



Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Implementation Strategy

Fiscal Years FY23-25

Update: April 2024



Mercy Medical Center
Trinity Health

Mercy Medical Center completed a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that was adopted by the Board of Directors on 10-10-22. Mercy Medical Center performed the CHNA in adherence with applicable federal requirements for not-for-profit hospitals set forth in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The assessment considered a comprehensive review of secondary data analysis of patient outcomes, community health status, and social determinants of health, as well as primary data collection, including input from representatives of the community, community members and various community organizations.

The complete CHNA report is available electronically at:

<https://www.trinityhealthofne.org/about-us/community-benefit/community-health-needs-assessments>

or printed copies are available upon request at:

Department of Community Health and Well Being, Trinity Health Of New England, 659 Tower Avenue, Hartford, CT 06112

Our Mission and Core Values

To serve together in the spirit of the Gospel as a compassionate and transforming healing presence within our communities. Guided by our charitable mission and core values, our work extends far beyond hospital or clinic walls. We continually invest resources into our communities to meet the health needs of underserved and vulnerable community members, bringing them healing, comfort, and hope. Through our community benefit initiatives, we help to make our communities healthier places to live.

Our Core Values:

- Reverence - We honor the sacredness and dignity of every person.
- Commitment to Those Who are Poor - We stand with and serve those who are poor, especially those most vulnerable.
- Safety - We embrace a culture that prevents harm and nurtures a healing, safe environment for all.
- Justice - We foster right relationships to promote the common good, including sustainability of Earth.
- Stewardship - We honor our heritage and hold ourselves accountable for the human, financial, and natural resources entrusted to our care.
- Integrity - We are faithful to who we say we are

Our Hospital

Founded in 1873, Mercy Medical Center has been a provider of health care services in Western Massachusetts for over 145 years. In 2015, Mercy Medical Center became part of Trinity Health Of New England, an integrated health care delivery system that is a member of Trinity Health, Livonia, Michigan, one of the largest multi-institutional Catholic health care delivery systems in the nation serving communities in 25 states. Mercy Medical Center is a 182-bed acute care hospital in Springfield. Other facilities include Mercy's Rehabilitation Hospital, a comprehensive hospital-based rehabilitation center on the campus of Mercy Medical Center and Brightside for Families and Children, an outpatient service offering counseling and family support programs.



Our Community Based Services

Mercy's actions to support the community's health and well-being include:

Health Care For The Homeless

For over 30 years this ongoing initiative identifies and helps homeless persons in Western Massachusetts. The program assesses client needs, finds resources, and provides health and social services. The support of primary care and behavioral health services for the homeless population covers Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin counties. Services are offered onsite at shelters, soup kitchens, job placement sites, and transitional programs.

Emergency Services Grants (ESG)

Mercy supports salaries for a Community Outreach Nurse (RN), Social Services Counselor and two Community Health Workers. Services offered to “rough sleepers” in Springfield and Hampden county include health education and assessments, social care screenings, employment assistance and life skills training. Referrals are made on behalf of clients that require mental health services, substance abuse treatment services and shelter.

MassUP Springfield

MassUp is a diverse, place-based coalition that advocates for all Springfield residents to access and enjoy healthy food. Collaboration members include Mercy Medical Center, Springfield Food Policy Council, Square One, Open Pantry Community Services, Gardening the Community, and Fertile Ground. Racial equity and resident leadership is the foundation of this coalition. Efforts include: Reduce SNAP/HIP gap, state and local advocacy efforts to increase access to healthy and affordable foods, engage and mobilize neighborhood councils and committees advocating for healthy food choices, increase supply of fresh food in current retail stores, increase community gardens. The communities of focus are Springfield's North End, South End, Mason Square, downtown and Metro Central neighborhoods.

Transforming Communities Initiative

An internally funded grant award designed to engage community residents using a policy, systems, and environmental approach to health equity. The project will use the funding to develop a process for prioritizing an issue identified in the CHNA that will be worked on by a coalition of local community-based organizations and residents to create system change.

