

## Mission Forward Overview

---

### Background

- Mission Forward is UW Medicine’s systemwide initiative to identify, design and implement changes that improve our financial stability; increase operational efficiency; promote the well-being of our staff, faculty and trainees; and ensure we can continue providing high-quality, equitable patient care to our community.
- UW Medicine, like many other health systems across the country and in Washington state, is facing significant financial strain as we emerge from the pandemic with resultant capacity and staffing challenges. From July 2022 to March 2023, our three hospitals incurred losses of \$131 million, excluding Federal Emergency Management Agency recovery funds.
- While all healthcare systems are challenged, UW Medicine’s financial situation is exacerbated by our unique role within the state and region:
  - Our mission is to provide care for all people, including the most vulnerable and most complex patients. This results in over \$800 million in undercompensated care per year.
  - We train over 65% of the residents in Washington state. However, the reimbursement for resident education has been capped since 1996.
  - We have continued to invest in contract labor to meet the clinical needs of our state while other healthcare systems have reduced their staffing and are not using all their physical beds.
  - We have over 175 patients in our system on any given day that are medically ready to be discharged to the next level of care but remain in our hospitals due to the lack of post-acute care availability; reimbursement covers only about 17% of their hospital care.
- In addition to our Mission Forward work, we are working to capture federal reimbursement for the costs associated with responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and partnering with the state to develop novel payment programs in support of our Medicaid managed care patients.
- In partnership with the University of Washington central team, we engaged state policymakers regarding the UW Medicine budget. In late April, we were pleased to learn that UW Medicine received \$150 million in funding from the Washington State Legislature, with \$50 million in fiscal year 2023 and \$100 million in fiscal year 2024. This is a significant commitment and an important piece of the overall puzzle to bridge UW Medicine to financial stability. We are grateful for the ongoing support of Governor Inslee and state lawmakers, recognizing the unique role UW Medicine serves in our state.

### Timeline & Progress

- The Mission Forward initiative has three phases: Phase 1 (Assessment), Phase 2 (Decide and Design) and Phase 3 (Implementation). We completed Phase 1 in April, which included a systemwide opportunity assessment conducted in partnership with Huron Consulting Group.
- Huron’s assessment confirmed we are doing many things well, but identified opportunities for improvement in four key areas – quality & efficiency, capacity, growth, and foundational improvements. An executive summary of the assessment can be accessed on the [Mission Forward Huddle page](#).
- We are transitioning to Phase 2 (Decide and Design) of Mission Forward. During this phase, using information from the assessment, we will focus on two parallel paths: 1) We will prioritize and design specific improvement initiatives within the four opportunity areas – each having detailed operational plans, metrics and targets for fiscal year 2024; 2) We will strategize opportunities to improve our system’s longer-term financial stability and competitive market position.

- In Phase 3 (Implementation), teams will begin implementing fiscal year 2024 plans and reporting on their progress. We will also create a set of system-level priorities and key strategies to pursue over the next 2-5 years based on our identified longer-term opportunity areas.
- In mid-December, we launched a 90-day action plan, bridging the first and second phases of Mission Forward, to make immediate improvements in key areas of our operations. Nearly a dozen teams were involved. Between mid-December and mid-March, these teams achieved significant results that already are having a positive, systemwide benefit:
  - **We expanded access for patients.** Increased patient appointments by 3,250 over baseline since January for a revenue gain of \$594,000
  - **We improved the processes by which we get paid for our services.** Professional fee revenue cycle work continues with a backlog reduction plan for \$4.8 million in aged, high-dollar follow-up; reduced \$3.4 million by mid-April
  - **We reduced our reliance on temporary staff.** Reduced costs associated with our reliance on temporary positions by \$14.4 million at Harborview Medical Center and UW Medical Center from December 2022 to March 2023 due to reduced pricing and a reduced number of contract labor FTEs
  - **We implemented process improvements.** Completed Systemwide Surgical Scheduling Workshop where we identified opportunities for standardization and alignment across perioperative services throughout the system; rapid process improvement items are being implemented, tracked and measured based on workshop outcomes
- Many of the 90-day action plan workstreams will continue their work as part of Phase 2 and Phase 3 of Mission Forward. This includes, for example, efforts to improve hospital and professional fee revenue cycle, decreasing length of stay, optimizing operating room utilization and ensuring accuracy of our inpatient clinical documentation.
- In addition to the groups that launched as part of the 90-day action plan, new workstreams will be stood up to tackle additional initiatives in areas such as supply chain, IT and how we utilize our space most effectively

### ***Engagement and Feedback***

- Mission Forward is a massive undertaking with profound implications for the future of UW Medicine. We will need ongoing engagement and support from the entire UW Medicine community, the University of Washington, King County officials and state policymakers to be successful.
- We are committed to sharing information throughout this process and have a Mission Forward page on The Huddle where you can find regular updates, previous Mission Forward messages to our full community, a project overview, frequently asked questions, links to related work at UW Medicine, and an executive summary of Huron's opportunity assessment. Link: <https://huddle.uwmedicine.org/mission-forward/>.
- We encourage everyone to share their questions or feedback on Mission Forward directly with their supervisors or by emailing [ideas4mf@uw.edu](mailto:ideas4mf@uw.edu).