Ascension
Wisconsin Foundation

The *spirit* of Giving

FALL NEWSLETTER 2026

A SIX MILLION DOLLAR SURGICAL SERVICES UPGRADE

When an ailment requires more than just medication or rehabilitation, surgery may be the answer. Whether the procedure is routine or complex, patients deserve access to a safe, modern surgical environment.

At Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Milwaukee and Ozaukee, and Ascension Franklin, a $6 million upgrade to surgical services is enhancing and modernizing operating rooms, ensuring individuals in the Greater Milwaukee area and surrounding communities can continue to receive high-quality care close to home.

"Thanks to the generosity of donors to Ascension Wisconsin Foundation, this $6 million investment provides state of the art surgical equipment ensuring our patients continue to receive high quality care close to home"

– SCOTT CIHAK

"We are dedicated to providing exceptional care to our local communities, and investing in our surgical services is one more way we are delivering on that commitment," said Scott Cihak, Interim Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer for Ascension Wisconsin. "Thanks to the generosity of donors to Ascension Wisconsin Foundation, this $6 million investment provides state of the art surgical equipment ensuring our patients continue to receive high quality care close to home."

The new investment in surgical services will support surgical video integration, providing surgeons with better visualization, streamlined workflows and device connectivity, ultimately supporting surgical efficiency and patient outcomes.

The impact of these upgrades extends beyond the operating room. They help ensure patients receive timely, compassionate care in an environment designed to support the best possible outcomes.

Aron, a recent patient, shared how the care she received at Ascension Wisconsin made a lasting difference in his life:

"I was diagnosed with acute appendicitis, and I was in the emergency room not knowing what was going to happen next. That night I had emergency surgery; it was the first surgery I ever had in my 45 years of life. The surgery went well, and everything went perfectly. My surgeon told me that I would be ok. I look at what these surgeons do for a living as a Godsend in this world. They help people and truly want to heal them."

PATIENT IMPACT

RAISING AWARENESS THIS OCTOBER

October is breast cancer awareness month, a time to recognize the strength of those impacted by breast cancer and the importance of compassionate, expert care. At Ascension Wisconsin's nine cancer centers, that care extends far beyond October.

For many patients, a breast cancer diagnosis changes every aspect of daily life. Their stories reflect not only the challenges they faced, but also the compassion, expertise and hope they found along the way.

"I was having a breast biopsy done for the first time, and my nurse stayed by my side and walked me through the entire procedure. When I didn't feel well, I felt comfortable enough to say something and she went into immediate action. As soon as the procedure was done, she stayed with me until I was feeling better."
— **ERIKA**, patient at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Milwaukee

"I was a nurse for 40 years, and soon after retiring I was diagnosed with breast cancer and found myself as a patient instead of a caregiver. I appreciate how my occupational therapist worked with me to try a variety of treatments to find out what worked best for me. She had a big impact on my recovery, was kind and compassionate."
— **ANONYMOUS PATIENT** at Ascension All Saints

"As soon as the procedure was done, she stayed with me until I was feeling better."

– ERIKA

"My nurse navigator was a constant source for me as questions came up about how to treat my breast cancer. She explained everything well, and helped me come to terms with all that I was facing in a loving yet informative way. She was a crucial part of my cancer journey. Without her, I would not have felt secure in some of my difficult decisions."
— **AMY**, patient at Ascension Elmbrook

"I have had the same mammogram provider for quite a few years. In my most recent mammogram she thought she saw something and insisted on getting as deep of a look as she could. She found a spot at the way back of my left breast, which turned out to be cancer. Without her persistence, it may not have been found so early. I underwent a lumpectomy and radiation treatments. I'm so thankful."
— **CARLA,** patient at Ascension Medical Group in Brown Deer

COMMUNITY IMPACT

EXPANDING ACCESS TO QUALITY DENTAL CARE

Dental care is out of reach for thousands of children and adults in Milwaukee and Racine Counties. Ascension Seton Dental clinics, mobile unit and Smart Smiles school-based program serve an important need, providing quality preventive and emergent care to those who might otherwise go without.

From routine fillings and extraction to referrals for emergent care, Ascension Wisconsin's comprehensive dental program helps both children and adults receive the dental care they so very need. In the school setting, Smart Smiles partners directly with Racine and Milwaukee County schools to bring preventative care and education to 126 schools, reaching 15,000+ students last year.

"Our clinics are focused on underserved populations, like those who are uninsured or face barriers to access. As we know, there are many barriers for both parents and students, so we want to meet people where they are. We are trying to break down barriers and help people receive the care they need," said Annie Meece, who oversees Ascension Wisconsin's dental programs.

Dr. Thomas Mullally recently joined the team as the new dentist. His interest in community dentistry began during outreach rotations in dental school.

"This work is so rewarding," he shared. "My hope is the sooner we can get patients who don't regularly see a dentist, the better. If we can get them comfortable coming back, they'll get that filling instead of needing an extraction later on. We can help our patients keep more of their natural teeth."

Many patients who visit Seton have gone years without dental care. They may have significant tooth decay, gum disease or anxiety about visiting a dentist.

William, a recent patient, came to the clinic after ongoing tooth pain became severe. Without dental insurance or a regular dentist, he first sought help at an emergency room, where he learned about Seton.

"It was great. I was surprised," William said. "They helped automatically, and they even offered care for my daughter as her adult teeth come in."

William was originally hesitant to see a dentist, but he plans to return to continue his care plan. Dr. Mullally emphasized that helping patients feel comfortable is key to sustained care.

"If you can get somebody who used to be so terrified they wouldn't even come to the dentist to say, 'Oh, that wasn't so bad,' that's huge," Dr. Mullally said. "When that happens, we've crossed a big barrier."

LETTER FROM YOUR FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

Racheal Faulks

I hope you've enjoyed reading our latest edition of The Spirit of Giving. Your generosity makes these stories possible, and I am honored that you choose to support your local Ascension Wisconsin Hospital.

Our operating rooms throughout Southeast Wisconsin will have the latest in surgical technology.

Patients in need of hope and healing can turn to our cancer centers for support.

Individuals in need of urgent or routine dental care can trust that they will receive great care from us, regardless of background or ability to pay.

And so much more.

Today, and every day, we are truly grateful for your support. If you ever have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at giveAWF@ascension.org.

Sincerely,

Racheal Faulks

Racheal Faulks

President, Ascension Wisconsin Foundation

A legacy gift doesn't have to be complicated. For many people, it starts with one simple decision: including Ascension Wisconsin Foundation in a will, trust or beneficiary form alongside the people and causes they value most. Some choose to give a percentage of their estate. Others designate a retirement account or life insurance policy. The form matters far less than the intention behind it.

A legacy gift is a meaningful way to ensure the compassionate care you value today continues for future generations while reflecting the people, places and causes that have been important throughout your life.

Your gift can support whatever matters most to you at whichever Ascension Wisconsin hospital means the most to you.

Questions about legacy giving? Contact Maria Betts, Planned Giving Officer, at maria.betts@ascension.org or 414-454-9495.

Learn more at giveAWFlegacy.org

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