Our Community

Mercy's service area, which includes the 23 communities in Hampden County and Granby, a city in Hampshire County. Hampden County is home to 467,871 residents. Springfield is the largest city in the service area and third largest in Massachusetts. Three adjacent cities (Holyoke, Chicopee, and West Springfield) join Springfield to create a densely populated urban core that houses over half of the county population. East and west of this central core are smaller communities, a majority with populations under 20,000. The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority, the second largest public transit system in the state, serves 11 communities in the service area, and connects suburban areas to the core cities and services. Spanning the geographically diverse service area, one finds a wealth of community-based organizations, resources and collaborations; a vibrant arts and culture scene; anchor education, health, and corporate institutions; a strong philanthropic network; and other assets that contribute to the region's status as a destination to live, work, and play. According to Census estimates, the service area has become slightly more diverse since the last CHNA. Hampden County experienced small increases in the proportion of all racial and ethnic groups except White residents, especially in the larger cities. The service area population is now 60% White, 23% Latinx, 8% Black, 5% two or more races, and 3% Asian. The proportion of foreign-born residents in the service area is close to 9%, half the statewide proportion. In Springfield, one in ten residents is foreign born.

Our Approach to Health Equity

While community health needs assessments (CHNA) and Implementation Strategies are required by the IRS, Trinity Health ministries have historically conducted CHNAs and developed Implementation Strategies as a way to meaningfully engage our communities and plan our Community Health & Well-Being work. Community Health & Well-Being promotes optimal health for those who are experiencing poverty or other vulnerabilities in the communities we serve by connecting social and clinical care, addressing social needs, dismantling systemic racism, and reducing health inequities. Trinity Health has adopted the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's definition of Health Equity - "Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care."

This implementation strategy was developed in partnership with community and will focus on specific populations and geographies most impacted by the needs being addressed. Racial equity principles were used throughout the development of this plan and will continue to be used during the implementation. The strategies implemented will mostly focus on policy, systems and environmental change as these systems changes are needed to dismantle racism and promote health and wellbeing for all members of the communities we serve.

Health Needs of the Community

The CHNA conducted in early 2022 identified the significant health needs within the Greater Springfield community. Community stakeholders then prioritized those needs during a facilitated review and analysis of the CHNA findings. The significant health needs identified, in order of priority include:

Social and economic factors or "determinants" that influence health

- Lack of Access and Affordability of Housing, Food, and Transportation
- Educational Attainment
- Employment and Income
- Violence and Trauma
- Environmental Exposures and Climate Crisis

Barriers to healthcare access

- Availability of Providers and Telehealth
- Other Barriers

Health behaviors and outcomes

- Youth Mental Health
- Mental Health and Substance Use
- Chronic Conditions and Other Health Outcomes

Hospital Implementation Strategy

Significant health needs to be addressed

Mercy Medical Center, in collaboration with community partners, will focus on developing and/or supporting initiatives and measure their effectiveness to improve the following health needs:

- 1 Housing and Homelessness – CHNA pages 39-41
- 2 Mental Health – CHNA pages 19-24,50,

Significant health needs that will not be addressed

Mercy Medical Center acknowledges the wide range of priority health issues that emerged from the CHNA process and determined that it could effectively focus on only those health needs which are the most pressing, under- addressed and within its ability to influence. Mercy Medical Center does not intend to address the following health needs:

- Telehealth Access – This issue is being led by Baystate Health with an existing collaborative which is focused on Digital Equity.
- Educational Attainment – Local community resources such as community colleges and educational support agencies are leading in this area. Work is being done to enhance employment of residents without college degrees that provide living wages.
- Food Access – Although Mercy is involved in a local coalition focused on access to healthy foods for Springfield residents, this work will be largely be lead by other Community Based Organizations and the hospital will be engaged primarily via in-kind resources.
- Employment and Income – At the local level our partners Pioneer Valley Planning Commission was recently awarded funding to support training of residents to fulfill expected job openings due to a shift away from fossil fuels. We remain apprised of grant opportunities and partnerships that can enhance resident's income and wealth.
- Climate Equity – Springfield has a strong climate coalition that continues to work on this issue inclusive of recent funding to the Public Health Institute of Western Mass for on-going activities.

This implementation strategy specifies community health needs that the hospital, in collaboration with community partners, has determined to address. The hospital reserves the right to amend this implementation strategy as circumstances warrant.

For example, certain needs may become more pronounced and require enhancements to the described strategic initiatives. During these three years, other organizations in the community may decide to address certain needs, indicating that the hospital then should refocus its limited resources to best serve the community.

