

Ascension Alabama

St. Vincent's Blount 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 Blount County and prioritized needs of the communities St. Vincent's Blount 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 Blount 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 Blount 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 Blount 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 Blount 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 Blount 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:

- St. Vincent's Blount will conduct medical services events in the community to create access and continuity for individuals who are uninsured and/or underserved.
- 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 4439:1 according to County Health Rankings.
- There are approximately 13 PCP providers in Blount County 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 10% in 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 Blount will promote and coordinate community efforts to improve medication access for uninsured individuals.

Strategy:

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- The strategy's target population is uninsured patients 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, and Dispensary of Hope will collaborate to increase utilization and access for medication.

Anticipated impact:

- By FY21, implementation of Dispensary of Hope in Blount County
- 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.

GOAL#3: Increase the number of practicing primary care providers

St. Vincent's Blount will work to recruit and place additional primary care providers in the Blount County community over the next three years.

Strategy:

- The strategy is to add at least three new primary care providers to the community over FY20-22.
- The strategy is supported by evidence found in What Works for Health
- The effort will address barriers to care by increasing the number of primary care providers available.
- The current PCP to individual ratio in the county is 4439:1 according to County Health Rankings.
- There are approximately 13 PCP providers in Blount County according to County Health Rankings.

Resources and Collaboration:

- The hospital, physician recruitment, local physician practices will collaborate to ensure the community has an increased number of primary care providers.

Anticipated impact:

- By June 2022, # of Primary Care Providers in Blount County will increase from 13 to 16.
- Increasing the number of primary care providers aligns with the #1 priority of the State of Alabama Community Health Improvement Plan to increase access. It is critical for the local community to offer residents local places of care. Healthy People 2020/2030's goal AHS-4 addresses the need for increased number of primary care providers.

Mental Healthcare and Substance Abuse

GOAL #1: 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 Blount realizes the need to promote mental health and substance abuse treatment in the community. To address this, St. Vincent's Blount 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, Blount County had 43 drug-overdose deaths in 2018 and 15% of individuals report excessive drinking. Alcohol-related driving deaths were 14 in 2018.
- Blount County is significantly underserved with mental healthcare and substance abuse treatment 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 individuals 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 individuals identified with substance abuse disorder will be referred 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 receive counseling about education related to weight-reduction, nutrition or physical activity.

St. Vincent's Blount will improve the health and wellness of Blount County by providing access to nutrition counseling to the community. With cardiovascular disease and cancer as the two leading causes of death in Blount County, proper understanding of diet and nutrition is critical to improving health and wellness.

Strategy:

- Provide diet and nutrition classes and education to individuals in the community.
- The strategy is informed by best practices promoted by What Works for Health.
- According to County Health Rankings the adult obesity rate in Blount County is 34%.

Resources and Collaboration:

- The hospital will collaborate with local non-profit service providers and Chamber of Commerce to promote nutrition counseling. The hospital will work closely with registered dietitians and the dietary company to provide information and resources.

Anticipated impact:

- By FY22, St. Vincent's Blount will have provided classes/education to over 100 individuals in the community.
- Individuals receiving education will report increased knowledge of healthy choices through pre- and post-test assessments.
- Addresses Alabama's obesity concerns as well as Healthy People 2020/2030 goals around nutrition and weight.

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

St. Vincent's Blount will improve the health and wellness of Blount County by providing access to healthy food. With cardiovascular disease and cancer as the two leading causes of death in Blount County, proper nutrition is critical to improving health and wellness.

Strategy:

- Increase healthy food distribution to community in partnership with community resources.
- 11% of households in Blount County are food insecure according to County Health Rankings and 53% of students are eligible for free or reduced cost lunch.
- Participate in various feeding programs across community to improve food access to high-risk individuals.

Resources and Collaboration:

- The hospital will collaborate with local non-profit service providers such as Community Food Bank and Hope House to ensure food collection and distribution benefit food insecure families in Blount County.

Anticipated impact:

- By FY22, St. Vincent's Blount will have provided healthy food to community agencies that assist feeding over 1000 individuals in the community.
- Addresses Alabama's obesity concerns as well as Healthy People 2020/2030 goals around nutrition and weight.

