

Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast

Implementation Strategy for the 2021 CHNA Okaloosa and Walton county, Florida



Ascension

IS

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The purpose of this implementation strategy is to describe how the hospital plans to address prioritized health needs from its current Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The significant health needs that the hospital does not intend to address are identified and a rationale is provided. Special attention has been given to the needs of individuals and communities who are more vulnerable, unmet health needs or gaps in services, and input gathered from the community.

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The 2021 Implementation Strategy (IS) was approved by the Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast Board of Directors on August 2, 2022 (2022 tax year), and applies to the following three-year cycle: July 2022 to June 2025. This report, as well as the previous report, can be found on our public website.

We value the community's voice and welcome feedback on this report. Please visit our public website (<https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>) to submit your comments.

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Introduction

As one of the leading non-profit and Catholic health systems in the United States, Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable.

Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast

As a Ministry of the Catholic Church, Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast (ASHEC) is a non-profit hospital governed by a local board of trustees represented by residents, medical staff, and sister sponsorships, and has been providing medical care to Okaloosa and Walton County, Florida. Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast is a regional health system that includes Ascension St. Vincent's based in Jacksonville, Florida, Ascension Sacred Heart based in Pensacola, Florida, and Ascension Providence in Mobile, Alabama. Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast operates ten hospitals and more than 200 other sites of care, employing more than 13,000 associates.

Across the region, Ascension Providence, Ascension Sacred Heart, and Ascension St. Vincent's each have served North Florida and South Alabama communities for more than 100 years. Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast continues the long and valued tradition of addressing the health of the people in our community, with special attention to the poor and vulnerable. Our health system is following in the footsteps of the Daughters of Charity, a community of religious women who built the original Catholic hospitals in Mobile, Jacksonville, and Pensacola.

For more information about Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, visit healthcare.ascension.org.

Overview of the Implementation Strategy

Purpose

This implementation strategy (IS) is the hospital's response to the health needs prioritized from its current Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). It describes the actions the hospital will take to address prioritized needs, allocate resources, and mobilize hospital programs and community partners to work together. This approach aligns with Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast's commitment to offer programs designed to address the health needs of a community, with special attention to persons who are underserved and vulnerable.

IRS 501(r)(3) and Form 990, Schedule H Compliance

The CHNA and IS satisfy certain requirements of tax reporting, pursuant to provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, more commonly known as the Affordable Care Act (ACA). As part of the ACA, all not-for-profit hospitals are required to conduct a CHNA and adopt an implementation strategy every three years.

Requirements for 501(c)(3) Hospitals Under the Affordable Care Act are described in Code Section 501(r)(3), and include making the CHNA report (current and previous) widely available to the public. In accordance with this requirement, electronic reports of both the CHNA and the current implementation strategy can be found at <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA> and paper versions can be requested at Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast's Administration offices.

Process to Prioritize Needs

Included in Code Section 501(r)(3) is the requirement that hospitals must provide a description of the process and criteria used to determine the most significant health needs of the community identified through the CHNA, along with a description of the process and criteria used to determine the prioritized needs to be addressed by the hospital. Accordingly, Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast used a phased prioritization approach to identify the needs of Okaloosa and Walton County, Florida. The first step was to determine the broader set of identified needs. Through the CHNA assessment, identified needs were then narrowed to a set of significant needs which were determined most crucial for community stakeholders to address.

Following the completion of the CHNA assessment, significant needs were further narrowed down to a set of prioritized needs that the hospital will address within the implementation strategy. To arrive at the prioritized needs, Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast used the following process and criteria: the collection and analysis of secondary data and the collection of primary data through interviews and focus groups held between May and August 2021. Data presented in the assessment is the most recent data available. Interview participants included public health officers, key informants, and community partners. Six focus groups were held for the service area and included community partners and leaders of area non-profits. Community input is shared throughout the report. Secondary data was collected from sources including, but not limited to, the U.S. Census Bureau, Florida Department of Public Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Kaiser Family Foundation, Department of Veteran Affairs, Centers for Disease Control, National Institute of Health, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The criteria used to prioritize the significant needs were:

