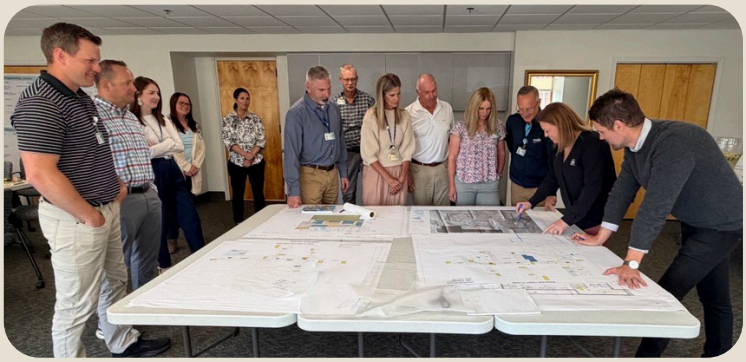
Offerings 2027

ST. ELIZABETH'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION



Building for a Future of Care



For more than a century, St. Elizabeth's has been guided by a simple but powerful mission: to improve the health and well-being of the people it serves. That mission continues to shape the future of care in our service area, where plans are moving forward for a major rehabilitation, wellness and pharmacy expansion designed to better meet the needs of the rural communities that rely on these services every day.

The proposed 17,000 square-foot expansion will double the current space and bring restorative services together under one roof. Cardiac rehab, cardiopulmonary, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and pharmacy services will all be housed in a more connected, efficient setting. The project also supports the continued growth of lifestyle medicine, helping patients manage chronic conditions and build healthier habits through coordinated, preventive care.

"We're in an important planning and preparation phase right now, and every step is focused on building a space that will better serve patients for years to come," says Jim Root, hospital administrator. "This project is about thoughtful design, wise use of resources and creating a facility that supports care into the future."

The project is also taking important steps forward behind the scenes. ISG has been selected as the architectural firm and Knutson Construction will serve as the construction contractor. With planning underway and a project start anticipated in 2027, the team is moving steadily toward a facility that will support patients now and for years to come.

More than $12 million has already been raised to support the project and 100% of funds raised remain in the community, helping improve the quality of life for the people who live in our service area. That local support is making it possible to build something that will serve patients across the region for generations.

"We are deeply grateful for the generosity that has brought this project so far," says Tom Crowley, St. Elizabeth's Community Development Foundation Director. "The support of our donors and community partners is making it possible to create something lasting for the people who depend on these services every day."

This expansion is about more than adding square footage. It is about creating a space that supports healing, prevention and long-term wellness in a rural setting where access matters. It is about making care easier to reach, to coordinate and to sustain for the people who depend on it.

A Growing Need, and a Clinic Built to Meet It

When Emplify Health by Gundersen Wabasha Hospital and Clinics opened its new eye clinic earlier this year, it marked an important step in bringing eye care closer to the people who need it. The clinic was created in response to a clear need for local eye services and early patient response has shown just how valuable that access is.

Dr. Jennie Tomlinson has been seeing patients in Wabasha since January, and the clinic's goal is to build a strong patient base that can support expanded hours, additional days and eventually more services. Establishing care and scheduling appointments in advance helps the team better understand demand and plan for what comes next.



"We want patients to feel cared for from the very first visit. When people establish care with us, it helps us build something that can grow with the community and make sure the right services are here when they're needed."

That kind of growth matters in a rural community, where travel can be difficult and convenience often affects whether people get the care they need. The clinic's design includes



room to grow, with a retail optical area, exam rooms, testing space and a specialty room for patient education. As demand increases, the hope is to expand services in ways that continue to meet patients where they are.

Support from St. Elizabeth's Community Development Foundation and St. Elizabeth's Auxiliary has also helped strengthen the clinic's ability to care for patients. The Foundation helped purchase a new fundus camera, an important tool that supports screening, diagnosis, monitoring and documentation of eye disease. The Auxiliary purchased a new slit lamp, another essential piece of equipment that helps providers examine the eye in greater detail and deliver more precise care.

Dr. Edwin Albrecht, who practiced optometry in Wabasha for decades, offered a simple reminder that still rings true today: treat people like family. That spirit continues to guide the clinic as it builds relationships, earns trust and grows to serve the community better. To schedule an appointment, please call (651) 565-5600.

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Community Impact Report

September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026

$1,441,378
Raised to support our mission

1,048 Gifts

600 Donors

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98%
of every gift directly benefits patient and resident health care.

55 active volunteers, **97** auxilians and **24** board members share their time and talents.

