

Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital

**Implementation Strategy for the 2021 CHNA
Milwaukee County, WI**



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 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, to unmet health needs or gaps in services and to input gathered from the community.

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The 2021 Implementation Strategy was approved by the Board of Directors of Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital on July 26, 2022 (2021 tax year) and applies to the following three-year cycle: July 2022 to June 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 at <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 Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital

As a ministry of the Catholic Church, Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital is a non-profit hospital governed by a local board of directors and provides medical care to Milwaukee County and the surrounding communities. In Wisconsin, Ascension operates 17 hospital campuses, more than 100 related healthcare facilities and employs more than 1,200 primary and specialty care clinicians from Racine to the Fox Valley.

Serving Wisconsin for about 150 years, Ascension is continuing the long and valued tradition of addressing the health of the people in our community. Following in the footsteps of our founders, Ascension Wisconsin was formed in 2016 when sponsorship transitioned from four health systems: Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, Ministry Health Care, Columbia St. Mary's and Affinity Health System.

For more information about Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital, visit:

<https://healthcare.ascension.org/locations/wisconsin/wimil/milwaukee-ascension-sacred-heart-rehabilitation-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 Sacred Heart Rehabilitation 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 non-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 the hospital.

Needs That Will Be Addressed

Following the completion of the current CHNA, Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital has selected the prioritized needs outlined below for its 2021 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 was selected because access to affordable, quality health care is important to physical, social and mental health. Ascension Wisconsin is committed to addressing all aspects of access to care, which includes affordability, geographic access and culturally competent care with trustworthy providers. As a Catholic healthcare system, improving access to care for all, regardless of ability to pay, is a foundational principle for Ascension Wisconsin.
- Chronic Disease and Prevention was selected because prevention is an important step toward a healthier community. For those with chronic diseases, proper treatment through healthcare can help improve quality of life. A healthy lifestyle through access to healthy foods, increase in activity and decreased stress can reduce the risk of several chronic diseases, lessening the need for medication or other treatments. This priority especially focuses on communities disproportionately affected by structural barriers relating to poverty. Ascension Wisconsin is committed to quality treatment of chronic diseases and focusing on prevention efforts.

In alignment with these priorities and the voice of the community, strategies addressing these health issues will focus on equity, working to address the root social causes of health disparities in our communities and giving special attention to those that have been made vulnerable by historic disadvantages.

Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation 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 Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital has chosen to focus its efforts on the priorities listed above.

Needs That Will Not Be Addressed

The following significant needs were not selected for the 2021 CHNA cycle: Alcohol and Drug Use, Community Safety, Infectious Diseases, Mental Health and Safe and Affordable Housing. Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital is a small specialty inpatient rehabilitation facility, with focus on a specific range of patient needs and these needs are outside the expertise, capacity and scope of services provided. However, Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital is committed to participating with partners in addressing these needs and will continue to look for opportunities to do so.

This report does not encompass a complete inventory of everything Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital does to support health within the community. To find a list of resources for each

need not being addressed, please refer to the Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital's 2021 CHNA: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA>.

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 notify key stakeholders of possible adjustments.

Written Comments

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

Approval and Adoption by the Board of Directors of Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital

To ensure Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital's efforts meet the needs of the community and have a lasting and meaningful impact, the 2021 Implementation Strategy was presented and adopted by the Board of Directors of Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital on July 26, 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 the board is aware of the IS, endorses the priorities identified and supports the action plans 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 people who are living in poverty/with low income or otherwise made vulnerable.

As part of this implementation strategy, several of the tactics designed to address the prioritized needs also incorporate targeted responses to the social determinants of health that were identified by the community. Both community safety and housing have a significant influence on the health of individuals and communities, particularly affecting chronic disease and mental health.

Priority 1: Access to Care	
Background	Access to health care includes affordability, accessibility and acceptability. Access to preventive health care can prevent both disease and early death (Healthy People 2030). People who can't get the care they need may have more preventable complications, hospitalizations, emotional stress and higher costs. Furthermore, delaying medical care can have a negative effect on health, including years of potential life lost. While the number of people getting preventive services has increased in recent years, there are disparities by age and race/ethnicity for many health care factors and health outcomes (Healthy People 2030). For example, the rate of preventable hospital stays for American Indian & Alaska Natives (12,488) and Black/African Americans (7,714) are much higher than the rates for Whites (4,432).
Objectives	By 2025, the number of preventable hospital stays in Milwaukee County will decrease (baseline: 5,196).
Healthy People 2030 Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AHS-04 - Reduce the proportion of people who can't get prescription medicines when they need them AHS-07 - Increase the proportion of people with a usual primary care provider AHS-08 - Increase the proportion of adults who get recommended evidence-based preventive health care (Healthy People 2030)
Collaborative Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current: Milwaukee Health Care Partnership, Ascension Pharmacies, Dispensary of Hope national program, Lyft, R1 RCM, Inc. Potential: Health departments, additional schools, various community based organizations (CBOs)
Strategy 1: Expand Access to Care in the Community	
Anticipated Impact	Increased access to health care services for community members in Milwaukee County.

