

# Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital

**Implementation Strategy for the 2021 CHNA  
White County, TN**



**Ascension**

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

Hospital Legal Name: Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital

Hospital Address: 401 Sewell Drive, Sparta Tennessee 38583

Hospital Website: [Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital](https://www.ascension.org/ascension-saint-thomas-highlands-hospital)

Hospital Phone: (931) 738-9211

Hospital EIN: 47-4063046

The 2022 Implementation Strategy was approved by the Ascension Saint Thomas Regional Hospitals Board of Directors on September 27, 2022 and the Ascension Saint Thomas Board of Directors on October 14, 2022. This report applies to the following three-year cycle: 7/1/2022 to 6/30/2024. 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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## Introduction

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

### **Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital**

At Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital, we strive to make a difference in the lives of our community by providing quality, compassionate care.

Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital is proud to have served White County and the surrounding communities since 1929. Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital is a Joint Commission accredited facility and is a part of the Saint Thomas Stroke Network. The 60-bed facility provides a full range of medical services including 24-hour Emergency Care, behavioral health, and rehabilitation services.

Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital is a member of Ascension, the nation's largest Catholic and non-profit health system. Through our Christian healing ministry, we are committed to serving the greater Nashville area and surrounding communities by providing the highest quality healthcare in a caring, compassionate, and faith-based environment. For more information about Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital, visit [Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital](#).

## Overview of the Implementation Strategy

### **Purpose**

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

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

The CHNA and IS satisfy certain requirements of tax reporting, pursuant to provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, more commonly known as the Affordable Care Act (ACA). As part of the ACA, all not-for-profit hospitals are required to conduct a CHNA and adopt an implementation strategy every three years. Requirements for 501(c)(3) Hospitals Under the Affordable Care Act are described in Code Section 501(r)(3), and include making the CHNA report (current and previous) widely available to the public. In accordance with this requirement, electronic reports of both the CHNA and the current implementation strategy can be found at <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA> and paper versions can be requested at Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital at the front desk.

## **Process to Prioritize Needs**

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

Following the completion of the CHNA assessment, significant needs were further narrowed down to a set of prioritized needs that the hospital will address within the implementation strategy. To arrive at the prioritized needs, Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital collaborated with the White County Health Department and the White County Health Council to facilitate a discussion during a Highlands Health Council meeting in March 2022 to prioritize the top three needs in the community. The White County Health Council chose to prioritize three needs: access to care, mental health, and substance misuse.

Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands identified additional criteria to prioritize the significant needs including:

- Health Equity lens and framework - have disparities for low-income and people of color been identified through the CHNA process?
- Feasibility - the ability to make progress and capture data related to health impact.
- Community readiness and momentum - is the community ready to address or modify interventions to address the issue?
- Alignment with others - is this need in alignment with our organization's strengths? Has this need also been identified in the community?
- Social Determinants of Health

## Needs That Will Be Addressed

Following the completion of the current CHNA, Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital has selected the prioritized needs outlined below for its 2022 Implementation Strategy. Ascension has defined “prioritized needs” as the significant needs which have been prioritized by the hospital to address during the three-year CHNA cycle:

- **Access to Care** - this need was selected because Access to Care is in alignment with the organizational strengths and priorities, and was identified as a top priority by most Ascension Tennessee ministries.
- **Mental Health** - this need was selected because Mental Health was one of the overall top needs identified by Ascension Tennessee ministries during the 2021 CHNA process.
- **Substance Misuse** - This need was selected because Substance Misuse was one of the overall top needs identified by Ascension Tennessee ministries during the 2021 CHNA process.

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

## Needs That Will Not Be Addressed

During the CHNA and Implementation Strategy brainstorming phase across the Ascension Tennessee ministry (8 counties), Community Benefit and hospital leaders agreed to a collective impact model toward addressing needs that appeared in multiple counties. This model is an effort to allocate resources in ways that can more meaningfully impact priority areas. The 3 needs chosen (Access to Care, Mental Health, and Substance Misuse) were prioritized in 5 or more of the (8) counties surveyed. However, additional needs and social drivers that were identified in each community will be monitored and addressed through focus priority areas.

Community stakeholders in White County decided upon the following needs:

- **Poverty/Low-Income Housing;**
- **Substance Misuse;**
- **Mental Health; and**
- **Access to Affordable Healthcare and Insurance.**

Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital plans to address all needs prioritized in the community, with priority given to Access to Care, Mental Health and Substance Misuse.

## **Acute Community Concern Acknowledgement**

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

## **Written Comments**

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

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



## **Approval and Adoption by Ascension Saint Thomas Regional Hospitals Board of Directors**

To ensure the Ascension Ascension Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital's efforts meet the needs of the community and have a lasting and meaningful impact, the 2022 Implementation Strategy was presented and adopted by the Ascension Saint Thomas Regional Hospitals Board of Directors on September 27, 2022. Additionally, the Ascension Saint Thomas Board of Directors (market level) approved the 2022 Implementation Strategy on October 14, 2022. Although an authorized body of the hospital must adopt the IS to be compliant with the provisions in the Affordable Care Act, adoption of the IS also demonstrates that the board is aware of the IS, endorses the priorities identified, and supports the action plans that have been developed to address prioritized needs.

