

ADVANCING HEALTH...



CARING FOR PEOPLE

A **YEAR-IN-REVIEW** FOR
DONORS AND FRIENDS
OF **ASPIRUS HEALTH
FOUNDATION**



DONOR SUPPORT BRINGS

Scalp Cooling

TECHNOLOGY TO ASPIRUS CANCER CENTER

Thanks to the generosity of donors, patients undergoing chemotherapy at Aspirus Cancer Center can now access innovative technology designed to help prevent hair loss during treatment.

The new technology works by lowering the temperature of the scalp. Patients wear a silicone cap attached to a machine that circulates cold water or gel. This causes blood vessels to constrict and reduces blood flow to the scalp, limiting the amount of chemotherapy that reaches hair follicles, so patients retain more of their natural hair.

By reducing chemotherapy-induced alopecia, the technology helps many patients maintain confidence and control over their appearance during an already difficult time.

“Losing hair is one of the most distressing side effects of chemotherapy for many of our patients,” said Brianna

Rogers, Manager of the Aspirus Cancer Center. “It’s more than just a physical change—it can be an emotional and psychological hurdle, as well. The ability to offer scalp cooling technology is a game-changer. It gives patients an opportunity to feel more like themselves, and we are incredibly grateful to our donors for helping to make this possible.”

With generous donor contributions, the Aspirus Health Foundation supported wiring updates to support the scalp cooling equipment, an additional infusion chair, patient amenities and call lights to assist the patients’ ability to communicate with staff.





It's heartwarming to witness patients feel empowered by the option to preserve their hair.

— Brianna Rogers
Manager of the Aspirus Cancer Center



“When we introduced this system, we immediately saw the positive impact it had,” Rogers added. “It’s heartwarming to witness patients feel empowered by the option to preserve their hair.”

In addition to this new technology, gifts to the Foundation have assisted cancer patients in many other ways over the past year. Donor gifts have been used to purchase aromatherapy patches to address nausea, educational materials, activities for patients and family members, port shirts for convenient access to a medical port without the need to fully undress, fanny packs to hold at-home infusion pumps, cryotherapy gloves and socks to reduce the risk of neuropathy, and many other important initiatives that can make a tremendous difference for patients while they are going through treatment.

The impact of donor generosity underscores Aspirus’ commitment to providing comprehensive, compassionate care that addresses patients’ physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

For information on how you can help support patients living with a cancer diagnosis, visit aspirus.org/foundation.

ASPIRUS HEALTH EMPLOYEES GIVE BACK TO ASPIRUS THROUGH DONATIONS

Every day, Aspirus employees make a difference in the lives of our patients and their families.

Through our annual Employee & Providing Giving Campaign, team members help strengthen our Mission and show our community that they believe in the work we do together to provide exceptional care.



\$90,000+
SHARED BY ASPIRUS
EMPLOYEES IN 2024



Last year, employees shared more than \$90,000 in personal gifts during the month-long campaign that kicked off March 1. Gifts were given to Aspirus Health Foundation to help care for our patients, many of whom are our friends, neighbors, and families. Donations have helped fund the greatest needs of our community hospitals, as well as advanced medical equipment, patient support services, and critical programs that improve health care accessibility.

Thanks to all who participated in the campaign, 2024 was a record fundraising year!

We are so grateful for our talented staff and all they do to support each other and the communities we serve.



NICU Cameras

PROVIDE COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE FOR PARENTS

Seven weeks before her due date, Makenzie Thurs's water broke as she was working in the birthing center at Aspirus Wausau Hospital.

Plans took an unexpected turn for first-time parents Makenzie and Tony. Doctors confirmed the baby was breech and needed to be delivered via emergency cesarean section.

Baby Tatum arrived at just 32 1/2 weeks, weighing 3lbs 10 ounces. Her premature birth prompted the need to transfer her to the Anya Marie Jackson Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Aspirus Wausau Hospital.

Thankfully, Tatum only had to spend two weeks in the NICU. For many families, though, this means they must balance the need to be with their newborn while also managing responsibilities at home, work and beyond. That separation adds an extra layer of stress during an already difficult and emotional time.

