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2025 FOURTH QUARTER

BUILDING FUTURES TOGETHER

Revitalization project creates new careers.

GROWTH & INSPIRATION

The season of giving naturally prompts us to reflect on the challenges we've overcome and the goals we've achieved during the past year.

Yes, there were difficult days. But we had joyful ones, too.

During the times that tested us, I reminded myself that the future of health care is unfolding in remarkable ways inside Allina Health.

Robot-assisted procedures, incisionless surgeries and even tumor liquefactions all took place right here in 2025. They represent remarkable strides forward in medicine.

This edition of All Together Better Magazine has more reasons to be inspired:

- Learn about a program that's creating career paths for people who live near the Abbott Northwestern Hospital campus revitalization project.
- Meet a Minneapolis woman whose willingness to join a clinical trial for triple-negative breast cancer led to what her doctor calls "the best possible outcome."
- Tag along with a volunteer to see how we support people who give the gift of time at Allina Health.

Thank you for reading and sharing these stories.



Kerri Gordon
Chief Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs Officer

PRESCRIPTION FOR CONVENIENCE

Kris Heckmann wanted the No. 1 spot in line — and not for concert tickets or a holiday shopping deal.

"I can't wait to be the first to pick up my prescription," she said with a smile ahead of opening day at the new Allina Health Pharmacy in Coon Rapids.

For Kris, the new pharmacy means a quick trip for fast, friendly service.

Located inside Allina Health Coon Rapids Clinic, the pharmacy offers auto-fill and free mail delivery for most prescriptions.



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OPPORTUNITY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

“ We’re giving people a shot at building something for themselves and their families.”

Georgia Coleman
Program Coordinator

When Allina Health approved the Abbott Northwestern Hospital campus revitalization, leaders made it clear the project’s benefits needed to reach beyond the campus and help the community, too.

“One way that could happen is if we offered people in the neighborhood a chance to work on the project,” said Alison Pence, director of community engagement for Allina Health.

That idea led to the Community Workforce Program, a partnership among Allina Health, Mortenson and its partners.

“The goal is simple,” said Georgia Coleman, program coordinator.

“We want to provide entry-level opportunities to people who are looking to start a career.”

And it’s working. Nearly 40 residents with little or no construction experience are gaining hands-on skills — and a résumé boost — at the future Richard M. Schulze Surgical and Critical Care Center at Abbott Northwestern Hospital.

“This building is a reflection of our commitment to this community and the people who live in it,” Alison added. “They’re both worth the investment.”



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CLINICAL TRIAL DELIVERS A WIN

“ I was able to contribute data that will help others.”

Nikka Ross
Patient

Nikka Ross still remembers the call confirming her triple-negative breast cancer, a rare aggressive form of the disease.

“I was shocked,” Nikka said. “I thought, ‘Can I beat this?’”

She did — and she credits a clinical trial offered by Allina Health Cancer Institute.

Because of a previous heart issue, traditional chemotherapy posed risks for Nikka, so her doctor suggested a trial with less chemotherapy.

“It was called the SCARLET Trial,” said medical oncologist Daniel Carlson, DO. “She was given less toxic chemotherapy along with immunotherapy.”

Breast exams during the trial indicated the treatment was working, and surgical pathology confirmed it.

“It was completely gone,” Dr. Carlson said. “That’s the best possible outcome with triple-negative breast cancer.”

Dr. Carlson says that having patients who are willing to participate in clinical trials is how Allina Health is making strides against cancer.

“I’m happy that I was able to participate,” Nikka said. “People with triple-negative breast cancer have a fighting chance because of those trials.”



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PILOTING INNOVATIVE STROKE CARE

“ The best birthday present I never expected.”

Jennifer
Patient

Just hours after her 52nd birthday, Jennifer, who prefers to share only her first name, was startled awake and quickly realized something was wrong.

“I think I’m having a stroke,” Jennifer said to her boyfriend. “Go call 911.”

Her speech was off. Her right arm and leg felt weak. As a rehabilitation therapist who works with stroke patients, Jennifer knew the signs and the need for fast help.

