

Ascension Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan & Wamego Health Center

**Implementation Strategy for the 2026 CHNA
Riley and Pottawatomie counties, Kansas**



Ascension



The purpose of this Implementation Strategy (IS) is to describe how the hospitals plan to address prioritized needs from the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The significant health needs the hospitals do not intend to address are identified, and a rationale is provided. Special attention has been given to the needs of individuals and communities at increased risk for poor health outcomes or experiencing social factors that place them at risk.

The 2026 IS was approved and adopted by each authorized governing body of the following hospitals for fiscal year 2026 (tax year 2025). The IS applies to the following three-year CHNA cycle: July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2029.

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Board adoption: June 17, 2026

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Board adoption: July 28, 2026

This report, as well as the CHNA and previous IS report, can be found on our public websites: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna> and <https://wamegohealthcenter.org/>. We value the community's voice and welcome feedback. Comments and questions can be submitted via the website.



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Introduction

About 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 those most vulnerable. In FY2025, Ascension provided \$1.7 billion in care of persons living in poverty and other community benefit programs along with \$1.8 billion of unreimbursed care for Medicare patients. Across 17 states and the District of Columbia, Ascension's network encompasses approximately 97,000 associates, 23,400 independent providers, 90 wholly owned or consolidated hospitals, and ownership interests in 29 additional hospitals through partnerships. Ascension also operates 22 senior living facilities and a variety of other care sites offering a range of healthcare services.

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 Via Christi

Serving Kansas for more than 135 years, Ascension Via Christi operates five hospitals with six campuses and 75 other sites of care and employs more than 6,400 associates. Across the state in fiscal year 2025, Ascension Via Christi provided over \$39 million in community benefit, including care of persons living in poverty.

Ascension Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan

Ascension Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan is a non-profit hospital that has served northeastern Kansas since 1996. As a ministry of the Catholic Church, Ascension Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan is continuing the long and valued tradition of addressing the health of the people in Riley County, Kansas. Ascension Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan is an acute care facility licensed to operate 150 beds and employs approximately 500 associates.

For more information about Ascension Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan, visit ascension.org/manhattankS.



Wamego Health Center

Wamego Health Center, a joint venture between Ascension Via Christi and the City of Wamego, has a rich history of providing medical care to the people of Pottawatomie County, Kansas, for more than 100 years. Wamego Health Center is a critical access hospital that provides a broad range of services including an ED, laboratory, rehabilitation services, and imaging. With the Wamego Family Clinic located near Wamego Health Center, patients are also able to conveniently access primary care services, internal medicine, and a nurse practitioner.

For more information about Wamego Health Center, visit <https://wamegohealthcenter.org/>.

Overview of the Implementation Strategy

Needs Prioritization

Included in Section 501(r)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code is the requirement that non-profit hospitals must provide a description of the process and criteria used to determine the 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.

Ascension Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan and Wamego Health Center used a phased prioritization approach to assess the needs of Riley and Pottawatomie counties. The first step was to determine a broader set of identified needs through a community survey and secondary data analysis. The CHNA narrowed the identified needs to a group of significant needs determined the most important to be addressed within the community.

Following the CHNA, the significant needs were further narrowed down to prioritized needs that the hospitals will address through the Implementation Strategy (IS). To arrive at the prioritized needs, the hospitals used the forced ranking method. Through the forced ranking method, hospital leadership and other key internal collaborators individually ranked the significant needs on a scale of 1 to 5, with “1” assigned to the need deemed most important to address. The criteria used to rank the significant needs were:

- Alignment with organizational strengths and priorities
- Ability to leverage organizational assets
- Existing community resources and opportunities for partnership
- Feasibility of change and availability of tested approaches

The needs were then weighted based on these rankings and ordered from highest to lowest priority in the following manner: 1) access to care, and 2) social determinants of health.