Development of the Implementation Strategy for Mercy Hospital – Trinity Health Of New England

The CHNA for Mercy Hospital was published on April 21, 2022, as a result of a years long process that included engagement with the other hospital systems on the Pioneer Valley, this group is called the Western Mass Hospital Coalition and is led by the Public Health Institute of Western Mass. Each hospital then uses this collective data and community input to develop a CHNA specific to their service area. The CHNA makes use of a racial equity lens to present and understand the data collected and to highlight the significant inequities that exist in our region. For Mercy Hospital the service area includes the Greater Springfield area as noted on page 2 in the CHNA, this includes 23 communities, largely in Hamden County.

For our Implementation Strategy we will focus on the city of Springfield where the most significant health inequities are seen, and which has a high concentration of BIPOC residents many of whom live on incomes well below the regional average. The start of our implementation strategy process included an investment of \$75k to plan for the focus of the Transforming Communities Initiative that is funded by Trinity Health to support community priorities identified in the Implementation Strategy.

As of March 2023, we have held 8 meetings with the Advisory Committee (AC) which was created for this project. (See appendix for the list of names and organizations included in the AC.) This group was invited to 2 community conversation meetings to explore more deeply the issues of inequity and the role of structural racism in this work. These were attended by 9 of the 17 members of the AC.

During the prioritization meetings we discussed the 9 priorities identified in the CHNA and worked together to come up with 3 priorities that will be the focus of our Implementation Strategy for the first year. During the next 3 months, we will continue discussions and identify the **one** priority that will be the focus of the TCI investment. Included in the pages below is more detailed information about each of these priorities and the strategies we will use to identify one topic for our focus as well as the strategies and metrics we will use to address that identified priority.

In May of 2023 the priority that the community chose to address is Housing and Homelessness while recognizing the impact that unstable housing has on the Mental Health of residents. The Advisory Committee continues to meet monthly and the Design Team leading this work has been expanded to include additional community-based organizations with expertise in collaborative development, evaluation, housing advocacy, policy and funding for housing. Additionally, the number of resident advisors has been expanded to increase community voice.

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Housing and Homelessness



Hospital facility: Mercy Medical Center
CHNA reference pages: 39 - 41

Brief description of need:

- 35% of households in Hampden County are housing-cost burdened (meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing)
- Between 2010 and 2019, homelessness increased three-fold in Hampden County
- There is a shortage of affordable housing units--UMass Donahue Institute projects a housing gap of over 13,000 units in Hampden County by 2025
- The housing cost burden was greater for people of color in the Pioneer Valley, and they are overrepresented in the Hampden County's unhoused population

Equitable and Inclusive SMART Objective(s):

1. Build Trust among CBO's who participate in the Advisory Committee so that members are comfortable discussing the TCI budget and can honestly assess the role they will play in the project by then end of February. **UPDATE:** Advisory Committee continues to meet monthly, and three organizations have committed to contracts to join the Design Team tasked with planning and executing activities.
2. Expand resources during the first year that are directed at the priority topic so that we can increase capacity of CBO's who are able to increase their engaged with Technical Assistance and other resources invested via our TCI project. **UPDATE:** Applications for additional funding have been submitted.
3. Increase participation of community members in the process so that 50% more residents are engaged in the implementation of our project plan during the 3-year duration of the project. **UPDATE:** The number of Resident Advisors has been increased from 3 to 6.

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Trauma & Mental Health as related to unstable housing.



Hospital facility: Mercy Hospital CHNA reference pages: 19-24, 50

Brief description of need:

- 1 in 5 Springfield students (1 in 4 Latino/a/e students) do not consider their neighborhood safe from crime and 1 in 4 students have witnessed someone being physically harmed in their neighborhood
- Black and Latino/a/e people have a higher intimate partner firearm homicide rate compared to White counterparts in Massachusetts. Latino/a/e death rates are 4x higher than White rates and 2x higher than Black rates
- 1 in 7 Hampden County adults (15%) reported their mental health was not good for 14 days or more within the prior 30 days. This exceeded the statewide rate of 13%
- Emergency Department visits for mental health in Hampden County were highest for Black residents (3,851 per 100,000)

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GOAL: Improve Safe and Affordable Housing for Low Income Residents of Springfield by making structural changes in the policies, systems, and environmental factors that impact residents experiencing housing instability and improves mental health and well being.

