

## Southern Ocean Medical Center



## Community Health Improvement Plan 2023-2025

## Southern Ocean Medical Center

### *A beacon of medical excellence our residents and visitors can depend on*

Each and every day at Southern Ocean Medical Center, our physicians, nurses, team members and volunteers come together to capture the spirit of compassionate care and medical excellence that has defined our hospital for more than 40 years. It is our way of assuring that we remain true to providing each patient with a remarkable health care experience. We were recognized with the Gold Plus Achievement Award for Stroke Care by the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association and are designated a High-Performing Hospital for Heart Failure and Stroke by U.S. News & World Report. Our Center for Bariatrics is recognized by the American College of Surgeons as the most comprehensive, high-quality bariatric surgery program in the region, and designated as a Center of Excellence by the American Society of Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery.

### **About Hackensack Meridian Health - Keep Getting Better**

Hackensack Meridian Health is a leading not-for-profit health care organization that is the largest, most comprehensive and truly integrated health care network in New Jersey, offering a complete range of medical services, innovative research and life-enhancing care. Hackensack Meridian Health comprises 18 hospitals throughout New Jersey, from Bergen to Ocean counties. Hackensack Meridian Health has more than 36,000 team members, and over 7,000 physicians and is a distinguished leader in health care philanthropy, committed to the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

### **CHNA Background**

In alignment with the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and applicable federal requirements for not-for-profit hospitals, Hackensack Meridian Health Southern Ocean Medical Center completed a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that was adopted by the Hackensack Meridian Health Board of Directors on December 7, 2022.

The Southern Ocean Medical Center 2022 CHNA was conducted by Professional Research Consultants, Inc. (PRC) for Hackensack Meridian Health to identify the health needs within the hospital's service area. The assessment incorporates data from multiple sources, including primary research (through the PRC Community Health Survey and PRC Online Key Informant Survey) as well as secondary research (vital statistics and other existing health-related data). The complete CHNA report can be found at <https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/en/About-Us/community-health-needs-assessment>

In addition to assessing health indicators, the 2022 CHNA took a close look at social determinants of health (SDoH) such as food insecurity, housing, transportation, education, and other factors. Furthermore, lessons learned about inequities in opportunity, access, education, and trust revealed by COVID-19 were taken into consideration.

## Determining Community Health Priorities

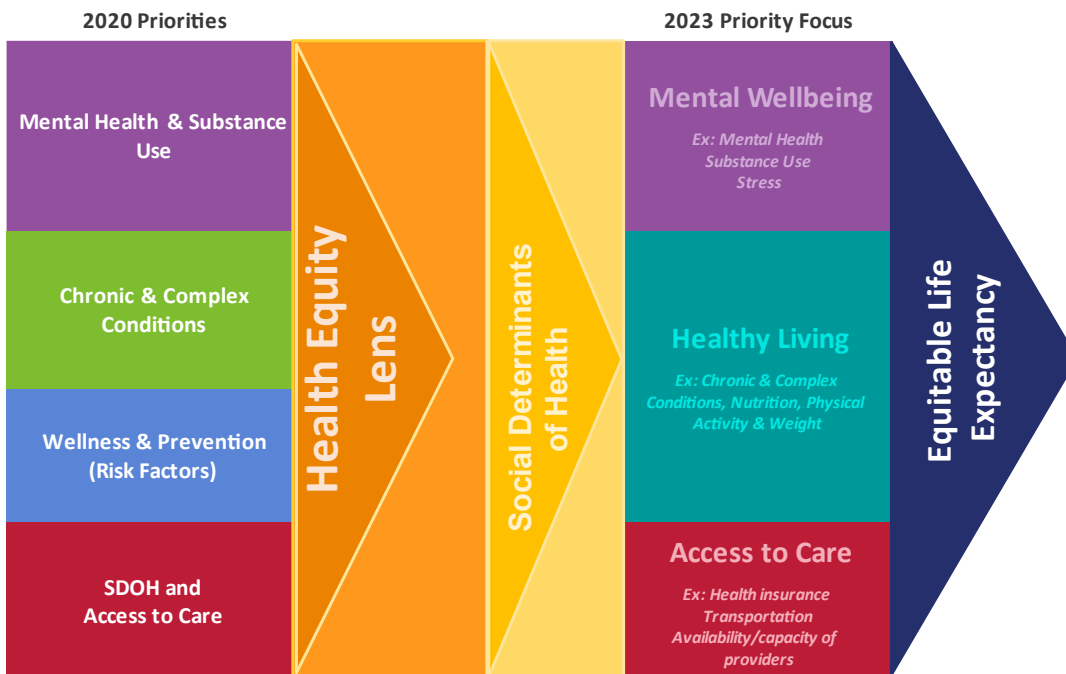
In reviewing the data from the 2022 CHNA, it is evident that the priorities identified in 2019 remain pressing needs but in different ways due to the myriad impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Existing inequities in opportunity, access, education, and trust were exacerbated by the pandemic. The inequities highlighted by the pandemic elevated health equity as a lens in which health priorities were redefined from 2019 for Hackensack Meridian Health as a network, and Southern Ocean Medical Center in particular.

