

## Ascension Alabama

### St. Vincent's East Implementation Strategy

#### Implementation Strategy Narrative

##### Overview

Ascension Alabama and its member hospitals conducted the previous Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in fiscal year 2016. The CHNA for fiscal years 2017-2019 (beginning July 1, 2016) addressed health needs of Jefferson County and prioritized needs of the communities St. Vincent's East serves. This CHNA cycle for fiscal years 2020-2022 assessed the health priorities for the communities served. The assessment provides a reference for the facility's implementation strategy, ensuring it is aligned with the community needs and the ministry goals of Ascension Alabama. The mission, vision, and values of Ascension Alabama are the key factors influencing the approach and commitment to addressing community health needs through community benefit activity.

Ascension Alabama facilitated the CHNA for its hospital in Jefferson County, with system leadership from Mission Integration and Strategy and Business Development providing coordination and oversight. Additionally, representation from system Senior Leadership, Finance, Wellness and the facility President's from each of the hospitals as well as leadership from the respective areas were involved in the process and in developing the subsequent implementation strategies.

The community served for purposes of this CHNA was defined as Jefferson County. The primary rationale for selecting this geography included: area served by collaborating entities; areas of populations that included the underserved, low-income and minority groups; potential for collaboration/partnering with other organizations; and availability of health information for the area selected. The process included a review of secondary health data, interviews of community health leaders, a survey of community members and several focus groups with representatives from communities served, with special attention to the vulnerable populations in the service area.

The objectives of the CHNA and subsequent facility specific implementation strategies are:

- 1.) To provide an unbiased comprehensive assessment of Jefferson County's health needs;
- 2.) Use the CHNA to prioritize Ascension Alabama's Community Benefit Program strategy; and
- 3.) Fulfill Internal Revenue Service regulations related to 501 (c)(3) non-profit hospital status for federal income taxes.

The process included a review of secondary health data, interviews of community representatives and leaders, a survey of community members and a community focus group to review findings and discern unmet health needs. The collaborating team received input from public health experts including the local health departments.

##### Prioritized Needs

The top three unmet health needs identified for Jefferson County, AL, by this Community Health Needs Assessment are:

1. Access to Healthcare
2. Mental Healthcare and Substance Abuse
3. Healthy Living

For Public Use

## Needs That Will Be Addressed

Ascension Alabama will address each of the above needs with at least 2 measurable goals to show improvement in the noted areas of focus.

## Needs That Will Not Be Addressed

Ascension Alabama will address all the needs listed.

## Summary of Implementation Strategy

### Access to Healthcare

#### **GOAL#1: Increase the proportion of persons with a usual primary care provider**

*St. Vincent's East will promote and coordinate community efforts to improve establishment of a medical home for unattached individuals. Focus will concentrate on individuals without a primary care provider or individuals who have not seen a provider in over a year.*

#### **Strategy:**

- The strategy's target population is individuals without a primary care provider or who have not seen a primary care provider in over a year.
- The strategy is informed by evidence found in What Works for Health
- The effort will address barriers to care for any individual without a primary care provider
- The current PCP to individual ratio in the county is 924:1 according to County Health Rankings.

#### **Resources and Collaboration:**

- The hospital, revenue cycle partners, community clinics and private practitioners will collaborate to provide appropriate resources for unattached individuals.

#### **Anticipated impact:**

- Develop and implement protocol to connect unattached individuals to primary care medical home by September 1, 2019
- Reduce number of individuals who report no PCP by at least 2% each year for 3 years as measured by patient access/registration
- Connecting unattached individuals aligns with the #1 priority of the State of Alabama Community Health Improvement Plan, is critical for local access for patients to have consistent place of care and echoes Healthy People 2020/2030's goal AHS-3.

#### **GOAL#2: Reduce the proportion of persons who are unable to obtain or delay in obtaining prescription medicine**

*St. Vincent's East will promote and coordinate community efforts to improve medication access for uninsured individuals.*

#### **Strategy:**

- The strategy's target population is uninsured individuals without the ability to access or pay for prescription medication.
- The strategy is supported by evidence found in What Works for Health
- The effort will address barriers to treatment/medication compliance due to access in obtaining prescription medications.

