



2022-2024

Community Health Needs
Implementation Strategy

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City

1000 North Lee Avenue, Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Message to our community

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital is proud to have delivered exceptional, compassionate care to Oklahoma City and surrounding communities for 124 years. Inspired by our founding Franciscan Sisters of Mary and guided by our Mission – Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God – we cherish the sacredness and dignity of each person as demonstrated through our Values of compassion, respect, excellence, stewardship, and community.

Our sustained community commitment can be seen through our collaborative partnerships with residents and other organizations. We rely on these relationships to help us identify opportunities and develop plans to address high-priority community health needs. We are grateful for our partners in this, including INTEGRIS Health, Mercy Hospital, OU Health and the Oklahoma City-County Health Department – a group we collectively refer to as the Central Oklahoma Health Impact Team (COHIT).

During the last 12 months, in collaboration with COHIT and our partners, we have conducted a community health needs assessment (CHNA) by gathering health-related information from the Oklahoma City-County Health Department's 2021 Wellness Score regarding Oklahoma County. We have also conducted stakeholder meetings, community surveys, community chats and key informant interviews to identify concerns about the health of Oklahoma County. These discussions identified needs that were prioritized based on the level of importance to community members and the hospital's ability to make a meaningful impact.

The primary health priorities our health ministry plans to address over the next three years include:

- **Access to Care**
- **Access to Healthy Food**

Our CHNA also identified **education** and **employment** as health-related needs in Oklahoma County. SSM Health plans to do our part to address these important social determinants of health through our work with the Health Anchor Network, which you will see described in this implementation strategy.

During this time, SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital will further develop our community partnerships and deliver an exceptional experience through high-quality, accessible care to all patients. Please visit our website at www.ssmhealth.com to learn more about how we will continue to make a difference in our community.

Sincerely,

Tammy Powell
President

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City
SSM Health Bone & Joint Hospital at St. Anthony



Executive summary

Background

SSM Health St. Anthony, Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City, OU Health, INTEGRIS Health, and the Oklahoma City-County Health Department engaged in joint community health needs assessment (CHNA) in 2021. The CHNA involved reviewing both quantitative and qualitative data to attain the full scope of the community's needs related to health with a focus on the economically poor and underserved populations.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires 501(c)(3), tax-exempt hospitals to conduct a CHNA every three years and adopt a strategic implementation plan for addressing identified needs.



Priorities

As a result of the 2021 CHNA, SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City determined two primary priorities and two secondary priorities for the 2022-2024 Community Health Needs Implementation Strategy:

Primary Priorities:

- Access to Care
- Access to Healthy Food

Secondary Priorities:

- Education and Employment

Strategies

Access to Care: We will continue to collaborate with community partners to improve access to health care services by launching a new health education program, finding new ways to care for people experiencing homelessness, and increasing access to tobacco cessation resources for patients. Regular and reliable access to health services improves health conditions and overall quality of life

Access to Healthy Food: We will continue to collaborate with community partners to expand access to healthy food by distributing food boxes and fresh produce at our Family Medicine Center, sponsoring a Backpack for Kids program, and supporting 8th Street Urban Farm. Increasing access to healthy food will help residents in Oklahoma County achieve and maintain a healthy weight and live longer.

Education & Employment: We will develop a strategy to support equitable employment opportunities and job training in our local community through our work with the Healthcare Anchor Network.

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About SSM Health and St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City

SSM Health

SSM Health is a Catholic not-for-profit health system serving the comprehensive health needs of communities across the Midwest through a robust and fully integrated health care delivery system.

Headquartered in St. Louis, SSM Health has care delivery sites in Missouri, Illinois, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin. The

health system includes 24 hospitals, more than 300 physician offices and other outpatient care sites, 10 post-acute facilities, comprehensive home care and hospice services, a pharmacy benefit company, an insurance company, a technology company and an Accountable Care Organization.

With more than 10,000 providers and 40,000 employees in four states, SSM Health is one of the largest employers in every community it serves. An early adopter of the electronic health record (EHR), SSM Health is a national leader for the depth of its EHR integration.

Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God.

