



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER: OUR VISION FOR PHELPS HEALTH AND OUR COMMUNITY

By Jason Shenefield, President and CEO, Phelps Health

Over the past several months, I've had the privilege of sharing a series of articles exploring some of the biggest questions and challenges in healthcare today—from workforce shortages and the cost of care to regulations and reimbursement.

Each of these topics is complex, and while they affect hospitals everywhere, they take on special meaning in communities like ours. Here in south-central Missouri, Phelps Health isn't just a healthcare provider—we're part of the fabric of the region. We care for our neighbors, our teachers, our first responders, our families.

That's why I wanted to take the time to explain not just what we do, but why we do it and how deeply we care about doing it well.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED TOGETHER

Throughout this series, I've shared how healthcare is shaped by factors both inside and outside our control:

- The national shortage of doctors, nurses and skilled clinical staff that affects access to care
- The rising costs of labor, supplies and technology, and how Phelps Health is working to make care more affordable through innovations like Phelps Health Preferred, our direct-to-employer insurance program
- The complex web of regulations that, while designed to protect patients, can also add layers of administrative burden to the system

These challenges are real—and we face them every day. But what I hope you've taken away from this series is that we are not standing still.

We're finding ways to innovate, to listen and to lead. We're finding ways to make healthcare work better for the people it was always meant to serve—you.

OUR GOAL: HEALTHIER PEOPLE, STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Our mission at Phelps Health is to provide high-quality, accessible healthcare. But today, that means more than simply treating illness. It means addressing the broader needs that shape health—prevention, education, access and affordability. That's why we're investing in:

- Local partnerships that connect healthcare with schools, employers and community organizations
- Technology and digital health tools that make care more convenient, especially for those who live farther from our main campus
- Workforce development programs that help grow the next generation of healthcare professionals right here at home
- Preventive care and wellness initiatives that help patients stay healthier, reducing the need for emergency or inpatient care



In short, we want to be more than the place you turn to when you're sick. We want to be your partner in lifelong health—a trusted resource you can count on to help you live better, not just longer.

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

No hospital can do this work alone. Healthcare is a shared responsibility—between hospitals, patients, employers, schools and policymakers.

That's why our approach moving forward is rooted in partnership. Whether it's working with local businesses to lower healthcare costs, collaborating with universities to bring medical talent to our region or joining forces with public health organizations to address issues like chronic disease and mental health, our focus is always on solutions that strengthen our community as a whole.

The conversations we've had through this article series are just the beginning. I want you to know that your feedback, your questions and your concerns matter. They help us improve and ensure we're always aligned with the needs of those we serve.

A WORD OF THANKS

To our patients: thank you for trusting us with your care. To our employees and providers: thank you for your compassion, skill and resilience. And to our community: thank you for standing with us as we navigate a healthcare landscape that continues to evolve.

We know the system isn't perfect. But I want you to know that we are working for you. Every decision we make at Phelps Health is guided by our commitment to deliver the best care possible, close to home, with integrity and heart.

LOOKING AHEAD

The future of healthcare will continue to change—but Phelps Health will continue to adapt, lead and serve.

Our goal is simple but powerful: a healthier community built on trust, collaboration and compassion.

As we move forward, I hope this series has helped you see not only the challenges we face, but also the hope, innovation and determination that drive us every day. Together, we can build a healthcare system—and a community—that works better for everyone.

About This Series

At Phelps Health, we know that while healthcare touches everyone in our region, the system behind it can feel complicated and confusing.

"Understanding the Realities of Healthcare" is a series of articles and podcasts that goes behind the scenes at Phelps Health to explain the pressures, decisions and changes shaping care today.

Created by Jason Shenefield, president and CEO of Phelps Health, this series explores topics like staffing, costs, regulations and innovation—and how they impact the patients and communities we serve.

We invite you to follow along, learn with us and help us build a future that delivers the care and compassion you've come to expect from Phelps Health.

Learn more at phelpshealth.org/realities-of-healthcare.