Hospitals as anchor institutions

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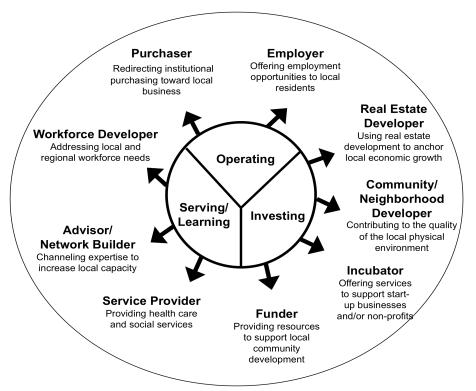


CURA Research Highlights 2010

Research Aims:

Research shows that hospitals have an important role to play as neighbourhood anchors and community builders. In recent years, American and Canadian hospitals have become increasingly involved in community development efforts beyond the walls of their institutions. The reasons for this are manifold and include improved health, social and economic outcomes.

In order to understand more precisely why hospitals offer community benefits, what kinds of benefits they provide and how they finance, manage, and administer these community programs, I undertook 10 case studies of hospitals which leverage their assets and resources for broader community gain. The information has been culled from hospital websites, community benefit and annual reports, as well as from telephone interviews with key informants from each hospital or affiliated community group.



Extract from *Health Institutions as Economic and Community Anchors: Case Studies and Practical Strategies* (Kauper-Brown: 2005).

Key results to date:

Community benefit programs that take advantage of available resources and existing organizations are a way for hospitals to meet more than one bottom line without compromising their principal mandates.

Based on this report's case studies, there seem to be three principal causes for hospitals to choose to engage in community building: their mission, their sense of responsibility as anchor institutions and their enlightened self-interest. In several cases, hospitals have more than one impetus.

Furthermore, the case studies show that hospitals use a variety of means to fund their community engagement initiatives. While some use their operating budgets, others rely on private foundations or grants; in other cases, having a variety of non-traditional funding sources and partnerships proves to be the enabling factor.