

Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital

**Implementation Strategy for the 2021 CHNA
Rutherford County, Tennessee**



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 Rutherford Hospital
Hospital Address: 1700 Medical Center Pkwy, Murfreesboro, TN 37129
Hospital Website: [Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital](https://www.ascension.org/hospital)
Hospital Phone: 615-396-4100
Hospital EIN: 62-0475842

The 2022 Implementation Strategy was approved by the Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital Board of Directors on September 15, 2022 (2022 tax year), 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 Rutherford Hospital

As a Ministry of the Catholic Church, Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, is a full-service hospital with 24/7 emergency care. Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital delivers care for life-threatening injuries and illnesses. Care teams listen to quickly understand your health needs and deliver care that's right for you. Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford is a destination for specialty care - including heart and vascular care, orthopedics, intensive care, maternal - fetal medicine and obstetrics and maternity services. The OB-GYN maternity care teams deliver a personalized birthing experience and advanced neonatal care for sick babies. Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital offers a wide range of minimally invasive procedures, imaging, lab tests and rehabilitation services, all on one campus.

Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford 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 Rutherford Hospital, visit [Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford 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 Rutherford 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 Rutherford 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 Rutherford Hospital used a phased prioritization approach to identify the needs with Rutherford 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 Rutherford Hospital collaborated with the Rutherford County Health Department and the Rutherford County Health Council to facilitate a discussion during a Rutherford Health Council meeting in March 2022 to prioritize the top three needs in the community. The Rutherford County Health Council chose to prioritize five needs: safe and affordable housing, mental health, opioid misuse, healthcare access, and infant mortality.

Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford 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 Rutherford 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 through 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 Rutherford 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 Rutherford 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 Rutherford County decided upon the following needs:

- **Safe and Affordable Housing;**
- **Infant Mortality;**
- **Opioid Misuse;**
- **Mental Health; and**
- **Healthcare Access.**

Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford 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 Rutherford Hospital Board of Directors

To ensure the Ascension Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford 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 Rutherford Board of Directors on September 15, 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	
Prioritized Health Need: Access to Care	
Strategy: Building and refining pipeline programs to support healthcare knowledge base	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
Improved health outcomes	
ACTION STEPS	OWNER/EXECUTIVE SPONSOR
1. Review applications and select 50 Rutherford County Schools seniors for Saint Thomas Scholars program	Program Manager/Hospital Leadership
2. Along with administration of current curriculum, assist students in program with soft skills, including resume building and interview skills	Program Manager/Hospital Leadership
3. Continue to develop behavioral health and substance misuse curriculum/learning opportunities by collaborating with other Ascension teams	Program Manager/Hospital Leadership
4. Provide post-graduation resources, scholarship and career pathways for all participants	Program Manager/Hospital Leadership
5. Provide CCMA Certification Opportunity to Ascension Saint Thomas Employees	Nurse Educator/Hospital Leadership
Measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 50 high school students participating ● 80% / 40 high school students passing ● # of AST Employee Participation Data Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA 	

Implementation Strategy Action Plan	
Prioritized Health Need: Access to Care	
Strategy: Increase access to care through mobile health who are underserved and/or marginalized	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
Improved health outcomes	
ACTION STEPS	OWNER/EXECUTIVE SPONSOR
1. Plan visits for Mobile Health Team	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
Measurement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 visits per calendar year • # of Individuals Screened and/or Referred 	
Data Source	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA 	

Implementation Strategy Action Plan	
Prioritized Health Need: Access to Care	
Strategy: Provide free or low-cost prescriptions for qualifying underinsured and uninsured individuals	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
Improved health outcomes	
ACTION STEPS	OWNER/EXECUTIVE SPONSOR
1. Conduct initial application interview with the patient to determine eligibility	Pharmacist/Hospital Leadership
2. Coordinate applications for manufacturers' Patient Assistance Programs	Pharmacist/Hospital Leadership
3. Provide free or discounted medications and testing supplies to all uninsured and underinsured individuals who qualify	Pharmacist/Hospital Leadership
4. Promote awareness in the community	Pharmacy Team/Hospital Leadership
Measurement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase/optimize prescriptions year over year • Complete 4/4 action steps 	
Data Source	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA 	