**Resources and Collaboration:**

- The hospital, community clinics, retail pharmacy (Proxys), and Dispensary of Hope will collaborate to increase utilization and access for medication.

**Anticipated impact:**

- By FY22, utilization of Dispensary of Hope will increase by 20%
- Connecting individuals with medication access aligns with the #1 priority of the State of Alabama Community Health Improvement Plan to increase access to healthcare. It also promotes Healthy People 2020/2030's goal AHS-6.4.

**Mental Healthcare and Substance Abuse**

**GOAL #1: Increase the proportion of adults with mental health disorders who receive treatment**

*St. Vincent's East realizes the need to promote mental health and substance abuse treatment in the community. To address this, St. Vincent's East will improve and increase referrals and treatment of individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse disorders.*

**Strategy:**

- Connect individuals with mental health disorders to treatment options.
- Target population is individuals with diagnosed mental health disorders who are currently without a mental health provider
- The strategy is supported by evidence found in What Works for Health
- The rate of mental healthcare providers to individuals in Jefferson County is 642:1 according to County Health Rankings

**Resources and Collaboration:**

- The hospital will collaborate with local mental healthcare providers to connect patients with treatment including the St. Vincent's East Outpatient Bridge Clinic as well as referrals to the Psychiatric Intake and Referral Center (PIRC) at Children's of Alabama.
- Ascension Medical Group practices will also coordinate to expand provision of mental health at primary care locations in collaboration with St. Vincent's East.
- Ascension Alabama will provide mental health first aid training to assist community members with identifying potential mental health concerns

**Anticipated impact:**

- By FY22, >25% of identified patients with mental health disorders will be connected with provider.
- By FY22, 120 individuals in the community will be trained in mental health first aid.
- Patients receiving treatment will show improvement in PHQ-9 scores annually.
- Connecting individuals to mental healthcare aligns with the State of Alabama Community Health Improvement Plan by assisting to increase the infrastructure for mental health promotion and echoes Healthy People 2020/2030's goal MHMD-9 and MHMD-5..

**GOAL #2: Increase alcohol and/or illicit drug treatment for individuals in community**

*St. Vincent's East realizes the need to promote mental health and substance abuse treatment in the community. To address this, St. Vincent's East will improve and increase referrals and treatment of individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse disorders.*

**Strategy:**

- Connect individuals with suspected or diagnosed substance abuse to treatment.
- Target population is individuals with substance abuse concerns who are not currently under treatment
- The strategy is supported by evidence found in What Works for Health
- According to County Health Rankings, Jefferson County had 572 drug-overdose deaths in 2018 and 16% of individuals report excessive drinking

**Resources and Collaboration:**

- The hospital will identify local resources for substance abuse treatment for all payors
- The hospital will assist and collaborate with local substance abuse treatment providers including the Recovery Resource Center to connect patients with treatment
- Ascension Alabama will provide physician and staff education related to substance abuse

**Anticipated impact:**

- By FY22, all employed physicians and Emergency Department physicians will implement referral protocol for individuals with substance abuse disorder.
- By FY22, >25% of patients identified with substance abuse disorder will be referred and followed up for treatment.
- Connecting individuals with substance abuse treatment aligns with the State of Alabama Community Health Improvement Plan by assisting to reduce prevalence of individuals with substance abuse disorders and reduce the number of deaths associated with drug and alcohol use. It also echoes Healthy People 2020/2030's goal SA-8.

**Healthy Living**

**GOAL #1: Increase the proportion of individuals who are aware of the symptoms of and how to respond to a heart attack**

*St. Vincent's East realizes the need to promote CPR awareness and training to individuals in the greater community with an intentional focus on individuals in key positions who might not otherwise have access to the training. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Jefferson County.*

**Strategy:**

- Provide CPR training to the community, especially individuals who work in schools and churches.
- The strategy is supported by best practices promoted by American Heart Association
- According to Healthy People 2020, less than 40% of the general population are aware of the early warning signs and symptoms of a heart attack and how to get emergency assistance.