“All I could think was, ‘I need to get to the hospital right now,’” Jennifer said.

Within nine minutes, emergency crews were in her living room. Minutes later, she was at Allina Health Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids.

Jennifer had gone to bed before 10:30 p.m. and woke around 4:30 a.m., which meant she was outside the typical stroke treatment window. But thanks to a pilot program at Mercy Hospital, her doctors were still able to take decisive action.

A rapid MRI of Jennifer’s brain revealed that part of it was at risk, even though the stroke hadn’t progressed to that area. The images made Jennifer eligible for special clot-busting medication.

Jennifer was eventually discharged without any lingering stroke issues — all thanks to her quick thinking and an innovative treatment.



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HEART SAFE COMMUNITIES

“Most adults have 6-8 minutes of oxygen in their blood at the start of cardiac arrest.”

Renee Hamdorf
Heart Safe Community Specialist

Sudden cardiac arrest can strike anyone, anywhere — and it's almost always fatal without quick action.

Thankfully, the right tools and the right people were in place when a man went into cardiac arrest in a Hastings restaurant.

An off-duty paramedic quickly began CPR and told a server to grab a nearby automated external defibrillator (AED).

It's one of many installed by Allina Health's Heart Safe Communities program, which distributes AEDs into public places like schools and businesses. The program also offers life-saving training.

“I help people learn the difference between a heart attack and cardiac arrest,” said Renee Hamdorf, a Heart Safe Community specialist. “I teach them to recognize the signs of both, and I show them how to use the AED.”

Renee says the emphasis is on hands-only CPR and using an AED when one is available.

Renee's favorite moment is when people realize saving a life isn't as complicated as they thought — and that they can make a difference if someone's heart suddenly stops.



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PITCHING IN FOR VOLUNTEERS

“ I see volunteers as essential members
of the health care team.”

Cheryl Wright, RN
Patient Care Manager

Volunteers want their time to be meaningful, and Allina Health has supporters within its ranks helping to make that happen.

It starts with volunteer supervisors like Charlie Srock who act as matchmakers of sorts.

“My job is to collaborate with our Care Team Members to find out what they need and then match them with volunteers to help with those needs,” Charlie said.

Allina Health staff who offer to help are called “volunteer champions.”

Cheryl Wright, RN, is among them.

“It’s our responsibility to expose volunteers to the work that’s happening in hospitals,” Cheryl explained. “They’re our future doctors, our future nurses.”

Cheryl is now a patient care manager at Allina Health Abbott Northwestern Hospital, but she began her career as a volunteer — so she understands the role from both sides. She currently supports two high-school-aged volunteers.

“I hope that they feel like they’re being helpful and learning some skills, so that it’s a rewarding experience,” Cheryl said.



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BRIGHT SPOTS



HIGH MARKS FOR HEART CARE

Allina Health Minneapolis Heart Institute has been honored with a 2025 Catalyst Award. It recognizes groundbreaking work using data and analytics to transform the delivery of cardiovascular care.

This honor follows the institute's launch of the Comprehensive Cardiovascular Care and Coordination Center (C5) to meet the increasing demand for heart care services.



ALLINA HEALTH EXPERTS GO INTERNATIONAL

Fred Ombongi, vice president, Operations-Ancillary Support Services, makes annual medical mission trips to Kenya, and this year he was joined by Badrinath Konety, MD, president of Allina Health Cancer Institute.

“Among the most powerful moments was a lifesaving surgery on a patient suffering from a rare sarcoma,” Dr. Konety said about the case, which other facilities had rejected due to its complexity.

“It was a turning point that symbolized the very heart of this initiative,” Fred said.



DRUMMING UP FITNESS FUN

The community recently got a peek at the new fitness studio at Allina Health Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute in Golden Valley.

Courage Kenny provides a variety of classes in the studio, including cardio drumming and functional strength. Classes that enhance stability play a key role in fall prevention.

An initial donation from long-time Allina Health Foundation supporter Meredith Low, along with funding from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, helped make the studio a reality.