Needs That Will Be Addressed

Based on the prioritization process, the hospitals selected the prioritized needs outlined below for the 2026 IS. Ascension Via Christi has defined “prioritized needs” as the significant needs the hospitals have prioritized to address during the three-year CHNA cycle:

- **Access to care:** This need was selected because it strongly aligns with Ascension Via Christi’s Mission and the hospitals’ strengths and strategic priorities. The hospitals can leverage organizational resources and partnerships to address access to care among patients and within the broader community.
- **Social determinants of health:** This need was selected because the hospitals can leverage community partnerships and organizational resources to advance the health system’s response to social determinant of health (SDoH) needs. In particular, the hospitals will focus on the following SDoH needs:

- **Food security:** This SDoH was a major focus of both community input and secondary data in the CHNA. Among the SDoH needs, food security was determined to have higher feasibility for the hospitals to address.
- **Transportation:** This SDoH was a major focus of community input in the CHNA. Among the SDoH needs, transportation was determined to have higher feasibility for the hospitals to address.

Ascension Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan and Wamego Health Center understand the importance of all the community's health needs. The hospitals are committed to playing an active role in improving the health of the people in the communities it serves. For the IS, however, the hospitals have focused efforts on the above priorities.

Needs That Will Not Be Addressed

Based on the prioritization criteria, the health needs identified through the CHNA that the hospitals do not plan to address at this time include:

- **Income:** This need was not selected since the hospitals do not have the resources or expertise to address broader economic issues such as income. Hospital leaders will continue to engage and partner with city leaders and economic development boards to explore opportunities to address workforce development issues within the community.
- **Housing:** This need was not selected since the hospitals do not have the resources or expertise to address the broader housing issues. Hospital leaders and associates will continue to partner with city and community partners to explore opportunities to address housing issues in the community.

This report encompasses only a partial inventory of actions the hospitals plan to take to support health and well-being in the community. The hospitals may consider investing resources in other areas as appropriate and as needed by residents of Riley and Pottawatomie counties, depending on opportunities to leverage organizational assets and community-based partnerships.

A list of resources for all the significant needs is included in the 2026 CHNA:

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

Written Comments

This IS has been made available to the public and is open for comments or questions via the website:

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

Approval and Adoption by the Hospitals' Board of Directors

To ensure the hospitals' efforts meet the needs of the community and have a lasting and meaningful impact, the 2026 IS was presented to and adopted by each hospital's board of directors by November 15, 2026. Although an authorized body of each hospital must adopt the IS to be compliant with

provisions in the Affordable Care Act, adoption of the IS also demonstrates the board is aware of the IS, endorses the prioritized needs, and supports the action plans developed to respond to those needs.

Action Plans

The action plans below are based on prioritized needs from the hospitals' most recent CHNA. The strategies within these action plans represent where the hospitals will focus their community efforts over the next three years.

Prioritized Need: Access to Care

Strategy 1: Access to Health Insurance Assist patients with eligibility and applications for public health insurance programs.
Hospitals: AVC Hospital in Manhattan Wamego Health Center
Objective: By June 30, 2029, the percentage of Riley and Pottawatomie counties' population under age 65 without health insurance will decrease. This objective aligns with the following Healthy People 2030 objectives: • AHS-01: Increase the proportion of people with health insurance. • AHS-04: Reduce the proportion of people who can't get medical care when they need it.
Collaborators: • Other Ascension Via Christi hospitals: AVC Hospitals Wichita (AVC St. Francis, AVC St. Joseph), AVC Rehabilitation Hospital, AVC St. Teresa • Ascension affiliate: R1 RCM
Resources: • People: financial counselors, care coordinators (e.g., social workers, case managers, and navigators) • Processes: patient referrals, financial assessments • Other investments: IT infrastructure
Tactics: • Identify and refer patients who are uninsured. • Educate patients about Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and other public programs. • Assess patients' eligibility for programs. • Assist patients with (re)enrollment processes.
Anticipated impact: This strategy will improve access to healthcare services, increase preventive care, and reduce avoidable emergency visits for the uninsured patient population.

Strategy 2: Access to Affordable Medications

Provide free or reduced-cost medications for qualifying uninsured and underinsured individuals.