**Resources and Collaboration:**

- The hospital will provide CPR classes to the public at no or significantly reduced cost.
- Ascension Alabama will collaborate with local American Heart Association to ensure education and awareness of heart disease.

**Anticipated impact:**

- By FY22, 600 community members will be trained and certified in CPR.
- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Alabama and Jefferson County. This strategy echoes Healthy People 2020/2030's goal HDS-16.

**GOAL #2: Reduce household food insecurity and in doing so reduce hunger.**

*St. Vincent's East will improve the health and wellness of Jefferson County by providing access to healthy food in the community. With cardiovascular disease and cancer as the two leading causes of death in Chilton County, a healthy diet including fresh fruits and vegetables is critical to improving health and wellness.*

**Strategy:**

- Promote access to healthy food consumption in food desert areas
- The strategy is supported by best practices promoted by What Works for Health.
- According to County Health Rankings, 20% of residents in Jefferson County are food insecure and 48% of students qualify for free or reduced cost lunches.
- The adult obesity rate in Jefferson County is 33%.

**Resources and Collaboration:**

- The hospital will collaborate with local non-profit service providers and Chambers of Commerce to promote access to healthy food through resources such as the East Lake Farmer's Market and SNAP programs.
- St. Vincent's East will provide coordination and resources to promote fresh food consumption.

**Anticipated impact:**

- By FY22, East Lake Farmer's Market will increase community participation by 10%

**GOAL #3: Reduce the lung cancer death rate**

*Cancer is one of the leading causes of death in Jefferson County and Alabama. St. Vincent's East is committed to ensuring individuals have access to screening and treatment, especially if at high risk for lung cancer and are uninsured.*

**Strategy:**

- Increase number of lung cancer screenings performed for high-risk individuals who are also uninsured.
- The strategy is informed by best practices promoted by What Works for Health.
- According to County Health Rankings, 18% of Jefferson County adults smoke.
- Lung cancer for males, especially for African-American males, is above the national average in Jefferson County.

**Resources and Collaboration:**

- The hospital will collaborate with local physician offices, FQHC clinics, and community providers to identify high-risk populations in need of screening at affordable cost.

**Anticipated impact:**

- By FY22, mortality rates for lung cancer in Jefferson County will decrease by 2%

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An action plan follows for each prioritized need, including the resources, proposed actions, planned collaboration, and anticipated impact of each strategy.

## Prioritized Need #1: Access to Healthcare

**GOAL:** Increase the proportion of persons with a usual primary care provider

### Action Plan

**STRATEGY 1:** Implement a protocol to connect unattached individuals to primary care providers

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The strategy’s target population is individuals without a primary care provider or who have not seen a primary care provider in over a year.
- The strategy is supported by evidence found in What Works for Health
- The effort will address barriers to care for any individual without a primary care provider
- The current PCP to individual ratio in the county is 924:1 according to County Health Rankings.

#### RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:

- The hospital, revenue cycle partners, community clinics and private practitioners will collaborate to provide appropriate resources for unattached individuals.

#### ACTIONS:

1. Determine system-wide alert system and protocol to notify staff of unattached individuals interfacing with hospital or community events
2. By 12/2019 staff will implement protocol to connect individuals to primary care provider
3. Monthly meetings will include data and monitoring as agenda item to ensure progress

#### ANTICIPATED IMPACT:

- I. Develop and implement protocol to connect unattached individuals to primary care medical home.
- II. Reduce number of individuals who interface with the hospital who list no PCP by 6% over 3 years.

### Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
I, II	Connecting unattached individuals to a medical home is critical for healthy community	Aligns with Priority 1, Access to Healthcare, in State of AL Community Health Improvement Plan (AL-CHIP)	Aligns with Healthy People 2020/2030 (AHS-3)

## Prioritized Need #1: Access to Care

**GOAL:** Reduce the proportion of persons who are unable to obtain or delay in obtaining prescription medicine

### Action Plan

**STRATEGY 1:** Promote and coordinate community efforts to improve medication access for uninsured individuals

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The strategy’s target population is uninsured individuals without the ability to access or pay for prescription medication.
- The strategy is informed by evidence found in What Works for Health
- The effort will address barriers to treatment/medication compliance due to access in obtaining prescription medications.

#### RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:

- The hospital, community clinics, retail pharmacy (Proxys), and Dispensary of Hope will collaborate to increase utilization and access for medication.

#### ACTIONS:

1. Promote Dispensary of Hope at St. Vincent’s East pharmacy
2. Increase utilization of Dispensary of Hope for uninsured individuals in community
3. Work with Ascension Medical Group and other affiliated practices to promote medication access for uninsured individuals

#### ANTICIPATED IMPACT:

- III. By FY22, utilization of Dispensary of Hope at St. Vincent’s East will increase by 20%

### Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
III	Connecting uninsured individuals to free medication will increase compliance with physician treatment plans	Aligns with Priority 1 – Access to Healthcare in State of AL Community Health Improvement Plan (AL-CHIP)	Aligns with Healthy People 2020/2030 (AHS-6.4)

## Prioritized Need #2: Mental Healthcare

**GOAL:** Increase the proportion of individuals with mental health disorders who receive treatment

**Action Plan**

**STRATEGY 1:** Connect individuals with mental health disorders to treatment options

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- Target population is individuals with diagnosed mental health disorders who are currently without a mental health provider
- The strategy is supported by evidence found in What Works for Health
- The rate of mental healthcare providers to individuals in Jefferson County is 642:1 according to County Health Rankings

**RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:**

- The hospital will collaborate with local mental healthcare providers to connect individuals with treatment including the St. Vincent’s East Outpatient Bridge Clinic and Psychiatric Intake and Referral Center (PIRC) at Children’s of Alabama.
- Ascension Medical Group practices will also coordinate to expand provision of mental health at primary care locations in collaboration with St. Vincent’s East Behavioral Health Department.
- Ascension Alabama will provide mental health first aid training to assist community members with identifying potential mental health concerns

**ACTIONS:**

4. Connect community members with diagnosed mental health disorder to mental healthcare provider both in ambulatory and inpatient settings
5. Develop and produce mental healthcare provider resource guide
6. Track PHQ-9 for primary care patients to show improvement
7. Provide Mental Health First Aid Training for community

**ANTICIPATED IMPACT:**

- IV. By FY22, >40% of identified patients with mental health disorders will be connected with provider.
- V. By FY22, 120 individuals in the community will be trained in mental health first aid.

**Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities**

<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	<b>LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:</b>	<b>STATE PLAN:</b>	<b>“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:</b>
IV, V	Access to Mental Health is a local priority	State of Alabama CHIP includes strengthening mental health access	Aligns with goals MHMD-9 and MHMD-5

## Prioritized Need #2: Mental Healthcare

**GOAL:** Increase access to alcohol and/or illicit drug treatment

### Action Plan

**STRATEGY 1:** Connect individuals with suspected or diagnosed substance abuse to treatment

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Target population is individuals with substance abuse concerns who are not currently under treatment
- The strategy is supported by evidence found in What Works for Health
- According to County Health Rankings, Jefferson County had 572 drug-overdose deaths in 2018 and 16% of individuals report excessive drinking

#### RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:

- The hospital will identify local resources for substance abuse treatment for all payors
- The hospital will assist and collaborate with local substance abuse treatment providers to connect patients with treatment including the Recovery Resource Center
- Ascension Alabama will provide physician and staff education related to substance abuse

#### ACTIONS:

1. Conduct physician education (CME) on substance abuse
2. Staff education on substance abuse
3. Develop and produce substance abuse provider resource guide
4. Refer individuals with suspected or diagnosed substance abuse to treatment facilities
5. Identify local resources for substance abuse treatment for all payors.

