



Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Implementation Strategy

St. Mary's Health Care System, Athens, Georgia
2022-2025



St. Mary's Health Care System completed a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that was adopted by the Board of Directors on April 26, 2022. St. Mary's Health Care System 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 www.stmaryshealthcaresystem.org/about-us/community-benefit. Printed copies are available by calling the hospital's Community Health & Well-being Department at 706-389-3424.

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 Health Care System is proud to be 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 Hospital in Athens is a certified chest pain center, a gold-plus hospital for stroke care, and has been named Georgia's Large Hospital of the Year multiple times. For more information, visit St. Mary's website at <https://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. Seven counties are defined as the service area for St. Mary's Health Care System: Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Jackson, Madison, Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton. The counties with the most patient visits are the Primary Service Area. 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 Health Care System service area Zip codes are: 30529, 30549, 30605, 30606, 30607, 30621, 30625, 30628, 30629, 30633, 30635, 30641, 30642, 30643, 30650, 30655, 30656, 30662, 30677, 30680, and 31024.

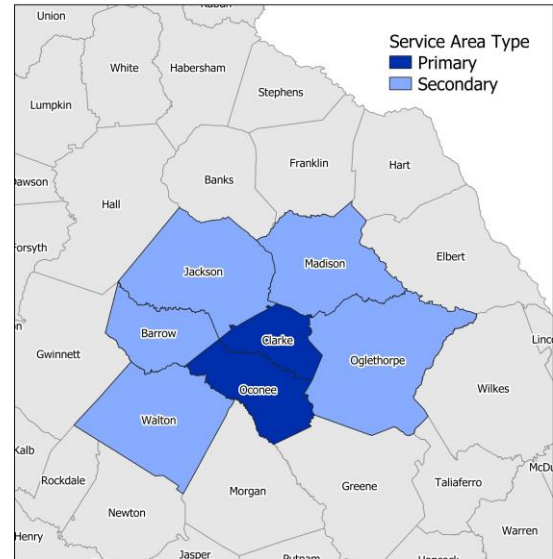
Our Approach to Health Equity

While Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) and Implementation Strategies are required by the IRS, Trinity Health and St. Mary's Health Care System 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. St. Mary's 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 St. Mary's 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 in which changes are needed to eliminate health disparities and promote health and wellbeing for all.

St Mary's 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 St. Mary's Health Care System'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
4. Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

Hospital Implementation Strategy

Significant health needs to be addressed

St. Mary's Health Care System, 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 Healthcare** – CHNA pages 18-19
2. **Addressing Social Needs** – CHNA pages 19-22
3. **Behavioral and Mental Health** – CHNA pages 22-23
4. **Chronic Disease Prevention and Management** – CHNA pages 23-24

Significant health needs that will not be addressed

St. Mary's Health Care System acknowledges the wide range of priority health issues that emerged from the CHNA process and determined that it could effectively focus on only those health needs which are the most pressing, under-addressed and within its ability to influence. St. Mary's Health Care System does not intend to address the following health needs:

- **HIV/AIDS**
- **Dental Health**
- **Social Needs for Children**

It was determined that addressing these needs was best served by others in the community who have applicable expertise, capacity, and adequate resources. Accordingly, St. Mary's Health Care System 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.

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Access to Healthcare



Hospital facility: St. Mary's Health Care System
CHNA reference pages: 18-19

Brief description of need:

Access to healthcare continues to be a priority need within the service area. Community stakeholders cited limited preventive healthcare, specialty care services (e.g., dental, HIV/AIDS) and care coordination, lack of primary care for the uninsured, limited resources for immigrant and other underserved ethnic communities (including language services at providers), and lack of knowledge about existing services in the area. Access to care is also exacerbated by the fact that most major healthcare and social service providers in the service area are located within Clarke County.

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 St. Mary's Community Health Worker Program to promote primary care access at safety net community clinics for uninsured people in Clarke County	X	X	X	St. Mary's Health Care System	Financial contributions Staff time
				Athens Neighborhood Health Center	Primary care services
				Mercy Health	
				Athens Nurses Clinic	

				Focus location(s)	Focus Population(s)
				Clarke County	Low-income community members
Strategy	Timeline			Hospital and Committed Partners	Committed Resources
	Y1	Y2	Y3		
Collaborate with Innovative Healthcare Institute to provide preventive vaccines, laboratory testing and other public health prevention services via mobile clinic	X	X	X	St. Mary's Health Care System	Financial contributions Staff
				Innovative Healthcare Institute	Staff Mobile unit Lab, vaccine, testing, supplies
				Focus location(s)	Focus Population(s)
				Minority communities in the region	Culturally diverse and minority communities

Anticipated impact of these actions:

Impact Measures	CHNA Baseline	Target	Plan to evaluate the impact
Number of community members that receive preventive health services at IHI mobile clinic events	Collaborative baseline developed Year 1	Appropriate and incremental increases based on funding and resource availability	Annual update provided by IHI
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

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Addressing Social Needs



Hospital facility: St. Mary’s Health Care System
CHNA reference pages: 19-22

Brief description of need:

Transportation, food insecurity, and housing insecurity are social needs and barriers to healthcare access and healthier communities. Access to safe and reliable transportation is critical to accessing healthcare, seeking or keeping work, obtaining food and medications, and seeking recreation to decrease social isolation. Food insecurity continues to be an expressed priority need by the stakeholders, mirroring findings from the 2019 CHNA. Access to safe and stable housing is a social influencer of whole-person health and wellbeing.

