

# Brookings

HEALTH SYSTEM

## Community Benefit Report **2025**



## Dear Friends,

At Brookings Health System, our Mission is to provide high-quality, compassionate, personalized health care.

At times, that statement seems relatively straight-forward and overly simplistic given the complex environment in which we operate. Yet every aspect of what we do at Brookings Health centers around those words and what it means to the individuals we serve when our team embodies the Mission. Brookings Health has five strategic pillars of success—People, Quality, Service, Finance and Growth—which ultimately leads us to the goal of being a top-ranked rural community-based health system in the country. That strategy is bold and ambitious, but we never lose focus of our commitment to you and your needs when you encounter our services.

As part of that commitment, we strive to give back and improve access to community-based local health services. Whether through health education and training, advanced life support ambulance services or financial assistance, we aim to care for the health and wellness of our region.

In this report you will read about some of the ways we live out our Mission and positively impact the patients, residents and communities that we serve. With that in mind, we reach out to do what is right, to protect and cure people from illness and injury, to provide care to the most vulnerable, and to offer the best of ourselves in all we do.



Jason Merkley  
President & CEO

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## What is Community Benefit?

Community benefit comprises of programs or activities that provide treatment or promote health and healing as a response to identified community needs in such a way as to improve residents' access to health care services, enhance the health of the community, advance medical or health knowledge, or relieve/reduce the burden on government or other community efforts.

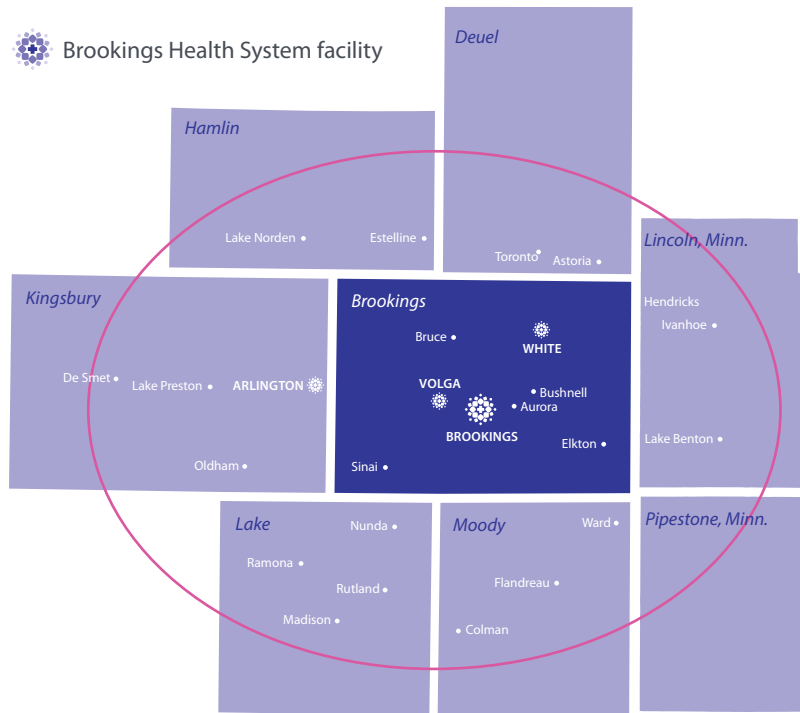


**“My favorite thing about the care was that I got it right here in Brookings.”**

—Kim Vig

# Serving The Region

We serve a radius around the City of Brookings, including patients in the adjacent counties of Deuel, Hamlin, Kingsbury, Lake, Moody, Lincoln, Minn., and Pipestone, Minn. In addition, we have local clinics in Arlington, White and Volga to offer convenient primary care to residents.



