



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: Nurse holding a baby in the neonatal intensive care unit of Norton Healthcare; Staff at Jewish Hospital; An Atria executive director with a resident; Humana headquarters in Louisville.



Compassionate Community

LOUISVILLE LEADS THE WAY IN INDUSTRIES FOCUSED ON LIFELONG WELLNESS AND AGING CARE.

BY JENNA ESAREY

► In 2011, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer signed a resolution making Louisville a “Compassionate City,” a designation that encourages citizens and businesses to “make sure no one is left behind or goes wanting.”

“The foundation for this to occur was already here: care and community,” explains Pattie Dale Tye, segment vice president of Humana. “Care and community are also what attracts health care businesses to Louisville.”

Few hubs of health care innovation and aging care have such a wide variety of businesses. And with Louisville’s variety comes high-paying, white-collar jobs focused on these industries: More than 21,000 professionals generate more than \$50 billion through Louis-

ville’s lifelong wellness and aging care organizations.

“We’re not just health care,” says Benjamin Moore, economic development cluster manager, lifelong wellness and aging care, for Louisville Forward. “Our economic growth is really in aging care technology and innovation. We have a unique collection of corporate partners that really represent something quite different here.”

From pharmaceutical development, health technology and hardware and software wearables to medical devices or simple devices to improve a senior’s quality of life, Louisville is leading the way. “We focus on our aging care headquarters because they offer higher-wage jobs—knowledge economy jobs,” says Mary Ellen Wiederwohl, chief of Louisville Forward.

Jobs, of course, are paramount. But those aging and health care industry professionals are also drawn to the region’s livability and culture. The benefits extend beyond the city limits, encompassing 13 counties and nearly 1.5 million people in Kentucky and southern Indiana.

Louisville is perfectly placed with an international airport, a major UPS hub as well as easy access to interstates, buses, trains and Ohio River transportation. “The medical logistics piece has been important,” says Moore. For example, “one local business creates synthetic DNA for researchers. It can be overnighted to researchers all over the world,” Moore says.

“WE PROUDLY BASE OUR SUPPORT CENTER IN LOUISVILLE, THE BEST CITY IN THE UNITED STATES FOR A SENIOR HOUSING BUSINESS SUPPORT CENTER.”

— JOHN MOORE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND CEO, ATRIA SENIOR LIVING

“Louisville’s central location and its proud heritage of national and international consumer-facing businesses—including major distillers, prominent fast and fast-casual restaurant brands, business logistics, health insurance and long-term care companies—make the city an ideal location for Atria’s support center,” explains John Moore, chairman of the board and CEO of Atria Senior Living. The support center includes a 7,000-square-foot training center. Most of the company’s management team also proudly calls Louisville home.

“Along with its high quality of life and strong talent pool, Louisville has a business ecosystem that has allowed us to build a fully vertically integrated business. Services that growing companies might outsource, such as IT, marketing and training, can be staffed and controlled in-house, in a more efficient manner.”

Innovation is nurtured here, especially when it comes to science. Among LINAK’s many facets is the manufacturing of actuator systems used in hospital beds and patient lifts. Fifty percent of LINAK U.S. Inc.’s sales are products manufactured in Louisville, and a 75,000-square-foot



FROM LEFT: Atria resident and employee; INSET: The rooftop at Atria West 86.



expansion will soon increase production and employment. The Nucleus provides business management and consulting services to entrepreneurs in health care treatments, pharmaceuticals, biotechnologies and medical devices. Louisville is also home to XLerateHealth, a mentorship program and health care accelerator. In 1911, University of Louisville Hospital launched the nation’s first trauma care center—then called “accident service,” but now commonly referred to as an emergency room. The first successful human hand transplant was performed in Louisville, and researchers here have assisted in redeveloping movement in patients with spinal cord injuries.

Of Louisville’s three Fortune 500 companies, two focus on health care. The 2017 *Louisville*

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Business First ranking of the biggest 25 employers in Louisville features eight health care-related companies, including Humana, Norton Healthcare and KentuckyOne Health.

The Louisville health care boom started more than 50 years ago with the founding of Humana—then a nursing home company, but today a health care company offering insurance products and health and wellness services.

Humana is really the root of all this,” says Wiederwohl. “A lot of that talent went on to start other companies.”

More than 40 health-related companies in Louisville were founded by former Humana executives, according to Tye. “Humana has played a major role in the development of Louisville’s vibrant and growing health care sector,” she says.

Antonio Melo, a technology director in the Humana Digital Experience Center, relocated with his wife and two infants to Louisville from New York City. “I sought to get my foot in the door of Humana,” Melo says. “I considered Humana to be the place for me given its noble mission to help people combined with what seemed [like] limitless opportunity for learning, growth and a way to contribute to the local community.”

Louisville’s third-largest employer, Norton

Healthcare, is a not-for-profit system of more than 250 locations, including five hospitals and 13 immediate care centers. KentuckyOne Health has hospitals, physician groups, clinics and home health agencies in Kentucky and southern Indiana. Kindred Healthcare provides care for those recovering from illness or injury within hospitals, rehab facilities and at home. Atria manages nearly 200 senior living communities across the United States and Canada for owners on a long-term basis, “not unlike major hotel brands,” says John Moore.

The city boasts the country’s largest collection of nursing home, rehabilitation, assisted living and home health administration headquarters. “Our calling card is our concentration of lifelong wellness and aging care headquarters,” says Wiederwohl. “That makes us unique.”

According to the American Association of Retired Persons, by 2040, 21.7 percent of the U.S. population, or 82.3 million people, will be over age 65. Of those, 14.6 million will be over 85. This effect—what some people have called the “silver tsunami”—creates a wonderful opportunity for Louisville, says Wiederwohl.

“If you are a health care talent looking to contribute to that platform, Louisville is the place to go.” ▾



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