

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay

Sacred Heart Health System, Inc.

2024 Community Health Needs Assessment Bay County, Florida

Conducted July 2024 to February 2025 (*Tax Year 2024*)



Ascension

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay

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The goal of this report is to offer a meaningful understanding of the most significant health needs across Bay County, Florida, with emphasis on identifying the barriers to health equity for all people, as well as to inform planning efforts to respond to those needs. Special attention has been given to the needs of individuals and communities who are at increased risk for poor health outcomes or experiencing social factors that place them at risk. Findings from this report can be used to identify, develop, and focus hospital, health system, and community initiatives and programming to better serve the health and wellness needs of the community.

The 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment report was approved by the Ascension Florida Board of Directors on February 4, 2025 (2024 Tax Year), and applies to the following three-year cycle: July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028. This report, as well as the previous report, can be found at 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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Message from the President



Robin M. Godwin, RN, MSN, CEN
President and CEO
Ascension Sacred Heart Bay

I am honored to serve as the President and CEO of Ascension Sacred Heart Bay hospital. Deeply rooted in our community for over 75 years, the community supported opening a county-owned hospital following World War II with the support of federal government funds. Ascension brought the hospital back to its original non-profit roots in 2019 following Hurricane Michael which heavily damaged the facility. Since then, services have not only been restored but improved with special attention to critical care access and those struggling the most.

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay provides the area's only Level II Trauma Center, only comprehensive cardiovascular program, and only stroke program with neurothrombectomy capability. The hospital provides a wide range of minimally invasive procedures using robotic-assisted technology, imaging and lab tests all on campus. This year, we were named a top-15 health system by Fortune/PINC AI and received national recognition for heart care. These awards are a testament to our physicians' and care teams' dedication to patients and a reflection of devotion to our Ministry's values. We will continue to expand these services to meet the growing needs of our community.

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay's commitment to Northwest Florida goes well beyond the walls of the hospital. We are blessed to be able to support & collaborate with local organizations such as St. Andrew Community Medical Center, Life Management Center, and PanCare of Florida, Inc. These partnerships are an integral part of our broader mission to enhance the health of our neighbors. However, our most significant commitment is to the most vulnerable members of Northwest Florida. Our outreach initiatives are varied and include the Women's Services Fund and Care of the Poor, among other collaborations. We value each member of our community and strive to have a positive impact on their lives.

Executive Summary

Purpose of the CHNA

The purpose of the community health needs assessment (CHNA) is to understand the health needs and priorities, with emphasis on identifying the barriers to health equity, for all people who live and/or work in the communities served by the hospital, with the goal of responding to those needs through the development of an implementation strategy (IS) plan. As part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, all not-for-profit hospitals are required to conduct a CHNA and adopt an IS every three years.

Community Served

For the 2024 CHNA, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay has defined Bay County, Florida, as its community served. While the hospital provides services to Bay County and surrounding areas, Bay County was chosen as the focus due to its status as the primary service area for both the hospital and its community partners.

Data Analysis Methodology

The 2024 CHNA was conducted from July 2024 to February 2025 with contracted assistance from Kleinhaus Consulting Group, LLC., and utilized an integrative analysis process that incorporated data from both primary and secondary sources.

- Community input (primary data) was collected to reflect the voice of the community. Focus groups and key stakeholder interviews with over 20 people representing health care consumers, health care professionals, community stakeholders, and multi-sector industries were held. Special attention was given to the needs of individuals and populations who are more marginalized and to unmet health needs or gaps in services.
- Secondary data was compiled and reviewed to understand the health status of the community. Over 35 indicators from reputable and reliable sources reflecting chronic disease, social and economic factors, and healthcare access were reviewed as well as utilization trends in the community.

Community Needs

A phased prioritization approach to determine the most crucial needs for community stakeholders to address. The significant needs are as follows (in alphabetical order):

- Access to care
- Affordable housing
- Chronic disease and obesity
- Mental health and substance abuse
- Transportation

Next Steps and Conclusion

The 2024 CHNA was presented to the Ascension Florida Board of Directors for approval on February 4, 2025. Findings from the report can be used to identify, develop, and focus hospital, health system, and community initiatives and programming to better serve the health and wellness needs of the community.

Following approval of the CHNA, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay will complete a prioritization matrix and develop an IS. The IS will focus on all or a subset of the significant needs, and will describe how the hospital intends to respond to those prioritized needs throughout the same three-year CHNA cycle: July 2025 to June 2028.

About Ascension

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 individuals and communities who are at increased risk for poor health outcomes or experiencing social factors that place them at risk.

Ascension

Ascension is one of the nation's leading non-profit and Catholic health systems, with a Mission of delivering compassionate, personalized care to all with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable. In fiscal year 2024, Ascension provided \$2.1 billion in care of persons living in poverty and other community benefit programs. Ascension includes approximately 131,000 associates, 37,000 affiliated providers, and 136 hospitals, serving communities in 18 states and the District of Columbia.

Ascension's Mission provides a strong framework and guidance for the work done to meet the needs of communities across the U.S. It is foundational to transform health care and express priorities when providing care and services, particularly to those most in need.

Mission: Rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer, we commit ourselves to serving all persons with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable. Our Catholic health ministry is dedicated to spiritually-centered, holistic care which sustains and improves the health of individuals and communities. We are advocates for a compassionate and just society through our actions and our words.

For more information about Ascension, visit <https://www.ascension.org>.

Ascension Florida

In Florida, Ascension operates Ascension Sacred Heart based in Pensacola and Ascension St. Vincent's based in Jacksonville. Together, Ascension Florida operates nine hospitals and more than 190 other sites of care and employs more than 12,000 associates.

Across the region, Ascension Sacred Heart and Ascension St. Vincent's have served North Florida communities for more than 165 years. In fiscal year 2024, they provided more than \$395 million in community benefit and other care for vulnerable persons

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay

As a Ministry of the Catholic Church, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay is a non-profit hospital under the guidance of a local Hospital Advisory Council and governed by a state board of directors represented by community members, medical staff, and sister sponsorships, and has been providing medical care to Bay county.

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay operates one hospital, a free-standing emergency department, seven related healthcare facilities, and employs more than 40 primary and specialty care clinicians.

Serving Florida since 1949, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay is continuing the long and valued tradition of responding to the health needs of the people in our community, following in the footsteps of legacy. The hospital was originally built as a county-owned facility through community support with federal government funds allocated for hospitals after World War II. Ascension Sacred Heart Bay was acquired by Ascension in 2019 following Hurricane Michael which caused extensive damage to the hospital. Since then, the hospital has not only restored but improved services, with a focus on increasing access critical care.



For more information about Ascension Sacred Heart Bay, visit ascension.org/BayFL.

About the Community Health Needs Assessment

A community health needs assessment is essential for community building, health improvement efforts, and directing resources where they are most needed. CHNAs can be powerful tools with the potential to be catalysts for immense community change.

Purpose of the CHNA

A CHNA is defined as “a systematic process involving the community that identifies and analyzes community health needs and assets to plan and act upon priority community health needs.”¹ The process serves as a foundation for promoting the health and well-being of the community by identifying the most pressing needs, leveraging existing assets and resources, developing strategic plans, and mobilizing hospital programs and community partners to work together.

This community-driven approach aligns with Ascension Sacred Heart Bay’s commitment to offer programs designed to respond to the health needs of a community, with special attention to persons who are medically underserved and at risk for poorer health outcomes because of social factors that put them at increased risk.

Advancing Health Equity

Health equity is the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health.² Progress toward achieving health equity can be measured by reducing health disparities. Health disparities are particular health differences closely linked with economic, social, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced such obstacles to health based on their race or ethnicity; religion; socioeconomic status; gender identity; sexual orientation; age; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.³

Focusing on the root causes that have perpetuated these differences contributes to the advancement of health equity. By identifying the conditions, practices, and policies that perpetuate differences in health outcomes, we can better respond to root causes when pursuing health equity.

