

FUELED BY

# Faith.

DRIVEN TO CARE

2024 GRATITUDE REPORT



# A legacy of hope, faith, and healing

Sister Bernie Kenny was called out of Tanzania by the Richmond Catholic Diocese to serve in Southwest Virginia, with one goal: to provide free healthcare to the impoverished in Appalachia.

Initially planning a short stay, she ended up dedicating decades to the region.

A nurse practitioner and member of the Medical Missionaries of Mary, she launched the Health Wagon in 1980 with a Volkswagen Beetle. Her visits to remote Central Appalachian communities, where many had never seen a doctor, eventually expanded from her small mobile unit into what is now a network of clinics and mobile health services that serve thousands today.

Sister Bernie also saw residents suffering severe dental pain.

Typically, on a daily basis, many pulled their own teeth because they couldn't afford to see a dentist. In response, she and Dr. Teresa

Owens Tyson, DNP, FNP-BC, established large-scale dental, vision, and medical outreach events, collaborating with organizations like Remote Area Medical (RAM) to bring volunteer providers to the region. The outreach event has been running for more than 25 years and has provided care to more than 100,000 patients. This effort has since evolved into Move Mountains Medical Missions (M7), ensuring that Sister Bernie's work lives on.

"She planted a seed that grew into a movement, proving that one person's dedication can make a world of difference."

Despite national recognition, Sister Bernie's greatest reward was the gratitude of those she served. Her compassion inspired generations of healthcare professionals and community leaders, proving one person can ignite lasting change. Her life was a testament to the power of service, faith, and kindness. She planted a seed that grew into a movement, proving that one person's dedication can make a world of difference. Though she is gone, her legacy will continue to touch lives for generations to come.

In Remembrance
December 8, 1938-December 7, 2024

# A Mother's Gratitude for The Health Wagon

Finding a dentist for my kids felt near impossible. Nobody around here took our insurance. Then COVID hit, and I didn't want to risk taking them during the pandemic. By the time it was over, finding care was even harder.

That's when Teresa at The Health Wagon stepped in. She helped me get all four of my kids into a dentist—something I truly never thought would happen. My youngest, Isley, was seven at the time and still had all her baby teeth. The folks were so patient with her, giving her little tricks to help wiggle them loose, like eating the crust on her pizza. They made the whole experience easy, and I finally felt like I could breathe, knowing my kids were taken care of.

Good dental health is so important, and thanks to the Health Wagon—and the kindness of caring, goodhearted people like you—my kids are on the right track. I can't tell you what a blessing this has been for our family. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. (Robin, mother of patient)





My name is Isley, and I am almost 8.

Thanks for helping the Health Wagon
because they helped me go to the dentist.

The dentist cleaned my teeth and showed me how to brush them better. It did not hurt, and the lady was nice. When I was done, I got to play a game and pick a prize.

I picked a stuffed bunny!

Thanks for helping my teeth stay healthy!

From,

Isley



# Health Wagon **Expanding Offerings for** Mental Health Conditions

During the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, Health Wagon providers trekked into rural areas to treat not only physical ailments, but also to take care of those with mental health problems.

While the disaster caused many people to struggle with their emotional wellness, it also shone a spotlight on mental health conditions that residents of our region face every day. Whether it's anxiety, depression, or a substance use disorder, Health Wagon caregivers have the skills and supplies needed to improve patients' quality of life.

Leandra Stanley, PMHNP-BC, is the behavioral health provider for the Health Wagon. She offers or helps patients access mental health screenings and treatment, psychological counseling, and substance use and opioid use disorder counseling.

Stanley and Cara Robinson, FNP, also offer medication-assisted treatment (injectable Sublocade) to help those with substance use disorders get healthy with a low risk of relapse.

In addition, the Health Wagon offers behavioral health and psychiatry clinics throughout the year as part of our routine outreach events.

All of these services are available through partnerships with Karen S. Rheuban Center for Telehealth, the Maven Project, VMAP, and others. These collaborations are helping the Health Wagon continue to grow the mental health component of the organization's health care offerings.

# 20+ Years of Advancing Mental & Behavioral Health



## Tele-Psychiatry & Counseling Launched

Partnered with UVA Center for Telehealth to provide remote psychiatric care, improving mental health access in Southwest Virginia.