Thanks to the generous support of donors through the Aspirus Health Foundation, NICU cameras were recently upgraded with the latest NICVIEW secure system and installed in each of the NICU's 20 rooms to help families like the Thurs stay connected to their premature babies any

time—day or night—even when they can't physically be with them.

"We could watch over her and once we went home, Tony and I shared the link with our family," shared Makenzie. "Thanks to all of the wonderful NICU nurses, I never had a doubt that our baby was getting the absolute best care and I knew she was already loved in the NICU. I was able to connect with Tatum from the very beginning while I was still recovering as an in-patient. The cameras gave us an extra layer of trust and the added comfort of knowing she was okay."

Through NICVIEW, parents can feel connected with their newborn when separated, and relatives can see their new family member, offering a sense of reassurance and emotional support. For the care team, it enhances communication and collaboration with families, ensuring they are involved in every step of their baby's care journey.

These life-changing resources are only possible because of donor generosity. By supporting advancements like NICU cameras, our donors help provide peace of mind to parents while ensuring our tiniest patients receive the best possible care from the very beginning.

Learn more about how you can support our tiniest patients at [aspirus.org/foundation](https://www.aspirus.org/foundation).

DONOR SUPPORT BRINGS CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY TO ASPIRUS MEDFORD HOSPITAL & CLINICS

A new, non-invasive portable ultrasound device is now available to help health care providers diagnose and treat bladder-related conditions, bringing exceptional accuracy and intelligent workflow to the point of care. With this advanced technology, health care providers can quickly and efficiently assess bladder health, minimizing discomfort for patients and enhancing diagnostic precision. This contributes to better clinical outcomes and a smoother care journey for patients.

"We received our new Foundation-funded bladder scanner and are so extremely grateful," said Sam Frost, Aspirus Medford Clinic Operations and Nurse Manager. "In the past we have had to borrow equipment from another hospital department, so this will really improve our efficiencies in the clinic and patient satisfaction. Thank you!"

The funding for this device reflects the dedication of the Aspirus Health Foundation to support impactful projects that address critical health care needs. Community

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support and generous contributions make it possible to bring such transformative advancements to local care facilities.

Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics is excited to integrate this new technology into its services, further demonstrating its commitment to exceptional patient care. This initiative exemplifies the power of philanthropy in driving health care innovation and improving lives.

For more information about this project or to learn how you can support future initiatives, please contact the Aspirus Health Foundation.

Aspirus Medford Clinic staff, pictured with a new state-of-the-art bladder scanner.



Thank you!

A YEAR OF GROWTH AND GIVING:

Two Foundations Working Together

TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH CARE PHILANTHROPY

This past year marked an exciting new chapter for philanthropy within the communities we serve, as St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth, Minnesota, officially joined the Aspirus Health family.

The affiliation between Aspirus Health and St. Luke's Hospital expanded the Aspirus Health System to 19 hospitals and 130 outpatient locations, strengthening our ability to provide compassionate, high-quality care. Together, we are collaborating in clinical care and sharing medical knowledge and resources to improve care coordination, increase patient access, and advance overall quality of health care.

The affiliation also brought together two philanthropic foundations, both dedicated to advancing health care through the generosity of those who support our mission.

Aspirus Health Foundation and Aspirus St. Luke's Foundation are collaborating to create new opportunities for donors who wish to make a lasting impact on the health and well-being of others.

From expanding critical services to investing in patient support programs, philanthropy plays a crucial role in

shaping the future of health care. With this affiliation, our two Foundations are working side by side to ensure donor contributions continue to drive meaningful change where it's needed most.

Aspirus is making substantial investments across the regions we serve, including major strategic initiatives at St. Luke's, a much-needed expansion of Aspirus Wausau Hospital and a \$40 million renovation and expansion of Aspirus Merrill Hospital, along with many other vital advancements. Donors can play a key role in bringing these projects to life, ensuring that our hospitals and clinics remain at the forefront of patient-centered care.

Together we thrive, and with the support of our donors, we will grow, transform, and continue our mission of delivering exceptional health care. As we look ahead, we invite our communities to join us in shaping the future of health care philanthropy. By giving to the Aspirus Health Foundation and Aspirus St. Luke's Foundation, donors can make a direct and lasting impact on the well-being of families throughout our region. We are excited about the possibilities this partnership brings and grateful for the generosity that makes it all possible.

