

# Southcoast Health recognizes 2021 “Volunteers of the Year”

Each year, volunteers of all ages donate their time to serve ill community members at Southcoast Health’s three hospitals, and through Southcoast VNA.

“Southcoast Health is thrilled to honor Laura, Laura, Sandi, and Jacqueline as our 2021 Volunteers of the Year,” says Kimberley Coon, the Executive Director of Hospital and Medical Staff Services. “We thank them—and the rest of our dedicated volunteers—for their unwavering service to our health system and region.”

**Laura Lopes, 2021 Volunteer of the Year at Tobey Hospital:** Laura worked for 32 and a half years as a registered nurse at Tobey. Nearly two years into retirement, she realized she missed her Tobey family and was not ready to put aside her passion for nursing. Her dedication to her patients, colleagues, and student nurses motivated her to apply to serve as a patient representative, so she could continue pursuing her passion for helping others. Laura takes pride in being a familiar face to comfort patients and their family members, answering questions and addressing any concerns they have.

**Laura Medeiros, 2021 Volunteer of the Year for Charlton Memorial Hospital:** Laura began volunteering five years ago, after her husband lost his battle to Alzheimer’s. Her daughter-in-law, an employee at Southcoast Health, suggested Laura cope with her loss through volunteer work at Charlton Memorial, which has played an important role in her healing process. She is an active presence and friendly face in Charlton’s gift shop, where she loves helping staff, visitors, and patients. Laura is especially passionate about using her translation services to make the gift shop more welcoming for visitors who speak Portuguese.

**Sandi Montour, 2021 Volunteer of the Year for St. Luke's Hospital:** Sandi began volunteering at Southcoast Health nine years ago with the VNA and has been volunteering in the St. Luke's Emergency Department since 2016. "Although the Emergency Department can be very hectic with some tough and sad situations, and even when I've not had a great day at work or otherwise, when I volunteer in the Emergency Department and interact with our patients and families, everything else melts away," says Sandi. "Each volunteer shift at the Emergency Department, I know they'll be multiple opportunities to make someone smile or make someone feel comforted. It's a joyful and meaningful experience to serve our community alongside the Southcoast Health professionals. There are many opportunities to volunteer with Southcoast Health; there's something for everyone."

**Jacqueline Swanson, 2021 Volunteer of the Year for the Visiting Nurse Association:** When her father was receiving hospice care from Southcoast, Jacqueline promised herself she would give back in appreciation for the exceptional skill and kindness he received. Jacqueline has remained true to this promise, brightening patients' days by visiting them in their homes or nursing homes and—more recently—lightening the VNA's administrative load by assisting with clerical work.

Volunteers are a deeply valued part of the Southcoast Health team and an essential resource to our region. Southcoast Health is deeply grateful to all those who volunteer their time on behalf of our health system and patients.

To find out more about volunteering at a Southcoast Health hospital or care center, visit <https://www.southcoast.org/philanthropy/volunteer/>. For more information on becoming a volunteer with the Southcoast VNA, call 508-973-3219.

**About Southcoast Health**

Celebrating the system's 25th anniversary in 2021, Southcoast Health is a not-for-profit, charitable organization and the largest provider of primary and specialty care in the region, serving communities in Rhode Island and across Southeastern Massachusetts. Southcoast Health is a Newsweek's World's Best Hospital in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Out of the 2,743 considered hospitals in the United States, only 250 earned this recognition. In 2020 and 2021, St. Luke's is a Newsweek and Leapfrog's Best Maternity Hospitals. US News ranks Southcoast 9th among hospitals in Massachusetts, and 2nd among those in the Providence Metro area. In 2019 and 2020, the Southcoast Health system also received seven awards, including Best Hospitals and Best Place to Work, in SouthCoast Media Group's Best of the Best Awards voted on by residents and readers.

As a network of more than 700 physicians, hospitalists, and mid-level practitioners, Southcoast Health is a system of three acute care hospitals – Charlton Memorial Hospital in Fall River, St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford, and Tobey Hospital in Wareham, and also provides behavioral health services in partnership with Acadia at Southcoast Behavioral Health in Dartmouth. Southcoast Health's System comprises seven Urgent Care Centers, two Centers for Cancer Care, visiting nurse association, and numerous additional ambulatory facilities that offer convenience and access to services for more than 724,000 residents in 33 communities covering over 900 square miles in Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

With 7,500 employees, Southcoast Health is the largest employer in Southeastern Mass., and one of the largest employers in the Commonwealth, according to the Boston Business Journal. Southcoast Health is proud of our mission of providing high-quality, affordable healthcare to our patients and proud of our tradition of eliminating the barriers that prevent access to care. More information is available online

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