Ascension acknowledges that health disparities in our communities go beyond individual health behaviors. Ascension’s Mission calls us to be “advocates for a compassionate and just society through our actions and words”; therefore, health equity is a matter of great importance to Ascension.

¹ Catholic Health Association of the United States. (2022). *A guide for planning and reporting community benefit, 2022* (p.146).

² National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2023, January 4). *Advancing health equity in chronic disease prevention and management*. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Retrieved October 11, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/healthequity/index.htm>

³ Braveman, P. (2014). What are health disparities and health equity? We need to be clear. *Public Health Reports*, 129(Suppl 2), 5-8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00333549141291S203>

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

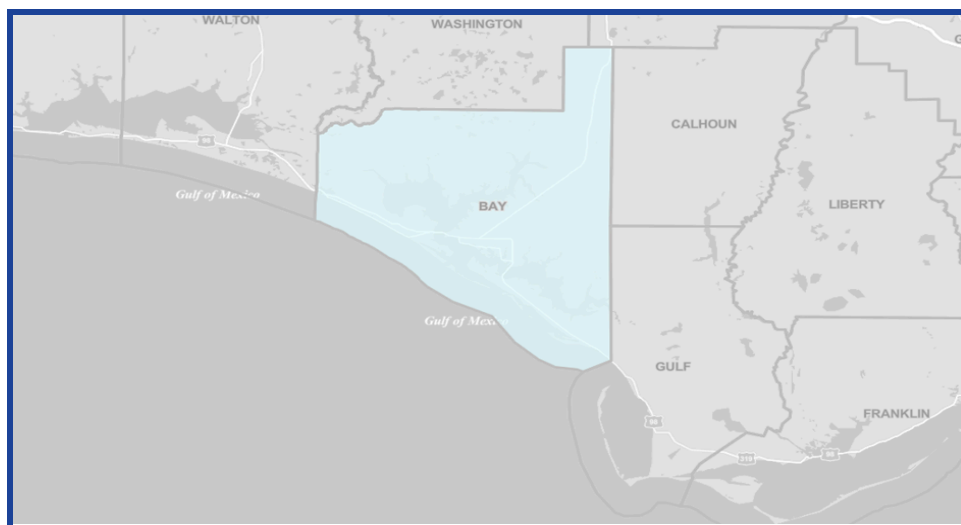
The CHNA also serves to satisfy certain requirements of tax reporting, pursuant to provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, more commonly known as the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Requirements for 501(c)(3) hospitals under the ACA are described in Code Section 501(r)(3).

Under the ACA, all not-for-profit hospitals must conduct a CHNA and adopt an IS every three years. Additionally, both current and previous CHNA and IS reports must be made widely available to the public. To meet this requirement, electronic versions of these reports are accessible at <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA>, and paper copies can be requested from the administrative offices at Ascension Sacred Heart Bay.

Community Served and Demographics

Community Served

For the purpose of the 2024 CHNA, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay has defined its community served as Bay County, Florida. Although Ascension Sacred Heart Bay serves Bay county and the surrounding areas, the “community served” was defined as such because (a) most of our service area is in each county; (b) most of our assessment partners define their service area at the county level; and (c) most community health data is available at the county level.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. [Bay County Profile](#)

Florida's Bay County is a coastal community in the Panhandle, renowned for its pristine beaches, diverse natural landscapes, and resilient spirit. Anchored by the city of Panama City and the tourist hub of Panama City Beach, the county is home to a mix of military families, retirees, and an increasing number of young professionals. While the military presence at Tyndall Air Force Base and Naval Support Activity Panama City and healthy tourism industry help stabilize the local economy, the region faces challenges with limited economic diversity.

Recent years have tested the community, including the devastation of Hurricane Michael in 2018 and the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Population growth has added pressure on housing affordability and local resources. Despite these challenges, Bay County continues to recover and grow, driven by collaboration, a strong military presence, and economic activity in tourism, construction, and small businesses.

Demographic Data

Located in Florida, Bay County has a population of 190,769 and is the 30th most populated county in the state. Below are demographic data highlights for Bay County:

- **Age Distribution:** In Bay County, 18.5% of residents are 65 or older, compared to 21.6% in Florida overall.
- **Ethnicity Breakdown:** 90.7% of Bay County residents are non-Hispanic, while 9.3% identify as Hispanic or Latino (of any race).
- **Racial Composition:** Among non-Hispanic Bay County residents, 73.3% are White, 11.9% are Black or African American, 2.4% are Asian, and 0.8% are American Indian or Alaska Native.
- **Population Growth:** From 2020 to 2023, Bay County's total population increased by 8.9%, with the Hispanic or Latino population showing the largest growth at 1.2%.
- **Household Income:** The median household income in Bay County is \$65,999, slightly below Florida's median income of \$67,917.
- **Poverty Rate:** The poverty rate in Bay County is 11.9%, which is 0.8% lower than Florida's overall rate of 12.7%.
- **Uninsured Rate:** Bay County's uninsured rate is 13.7%, slightly higher than the state average of 13.4%.

Table 1: Demographics

Population			
Indicator	Bay County	Florida	Description
Residents living in rural communities	13.1%	8.1%	N/A
Residents below 18 years of age	20.8%	19.3%	N/A
Residents 65 years of age and over	18.5%	21.6%	N/A
Asian	2.4%	3.1%	N/A
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.8%	0.5%	N/A
Hispanic	7.9%	27.1%	N/A
Non-Hispanic Black	11.8%	17.0%	N/A
Non-Hispanic White	73.3%	51.9%	N/A
Social and Community Context			
English proficiency	3.5	11.9	Proportion of community members who speak English "less than well"
Median household income	\$65,999	\$67,917	Income level at which half of households in a county earn more and half of households earn less
Children in poverty	14.8%	17.1%	Percentage of people under age 18 in poverty
Uninsured	13.7%	13.4%	Percentage of population under age 65 without health insurance
Educational attainment	90.4%	89.3%	Percentage of adults ages 25 and over with a high school diploma or equivalent
Unemployment	3.2%	3.2%	Percentage of population ages 16 and older unemployed but seeking work

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). [American Community Survey](#)

To view community demographic data in their entirety, see [Appendix B](#) (Page 33).

Process and Methods Used

Collaborators and/or Consultants

With the contracted assistance of Kleinhaus Consulting Group, LLC., Ascension Sacred Heart Bay completed its 2024 CHNA with input from the following organizations:

- Anchorage Children’s Home
- Bay County Council on Aging
- BASIC Northwest Florida
- Boys and Girls Club of Bay County, Inc.
- Early Education and Care, Inc.
- Emerald Coast Regional Planning Council
- Family Service Agency of Bay County
- Florida Department of Children and Families
- Florida Department of Health
- Gulf Coast Veterans Health System
- Healthy Start Coalition of Bay, Franklin and Gulf Counties

Kleinhaus Consulting Group, LLC. is an external firm that conducted the previous Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), and was again contracted to conduct the 2024 CHNA for the following hospitals: Ascension Sacred Heart Bay, Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, and Ascension Sacred Heart Gulf. Kleinhaus Consulting Group, LLC specializes in community health needs assessments, planning, and healthcare strategy, and Julie Klein, MBA, serves as the principal investigator, leading both primary and secondary research efforts to provide a comprehensive analysis of community health needs.

Kleinhaus Consulting Group, LLC. worked closely with the Ascension Florida Community Benefit team to evaluate the health needs of the local community, gather data, and provide insights that would guide the development of effective implementation strategies. Their collaboration ensures that Ascension Sacred Heart’s services are aligned with the needs of the communities served, fostering improved health outcomes and strategic planning for healthcare delivery.

Data Collection Methodology

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay is committed to using national best practices in conducting the CHNA. In collaboration with various community partners, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay’s approach relies on the collection and analysis of secondary data, and the collection of primary data through interviews and focus groups held between October and November 2024.