St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City

Highlight of services

We offer a comprehensive array of medical specialty services, such as:

- Behavioral Health
- Cancer Care
- Emergency Services
- Heart & Vascular Care
- Neuroscience
- Orthopedics
- Surgery Services
- Women's Health

Community partnerships

We are proud to be part of community projects that work to improve health outcomes in the areas we serve:

- Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma
- Mental Health Association Oklahoma
- The Homeless Alliance
- Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City
- OK to Quit Task Force

Community benefit

In 2019, St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City provided \$41,049,043 in community benefit, comprised of \$30,928,619 in charity care and \$10,120,424 in community services. Examples of our community benefit programs include:

- Loaves & Fishes Food Pharmacy
- NRT Bridge Medication Program
- Oklahoma Tobacco Quitline Referrals
- 8th Street Urban Farm

Additional affiliations and partnerships

- Central Oklahoma Health Impact Team
- Oklahoma City-County Health Department
- Health Alliance for the Uninsured
- Oklahoma Hospital Association
- OKC Public Schools

Hospital at a glance

Admissions | **26,323**

Outpatient visits | **312,339**

ER visits | **126,207**

Births | **1,497**

Beds | **1,016**

Employees | **3,824**

Medical staff | **948**

Volunteers | **150+**

Charity care | **\$30,928,619**

CHNA community partners and roles

Stakeholder Meeting Participants

Alliance for Economic Development of Oklahoma City
Areawide Aging Agency
Butterfield Foundation
Centennial Health
City Councilwoman, Ward 7
City of Oklahoma City
County Commissioner, District 1
Crossings Community Clinic
Dentists for the Disabled and Elderly in Need of Treatment (D-Dent)
El Latino News
Embark OKC (transportation)
Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma
Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce
Greater OKC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Homeless Alliance
Health Alliance for the Uninsured
Hunger Free Oklahoma
Inasmuch Foundation
Langston University
Latino Community Development
Lynn Institute
Metafund (CDFI)
MetroTech
Millwood Public Schools
OKC Black Eats
Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits
Oklahoma Children's Hospital at OU Health
Oklahoma City Black Chamber
Oklahoma City-County Health Department
Oklahoma City Indian Clinic
Oklahoma City Innovation District

Oklahoma Dental Foundation
Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Aging Services
Oklahoma Health Care Authority (Medicaid)
Oklahoma Hospital Association
Oklahoma State University
Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET)
Potts Family Foundation
Regional Food Bank
Restore OKC
St. Luke's United Methodist Church (Meals on Wheels)
State Representative, District 99
Sunbeam Family Services
United Way of Central Oklahoma
University of Oklahoma College of Nursing
VarietyCare (FQHC)

Community Chat Hosts & Partners

Crossings Community Clinic
Good Shepherd Clinic
Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma
Health Alliance for the Uninsured
Hilltop Clinic
Lynn Institute
Mary Mahoney Memorial Health Center (FQHC)
Millwood Public Schools
Skyline Urban Ministry
Stanley Hupfeld Academy

Informational Interview Participants

Choctaw Chamber of Commerce
Greater OKC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Health Alliance for the Uninsured
Latino Community Development Agency
Lynn Institute

We look forward to working with many of these partners to address the prioritized health needs in our 2022-2024 strategy for Oklahoma County.



Our progress since 2018

In our 2019-2021 Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP), SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City committed to addressing three social determinants of health identified in the 2018 CHNA: Food Insecurity, Access to Behavioral Health Services, and Tobacco Cessation.

Priority 1: Food Insecurity

SSM Health St. Anthony established a Backpacks for Kids program, partnering with the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma to provide nutritional support on the weekends for food-insecure families at Rockwood Elementary School. SSM Health St. Anthony invests \$15,000 in this program annually. Our partnership with Rockwood Elementary also developed beyond the Backpacks program to include donations of P.E. equipment, water bottles, and other resources to support the health of the students and the school's response during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the 2018 CHNA, INTEGRIS and Mercy joined us in a commitment to launch food pharmacy programs in our health systems. SSM Health St. Anthony launched its food pharmacy in 2021 in conjunction with Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma at the St. Anthony Family Medicine Center, a primary care clinic located on our Midtown campus that serves a high number of vulnerable families. This program provides food to over 125 food-insecure patients per month. Resources provided to these food-insecure patients include a food box with non-perishable items for up to 4 meals for a family of 4, fresh produce, healthy cooking tips, and information about SNAP enrollment and food pantries in the patient's neighborhood.

Priority 2: Mental Health Access

In our 2019-2021 CHIP we committed to increasing the number of mental health screenings done in the primary care setting in SSM Health Medical Group. Starting from a baseline of 730 in 2018, we increased the number of screenings to over 40,000 per year during the 2019-2021 CHIP period.

