

Cape Cod Healthcare: Cape Cod Hospital and Falmouth Hospital

CHNA 2023 – 2025: Strategic Implementation Plan FY23 – Year 1

Introduction

The FY23 Cape Cod Healthcare (CCHC) Community Benefits Strategic Implementation Strategy (SIP) describes how Cape Cod Hospital (CCH) and Falmouth Hospital (FH) will jointly address the priorities and target populations identified in the 2023 - 2025 Cape Cod Hospital and Falmouth Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Report. The report can be viewed and downloaded at www.capecodhealth.org. Please refer to the CHNA for further detail on CCHC's service area, target populations, and Community Benefits program.

The priorities and cross-cutting themes are listed below and were identified during a comprehensive prioritization process will inform CCHC's Strategic Implementation Plans (SIP) for the years 2023, 2024 and 2025. The SIP is an annual blueprint of how CCHC plans to accomplish its Community Benefits Mission and facilitates community engagement and collaboration across institutions.

CCHC Community Benefits Mission Statement

Cape Cod Healthcare, Inc., through its Community Benefits initiative, is committed to enhancing the quality of and access to comprehensive healthcare services for all Cape Cod residents. Through continuous assessment of community needs, coordinated planning and the allocation of resources, this commitment includes a special focus on the unmet needs of the financially disadvantaged and underserved populations. We will assume a leadership role in collaborative efforts joining our resources, talent, and commitment with that of other providers, organizations and community members.

The Community Benefits Mission Statement was affirmed by the CCHC Community Health Committee and the Board of Trustees in 2000 and remains in effect.

2023-2025 CHNA Findings

Through thoughtful consideration of the data presented in the CHNA, and using prioritization criteria and knowledge of the existing and planned programs already in place, three priority areas have been identified for 2023-2025:

Priority Areas

1. Behavioral Health
2. Healthcare Access
3. Housing

Cross-cutting themes were also identified and will be represented in each of the priority areas:

Cross-Cutting Themes

1. Health Equity
2. Economic Stress & Instability

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The following vulnerable populations are addressed in the 2023-2025 CHNA and FY23 SIP

Vulnerable Populations

- Residents across Barnstable County with focus on specific regions of the Cape most acutely impacted by geographic isolation and access to services
- Populations managing mental health and/or behavioral health disorders, particularly children and older adults
- People facing housing-insecurity
- Non-English-speaking individuals
- Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)
- Low-income individuals and families

Social Determinants of Health (SDH) addressed by the 2023-2025 CHNA and FY23 SIP

include: economic stress and instability, food access, housing, transportation, healthcare access, discrimination, and racism.

FY23 SIP Highlights

FY23 is the first year for CCHC's 2023-2025 CHNA, which brought to light the current needs that the community of Barnstable County is facing. While there were similarities in the needs that were identified in prior CHNAs, there are also some community needs identified that were exasperated by the Covid 19 pandemic. In creating the FY23 SIP, we are able to take a fresh look at the needs of our community that emerged over the last three years, and make concrete plans on how to address the 2023-2025 CHNA priorities.

Please see the following pages for detailed plans on how CCHC is addressing each Priority Area identified in the 2020-2022 CHNA.

Behavioral Health Priority Area

Mental health appeared to be the single greatest healthcare concern for residents and stakeholders across Barnstable County. High prevalence of issues for most populations and age groups were noted (though youth identified most frequently), coupled with a healthcare sector that is not adequately meeting the needs of those seeking services related to mental health. Both issues have been severely exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Mental health was identified frequently as a top health issue by survey respondents for the community as well as themselves or their families, particularly among respondents who were non-white, renters, parents, or LGBTQ. Substance use has also been a consistent concern of residents in Barnstable County for many years. Driven by historically higher rates of opioid misuse and overdose deaths and systemic challenges to meeting the treatment and recovery needs of those seeking care. Substance use is also impacting youth and older adults, though for different types of substances.

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All has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly half of survey respondents identified drug use as a top health issue for the community with concern highest for the specific issues of opioid misuse and alcohol/binge drinking. Groups of particular concern among stakeholders included older adults, those experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety/depression, economically unstable individuals, labor/service workers, and youth.

Goal: CCHC will be a leading partner in providing comprehensive regional health services and community resources for individuals with mental health conditions and substance use disorders. We will partner with our community to improve access to behavioral health services across Barnstable County.

Objective 1

Expand hospital-based services and collaborations to address mental health, substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders in various care settings.

- Provide embedded Recovery Support Navigators in CCHC Emergency Departments.
- Provide psychiatric consultation to First Responders.
- Create new collaborations to create new and untraditional points of access to services.
- Support wellness programs to contribute to the overall well-being of the population, whereby reducing the need for mental health services.
- Support the “Seeking Safety Model” of trauma-informed care to address trauma and substance use in the community.
- Offer a Behavioral Health Community Helpline.
- Continue to utilize CCHC’s Substance Use Prevention Fund to make grants to organizations that meet CCHC Community Benefit’s goals and objectives.
- Support both well-established programs and new, innovative programs to increase access to wellness and mental health services.
- Focus investments on substance use disorder prevention programs, including mentor programs for at-risk youth.