Interview participants included public health officers, key informants, and community partners. Five (5) focus groups were held for the service area and included community partners and leaders of area non-profits.

Secondary data was collected from sources including, but not limited to, the U.S. Census Bureau, Florida Department of Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Kaiser Family Foundation, Department of Veteran Affairs, Centers for Disease Control, National Institute of Health, University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Summary of Community Input

Community input, also referred to as “primary data,” is an integral part of a CHNA and is meant to reflect the voice of the community. This input is invaluable for efforts to accurately assess a community's health needs. A concerted effort was made to ensure that the individuals and organizations represented the needs and perspectives of:

1. public health practice and research.
2. individuals who are medically underserved, low-income, or considered among the minority populations served by the hospital.
3. the broader community at large and those who represent the broad interests and needs of the community served.



Multiple methods were used to gather community input, including community focus groups and key stakeholder interviews. These methods provided additional perspectives on selecting and responding to top health issues facing Bay County.

A summary of the process and results is outlined below. To view the primary data and sources in its entirety, see [Appendix C](#) (Page 35).

Community Focus Groups

A series of five (5) focus groups were conducted by Kleinhaus Consulting Group, LLC. to gather feedback from the community on the health needs and assets of Bay County. Fourteen individuals participated in the focus groups, held between October and November 2024. Populations represented by participants included medically underserved, low-income, and minority groups.

Key Summary Points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bay County faces critical health challenges, including limited access to healthcare providers, a high prevalence of chronic conditions like diabetes and obesity, and inadequate mental health and substance abuse services. ● Disruptions from Hurricane Michael and COVID-19, combined with social determinants such as low income, food insecurity, and housing instability, exacerbate health disparities in the county. ● Key areas of concern include shortages of specialty care providers, unreliable public transportation, persistent food deserts, and rising housing costs, all of which limit residents' access to essential health services. ● Enhancing after-hours care, expanding reliable transportation options, recruiting healthcare providers, and investing in preventative care and health education are critical steps to address these challenges. ● Bay County's resilience, strong community partnerships, and public health programs provide a solid foundation for addressing health challenges and building a healthier future for its residents. 	
Sectors Represented	Common Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business ● Education ● Healthcare ● Justice system ● Transportation ● Youth services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to healthcare is significantly hindered by a shortage of providers and inadequate transportation options, particularly in rural areas. ● High prevalence of diabetes, obesity, and other chronic illnesses linked to lifestyle and environmental factors. ● Insufficient mental health and substance abuse treatment options, compounded by stigma and discrimination.
Meaningful Quotes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "Hurricane Michael and the COVID-19 pandemic created a double-whammy for our community. Schools closed during both crises, and some children never returned." ● "Mental health touches every part of our well-being—it's not just about the mind; it affects the whole body too." ● "There are a lot of community nonprofits stepping up to deliver essential programs and services where they are needed most." 	

Key Stakeholder Interviews

One-on-one interviews were conducted by Kleinhaus Consulting Group, LLC. to gather feedback from key stakeholders on the health needs and assets of Bay County. Six representatives from two different agencies participated in the interviews, held between October and November 2024. Sectors represented include public and veteran health.

Key Summary Points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bay County faces major health needs, including limited access to healthcare providers and specialists, a high prevalence of chronic conditions such as diabetes, and substance abuse (particularly fentanyl), as well as gaps in dental and mental health services. • The community is still recovering from the combined impacts of Hurricane Michael and the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted healthcare infrastructure, school systems, and overall stability. Additionally, low income, housing affordability, and transportation barriers exacerbate access to care and healthy living. • Key gaps include shortages of specialty care providers like endocrinologists and pediatricians, unreliable transportation for medical appointments, limited after-hours healthcare, and insufficient access to healthy food due to persistent food deserts. • Bay County demonstrates resilience through strong partnerships, motivated leadership, and public health programs such as school-based initiatives, mobile clinics, and WIC farmers markets, which collectively help address health disparities. • Veterans, LGBTQ+ individuals, children, and disabled residents face unique barriers, including stigma, language challenges, and limited tailored healthcare options, highlighting the need for more inclusive and accessible services. • Addressing housing affordability, expanding healthcare access (especially after-hours and specialty care), improving transportation systems, and enhancing mental health and substance abuse services are critical priorities for improving overall community health. 	
Sectors Represented	Common Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Public Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited availability of providers and transportation barriers hinder access to primary and specialty care. • Affordable housing, food deserts, low income, and rural isolation exacerbate health disparities and chronic conditions. • Veterans, LGBTQ+ individuals, children, and disabled residents face unique barriers, including stigma and insufficient specialized care.
Meaningful Quotes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "In Bay County, getting healthcare isn't just about finding a doctor—it's about dealing with transportation issues and the fact that many specialists aren't nearby." • "This area is one of the fastest-growing regions in the veteran healthcare system. We're building new clinics, and the Panama City clinic is on track to expand within the next five years." • "Our community's health challenges are deeply tied to access to healthy food and affordable housing." 	

Summary of Secondary Data

Secondary data is data that has already been collected and published by another party. Both governmental and non-governmental agencies routinely collect secondary data reflective of the population's health status at the state and county levels through surveys and surveillance systems. Secondary data for this report was compiled from various reputable and reliable sources.

Health indicators in the following categories were reviewed:

- Health outcomes
- Physical environment
- Clinical care
- Social determinants that impact health
- Disparities

A summary of the secondary data collected and analyzed through this assessment is outlined below.

- **Population Growth and Infrastructure:** Bay County has experienced significant population growth since 2020, leading to strained housing inventory, overwhelmed infrastructure, and increased costs.
- **Income and Economic Challenges:** While income levels have risen, challenges remain in addressing food insecurity, mental health needs, and access to healthcare.
- **Crime Rates and Safety:** Despite a decrease in overall crime rates, violent crime has increased.
- **Health Outcomes and Life Expectancy:** Maternal and infant health outcomes have declined, and while deaths from diabetes and heart disease have improved, life expectancy has decreased, and stroke-related deaths have worsened.
- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse:** Mental health concerns, including depression and suicide, are increasing, accompanied by a dramatic rise in opioid-related overdoses and substance abuse.
- **Efforts to Address Disparities:** Expanded broadband access and new hospital developments are efforts aimed at reducing disparities within the community.

To view the secondary data and sources in their entirety, see [Appendix D](#) (Page 37).

Written Comments on Previous CHNA and Implementation Strategy

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay's previous CHNA and implementation strategy are available to the public and open for public comment via the website: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>.

No comments pertaining to the 2021 CHNA have been received as of the publication of this report.

Data Limitations and Information Gaps

Although it is quite comprehensive, this assessment cannot measure all possible aspects of health and cannot represent every possible population within Bay county. This constraint limits the ability to assess all the community's needs fully.

For this assessment, three types of limitations were identified:

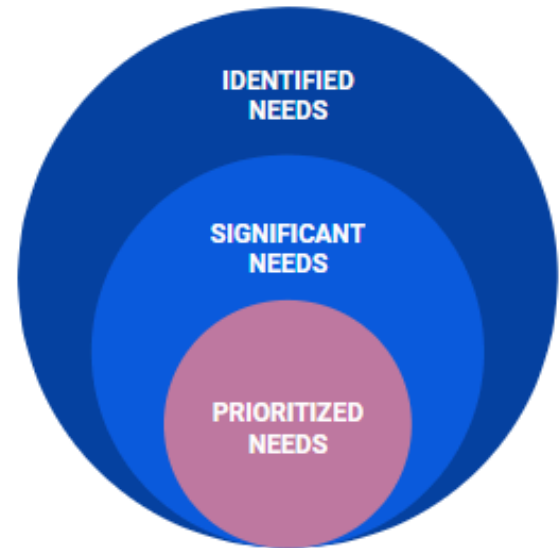
- Some groups of individuals may not have been adequately represented through the community input process. For example, engaging with non-English speaking populations and individuals experiencing homelessness posed significant challenges in locating and conducting interviews.
- Secondary data is limited in a number of ways, including timeliness, reach, and ability to fully reflect the health conditions of all populations within the community.
- An acute community concern may significantly impact a hospital's ability to conduct portions of the CHNA assessment. An acute community concern is defined by Ascension as an event or situation that may be severe and sudden in onset or newly affects a community. Such an event or situation may impact the ability to collect community input, may not be captured in secondary data, and/or can present in the middle of the three-year CHNA cycle. For the 2024 CHNA, no acute community concerns were identified.

