



# Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Implementation Strategy

*St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital, Lavonia, Georgia*  
2022-2025



**St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital completed a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that was adopted by the Board of Directors on May 16, 2022.** St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital performed the CHNA in adherence with applicable federal requirements for not-for-profit hospitals set forth in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The assessment considered a comprehensive review of secondary data analysis of patient outcomes, community health status, and social determinants of health, as well as primary data collection, including input from representatives of the community, community members, and various community organizations.

The complete CHNA report is available electronically at <https://www.stmaryshealthcaresystem.org/about-us/community-benefit>. Printed copies are available by calling the hospital's Community Health & Well-being Department at 706-356-7800.

## Our Mission

We, St. Mary's Health Care System and Trinity Health, serve together in the spirit of the Gospel as a compassionate and transforming healing presence within our communities.

## Our Hospital and Community Based Services

St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital is proud to part of St. Mary's Health Care System, a Regional Health Ministry in Trinity Health. Trinity Health is one of the nation's largest Catholic health care systems, serving people in multiple states from coast to coast. Being a part of a large national system gives us access to resources and ideas across the broad spectrum of care, making it easier for us to advance clinical quality in significant ways at the local level and providing economies of scale that reduce our costs. It also allows us to contribute our knowledge and best practices to make care better wherever Trinity Health operates.

St. Mary's Health Care System, a member of Trinity Health, is a faith-based, not-for-profit health care ministry whose mission is to be a compassionate and transforming healing presence in the communities we serve. St. Mary's puts special focus on neurosciences, cardiac care, orthopedics, general medicine, general surgery, women's and children's health, and care for older adults. Our system includes hospitals in Athens, Lavonia and Greensboro, as well as a multi-practice medical group, a retirement community, outpatient care facilities, graduate medical education, and a region-wide home health care/hospice service. St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital is accredited by The Joint Commission and guided by the Mission of Trinity Health to be a compassionate and transforming healing presence within the community. Sacred Heart Hospital is designated by the State of Georgia as a Remote Treatment Stroke Center. For more information, visit St. Mary Sacred Heart's website at [www.stmaryshealthcaresystem.org](http://www.stmaryshealthcaresystem.org).



## Our Community

The geographic service area was defined at the county level for the purposes of the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The service area was determined by counting the number of patient visits by county of residence. Five counties are defined as the service area for St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital: Banks, Elbert, Franklin, Hart, and Stephens. The counties with the most patient visits are the Primary Service areas. The counties with the next highest patient visits are the Secondary Service Area. See the map of the service area.

The inpatient discharge data for the hospital was reviewed, and Zip codes reflecting the top inpatient discharges within the most recent year of data were included within the defined community. Demographic data by Zip code was analyzed to ensure that medically underserved, low-income, or minority populations who live in the geographic areas from which the hospital draws patients were not excluded from the defined community.

St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital service area Zip codes: 30529, 30510, 30530, 30554, 30543, 30558, 30511, 30547, 30624, 30634, 30635, 30520, 30521, 30553, 30639, 30662, 30643, 30516, 30577, 30557, 30538, 30598.

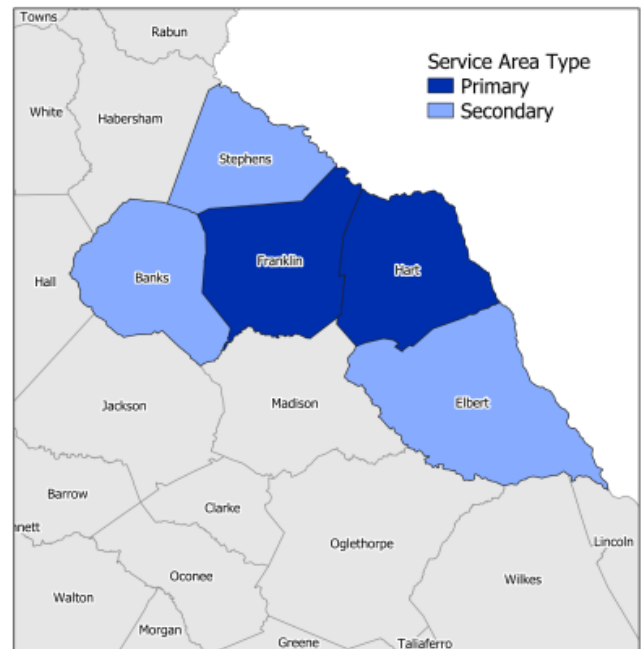
## Our Approach to Health Equity

While Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) and implementation strategies are required by the IRS, Trinity Health and Sacred Heart Hospital have historically conducted CHNAs and developed implementation strategies as a way to meaningfully engage our communities and plan our community health and well-being work. We promote optimal health for those who are experiencing poverty or other vulnerabilities in the communities we serve by connecting social and clinical care, addressing social needs, dismantling systemic racism, and reducing health inequities. Sacred Heart has adopted the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's definition of Health Equity:

“Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.”

