth-largest Catholic healthcare system. Its network comprises more than 40 hospitals (both acute care and specialty) and 350 outpatient facilities. Mercy employs tens of thousands of people in four different states, and was named one of the five best-performing large health systems in the country by Truven Health Analytics in both 2016 and 2017.

### Support of Senior Leaders

Frontline employee development is at the core of Mercy's business strategy, and fundamental to Mercy's mission is the goal of improving compensation for its lowest paid co-workers. To reach this goal, it operates the Lowest Paid Worker Committee which brings together senior leaders to develop and implement strategies that improve wages and career opportunities for frontline workers. The Committee has been instrumental in implementing a Medical Premium Assistance Program. 2017 marks the fifth year for the Medical Premium Assistance Program, which provides a reduced medical premium for eligible co-workers. Since the program began in 2013, a total of 8,716 applications have been approved at a total cost to Mercy of approximately \$10 million.

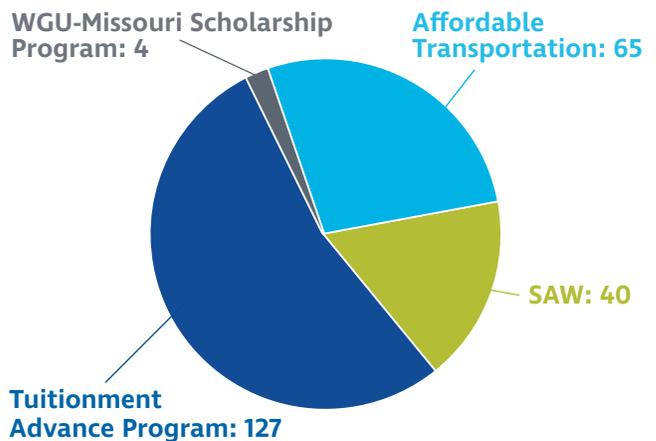
### Provide Basic Skills Development

Mercy is deeply committed to building the skills necessary to prepare its frontline workers for career advancement. In 2004, it partnered with Catalyst Learning to offer the School at Work® (SAW) program, giving frontline workers the opportunity to brush up on basic skills (math, writing, communication) before moving on to more advanced healthcare knowledge, such as medical terminology and patient satisfaction. Mercy's intention in offering SAW is to move its lowest-paid workers, such as nurse aides, into more advanced clinical and support roles.

### Career Exploration Tools and Opportunities

Mercy also helps employees who want to advance their skills through higher learning, but may lack the money to properly invest in themselves. Through its Tuition Advance Program, Mercy employees who earn \$12 an hour or less are eligible to have up to 50 percent of their tuition paid up front. To expand educational opportunity, Mercy has partnered with the nonprofit online university WGU Missouri to offer 15 scholarships to low-wage Mercy employees. Additionally, Mercy operates an apprenticeship program to help employees earn a degree while working.

### 236 INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATED IN MERCY'S ADVANCEMENT PROGRAMS LAST YEAR



## Recruit from the Community

Mercy is firmly committed to improving the lives of member of its local community facing barriers to employment including individuals living with disabilities and returning citizens. In 2010 it began a volunteer program that recruits people with disabilities to work in the hospital and assists them along the way by a job coach who helps them to meet their personal goals. In addition to a culture of recognizing the contributions of employees with different abilities, Mercy offers an on-site internship training program for high school seniors who have disabilities. Mercy is expanding its successful diversity inclusion efforts to seven additional hospitals in the system over the next two years.

## Supportive HR Policies

Committed to supporting frontline workers, Mercy offers a slew of benefits and initiatives designed to ease their burden and grow their overall success, including personal counseling, medical premium assistance, affordable child care, an on-site clinic, low-interest loans, transportation subsidies, and a crisis fund to offset the effects of a financial crisis.

## BUSINESS IMPACT

- > **32.5%** of SAW graduates have advanced into new roles since the program began in 2004
- > **9%** of SAW graduates in 2015-16 have enrolled in higher education
- > **100%** of SAW participants graduated and gained an average knowledge increase of **22%**



## Frontline Success Story

Rachel Blankenship had not attained her high school diploma when she began her Mercy career in the Environmental Services Department. After graduating from the SAW program, however, she got her GED, then was accepted to nursing school.

She became a registered nurse and today has advanced all the way up to clinical supervisor. "I came into healthcare knowing nothing about it," she says. Mercy and the SAW program "helped me grow, and that made a huge difference... Anyone who comes to Mercy absolutely has the ability to advance their career if that's the path they choose."

## NOTE FROM THE CEO



Lynn Britton, Mercy's President and CEO, emphasizes that Mercy's core values — dignity, excellence, justice, service, and stewardship — apply just as easily to its frontline workforce as to its patients. "We invest in the development of frontline workers to help them realize their talents and to support their professional and financial advancement," Britton says. "Mercy's leadership team strongly believes that through improving the lives of ministry co-workers, we will deliver a transformative health care experience for our patients."

- Lynn Britton, Mercy's President and CEO

**Number of Employees: 40,000**  
**Number of Frontline Workers: 6,000**



## The Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion Recognition Program

The CareerSTAT Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion program recognizes healthcare organizations making exemplary investments in the skills and careers of their frontline workers. Organizations are designated as Champions and Emerging Champions. Champions meet all of CareerSTAT's recognition criteria, including making skill and career development accessible, offering programs at a significant scale, measuring program business impact, and building sustainable programs, while Emerging Champions are in earlier stages of investment and are working with CareerSTAT leaders to strengthen their programs and achieve Champion status. CareerSTAT is an employer-led initiative of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions. Learn more at [www.NationalFund.org/CareerSTAT](http://www.NationalFund.org/CareerSTAT).