SSM Health St. Anthony also partnered with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City to increase access to counseling services in the underserved Hispanic population in south Oklahoma City. In 2020 and 2021 SSM Health issued a \$76,000 in grant support to Catholic Charities' St. Joseph Counseling program, with targeted outreach and education in six vulnerable zip codes. This partnership with Catholic Charities has reached over 200 members of the Hispanic community.

Our progress since 2018

Priority 3: Tobacco

During the 2019-2021 period, SSM Health partnered with the Oklahoma Hospital Association and the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce to lead advocacy efforts to remove smokers as a protected class in employment status in Oklahoma. Our ministry also partnered with OHA and the Chamber of Commerce to support “clean air” legislative efforts to make all bars and restaurants in Oklahoma smoke-free.

SSM Health participated in multiple public awareness campaigns to encourage the public to quit using tobacco products. Our ministry served on the steering committee for the annual “OK to Quit Week,” a public education campaign that takes place in late January to encourage Oklahomans to remain committed to their New Year’s resolutions to quit smoking, vaping, and chewing tobacco. In 2021 the campaign focused on the connection between poor COVID-19 outcomes and smoking and combatting teen vaping. SSM Health also continued to participate in the annual Great American Smokeout.

To support our patients’ efforts to quit tobacco products, SSM Health created an electronic referral system to the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline. This mechanism allows providers in the inpatient and outpatient setting to seamlessly connect our patients to resources that will support them in their efforts to quit using tobacco products. Along with other area hospitals, we work with the Oklahoma Hospital Association to track referrals to the Helpline on a monthly basis.

As a complement to the electronic referral system, SSM Health also launched a “Bridge Medication” program in collaboration with the Oklahoma Hospital Association. This program offers SSM Health patients a 2-week supply of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) medication to help them transition from the time they receive care in our health ministry to when they receive their first NRT shipment from the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline.

The health needs of our community

The 2022 COHIT CHNA includes both qualitative and quantitative data to provide insights into the biggest and most pressing health needs affecting people in Oklahoma County. We began the CHNA process with a review of the collaborative's previous CHNA report and gathered feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

Stakeholder Meeting

We assembled a group of 65 community stakeholders representing 45 organizations. We presented a comprehensive overview of health indicator findings for Oklahoma County. We used a “real-time” survey process to engage stakeholders and assess their views on the greatest factors for poor health outcomes in Oklahoma County. Four main health topics emerged from this process: access to meaningful employment, access to education, access to healthy food, and access to healthcare. We divided the stakeholders into discussion groups for each problem area. Each group further defined the problem using the “five whys exercise” in order to determine the root causes of each problem.

Convenience Sample Survey

We used the findings from the stakeholder meeting to create a community survey to collect information from Oklahoma County residents. To create the community survey, we contacted the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for examples of surveys from other states that were successful in gathering information related to social determinants of health. Through our partnership with the Oklahoma City-County Health Department, we utilized COVID-19 vaccination events to collect surveys. In addition, we enlisted the help of our stakeholders to send targeted emails to specific population groups. Surveys were made available in English and Spanish. To make the results more generalizable to Oklahoma County, we used post-stratification weighting.

Community Chats

Each hospital was responsible for Community Chats related to one of the following priority areas: Education, Employment, Food Access, Health Care Access. Each Community Chat was moderated by a staff member from one of the partner hospitals and recorded for transcription. Between May 23 and June 30, 2021, 111 participants engaged in 16 Community Chats: 4 on Health Care Access, 4 on Food Access, 3 on Education and 5 on Employment. All sessions were recorded, and audio files were anonymously transcribed into text documents. Text documents were uploaded to the qualitative data analysis software tool “Dedoose” for coding. Dedoose is a web-based program that allowed the researchers to organize and analyze research data into text formats for quantitative and qualitative data and facilitated mixed methods research output.

Analysis Techniques

The first stage in the research process was initial coding. A team of two primary and two secondary coders was established to generate codes and read through each transcript to draw relationships and identify keywords. We created a codebook with definitions for each code through an iterative process of testing codes and reconciling coding differences until an acceptable level of coding agreement was reached.¹¹ We calculated intercoder reliability by having multiple coders code random excerpts of text representing about 10% of the data. A second round of interrater reliability tests was administered to Community Chat facilitators to establish clarity on coding applications across administrative levels of the qualitative research efforts.¹²

The second stage of analysis involved focus coding in eliminating, combining, and subdividing coding categories identified in the first step. The process yielded quantitative results that drew comparisons across each Community Chat topic area. The content analysis enabled us to systematically code data by organizing the statements into categories allowing us to discover patterns that could be undetectable with listening and reading alone.