Hospitals:

AVC Hospital in Manhattan

Objective: By June 30, 2029, the percentage of Riley and Pottawatomie counties' population unable to obtain prescription medicines due to cost will decrease. This objective aligns with the following Healthy People 2030 objective:

- [AHS-6](#): Reduce the proportion of people who can't get prescription medicines when they need them.

Collaborators:

- Other Ascension Via Christi hospitals: AVC Hospitals Wichita (AVC St. Francis, AVC St. Joseph)
- Joint ventures: Wamego Health Center
- Community-based organizations: federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), community clinics, and other community-based non-profits
- Other collaborators: Dispensary of Hope

Resources:

- People: pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, care coordinators
- Processes: AVC Hospital in Manhattan dispensing site, patient screenings and referrals
- Other investments: IT infrastructure, medications and supplies, program membership fees

Tactics:

- Pay annual subscription fees for participating Dispensary of Hope pharmacies.
- Assess patients' eligibility for programs.
- Provide free and/or reduced-cost medications and testing supplies to qualifying uninsured and underinsured individuals.
- Promote awareness of Dispensary of Hope in the community and among caregivers.
- Explore options to expand the number of dispensing sites at AVC and/or in collaboration with community clinics and non-profits.

Anticipated impact: This strategy will enhance adherence to prescribed medications, improving health outcomes for individuals whose income is near or below the federal poverty line.

Strategy 3: Community Health Education

Provide free community health education classes to the community.

Hospitals:

AVC Hospital in Manhattan

Objective: By June 30, 2029, the percentage of Riley and Pottawatomie counties' population able to receive free community-based health education will increase. This objective aligns with the following Healthy People 2030 objectives:

- [MICH-08](#): Increase the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care.
- [MICH-05](#): Reduce severe maternal complications identified during delivery hospitalizations.
- [HDS-01](#): Improve cardiovascular health in adults.

Collaborators:

- Other Ascension Via Christi hospitals: AVC Hospitals Wichita (AVC St. Francis, AVC St. Joseph)
- Joint Venture: Wamego Health Center
- Community-based organizations: federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), Riley County Health Department, community-based coalitions and non-profits, Flint Hills Wellness Coalition, Kansas State University

Resources:

- People: AVCHM Birth and Women's Center associates and nurses, cardiac and pulmonary rehab associates, communications associates
- Processes: community engagement and partnerships
- Other investments: IT infrastructure, educational materials, meeting rooms, food and beverage costs

Tactics:

- Develop perinatal education classes focused on pregnancy and delivery, infant care, and child development.
- Collaborate and partner with community-based organizations, health departments, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), educational institutions, and coalitions.
- Promote awareness of educational offerings through social media and partner networks.
- Provide free education classes to the public.
- Provide free car seat checks to the public.

Anticipated impact: This strategy will increase knowledge and understanding of pre- and postnatal care, and how physical activity and nutrition can improve cardio-pulmonary health outcomes and quality of life.

Strategy 4: Adult Behavioral Health Therapy

Provide adult behavioral health therapy to uninsured and underinsured adults.

Hospitals:

Wamego Health Center

Objective: By June 30, 2029, the percentage of adults with major depressive episodes who receive treatment will increase. This objective aligns with the following Healthy People 2030 objective:

- [MHMD-05](#): Increase the proportion of adults with depression who get treatment.

Collaborators:

- Other Ascension Via Christi hospitals: AVC Hospital in Manhattan
- Community-based organizations: federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), community clinics, county health departments, and other community-based non-profits
- Other collaborators: Heritage Senior Behavioral Health, Signet Health

Resources:

- People: therapists, care coordinators
- Processes: patient screenings and referrals
- Other investments: medications and supplies, transportation

Tactics:

- Screen patients for behavioral and mental health needs.
- Screen patients for transportation barriers and provide transportation to Heritage Senior Behavioral Health.
- Refer patients and provide warm hand-offs to Heritage Senior Behavioral Health.
- Provide in-kind outpatient mental and behavioral health services for qualifying underinsured and uninsured adults.

Anticipated impact: This strategy will improve access to mental and behavioral health services.

Prioritized Need: Social Determinants of Health

Strategy 1: Transportation

Provide non-emergency rides to medical appointments and/or other healthcare facilities for individuals experiencing barriers to reliable transportation.