Priority Populations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families and individuals living in poverty and/or with low income; Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx individuals and families; older adults; pregnant individuals 	
Resources Committed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time, funding, education materials, IT infrastructure for tracking, Ascension Wisconsin Foundations 	
INITIATIVES	TACTICS
Support Community Access to Care Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide funding to important access initiatives and associate support towards these initiatives -Conduct mobile health screenings within the community -Work closely with community Emergency Medical Services (EMS) on health education and mobile health resources outside of the traditional health system
Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process outcomes of community engagement activities to respective tactics 	
Strategy 2: Provide Initiatives to Patients for Improved Access to Care	
Anticipated Impact Increased access to healthcare services and quality holistic care for Ascension Wisconsin patients in Milwaukee County.	
Priority Populations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ascension Wisconsin patients experiencing barriers to healthcare, particularly those with low-income; patients who are under/uninsured; Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx patients 	
Resources Committed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time, funding, education materials, transportation resources, IT infrastructure for tracking 	
INITIATIVES	TACTICS
Increase Access to Health Care Services by Providing Holistic Support for Ascension Patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Support patients in engaging in a usual place of care by assisting patients in accessing financial assistance -Screen patients to determine if they have social related barriers to access to care and connect these individuals with local resources -Remove barriers to prescription medications for those with low income or other access barriers
Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of patients screened Number of patients referred to support services Number of patients utilizing services Process outcomes to respective tactics 	

Priority 2: Chronic Disease and Prevention

Background

Chronic conditions are responsible for the majority of deaths in the United States ([CDC, 2022](#)). A healthy lifestyle reduces risk of several chronic diseases, risk factors and illnesses. However, not all people have equal access to healthy opportunities. For example, individuals with low income and some racial and ethnic minorities live farther from supermarkets, limiting their access to affordable and nutritious food ([Healthy People 2030](#)), and/or have built environments that otherwise worsen their quality of life ([AJMC, 2022](#)). This can contribute to disparities in chronic disease morbidity and mortality. Individuals with low income and some racial and ethnic minorities have higher rates of obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol and blood pressure and stroke. For example, the Black/African American death rate due to heart disease is 30%* higher than the overall rate and 14% of Hispanic adults report diabetes compared to 9% of White adults ([Health Compass Milwaukee, 2022](#)). Older adults are also disproportionately affected by chronic conditions, with 80% managing at least one chronic condition ([CDC, 2011](#)).

Objective

By 2025, the percentage of the population who lack adequate access to food in Milwaukee County will decrease (baseline: 13%).

Healthy People 2030 Alignment

- NSW-01 - Reduce food insecurity and hunger
- NSW-03 - Reduce the proportion of adults with obesity
- HDS-01 - Improve cardiovascular health
- HDS-04 - Reduce the proportion of adults with high blood pressure ([Healthy People 2030](#))

Collaborative Partners

- Current: Faith groups, Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin, Ascension Columbia St. Mary's
- Potential: Schools, local food pantry, hospital volunteers, various community based organizations (CBOs), Hunger Task Force

Strategy 1: Implement Prevention and Detection Activities Within the Community

Anticipated Impact

Increased access to healthy foods and increased education on the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity for community members in Milwaukee County.

Priority Populations

- Families and individuals living in poverty and/or with low income; Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx individuals and families; older adults

Resources Committed

- Staff time donated to numerous organizations, cash donations to community organizations, education collateral, transportation, marketing resources, [Neighborhood Resource](#)

INITIATIVES

Engage and Educate Community Members about Health and Prevention

TACTICS

-Contribute to community education sessions on healthy foods and physical activity within the community
-Provide chronic disease support and prevention to groups that have historically been marginalized

Expand Opportunities for Community Members to be Engaged in Healthy Living Activities	-Donate fresh produce and other healthy foods through various channels -Partner with/support community-based organizations (CBOs) to positively influence the social determinants of health related to chronic conditions
Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process outcomes of community engagement activities to respective tactics 	
Strategy 2: Provide Initiatives to Patients for Improved Chronic Disease Care and Prevention	
Anticipated Impact Increased access to healthy foods and increased education on the benefits of healthy eating for Ascension Wisconsin patients and associates.	
Priority Populations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients experiencing barriers to healthy foods, particularly those with low-income; patients who are under/uninsured; Black/African Americans and Hispanic/Latinx patients 	
Resources Committed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time, rooming standard updates, IT infrastructure for tracking, funding as needed for food support, education collateral, Neighborhood Resource 	
INITIATIVES	TACTICS
Promote Screenings and Interventions for Chronic Disease Support and Prevention	-Develop a food insecurity screening, tracking and referral program for patients -Connect food insecure patients with chronic conditions to condition-specific food, education and support -Improve standardized processes statewide for healthy weight/BMI screenings and provide referrals to nutritionists and other resources as needed
Educate Patients and Associates about Healthy Living and Resources	-Hold healthy living demonstrations within Ascension Wisconsin healthcare facilities, particularly around specific chronic conditions -Identify and address social factors that influence chronic conditions through screening and referral to mitigate social-related barriers
Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of patients screened Number of patients referred to support services Process outcomes to respective tactics 	

**This measure has been corrected from the previously published report.*

Evaluation

Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation 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 Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital uses a tracking system to capture community benefit activities and implementation. To ensure accountability, data will be aggregated and reported on in the next CHNA.