

## RUSH UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

Chicago, IL



### A MISSION BEYOND EXCELLENT CLINICAL CARE

Rush University Medical Center is a nonprofit, 700-plus bed academic medical center just west of downtown Chicago. The medical center’s mission is to improve the health of the individuals and diverse communities it serves through the integration of outstanding patient care, education, research, and community partnerships. As the largest non-government employer on Chicago’s West Side, the medical center is an anchor for the surrounding community. The medical center employs roughly 10,000 people and prides itself on long-standing programs that provide experiential learning and personal development to its frontline staff and community residents.

### Anchoring a Healthier Community

Central to its Anchor Mission strategy, the medical center leads several initiatives to improve the quality of life for residents in its diverse neighboring communities. They leverage partnerships with community-based organizations to target and recruit local talent who face barriers to education and employment, resulting in a 4% uptick in local hiring trends within the last year. In addition to direct hires, the medical center is dedicated to educating area residents through community education opportunities. One example is the medical center’s Summer Enrichment Program. This eight week program offers health science community college students exposure to numerous allied health professions. A recently launched apprenticeship program uses an earn-and-learn model to complement classroom learning with real world experience. In addition, Rush University students lead programs that educate over 10,000 community members annually about healthy living, disease prevention, and health science careers. These initiatives simultaneously build a local talent pipeline, expand exposure to the industry, and positively impact nearby communities.

### MAPPING the Future for Frontline Workers

Training is integral to frontline worker career advancement. In partnership with several community-based organizations,

the medical center offers a unique opportunity for young people to explore the healthcare industry while acquiring the certification needed to become a patient care technician (PCT) within the health system. The initial cohort of students has completed this program, and 78% of them graduated. Of those, 86% received full-time employment offers from the medical center.

Workers are also able to access a new Medical Assistant Pathway Program (MAPP) that gives full-time frontline employees an opportunity to complete a local medical assistant certification program. Launched in 2018, the program is a collaboration with three other local health systems. Participants receive fully-funded tuition support, a transportation subsidy, and career coaching.

#### PROGRAM DATA

**PCT  
PATHWAY  
PROGRAM**

**78% graduation**  
**86% placement**  
**30-day reduction in time-to-fill**

**MAPP**

**80% current retention of Rush employees (program is ongoing)**

## From Cradle to Career

In 2017, Rush created the Rush Education and Career Hub (REACH), a “cradle to career” program that deepens the organization’s involvement with students, teachers, and families from pre-K through college. REACH aims to better prepare students for college and the workplace, foster interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) or healthcare careers, and increase high school graduation rates and college enrollment.

REACH offers two paid internship tracks, which provide students with work-based learning experiences across a variety of hospital departments. In the past year, the program served approximately 200 youth — 90% of them earned an industry-recognized credential. By helping young adults explore and prepare to enter the healthcare industry, REACH serves as another part of the medical center’s local investment strategy to reduce barriers to education and employment.

## Frontline Success Story

“I’ve always known that I wanted to be a nurse,” says Jessica Tafolla. But financial constraints and starting a family were constant barriers.

“Adjusting to school after a seven-year break was difficult until I found the Patient Care Technician Pathway.” A program that provides education, mentorship, and experiential learning to young adults, the PCT Pathway launched Jessica on a trajectory to nursing. She explained that it “taught me the skills I needed to become a PCT and the applied component allowed me to practice my newly-developed skills.” While the program was challenging, family support kept her going, and she was excited to be hired by the medical center in March 2019. “I’m proud of myself and the fact that I’m one step closer to becoming a nurse,” says Jessica. “I look forward to growing my career here.”



The Patient Care Technician Pathway program enabled Jessica to overcome financial and family constraints.

## BUSINESS IMPACT

Preliminary data for Rush University Medical Center frontline investment demonstrates . . .



### Increased

- Local hiring by 4% within 1 year
- Partnership with community-based organizations
- Number of industry-recognized credentials earned
- Exposure to healthcare careers
- Graduation rates from local city college Basic Nursing Assistant program



### Decreased

- Time-to-fill for PCT role
- Turnover costs for MAPP participants
- Barriers to obtaining education within high demand roles

## Note from the CEO



Omar Lateef, CEO  
Rush University Medical Center

“As the largest employer on the West Side of Chicago, we have a responsibility not only to improve the health of our neighbors but also the overall wellbeing of the community,” says CEO Dr. Omar Lateef.

“Our Anchor Mission strategy is about community – and our employees are our first community. Investing in training and development for them is critical to our success. We are proud to be designated as an Emerging Champion.”

**Rush University Medical Center Statistics**  
20,000 employees | 2,400 frontline workers

## The Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion Peer Recognition Program

CareerSTAT’s Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion program recognizes healthcare organizations investing in the skills and career 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 business impact, and building sustainable programs, while Emerging Champions are in earlier stages of investment and working with CareerSTAT leadership to strengthen their programs.

