

## Ascension Alabama

### St. Vincent's St. Clair 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 St. Clair County and prioritized needs of the communities St. Vincent's St. Clair 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 St. Clair 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 St. Clair 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 St. Clair 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 St. Clair County, AL, by this Community Health Needs Assessment are:

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

## 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 St. Clair 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 patients 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 5870:1 according to County Health Rankings.
- There are approximately 15 PCP providers in St. Clair County according to County Health Rankings.

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

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

#### **Anticipated impact:**

- Develop and implement protocol to connect unattached patients to primary care medical home by September 1, 2019
- Reduce number of individuals who report no PCP by at least 8% in 3 years as measured by patient access/registration
- Connecting unattached patients 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 necessary medical care**

*St. Vincent's St. Clair will assist and promote community efforts to improve access to care through the Easter Seals clinic that is established for individuals who are uninsured. Support of local resources that provide care to the uninsured and/or underinsured will assist with individuals preventing delay of care.*

#### **Strategy:**

- The Easter Seals clinic is designed for access to individuals without health coverage in St. Clair County

- The strategy is informed by evidence found in What Works for Health
- St. Clair County is a medically underserved area according to County Health Rankings

**Resources and Collaboration:**

- The hospital will provide assistance and collaboration with the Easter Seals Clinic through volunteer support, materials, medication and supplies as well as marketing and referrals.

**Anticipated impact:**

- Easter Seals will provide assistance to the community and increase their patient services by 5% annually for 3 years.
- Connecting unattached patients 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 and AHS-6.2.

**Mental Healthcare and Substance Abuse**

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

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

**Strategy:**

- Connect adults 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 informed by evidence found in What Works for Health
- The rate of mental healthcare providers to individuals in St. Clair County is 6785:1 according to County Health Rankings
- St. Clair County is significantly underserved with mental healthcare provision

**Resources and Collaboration:**

- The hospital will provide assistance and collaboration with local mental healthcare providers to connect patients with treatment
- Ascension Alabama will provide mental health first aid training to assist community members with identifying potential mental health concerns

**Anticipated impact:**

- By FY22, >40% 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.
- Connecting unattached patients 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.

**GOAL #2: Increase the proportion of persons who are referred for follow-up care for alcohol problems, drug problems after diagnosis or treatment for one of these conditions in a hospital emergency department**

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

**Strategy:**

- Connect adults 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 informed by evidence found in What Works for Health
- According to County Health Rankings, St. Clair County had 77 drug-overdose deaths in 2018 and 16% of individuals report excessive drinking
- St. Clair County is significantly underserved with mental healthcare provision

**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 to connect patients with treatment
- Ascension Alabama will provide physician education related to substance abuse

**Anticipated impact:**

- By FY22, all employed physicians and ED physicians will implement referral protocol for patients with substance abuse disorder.
- By FY22, >40% of patients identified with substance abuse disorder will be referred for treatment.
- Connecting patients 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 St. Clair 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 St. Clair County.*

**Strategy:**

- Provide CPR training to the community, especially individuals who work in schools.
- The strategy is informed 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, 200 community members will be trained and certified in CPR.
- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Alabama and St. Clair County. This strategy echoes Healthy People 2020/2030's goal HDS-16.

**GOAL #2: Increase the proportion of employed adults who have access to and participate in employer-based exercise facilities and exercise programs**

*St. Vincent's St. Clair realizes the need to increase physical activity amongst adults in the community.*

**Strategy:**

- Provide opportunities for individuals to engage in physical activity at work.
- The strategy is informed by best practices promoted by What Works for Health.
- 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 collaborate with the local Chamber of Commerce and fitness centers to promote access to physical activity at place of employment.
- St. Vincent's St. Clair will provide coordination and resources to promote physical activity.

**Anticipated impact:**

- By FY22, 5 employers will engage associates in regular physical activity.
- Cardiovascular disease and cancer are the leading causes of death in Alabama and St. Clair County. This strategy echoes Healthy People 2020/2030's goal PA-12 and works to increase physical activity for individuals.

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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 patients 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 5870:1 according to County Health Rankings.
- There are approximately 15 PCP providers in St. Clair County 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 and 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 by September 1, 2019
- II. Reduce number of individuals who report no PCP by at least 8% in 3 years as measured by patient access/registration

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

<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	<b>LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:</b>	<b>STATE PLAN:</b>	<b>“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:</b>
I, II	Connecting unattached individuals to a medical home is critical for community health management	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 Healthcare

**GOAL:** Reduce the proportion of persons who are unable to obtain or delay in obtaining necessary medical care

### Action Plan

**STRATEGY 1:** Assist and promote community efforts to improve access to care through the Easter Seals clinic for the uninsured

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The Easter Seals clinic is designed for access to individuals without health coverage in St. Clair County
- The strategy is informed by evidence found in What Works for Health
- St. Clair County is a medically underserved area according to County Health Rankings

#### RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:

- The hospital and local physicians will provide assistance and collaboration with the Easter Seals Clinic through volunteer support, materials, medication and supplies as well as marketing and referrals.

#### ACTIONS:

1. St. Vincent's St. Clair staff and physicians will volunteer at clinic to see patients from community
2. St. Vincent's St. Clair will provide materials, marketing and printing services to Easter Seals clinic
3. St. Vincent's St. Clair will provide medical supplies and medications to the Easter Seals clinic

#### ANTICIPATED IMPACT:

- III. Easter Seals will provide healthcare to the community and increase their patient services by 5% annually for 3 years.

### Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	"HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030":
III	Connecting individuals to a medical home is critical for a 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) and AHS – 6.2

## Prioritized Need #2: Mental Healthcare and Substance Abuse

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

### Action Plan

**STRATEGY 1:** Connect adults and children 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 informed by evidence found in What Works for Health
- The rate of mental healthcare providers to individuals in St. Clair County is 6785:1 according to County Health Rankings
- St. Clair County is significantly underserved with mental healthcare provision

#### RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:

- The hospital will provide assistance and collaboration with local mental healthcare providers to connect individuals with treatment
- Ascension Alabama will provide mental health first aid training to assist community members with identifying potential mental health concerns

#### ACTIONS:

4. Connect individuals with diagnosed mental health disorder to mental healthcare provider
5. Provide Mental Health First Aid training to community
6. Promote PIRC (Psychiatric Intake and Response Center) for children, youth and caregivers

#### ANTICIPATED IMPACT:

- IV. By FY22, >40% of identified patients with mental health disorders will be connected with provider.
- V. By FY22, 60 individuals in the community will be trained in mental health first aid.

### Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
IV, V	Addresses complexity of entering into mental health clinically integrated systems of care	Aligns with Alabama goal to increase infrastructure for mental health promotion	Healthy People 2020/2030 – MHMD - 9



## Prioritized Need #2: Mental Healthcare and Substance Abuse

**GOAL:** Increase the proportion of persons who are referred for follow up care for alcohol problems, drug problems after diagnosis or treatment for one of these conditions in a hospital emergency room.

### Action Plan

**STRATEGY 1:** Connect adults 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 informed by evidence found in What Works for Health
- According to County Health Rankings, St. Clair County had 77 drug-overdose deaths in 2018 and 16% of individuals report excessive drinking
- St. Clair County is significantly underserved with mental healthcare provision

#### 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
- Ascension Alabama will provide physician education related to substance abuse

#### ACTIONS:

7. Physician education (CME) on substance abuse
8. Health system wide substance abuse education
9. Refer patients with suspected or diagnosed substance abuse to treatment facilities
10. Identify local resources for substance abuse treatment for all payors

#### ANTICIPATED IMPACT:

- VI. By FY22, all employed physicians and ED physicians will implement referral protocol and follow up for patients with substance abuse disorder.
- VII. By FY22, >40% of patients identified with substance abuse disorder will be referred for treatment.

### Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
IV, V	With 77 drug overdose deaths in 2018, this is a	Aligns with goal to reduce prevalence of	Healthy People 2020/2030 – SA - 8

local concern	individuals with substance abuse disorders
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### 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> Offer CPR training to the community, especially individuals who work in schools.
<p><b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The strategy is informed 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 for free and/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</li> <li>Provide CPR classes at local public and private schools</li> </ol>
<p><b>ANTICIPATED IMPACT:</b></p> <p>VIII. By FY22, &gt;90 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 St. Clair County	Cardiovascular disease accounts for the leading cause of death in Alabama	Healthy People 2020/2030 HDS - 16

### Prioritized Need #3: Healthy Living

**GOAL:** Increase the proportion of persons with diagnosed diabetes who receive formal diabetes education.

#### Action Plan

<b>STRATEGY 1:</b> Offer community-based diabetes management resources/education
<p><b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target population is individuals with diabetes who are uninsured and/or at high risk for unmanaged disease</li> <li>• St. Clair County is medically underserved and 12% of the population is diabetic.</li> </ul>
<p><b>RESOURCES &amp; COLLABORATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The hospital will collaborate with local physician clinics, Easter Seals clinic as well as the American Diabetes Association</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Develop sliding scale and/or scholarship opportunities for Diabetes Education classes</li> <li>14. Publicize availability of Diabetes education to greater community</li> <li>15. Partner with Dispensary of Hope to provide insulin and diabetes management supplies at free or low cost</li> <li>16. The hospital will collaborate with local clinics to identify diabetic patients in need of education</li> </ol>
<p><b>ANTICIPATED IMPACT:</b></p> <p>IX. From FY 20 – FY 22, St. Vincent’s St. Clair will increase individuals participating in diabetes education by 5% annually.</p>

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

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
VIII	Diabetes is increasing in St. Clair County with 12% of county population diabetic	Aligns with goal to improve access to healthcare and health education	Healthy People 2020/2030 – D-14

### Prioritized Need #3: Healthy Living

**GOAL:** Increase the proportion of employed adults who have access to and participate in employer-based exercise facilities and exercise programs

**Action Plan**

**STRATEGY 1:** Provide opportunities for individuals to engage in physical activity at or through place of employment

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The strategy is informed by best practices promoted by What Works for Health.
- According to County Health Rankings, 30% of St. Clair County residents are physically inactive.

**RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:**

- The hospital will collaborate with the local Chamber of Commerce, fitness centers, as well as parks and recreation to promote access to physical activity at place of employment.
- St. Vincent’s St. Clair will provide coordination and resources to promote physical activity.

**ACTIONS:**

17. Develop opportunities with local fitness centers to promote on-site and off-site physical activity opportunities.
18. Engage local employers with health resources such as walking trails, lunch break exercise groups, etc.

**ANTICIPATED IMPACT:**

- X. By FY22, 5 employers will engage associates in regular physical activity.

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

<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	<b>LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:</b>	<b>STATE PLAN:</b>	<b>“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:</b>
VIII	With cardiovascular disease and cancer as leading causes of death, physical activity is critical for health improvement		Healthy People 2020/2030 – PA-12