- Importance of the problem to the community
- Magnitude: the number of people impacted by the problem
- Severity: the risk of morbidity and mortality associated with the problem

Needs That Will Be Addressed

Following the completion of the current CHNA, Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast has selected the prioritized need outlined below for its 2021 implementation strategy. Ascension has defined “prioritized needs” as the significant needs which have been prioritized by the hospital to address through the three-year CHNA cycle:

- Access to Care - This need was selected because the community prioritized this identified need across all Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast campuses in the previous CHNA and in the current CHNA report, increasing the importance of the identified need.

Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast understands the importance of all the health needs of the community and is committed to playing an active role in improving the health of the people in the communities it serves. For the purposes of this implementation strategy, Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast has chosen to focus its efforts on the priorities listed above.

Needs That Will Not Be Addressed

Based on the prioritization criteria, the health needs identified through the CHNA that Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast does not plan to address at this time include:

- Alcohol & Drug Use - This need was not selected because there are other organizations in the community that are specialized in addressing this prioritized identified need.
- Chronic Disease [Cancer, Diabetes, Obesity] - This need was not selected because while we continue to provide preventative health education, medical screening, and medical services, due to limited resources, ASHEC is focused on other prioritized identified needs.
- COVID-19 - This need was not selected because the pandemic continues to be dynamic and ever-involving. ASHEC will continue to serve the community by providing high-quality, medical care to all persons.
- Mental/Behavioral Health - This need was not selected because there are other organizations in the community that are specialized in addressing this prioritized identified need.
- Social Determinants of Health [Housing & Transit, Income] - This need was not selected because there are other organizations in the community that are specialized in addressing this prioritized identified need.

While these needs are not the focus of this implementation strategy, Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast may consider investing resources in these areas as appropriate, depending on opportunities to leverage organizational assets in partnership with local communities and organizations. Also, this report does not encompass a complete inventory of everything Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast does to support health within the community.

To find a list of resources for each need not being addressed, please refer to the Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast's 2021 CHNA: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA>.

Acute Community Concern Acknowledgement

A CHNA and Implementation Strategies (IS) offer a construct for identifying and addressing needs within the community(s) it serves. However, unforeseen events or situations, which may be severe and sudden, may affect a community. At Ascension, this is referred to as an acute community concern. This could describe anything from a health crisis (e.g., COVID-19), water poisoning, environmental events (e.g., hurricane, flood) or other event that suddenly impacts a community. In which case, if adjustments to an IS are necessary, the hospital will develop documentation, in the form of a SBAR (Situation-Background-Assessment-Response) evaluation summary, to notify key internal and external stakeholders of those possible adjustments.

Written Comments

This IS has been made available to the public and is open for public comment. Questions or comments about this implementation strategy can be submitted via the website:

<https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>.

Approval and Adoption by Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast Board of Directors

To ensure the Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast's efforts meet the needs of the community and have a lasting and meaningful impact, the 2021 implementation strategy was presented and adopted by Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast Board of Directors on August 2, 2022. Although an authorized body of the hospital must adopt the IS to be compliant with the provisions in the Affordable Care Act, adoption of the IS also demonstrates that the board is aware of the IS, endorses the priorities identified and supports the action plans that have been developed to address prioritized needs.

Action Plans

The IS below is based on prioritized needs from the hospital’s most recent CHNA. These strategies and action plans represent where the hospital will focus its community efforts over the next three years. While these remain a priority, the hospital will continue to offer additional programs and services to meet the needs of the community, with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable.

