

# Ascension Providence

## Implementation Strategy for the 2021 CHNA



**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.

Ascension Providence

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<https://healthcare.ascension.org/locations/texas/txwac/waco-ascension-providence>

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The 2021 Implementation Strategy was approved and adopted by the Ascension Providence and Ascension Texas Boards of Directors on August 24th and 25th, 2022, respectively (2021 tax year), and applies to the following three-year cycle: August 2022 to August 2025. 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 Providence**

As a Ministry of the Catholic Church, Ascension Providence is a non-profit hospital governed by a local board of trustees represented by residents, medical staff, and sister sponsorships, and provides medical care to McClennan and surrounding Central Texas Counties. Ascension Providence operates one hospital campus, including the Ascension Providence DePaul Center (a mental and behavioral health care center), 37 related healthcare facilities, and employs more than 535 primary and specialty care clinicians.

Ascension Providence Hospital in Waco, Texas, is a full-service hospital with 24/7 emergency care. Our surgical center has robotic and image-guided technology, and our surgeons perform minimally invasive techniques whenever possible to help with recovery. Ascension Providence Hospital is a destination for specialty care including heart and vascular health, orthopedics, women's health and maternity services. Our OB-GYN maternity care teams at our Women's and Newborn Center deliver a personalized birthing experience and advanced neonatal care for sick babies. We offer a wide range of minimally invasive procedures, imaging, lab tests and rehabilitation services, all on one campus.

For more information about Ascension Providence, visit

[https://healthcare.ascension.org/locations/texas/txwac/waco-ascension-providence?utm\\_campaign=gmb&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_source=local](https://healthcare.ascension.org/locations/texas/txwac/waco-ascension-providence?utm_campaign=gmb&utm_medium=organic&utm_source=local).



## 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 Texas'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 IS 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 IS can be found at <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA> and paper versions can be requested at Ascension Providence Administrative Offices.

### Process to Prioritize Needs

Ascension Providence, with contracted assistance from Alpinista Consulting, applied a phased prioritization process, described below, to identify the priority needs in the Ascension Providence service area in the CHNA.

The first step was to gather data from a variety of quantitative and qualitative sources to understand the raw data in terms of trends, gaps, perceptions and opinions. Quantitative needs were categorized into groups such as health behaviors, social determinants of health, length of life, quality of life, clinical care, and systemic issues in order to better develop measures and evidence-based interventions that respond to the determined condition.

From there, with guidance from Alpinista consulting, quantitative and qualitative data were reviewed and analyzed through a "validation" process, whereby themes that emerged from the qualitative data gathering process were matched against analysis of trends and stark gaps in key indicators of the County Health Rankings Data (the primary source of the quantitative data). Specifically, Ascension Providence compared themes that emerged from the qualitative data gathering activities to various data "filters" of quantitative data, including: 1) Quantitative indicators of health and social needs that were worse by greater than one standard deviation compared to Texas and/or national indicators, 2) Analysis of trends over time that revealed worsening conditions related to health and social needs, 3) Analysis of significant gaps in health and social indicators among geographies within the service region as well as socio-economic and demographic (including racial and ethnic) indicators.



Next, “sensemaking” teams were convened with internal and external stakeholders to review the validated data and identify, through the lens of impact and alignment with Ascension Providence capacities and strategic priorities, which of the data points, or themes might be appropriate for prioritization. The sensemaking process, completed through a series of six sessions with three internal groups and three external groups, asked participants to consider the identified needs through various criteria, including the following:

- Alignment of problem with Ascension Providence’s strengths, capacities and priorities
- Impact on vulnerable populations
- Importance of problem to the community
- Organizational resources available to address problem

Based on the results of the sensemaking sessions, the CHNA Steering Committee<sup>1</sup> prioritized which of the identified needs were most significant.

Ascension Providence has selected those needs determined by the CHNA Steering Committee as the prioritized needs to develop a three-year IS for each of the 12 hospitals in the Ascension Providence network, as well as the six joint ventures in its service area. Although each hospital may address many more needs, the prioritized needs will be at the center of a formal CHNA IS and corresponding tracking and reporting.