## Medical Services

Aesthetic Medicine

Allergies

Ambulance

Anesthesia

Cardiology

Cardiopulmonary Rehab

Chaplain

Community Health Worker

Diabetes Education

Dialysis

Doula

Ear, Nose and Throat

Emergency Services

General Surgery

Gynecology

Home Health

Hospice

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

Imaging

Inpatient Care

Laboratory

Long-Term Care

Nephrology

Neurology

Nutrition

Obstetrics

Occupational Therapy

Orthopedics

Ophthalmology

Optical

Optometry

Outpatient Treatment

Pain Management

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Physical Therapy

Plastic Surgery

Podiatry

Pulmonology

Respiratory Therapy

Rural Health Clinics

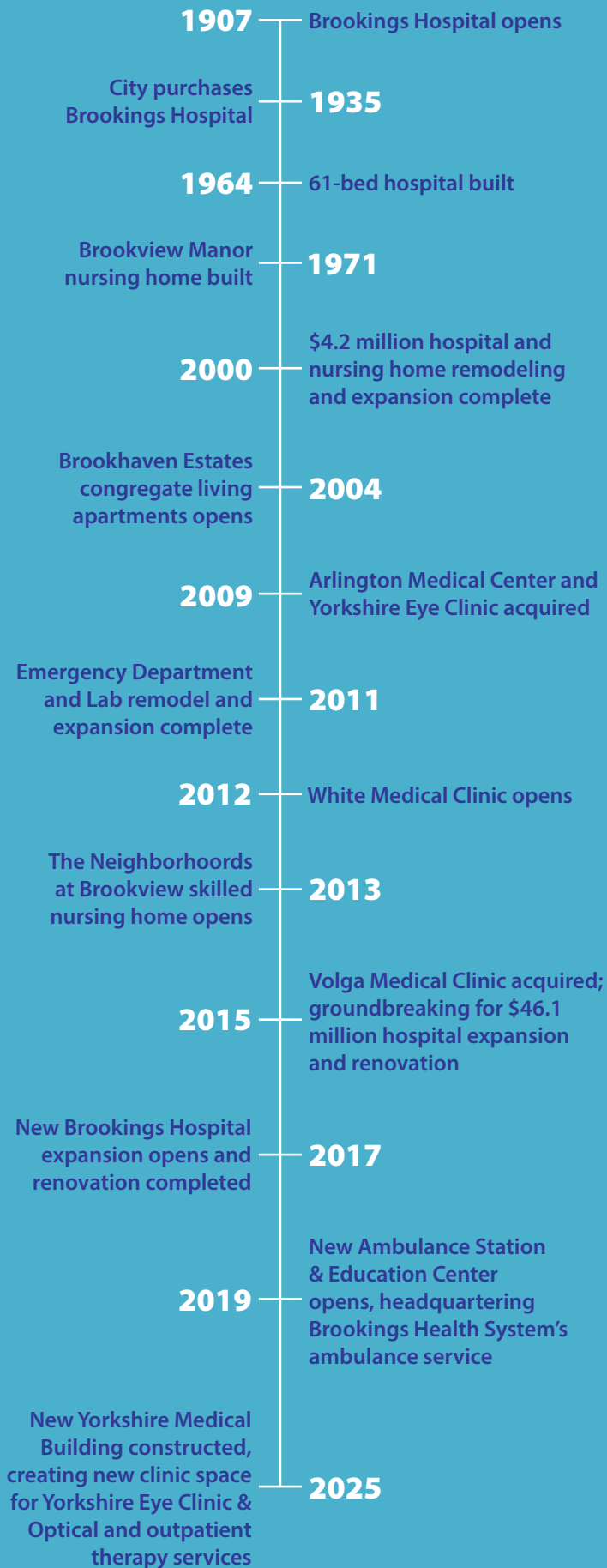
Speech Therapy

Urology

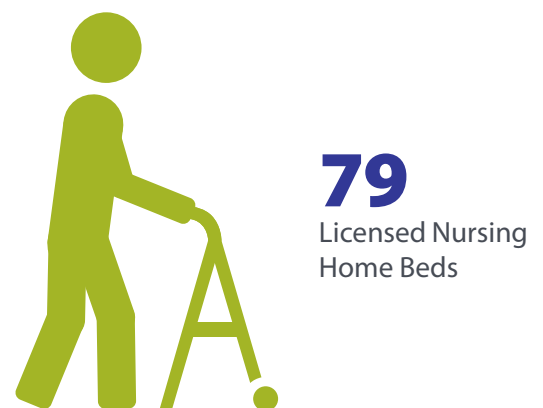
Vascular Surgery

Wound Care

## History Timeline



## Brookings Health System by the Numbers



# Six Things to Know About Us

## 1 We provide high-quality care.

We have consistently been named a Top 20 Rural Community Hospital by the National Rural Health Association since 2017. In 2025, we were the highest scoring rural prospective payment system hospital in the Winter 2025 Chartis Rural Hospital Performance Index.

## 2 We give back.

Annually we grant over \$1 million in financial assistance and invest roughly \$170,000 to support community activities.

## 3 We create jobs.

Brookings Health directly employs nearly 40% of Brookings County's education and health services sector. Over 1,000 local jobs annually are either directly or indirectly supported by us.

## 4 We impact the local economy.

In 2024, we invested nearly \$37 million annually in local salaries supporting area families. Our total impact generated over \$56 million annually to Brookings County's local economy.

## 5 We are independent.

As a municipal health system, we operate autonomously. We can, and do, work with any provider, including Avera, Sanford or any other physician group.

## 6 We are not-for-profit.

We receive no ongoing funding from city or county taxes. Any revenues in excess of expenses are reinvested into our operations to enhance and expand local care for area patients.

