



Sisters Of Mercy
Services Corporation

The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas is an international community of Roman Catholic women vowed to serve people who suffer poverty, sickness and lack of education, with a special concern for women and children. In both innovative and traditional ways they address human needs through collaborative efforts in education, health care, housing and pastoral and social service.

Catherine McAuley established the first House of Mercy in Ireland in 1827 to serve the needs of homeless and abused young women who came from the farms of Ireland to work in Dublin, and children who lived in Dublin's slums. In 1831, Catherine founded the Sisters of Mercy as a new congregation of religious women in Dublin. The first United States mission was opened in 1843 in Pittsburgh. During the Civil War, three Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy from Charleston, South Carolina journeyed to Wilmington, North Carolina to nurse victims of yellow fever; joined by others, these Sisters eventually traveled to Belmont, North Carolina to open an academy for girls. They became affiliated with the Sisters of Mercy in 1913. In due course Belmont became the Motherhouse for the Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina, one of the 25 regional communities that now comprise the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas.

In the late 1800s, the Sisters of Mercy came to Asheville to open a school; they stayed for one year. In 1900, three Sisters returned to Asheville from Belmont to open an 18-bed tuberculosis sanatorium on French Broad Avenue. Thus began a 100-year presence of the Sisters in Western North Carolina that continues today.

The tuberculosis sanatorium was expanded several times, eventually moving to Biltmore Avenue where St. Joseph's Hospital stands today. In 1938, St. Joseph's Sanatorium was converted to a general medical hospital with a bed capacity of 110. Over the next 60 years, St. Joseph's Hospital continued to grow and prosper. However, after several years of negotiating, the Sisters of Mercy finalized the sale of St. Joseph's Hospital to Memorial Mission Medical Center on October 28, 1998, thus creating the Mission St. Joseph's Health System. As part of the agreement, the Sisters retained ownership of Sisters of Mercy Services Corporation, which oversees the operations of Sisters of Mercy Urgent Care, Inc., Mountain Health Services, Inc. and Mountain Health Contracting Services, Inc.

Over the years, many Sisters served the people of Western North Carolina at St. Joseph's Hospital, in schools, and in a number of other ministries. Today, three Sisters still reside in the convent on Biltmore Avenue and remain active in various ministries in the local community, with a continued emphasis on health care.

Last year approximately 250,000 patient visits/encounters took place at Sisters of Mercy Services Corporation healthcare facilities in North Carolina.

- **Sisters of Mercy Urgent Care** centers provide evaluation and treatment of non-life-threatening injuries and illnesses to the men, women and children of the region regardless of their ability to pay. The four Urgent Care centers serve more people than any other facility of their type in Western North Carolina, with over 67,000 patient visits last year. In keeping with the vow to serve those who suffer poverty and sickness, approximately 50 percent of Urgent Care patients received treatment for reduced fees or free of charge. Comprehensive, continuing medical care is now available to individuals and families by the family practice physicians at Mercy Family Care North. In addition, the Microcurrent Therapy program at Urgent Care South provides effective pain relief and promotes faster healing for patients suffering from acute and chronic sprains and strains, arthritis, tendonitis, bursitis and similar ailments.
- **Health Designs**, the Sisters' occupational medicine division, takes health care into the workplace. Health Designs engaged in over 161,000 occupational patient interactions last year, serving over 1,250 businesses and industries. The need for compassionate, respectful medical care and the devotion to the values of the Sisters of Mercy provides the primary motivation for Health Designs to remain involved in these activities.
- **ARP/Phoenix**, the Sisters' substance abuse program, has more sites and serves more people than any similar service in North Carolina—21 locations in 13 cities with more than 22,000 patient encounters last year. Through individual and group counseling, ARP/Phoenix helps men and women overcome their drug and alcohol addictions and lead more fulfilling lives.
- **Sisters of Mercy Thrift Store** provides high-quality, reasonably-priced merchandise to the local community. The proceeds from store sales go toward providing affordable health care to the people of Western North Carolina at our four Sisters of Mercy Urgent Care centers.
- **The McAuley Foundation** grants funding for Sisters of Mercy Services Corp. programs that offer affordable health care to the people of Western North Carolina, including the Compassionate Care Program.
- **Mountain Health Services, Inc.** is the general partner for the 445 Biltmore Center medical office building and provides management and general real estate services for Sisters of Mercy Services Corporation and 445 Biltmore Center.
- **Mountain Health Contracting Services, Inc.** provides general contracting services for the community-at-large.

The Sisters of Mercy have concluded a century of service to the people of Western North Carolina. And now, they look toward a new era, a second century in which they will continue to minister to those in need in accordance with their values—sacredness of life, human dignity, mercy, justice, service and excellence.

For more information about the Sisters of Mercy Western North Carolina ministries, please contact Sandra Bishop-Ray, Director of Marketing, at (828) 254-8826.