Through the prioritization process for the 2021 CHNA, the prioritized needs are as follows:

- **Mental and Behavioral Health** - This need was selected because a number of key indicators reveal the significant and growing concerns over mental and behavioral health needs in our region. Many of these concerns are long standing, including reported numbers of poor mental health days and upward trending suicide rates and substance use and abuse. Coupled with the effects of the pandemic, concerns around isolation, anxiety and depression heightened needs around mental and behavioral health.
- **Access to Care** - This need was selected because both qualitative and quantitative data revealed significant and increasing needs around issues of accessing care, particularly regarding affordability and insurance coverage for care, transportation- especially in the rural parts of Ascension’s service area, telemedicine and access to sufficient broadband infrastructures, and navigation of the complex medical system and services.
- **Social Determinants of Health** - This need was selected because many of the counties in the Ascension Providence service area have multiple indicators related to social needs that are significantly worse than averages for Texas and the United States, including lower access to exercise opportunities, lower rates of home ownership, very high rates of childhood poverty and low median household incomes, among others. Focus groups also mentioned food security and housing as significant barriers to healthy living.

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<sup>1</sup> The CHNA Steering Committee is comprised of internal leaders Ray Anderson (Chief Strategy Officer), Lauren Baker (VP of Academic Integration & Chief of Staff), Derek Covert (Chief Mission Integration Officer and VP Canonical Affairs), and Kate Henderson (President - Regional Hospitals and Strategic Community Partnerships), and community partners Dr. Jewel Mullen (Associate Dean for Health Equity and Associate Professor, Department of Population Health at The University of Texas), and Dr. Andrew Springer (Associate Professor, Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences at The University of Texas School of Public Health).



- Health Equity - This need was selected because significant gaps in health indicators and outcomes exist in the Ascension Providence service region according to County Health Rankings data and focus groups revealed narratives of cultural and language barriers to receiving care.

Ascension Providence 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 CHNA, Ascension Providence has chosen to focus its efforts on the priorities listed above.

## **Needs That Will Be Addressed**

The prioritized health needs that were identified in the 2021 CHNA were mental health, access to care, social determinants of health and health equity. Ascension Providence will address all four of these needs in these implementation plans.

## **Needs That Will Not Be Addressed**

Based on the prioritization criteria, Ascension Providence will address all four of the health needs identified through the CHNA.

This report does not encompass a complete inventory of everything Ascension Providence does to support health within the community.

## **Acute Community Concern Acknowledgement**

A CHNA and 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. If adjustments to an IS are necessary, the hospital will develop documentation to inform key internal and external stakeholders.

## **Written Comments**

This IS has been made available to the public and is open for public comment. Questions or comments about this IS can be submitted via the website: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>.

## **Approval and Adoption by Ascension Providence and Ascension Texas Boards of Directors**

To ensure the Ascension Providence's efforts meet the needs of the community and have a lasting and meaningful impact, the 2021 IS was approved and adopted by the Ascension Providence and Ascension Texas Boards of Directors on August 24th and 25th, 2022, respectively. 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.

The IS lists actions that this hospital is taking to address the needs, recognizing that needs are complex and multi-layered. More specific information about how the "Actions" and "Measurement" under each IS are carried out and tracked are in an Evaluation Plan. The information gathered for evaluation will be used to report on each activity listed along with others that may align with the strategies adopted.





<b>STRATEGY 1</b>
<p><b>Hospital Name</b> Ascension Providence</p>
<p><b>Prioritized Health Need</b> Access to Care</p>
<p><b>Strategy</b> Increase access points and capacity for primary, acute and specialty care services, including mental and behavioral health through the longstanding partnership with the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Waco Family Medicine</p>
<p><b>Collaborators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ascension Medical Group</li> <li>● Waco Family Medicine</li> <li>● Other health providers and community organizations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● AMG physicians</li> <li>● Supplies and materials</li> <li>● Planning and training time</li> </ul>
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>
Through the Waco Family Medicine Residency Program, train family physicians with an emphasis on compassion and culturally-sensitive care
Through collaboration, serve patients referred and served by Ascension Providence clinicians and program leaders
Where possible, expand partnership to include expanded areas of service
<b>MEASUREMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Number of family physicians in residency through Ascension Providence</li> <li>● Number of patients referred to and served by Ascension Providence clinicians and leaders</li> <li>● Expand tracking if/when new programs emerge in partnership with Waco Family Medicine</li> </ul>
<b>ANTICIPATED IMPACT</b>
<p><i>Short Term:</i> Provide healthcare to underserved residents of McLennan and Bell counties</p> <p><i>Long Term:</i> Decrease health emergencies and preventable deaths by providing the right levels of care when and where they are needed including primary care for the prevention, early identification and maintenance of chronic health conditions and fast and easy linkages to needed hospital services</p>



