



Community Health Improvement Plan 2023-2025

Pascack Valley Medical Center

Hackensack Meridian *Health* Pascack Valley Medical Center is a world-class, 128-bed community hospital that offers all the resources of a large facility with more personalized care for each patient. We understand that being in the hospital can be a difficult time and not something that you choose to do. That's why we've made it our goal to make your hospital stay the most pleasant and comfortable experience as possible.

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* Pascack Valley 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 Pascack Valley 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

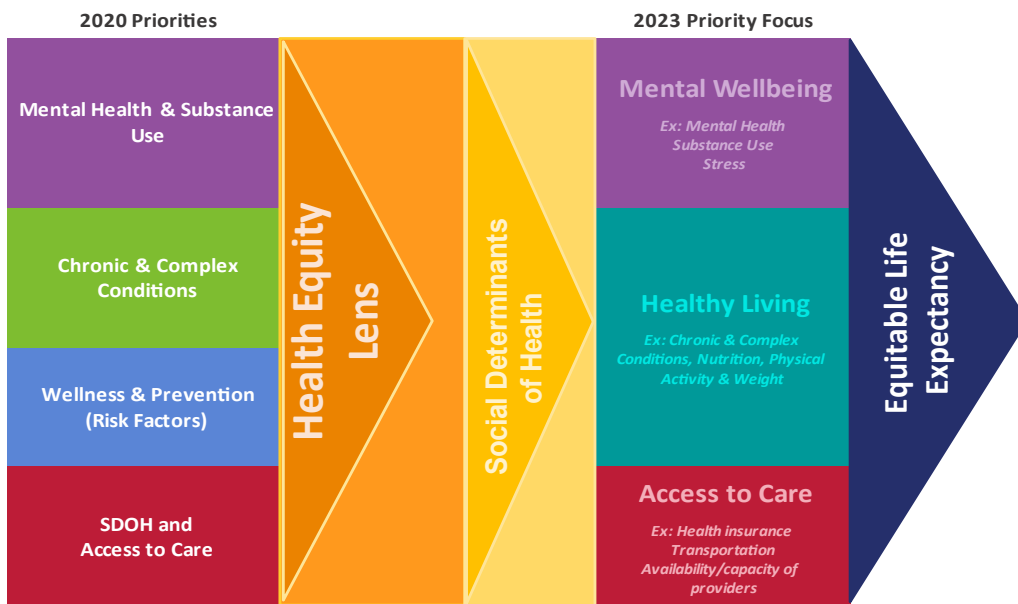
In reviewing the data from the 2022 CHNA, it is evident that the priorities identified in 2019 remain pressing needs but in different ways due to the myriad impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Existing inequities in opportunity, access, education, and trust were exacerbated by the pandemic. The inequities 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 Pascack Valley 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. Twenty-seven people participated in the Northern Region Community Partner Forum on August 18, 2022, representing agencies and institutions throughout the region, representing diverse perspectives. Additionally, Pascack Valley Medical Center also participates in the Bergen County Community Health Improvement Partnership which also hosted a community partner forum with key leaders specifically from Bergen County, New Jersey, to discuss their health equity-based priorities which closely align with the priority areas identified by the Hackensack Meridian Health Network priorities. Seventy-eight people representing multiple community agencies participated in the Bergen County event on October 19, 2022. During both discussions, there was overwhelming support for the health equity strategy and endorsement of 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

Pascack Valley 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, Pascack Valley Medical Center will not be addressing:

- Receiving Treatment for Mental Health
- Injury and Violence
- Housing Conditions
- Skipping/Stretching Prescriptions

These priorities are outside of the clinical expertise of the organization, rendering them outside of Pascack Valley Medical Center’s feasibility of having an impact in the short or long term, and are being effectively addressed by community partners in the area. As a member of the Bergen County Community Health Improvement Partnership, Pascack Valley Medical Center remains open and willing to partner with community agencies to support their missions to address these and other issues impacting this community. Pascack Valley Medical Center will continue to work with hospitals across the Hackensack Meridian Health network and other public and private partners to address these and other issues impacting health and wellbeing as opportunities arise.

Priority Area: Mental Wellbeing

The 2022 CHNA for Pascack Valley 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
- Difficulty Obtaining Mental Health Services
- Key Informants: Mental health ranked as a top concern
- Cirrhosis/Liver Disease Deaths
- Unintentional Drug-Related Deaths
- Illicit Drug Use
- Use of Marijuana
- 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"> ▪ Provide universal behavioral health screenings for patients ▪ Continue behavioral health education and increase participation among diverse and vulnerable populations ▪ Support public health in local prevention and emergency initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistently utilize the universal behavioral health screening as a standard assessment tool ▪ Organize lectures related to substance use, healthy social, emotional, and mental health that are inclusive and accessible to diverse and vulnerable populations
Strengthen Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase, strengthen and evaluate partnerships with community-based organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in local and regional health coalitions and task forces to lend support to activities promoting mental wellness for all ▪ Identify and deepen partnerships with community-based organizations that serve diverse and vulnerable populations

Priority Area: Healthy Living

The 2022 CHNA for Pascack Valley 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
- Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Weight
- Potentially Disabling Conditions
- Respiratory Disease
- Tobacco Use

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
Prevention and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to provide education and health promotion and increase participation among diverse and vulnerable populations ▪ Support public health departments in local prevention and emergency initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct or support community-based preventive health screenings with a focus on reaching diverse and vulnerable populations ▪ Conduct or support community-based education with a focus on diverse and vulnerable populations
Build Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to engage, monitor and coordinate care for patients with chronic/complex conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support case management and patient navigation programs to support those with chronic/complex conditions and their caregivers
Strengthen Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase, strengthen and evaluate partnerships with community-based organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in local and regional health coalitions and task forces to support activities promoting equitable healthy living for all ▪ Identify and deepen partnerships with community-based organizations that serve diverse and vulnerable populations

Priority Area: Access to Care

The 2022 CHNA for Pascack Valley 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:

- Inconvenient Office Hours
- Appointment Availability
- Finding a Physician

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"> ▪ Reduce common barriers to accessing health care for diverse and vulnerable populations ▪ Strengthen cultural competency training for team members and physicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase screening for social determinants of health (SDoH) and make appropriate referrals to community-based resources ▪ Increase implicit bias and cultural competency training amongst all team members
Build Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and leverage alternative care delivery models to improve access to care for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to provide support and training for ReaL (race ethnicity, and language) and SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) data collection tools, methods, use
Strengthen Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase, strengthen and evaluate partnerships with community-based organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in local and regional health coalitions and task forces to lend support to health equity ▪ Identify and deepen partnerships with community-based organizations that serve diverse and vulnerable populations

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 Pascack Valley 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 Pascack Valley 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.



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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.