## Radford University Counseling Partnership

Integrated counseling students into services, expanding therapy access while providing hands-on training.



## Substance Use Disorder (SUD) & MAT Program

Dr. Ben Carey, MD collaborated with Dr. R. Lawrence Merkel, MD (an addiction specialist with UVA), and additional partners to launch a Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) program for opioid and substance use disorders. Hired a Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC) and Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) to enhance care.



### Mental Health Workforce Expansion

Hired a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner for evaluations, medication management, and therapy. Added a Peer Recovery Support Specialist for mentorship in addiction



# Strengthening Behavioral Health Partnerships

Karen S. Rheuban Center for Telehealth: Continued remote psychiatric care.

VMAP (Virginia Mental Health Access Program): Expanded pediatric mental health access.

VTHMI (Virginia Telemental Health Initiative): Broadened tele-mental health services.

MAVEN Project: Enhanced mental health training for healthcare professionals.



## Mark UVA Health









Clockwise from left: Dr. Ben Carey, MD, Dr. Teresa Owens Tyson, DNP, FNP-BC, Dr. Paula Hill-Collins, DNP, FNP-BC, and Dr. Mark Handy, MD provide medical care to Southwest Virginia residents after Hurricane Helene.

# Faith on the Frontlines in Catastrophic Times

In the wake of Hurricane Helene in September 2024, Southwest Virginia grappled with severe flooding, road washouts, and displaced residents.

The Health Wagon swiftly responded to the hardest-hit areas, including Damascus and Haysi. Equipped with the latest satellite technology, our medical professionals overcame storm-related communication barriers to provide essential care.

Our dedicated healthcare team conducted doorto-door visits in flood-ravaged neighborhoods, providing crucial medical care including pulmonary tests, chest X-rays, and vaccinations such as tetanus, hepatitis A, flu, and COVID-19. We coordinated with pharmacies to replace lost

medications and delivered oxygen tanks to those stranded by washed-out roads.

Dr. Carey and his psychiatric team offered mental health services and coping strategies to residents, including those with pre-existing PTSD, who were deeply distressed by the flood's trauma. Beyond medical care, we distributed emergency supplies like antibacterial spray, clothing, and toiletries to assist in recovery and maintain hygiene.

Our relief efforts were made possible thanks to the generosity of partners like CVS Pharmacy, Ballard Urgent Care, Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief, Dr. Smiddy, Mennonite Women's Ministry, local churches, and many more who stepped up to help. Together, these organizations worked to address the full scope

of recovery needs, ensuring comprehensive care for the residents of Damascus.







# High-Speed Telehealth in Rural Virginia

In 2024, the Health Wagon and the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority brought satellite internet to rural Southwest Virginia.

This technology enables virtual check-ups and consultations from home, reduces travel, and eliminates communication dead zones, improving emergency responses.

For instance, during Hurricane Helene, we facilitated real-time patient updates, helping doctors deliver prompt, life-saving care.

Remote tools like TytoCare's Home Smart Clinic, expand access to Al-powered health check-ups and virtual doctor visits. Looking ahead, we plan to integrate Al health screenings and dronedelivered medications.

Thanks to ongoing support from our partners, we're breaking barriers and shaping the future of rural healthcare!





# 10 Years Since the "Kitty Hawk Moment" for Medical Drones

History was made nearly a decade ago in Wise, Va., when first FAA-approved drone delivery in the U.S. took place, allowing medications to be air-dropped at the Remote Area Medical (RAM) outreach event.

The Flirtey F3.0 Hexacopter carried medicine from Lonesome Pine Airport to nearby fairgrounds—an effort now widely referred to as the "Kitty Hawk Moment" for the drone industry.

This initiative, led by RAM founder Stan Brock and Health Wagon CEO Dr. Teresa Tyson, DNP, FNP-BC, involved partnership with Flirtey, the NASA Langley Research Center, Virginia Tech's Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science, the Business and Economic Development Office of Wise County, the Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership, and the Appalachian College of Pharmacy, among others.

As we approach the 10-year anniversary of this milestone, we're proud to have played a role in redefining what's possible in rural healthcare delivery.