Although Sacred Heart is early in our health equity journey, we will work towards using equity principles to inform our journey. In collaboration with other trusted community partners, we aim to develop a network of community advisors who provide direct service to minority people of color, those who are homeless, active substance users, and other traditionally marginalized and vulnerable communities. This implementation strategy was developed with community input and will focus on specific communities and areas most impacted by the needs being addressed. The strategies implemented will mostly focus on policy, systems, and environmental change, for these are the areas where changes are needed to eliminate health disparities and promote health and wellbeing for all.

Sacred Heart Service Area



## Health Needs of the Community

The CHNA conducted between December 2021 and February 2022 identified the significant health needs within the community in Sacred Heart's service area. Community stakeholders then prioritized those needs during a facilitated review and analysis of the CHNA findings. The significant health needs identified, in order of priority, include:

1. Access to Healthcare
2. Addressing Social Needs
3. Behavioral and Mental Health

## Hospital Implementation Strategy

### Significant health needs to be addressed

St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital, in collaboration with community partners, will focus on developing and/or supporting initiatives and measuring their effectiveness to improve the following health needs:

1. **Access to Care** – CHNA pages 6-8
2. **Addressing Social Needs** – CHNA pages 9-10
3. **Behavioral and Mental Health** – CHNA pages 12-14

### Significant health needs that will not be addressed

St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital acknowledges the area's complex health needs and will address all needs identified in the CHNA process. Stakeholders mentioned needs that specific communities face as daily barriers to health and quality of life. We prioritized to address those areas of collaboration and partnerships that can leverage impact and address systemic social determinants of health and chronic concerns, as well as emergent public health needs. All needs were addressed that were shared by the community stakeholders. Accordingly, St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital will continue to support strong partners in the community to effectively address the needs of the community we serve.

This Implementation Strategy specifies community health needs that the hospital, in collaboration with community partners, has determined to address. The hospital reserves the right to amend this implementation strategy as circumstances warrant. For example, certain needs may become more pronounced and require enhancements to the described strategic initiatives. During these three years, other organizations in the community may decide to address certain needs, indicating that the hospital then should refocus its limited resources to best serve the community.



# 1

## Access to Healthcare



**Hospital facility:** St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital  
**CHNA reference pages:** 6-8

### Brief description of need:

There is a lack of community-based and chronic disease-based programs to assist with specific health problems, such as diabetes and heart disease. Two areas of shortage of health professionals were identified: mental health resources and pediatricians. Rural counties lack resources, which causes additional challenges for residents, forcing them to travel to larger counties to address their needs.

### Equitable and Inclusive SMART Objective(s):

1. By June 2025, partner with local community based organizations to increase the availability of preventive healthcare services, specifically in traditionally underserved, culturally diverse, and minority communities.
2. By June 2025, increase the number of safety net and community clinic referrals of uninsured emergency department (ED) patients who do not have primary care physicians.

### Actions the hospital facility intends to take to address the health need:

| Strategy  | Timeline |    |    | Hospital and Committed Partners                        | Committed Resources                   |
|---|----------|----|----|--|---------------------------------------|
|   | Y1       | Y2 | Y3 |  |                                       |
| Develop a strong partnership and written plan of action which includes local safety net clinics and the Regional St. Mary's Community Health Worker Program to promote primary care access at safety net community clinics for uninsured people in Franklin County. |          |    |    | Sacred Heart Hospital<br>St. Mary's Health Care System | Financial contributions<br>Staff time |
|   |          |    |    | Medlink Georgia  | Primary care services                 |
|   | X        | X  | X  | <b>Focus location(s)</b>                               | <b>Focus Population(s)</b>            |
|   |          |    |    | Franklin and surrounding counties                      | Patients with social needs            |

| Strategy   | Timeline |    |    | Hospital and Committed Partners   | Committed Resources                |
|--|----------|----|----|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|  | Y1       | Y2 | Y3 |                                   |                                    |
| Implement Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) that is focused on people who do not have diabetes and helps to decrease weight and promote a healthy lifestyle. |          |    |    | Sacred Heart Hospital             | Staff<br>External funding          |
|  |          | X  | X  | <b>Focus location(s)</b>          | <b>Focus Population(s)</b>         |
|  |          |    |    | Franklin and surrounding counties | Minority communities<br>Low income |
| Strategy   | Timeline |    |    | Hospital and Committed Partners   | Committed Resources                |
|  | Y1       | Y2 | Y3 |                                   |                                    |
| Provide no-cost mammograms to un- and under-insured women at risk of breast cancer.  |          |    |    | Sacred Heart Hospital             | Staff and Expertise                |
|  |          |    |    | Medlink Georgia                   | Expertise                          |
|  | X        | X  | X  | <b>Focus location(s)</b>          | <b>Focus Population(s)</b>         |
|  |          |    |    | Franklin and surrounding counties | Low-income women<br>Minority women |