<b>STRATEGY 2</b>
<p><b>Hospital Name</b> Ascension Providence</p>
<p><b>Prioritized Health Need</b> Access to Care</p>
<p><b>Strategy</b> Expand health and social services for women and new mothers through participation in the national Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Perinatal Improvement Collaborative</p>
<p><b>Collaborators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Health and Human Services: through Perinatal Improvement Collaborative, a contract with Premier, Inc.</li> <li>• Ascension Seton Northwest and other hospitals participating in this initiative</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associate time for documentation on Perinatal Improvement Collaborative</li> <li>• Data and data analysis by HHS focused on improving maternal and infant health outcomes by reducing disparities. Comprised of hospitals from all 50 states, the collaborative is the first to evaluate how pregnancy affects overall population health by linking inpatient data of newborns to their mothers.</li> </ul>
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>
<p>Participate in the Perinatal Improvement Collaborative (an initiative to bridge gaps in existing maternal morbidity and mortality data to drive clinical quality improvements for mothers and babies)</p>
<b>MEASUREMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit data on more than 150 measures on patient and clinical care data for both mother and infant to the HHS</li> </ul>
<b>ANTICIPATED IMPACT</b>
<p><i>Short Term:</i> Data from 200 hospitals nationwide will inform how care can be modified to meet diverse needs of newborns and their mothers</p> <p><i>Long Term:</i> Improve postpartum physical and mental health for mothers and decrease infant emergency medical events</p>



<b>STRATEGY 3</b>
<p><b>Hospital Name</b> Ascension Providence</p>
<p><b>Prioritized Health Need</b> Mental and Behavioral Health</p>
<p><b>Strategy</b> Improve network of care for Mental and Behavioral Health for the Ascension Providence service area</p>
<p><b>Collaborators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Psychiatrists at Ascension Providence</li> <li>● Prosper Waco</li> <li>● City and county law enforcement</li> <li>● County Judge</li> <li>● Mayor of Waco</li> <li>● Three community foundations</li> <li>● Hillcrest and Waco Family Medicine</li> <li>● Local Mental Health Authority</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● AMG Physicians</li> <li>● Emergency Department staff and clinicians</li> <li>● Social workers</li> <li>● Associate Time</li> </ul>
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>
<p>Participate in Prosper Waco Leadership team for Mental and Behavioral Health to build a strong continuum of care for mental health needs across the Ascension Providence service area, particularly from a forensic perspective</p>
<p>Support the Local Mental Health Authority's expansion of crisis treatment services related to mental and behavioral health services</p>
<p>Share space with the Local Mental Health Authority to enable a more robust continuum of care, particularly related to forensic issues.</p>
<p>Use dedicated social workers to do case management and discharge planning at Ascension Providence DePaul Center to improve the model of care that includes close collaboration with all community partners, including law enforcement and service organizations.</p>
<b>MEASUREMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Report outcomes of partnership with Prosper Waco</li> <li>● Develop and report measures of effort and/or outcomes from dedicated social worker</li> <li>● Report outcomes of partnership with Local Mental Health Authority programs and potential expansion</li> </ul>



<b>ANTICIPATED IMPACT</b>
<p><i>Short Term:</i> Increase access to mental and behavioral health services treatment at Ascension Providence</p> <p><i>Long Term:</i> Improve overall mental wellbeing and decrease mental health crises in the Ascension Providence service area</p>