**"The staff, the doctors, the surgical team, nurses, anybody that I encountered was so caring and compassionate."**

*—Kourtney Born*



# 2024 Community Benefit

**Financial Assistance** \$1,063,432

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## **Government Means-Tested Healthcare**

Medicaid Shortfall \$420,132

Medicare Shortfall \$1,986,445

Medicare Advantage Shortfall \$1,288,125

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## **Additional Community Benefit Services for the Poor & Vulnerable**

Nursing Home Shortfall \$1,032,493

Rural Health Clinic Shortfall \$288,379

HEARTH Program Shortfall \$55,882

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## **Community Benefit Services for the Broader Community**

Ambulance Service Shortfall \$574,882

Chaplain/Social Work \$277,495

Community Health Services & Education \$152,917

Service Promotion \$21,104

Continuing Medical Education \$100,620

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**Community Investments (Philanthropy)** \$167,375

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**Total Community Investment** **\$7,429,241**



## More than Medicine: Connecting Patients to Care & Resources

In 2022 Brookings Health System launched a community health worker program with the goal to bridge the gap for at-risk patients between health and social services.

Non-medical factors, such as housing, income, insurance coverage, family support and even understanding how and when to access health care, influence a person's overall health. A community health worker meets patients one-on-one in the home, builds trust with them, educates them on how to maintain their health, and helps them overcome non-medical factors by linking them to appropriate medical and social services. The end result: improved health and quality of life for patients.

The program's initial focus was to help patients who frequently visited the emergency room or who had repeat inpatient care stays. It has since expanded to include primary care, wound care and obstetrics patients. Goals included decreasing hospital readmissions and unnecessary ER visits while increasing primary care visits, including preventative healthcare and routine checkups.