#### ANTICIPATED IMPACT:

- VI. By FY22, all employed physicians and Emergency Department physicians will implement referral protocol for individuals with substance abuse disorder.
- VII. By FY22, >25% of patients identified with substance abuse disorder will be referred and followed up with for treatment.

### Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
VI, VII	With an increase in drug-overdose deaths, it is a critical issue in Jefferson County	Aligns with goal to reduce prevalence of individuals with substance abuse disorders	Healthy People 2020/2030 – SA - 8

### Prioritized Need #3: Healthy Living

**GOAL:** Increase the proportion of individuals who are aware of the symptoms of and how to respond to a heart attack

#### Action Plan

<b>STRATEGY 1:</b> Provide CPR training to the community, especially individuals who work in schools and churches
<p><b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The strategy is supported by best practices promoted by American Heart Association</li> <li>According to Healthy People 2020, less than 40% of the general population are aware of the early warning signs and symptoms of a heart attack and how to get emergency assistance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>RESOURCES &amp; COLLABORATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The hospital will provide CPR classes to the public at no or significantly reduced cost.</li> <li>Ascension Alabama will collaborate with local American Heart Association to ensure education and awareness of heart disease.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer CPR training sessions to the community, especially churches</li> <li>Provide CPR classes at local public and private schools</li> </ol>
<p><b>ANTICIPATED IMPACT:</b></p> <p>VIII. By FY22, 600 Community members will be trained and certified in CPR.</p>

#### Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
VIII	Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Jefferson County	Cardiovascular disease accounts for the leading cause of death in Alabama	Healthy People 2020/2030 HDS - 16

### Prioritized Need #3: Healthy Living

**GOAL:** Reduce household food insecurity and in doing so reduce hunger

### Action Plan

**STRATEGY 1:** Provide healthy food access to individuals in Jefferson County.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The strategy is supported by best practices promoted by What Works for Health.
- According to County Health Rankings, 20% of residents in Jefferson County are food insecure and 48% of students qualify for free or reduced cost lunches.
- The adult obesity rate in Jefferson County is 33%.

**RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:**

- The hospital will collaborate with local non-profit service providers and Chambers of Commerce to promote access to healthy food through resources such as the East Lake Farmer’s Market and SNAP programs.
- St. Vincent’s East will provide coordination and resources to promote fresh food consumption.

**ACTIONS:**

6. Hospital will collaborate with community food bank to improve healthy food access
7. Support East Lake Farmer’s Market SNAP program through promotion and financial support
8. Implement healthy snack program through collaboration with Community Food Bank and Christ Health Center
9. Distribute healthy food cookbooks at community events in food desert areas

**ANTICIPATED IMPACT:**

- IX. By FY22, East Lake Farmer’s Market will increase community participation by 10%

### Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
IX	Jefferson County has various food deserts that prevent individuals from accessing healthy food		Healthy People 2020/2030 Goal NWS-13

### Prioritized Need #3: Healthy Living

**GOAL:** Reduce lung cancer death rate

**Action Plan**

**STRATEGY 1:** Increase number of lung cancer screenings performed for high-risk individuals who are also uninsured.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The strategy is informed by best practices promoted by What Works for Health.
- According to County Health Rankings, 18% of Jefferson County adults smoke.
- Lung cancer for males, especially for African-American males, is above the national average in Jefferson County.

**RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:**

- The hospital will collaborate with local physician offices, FQHC clinics, and community providers to identify high-risk populations in need of screening at affordable cost.

**ACTIONS:**

10. Hospital will collaborate with community providers and AMG clinics to promote guidelines for lung cancer screening
11. Coordinate affordable cash rate to uninsured patients
12. Collaborate with Cooper Green Mercy and Alabama Oncology to create referral pathway if lung screening needs follow up care

**ANTICIPATED IMPACT:**

- X. By FY22, mortality rates for lung cancer in Jefferson County will decrease by 2%

**Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities**

<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	<b>LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:</b>	<b>STATE PLAN:</b>	<b>“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:</b>
X	Cancer is a leading cause of death in Jefferson County and lung cancer rates are higher than the national average		Healthy People 2020/2030 C-2