Hospitals:

AVC Hospital in Manhattan
Wamego Health Center

Objective: By June 30, 2029, the percentage of no-show appointments for the hospitals will decrease. This objective aligns with the following Healthy People 2030 objective:

- [AHS-04](#): Reduce the proportion of people who can't get medical care when they need it.

Collaborators:

- Collaborators: Ascension Medical Group Via Christi clinics, regional hospitals and healthcare providers

Resources:

- People: nursing associates, case managers
- Processes: SDoH patient screenings, patient referrals, transportation coordination, Neighborhood Resource referral
- Other investments: hired services (e.g., Uber, taxi, and bus), Foundation funding support

Tactics:

- Collaborate with area hospitals, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), other community clinics, and non-profit organizations to coordinate transportation services.
- Screen patients for barriers to reliable transportation.
- Refer patients in need of a non-emergency ride to community transportation services.
- Arrange transports for eligible patients to medical appointments and other hospital services in the area.

Anticipated impact: This strategy will ensure timely healthcare services and reduce both avoidable emergency visits and no-show appointments for ambulatory care.

Strategy 2: Food Security

Support food security efforts of community partners through cash and in-kind donations.

Hospitals:

AVC Hospital in Manhattan
Wamego Health Center

Objective: By June 30, 2029, the percentage of food-insecure households in Riley and Pottawatomie counties will decrease. This objective aligns with the following Healthy People 2030 objective:

- [NWS-01](#): Reduce household food insecurity and hunger.

Collaborators:

- Community-based organizations: food banks, organizations that offer free meals or grocery items

Resources:

- People: mission integration, finance, TouchPoint, and communications teams; interested associates and volunteers
- Processes: distribution networks, volunteer facilities and locations, associate outreach and communication, coordination
- Other investments: market, hospital, or foundation funding support; food items

Tactics:

- Identify local organizations in need of support to drive food security programs.
- Provide cash and/or in-kind donations.
- Promote volunteer opportunities among associates and volunteers.
- Identify partner organization to collaborate and address community needs.
- Engage associates in Neighborhood Resource (FindHelp) refresher campaign to improve patient referrals to food resources in the community.

Anticipated impact: This strategy will enhance access to healthy food in the community.

Strategy 3: Community Resources

Connect patients and community members with identified social needs to local community resources.

Hospitals:

AVC Hospital in Manhattan
Wamego Health Center

Objective: By June 30, 2029, the annual totals of Neighborhood Resource active users, searches, interactions, and programs added/claimed for Riley and Pottawatomie counties will increase. This objective aligns with several Healthy People 2030 SDoH objectives.

Collaborators:

- Other Ascension Via Christi hospitals: AVC Hospitals Wichita (AVC St. Francis, AVC St. Joseph), AVC St. Teresa, AVC Rehabilitation Hospital
- Third-party vendor: FindHelp
- Community-based organizations

Resources:

- People: associates who conduct SDoH screenings, Neighborhood Resource initiative leads, marketing and communications teams, Medical Mission at Home planning committee
- Processes: SDoH screenings, patient connections and referrals, awareness campaign
- Other investments: Neighborhood Resource platform, printed materials, IT infrastructure

Tactics:

- Conduct an SDoH screening for all patients at least annually. Offer the SDoH screening tool publicly on the Neighborhood Resource community site.
- Use Neighborhood Resource to refer patients to free or reduced-cost social services and other community-based resources based on their individual needs.
- Explore integration of Neighborhood Resource into AVC's EHR systems.
- Increase associate engagement to drive referrals.
- Participate in Ascension's Neighborhood Resource awareness campaign.

Anticipated impact: This strategy will increase wrap-around services for social needs of patients and community members, thereby promoting an improved environment for positive health behaviors and outcomes.

Evaluation

The hospitals will develop a comprehensive measurement and evaluation process to monitor the strategies outlined in this report. The impact of each action plan is documented and reported on the hospitals' annual IRS Form 990 Schedule H, as well as the next CHNA.