Kinsella Family Gift

ENHANCES BREAST BIOPSY TECHNOLOGY AT ASPIRUS STEVENS POINT HOSPITAL

Aspirus Health Foundation recently received a generous gift that will enhance biopsy technology at the Aspirus Stevens Point Hospital-Breast Care Center.

This innovative technology, made possible thanks to a generous gift from Joe and Cindy Kinsella of Almond, Wisconsin, will provide a more seamless and compassionate patient experience.

“This opportunity and breast biopsy technology hit home for us,” Cindy Kinsella said. “We just knew it was something we wanted to do and we are fortunate to be able to provide the funding necessary to help ensure quality, close-to-home health care.”

The new breast biopsy system replaces technology installed when the Breast Care Center opened in 2018 and will dramatically shorten what can be uncomfortable and anxious exam times for patients.

“With this new technology, radiologists can obtain real-time sample imaging and point-of-care biopsy verification without ever needing to leave the patient’s side,” said Tracy Rekowski, Aspirus Stevens Point Hospital Imaging Services Manager. “It provides exceptional image quality and integrated pain management, which can reduce patient discomfort, anxiety, stress and potential complications.”

The Aspirus Stevens Point Hospital Breast Care Center offers all-encompassing breast care, including mammograms, ultrasound, biopsy, pathology, surgery, reconstruction, radiation oncology and medical oncology all from one caring, collaborative team of experts.

“On behalf of our 1,000 regional employees and the almost 80,000 patients we serve annually in Stevens Point, Plover and surrounding communities, our heartfelt thank you to the Kinsellas,” said Aspirus Southeast WI Regional President Carrie Penovich. “The impact of their gift is truly incredible.”

The Kinsellas, who served as co-chairs of a capital campaign that built the Breast Care Center in 2018, have generously supported other important initiatives at Aspirus Stevens Point Hospital, including an Angel Fund that provides free breast cancer screenings and diagnostics to patients in the

Portage County community who meet financial need requirements.

“This gift for the Breast Care Center is transformative,” said Gregg Gutschow, Major Gifts Officer with Aspirus. “Our Aspirus Health Foundation Stevens Point Philanthropy Committee embraces the knowledge that we are ‘Better, Faster, Together,’ and thanks to families like the Kinsellas, we are.”



We just knew it was something we wanted to do and we are fortunate to be able to provide the funding necessary to help ensure quality, close-to-home health care.

— **Cindy Kinsella**
Almond, Wisconsin



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE 2024 Festival of Trees

A heartfelt thank you to our amazing community!

We are deeply grateful to all who contributed to this year's Festival of Trees—an event that was nothing short of magical, all thanks to you!

Held each year during Thanksgiving week, Festival of Trees is the signature fundraising event for our Aspirus Health Foundation. It embodies the spirit of giving, and this year was no exception. Thanks to your dedication and contributions, a record breaking \$288,100 was raised, surpassing last year's total by \$75,000.

Proceeds from this special event support compassionate care for patients and families through Aspirus Comfort Care & Hospice Services and the Aspirus Family House.



The success of the Festival of Trees would not have been possible without donor and volunteer support, dedication, and enthusiasm. Your generosity has touched the lives of many and will have a lasting impact on our community and those we serve. We are deeply grateful for your involvement and for helping us make the holiday season brighter for those in need.

Thank you to our presenting sponsor, Miron Construction, and our other incredible sponsors, talented designers, performers and donors, hardworking committee members and volunteers, enthusiastic attendees, and auction and raffle winners who made the annual Festival of Trees a huge success! Your passion and support make this event a true community celebration. You made 2024 a great year!

Get involved in 2025! Visit festivaloftrees@aspirus.org.

THE GIFT OF ASPIRUS FAMILY HOUSE: A PLACE OF COMFORT FOR LYNN

In times of crisis, having a place of refuge can make all the difference.

On September 16, 2024, while the Martin Family was enjoying a campfire at their seasonal site in Boulder Junction, WI, Lynn's husband suffered a heart attack.