Despite the data limitations, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay is confident of the overarching themes and health needs represented through the assessment data. This is based on the fact that the data collection included multiple qualitative and quantitative methods, and engaged the hospital and participants from the community.

Community Needs

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay, with contracted assistance from Kleinhaus Consulting Group, LLC., analyzed secondary data of 35 indicators and gathered community input through focus groups and interviews to identify the needs in Bay County. In collaboration with community partners, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay used a phased prioritization approach to identify the needs.

- First phase: Determine the broader set of **identified needs**.
- Second phase: Narrow identified needs to a set of **significant needs**.
- Third phase: Narrow the significant needs to a set of **prioritized needs** to be addressed in the implementation strategy plan.



Following the completion of the CHNA assessment, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay will select all, or a subset, of the significant needs as the hospital's prioritized needs to develop a three-year implementation strategy. Although the hospital may respond to many needs, the prioritized needs will be at the center of a formal CHNA implementation strategy and corresponding tracking and reporting. The image above portrays the relationship between the needs categories.

Identified Needs

The first phase was to determine the broader set of *identified needs*. Ascension has defined *identified needs* as the health outcomes or related conditions (e.g., social determinants of health) impacting the health status of Bay County.

The identified needs were categorized into health behaviors, social determinants of health, length of life, quality of life, clinical care, and systemic issues to develop better measures and evidence-based interventions that respond to the determined condition.

Significant Needs

In the second phase, identified needs were then narrowed to a set of *significant needs* determined most crucial for community stakeholders to address. Ascension has defined *significant needs* as the identified needs deemed most significant to respond to based on established criteria and/or prioritization methods.

Kleinhaus Consulting Group, LLC. collaborated with the Ascension Florida Community Benefit team to synthesize and analyze data, identifying the most significant needs from those identified. An integrative analysis approach was used to uncover patterns, trends, and themes within both quantitative and qualitative data gathered from reliable sources and community input. Quantitative data provided measurable outcomes, while qualitative insights captured the context and lived experiences behind those numbers. This comprehensive approach supported well-rounded conclusions and informed decision-making, guided by key criteria:

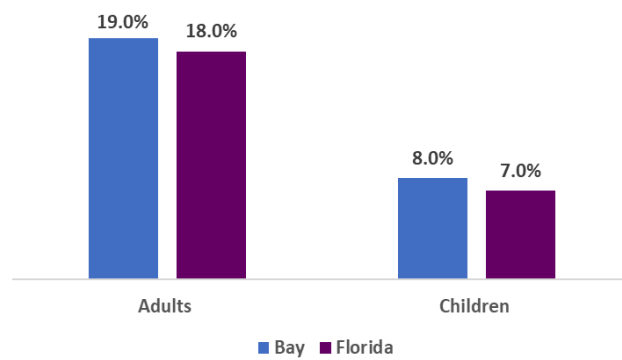
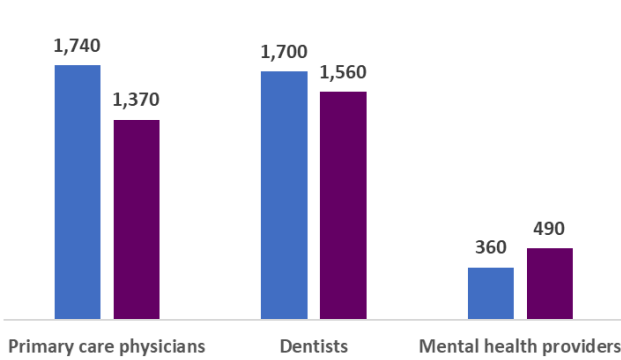
- The burden, scope, severity, or urgency of the health issue within the community.
- The presence of health disparities associated with the need.
- The importance the community places on addressing the need.

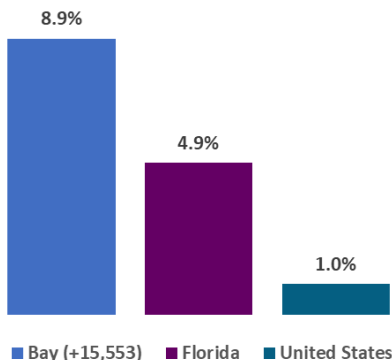
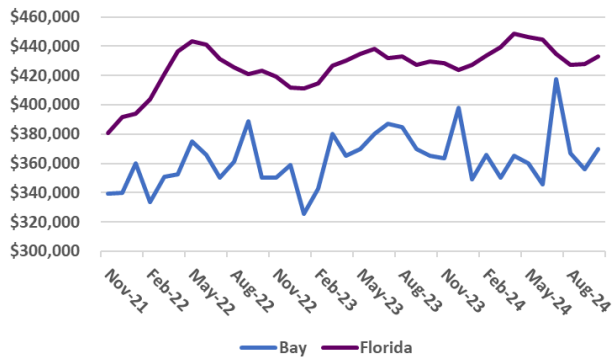
Based on the synthesis and analysis of the data, the significant needs for the 2024 CHNA are as follows (in alphabetical order):

- Access to care
- Affordable housing
- Chronic disease and obesity
- Mental health and substance abuse
- Transportation

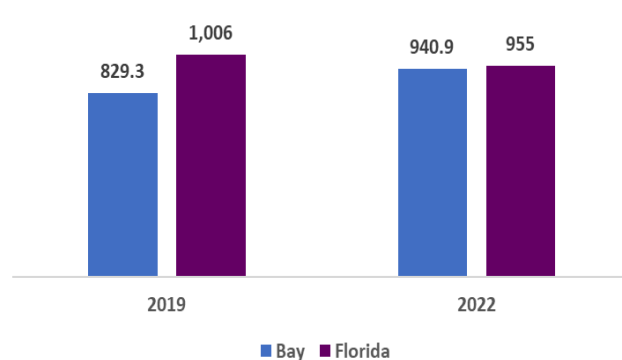
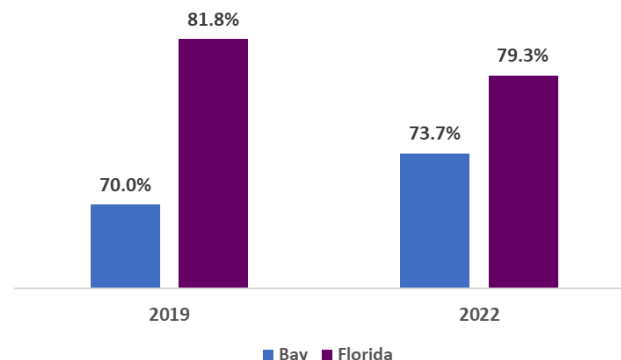
The following pages contain a description (including data highlights, community challenges and perceptions, and local assets and resources) of each significant need.

To view healthcare facilities and community resources available to respond to the significant needs, please see [Appendix E](#) (Page 43).