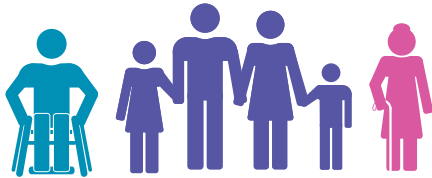
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### **Since the program's launch, the community health worker has assisted over 165 patients. Services provided include:**

- ◆ Connecting patients with resources to help with basic needs such as rent, utilities, food and clothing
- ◆ Helping patients apply for medical financial assistance and Medicaid
- ◆ Giving patients tools to overcome hearing and communication barriers
- ◆ Setting up transportation to and from medical appointments
- ◆ Educating on when to visit a clinic versus the emergency room
- ◆ Assisting in understanding medical diagnoses and how to manage chronic conditions
- ◆ Arranging in-home assistance with services such as personal aides and homemakers
- ◆ Reducing isolation and loneliness with companionship referrals and community involvement opportunities
- ◆ Referring to mental health services and support groups, including grief counseling
- ◆ Assessing home safety and making improvements
- ◆ Improving access to crucial medications
- ◆ Guiding patients in making healthy lifestyle choices
- ◆ By focusing on non-medical factors, the community health worker program has improved overall health for patients and the community.

## Community Benefit by the Numbers

**656** Local people helped by financial assistance program



**\$1,063,432**

Total granted in financial assistance



**\$185,676**

Cost to operate per day

**For every \$1 charged, Brookings Health System receives:**



**26¢**  
per Medicare Advantage patient



**28¢**  
per Medicare patient

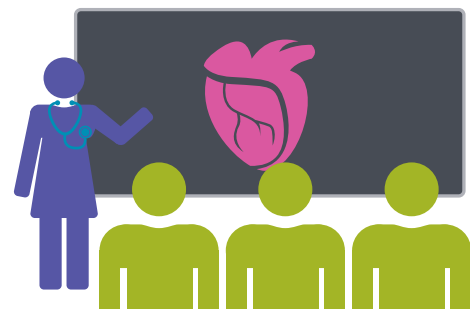


**29¢**  
per Medicaid patient



**56¢**  
per privately insured patient

**54** Community Class Sessions



**3** Weekly Support Groups

# \$167,375

in Philanthropy invested in local organizations

Organizations we gave to in 2024:

	 <b>BOYS &amp; GIRLS CLUB</b>	 <b>BOBCAT BB BACKERS</b>	
			
	 <b>SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY</b>	 <b>SOUTH DAKOTA</b> <small>NURSES ASSOCIATION</small>	
		 <small>SLIP IN HEAVENLY PLACE</small>	 <small>VISION + ACTION = CHANGE</small>
<b>Brookings County 4-H</b>	<b>Brookings High School HOSA</b>	<b>Dolphin Foundation Athletic Complex White, SD</b>	
<b>Brookings Area Chamber Leadership Class</b>	<b>Brookings High School Scholarship</b>	<b>Friends of Brookings Baseball</b>	
<b>Brookings Domestic Abuse Shelter</b>	<b>Brookings Pink Ladies Cancer Golf Tourney</b>	<b>Run 4 Fun Brookings</b>	
<b>Brookings El Riad Shrine</b>		<b>Team Isaac Golf Tournament</b>	

