

AHP in the News
Diverse Health-Care Fundraising Found More Effective

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Well-rounded healthcare fundraising programs that support a variety of activities to raise money and devote time to maintaining major donors fare best, a new report says. Building a successful fundraising program always takes time, says the report, first in a series of studies from the new benchmarking service of the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy. Up-front investment will often not yield higher returns and lower costs for three to five years. The report, which examines fundraising efforts at nonprofit health-care facilities in 18 states in the U.S. and two provinces in Canada, also says major-giving and planned-giving programs are at the core of most successful fundraising success stories. High performers show a strong focus on high-return fundraising, and what the report calls "leanness": few employees, each entrusted with great responsibility in the groups' day-to-day operations. Yet fundraising is often a balancing act, the report says.

A strong focus on investment in programs that have lower-costs but yield higher returns should be moderated by a still-significant focus on programs that are more expensive but important in attracting new donors. This balance can also be achieved through a wide assortment of programming, including annual giving, special events, public support, major gifts and planned giving, the report says. The study says uncontrollable factors, such as geography, demographics and the size or structure of an organization, do not affect fundraising capabilities as much as previously believed. With the economy facing a possible recession, and with "heightened scrutiny of nonprofits by government agencies to justify their tax-exempt status," William McGinly, president and CEO of the Association Healthcare Philanthropy, says in a statement, "the gap continues to grow between hospitals' costs to treat uninsured and under-insured patients and reimbursements from public and private sources." Established in 1967, the Washington, D.C.-based Association for Healthcare Philanthropy counts among its members the directors of philanthropic programs in 2,200 U.S. nonprofit health care facilities.