Rick was rushed to Aspirus Woodruff Hospital and later transferred to Aspirus Wausau Hospital, where doctors determined he needed multiple bypass surgeries. He had two emergency procedures to place stents in his two most critical arteries.

Lynn spent 31 days at the Aspirus Family House before returning home to Portage, Wisconsin.

"We are so blessed to have a wonderful place to stay while Aspirus Hospital does a great job treating their

patients and family," shared Lynn during her stay. "Rick had a long up and down journey through the ICU, and testing, and inpatient rehab. Everyone here has gone out of their way to meet my needs through talking, kindness and caring. After stressful and exhausting days, I was able to come here and feel peace and comfort, share stories and supporting each other through love and comfort, and enjoy homemade meals. Thank you for all you do, and the wonderful people you all are."

When you give to the Aspirus Family House, you help others experience the same support and compassion during difficult times when needing to travel for care.



Lynn Martin
Portage, Wisconsin



IN 2024, OUR 10 BEDROOM
ASPIRUS FAMILY HOUSE:

PROVIDED
3,274
NIGHTS OF HOUSING

RECEIVED
851
REFERRALS

HOSTED
5,932
GUESTS

A LIFE RECLAIMED:

Jane's Journey

Doug and Jane Schwanz had long enjoyed the tranquility of their lake home in Presque Isle, Wisconsin, a haven since their retirement in 1999.

But on the night of September 5, 2022, their lives took an unexpected turn. After a day filled with laughter and plans for the future, Jane suffered a severe fall, resulting in a wound near her right eye and temple.

Doug immediately called 911 and an ambulance arrived swiftly, taking Jane to Aspirus Howard Young Medical Center in Woodruff. Watching her leave was a heart-wrenching moment for Doug, who followed behind through worsening weather. At the hospital, Jane's condition was critical, with a CT scan revealing bleeding on the brain. She was soon transferred to Aspirus Wausau Hospital due to the severity of her injuries.

Arriving at the hospital, Doug was met with the sight of Jane in the Medical Surgical Intensive Care Unit (MSICU), connected to life support and surrounded by dedicated medical staff. Doctors assured him the brain bleed was small and improving, but Jane's journey was far from over. Complications arose, including a severe lung infection and pneumonia. Specialists worked tirelessly to stabilize her, while nurses provided both medical care and emotional support for Doug.

On September 7, Doug and Jane marked their 59th wedding anniversary in the MSICU. Though far from the celebration they had envisioned, Doug found solace in the excellent care Jane was receiving. Slowly, she began

to recover. By October 12, she was deemed a candidate for rehabilitation. Over the following weeks, Jane worked diligently in therapy, relearning how to walk, talk, and manage daily tasks and move independently.

Nurses celebrated milestones with them, including Jane's 84th birthday, which they marked in the hospital. Each day brought new challenges, but also small victories that paved the way for her return home.

November 1 was discharge day—a bittersweet moment. Doug and Jane left the hospital, deeply grateful for the compassionate care that had saved Jane's life. They knew their journey was far from over; one of her physicians had aptly described her recovery as a marathon, not a sprint.

In the months that followed, Jane continued

to regain her independence, participating in therapy sessions and embracing daily exercises. By September 2023, she and Doug celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with a quiet dinner, a testament to resilience and enduring love.

In gratitude for the life-changing care Jane received, Doug and Jane made a heartfelt donation to the MSICU and Rehab Unit at Aspirus Wausau Hospital, wanting to support other families facing similar challenges and to honor the exceptional team that gave them back their life together.

"This team's effort was nothing short of a miracle," Doug reflected. "They gave Jane back her life and mine. For that, we will be forever thankful."



They gave Jane back her life and mine. For that, we will be forever thankful.

— Doug Schwanz
Presque Isle, Wisconsin



TRANSFORMING HEALTH CARE IN MERRILL FOR

Future Generations

In Spring 2024, Aspirus Health announced a \$40 million planned renovation and expansion project that will reshape Aspirus Merrill Hospital and redefine how we care for our community.