Today, the drone is on display at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, a permanent reminder that innovation can—and did—take flight in Southwest Virginia.



# Short Film Highlights the Health Wagon

If Dreams Were Lightning is a powerful documentary that shines a light on the rural healthcare crisis in Appalachia through the lens of patients and providers fighting for access to care. Featuring the compassionate work of The Health Wagon, this film brings honesty, emotional depth, and an urgent call to action about what it means to live without basic medical services in America.

# Why everyone should see it:

This film is more than a documentary—it's a wakeup call. It captures the resilience of underserved communities and the life-saving impact of grassroots healthcare. If Dreams Were Lightning will move your heart, challenge your perspective, and inspire you to care more deeply about healthcare equity. The ending is gripping, raw, and emotionally charged.





# CJ Ratliff Named to 40 Under Forty

Christopher Jackie "CJ" Ratliff understands what it means to fight for a chance—because he's lived it.

That same grit and empathy now fuel his work as supervising nurse practitioner at The Health Wagon. Before stepping into this role, his journey was marked by humble beginnings and the challenges of living with Asperger's. He worked as a grocery clerk and maintenance worker while pursuing his nursing education, ultimately earning multiple degrees through determination and hard work.

Since joining us in 2019, Ratliff has played a key role in delivering care to the underserved communities he calls home. He leads our mobile clinics, delivering essential services throughout Southwest Virginia and Eastern Kentucky. CJ rose to the challenge during the region's devastating floods, delivering care when it was needed most.

He received this award in recognition of his impact as a rising leader in healthcare and service to community.

# 25+ YEARS OF GROUNDBREAKING OUTREACH & AMAZING CARE

From Remote Area Medical (RAM) Wise County to Move Mountains Medical Mission: A National Model of Compassionate Outreach

What began as the region's first Remote Area Medical (RAM) Wise County event has grown into the Move Mountains Medical Mission (M7)—in the early days it quickly became the largest free health outreach of its kind in the United States.

For more than two decades, the Health Wagon has led this transformative event, which has garnered international attention, attracted even presidential candidates, and served as a national example of what community-driven healthcare can achieve.

At our 20th anniversary, we proudly marked a historic milestone: 100,000 patients served—a testament to the power of compassion, collaboration, and commitment. Each year, thousands receive free or low-cost medical, dental, and vision services from caring professionals, along with diagnostic services, lab services, specialty care, food boxes, and so much more.

M7 is more than a clinic—it is a beacon of hope. The Health Wagon continues to host the flagship annual M7 outreach and smaller satellite Mini M7 events throughout the year to meet the continuing healthcare needs of Southwest Virginia.

Everyone has a place in this mission. Whether you're part of a medical team, a church, an organization, a club or an individual with a heart to serve, your support is essential and deeply appreciated.

Scan the QR code to learn more and fill out our volunteer interest form. Together, we can continue to move mountains for those in need.



























Davey Meade

# 4th Annual Davey's Shuffle a Huge Success

The Health Wagon's 4th Annual Davey's Back-to-School Shuffle welcomed a record crowd of more

than 2,000 people in just four short hours.

Held August 1, the event provided 1,200 backpacks filled with essential school supplies to ensure children have the tools they need for academic success.

Initially focused on school supplies, Davey's Shuffle now expands each year to offer additional resources such as clothing and food boxes for the whole community. Raffle prizes added excitement, with lucky participants taking home drones, toys, bikes, and gift cards.

"Davey's Shuffle honors my son David, whose joyful, giving spirit lives on in every backpack—helping kids start school with dignity, confidence, and a whole lot of love."

-Dr. Paula Hill-Collins, DNP, FNP-BC, PPCNP, FAANP

Thanks to support from volunteers, local businesses, and sponsors, including the United Breast Cancer Foundation, more than \$110,000 in goods were donated. Additionally, Medicaid/FAMIS eligibility screenings were provided through a Virginia Health Care Foundation grant, helping families access essential health insurance coverage.

