



## CASE STUDY

# Evangelical Community Hospital (ECH) Tackles Back-up Child Care Challenges for Employees Through Partnership with Patch Caregiving

Child care challenges can lead to issues affecting both employees and employers, like attendance, productivity, and job retention. Due to cost, availability, and shift hours, working families with young children often layer their child care solutions. When one of those solutions falls through, due to caregiver illness or child care center or school closures, parents are faced with hard decisions, including calling off work.

**The Need:** ECH's workforce of around 2000 employees is 80% female and an estimated 40% of its workforce are parents of young children. During employee listening sessions hosted by ECH's President/CEO, employees identified child care accessibility and affordability as major challenges affecting their personal and work life. Employees cited long waiting lists at child care centers and lack of back-up options as pain points that impact employee attendance, changes to work schedules or employment status, and turnover. Absenteeism, due to a lack of back-up care options for both clinical and non-clinical staff, can negatively impact Hospital operations, staff morale, and patient care.

**The Business Investment:** ECH, providing services to Union County and neighboring communities in rural Pennsylvania, understood that a multi-component approach was needed to help solve their employees' varied, child care challenges. Engaging a consultant through Creative Child Care Solutions (CCCS) was key to mapping out the current needs and opportunities within the existing, local child care landscape to design an ECH-specific strategy.



**The Innovation:** Guidance from Investments in Caring PA and support from CCCS helped prioritize filling the occasional and often unexpected need for back-up child care. Connection was made to Patch Caregiving, the first and only child care benefit designed for the frontline workforce, to co-design an onsite, drop-in child care program for the ECH workforce.



**How It's Done:** Together, ECH and Patch Caregiving launched an onsite, drop-in child care program, opening its doors in September, 2023. The child care program is open Mondays-Fridays, from 6am - 6pm and serves all ECH employees. The program has capacity for a maximum of five (5) children ages 2 to 12. Patch Caregiving took the lead in transforming vacant Hospital space, adhering to regulatory and permitting requirements, hiring local, experienced caregivers, and handling all advertising and enrollment. Now, when an ECH employee faces a last-minute or anticipated child care disruption, they can simply book care with Patch and drop their child off in the care room and pick them up whenever their shift is over.



**How It's Funded:** ECH subsidizes a portion of the costs and parents pay a tiered copayment based on their hourly rate of pay. Copayments are collected through payroll deduction to make it seamless for employees.



**The Impact:** Within the first four months of opening, Patch Caregiving has:

- Enrolled 60% of the eligible employee population
- Helped to avoid 70 parent absences from work and has served over 20 families
- Cared for kids 70% of the days the program is open
- Helped parents solve a variety of child care challenges, including school closures, caregiver vacations or illness, and last-minute work schedule changes



**What's Next?:** ECH continues to work with CCCS and a local child care provider to explore a near-site, employer subsidized option for quality, full-day child care services.

**Get Involved:** Most Pennsylvania employers want to help working families address child care needs, but few realize that resources are available to help. The Case Studies in Caring series explores award-winning business initiatives created with available resources and are custom-crafted to meet local child care needs for communities and workforces. To learn how your business can join the movement to invest in caring, contact the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission at [info@paeearlylearning.com](mailto:info@paeearlylearning.com) and find an online toolkit for businesses to support working families and child care at Investments in Caring PA, [www.investmentsincaringpa.com](http://www.investmentsincaringpa.com).