Hackensack Meridian Health conducted virtual community forums in the Northern, Central, and Southern regions of the network service areas with representatives from each hospital and key community stakeholders during August 2022. During the forums, an overview of the findings from the 2022 CHNA report for each region was shared by PRC, Inc. Following the data presentation, 35th Street Consultants presented the proposed framework for this CHIP and led the prioritization discussion in the breakout groups. Sixty-seven people participated in the Southern Region Community Partner Forum on August 16, 2022, representing agencies and institutions throughout the region, representing diverse perspectives. During discussion, there was overwhelming support for the health equity strategy and endorsed the reframed priority areas for 2023-2025.

Using a health equity lens, the goals were reframed to achieve equitable life expectancy for all people, regardless of their zip code, race, ethnicity, preferred language, gender identity, or other factor. When the needs, priorities, and activities from 2022 are viewed through a health equity lens, it becomes clear that social determinants of health (SDoH) have an impact on every identified area and are incorporated in each rather than as a distinct priority.

The final priority areas are – **Mental Wellbeing, Healthy Living, and Access to Care.**

## Prioritized Health Needs Summary



## Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

The intent of our CHIP is to be responsive to community needs and expectations and create a plan that can be effectively executed to leverage hospital and network resources, as well as community partners.

A CHIP is a dynamic rather than a static plan and should be modified and adjusted as external environmental factors change, including market conditions, availability of community resources, and engagement from community partners. Furthermore, a CHIP should build on and leverage prior success while simultaneously adjusting strategies and actions as obstacles are encountered.

The following defines the types of programmatic strategies and interventions that guided the development of the Community Health Improvement Plan.

- **Prevention and Awareness:** Health promotion and disease prevention programs focus on keeping people healthy. These initiatives aim to engage and empower individuals and communities to choose healthy behaviors and make changes that reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases and other morbidities.
- **Build Capacity:** Efforts which aim to help individuals navigate the healthcare system and improve access to services when and where they need them.
- **Strengthen Community Partnership:** Includes collaborations, partnerships, and support of providers and community organizations across multiple sectors (e.g., health, public health, education, public safety, and community health).

## Significant Health Needs That Will Not Be Addressed

Southern Ocean Medical Center acknowledges the wide range of 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. Specifically, Southern Ocean Medical Center will not be addressing oral health because these priorities are outside of the clinical expertise of the organization, rendering them outside of Southern Ocean Medical Center's feasibility of having an impact in the short or long term. Southern Ocean Medical Center remains open and willing to work with hospitals across the HMM network and other public and private partners to address issues impacting health and wellbeing as opportunities arise.

## Priority Area: Mental Wellbeing

The 2022 CHNA for Southern Ocean Medical Center identified the following sub-priorities within the Mental Wellbeing priority area. Sub-priorities were determined based on areas of opportunity uncovered through the CHNA process.

### Sub-priorities identified from the 2022 CHNA:

- “Fair/Poor” Mental Health
- Diagnosed Depression
- Symptoms of Chronic Depression
- Mental Health Provider Ratio
- Receiving Treatment for Mental Health
- Key Informants: Mental health ranked as a top concern
- Unintentional Drug-Related Deaths
- Personally Impacted by Substance Abuse (Self or Others)
- Key Informants: Substance Abuse ranked as a top concern

Priority Area: Mental Wellbeing		
Goal: A community where all people have access to high quality behavioral health care, and experience mental wellness and recovery		
	Objectives	Strategies/Action Steps
Prevention and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide universal behavioral health screenings for patients</li> <li>▪ Continue behavioral health education and increase participation among diverse and vulnerable populations</li> <li>▪ Support public health in local prevention and emergency initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consistently utilize the universal behavioral health screening as a standard assessment tool</li> <li>▪ Organize lectures related to substance use, healthy social, emotional, and mental health that are inclusive and accessible to diverse and vulnerable populations</li> </ul>
Build Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand care delivery methods for behavioral healthcare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase care delivery options for diverse and vulnerable populations</li> </ul>
Strengthen Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase, strengthen and evaluate partnerships with community-based organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate in local and regional health coalitions and task forces to lend support to activities promoting mental wellness for all</li> <li>▪ Identify and deepen partnerships with community-based organizations that serve diverse and vulnerable populations</li> </ul>

## Priority Area: Healthy Living

The 2022 CHNA for Southern Ocean Medical Center identified the following sub-priorities within the Healthy Living priority area. Sub-priorities were determined based on areas of opportunity uncovered through the CHNA process.