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CNA, patient form lasting friendship through common discovery

From the moment Jack Walters met Jim Pfeilsticker, it was clear they'd end up as friends. Walters, a 24-year-old CNA at Emplify Health by Gundersen Wabasha Hospital, was caring for the 84-year-old Pfeilsticker during his three-month swing bed recovery stay.

With that much time together, the two developed an easy rapport, often losing themselves in conversation about their shared hometown of Wabasha and just about everything else under the sun.

A friendship forming

Earlier this year, Pfeilsticker had a backache that wouldn't go away, no matter what he tried. Eventually, he went to Rochester for a CAT scan and learned he had a thinning in his spine that required two metal rods and months of recovery and rehabilitation.

Pfeilsticker returned to Emplify Health by Gundersen Wabasha Hospital for a swing bed stay, but while there, he contracted pneumonia and influenza and had to return to Rochester. Luckily for him, the swing bed he left in Wabasha remained open when he was able to return, so he moved back in and continued his stay.

"I couldn't walk when I came back (from Rochester)," Pfeilsticker said. "I had to start out with physical therapy and baby steps."

Walters helped Pfeilsticker with his physical therapy, getting him to appointments and helping with basic activities on weekends when PT staff weren't present.



"Jim would always be like, 'Alright, we're doing two minutes of standing,'" Jack said. "But then we would just get so locked in to talking with each other that we'd look at the clock and, ope, Jim stood up for eight minutes straight and we didn't even realize it!"

In a smaller community, that daily encouragement can make a real difference in recovery.

Something familiar

As Jack spent more time with Jim and his visitors, that sense of familiarity grew. Then, suddenly, it all made sense. They shared a connection to the same house in Wabasha, a home that had been part of three generations of Pfeilstickers and sat across the street from St. Felix Catholic School.

"It's a beautiful house; you can tell there was a lot of care that was put into it," Walters said.

In a community like Wabasha, it didn't take long for the caregiver and patient relationship to become something more personal, shaped by conversation, trust and the kind of connection that often develops when care happens close to home.

One of his favorites

Walters has worked in a skilled nursing facility, but he always knew he wanted to get into hospital work and wanted to do that work near home.

"I felt like being here in Wabasha has been a really great learning opportunity," said Walters, who already has an EMT certification and hopes to become a registered nurse in the future. "I've seen a lot of stuff and learned a lot, especially being able to work down in the ER. It's been a very good process."

For Pfeilsticker's part, he's also impressed with Emplify Health by Gundersen Wabasha Hospital. He called the care he received "top of the rock."

"I have no time to complain about that," he said. "They do things I didn't want to do, there are things we laugh about. We have a good time."

When Pfeilsticker arrived, he couldn't walk and moved around in a wheelchair. Then physical therapy began, and after some time, he was able to take a few unassisted steps.

Later, he graduated to 360 feet of walking by himself.

Now, he does maintenance care in the Wellness Center three days a week, in addition to some work he can do at home.

"We were nervous about whether he was ready to return home," said Sandy, Jim's daughter. "We didn't know how it would go, but because of the outstanding care he received, he's back to his old routine and doing great."

And because of Jim's stay, he and Jack formed a friendship neither of them saw coming.

"I know we're not supposed to have favorites, but Jim has definitely been my favorite patient that I've gotten to work with during my time here," Jack said.

That friendship made Jim's stay just a little easier.

"I was at home without being home," he said.



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A Community Gift That Makes Cancer Care More Personal



A cancer diagnosis can change everything in an instant. It brings fear, uncertainty and challenges that reach far beyond treatment itself. For many patients, it also means long drives, time away from loved ones and the strain of traveling when energy is already limited. Thanks to the generosity of donors and the continued growth of care at Emplify Health by Gundersen Wabasha Hospital and Clinics, oncology and chemotherapy services are now available in Wabasha, offering patients comfort, dignity and support during a difficult season.

This year, patients in our service area gained access to outpatient oncology care in the Wabasha Clinic and chemotherapy services through Outpatient Services. In addition, PET CT is now available in Wabasha, giving patients another important diagnostic option closer to home. Instead of facing treatment and testing far from home, they can now receive care from a team that knows them and understands what they are going through.

Dr. Kurt Oettel, an oncologist based in La Crosse, sees patients in Wabasha twice a month, giving local patients access to expert cancer care without the burden of a long drive. New patients can begin care locally and those already receiving treatment can transition with a simple referral.

"If you have a loved one undergoing chemotherapy, you understand how draining it is, not just the treatment itself, but the travel," says Kurt Henn, Director of Outpatient Services. "Having care nearby means everything."