Access to Care																						
Significance Limited access to health care exacerbates health disparities, resulting in untreated chronic conditions and unaddressed mental health needs, particularly among underserved populations. This not only compromises individual well-being but also hinders efforts to achieve health equity. <i>Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</i>																						
Drivers	Populations Most Impacted																					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shortage of Providers and Specialists: Limited access to care due to an insufficient number of healthcare providers and specialists. ● Affordability Barriers: High costs of care create financial obstacles for individuals seeking medical services. ● Rural Access Issues: Geographic obstacles in rural areas that restrict access to healthcare services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low-income households ● Children/Adolescents ● Elderly ● Disabled ● LGBTQ+ 																					
Community Input Highlights																						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Residents face challenges in obtaining medical services due to factors such as transportation barriers, a shortage of healthcare providers, and limited availability of after-hours care. ● “Economic disparities and overall lack of affordability lead to decreased access to care.” ● The demand for mental health providers continues to grow. 																						
Secondary Data Highlights																						
<p>Residents with No Health Insurance, 2021 (Percentages reflect residents without health insurance)</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Residents with No Health Insurance, 2021</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>Bay (%)</th> <th>Florida (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Adults</td> <td>19.0%</td> <td>18.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Children</td> <td>8.0%</td> <td>7.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (2024)</p>	Age Group	Bay (%)	Florida (%)	Adults	19.0%	18.0%	Children	8.0%	7.0%	<p>Clinical Providers, 2021 (Numbers reflect the ratio of residents per provider)</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Clinical Providers, 2021</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Provider Type</th> <th>Bay (Ratio)</th> <th>Florida (Ratio)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Primary care physicians</td> <td>1,740</td> <td>1,370</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dentists</td> <td>1,700</td> <td>1,560</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mental health providers</td> <td>360</td> <td>490</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (2024)</p>	Provider Type	Bay (Ratio)	Florida (Ratio)	Primary care physicians	1,740	1,370	Dentists	1,700	1,560	Mental health providers	360	490
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Mental health providers	360	490																				

Affordable Housing									
<h3>Significance</h3> <p>High housing costs create financial strain, forcing individuals to choose between housing and essentials like food and healthcare. This can lead to mental health issues, increased stress, and limited access to quality housing and healthcare services.</p> <p>Source: Healthy People 2030</p>									
<h3>Drivers</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Population Growth: Increased demand from population growth places additional pressure on housing markets. ● Rising Construction Costs: Increased costs for labor, materials, and land development make building affordable housing more expensive. ● Market Speculation: Wealthier populations moving to coastal communities can drive up housing costs and displace lower-income residents. 	<h3>Populations Most Impacted</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low-income households ● Elderly ● Children/Adolescents ● Working families 								
<h3>Community Input Highlights</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Population growth accelerated significantly over the past few years, adding over 15,500 people in 3 years. ● "The challenges we face today began with the lasting impact of Hurricane Michael in 2018." ● "Do we pay the rent or do we pay a doctor?" 									
<h3>Secondary Data Highlights</h3>									
<h4>Population Growth, 2020-2023</h4>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Region</th> <th>Population Growth (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bay (+15,553)</td> <td>8.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Florida</td> <td>4.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>United States</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, (2023). American Community Survey</p>	Region	Population Growth (%)	Bay (+15,553)	8.9%	Florida	4.9%	United States	1.0%	<h4>Median Housing Sale Price, 2021-2024</h4>  <p>Source: Realtor.com, (2024)</p>
Region	Population Growth (%)								
Bay (+15,553)	8.9%								
Florida	4.9%								
United States	1.0%								

Chronic Disease and Obesity																			
<p>Significance</p> <p>Chronic diseases and obesity heighten the risk of comorbidities, lower life expectancy, and reduce quality of life. The area faces high rates of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and a rising prevalence of chronic liver disease. These conditions complicate treatment, increase healthcare costs, and affect mental health due to stigma and stress.</p> <p>Source: Florida Department of Health</p>																			
Drivers	Populations Most Impacted																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unhealthy Diets: High consumption of processed foods, sugary beverages, and nutrient-poor foods contributes to weight gain and chronic diseases. ● Physical Inactivity: Sedentary lifestyles, often driven by technology use and limited access to recreational spaces, increase the risk of obesity and related conditions. ● Stress and Mental Health: Chronic stress and mental health conditions can lead to overeating, poor dietary choices, and reduced physical activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low-income households ● Rural populations ● Minority populations ● Children ● Elderly 																		
<p>Community Input Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The community reports high rates of chronic illnesses and obesity are driven by limited healthy food access, lack of physical activity options, and socioeconomic challenges. ● “This area has a lot of food deserts; with Michael, we lost a lot of stores and now it’s a bigger challenge.” ● Community input highlights the importance of addressing risk factors like smoking, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity to improve overall health outcomes in the region. 																			
<p>Secondary Data Highlights</p>																			
<p>Health Behaviors, 2020-2023</p> <p>(Percentages reflect adult residents who are current smokers, have a BMI greater than or equal to 30 kg/m², and have adequate access to locations for physical activity, respectively)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Health Behaviors, 2020-2023</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Bay</th> <th>Florida</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Adult smoking</td> <td>21%</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Adult obesity</td> <td>31%</td> <td>28%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Access to exercise opportunities</td> <td>69%</td> <td>87%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Legend: Bay (Blue), Florida (Purple)</p>	Category	Bay	Florida	Adult smoking	21%	16%	Adult obesity	31%	28%	Access to exercise opportunities	69%	87%	<p>Poor or Fair Health, 2020</p> <p>(Percentage of adults age 18 and over who consider themselves in fair or poor health)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Poor or Fair Health, 2020</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Region</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bay</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Florida</td> <td>13%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Region	Percentage	Bay	16%	Florida	13%
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<p>Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, (2024).</p>																			

Mental Health and Substance Abuse																			
<p>Significance</p> <p>Poor mental health and substance abuse heighten illness risks, delay care, and increase mortality rates, with suicide ranking among the top 10 causes of death. These issues also drive higher healthcare costs and social challenges, such as unemployment and homelessness.</p> <p>Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</p>																			
Drivers	Populations Most Impacted																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Socioeconomic Factors: Poverty, unemployment, and housing instability are closely linked to mental health struggles and addiction. ● Stigma: Societal stigma discourages seeking help for both mental health and substance use disorders. ● Substance Use and Self-Medication: Substance use often worsens mental health conditions, creating a cyclical relationship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low-income households ● Military veterans ● Children/Adolescents ● LGBTQ+ ● Homeless ● Disabled 																		
<p>Community Input Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stigma and limited resources prevent many from seeking help, leading to untreated conditions, more hospitalizations, and higher rates of suicide and overdose deaths. ● “Care taking is very expensive, insurance is expensive, and there are not enough resources so caretakers become homebound, too.” ● Overdose deaths in Bay County have risen sharply, driven by a significant increase in opioid and methamphetamine use. 																			
<p>Secondary Data Highlights</p>																			
<p>Hospitalizations for Mental Disorders (Number of hospitalizations per 100,000)</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Bay</th> <th>Florida</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>829.3</td> <td>1,006</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022</td> <td>940.9</td> <td>955</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Bay	Florida	2019	829.3	1,006	2022	940.9	955	<p>Opioid Overdose Deaths (Percent of total overdose deaths)</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Bay</th> <th>Florida</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>70.0%</td> <td>81.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022</td> <td>73.7%</td> <td>79.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Bay	Florida	2019	70.0%	81.8%	2022	73.7%	79.3%
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Transportation																
Significance																
<p>The area is highly rural with limited public transportation, and alternative options are often unreliable. These challenges delay care, restrict access to services, and exacerbate health disparities, resulting in poorer outcomes and increased costs. Source: National Institutes of Health</p>																
Drivers	Populations Most Impacted															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Population Growth: Rapid growth can overwhelm existing transportation systems, creating congestion and limiting access. ● Socioeconomic Disparities: Lower-income areas often lack access to reliable transportation due to systemic disinvestment. ● Technological Limitations: Inadequate adoption of modern transit solutions, such as ridesharing or electric buses, can restrict options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low-income households ● Rural communities ● Elderly ● Children ● Disabled ● Military veterans 															
Community Input Highlights																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community input included how limited public transportation systems, particularly in rural areas, make it difficult for residents to access healthcare, resulting in missed appointments and delayed care. ● "Kids feel the impact even more—if a parent can't get transportation, the child is left with no options at all." ● "People have to travel out of the area for specialty care, especially veterans who may have to travel to Biloxi for treatment." 																
Secondary Data Highlights																
<p style="text-align: center;">Population Per Square Mile, 2023</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Population Per Square Mile, 2023</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Location</th> <th>Population Per Square Mile</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bay</td> <td>231.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Florida</td> <td>401.4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, (2023). American Community Survey</p>	Location	Population Per Square Mile	Bay	231.0	Florida	401.4	<p style="text-align: center;">Daily Commute, 2018-2022 (Reflects the percentage of the workforce that drives alone to work and percentage that commute more than 30 minutes)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Daily Commute, 2018-2022</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Location</th> <th>Driving alone to work</th> <th>Long commute - driving alone</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bay</td> <td>78%</td> <td>34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Florida</td> <td>74%</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (2024)</p>	Location	Driving alone to work	Long commute - driving alone	Bay	78%	34%	Florida	74%	43%
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Florida	401.4															
Location	Driving alone to work	Long commute - driving alone														
Bay	78%	34%														
Florida	74%	43%														

