

CUSTOMER STORY:

Obici Healthcare Foundation



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– Cathy Huband
Grants Manager
Obici Healthcare Foundation

As the opioid epidemic continues to spread throughout American communities, it is becoming far too common for law enforcement, emergency responders, family and friends to regularly witness the devastating effects of opioid abuse and overdose. Witnessing something like this – which has hit crisis levels across the country – on an individual level puts a face to the problem, but can also make people feel helpless, wonder where to turn, and what can be done to stop it. What will it take to end an epidemic that is affecting people from all walks of life? It takes the recognition that we can start somewhere, even with one small step. And it requires a belief that each life saved is an opportunity for a second chance. Unless you're living it yourself, it can be all too easy to think of big-picture problems like the rise of opioid addiction, the prevalence of disease, or the pains of poverty as faceless, sweeping issues that require mammoth investments to solve. If we think this way, the problems facing our communities may seem insurmountable. But what if we thought about it differently? What if, instead of one huge problem to tackle, we thought about this as many opportunities to take one step, however small, toward achieving change?

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This is exactly the mindset that the Obici Healthcare Foundation, a private health-focused organization based in Suffolk, Virginia, embraces in its work. The Obici Healthcare Foundation's mission strives to address the unmet needs of the medically indigent and uninsured and to support programs which prevent illness and disease – and the Foundation makes this mission personal.

Case in point: the Obici Healthcare Foundation made the decision to take one small step to prevent deaths from opioid overdose, with the belief that any life saved is a positive outcome. Cathy Huband, grants manager at the Obici Healthcare Foundation, sees the real-life outcomes of the organization's Community Engagement grants. "Earlier this year, we gave a Community Engagement grant to our local police to purchase Narcan, an FDA-approved prescription opiate antidote that blocks the effects of opioids and reverses the effects of overdose. Within weeks, our police force saved four people's lives by administering Narcan. Four people in our community were able to get another chance at life. That's a pretty strong return on investment."



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The Obici Healthcare Foundation funds many health-centered programs and projects that hinge on this mindset that each life saved or improved is a community victory. In addition to the Community Engagement grants, other programs are focused on the prevention and management of diabetes, a disease affecting many people across the Suffolk, Virginia area. "We place a strong emphasis on bringing healthcare and services to people where they need it," Cathy explains. "The free diabetes clinics we fund are incredibly well-attended– in fact, we've seen hundreds of people lined up around the block to attend events focused on dentistry, a key aspect of diabetes management. Have you ever seen 500 people looking forward to seeing a dentist? A dental check sounds like a small thing, but it has a big impact. In many ways, the grantees and programs we fund become the medical home for our neighbors across the community."

Where some of the Obici Healthcare Foundation's programs support creating medical homes for community members, others bring health-focused programs right to people's front doors. Cathy shares, "We work with our grantees to make health accessible and sustainable for the people served by our programs. As an example, we fund a program with Sentara Obici Hospital to provide guidance and health services to pregnant mothers and children through age 5. A program professional regularly visits the mother and children at their home to keep healthy living top of mind, helping with things like staying up-to-date with vaccinations and discussing nutrition. One of the amazing parts of this program is how it fosters a long-term, sustainable approach to a healthy life. We've received letters and emails of what a difference this has made in these families' lives. That's one of the best validations of outcomes that we could see."



Focusing on outcomes to enhance the health of their community

It's no small feat to provide such well-received and meaningful programs in a community, and the Obici Healthcare Foundation knows that one ingredient for success is collaboration with a variety of effective grantee partners. And this collaborative spirit is centered on the idea of establishing a shared vision for outcomes from the start of a grant. "Focusing on outcomes has had an impact on everything we do at the Obici Healthcare Foundation – and we believe this has helped our grantee partners to be even stronger as they approach their own work. A concept will come in, and we'll say, 'Have you thought about it this way?'" and we can help refine ideas with our grantees so we're all going down the right path," Cathy explains.



Flexible and efficient technology drives collaborative relationships with grantees

In her everyday work, Cathy sees the magic of combining an emphasis on defining and measuring outcomes with powerful grants management technology. "Blackbaud Grantmaking helps us keep the focus on outcomes at every point, from applications to reports to form libraries... There are always a lot of moving pieces in our work, so we need our technology to be flexible and efficient as we collaborate with our grantees and look to constantly revise and improve," Cathy says. "We encourage sustainability among our grantees – for example, we provide trainings and one-on-one services to elevate their proposal writing. We are always looking for ways to strengthen and empower our grantee partners so they can be as effective as possible, even after our particular grant is complete."

The Obici Healthcare Foundation recognizes the power of technology to foster that close collaboration with grantees and support the achievement of the outcomes they seek in their community. And you'd be hard-pressed to find a more enthusiastic user of grants management technology than Cathy Huband. "Technology absolutely helps us make a bigger difference in our community. Blackbaud Grantmaking enables us to keep our grantmaking process streamlined and it gives us a platform for incredible collaboration with our grantee partners. I love working in the system and continually expanding what it can do. With Blackbaud Grantmaking supporting our work, we can push ourselves and our partners to keep getting better every time with every program and every opportunity to make a difference."



This idea of taking every opportunity to make improvements and achieve positive outcomes is at the center of the Obici Healthcare Foundation's personal, sustainable approach to what it means to enhance the health of their community. That mission is evident every time a new family is supported, every time a person has the chance to take advantage of services to manage a chronic disease, and every time someone's life is saved from the brink. What the Obici Healthcare Foundation shows us is that every step in the right direction adds up to a healthier community, and every step, even if it seems small, is worth taking.