Objective 2

Strengthen the regional network of care for those with mental health and substance use disorders.

- Support behavioral health prevention, education, and training through regional coalitions including:
 - Zero Suicide Initiative
 - MA Behavioral Health Funders Collaborative
 - Community Crisis Intervention Team Coalition
 - Behavioral Health Provider Coalition

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Community Partners Include: NAMI, Gosnold, Duffy Health Center, Outer Cape Health Services, Big Brothers Big Sisters, AIDS Support Group of Cape Cod, Philanthropy MA, National Institute of Health, Children’s Cove, Sharing Kindness, Pause A While, WE CAN Corporation, MA DPH, MA DMH, Behavioral Health Innovators, Cape Cod Children’s Place, Cape Cod YMCA, Recovery Without Walls and Heroes In Transition.

Healthcare Access Priority Area

Timely and accessible healthcare is essential to prevent underlying health conditions from developing into more become acute issues/concerns and larger problems in the future. It was clear from the data collected from community residents and stakeholders alike, that access to healthcare in Barnstable County has become increasingly challenging compared to findings from the prior CHNA, with barriers now being more numerous, more severe, and impacting more residents. A significant factor impacting access to health care is the population boom experienced on Cape Cod during the Covid pandemic. The Cape’s population has grown from 215,000 year-round residents to 230,000 year-round residents post-Covid.

Overall, primary care was the type of healthcare identified as most challenging to access, however many stakeholders and residents were concerned over the lack of behavioral health services in Barnstable County, particularly for children and youth. For some groups, access to dental and oral healthcare was also reported as challenging. A major factor that has contributed to difficulties in accessing most types of healthcare services was staffing shortages, which itself is related to the challenges around economic stability, income, and housing costs in Barnstable County. On a positive note, the availability and use of Telemedicine expanded greatly due to the Covid pandemic. Utilization did not appear to vary by sub-group and satisfaction with this type of care was high among survey respondents.

Goal: Increase access to physical and mental health services in Barnstable County through collaborative approaches.

Objective 1

Expand hospital-based initiatives to increase access to care.

- Falmouth Hospital Medical Center at Bramblebush is a new initiative combining primary care physicians, acute ambulatory care and a testing center with hospital inpatient care available onsite.
- Continue to expand and invest in Urgent Care centers throughout the community.
- Increase the number of treatment trials offered to Cape Cod oncology patients.

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Objective 2

Support, strengthen and expand strategic collaborations and regional efforts to increase access to care.

- Continue to partner with the Federally Qualified Health Centers in our region.
- Support the dental health program at Harbor Health.

Objective 3

Strengthen the healthcare workforce by investing in innovative training programs

- Continue to partner with the SEIU union to build out CCHC’s apprentice program for CNAs and Phlebotomists and expand the program to other positions, such as medical coding.
 - Participants are provided a mentor and receive paid on-the-job training.
 - The first cohort saw four applicants in the phlebotomy program and 12 CNA candidates.
- Partnership with Barnstable High School on their CNA certification program, which trains certified nursing assistants who are ready to join the workforce upon graduation.

Objective 4

Provide support for patients and staff whose first language is not English

- English for speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes are free to CCHC employees.
- Free medical interpreters are provided to all CCHC patients, as well as physician offices throughout the community and EMS.

Community Partners Include: The 1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund, Duffy Health Center, Outer Cape Health Services, Harbor Health Center, Community Health Center of Cape Cod, Barnstable High School, Cape Cod Foundation, Health Imperatives, Team Maureen, and Community Action Committee of Cape Cod & the Islands.

Housing Priority Area

Housing is the issue most affecting the economic stability of individuals and families of Barnstable County and is the result of both high housing costs and the low availability of non-seasonal housing stock—both issues that stem from the economic seasonality in the region and its importance as a tourist destination. In recent years, the percentage of renter-occupied households that are housing cost burdened has increased sharply, exacerbated by the acute pressure the Covid pandemic has had on the already limited stock of year-round housing on the Cape. While housing has been a major issue among residents for many years, the pandemic has accelerated the problem and compounded its downstream effects—including creating barriers to healthcare access due to staffing shortages. In many stakeholder interviews, it was clear that the

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lack of available and affordable housing was preventing employers in the healthcare and social service sectors from filling their many open positions. Housing instability and homelessness are disproportionately experienced by communities of color and are associated with a variety of physical and mental health issues, infectious diseases, chronic health conditions, and increased mortality.

Goal: Improve health indicators of vulnerable populations in our community by increasing access to housing and supporting programs and partnerships that support stable and high-quality housing.

Objective 1

Develop partnerships with regional organizations that address issues of housing and homelessness.

- Include housing representatives on CCHC Community Benefits advisory committee.
- CCHC representatives participate on regional housing committees and workgroups.
- Provide grant funding to organizations addressing the housing crisis in our region.
- Develop cross sector partnerships to assist patients in securing or maintaining stable, high-quality housing.
- Leverage CCHC’s DoN CHI funding to impact the housing crisis on Cape Cod.