GOAL #3: Increase the proportion of persons living with diagnosed diabetes who receive formal diabetes education.

St. Vincent's Blount will increase the number of individuals who receive formal diabetes education.

Strategy:

- Provide free or reduced cost diabetes education to individuals diagnosed with diabetes.
- The strategy is supported by best practices promoted by What Works for Health.
- According to County Health Rankings the adult diabetes rate in Blount County is 14%.

Resources and Collaboration:

- The hospital will collaborate with the American Diabetes Association and Diabetes Education department to provide classes.

Anticipated impact:

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- By FY22, St. Vincent’s Blount will have provided diabetes classes/education to over 100 individuals in the community.
- Individuals receiving education will report increased knowledge of disease management through pre-and post-test assessments.
- Addresses Alabama’s obesity concerns as well as Healthy People 2020/2030 goal D-14.

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

<p>STRATEGY 1: Conduct medical services events in the community to create access and continuity for individuals who are uninsured and/or underserved</p>
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 4439:1 according to County Health Rankings. • There are approximately 13 PCP providers in Blount County according to County Health Rankings.
<p>RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hospital, revenue cycle partners, community clinics and private practitioners will collaborate to provide patient-appropriate resources for unattached individuals.
<p>ACTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct community-wide medical screening and services event 2. Connect each participant at screening/services with primary care provider 3. Provide counseling and information related to screening results for participants at community event
<p>ANTICIPATED IMPACT:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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

STRATEGY 1: Conduct medical services events in the community to create access and continuity for individuals who are uninsured and/or underserved

patient access/registration

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 community health	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 prescription medicine

Action Plan

STRATEGY 1: Implement Dispensary of Hope program

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The strategy’s target population is uninsured patients 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, and Dispensary of Hope will collaborate to increase utilization and access for medication.

ACTIONS:

4. Develop and implement plan to begin Dispensary of Hope medication distribution to uninsured individuals in the community
5. Connect participants at screening/services with medication, as needed
6. Provide information and resources related to medication and medication reconciliation to

STRATEGY 1: Implement Dispensary of Hope program
community members
<p>ANTICIPATED IMPACT:</p> <p>III. By FY20, implementation of Dispensary of Hope</p> <p>IV. By FY22, utilization of Dispensary of Hope will increase by 20%</p>

Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
III, IV	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 #1: Access to Healthcare

GOAL: Increase the number of practicing primary care providers

Action Plan

STRATEGY 1: Add at least three new primary care providers to the community over FY 20 – FY 22
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy is supported by evidence found in What Works for Health The effort will address barriers to care by increasing the number of primary care providers available. The current PCP to individual ratio in the county is 4439:1 according to County Health Rankings. There are approximately 13 PCP providers in Blount County according to County Health Rankings.
<p>RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hospital, physician recruitment, local physician practices will collaborate to ensure the community has an increased number of primary care providers.
ACTIONS:

STRATEGY 1: Add at least three new primary care providers to the community over FY 20 – FY 22

- 7. Recruit and credential at least 1 PCP per year for 3 years
- 8. Work with existing primary care providers to increase recruitment and visibility in community
- 9. Locate areas with little to no access to primary care and coordinate with PCP to provide access
- 10. Increase specialty provider access to community

ANTICIPATED IMPACT:

- V. By June 2022, # of Primary Care Providers in Blount County will increase from 13 to 16.

Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
V	Increasing number of PCP in Blount county is high priority with the large patient: provider ratio that currently exists. Specialty care closer to patient residents will help with access.	Aligns with Priority 1 - Access to Healthcare in State of AL Community Health Improvement Plan (AL-CHIP)	Aligns with Healthy People 2020/2030 (AHS-4)

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 individuals with suspected or diagnosed substance abuse to treatment.			
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, Blount County had 43 drug-overdose deaths in 2018 and 15% of individuals report excessive drinking. Alcohol-related driving deaths were 14 in 2018. • Blount County is significantly underserved with mental healthcare provision 			
RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 and Psychiatric Intake and Response Center (PIRC) of Children’s of Alabama to connect patients with treatment • Ascension Alabama will provide physician and staff education related to substance abuse 			
ACTIONS:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physician education (CME) on substance abuse 2. Staff education on substance abuse 3. Refer individuals with suspected or diagnosed substance abuse to treatment facilities 4. Identify local resources for substance abuse treatment for all payors 			
ANTICIPATED IMPACT:			
<p>VI. By FY22, all employed physicians and Emergency Department physicians will implement referral protocol for individuals with substance abuse disorder.</p> <p>VII. By FY22, >25% of patients identified with substance abuse disorder will be referred for treatment.</p>			

Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
VI, VII	With 43 drug overdose deaths in 2018, this is a local concern	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 receive counseling about nutrition and diet

Action Plan

<p>STRATEGY 1: Provide diet and nutrition counseling to individuals who have not previously received this service</p>
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy is supported by best practices promoted by What Works for Health. According to County Health Rankings the adult obesity rate in Blount County is 34%.
<p>RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hospital will collaborate with local non-profit service providers and Chamber of Commerce to promote nutrition counseling. The hospital will work closely with registered dietitians and the dietary company to provide information and resources. St. Vincent’s Blount will provide coordination and resources to promote fresh food consumption.
<p>ACTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Offer at free and/or reduced cost nutrition classes/counseling Work with local produce providers and community agencies to increase access to healthy food Reach out to civic groups and social service agencies to promote service
<p>ANTICIPATED IMPACT:</p> <p>VIII. By FY22, St. Vincent’s Blount will have provided classes/education to over 100 individuals in the community.</p> <p>IX. Individuals receiving education will report increased knowledge of healthy choices through pre- and post-test assessments.</p>

Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
VIII, IX	Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death Chilton County. Obesity rate in Chilton County is 34%	Cardiovascular disease accounts for the leading cause of death in Alabama. Healthy eating will promote disease	Healthy People 2020/2030 NWS-6, NWS-8

management and healthy habits

Prioritized Need #3: Healthy Living

GOAL: Reduce household food insecurity and in do so reduce hunger

Action Plan

STRATEGY 1: Increase healthy food distribution in partnership with community resources
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11% of households in Blount County are food insecure according to County Health Rankings and 53% of students are eligible for free or reduced cost lunch. Participate in various feeding programs across community to improve food access to high-risk individuals.
<p>RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hospital will collaborate with local non-profit service providers such as Community Food Bank and Hope House to ensure food collection and distribution benefit food insecure families in Blount County.
<p>ACTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Conduct ongoing food drives focusing on healthy food 9. Explore and participate in weekend backpack feeding program locally with schools 10. Distribute healthy non-perishable food to local organizations for food insecure families 11. Work with Touchpoint to identify excess food such as produce that can be distributed to individuals and/or organizations in need
<p>ANTICIPATED IMPACT:</p> <p>X. By FY22, St. Vincent’s Blount will have provided healthy food for >1,000 community members.</p>

Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

OBJECTIVE:	LOCAL / COMMUNITY PLAN:	STATE PLAN:	“HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030”:
X	Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death Chilton County. Obesity rate in Blount County is 34%	Cardiovascular disease accounts for the leading cause of	Healthy People 2020/2030 NWS-13

death in Alabama.
Healthy eating will
promote disease
management and
healthy habits

Prioritized Need #3: Healthy Living

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

Action Plan

STRATEGY 1: Offer community-based diabetes management resources
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide free or reduced cost diabetes education to individuals diagnosed with diabetes. The strategy is informed by best practices promoted by What Works for Health. According to County Health Rankings the adult diabetes rate in Blount County is 14%.
<p>RESOURCES & COLLABORATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hospital will collaborate with the American Diabetes Association and Diabetes Education department to provide classes.
<p>ACTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Develop sliding scale and/or scholarships for Diabetes Education classes 13. Publicize availability of diabetes education to greater community 14. Partner with Dispensary of Hope to provide insulin and diabetes management supplies at free or low cost 15. The hospital will collaborate with local clinics to identify diabetic patients in need of education
<p>ANTICIPATED IMPACT:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> XI. From FY 20 – FY 22, St. Vincent’s Blount will increase individuals participating in diabetes education by 5% annually. XII. Individuals receiving education will report increased knowledge of disease management through pre-and post-test assessments

Alignment with Local, State & National Priorities

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