

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Health care is top priority

When the non-profit Pottstown Memorial Medical Center was sold to the for-profit Community Health Systems for \$80 million in 2003, the proceeds were used to create the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation. The Foundation gives out grants to promote healthy living in Pottstown and an area within a 10-mile radius of downtown Pottstown.



Commentary by  
Thomas Hylton

However, when Community Health Systems took over the hospital, it significantly decreased the charitable care it provided (to maximize the company's profits). In the first year after the sale, charity care at PMMC fell from

\$725,000 to just \$3,570.

In response, the Health and Wellness Foundation provided seed money to create Community Health and Dental Care in 2008, a federally qualified non-profit health center which provides medical services to thousands of Pottstown area residents based on their ability to pay. Community Health has locations in Lower Pottsgrove and the Coventry Mall.

Although the Foundation has given more funding to Community Health & Dental than any other entity — \$6.3 million — the medical provider has become self-sufficient, with a 2016-2017 budget of more than \$8 million. The last Foundation grant to Community Health — \$45,000 — was in 2015-2016.

The second largest recipient of

Health and Wellness Foundation funding is Creative Health Services, founded in 1957, with more than 5,000 clients annually, according to its website.

Creative Health provides primary health care and behavioral health care treatment, including mental illness, alcohol and drug abuse, stress, depression, and domestic violence. About 85 percent of its clients are Medicaid enrollees.

The only other provider of medical services to receive substantial funding from the Foundation — nearly \$400,000 since 2007 — is the Visiting Nurse Association.

*Next week: School districts and non-profits.*

**Pottstown Area Health and  
Wellness Foundation  
Total funds disbursed  
2004-2018**

**\$37,500,000**

**Funds given to Community  
Health & Dental Care  
2005-2016**

**\$6,260,915**

**Funds given to Creative  
Health Services  
2004-2017**

**\$3,002,151**

**NEW  
OFFICE —  
Community  
Health and Den-  
tal, founded in  
2008, opened its  
new office in the  
Coventry Mall in  
August, replac-  
ing a smaller  
facility in the  
Pottstown Busi-  
ness Campus.  
It has other of-  
fices in Lower  
Pottsgrove. The  
non-profit pro-  
vides affordable  
health care.**