Next Steps

In the third phase, which will take place following the completion of the CHNA as outlined in this report, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay will narrow the *significant needs* to a set of prioritized needs. Ascension defines *prioritized needs* as the significant needs that the hospital has prioritized to respond to through the three-year CHNA implementation strategy (IS).

The IS will detail how Ascension Sacred Heart Bay will respond to the *prioritized needs* throughout the three-year CHNA cycle: July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028, and will also describe why certain *significant needs* were not selected as *prioritized needs* to be addressed by the hospital.

Summary of Impact of the Previous CHNA Implementation Strategy

An important piece of the three-year CHNA cycle is revisiting the progress made on priority needs set forth in the preceding CHNA. By reviewing the actions taken to respond to the prioritized needs and evaluating the impact those actions have made in the community, it is possible to better target resources and efforts during the next CHNA cycle.

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay's previous CHNA implementation strategy was completed in June 2022 and responded to the following priority health needs: Access to Care.

Highlights from the Ascension Sacred Heart Bay's previous implementation strategy include:

- Access to telehealth appointments: Ascension Sacred Heart Bay hospital teams improved access to medical care by increasing virtual care visits, and allowing patients who have difficulty with transportation, mobility, child care, etc; to visit with a medical provider. Teams trained and supported Ascension Medical Group (AMG) providers and offices on increasing access for patients appropriate for telehealth appointments.

Written input received from the community and a report on the actions taken to respond to the significant health needs prioritized in the 2024 CHNA implementation strategy can be found in [Appendix F](#) (Page 45).

Approval by Ascension Florida Board of Directors

To ensure Ascension Sacred Heart Bay's efforts meet the needs of the community and have a lasting and meaningful impact, the 2024 CHNA was presented to the Ascension Florida Board of Directors for approval and adoption on February 4, 2025. Although an authorized body of the hospital must adopt the CHNA and implementation strategy reports to be compliant with the provisions in the Affordable Care Act, adoption of the reports also demonstrates that the board is aware of the findings from the CHNA, endorses the health needs identified, and supports the strategies developed to respond to those needs.

Conclusion

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay hopes this report offers a meaningful and comprehensive understanding of the most significant (health-related) needs of Florida's Bay county. The 2024 CHNA will be used by internal stakeholders to guide the implementation strategies and community health improvement efforts as required by the Affordable Care Act. This report will also be available to the broader community as a useful resource for nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and community partners to further health improvement efforts. The hospital values the community's voice and welcomes feedback on this report. Please visit Ascension's public website (<https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>) to submit any comments or questions.

As a Catholic health ministry, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay is dedicated to spiritually centered, holistic care that sustains and improves the health of not only individuals but the communities it serves. With special attention to those who are underserved and marginalized, we are advocates for a compassionate and just society through our actions and words. Ascension Sacred Heart Bay is dedicated to serving patients with compassionate care and medical excellence, making a difference in every life we touch.

Appendices

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Appendix A: Definitions and Terms

Catholic Health Association of United States (CHA) “is recognized nationally as a leader in community benefit planning and reporting.”³ The definitions in Appendix A are from the CHA guide *Assessing and Addressing Community Needs, 2015 Edition II*, which can be found at chausa.org.

Community Focus Groups

Group discussions with selected individuals. A skilled moderator is needed to lead focus group discussions. Members of a focus group can include internal staff, volunteers and the staff of human service and other community organizations, users of health services and members of minority or disadvantaged populations.

Demographics

Population characteristics of your community. Sources of information may include population size, age structure, racial and ethnic composition, population growth, and density.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

A method of obtaining input from community leaders and public health experts one-on-one. Interviews can be conducted in person or over the telephone (including computer/video calls). In structured interviews, questions are prepared and standardized prior to the interview to ensure consistent information is solicited on specific topics. In less structured interviews, open-ended questions are asked to elicit a full range of responses. Key informants may include leaders of community organizations, service providers, and elected officials. Individuals with special knowledge or expertise in public health may include representatives from your state or local health department, faculty from schools of public health, and providers with a background in public health. Could also be referred to as Stakeholder Interviews.

Medically Underserved Populations

Medically underserved populations include populations experiencing health disparities or that are at risk of not receiving adequate medical care because of being uninsured or underinsured or due to geographic, language, financial, or other barriers. Populations with language barriers include those with limited English proficiency. Medically underserved populations also include those living within a hospital facility’s service area but not receiving adequate medical care from the facility because of cost, transportation difficulties, stigma, or other barriers.

³ Catholic Health Association of the United States. (2015). *Assessing & Addressing Community Health Needs, 2015 Edition II*.

Appendix B: Community Demographic Data and Sources

The tables below provide further information on the community’s demographics. The descriptions of the data’s importance are largely drawn from the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps website.

Table 2: Population

Why it is important: The composition of a population, including related trends, is important for understanding the community context and informing community planning.

Population	Bay County	Florida	U.S.
Total	190,769	22,610,726	334,914,895
Male	49.6%	49.1%	49.5%
Female	50.4%	50.9%	50.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). [American Community Survey Bay County](#)

Table 3: Population by Race and Ethnicity

Why it is important: The racial and ethnic composition of a population is important in understanding the cultural context of a community. The information can also be used to better identify and understand health disparities.

Race or ethnicity	Bay County	Florida	U.S.
Asian	2.4%	3.1%	6.3%
Non-Hispanic Black / African American	11.8%	17.0%	13.6%
Hispanic / Latino	9.3%	27.4%	19.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.8%	0.6%	1.3%
Non-Hispanic White	73.3%	51.9%	58.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). [American Community Survey Bay County](#)

Table 4: Population by Age

Why it is important: The age structure of a population is important in planning for the future of a community, particularly for schools, community centers, healthcare, and child care. A population with more youths will have greater education and childcare needs, while an older population may have greater healthcare needs.

Age	Bay County	Florida	U.S.
Median age	41.4	42.8	38.9
Ages 0-17	26.8%	24.4%	27.2%
Ages 18-64	55.7%	53.9%	55.1%
Ages 65+	18.5%	21.7%	17.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). [American Community Survey Bay County](#)

Table 5: Income

Why it is important: Median household income and the percentage of children living in poverty, which can compromise physical and mental health, are well-recognized indicators. People with higher incomes tend to live longer than people with lower incomes. In addition to affecting access to health insurance, income affects access to healthy choices, safe housing, safe neighborhoods, and quality schools. Chronic stress related to not having enough money can have an impact on mental and physical health as well. ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, are households that earn more than the U.S. poverty level but less than the basic cost of living for the county. Combined, the number of poverty and ALICE households equals the total population struggling to afford basic needs.