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 hospital-based Community Health Worker Program by hiring or partnering with more Community Health Workers	X	X	X	St. Mary’s Health Care System St. Mary’s Medical Group	Community Health Worker Community Resource Directory
				Georgia Community Health Worker Network	Expertise
				Clarke County Health Department, DPH Northeast Health District	Expertise
				Focus location(s)	Focus Population(s)
				Clarke 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	St. Mary's Health Care System	Health education Staff time
				United Way organizations Community Resource Directory organizations	Staff Expertise
				Focus location(s)	Focus Population(s)
				Clarke 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	~150/month	10% increase each month	Monthly report provided by TogetherCare

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Behavioral and Mental Health



Hospital facility: St. Mary’s Health Care System
CHNA reference pages: 22-23

Brief description of need:

There is a concern regarding deaths from opioids and that some behavioral health clients have substance abuse issues. There is an increased awareness of the impact of behavioral health issues on children and families within the school system, as well as a perceived higher prevalence of anxiety, suicidal thoughts, depression, and trauma in younger people.

Equitable and Inclusive SMART Objective(s):

1. By 2025, decrease number of substance use overdoses and deaths within Clarke County.

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

Strategy	Timeline			Hospital and Committed Partners	Committed Resources
	Y1	Y2	Y3		
Participate in substance use prevention workgroups such as the SAFE initiative to lead efforts in developing a local plan of action	X	X	X	St. Mary’s Health Care System	Expertise and staff time
				Clarke and Oconee County District Attorney	Expertise and staff time
				Clarke County Police Department	Expertise and staff time
				Envision Athens “Healthy Athens” workgroup	Expertise and staff time
				Focus location(s)	Focus Population(s)
	Clarke County	Substance users Hospitals Community providers Community members			

Anticipated impact of these actions:

Impact Measures	CHNA Baseline	Target	Plan to evaluate the impact
Number of organizations and businesses that have participated in mental health awareness, substance use disorder, and/or Narcan training	Baseline and training developed in Year 1	10 educational offerings per year	Annual report by SAFE initiative workgroup

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Chronic Disease Prevention and Management



Hospital facility: St. Mary's Health Care System
CHNA reference pages: 23-24

Brief description of need:

There is a need to continue efforts to prevent and manage chronic diseases, in particular cardiovascular health, respiratory health, cancer, and nutrition-related conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

Equitable and Inclusive SMART Objective(s):

1. By January 2023, implement a 15-participant Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), which is an evidence-based program that demonstrates measurable clinical improvement in risk factors associated with diabetes.
2. By June 2025, increase access and utilization of hospital-based health education and support groups among individuals at risk or currently living with chronic disease.

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

Strategy	Timeline			Hospital and Committed Partners	Committed Resources
	Y1	Y2	Y3		
Implement Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) which is focused on people who do not have diabetes and helps to decrease weight and promote a healthy lifestyle	X	X	X	St. Mary's Health Care System St. Mary's Wellness Center Safety Net Clinics	Staff External funding
				Focus location(s)	Focus Population(s)
				Clarke County	Minority communities Low income
Strategy	Timeline			Hospital and Committed Partners	Committed Resources
	Y1	Y2	Y3		
Offer health education and support groups for individuals at risk of developing or currently managing chronic disease (e.g., Freedom from Smoking, Better Breathers)	X	X	X	St. Mary's Health Care System	Staff and Expertise
				Focus location(s)	Focus Population(s)

Club, Living with Memory Loss, Healthy Heart Living, etc.).				Broader Community	Those living with chronic disease			
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	X	X	X	St. Mary's Health Care System	Staff and Expertise			
				Athens Radiology Associates	Staff time			
				Athens Neighborhood Health Center				
				Mercy Health				
				Athens Nurses Clinic				
				Focus location(s)				Focus Population(s)
				Clarke and Surrounding Counties				Low-income women Minority women

Anticipated impact of these actions:

Impact Measures	CHNA Baseline	Target	Plan to evaluate the impact
Number of participants in the DPP program who demonstrate improved health status	Baseline and training developed in Year 1	10% increase each year	Annual reports
Number of no-cost mammograms provided at a special yearly outreach event	50/year	50/year or increase as resources become available	Annual reports

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. After this review, the Board approved this Implementation Strategy and the related budget.



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

September 27, 2022