Implementation Strategy Action Plan	
Prioritized Health Need: Access to Care	
Strategy: Implement promising practices that close racial and ethnic disparity gaps to improve maternal health outcomes	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
Improved health outcomes for women and infants	
ACTION STEPS	OWNER/EXECUTIVE SPONSOR
1. Explore infant mortality/maternal morbidity data capabilities	Nursing/Physician Leadership/Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
2. Recommend opportunities to improve Antenatal Anemia	Physician Leadership/Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
3. Explore Fetal Monitoring Models that will improve maternal health outcomes	Physician Leadership/Hospital Administrator/Hospital Leadership
4. Provide financial support to community organization working with women, children and infants related to improved maternal health outcomes	Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
5. Support a nonprofit whose mission is to support women and children by actively participating on a board, coalition, etc.	Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
Measurements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External and Internal Data Review • 5 of 5 action Steps Data Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA 	

Implementation Strategy Action Plan	
Prioritized Health Need: Access to Care	
Strategy: 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
Measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process measures: 3 of 3 action steps Data Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA SDOH analysis - quarterly HR 	

Implementation Strategy Action Plan	
Prioritized Health Need: Access to Care	
Strategy: 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 and hospital leaders
2. Identify and invest in nonprofit organizations whose mission support enhancing coordination and navigating resources	501r committee/Hospital leaders
3. Track, review and share referral resource data	Population Health/Case Management
Measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of referrals ● \$ of dollars ● # of collaborations ● 3 of 3 action steps 	
Data Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA 	

Implementation Strategy Action Plan	
Prioritized Health Need: Substance Misuse	
Strategy: Increase opportunities to engage in Substance Use Disorder prevention, identification and treatment	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
Improved health outcomes for those who are at risk for or suffer from substance misuse	
ACTION STEPS	OWNER/EXECUTIVE SPONSOR
1. Explore data related to screening for alcohol misuse	Nursing/Physician Leadership/Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
2. Continue to host and support WE C.A.R.E. (Opioid Crisis Alliance)	Physician Leadership/Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
3. Collaborate with Opioid Stewardship activities in the Tennessee Market and share data to amplify education/resources in the community	Physician Leadership/ED/AMG/Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
4. Increase Emergency Department Physicians and Hospitalists who have their X-Waiver	Physician Leadership/Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
5. Actively partner, invest, participate and serve on councils, nonprofits, boards and other community facing groups whose mission is to support prevention, identification and treatment of substance use misuse and abuse	Program Manager/Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
Measurements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # or % of patients screened for Audit-C, Opioid Risk tool, or other screener ● % of patients screened who were referred to support services ● Investment \$ ● # of X-waivered physicians and hospitalists 	
Data Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA 	

Implementation Strategy Action Plan	
Prioritized Health Need: Mental Health	
Strategy: Integrate mental health services, support and/or education into Primary Care Clinics and/or Emergency	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
Improved health outcomes related to mental health	
ACTION STEPS	OWNER/EXECUTIVE SPONSOR
1. Review data quarterly to ensure patient population is being screened for depression at least once every year	Nursing/Population Health/Hospital Administrators/Hospital Leadership
2. Review utilization of data to inform strategies that would improve health outcomes	Nursing/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	CHBAC/501r committee/Hospital Administrators/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 supporting individuals in need of mental health services, support and/or education, including Rutherford County Health Council	ED/Hospital Administrator/Hospital Leadership
Measurements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of patients being screened for depression ● # of partnerships ● \$ invested 	
Data Source	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Google Sheets, Google Forms, and CBISA 	

Evaluation

Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford 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 Rutherford 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.