

# Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through our actions



Each year, on the third Monday in January, we celebrate the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. On this national holiday, we commemorate the life and legacy of this visionary leader who brought hope and healing to America when we needed it most.

Dr. King was a champion of racial justice, equality, forgiveness and reconciliation. He taught us that through nonviolence and service to one another, we can overcome the world's most pressing problems.

In the words of Martin Luther King Jr. -

***“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.  
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”***

Today, as we reflect back on Dr. King's life of service, may we also be inspired in our own Mission and our Values of compassion, respect, excellence, stewardship and community. As members of SSM Health, we are called to lead by example, providing a healing presence in our workplace and our communities. This is who we are.

SSM Health was founded by five sisters who arrived from Germany in 1872. They spoke very little English and came to this country with just \$5, and a heart for serving others, regardless of race or nationality. In 1933, they opened St. Mary's Infirmary, the nation's first Catholic hospital for African American patients, physicians and nurses.

## Continuing Dr. King's Legacy

Today, we actively work to train and recruit a diverse workforce who reflects the diverse population we serve. This includes **partnering with schools in underserved communities** to host job fairs and provide education about opportunities in health care. In the wake of the racial unrest that occurred in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014, SSM Health committed to placing more than a dozen young people from the Ferguson area in positions at SSM Health DePaul Hospital - St. Louis. We've worked to **mentor these individuals** in preparation for a career in the health care field. We've also made significant donations of time, money and other resources to help those who were and continue to be impacted in the community. As an organization, we also invest hundreds of millions of dollars each year in programs and services that **improve the health of our communities**. This includes providing free and reduced cost medications and health care services, preventive screenings and dental health care packages.

On a state and federal level, we strongly **advocate for important issues** including Medicaid expansion and increased funding for behavioral health services and the Children's Health Insurance Program. We work to **create more access** to compassionate and coordinated palliative care and for expansion of programs that cover our most vulnerable population - our children. In the last year, we began piloting a clinic that helps to ensure continuity of care for children in the foster care system.

Working together, we can make a difference in the lives of our patients, our communities and this country. Let us be the light that drives out the darkness, by **inspiring service, promoting justice, and embracing diversity** in those we work with and in those we serve.

Thank you for all you do,

Bill Thompson  
President/CEO