This transformative initiative is designed to:

- Expand our facilities to better serve a growing patient population.
- Modernize our technology, keeping us at the forefront of medical innovation.
- Create state-of-the-art treatment areas and healing environments to enhance patient experiences.
- Streamline operations to provide faster and more efficient care.

Investing in the Health of Merrill

The \$40 million expansion follows more than \$2 million in improvements made to the hospital in 2022 and 2023. These enhancements represent our steadfast commitment to ensuring high-quality, accessible health care for all residents. Key improvements include:

- Revitalized main entrance, emergency department, and same-day surgery entrances.
- Updated heating and cooling systems.
- New internal communications system to improve coordination and responsiveness.

- State-of-the-art telemetry monitors to enhance patient care and safety.
- New nurse call system to strengthen communication between patients and caregivers.
- New equipment in surgery, emergency services, physical therapy, and lab.



With your partnership, we can continue to provide world-class care, close to home, allowing patients the comfort of having family and friends nearby. Together, we will build a brighter, healthier future for all.

- Advanced diagnostic tools, including ultrasound and upgraded digital radiography technology.
- New surgical sterilizer and washer to uphold the highest standards of cleanliness and infection prevention.

Transforming Healthcare for Future Generations

For nearly 100 years, Aspirus Merrill Hospital has been at the heart of the community's health and wellness. Our planned \$40 million expansion represents our promise to

ensure that legacy continues for generations to come.

As we close this chapter and look to the year ahead, we do so with excitement and determination to make an even greater difference in the lives of the people we serve. Together, we are building a healthier future. Thank you for being part of our journey.

For information on how you can help support the Merrill Hospital renovation and expansion, visit [aspirus.org/foundation](https://www.aspirus.org/foundation).

YOUR GIFTS HAVE HELPED US FUND:



Wireless Fetal Monitor Systems that allow health care providers at Aspirus Stevens Point Hospital to continuously track a baby’s heart rate during pregnancy and labor, while enabling the pregnant mother-to-be greater freedom of movement during labor due to a lack of wires. The monitors provide crucial information about the baby’s well-being, enabling early detection of potential complications and allowing for timely interventions in high-risk pregnancies.



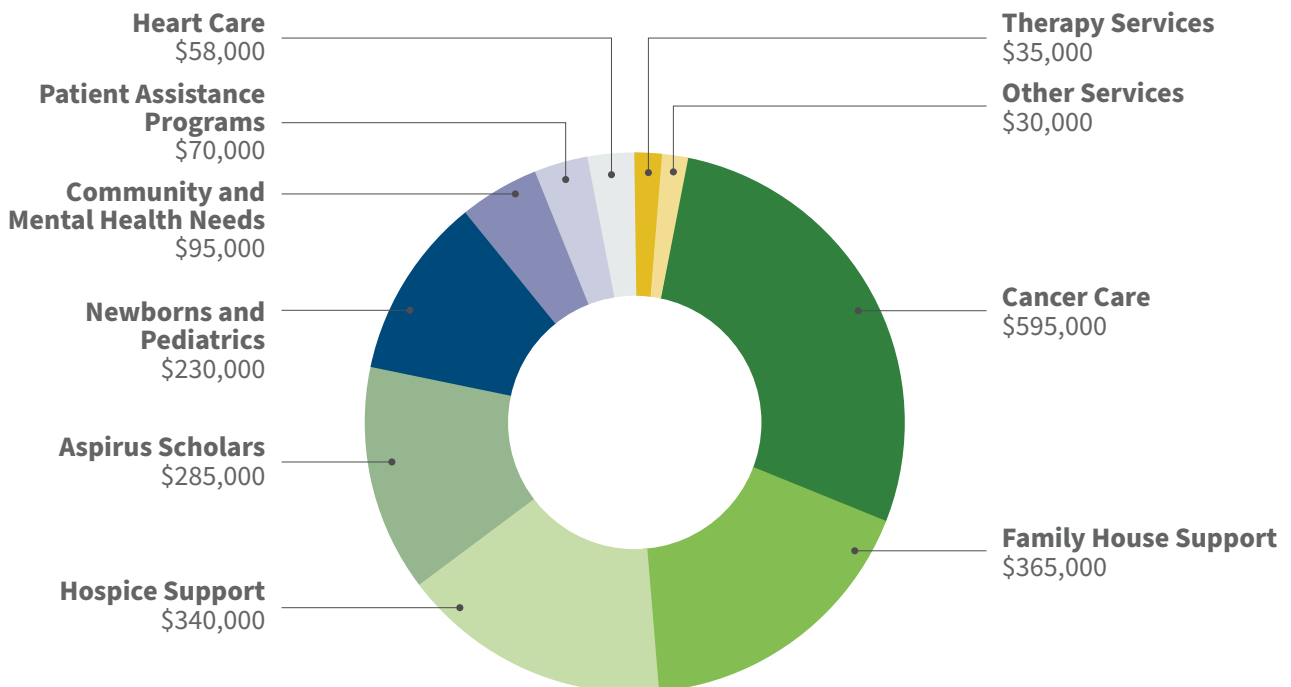
A NICU transporter, which safely transfers newborns — especially premature babies or those with medical complications — to the Anya Marie Jackson Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Aspirus Wausau Hospital.