STRATEGY #1
Hospital Name Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast
Prioritized Health Need #1 Access to Care
Strategy Improve Access to Care by increasing the overall % of Virtual Care Visits of Ascension Medical Group (AMG) patients, as compared to the total number of AMG patient visits, over 3 years.
Strategy Source Improving Access to Care: Telemedicine Across Medical Domains https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-090519-093711
Objective By the Year End reporting of FY23, FY24, and FY25, the percentage of Virtual Care Visits for FLPEN AMG Patients, as compared to total number of FLPEN AMG patient visits will increase to 6%, 7%, and 8% respectively.
Target Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Target Population: Ascension Sacred Heart Medical Group patients (Primary Care and Speciality Care) ● Medically Underserved Population: inclusive of all patients we serve, uninsured, Medicaid, etc
Collaborators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Other Ascension hospitals: Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay, Ascension Sacred Heart Gulf ● Joint Venture: N/A ● Collaborators: Ascension Sacred Heart Medical Group ● Consultants: N/A ● Other non-profit hospital: N/A
Resources List organization(s) and the resources that each organization will be committing to the (e.g., people, process, funding), delete if not applicable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborators: Ascension Sacred Heart Medical Group will support the program by incorporating training of staff and implementing programs to support telehealth

ACTION STEPS	ROLE/OWNER
Training of office staff and Providers on the use of Virtual Visits	AMG
Training of Scheduling office to offer and book Virtual Visits	AMG Scheduling/DASH Call Center
Providers having set time available for Virtual Visits	AMG
Local Leadership’s championing of virtual care program	AFGC Leadership
Monthly reporting into Growth Council	Strategy
Output(s) and/or Outcome(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: % of FLPEN Virtual Visits, compared to all FLPEN AMG Visits, at the FY22 Year End. • Target: increase to 6% at FY23 Year End, 7% at FY24 Year End, 8% at FY25 Year End • Data Source; Data Owner: Athena data via Tableau reporting platform; Jacob Fischer 	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
The anticipated impact of these actions is improving access to medical care by increasing virtual office visits, and allowing patients who have difficulty with transportation, mobility, child care, etc; to visit with a medical provider.	

STRATEGY #2
Hospital Name Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast
Prioritized Health Need #1 Access to Care
Strategy Increase Access to Care by Care Continuity connecting Emergency Dept patients who do not have a Provider (aka unattached patients) assisted through the ED Concierge program
Strategy Source Improving Care Coordination and Reducing ED Utilization Through Patient Navigation https://www.ajmc.com/view/improving-care-coordination-and-reducing-ed-utilization-through-patient-n avigation
Objective By June 30, 2025, Care Continuity will offer assistance to a targeted number of ASHEC ED Charity/Self-Pay patients, assisting 10% to connect to an outpatient Provider for continuity of care.
Target Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Population: Unattached Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast Emergency Department patients • Medically Underserved Population: Charity/Self-pay patients
Collaborators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Ascension hospital: N/A • Joint Venture: N/A • Collaborators: Care Continuity & Ascension Medical Group (AMG)
Resources

<p>List organization(s) and the resources that each organization will be committing to the (e.g., people, process, funding), delete if not applicable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Ascension hospital(s): N/A • Joint Venture: N/A • Collaborators: Care Continuity • Consultants: N/A • Other non-profit hospital: N/A 	
ACTION STEPS	ROLE/OWNER
Onboarding of Care Continuity into AFGC	Strategy
Implementation of program with ED and Nursing leadership	Care Continuity
Deployment of staff into ED	Care Continuity
Set up and connection of workstations in ED	AFGC
Monthly reporting into Growth Council	Strategy
<p>Output(s) and/or Outcome(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: zero as program has not been implemented at this time • Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 & June 30, 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase Charity/Self-Pay patients offered assistance through ED Concierge program ■ 10 % of Charity/Self-Pay patients offered assistance, connected with a provider • Data Source; Data Owner: Strategy Dashboard; Strategy 	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
<p>The anticipated impact of these actions will be increasing continuity of care and access to medical services for patients who visit the Emergency Department, with special attention to charity/self-pay patients.</p>	

Evaluation

Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast will develop a comprehensive measurement and evaluation process for the implementation strategy. The Ministry will monitor and evaluate the action plans outlined in this plan for the purpose of reporting and documenting the impact these action plans have on the community. Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast uses a tracking system to capture community benefit activities and implementation. To ensure accountability, data will be aggregated into an annual Community Benefit report that will be made available to the community.