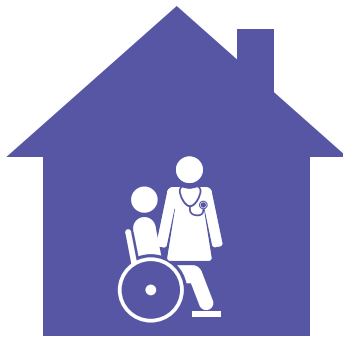
# Services by the Numbers



**4,248**  
Hospital Patient Days **↑ 42.7%**

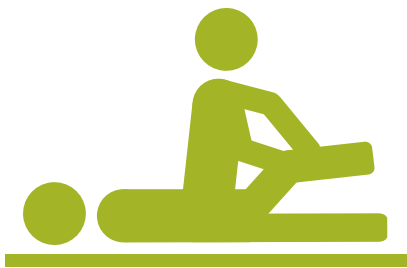


**73.1**  
Average Daily  
Nursing Home  
Census  
**↓ 4.7%**

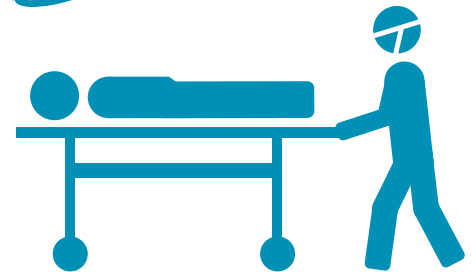


**10,285**  
Home Health Visits  
**↑ 31.2%**

**392**  
Births  
**↑ 15.6%**



**14,575**  
Therapy Visits



**3,961**  
Surgeries **↑ 35%**

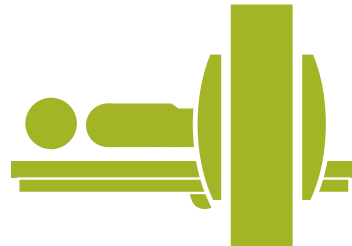
↑ ↓ % change since 2019



**3,077**

Rural Health  
Clinic Patient  
Visits

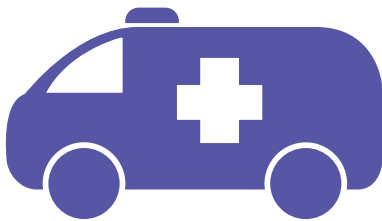
↓ 0.1%



**23,896**

Imaging Procedures

↑ 38.6%



**2,781**

Ambulance Runs ↑ 15.2%

**579**

Sleep Studies

45.1% ↑



**134,448**

Laboratory Tests



**11,136**

ED Visits

↑ 21.6%

“This health care system just makes me feel good about health care again.”

—Tammy Snyder



# Paying It Forward: Employee Giving & Volunteering

Brookings Health System encourages employees to give back and support both our health system and the local community.

**Annual Giving:** Every fall, employees are invited to participate in the annual giving campaign. Through simple payroll deductions, staff can support Brookings Area United Way, benefiting organizations across Brookings County, and Brookings Health System Foundation, which supports our patients, programs, and fellow employees. One of the most meaningful ways employees support one another is through the Employee Emergency Fund which provides financial assistance to coworkers facing unforeseen hardships such as illness, family crises, or natural disasters.

**Quarterly Volunteering:** In addition to financial giving, our Foundation's Caring & Sharing employee committee supports quarterly volunteer opportunities, allowing staff to share their time, talent, and treasure. These projects provide tangible support to local organizations and demonstrate our commitment to the health and well-being of those we serve.

## Over the past three years, employees have partnered with organizations through service projects, including:

**Sleep in Heavenly Peace:** sponsor materials, volunteer to build beds, and donate bedding, books, and stuffed toys. This organization ensures no child sleeps on the floor in Brookings County or the surrounding area.



**Brookings Marathon:** support race-day logistics as a volunteer. This local marathon relies on volunteers for water stations, registration, and overall event support.



**Feeding Brookings:** volunteer for food distribution and donation drives. Feeding Brookings provides free groceries weekly to community members in need.

**Margo's Place:** fundraise, donate, or volunteer. Margo's Place provides shelter, crisis services, and resources for survivors of domestic violence and abuse.



**Harvest Table:** sponsor and serve meals and support donation drives. Harvest Table offers free, warm meals every Monday to anyone in Brookings County.



**Brookings Area Foster Closet:** donate items or volunteer to support children entering foster care. The Foster Closet provides clothing, hygiene products, and other essentials to foster families.



**Project Joy:** donate toys or cash and volunteer at the holiday store. Project Joy ensures every child in Brookings County receives a gift during the holiday season.

**The Neighborhoods at Brookview:** sponsor resident activities, volunteer for group outings, and donate to wish list needs. These efforts directly enhance the daily lives and well-being of our residents.