Objective 2

Improve regional capacity to support transitions between health care settings and home.

- Support programs that keep individuals with health conditions stably housed.
- Establish partnerships to develop new programs to address gaps in services.
- Invest in the Medical Respite program for Barnstable County.
- Partner with Duffy Health Center to offer the Bridge Program to people who are hospitalized and experiencing homelessness.

Community Partners Include: Housing Assistance Corporation, Homeless Prevention Council, Duffy Health Center, Habitat for Humanity, Belonging to Each Other, Community Development Partnership, and Lower Cape Outreach Council, Cape Cod Village.

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Cross Cutting Themes: Health Equity and Economic Stress & Instability

During the prioritization process for selecting priority areas for planning, two cross-cutting themes were identified to be included in the strategies in each of the above priority areas.

Health Equity Cross-Cutting Theme

Health equity means the attainment of the highest level of health for all people, where everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their optimal health regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, preferred language, or other factors that affect access to care and health outcomes (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services).

In CCHC’s most recent CHNA, differences in healthcare utilization were observed in stratified analyses of survey respondents. Compared to the overall sample, non-white survey respondents were much less likely to report having received cancer screenings, vision services, and outpatient services such as blood work or radiology. Survey respondents who were non-white were also more likely to rate their own or their family’s health as ‘fair’ or ‘poor’ compared to the overall sample. Additionally, over one third of non-white respondents identified discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or languages as a top social issue for the community, and one quarter of LGBTQ respondents identified discrimination based on other characteristics as a top social issue for the community.

One of CCHC’s goals is to help everyone we serve have the opportunity to attain their full health potential regardless of socio-economic factors such as race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation or gender-identity. To help achieve this goal, Dr. Kumara Sidhartha, MD, MPH, will be named CCHC’s first Chief Health Equity and Wellness officer in May 2023. In this new role, Dr. Sidhartha will be responsible for developing, implementing and managing CCHC’s overarching strategy for providing equitable health, including:

- Identifying and addressing health disparities
- Developing culturally specific and responsive policies in care delivery
- Supporting all CCHC programs in building their equity practice and culture
- Using the lens of diversity and inclusion to enhance policies related to our community engagement and partnership
- Building CCHC’s quality measures around disparities and analyzing how we collect data to reflect best practices
- Screen for Social Determinates of Health in the Epic EMR. In FY23 we will determine the baseline for reporting, with a goal of expanding throughout the entire system in FY24
- Establish a health equity committee for CCHC

Another way CCHC will address disparities is with the TeamBirth maternal child health program. Cape Cod Hospital was recruited to participate in an 18-month collaboration along with nine other hospitals across the region to address disparities in childbirth experiences and to reduce inequities in the birth experience and outcomes. TeamBirth is designed to give every member of the team, including obstetricians, midwives, the patient’s primary care nurse,

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lactation consultant, and the patient, an opportunity to contribute information, have structured communication, and develop a care plan. This program helps the patient have a clear understanding of what is happening, the knowledge of her care plan and goals, and gives her the information she needs to make informed decisions about her care

CCHC cannot address the underlying causes of health disparities alone. Key partnerships and relationships to build include Amplify POC, local Wampanoag Tribes, the Visiting Nurse Association, local Federally Qualified Health Centers, Alzheimer’s Family Support Center, B Free Wellness, Barnstable County Extension, THRIVE at CIGSYA LGBTQ Center of Cape Cod and the Islands, and Health Ministry. We intend to continue to build relationship in our community with organizations serving traditionally marginalized populations.

Economic Stress and Instability Cross-Cutting Theme

The cost of living in Barnstable County is high. This includes housing costs, food, childcare, and other basic needs, all of which were major concerns among residents based on data from the CHNA’s community survey as well as stakeholder interviews and resident focus groups. While documented poverty rates are lower compared to the state, the true cost of living in the region requires an income level that far exceeds poverty level incomes. Median household incomes are notably lower among renter-occupied households and householders who are under 25 years of age, over 65 years of age, or Black.

Many of these economic pressures stem from or are exacerbated by the seasonal nature of the local economy in Barnstable County. Seasonal instability can impact the consistency of household income as well as the consistency of health insurance coverage. Thus, residents and families in Barnstable County may be forced to prioritize the costs of basic needs like housing, food, or childcare over healthcare services, contributing to poorer health outcomes over time. Additionally, in Massachusetts, lower income is correlated with an increase in diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma and respiratory disease, and mental illness, resulting in disproportionate rates of chronic disease in Black and Hispanic communities.

Partners will include A Baby Center, The Family Pantry of Cape Cod, Sustainable CAPE, Cape Abilities, Cape Wellness Collaborative, and Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen’s Alliance.

Conclusion

CCHC’s Community Benefits will continue to support programs and organizations that address the community needs identified in the 2023-2025 CHNA, with an increased focus on health equity and economic stress and stability. We will continue to explore how to meaningfully invest in Social Determinates of Health that contribute to the root causes of health disparities.