This new service was designed with patients in mind. Outpatient Services has six infusion chairs available, along with upgraded recliners for patients who need longer infusion times. The Foundation also helped purchase new chairs and a supply cart to support the space. As demand grows, the team plans to expand services further so more patients can continue receiving care close to home.

For the care team, one recent moment captured the heart of this work. Wabasha resident Linda Wallerich was the first chemotherapy patient in Wabasha to complete treatment and ring the bell, a cherished tradition that marks the end of chemotherapy and celebrates hope, courage and healing. Family, friends and staff lined the hall to cheer her on, turning that moment into a powerful reminder of what community support can mean.



Dr. Oettel's visits, the infusion team's pharmaceutical preparation and the support of local staff all come together to create something bigger than a service line. They create peace of mind for patients who want expert care without leaving the community they know and love.

"Our mission is to bring personalized, expert care to our patients' doorsteps," says Kim Wolter, Director of Inpatient Services. "Convenience isn't just about location. It's about peace of mind."

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In Honor Of:

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Tom Crowley
John & Pat Edwards
James W. Hennessy
Father James Russell
Physical Therapy, Cardiac Rehab & Wellness Center Staff
Bob Wooden

A Gift That Brings Advanced Care Closer to Home



Thanks to the generosity of its donors, St. Elizabeth's Community Development Foundation helped bring advanced technology to Emplify Health by Gundersen Wabasha Hospital and Clinics in a way that is already making a meaningful difference for patients and care teams.

The Foundation secured special funding from community supporters for an advanced AI Handheld Ultrasound System, a powerful diagnostic tool that is now being used across multiple areas of the organization, including the Emergency Department, Clinic, Operating Room and Med/Surg unit.

For a rural hospital, having access to this level of technology is rare and deeply valuable. The portable system, which can also travel throughout the building on a mobile cart, gives clinicians the ability to evaluate patients more quickly and accurately at the bedside. Its AI capabilities help guide providers to the best positioning for image capture, improving image quality and reducing the time it takes to get results. That means faster answers, quicker decisions and more timely care for patients who need it most.

Dr. Spano said the impact has been immediate. "What makes this equipment so valuable is not just the technology itself, but what it allows us to do for our patients," he said. "It gives our team another level of confidence when time matters most, and it helps us deliver care more efficiently, right here in our community. We are deeply grateful to the donors who made this possible."

The benefits of the AI handheld ultrasound system extend beyond efficiency. For trauma and cardiac patients especially, every minute matters. Having this technology available onsite helps reduce wait times for results and supports more confident clinical decision-making when time is critical. It also provides peace of mind to patients and families, knowing that advanced care is available close to home.



In October 2025, Jake's Field of Dreams harvest brought in 2,363.33 bushels of beans, generating $21,813.54 for St. Elizabeth's Community Development Foundation. Year after year, this effort reflects the generosity of volunteers, donors, and community members who come together to support rural health and strengthen care for the people who live in our service area. It's a meaningful reminder of how local support helps sustain care close to home.



The annual Spring Bazaar and Dad's Belgian Waffle Breakfast, sponsored by St. Elizabeth's Auxiliary and employees, brought the community together once again in support of Emplify Health by Gundersen Wabasha Hospital and Clinics. Thanks to the generosity of participants and volunteers, this year's event raised $34,812.60 to help create an accessible outdoor patio at the hospital and clinic campus that is already being well used by residents, patients, and staff.



The Lucille Burrichter Scholarship Fund is celebrating 24 years of helping students pursue their dreams in healthcare. Administered by St. Elizabeth's Community Development Foundation, the fund has awarded more than 400 scholarships totaling over $460,000 since it began in 2002, thanks to the generosity of donors who believe in investing in the future.

This year, 17 scholarships were awarded to staff members, family members of staff, and area high school students. These awards reflect the care and encouragement of a community that wants to see students succeed and grow into the next generation of healthcare professionals.



The sixth annual Jim Abbott Memorial Golf Tournament was held on August 14, 2026, bringing together golfers, sponsors, and community members in support of St. Elizabeth's Community Development Foundation. This year's event raised $170,762.50, adding to the remarkable impact of the tournament over the past six years.

Since the tournament began, it has raised $577,202.78 for the Foundation, a reflection of the generosity and commitment of everyone who continues to honor Jim Abbott's legacy. Year after year, the event stands as a meaningful reminder of what can happen when a community comes together to support care close to home.

ST. ELIZABETH'S
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

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