It was a joyful day of giving and celebration, honoring David "Davey" Meade, the Health Wagon's late development director, who devoted his life to community outreach. Events like this reflect our commitment to addressing social determinants of health and fostering a supportive, healthy environment. Davey's Shuffle by the numbers

200+ 🕎



household items

1,200 backpacks

1,500+1 clothing items

300+

pairs of shoes

20 % bicycles to dance

contest winners



Various toiletry items, hygiene products, and baby essentials

# **Clinic Expands** Free and Affordable **Dental Health Services**

As the region's first free clinic of its kind, the Owens and Hill Dental **Health Clinic in Wise County offers** a wide range of dental services to uninsured and Medicaid patients.

#### Services include:

- Exams, cleanings, fillings, and extractions
- Dentures, partials, root canals, and crowns
- Oral cancer screenings for adults
- School-based preventative education

Enhancing our mobile dental unit's offerings, the state of the art clinic provides year-round care and is equipped with:

- Negative pressure environments
- A modern teaching classroom with 10 exam chairs
- Sterilization facilities
- An in-house denture lab
- 3D printing of nightguards and dentures, and same-day crown milling

Additionally, the clinic supports the next generation of dental professionals through clinic practicums, offering:

- Hands-on experience in treating underserved populations
- Development of practical skills
- · Cultivation of a workforce committed to expanding access to quality dental care.

See the mission in action with a virtual tour, and reach out if you're inspired to get involved.





## Supporters Who Make It Possible

- Debra K. Howe Charitable Trust—a cornerstone of our growth, helping build and sustain our dental clinic
- Rapha Foundation—gifted a panoramic X-ray that's now central to our diagnostics
- · Room Naming Campaign Donors—forever part of our clinic's story
- Benevolent supporters who quietly sustain our work, day after day

This year, several new donors joined our mission to provide compassionate, no-cost dental care to those in need. Whether you gave once, sponsored a room, or support us monthly—you are the reason we can keep going. And there's always room for more to join us.

# Dental health by the numbers

8,594

total procedures

dentures

**197 §** 

emergency dental visits 452 嵾

oral surgery procedures

# Dr. Hammons Carries on a Legacy of Care Through **Pharmacy Services**

As a "homegrown pharmacist," as she calls herself. Jennifer Hammons. PharmD, is continuing a long legacy of care started by a group of nuns seven decades ago.

Named in honor of the former St. Mary's Hospital in Norton, Va.—founded by three Catholic sisters—the new St. Mary's Faith Pharmacy is led by Jennifer Hammons, Director of Pharmacy Services for the Health Wagon.

Encouraged by Health Wagon's Dr. Teresa Owens Tyson, DNP, FNP-BC, and Dr. Paula Hill-Collins, DNP, FNP-BC, Hammons earned her PharmD from Appalachian College of Pharmacy in 2018, completed her clinicals at the Health Wagon, and recently received her Doctor of Public Health from the same school—furthering her mission to provide excellent care to Health Wagon patients. She always knew the organization was her home and dreamed of serving there.

She also manages St. Mary's Faith Pharmacy, Southwest Virginia's first free and charitable pharmacy, offering services like diabetes education, preventive screenings, weight loss therapy, and radon testing.

Over the past 17 years, The Pharmacy Connect Program—offered in partnership with Mountain Empire Older Citizens and the Virginia Health Care Foundation—has provided more than \$20 million in brand-name medications to those in need. The opening of our pharmacy is a natural evolution of the success of this program

Hammons notes, "Access to life-changing medications like those for behavioral health disorders and insulinfor diabetes allow our patients to get back to work and have a better quality of life."



Pharmacy services by the numbers

\$23.2 million **3** 

in medications provided to patients since launching the program 20 years ago

353



total Rx ordered through The Pharmacy Connect in 2024

> 106 unique patients in 2024

384 total consults in 2024





# Partnerships Allow Free **Eye Disease Screenings** at Mobile Clinics

Last fall, the Health Wagon partnered with Dr. Ian McWherter, OD, and Dr. Cliff Caudill, OD, from the University of Pikeville Kentucky College of Optometry to conduct free preventative eye screenings across multiple locations.

These screenings were part of the Donnie Rife Mobile Vision Clinics, named in honor of Donnie Rife, a dedicated Health Wagon volunteer and Lions Club member who championed eye care for the uninsured and underinsured. Mobile units play a vital role in decreasing vision loss by helping to diagnose and treat eye disease in underserved areas.