### Anticipated impact of these actions:

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| Number of primary care referrals to safety net clinics providers via TogetherCare | Baseline developed in Year 1              | 10% increase each year                            | Annual report provided by TogetherCare |
| Number of participants in the DPP program who demonstrate improved health status  | Baseline and training developed in Year 2 | 10% increase each year                            | Annual reports                         |
| Number of no-cost mammograms provided at a special yearly outreach event          | 25/year                                   | 25/year or increase as resources become available | Annual reports                         |

# 2

## Addressing Social Needs



**Hospital facility:** St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital  
**CHNA reference pages:** 9-10

### Brief description of need:

Lack of transportation was identified as a barrier to accessing healthcare resources by stakeholders. Food stamps will be accessed and traded as a way for residents to meet their transportation needs, resulting in food insecurity among residents. Resources are limited because the county is rural.

### Equitable and Inclusive SMART Objective(s):

1. By June 2025, 60% of primary care patients with St. Mary's Medical Group will be screened for social needs.
2. By June 2025, an annual 5% increase in the number of social needs referrals to local social service organizations.

### Actions the hospital facility intends to take to address the health need:

| Strategy   | Timeline |    |    | Hospital and Committed Partners  | Committed Resources                                     |
|--|----------|----|----|--|---|
|  | Y1       | Y2 | Y3 |  |   |
| Increase the capacity of Regional Community Health Worker Program by hiring or partnering with more Community Health Workers | X        | X  | X  | Sacred Heart Hospital<br>St. Mary's Health Care System<br>St. Mary's Medical Group | Community Health Worker<br>Community Resource Directory |
|  |          |    |    | Georgia Community Health Worker Network  | Expertise   |
|  |          |    |    | Franklin County Health Department, DPH North Health District 2                     | Expertise   |
|  |          |    |    | <b>Focus location(s)</b>   | <b>Focus Population(s)</b>                              |
|  |          |    |    | Franklin and Hart County   | Patients with social needs                              |

| Strategy  | Timeline |    |    | Hospital and Committed Partners  | Committed Resources            |
|---|----------|----|----|--|--------------------------------|
|   | Y1       | Y2 | Y3 |  |                                |
| Provide strategic support and partnership with social service agencies addressing current and emerging community needs. | X        | X  | X  | Sacred Heart Hospital  | Health education<br>Staff time |
|   |          |    |    | United Way organizations<br>Community Resource Directory organizations<br>UGA SNAP-Ed (Food Talk)<br>Lavonia Housing Authority | Staff<br>Expertise             |
|   |          |    |    | <b>Focus location(s)</b>   | <b>Focus Population(s)</b>     |
|   |          |    |    | Franklin and surrounding rural counties  | Low-income community members   |

**Anticipated impact of these actions:**

| Impact Measures  | CHNA Baseline                | Target                  | Plan to evaluate the impact             |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Number of patient encounters of social needs by Community Health Workers | Baseline developed in Year 1 | 10% increase each month | Monthly report provided by TogetherCare |



# 3

## Behavioral and Mental Health



**Hospital facility:** St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital  
**CHNA reference pages:** 12-14

### Brief description of need:

Community stakeholders identified a need for behavioral and mental health resources and indicated a need for further connectivity between providers for community members.

### Equitable and Inclusive SMART Objective(s):

1. By June 2025, improve the transition of care among patients with mental health needs between hospital and mental healthcare providers.

### Actions the hospital facility intends to take to address the health need:

| Strategy  | Timeline |    |    | Hospital and Committed Partners     | Committed Resources   |
|---|----------|----|----|-------------------------------------|---|
|   | Y1       | Y2 | Y3 |                                     |   |
| Strengthen relationships and identify behavioral and mental health resources to assist patients, providers, and the broader community | X        | X  | X  | Sacred Heart Hospital               | Formal agreement<br>Assistance with transition of care                                |
|   |          |    |    | Advantage Behavioral Health Systems | Mental health services and resources  |
|   |          |    |    | Focus location(s)                   | Focus Population(s)   |
|   |          |    |    | Franklin and surrounding counties   | Community members<br>Those needing mental health resources<br>Mental health providers |

### Anticipated impact of these actions:

| Impact Measures   | CHNA Baseline                | Target                  | Plan to evaluate the impact        |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Number of collaborative and educational efforts of mental and behavioral health providers to increase resources in local area | Baseline developed in Year 1 | 10% increase each month | Annual report of Community Benefit |

## Adoption of Implementation Strategy

On September 27, 2022, the Board of Directors for Trinity Health Georgia voted after review of the 2022-2025 Implementation Strategy for addressing the community health needs identified in the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment. Following this review, the Board approved this Implementation Strategy and the related budget.

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D. Montez Carter, FACHE  
President and CEO  
St. Mary's Health Care System

September 27, 2022