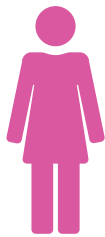


**The Caring & Sharing committee is always looking for ways to support our community and welcome community partners to contact [foundation@brookingshealth.org](mailto:foundation@brookingshealth.org) to coordinate group volunteer activities for 15 or more participants.**

## People by the Numbers



**553**  
Employees



**93**

Unscheduled  
Part-Time



**100**

Part-Time  
<20 Hours



**128**

Part-Time  
20+ Hours

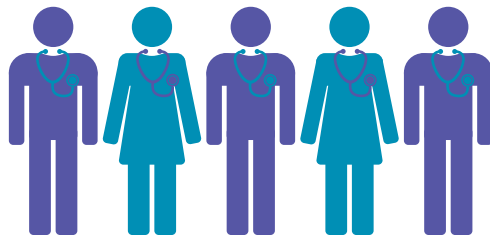


**232**

Full Time



**84% Female**  
vs.  
**16% Male**



**25**

Active Medical  
Staff Members



**92**

Job  
Shadows



**260**

Nursing Students



**30**

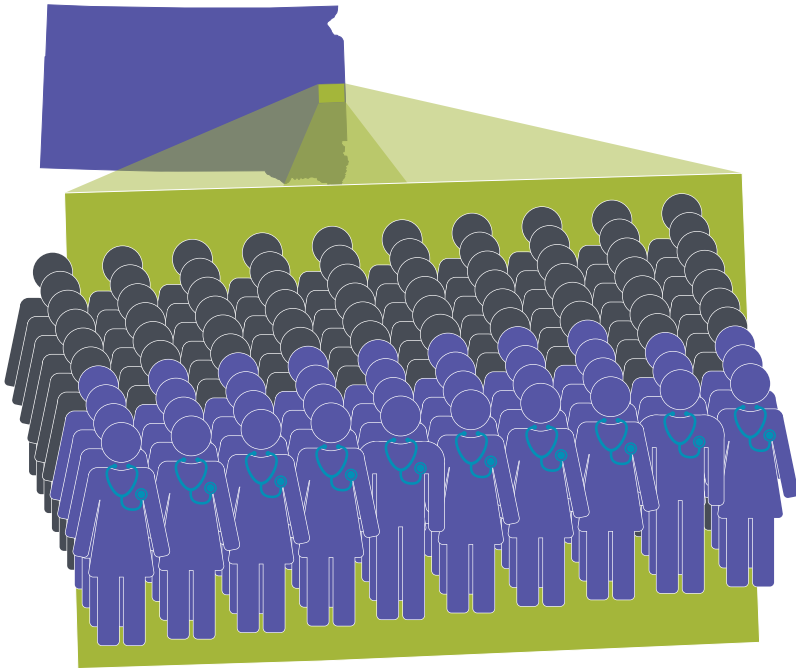
Volunteers



**27**

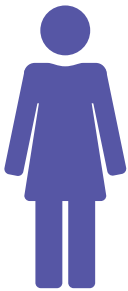
Interns

# Economic Impact by the Numbers



**38.5%**

of education and health care sector workers in Brookings County directly employed by Brookings Health System



**553**

Directly Employed



**59.3%**

of education and health care sector payroll in Brookings County attributed directly to Brookings Health System

**\$36.9 million** directly attributed

**\$19.8 million** indirectly attributed

Source: 2025 Study by South Dakota State University, "The Impacts of Brookings Health System on the Economy of Brookings County and Rural Health in South Dakota"



**441**

Additional jobs supported by  
Brookings Health's presence

**\$56,780,000**

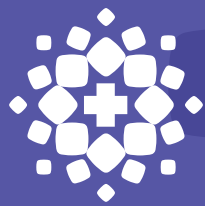
Brookings Health System's annual  
economic impact of Brookings County



**"From the time I walked in the door,  
it was amazing."**

*—Bill Thelen*





**Brookings**  
HEALTH SYSTEM

Every  
**Person**  
Matters.