<b>STRATEGY 4</b>
<p><b>Hospital Name</b> Ascension Providence</p>
<p><b>Prioritized Health Need</b> Social Determinants Of Health</p>
<p><b>Strategy</b> Connect patients with social needs to community resources through the use of Neighborhood Resource, a platform that connects people in need to community organizations that offer free and reduced cost services, through a simple zip code search.</p>
<p><b>Collaborators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social workers</li> <li>● FindHelp</li> <li>● Representatives from community organizations</li> <li>● Clinical and administrative teams across the network</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Time of associates</li> <li>● Materials used for screening patients</li> <li>● Neighborhood Resource platform</li> </ul>
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>
<p>Connect patients screened for social needs, including women currently screened for food security, with services through Neighborhood Resources</p>
<b>MEASUREMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Number of referrals through Neighborhood Resource</li> <li>● Number of searches by Ascension Texas associates in Neighborhood Resource</li> <li>● Top searched needs</li> </ul>
<b>ANTICIPATED IMPACT</b>
<p><i>Short term:</i> Increase identification of healthcare and social needs for all patients and create connections to community resources that address those needs</p> <p><i>Long term:</i> Improve health and social conditions in our communities</p>

<b>STRATEGY 5</b>
<b>Hospital Name</b> Ascension Providence
<b>Prioritized Health Need</b> Social Determinants of Health
<b>Strategy</b> Address social needs related to housing and community safety through investments and trainings
<b>Collaborators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Leaders from across the Ascension Texas network</li> <li>● Clinicians and associates and others participating in Human Trafficking Training</li> <li>● Space and supplies for trainings and meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hospital leadership and associate time to engage with community partners</li> <li>● Cash and other donations that are in-kind supplies, services and/or time</li> <li>● Space and supplies for trainings and meetings</li> </ul>
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>
Coordinate and conduct Ascension Texas Human Trafficking Training (which has been certified by the State of Texas) to Ascension Providence associates
<b>MEASUREMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Number of trainings related to Human Trafficking offered</li> <li>● Number of participants in Human Trafficking training</li> </ul>
<b>ANTICIPATED IMPACT</b>
<i>Short Term:</i> Identify and address patient housing and safety concerns
<i>Long Term:</i> Improve outcomes for individuals experiencing housing and safety concerns by contributing to community and systemic resource development and coordination



STRATEGY 6
<b>Hospital Name</b> Ascension Providence
<b>Prioritized Health Need</b> Health Equity
<b>Strategy</b> Deepen community partnerships with organizations that advance health in underserved populations
<b>Collaborators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waco Family Medicine</li> <li>• Prosper Waco</li> <li>• Additional partnerships in McLennan County through the above collaborations</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital leadership and associate time to engage with community partners</li> </ul>
ACTION STEPS
Work with community partners to support vulnerable community members through ongoing engagement and investments
MEASUREMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track partnerships and significant results from program partnerships</li> </ul>
ANTICIPATED IMPACT
<i>Short term:</i> Improved relationships with communities who have been underserved
<i>Long term</i> Improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities for underserved populations

STRATEGY 7
<b>Hospital Name</b> Ascension Providence
<b>Prioritized Health Need</b> Health Equity
<b>Strategy</b> Identify and address barriers to care within the community, with special attention to persons who are underserved and/or marginalized
<b>Collaborators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ascension Appreciation, Belongingness, Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity (ABIDE) program leaders at the national and local level</li> <li>● Community Impact and Solidarity leaders within Ascension</li> <li>● All Ascension associates</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hospital leadership and associate time</li> <li>● Training materials</li> </ul>
ACTION STEPS
Learning opportunities related to understanding poverty and advancing health equity
Training related to awareness of social determinants of health and identifying resources to assist patients in need
MEASUREMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Number of internal training and educational opportunities related to equity, barriers to care and social determinants of health</li> <li>● Number of people attending ABIDE and other opportunities addressing health equity and barriers to care</li> </ul>
ANTICIPATED IMPACT
<i>Short term:</i> Improved relationships with communities who have been underserved
<i>Long term</i> Improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities for underserved populations

## Evaluation

Ascension Providence will develop a comprehensive measurement and evaluation process for the IS. 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 Providence 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.