

Southcoast Health employees donate record-breaking 23,000 menstrual hygiene products

“Southcoast Health employees donated 23,942 menstrual hygiene products, breaking Southcoast’s 2021 donation record of over 18,000 products, as part of their annual Justice Flow Advocacy Project collection drive.

This is the third year Southcoast’s Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council and Community Health and Wellness department hosted the drive as part of a partnership with the YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts, United Neighbors of Fall River and the Women’s Resource Center of Rhode Island. The donations included pads, tampons, reusable cups and period underwear.

“We are ecstatic about the successful results of this year’s drive and the overall response from our employees. As a not-for-profit institution, it is our mission to provide exceptional healthcare and promote equity and inclusion across the region. This is why it’s so important to collaborate with other great community organizations like the YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts, United Neighbors of Fall River and the Women’s Resource Center of Rhode Island to help achieve our goals,” said Lauren De Simon Johnson, SVP & Chief Human Resource Officer. “Our plan is to continue doing this drive every year as there is an immense and continual need for obtaining safe menstrual hygiene products in our communities.”

Southcoast employees utilized numerous methods of donation throughout the month-long campaign by purchasing products at the Southcoast retail pharmacies, placing items in donation collection boxes around the organization, and donating online directly through Amazon. Southcoast employees also had the opportunity to participate in virtual training called “Period

Poverty – Change the Cycle” to learn about the gravity and prevalence of period poverty in the region. Over 800 employees voluntarily participated.

“Offering access to free feminine hygiene products is one step toward leveling the playing field. A box of tampons can cost upwards of \$10 in a retail store. For some, that can be the difference between feeding their families or purchasing the product.” said Beth Welborn, Employee Experience and Wellbeing Manager at Southcoast Health.

This initiative will benefit people all over the south coast region and in particular areas prone to period poverty, which is defined by poor access to menstrual hygiene products and lack of menstrual knowledge by the YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts’ Menstrual Advocacy Access Project.

Lack of access to menstrual hygiene products can have serious consequences. Adults facing such challenges can result in increased work absenteeism which can lead to disciplinary action or termination, furthering cycles of poverty and inequity. Children missing school for the same reason can also result in outcomes such as wider achievement gaps, especially for lower-income students.

The products collected from the drive have been distributed to those in need by a variety of local non-profits and service organizations including United Neighbors of Fall River, YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts, and Women’s Resource Center of Rhode Island. Products will be supplied to local schools to provide free products to students.

About Southcoast Health

For more than 25 years, Southcoast Health has served communities across southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island as the largest provider of primary and specialty care in the

region. The not-for-profit, charitable system includes three acute care hospitals – Charlton Memorial in Fall River, St. Luke's in New Bedford (a Level II Trauma Center), and Tobey in Wareham – as well as a network of over 700 physicians, hospitalists, and midlevel practitioners.

Southcoast Health has established six Urgent Care Centers, two Cancer Centers, a Visiting Nurse Association, and numerous ambulatory facilities that ensure convenient access to services for 725,000 residents in 33 communities covering 900 square miles. In addition, the system partners with Acadia Healthcare to offer expanded resources at Southcoast Behavioral Health in Dartmouth.

Southcoast Health has been recognized consecutively as a Newsweek's World's Best Hospital from 2019-2023 in addition to ranking as a High Performing Hospital for Maternity Care throughout the calendar years of 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 by U.S. News & World Report.

With upward of 7,500 employees, Southcoast Health is the largest employer in southeastern Massachusetts, and one of the largest employers in the Commonwealth, according to the Boston Business Journal. More information is available online at www.southcoast.org."