## Action Plans

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

Implementation Strategy Action Plan	
<b>Prioritized Health Need:</b> Access to Care	
<b>Strategy:</b> Increase access to care through mobile health	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
Improved health outcomes	
ACTION STEPS	OWNER/EXECUTIVE SPONSOR
1. Plan visits for Mobile Health Unit/Mobile Mammo	Mobile Health Unit Director/Hospital Leadership
2. Publicize opportunities with administrators, community partners, Health Councils, etc.	Mobile Health Unit Director/Hospital Leadership
3. Screen Mobile Health Unit/Mobile Mammography patients for depression and Social Determinants of Health	Mobile Health Unit Director/Hospital Leadership
4. Connect patients to care, other resources	Mobile Health Unit Director/Hospital Leadership
<b>Measurement</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2 visits per calendar year</li> <li>● # of Individuals Screened and/or Referred</li> </ul>	
<b>Data Source</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA</li> </ul>	

Implementation Strategy Action Plan	
<b>Prioritized Health Need:</b> Access to Care	
<b>Strategy:</b> Identify and address barriers to care within the community, with special attentions to persons who are underserved and/or marginalized	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
Improved health outcomes	
ACTION STEPS	OWNER/EXECUTIVE SPONSOR
1. Increase understanding of social determinants of health through learning opportunities related to understanding poverty and advancing health equity	Population Health/AMG/ED/Patient Experience/Mission/HR/other hospital leaders as relevant
2. Review and share Social Determinant of Health Screener data regularly and broadly	Population Health/AMG/ED/Patient Experience/Mission/other hospital leaders as relevant
3. Develop initiatives to address Social Determinants of Health	Population Health/AMG/ED/Patient Experience/Mission/other hospital leaders as relevant
<b>Measurement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process measures: 3 of 3 action steps</li> </ul> <b>Data Source</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA</li> <li>Social Determinants of Health analysis - monthly</li> <li>Human Resources</li> </ul>	

Implementation Strategy Action Plan	
<b>Prioritized Health Need:</b> Access to Care	
<b>Strategy:</b> Enhance Coordination and Navigation of Resources	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
Improved health outcomes	
ACTION STEPS	OWNER/EXECUTIVE SPONSOR
1. Join councils, associations, organizations working on coordinating and navigating resources	Population Health/AMG/Case Management/501r committee/Hospital Leadership
2. Identify and invest in nonprofit organizations whose mission support enhancing coordination and navigating resources	501r committee/Hospital Leadership
3. Track, Review and Share Referral Resource Data	Population Health/Case Management
<b>Measurement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● # of referrals</li> <li>● \$ of dollars</li> <li>● # of collaborations</li> <li>● 3 of 3 action steps</li> </ul>	
<b>Data Source</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA</li> </ul>	

<b>Implementation Strategy Action Plan</b>	
<b>Prioritized Health Need:</b> Substance Misuse	
<b>Strategy:</b> Increase opportunities to engage in Substance Use Disorder prevention, identification and treatment	
<b>ANTICIPATED IMPACT</b>	
Improved health outcomes for those who are at risk for or suffer from substance misuse	
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>OWNER/EXECUTIVE SPONSOR</b>
1. Regularly review data related to alcohol misuse	Program Manager/Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
2. Collaborate with Opioid Stewardship activities in the Tennessee Market and share data to amplify education/resources in the community	Program Manager/Physician Leadership/Hospital Leadership
3. Explore process for Emergency Department Physicians and Hospitalists to attain their X-Waiver	Program Manager/ED/Physician Leadership/Hospital Leadership
4. Explore investments in the community for resources and support of patients in recovery from substance misuse	Program Manager/Hospital Leadership
5. Participate in councils, associations, organizations working on coordinating and navigating resources, including White County County Health Council	Hospital Leadership
<b>Measurements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● # or % of patients screened for Audit-C, Opioid Risk tool, or other screener</li> <li>● % of patients screened who were referred to support services</li> <li>● # of partnerships</li> <li>● \$ invested</li> </ul>	
<b>Data Source</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA</li> </ul>	

Implementation Strategy Action Plan	
<b>Prioritized Health Need:</b> Mental Health	
<b>Strategy:</b> Integrate mental health services, support and/or education into Primary Care Clinics and/or Emergency Department.	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
The anticipated impact of these actions is to identify depression and other mental illness early and treat/refer as appropriate.	
ACTION STEPS	OWNER/EXECUTIVE SPONSOR
1. Review data quarterly to ensure patient population is being screened for depression at least once every year	Population Health/Hospital Leadership
2. Review utilization of data to inform strategies that would improve health outcomes	Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
3. Explore investments in the community for resources and support of patients in need of mental health services, support and/or education	Hospital Leadership
4. Explore developing training for first responders related to trauma and mental wellness	Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
5. Participate in councils, associations, organizations working on coordinating and navigating resources, including White County Health Council	Hospital Leadership
<b>Measurements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● % of patients being screened for depression</li> <li>● # or % of community members participating</li> <li>● # of partnerships</li> <li>● \$ invested</li> </ul> <b>Data Source</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA</li> </ul>	

## Evaluation

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