Strategy #1	Timeline			Hospital and Committed Partners (align to indicate committed resource)	Committed Resources (align by hospital/committed partner)
	Y1	Y2	Y3		
Develop a housing focused collaboration with community-based organizations to improve safe and affordable housing for Springfield.	X			Mercy Medical Center	TCI Grant Dollars will be used to support this work. Up to \$350,000 per year.
	X			Wayfinders	Contracted and In- Kind Staff time and expertise.
	X			Public Health Institute of Western Mass.	Collaborative coordination and management.
	x			Neighbor to Neighbor	Advocacy skills and resources
	x			Partnership in Practice	Evaluation skills
	x			Springfield No One Leaves	Advocacy skills and resources.
	Focus location(s)				Focus Population(s)
Zip codes; 01103, 01105, 01107, 01108, 01109				Low/moderate income residents of the targeted zip codes.	
Strategy #2	Timeline			Hospital and Committed Partners (align to indicate committed resource)	Committed Resources (align by hospital/committed partner)
	Y1	Y2	Y3		
Advocate for passage of a state law that guarantees access to council for those facing eviction.		X		Mercy Medical Center	TCI Grant Dollars will be used to support this work. Up to \$350,000 per year.
		X		Wayfinders	Contracted and In- Kind Staff time and expertise.
		X		Public Health Institute of Western Mass.	Collaborative coordination and management.
		x		Neighbor to Neighbor	Advocacy skills and resources
		x		Partnership in Practice	Evaluation skills
		x		Springfield No One Leaves	Advocacy skills and resources.
		x		City of Springfield Housing Dept.	In Kind Housing Expertise
		x		Mass CDC	In Kind Financing Expertise
Focus location(s)				Focus Population(s)	
Zip codes 01103, 01105, 01107, 01108, 01109				Low/moderate income residents of the targeted zip codes.	
Strategy #3	Timeline			Hospital and Committed Partners (align to indicate committed resource)	Committed Resources (align by hospital/committed partner)
	Y1	Y2	Y3		
Increase resident involvement and skills in advocacy for improved housing conditions by allocating additional resources to the Springfield Trust Fund.			X	Neighbor to Neighbor	Advocacy skills and resources
			X	Partnership in Practice	Evaluation skills
			X	Springfield No One Leaves	Advocacy skills and resources.
			X	New North Citizens Council	Resident Engagement
			X	Public Health Institute of Western Mass.	Collaborative coordination and management. Policy expertise.
	Focus location(s)				Focus Population(s)
Zip codes 01103, 01105, 01107, 01108, 01109				Low/moderate income residents of the targeted zip codes.	

Strategy #4	Timeline			Hospital and Committed Partners (align to indicate committed resource)	Committed Resources (align by hospital/committed partner)
	Y1	Y2	Y3		
Increase home ownership and avoid foreclosures among residents of targeted neighborhoods by improving resources for down payments and home maintenance.			x	Mercy Medical Center	TCI Grant Dollars will be used to support this work. Up to \$350,000 per year.
			x	Wayfinders	Contracted and In- Kind Staff time and expertise.
			x	Public Health Institute of Western Mass.	Collaborative coordination and management.
			x	City of Springfield Housing Dept.	In Kind Housing Expertise
			x	Mass CDC	In Kind Financing Expertise
	Focus location(s)				Focus Population(s)
Zip codes 01103, 01105, 01107, 01108, 01109				Low/moderate income residents of the targeted zip codes.	

Impact measures of these actions:

Impact Measures	Baseline	Target	Plan to evaluate the impact
Engagement of Advisory Committee members in the discussions. (Building of Trust)	9 members engaged	50% increase	Meeting participation data.
Increased resources dedicated to the need identified. (Increase Capacity)	TCI Budget Invested = 0	Year 1 = \$147,000 Year 2 = 256,000 Year 3 - \$350,000	Monitor budget allocations and resources brought to the initiative.
Resident input and participation in the process. (Community Engagement)	3 resident advisors on Advisory Committee	9 regularly engaged residents	Measure participation and survey for levels of engagement via evaluation plan for TCI.

Adoption of Implementation Strategy

On 4-15-2024 the authorized body of the Trinity Health Of New England Board reviewed the UPDATE to the 2023-2025 Implementation Strategy for addressing the community health needs identified in the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment. Upon review, the authorized body approved this Implementation Strategy and the related budget.

Syed Hussain, M.D.
Syed Hussain, M.D. (Apr 15, 2024 14:29 EDT)

Syed Ahmed Hussain, M.D., Senior Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer, Trinity Health Of New England



Transforming Communities Initiative (TCI) Advisory Committee

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