Prioritized Health Needs

Priority 1: Access to Care

932.6

deaths per 100,000

Overall mortality rate in Oklahoma City-County from 2016-2018.
(Wellness Score, 2021)

- High rates of hypertension and heart disease were prevalent across Oklahoma County (CHNA, page 50)
- Cardiovascular disease was the leading cause of death in Oklahoma County from 2016-to 2018 (CHNA, page 49)
- In the CHNA Community Chats, Oklahoma County residents stated that their most significant barriers to accessing healthcare include:
 - Lack of knowledge on how to access care
 - Affordability

(CHNA, pages 69-70)

Priority 2: Access to Healthy Food

14%

of Oklahoma county residents struggle with Food insecurity.
(Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma)

In the CHNA Community Survey, the top reasons why Oklahoma County residents stated they struggle to access healthy food include:

- Healthy food is too expensive in my community
- I don't have time to buy or prepare healthy food
- I don't know how to find food pantries and other sources of free food

(CHNA, page 79)

Secondary Priorities: Education and Employment

Stakeholders and Community Chat participants identified the need for interventions that close gaps in educational outcomes and the quality of employment in low-income or racial and ethnic minority populations (CHNA, pages 11-12). Education and employment significantly impact people's health, well-being, and quality of life.

Community assets

Potentially Available Resources

On August 11, 2021, COHIT reconvened with the original stakeholder group. We reviewed progress on the CHNA, presented data, and asked for input on community assets that could help address identified needs.

Community Assets discussed at 2nd Stakeholder meeting included:

Access to Education

- Langston University is using some of its COVID relief dollars toward loan forgiveness.
- Metro Tech and career techs are continuing to expand and are experiencing higher enrollment. Career techs are a valuable resource for people who are seeking to change careers or obtain more education to further their careers.
- Education about how to navigate insurance and health care needs to happen during middle and high school, in addition to traditional nutrition, health education, etc.

Access to Health Care

- Collaborations among healthcare organizations and community non-profits are a tremendous asset in Oklahoma County, including COHIT's partnership and the collaborations that formed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The group discussed interventions related to COHIT's desire to take a health equity approach to the CHNA and implementation plans

Access to Employment and Quality Jobs

- Career techs were mentioned as an asset to the community to reach those who need to enhance their job skills and employment opportunities.
- The group acknowledged that people receive information differently, whether via radio, text, social media, or other avenues.
- The group also discussed reaching out to adolescents to explore careers.

Access to Healthy Food

- The Regional Food Bank is trying to work to end hunger by addressing the root causes, through partnerships, which relates back to the COHIT focus on the social determinants of health, including access to education, transportation, employment, etc.
- Recommendations for interventions included collaborations among organizations to avoid overlap or duplication, to identify and address gaps and resources, and to eliminate territorial thinking.

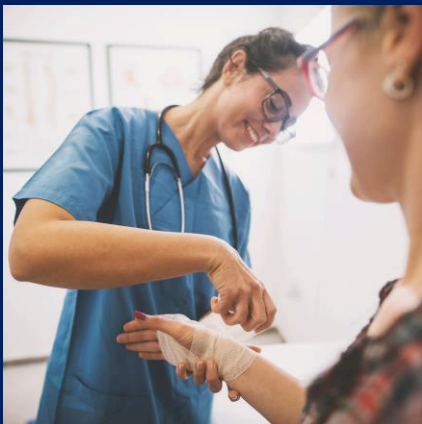
Strategic implementation plan

Using the data collected in the CHNA, the Community Health team worked with community partners and hospital leadership to identify the health priorities for the implementation strategy. This process included an evaluation of the assets and programs already present in the community, a determination of which needs SSM is best equipped to address, and selection of evidence-based interventions that SSM can support to make a measurable impact in the chosen health priorities.



Priority 1

Access to Health care



Priority 2

Access to Healthy Food



Secondary Priorities

Education

Employment



Priority 1:

Access to Care



Background

Financial barriers and lack of insurance were the most significant barriers to accessing care identified during the CHNA. In Oklahoma County, the hypertension mortality rate was above the national age-adjusted death rate, as was the percentage of people who use tobacco products. Regular and reliable access to health services can increase quality of life and detect and treat preventable health conditions.