Income	Bay County	Florida	U.S.
Median household income	\$65,999	\$67,917	\$75,149
Per capita income	\$36,868	\$38,850	\$41,261
People with incomes below the federal poverty guideline	11.9%	12.3%	11.1%
ALICE households	30.7%	33.0%	29.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). [American Community Survey Bay County](#)

Table 6: Education

Why is it important: There is a strong relationship between health, lifespan, and education. In general, as income increases, so does lifespan. The relationship between more schooling, higher income, job opportunities (e.g., pay, safe work environment), and social support helps create opportunities for healthier choices.

Income	Bay County	Florida	U.S.
High school diploma or higher	90.4%	89.3%	89.1
Bachelor’s degree or higher	26.6%	32.3%	34.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). [American Community Survey Bay County](#)

Table 7: Insured/Uninsured

Why it is important: Lack of health insurance can have serious health consequences due to lack of preventive care and delays in care that can lead to serious illness or other health problems.

Income	Bay County	Florida	U.S.
Uninsured	13.7%	13.4%	9.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). [American Community Survey Bay County](#)

Appendix C: Community Input Data and Sources

Community Focus Groups

The following questions were discussed with participants of the Ascension Sacred Heart Bay community focus groups conducted in Bay County, Florida:

1. What would you say are the most significant health issues (top 2-3) and needs in Bay County, including the contributing factors and unmet or under-addressed needs, and why?
2. In Bay County, which kind of care is more difficult for residents to access?
3. If you could pick 3 things to change in your county that would improve access to care, what would those be?
4. How is health equity affecting your community and how can it be improved?
5. How do you see barriers to service affecting vulnerable populations?
6. Have you noticed improvements or other changes to these significant health needs since the last CHNA (in the last 3 years, since 2021)?
7. What do you consider the strengths and weaknesses of Bay County?
8. How do you see public health programs helping meet the community health needs?
9. How can Ascension be a better partner?

The focus groups were held via Zoom. Ascension was integral in recruitment efforts for the focus groups.

- Anchorage Children's Home
- Bay County Council on Aging
- BASIC Northwest Florida
- Boys and Girls Club of the Emerald Coast
- Community members, residents
- Early Education and Care, Inc.
- Emerald Coast Regional Planning Council
- Family Service Agency of Bay County
- Florida Department of Children and Families
- Florida Department of Health
- Gulf Coast Veterans Health System
- Healthy Start Coalition of Bay, Franklin and Gulf Counties

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay reached out to several organizations and agencies in Bay County with an invitation to participate in the key stakeholder interviews. We thank the following individuals for their willingness to volunteer their time and knowledge to this effort:

- Florida Department of Health
- Gulf Coast Veterans Health System

Conducted via Zoom, the key stakeholder interviews loosely followed the following set of questions:

1. What would you say are the most significant health issues (top 2-3) and needs in Bay County, including the contributing factors and unmet or under-addressed needs, and why?
2. In Bay County, which kind of care is more difficult for residents to access?
3. If you could pick 3 things to change in your county that would improve access to care, what would those be?
4. How is health equity affecting your community and how can it be improved?
5. How do you see barriers to service affecting vulnerable populations?
6. Have you noticed improvements or other changes to these significant health needs since the last CHNA (in the last 3 years, since 2021)?
7. What do you consider the strengths and weaknesses of Bay County?
8. How do you see public health programs helping meet the community health needs?
9. How can Ascension be a better partner?

Appendix D: Secondary Data and Sources

The tables below are based on data vetted, compiled, and made available on the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (CHRR) website (<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>). The site is maintained by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, School of Medicine and Public Health, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. CHRR obtains and cites data from other public sources that are reliable. CHRR also shares trending data on some indicators.

CHRR compiles new data annually and shares it with the public. The data below is from the 2024 publication. It is important to understand that reliable data is generally two to three years behind due to the importance of careful analysis.

How to Read These Charts

Why they are important: Explains why we monitor and track these measures in a community and how it relates to health. The descriptions for “*Why they are important*” are largely drawn from the CHRR website.

Trends: CHRR provides a calculation for some measures to explain if a measure is worsening or improving.

- Red [■]: The measure is worsening in this county.
- Green [■]: The measure is improving in this county.
- Empty: There is no data trend to share, or the measure has remained the same.

Bay: Describes how county’s most recent data for the health issue

Florida: Describes how state’s most recent data for the health issue

U.S. (United States): Describes how country’s most recent data for the health issue

Description: Explains what the indicator measures, how it is measured, and who is included in the measure.

N/A: Not available or not applicable. There might not be available data for the community on every measure. Some measures will not be comparable.

Table 8: Health Outcomes

Why they are important: Health outcomes reflect how healthy a county is right now. They reflect the physical and mental well-being of members within a community.

Indicators	Trend	Bay	Florida	U.S.	Description
Length of Life					
Premature death		11,400	8,300	8,000	Years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population (age-adjusted)
Life expectancy		74.5	78.5	77.6	How long the average person is expected to live
Infant mortality		8	6	6	Number of all infant deaths (within one year) per 1,000 live births
Physical Health					
Poor or fair health		16%	13%	14%	Percentage of adults reporting fair or poor health
Poor physical health Days		4.0	3.0	3.3	Average number of physically unhealthy days reported in the past 30 days (age-adjusted)
Frequent physical distress		12%	9%	10%	Percentage of adults with 14 or more days of poor physical health per month
Low birth weight		9%	9%	8%	Percentage of babies born too small (less than 2,500 grams)
Falls 65+ (by state)		n/a	24.2%	27.1%	Older adult falls reported by state
Fall fatalities 65+ (by state)		n/a	87.3	78.0	Number of injury deaths due to falls among those 65 years of age and over per 100,000 population
Mental Health					
Poor mental health days		5.5	4.2	4.8	Average number of mentally unhealthy days reported in the past 30 days
Frequent mental distress		17%	13%	15%	Percentage of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor mental health per month
Suicide		22	14	14	Number of deaths due to suicide per 100,000
Morbidity					
Diabetes prevalence		10%	10%	10%	Percentage of adults ages 20 and above with diagnosed diabetes
Cancer deaths (by state)		159.3	138.8	146.0	Average annual cancer death rate per 100,000
Communicable Disease					
HIV prevalence		334	625	382	Number of people ages 13 years and over with a diagnosis of HIV per 100,000
Sexually transmitted infections		457.7	479.3	495.5	Number of newly diagnosed chlamydia cases per 100,000

Source: [County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Bay County FL, 2024](#)

Table 9: Social and Economic Factors

Why they are important: These factors have a significant effect on our health. They affect our ability to make healthy decisions, afford medical care, afford housing and food, manage stress, and more.

Indicator	Trend	Bay	Florida	U.S.	Description
Economic Stability					
Median household income		\$65,999	\$67,917	%75,149	The income where half of households in a county earn more and half of households earn less
Unemployment		3.2%	3.2%	3.8%	Percentage of population ages 16 and older unemployed but seeking work
Poverty		11.9%	12.7%	11.5%	Percentage of population living below the federal poverty line
Childhood poverty		14.8%	17.1%	16.3%	Percentage of people under age 18 in poverty
Educational Attainment					
High school completion		90%	89%	89%	Percentage of adults ages 25 and over with a high school diploma or equivalent
Some college		65%	65%	68%	Percentage of adults ages 25-44 with some post-secondary education
Social/Community					
Children in single-parent homes		27%	28%	25%	Percentage of children who live in a household headed by a single parent
Social associations		8.5	7.1	9.1	Number of membership associations per 10,000 population
Disconnected youth		6%	7%	7%	Percentage of teens and young adults ages 16-19 who are neither working nor in school
Violent crime		294.8	150.7	363.8	Number of reported violent crime offenses per 100,000 population
Access to Healthy Foods					
Food environment index		7.2	7.2	7.7	Index of factors that contribute to a healthy food environment (0 = worst, 10 = best)
Food insecurity		12%	11%	10%	Percentage of the population who lack adequate access to food
Limited access to healthy foods		10%	8%	6%	Percentage of the population who are low-income and do not live close to a grocery store

Source: [County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Bay County FL, 2024](#)

Table 10: Physical Environment

Why they are important: The physical environment is where people live, learn, work, and play. The physical environment impacts our air, water, housing, and transportation to work or school. Poor physical environment can affect our ability and that of our families and neighbors to live long and healthy lives.