The clinics focused on early detection of conditions such as macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and other eye diseases. If issues were identified, Health Wagon assisted patients in accessing the necessary resources for further care.

# **Bluegrass Concert Raises Funds for Flood Relief**

An unforgettable evening of bluegrass and old-time music at the legendary Carter Family Fold in Hiltons, Va., supported the Health Wagon's flood relief efforts across Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

Held on November 2, 2024, the benefit concert featured the Reedy Creek Bluegrass Band, along with the DCB Bluegrass Band, uniting the community in support of those impacted by Hurricane Helene.

Dr. Joe Smiddy, not only our pulmonologist and medical director but also a talented guitarist and vocalist, performed with Reedy Creek Bluegrass Band. Dr. Smiddy works closely with the Carter Family Fold.

All proceeds from ticket sales and donations directly supported the flood victims, providing essential resources and assistance. Attendees also donated items like bottled water, canned goods, blankets, and coats.

# Our Cervices



## **Primary/Preventive Care**

Acute Disease Management

After-Hours Clinics

Chronic Disease Management

Medical Therapy Management

Medication-Assisted Treatment (Injectable

Sublocade to reduce diversion)

Medicare and Medicaid Enrollment

Sports Physical Assessments

Annual Physical Assessments

COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination Clinics

Pneumococcal Vaccines

Diabetes Education

CDL Certification

Influenza Vaccine Clinics

Intravenous Infusion Therapies



## **Specialty Care and Diagnostics**

Bone Density Screenings

Behavioral Health Clinics

Cancer Screening Clinics (Cystoscopy, Mammography, Pap Smears, Lung Screenings)

Cardiovascular Disease Management

Colposcopy Clinics

Dermatology Clinics

Echocardiogram Clinics

Endocrinology Clinics

Hepatitis C Clinics

Lab Services

Nephrology Clinics

Ostomy Clinics

Pharmacy Connect and Medication Assistance

**Podiatry Clinics** 

Pre-Op and Post-Op Surgery Clinics

Psychiatry Clinics

Psychological Counseling

Pulmonary Clinics

Referrals and Follow-Up Systems

Skin Cancer Screenings

Telemedicine Clinics (Cardiology, Colposcopy, Gastroenterology, Nephrology, Pain Management, and Primary Care)

Dermatology Services Diagnostic Services



## Dental, Vision, Auditory

Ophthalmology

Optometry

Eyeglasses (Fabrication)

Dental Care (fillings, extractions, crowns, root canals)

Preventative Dental Care

**Periodontics** 

Denture Fabrication

Orthodontics

Oral Cancer Screening

Dentures (3D Printing)

Night Guards

Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) Clinics

Hearing Aid Assistance



## **Social Support**

Transportation Assistance

Pastoral Care

Referrals and Follow-Up Systems

HIV/AIDS Clinics

Nutrition Counseling

Counseling Services (Family, Marital, Trauma-Informed, or General)

Mobile Crisis and Disaster Response



# **Population Health and Outreach**

"Move Mountains Medical Missions". also known at M7 Clinics

Veterinary and Rabies Immunizations

Innovative Readiness Training Event

Davey's Shuffle Back to School Outreach Event

Health Fairs throughout the Year (Partners with ETSU)

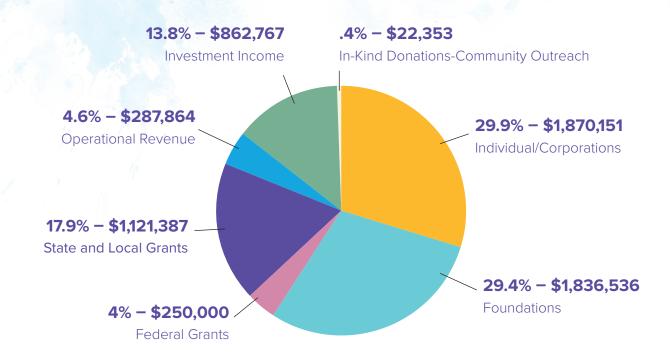
Give Kids a Smile Pediatric Dental Clinic

International Medical/Dental Outreach (Belize Mission Trip)