Because of its urban setting, St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City is uniquely positioned to support programs designed to address health needs of the city's homeless population

Action plan

- Partner with Cardinal Community House to provide **respite care** for patients experiencing homelessness. The respite shelter at Cardinal Community House provides patients a safe, medically appropriate environment to rest and heal after a hospitalization. Participants receive case management services, meals, and medication assistance.
 - St. Anthony and Cardinal Community House will evaluate patient outcomes and readmission rates.
- Partner with Mental Health Association Oklahoma to pilot a **Street Medicine Team** to provide care for persons experiencing homelessness in Oklahoma City. The team will provide primary care, mental health, and other support for people living on the streets.
 - The OKC Street Medicine team will begin serving the city in 2022.
- Launch **Health Coaches for Hypertension** classes in Oklahoma City. This is an eight-week course designed to improve hypertension self-management through group educational sessions and support offered by a trained health coach.
 - Conduct one cohort per quarter
 - Report quarterly program outcomes
- Utilize the Health Alliance for the Uninsured's **Care Navigation** program to provide successful referrals to community organizations for vulnerable patients. This program is a central hub for basic health, vision, dental, and social services to improve individual health outcomes.
 - Provide training for the hospital Case Management team on how to utilize the program
 - Track the number of monthly referrals
- Continue to provide support for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City to offer **counseling services** in 6 vulnerable south Oklahoma City zip codes.
- Provide community-based organizations with **financial support** for their work in addressing access to care in Oklahoma City

Priority 1: Access to Care

Community partners

- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City
- Cardinal Community House
- Mental Health Association Oklahoma
- Health Alliance for the Uninsured

Supporting resources

- Clemson University's Health Coaches for Hypertension curriculum
- SSM Health St. Anthony Foundation

Evidence-based interventions

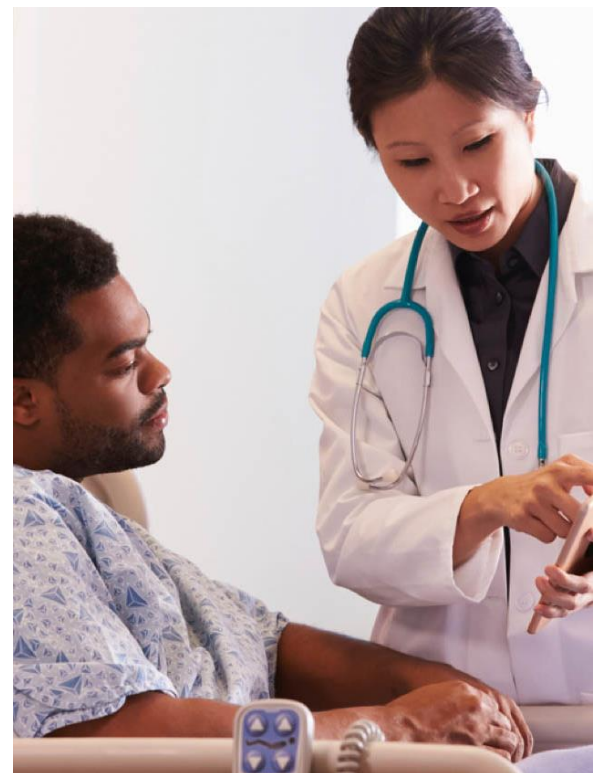
- Health Coaches for Hypertension is [named an evidence-based program](#) by the National Council on Aging's Center for Healthy Aging
- HAU's Care Navigation program aligns with County Health Rankings' [recommendations for patient navigator strategies](#)
- Coordinated street outreach such as the OKC Mobile Medicine Team is an [effective approach](#) to end homelessness, per the U.S. Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness

Health goal(s)

- Decrease the cardiovascular disease mortality rate in Oklahoma County from 281 per 100,000 (2016-2018 average, see page 8 of CHNA)
- Decrease the hypertension mortality rate in Oklahoma County from 53 per 100,000 (2016-2018 average, see page 50 of CHNA)
- Decrease the overall mortality rate for Oklahoma County of 932.6 deaths per 100,000 (2016-2018, see page 48 of CHNA)

Objective(s) with performance measures

- Baselines and performance measures to be identified in 2022



Priority 2:

Access to Healthy Food



Background

14% of Oklahoma County residents are food insecure. Food insecurity has an impact on a community's socioeconomic and health status. A healthy diet is difficult without access to nutritious food.