Indicator	Trend	Bay	Florida	U.S.	Description
Physical Environment					
Severe housing cost burden		13%	17%	14%	Percentage of households that spend 50 percent or more of their household income on housing
Severe housing problems		16%	19%	17%	Percentage of households with at least one of four housing problems: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, and/or lack of plumbing facilities
Air pollution: particulate matter		8.4	7.8	7.4	Average daily density of fine particulate matter in micrograms per cubic meter (PM2.5)
Homeownership		69%	67%	65%	Percentage of occupied housing units that are owned

Source: [County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Bay County FL, 2024](#)

Table 11: Clinical Care

Why it is important: Access to affordable, quality care can help detect issues sooner and prevent disease. This can help individuals live longer and have healthier lives.

Indicator	Trend	Bay	Florida	U.S.	Description
Healthcare Access					
Uninsured		16%	15%	10%	Percentage of population under age 65 without health insurance
Uninsured adults		19%	18%	12%	Percentage of adults under age 65 without health insurance
Uninsured children		8%	7%	5%	Percentage of children under age 19 without health insurance
Primary care physicians		1,740:1	1,370:1	1,330:1	Ratio of the population to primary care physicians
Mental healthcare providers		360:1	490:1	320:1	Ratio of the population to mental healthcare providers
Hospital Utilization					
Preventable hospital stays		2,872	3,035	2,681	Rate of hospital stays for ambulatory-care sensitive conditions per 100,000 Medicare enrollees
Preventive Healthcare					

Flu vaccinations		38%	43%	46%	Percentage of fee-for-service Medicare enrollees who had an annual flu vaccination
Mammography screenings		37%	44%	43%	Percentage of female Medicare enrollees ages 65-74 who received an annual mammography screening

Source: [County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Bay County FL, 2024](#)

Table 12: Health Behaviors

Why they are important: Health behaviors are actions individuals take that can affect their health. These actions can lead to positive health outcomes or they can increase someone’s risk of disease and premature death. It is important to understand that not all people have the same opportunities to engage in healthier behaviors.

Indicator	Trend	Bay	Florida	U.S.	Description
Healthy Lifestyle					
Adult obesity		31%	28%	34%	Percentage of the adult population (ages 20 and older) that reports a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30 kg/m ²
Physical inactivity		27%	26%	23%	Percentage of adults ages 20 and over reporting no leisure-time physical activity
Access to exercise opportunities		69%	87%	84%	Percentage of population with adequate access to locations for physical activity
Insufficient sleep		35%	34%	33%	Percentage of adults who report fewer than seven hours of sleep on average
Motor vehicle crash deaths		19	15	12	Number of motor vehicle crash deaths per 100,000 population
Teen births		28	16	17	Number of births per 1,000 female population ages 15-19
Substance Misuse					
Adult smoking		21%	16%	15%	Percentage of adults who are current smokers
Excessive drinking		18%	17%	18%	Percentage of adults reporting binge or heavy alcohol drinking
Alcohol-impaired driving deaths		12%	22%	26%	Alcohol-impaired driving deaths
Overdose deaths: any opioids by state		32.3	29.0	32.6	Rate of opioid-related deaths by state per 100,000 persons

Sources: [County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Bay County FL, 2024](#)

Table 13: Health Disparities

Why they are important: Differences in access to opportunities that affect health can create differences between groups of people in the community. A focus on equity is important to improve health for everyone in the community.

Indicator	Population	Bay
Health Disparities		
Premature death: Years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population (age-adjusted)	Overall	11,400 per 100,000
	Asian	n/a per 100,000
	Non-Hispanic Black / African American	13,700 per 100,000
	Hispanic / Latino	7,900 per 100,000
	American Indian or Alaska Native	n/a per 100,000
	Non-Hispanic White	11,600 per 100,000
Low birthweight: Percentage of live births with low birthweight (< 2,500 grams)	Overall	9%
	Asian	8%
	Non-Hispanic Black / African American	14%
	Hispanic / Latino	7%
	American Indian or Alaska Native non his 2 or more	n/a
	Non-Hispanic White	8%

Source: [County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Bay County FL, 2024](#)

Appendix E: Health Care Facilities and Community Resources

As part of the CHNA process, Ascension Sacred Heart Bay has cataloged resources available in Bay County that respond to the significant needs identified in this CHNA. Resources may include acute care facilities (hospitals), primary and specialty care clinics and practices, mental health providers, and other non-profit services. State and national resources can also provide information regarding programs that can better serve the needs of a person experiencing a specific problem.

The resources listed under each significant need heading are not intended to be exhaustive.

Access to Care

Organization	Phone	Website
BASIC Northwest Florida	(850) 785-8111	www.basicnwfl.com
LEAD Coalition of Bay County	(850) 640-2028	www.leadabetterlife.org
United Way of Northwest Florida	(850) 785-7521	www.unitedwaynwfl.org

Affordable Housing

Organization	Phone	Website
Panama City Housing Assistance (SHIP)	(850) 872-7230	www.panamacity.gov
ReHouse Bay	(850) 215-2479	www.rehousebay.org
Springfield Housing Authority	(850) 769-1596	www.springfieldhousingfl.com

Chronic Disease and Obesity

Organization	Phone	Website
Ascension Sacred Heart Bay	(850) 769-1511	www.ascension.org
Florida Department of Health	(850) 872-4455	www.bay.floridahealth.org
Florida Gulf Coast HCA Hospital	(850) 769-8341	www.hcafloridahealthcare.com

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Organization	Phone	Website
Chemical Addictions Recovery Efforts	(850) 872-7676	www.care4000.com
Emerald Coast Behavioral Hospital	(850) 763-0017	www.emeraldcoastbehavioral.com
LGBTQ+ Center of Bay County	(850) 252-5145	www.gulfcoastlgbtqcenter.org

Transportation

Organization	Phone	Website
Bayway	(850) 769-0557	www.baywaytransit.org
Beach Care Services	(850) 235-3002	www.beachcareservices.org
Florida Department of Children and Families	(850) 747-5346	www.myflfamilies.com/medicaid

Appendix F: Evaluation of Impact from the Previous CHNA Implementation Strategy

Ascension Sacred Heart Bay’s 2021 CHNA implementation strategy will complete in June 2025, and respond to the following priority health needs: Access to Care.

Note: At the time of the report publication (February 2025), the third year of the cycle will not be complete. The hospital will accommodate for that variable; results from the last year of this cycle will be reported and attached to the Tax Year 2024 IRS Form 990/Schedule H.

The table below describes the actions taken during the 2021-2024 CHNA implementation strategy cycle to respond to the priority need.

Priority Need: Access To Care

Strategy	Action(s) Taken	Status of Action(s)
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	Trained office staff and providers on the use of Virtual Visits	Complete
	Trained of scheduling office to offer and book Virtual Visits	Complete
	Providers set time available for Virtual Visits	On-going
	Reported progress regularly to Ascension Florida leadership	On-going
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	Onboarded Care Continuity into Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast facilities	Complete
	Implemented ED Concierge program in partnership with Emergency Dept. and Nursing leadership	Delayed
	Completed Care Continuity set-up and connection of workstations in the Emergency Dept.	Delayed
	Deployed Care Continuity staff into the Emergency Dept.	Delayed
	Reported progress regularly to Ascension Florida leadership	On-going