Support for patients and families who utilize the **Aspirus Family House**, ensuring a safe, affordable place to stay when traveling to Wausau for specialty or emergency care. Accommodating guests from across Wisconsin, as well as neighboring states, the Family House opened its doors in 2020 and is celebrating its fifth anniversary in 2025.

\$2M+

Aspirus Health Foundation granted **more than \$2 million** to support Aspirus Health and community health initiatives, funding needed technology and critical programs and services that benefit our patients.



DONOR SUPPORT ENSURES

Compassionate

END-OF-LIFE CARE AT ASPIRUS HOSPICE HOUSE

For many patients facing the final stages of life, the Aspirus Hospice House is more than just a place to receive care—it is a sanctuary of peace, dignity, and comfort.

Through the generosity of donors, Aspirus Health Foundation provides funding for community bedrooms at the Hospice House, ensuring patients without financial means can still receive the compassionate, high-quality end-of-life care they deserve.

With eight private bedrooms, the Hospice House offers a home-like environment where patients and their families can spend meaningful time together in a setting designed for comfort and support. In the past year, Aspirus Health Foundation has provided assistance to more patients than ever before, with as many as six of the eight rooms at a time occupied by patients receiving support through donor gifts that totaled more than \$200,000.

“This incredible generosity allows us to care for patients who may have no other option,” said Carrie Hawro, Hospice Director at Aspirus. “The financial burden of end-of-life care should never stand in the way of dignity and comfort. Because of our donors,

patients and their families can focus on what truly matters—spending their remaining time together in comfort and peace. We are beyond grateful for the gifts that make this possible.”

The Aspirus Hospice House provides round-the-clock

medical care, pain management, and emotional and spiritual support, ensuring that each patient’s final days are met with dignity and respect. The need for this support continues to grow, and donor generosity is making a greater impact than ever before.

“Helping patients at such a vulnerable time is one of the most meaningful ways we can make a difference in our community,” said Lanna Scannell, Aspirus Vice President of System Philanthropy. “Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we have the privilege to help offer this compassionate support, ensuring patients receive

care and comfort when they need it most.”

Make a gift to support end-of-life care at [aspirus.org/foundation](https://www.aspirus.org/foundation).



The financial burden of end-of-life care should never stand in the way of dignity and comfort.

— Carrie Hawro
Aspirus Hospice Director



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HEALTH FOUNDATION
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LEAVE A LASTING IMPACT

Your generosity can extend beyond today and shape the future of health care in your community. By including a legacy gift in your Will or estate plan, you can support compassionate care and critical programs for generations to come.

Legacy gifts ensure that Aspirus continues to provide life-changing services to those in need. Another impactful way to give is through your IRA's Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). Making a charitable gift from your IRA can be a tax-smart way to support the programs and services that matter most to you, while directly benefiting patients in need.



**We make a living by what we
get, but we make a life by
what we give.**



— Winston Churchill

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ASPIRUS HEALTH FOUNDATION OR TO MAKE A DONATION:

CALL



715.847.2470

MAIL



**Aspirus Health Foundation
333 Pine Ridge Blvd.
Wausau, WI 54401**

ONLINE



aspirus.org/foundation