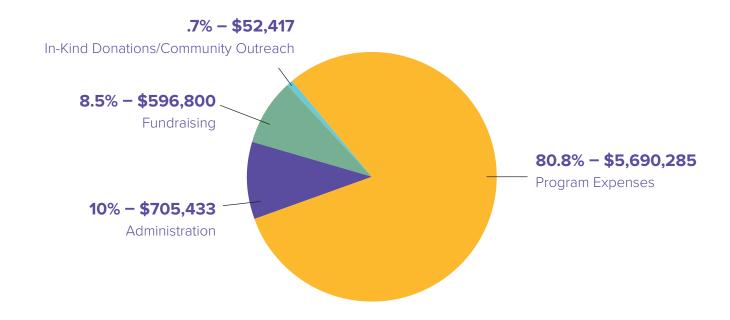
# Your financial gifts help make everything possible!

Your support has been strong, but as demand grows and services expand, the Health Wagon's costs continue to rise. With more people losing access to care, your continued generosity is critical. You help provide essential health services, ensuring no one in our region is left without the care they deserve.

# 2024 FUNDS RAISED: **\$6,251,058**



2024 EXPENSES: **\$7,044,935** 



# Vital Stats

Service Site Statistics: Sister Bernie Kenny M.M.M. Clinic, Smiddy Clinic, Owens & Hill Dental Health Clinic, St. Mary's Faith Pharmacy, St. Mary's Clinic and Mobile Clinics

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28,332	8,443	454
total patient visits	unique patients	eye exams and custom eyeglasses provided
449	<b>370</b>	<b>₽E</b> \$1,997,615
total after-hours clinic visits	unique after-hours clinic patients	total value of medications dispensed through St. Mary's Faith Pharmacy





As I reflect on our accomplishments in 2024, I'm reminded of how much more we aim to accomplish and the growing number of people who need our care.

We're always strategically looking ahead, continually innovating to further our mission and expand the services we offer. I am excited to share our vision for the next three to five years, highlighting several initiatives—some already underway and others dependent on our valuable partnerships.

Exciting strategic initiatives we're working on include:

- Expanding access to cancer care with mobile lung screenings and addressing barriers to ensure everyone has access to prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship.
- Enhancing mental health services with psychiatric nurse practitioners and a mobile mental health unit.
- Increasing access to essential care with mobile surgical units, pediatric audiology screenings, and special needs dental services.
- Boosting telehealth by bringing internet to Southwest Virginia's most remote communities.
- Improving disaster preparedness with emergency relief drop boxes across the region.
- Launching mobile vet clinics for rabies shots and pet therapy, recognizing the importance of the human-animal bond.
- Expanding vision care through cataract surgery clinics.
- Supporting replication of our Integrated Comprehensive Care Collective (ICCC) model in other communities.

Thanks to your generous support and the help of our amazing partners, we can continue making lifesaving care accessible to those who need it most. You are the heart of the Health Wagon's mission, and your support is more critical than ever. We are so grateful for you!

Sincerely,

Dr. Teresa Owens Tyson, DNP, FNP-BC

President and CEO



# How You Can Help

Your generosity fuels our mission to continue offering comprehensive, integrated care to our communities.

#### Make a Donation

#### Donate Online

Visit thehealthwagon.org/driventocare or scan the QR code.





#### **Donate by Mail**

St. Mary's Health Wagon P.O. Box 7070 Wise, VA 24293

# **Donate by phone**

Call (276) 337-6848

#### Leave a Gift in Your Will

Follow in the footprints of Sister Bernie and give to the Sister Bernie Legacy Fund. A gift in your will to the Health Wagon will provide:

- Tens of thousands of health care provider visits to deserving people each year
- Access to medical specialists and 65 specialty programs
- Training for medical and nursing students
- Job opportunities in the region
- · Access to medical care through mobile units, stand-alone clinics, and telehealth
- Vision and dental care
- Health care at no cost for deserving people

Learn more about planned giving, donating through an IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution, stocks, and gifts outside of wills at thehealthwagon.org/legacy.

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The information presented in this gratitude report is accurate to the best of our knowledge and based on data available at the time of publication. Every effort has been made to ensure the reliability and completeness of the information contained herein. The Health Wagon reserves the right to make changes and updates to the information as needed

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A portion of design services for this report were provided as an