### Sub-priorities identified from the 2022 CHNA:

- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease and Stroke
- Infant Health and Family Planning
- Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Weight
- Potentially Disabling Conditions
- Respiratory Disease
- Injury and Violence

Priority Area: Healthy Living		
Goal: All people will have access to chronic disease education, screening, and management services to achieve an optimal state of wellness		
	Objectives	Strategies/ Action Steps
<b>Prevention and Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to provide education and health promotion and increase participation among diverse and vulnerable populations</li> <li>▪ Support public health departments in local prevention and emergency initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct or support community-based preventive health screenings with a focus on reaching diverse and vulnerable populations</li> <li>▪ Leverage best practice strategies to increase retention in chronic disease management protocols post discharge</li> <li>▪ Conduct or support community-based education with a focus on diverse and vulnerable populations</li> </ul>
<b>Build Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to engage, monitor and coordinate care for patients with chronic/complex conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support case management and patient navigation programs to support those with chronic/complex conditions and their caregivers</li> <li>▪ Increase connections to food, nutrition access for identified patients including diverse and vulnerable populations</li> </ul>
<b>Strengthen Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase, strengthen and evaluate partnerships with community-based organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate in local and regional health coalitions and task forces to support activities promoting equitable healthy living for all</li> <li>▪ Identify and deepen partnerships with community-based organizations that serve diverse and vulnerable populations</li> </ul>

## Priority Area: Access to Care

The 2022 CHNA for Southern Ocean Medical Center identified the following sub-priorities within the Access to Care priority area. Sub-priorities were determined based on areas of opportunity uncovered through the CHNA process.

### Sub-priorities identified from the 2022 CHNA:

- Appointment Availability
- Finding a Physician
- Primary Care Physician Ratio
- Skipping/Stretching Prescriptions
- Ratings of Local Health Care

Priority Area: Access to Care		
Goal: All people will have the opportunity to be as healthy as possible, regardless of where they live, work or play		
	Objectives	Strategies/ Action Steps
Prevention and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduce common barriers to accessing health care for diverse and vulnerable populations</li> <li>▪ Strengthen cultural competency training for team members and physicians</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase screening for social determinants of health (SDoH) and make appropriate referrals to community-based resources</li> <li>▪ Increase implicit bias and cultural competency training amongst all team members</li> </ul>
Build Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hire, retain and promote a diverse workforce</li> <li>▪ Develop and leverage alternative care delivery models to improve access to care for all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leverage implementation of Health and Wellness Centers to reduce barriers to accessing specialty care and wellness services</li> <li>▪ Continue to provide support and training for ReaL (race ethnicity, and language) and SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) data collection tools, methods, use</li> <li>▪ Provide education and training to staff regarding social determinants of health (SDoH) screening tool</li> <li>▪ Team member and physician well-being programs</li> </ul>
Strengthen Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase, strengthen and evaluate partnerships with community-based organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate in local and regional health coalitions and task forces to lend support to health equity</li> <li>▪ Identify and deepen partnerships with community-based organizations that serve diverse and vulnerable populations</li> </ul>

## Alignment with New Jersey State Health Improvement Plan

Health needs identified in the CHNA research were confirmed by community stakeholders and refined through collaborative discussion. Local concerns were then aligned with the statewide health priorities in the **New Jersey State Health Improvement Plan (2020)**. This approach ensures priority areas reflect local concerns and community-generated strategies for action while establishing a connection to statewide initiatives. The table below shows the identified health needs in the New Jersey State Health Improvement Plan and the alignment of these issues with priorities with Hackensack Meridian Health priorities.

New Jersey State Health Improvement Priorities	Hackensack Meridian Health Priorities	
Health Equity	Health Equity Lens	
Mental Health and Substance Use	Mental Wellbeing	
Nutrition, Physical Activity and Chronic Disease	Healthy Living	
Immunizations	Healthy Living	Access to Care
Birth Outcomes	Healthy Living	Access to Care
Alignment of State and Community Health Improvement Planning	Applies to all HMH priorities	

## Next Steps

Community health improvement requires collaboration among community-based organizations, policy makers, funders, and many other partners. A CHIP is a dynamic guide to move from data to action, to coordinate community resources, and to measure progress as a community. The Southern Ocean Medical Center CHIP outlines specific actions to address our community’s most pressing health needs. We invite your partnership as we monitor and share our progress toward these efforts during the 2023-2025 reporting cycle. For more information about Southern Ocean Medical Center’s community health improvement initiatives, please visit <https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/en/About-Us/community-health-needs-assessment>

### Our Research Partners:



A New Jersey certified Small Business Enterprise (SBE) and Women Owned Business Enterprise (WBE), 35th Street Consulting specializes in transforming data into action that advances health and social equity through practical and impactful strategies. Our interdisciplinary team of community development experts, health planners, researchers, and data analysts have worked with hundreds of healthcare providers, payors, public health departments, government agencies, health and human service providers, and other community-based organizations to direct action and funding to reimagine policies and achieve realistic, measurable social impact.



[www.PRCCustomResearch.com](http://www.PRCCustomResearch.com)

Professional Research Consultants (PRC) is a nationally recognized health care consulting firm with extensive experience conducting Community Health Needs Assessments in hundreds of communities across the United States since 1994.