Action plan

- Continue food insecurity screenings and the **Food Pharmacy** program at Family Medicine Center.
 - Commit FMC staff time to screen and distribute fresh produce and food boxes
 - Report the number of families served
 - Evaluate the percentage of patients who access community food pantries and SNAP benefits using the resources included in the food boxes
- Continue to sponsor the **Backpacks for Kids** program at Rockwood Elementary. Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma's Backpacks for Kids program provides children with food access issues food for the weekends when the schools cannot feed them.
- Ongoing utilization of land, utilities, and financial support for the **8th Street Urban Farm**. The 8th Street Urban Farm is located on the St. Anthony campus and operated by the Midtown Community Development Foundation. The farm was established in 2021. A portion of the harvested produce is distributed to Family Medicine Center patients as a supplement to the Food Pharmacy program.
- Provide community-based organizations with **financial support** towards work in addressing food insecurity in Oklahoma City

Community partners

- Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma
- Rockwood Elementary School
- Midtown Community Development Foundation - a ministry of 8th Street Church of the Nazarene

Supporting resources

- SSM Health Medical Group
- SSM Health St. Anthony Foundation

Priority 2: Access to Healthy Food

Evidence-based interventions

- Urban farms and community gardens expand access to [nutritious foods](#), fosters community engagement, and expands green spaces as expressed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Food pharmacies help patients achieve and maintain a [healthy weight and help live longer](#), as indicated by the United States Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services.

Health goals

- Decrease the heart disease mortality rate in Oklahoma County from 22.9 deaths per 100,00 (2016-2018, see page 50 of the CHNA)
- Increase knowledge and encourage sustained behavior change as healthy foods are introduced from 8th Street Urban Farm
- Increase the percentage of Oklahoma County residents who have access to healthy food for their family (see page 78 of CHNA)

Objectives with performance measures

- Screen 70% of patients at SSM Health's Family Medicine Center for food insecurity
- Other baselines and performance measures to be identified in 2022



Secondary Priorities: Education & Employment

SSM Health is a proud member of the Healthcare Anchor Network. Members of the Healthcare Anchor Network commit to use their role as an “Anchor Institution” in their community to address the structural disparities that affect equitable health outcomes.

In 2022 the entire SSM Health system, including St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City, will begin to formulate a strategy to support the creation of equitable employment opportunities for marginalized community members. Local health ministries will determine whether to begin with a strategy focused on supply chain practices (making strategic purchasing decisions that support local and minority-owned/operated businesses) or job-training and hiring practices that increase access to meaningful employment in historically underserved segments of our local community. St. Anthony Hospital – Oklahoma City looks forward to participating in the Anchor Network strategy and believes that it presents an opportunity for a systemic response to the education and employment priorities identified in the Oklahoma County CHNA.



Overarching priorities

Social determinants of health (SDoH)

The social determinants of health are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. Examples of these factors include safe and affordable housing, access to quality education, public safety, availability of healthy foods, accessible health care services, and positive social support systems.

Research shows that the SDoH can be more important than healthcare or lifestyle choices in influencing health. For example, numerous studies suggest that SDoH accounts for between 30-55% of health outcomes. In addition, estimates show that the contribution of sectors outside health to community health outcomes exceeds the contribution from the healthcare sector. By applying what we know about SDoH, we can not only improve individual and community health but also advance health equity.

The primary data collection tools used in the CHNA were rooted in questions regarding SDoH. This health equity lens was used when prioritizing health needs and informed the development of this implementation strategy.

Health equity

Equity is defined as “the absence of avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically” (World Health Organization, 2016). As a Catholic health ministry, we believe healthcare is a fundamental human right. Interventions to address health disparities need to be effective and sustainable, focused on empowering those experiencing inequities.

A characteristic common to groups that experience health inequities – such as poor and marginalized persons, racial and ethnic minorities, and women – is a lack of political, social, or economic power. Research indicates a strong relationship between self-reported racism and discrimination with negative mental health outcomes and negative health-related behaviors.

Research also indicates that chronic stress from experiencing discrimination, such as racism, throughout the lifespan can lead to negative health outcomes. Those outcomes are seen even after controlling for differences such as socioeconomic status and access to adequate healthcare. The effects can include:

- Higher blood pressure
- Lower immune function
- Lower rates of exercise and social support
- Higher rates of infant mortality

