

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

# Good Community Citizen

NorthShore University HealthSystem and Community Advisory Committees work in tandem to let people know about improving our services to our communities.

By Patricia McGhee

**N**orthShore University HealthSystem's (NorthShore) Hospitals pride themselves on being good citizens in the neighborhoods and communities they serve. To become better citizens, NorthShore Hospitals must know what's going on in their service areas. And to be the best citizens, they must address the communities' health issues, needs and goals.

To ensure accountability to the communities it serves, NorthShore established three Community Advisory Committees (CACs)—one each at Evanston Hospital (Katie Dold White, Chair), Glenbrook Hospital (Jill Brickman, Chair) and Highland Park Hospital (Mari Barnes, Chair). Planning for a CAC at Skokie Hospital is under way. CACs advise Hospital administrators on services and initiatives from a community perspective, help identify community resources that work to strengthen NorthShore, improve community health and serve as a communication link between the Hospital and community.

Comprised of area residents, local faith leaders and business and community leaders, CACs serve a vital role in allowing NorthShore to fulfill its mission. "We formed these Committees as one more way to give the communities we serve a voice," said Mark Schroeder, Director of Community Relations at NorthShore. "CACs also provide a forum where members—who represent and provide a broad diversity of community interests—can advise Hospital administrators on their own community's perspective."

NorthShore's relationships with the CACs



Good citizens stay informed about "the latest" in their communities. Better citizens rely on a two-way communications model to address communities' health issues, needs and goals. Here Willis Francis (with clasped hands), Chairman of the Evanston Latino Resource Coalition, listens to a question from a fellow Evanston Hospital CAC member.

not only advance each community's health but also provide recommendations on where NorthShore's community contributions should go, according to Schroeder. "They bring an outside perspective that results in a two-way communication that lays the ground work for how NorthShore's Hospitals and their CACs can collaborate—with the goal of advancing NorthShore's mission 'to preserve and improve human life,'" Schroeder said.

The CACs meet quarterly, but the relationship goes far beyond these meetings. "They call to ask if NorthShore would like to be involved in this particular health fair or call to ask what we know about this issue or that proposal," Schroeder said. "We've created this environment that allows the members of CACs to bring any community issue to our attention."

Northfield Township Supervisor Jill Brickman has served as Chair of Glenbrook Hospital's CAC since its inception more than a year ago. "I felt a real desire to know more about what the Hospital does and what it offers," she said. As Township Supervisor, she is frequently asked questions about Glenbrook Hospital: Does it have a community clinic? Does it have a psychiatric clinic? What about geriatric care?

"Because of the information sharing at our meetings, I have answers for people and can match them up with specific resources at Glenbrook Hospital or in the NorthShore health system," Brickman said. "I think the matching of needs with services and networks is the big key to what's great about our community. We need to work together to get the word out, and it works both ways." **C**