

2024 COMMUNITY  
HEALTH NEEDS  
ASSESSMENT:  
**IMPLEMENTATION  
PLAN**

July 1, 2024



*Excellence Every Day.*

# 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment: Implementation Plan

Plan dates: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2027

## Introduction

Evangelical Community Hospital (Evangelical or ECH) is a non-profit organization that employs over 1900 individuals and has more than 550 employed and non-employed physicians on staff. Evangelical has been providing for the healthcare needs of Central Susquehanna Valley residents for nearly a century.

The mission of the Hospital is to provide exceptional healthcare, accessible to all, in the safest and most compassionate atmosphere possible to build a healthy community. The mission is what guides service and commitment as a community Hospital.

In Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023, the Hospital:

- Received 434,373 outpatient visits
- Received 11,780 inpatients
- Provided 6,224 patient observation stays
- Delivered 1,325 babies
- Received more than 58,512 emergency department visits

Our patients and the community are at the heart of Evangelical's vision to be the community's healthcare provider of choice for patients, clinicians, and employees. This is accomplished by maintaining a challenging, energized work environment for our valued employees who exemplify our Core Values of:

- Quality Service
- Compassion
- Respect
- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Cooperation
- And Creativity

A part of the Hospital's commitment to the community, Evangelical conducts a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years. The CHNA findings are used by Evangelical for the development of a community health improvement plan. The findings are available to community stakeholders, service agencies, and public health organizations who can also use this valuable information as a resource to improve or add to their current services.

## 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment Planning

The 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was conducted in partnership with Geisinger and Allied Services Integrated Health System. The study area included 18 counties across central and northeastern Pennsylvania, which represents the collective service areas. Evangelical Community Hospital is located in the Central Region, which is comprised of the following counties:

- Clinton
- Columbia
- Lycoming
- Montour
- Northumberland
- Schuylkill
- Snyder
- Sullivan
- Union

## CHNA Methodology

The 2024 CHNA was conducted from January to December 2023. Quantitative and qualitative methods, representing both primary and secondary research, were used to illustrate and compare health and social trends and disparities across each region and hospital service area.

Specific research methods include:

- Statistical analysis of health and socioeconomic data indicators
- Electronic survey of key stakeholders, including experts in public health and individuals representing medically underserved, low-income, and minority populations
- Discussion and prioritization of community health needs to determine the most pressing health issues on which to focus community health improvement efforts

The 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment was built upon the Hospitals' previous CHNAs and subsequent Implementation Plans. The CHNA was conducted in a timeline to comply with IRS Tax Code 501(r) requirements to conduct a CHNA every three years as set forth by the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The research findings will be used to guide community benefit initiatives for the Hospital and engage local partners to collectively address identified health needs.

## Prioritized Community Health Needs and Implementation Plan Strategies

From the review and analysis of key data sources, the following health needs were identified as top priorities:

- Access to Care
- Chronic Disease Prevention and Management
- Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder

The chart below identifies key contributing factors driving these top priorities:

**Consistent Community Priorities and Contributing Factors**

Access to Care	Chronic Disease Prevention & Management	Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder
Ability to afford care	Aging, rural population	Availability of providers
Availability of providers	Comorbidities	Comorbidities
Cultural competence	Disparities in disease, mortality	Depression and stress
Digital access	Early detection, screening	Impact of COVID pandemic
Healthcare navigation	Health education	Opioid and alcohol use
Health insurance	Healthy food access	Social isolation
Medical home	Physical activity	Stigma
Transportation	Tobacco use	Suicide attempts, death

**Focus on underlying Social Drivers of Health**

Access to care and chronic disease prevention and management are consistent with those needs determined in the previous 2021 CHNA and reflect complex needs requiring sustained commitment and resources. Mental health and substance use disorder is a more specific identified need than the broader 2021 CHNA behavioral health need.

**Access to Care** – through several programs and resources Evangelical will continue to focus on vulnerable areas of need for improvement to access to care.

- Evangelical and its subsidiaries will continue to expand diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts focused on creating a welcoming environment for patients of all backgrounds and beliefs;
- Continue to expand Evangelical Regional Mobile Medical Services (ERMMS) to support access to quality emergency medical services throughout the ECH service area;
- ERMMS will collaborate and educate medical clinics on services that can be provided with the ERMMS wheelchair van in an effort to identify patients with transportation needs impacting access to medical care;

- Evangelical Community Health and Wellness/Mobile Health of Evangelical will continue to offer free or reduced fee health screenings, focused on screenings that identify risk or prevalence of chronic disease;
- Continue offering free or reduced fee preventive programs such as Freedom from Smoking through Evangelical Community Health and Wellness;
- Cancer Services in collaboration with Mobile Health of Evangelical will partner to offer community based clinical breast exams and skin cancer screenings throughout the Hospital's service area;
- Serve as a community advocate for increasing use of closed loop referral resources. Continue to collaborate with external community organizations to increase awareness of these resource portals (i.e. PA Navigate, 211);
- Continue screening patients for food insecurity and providing free food boxes to patients through Care Coordination, Infusion, Hospital to Home, and the Union County Food Hub at The Miller Center;
- Continue leveraging and building on collaborations and partnerships through The Miller Center joint venture to increase awareness and access to lifestyle-based resources such as the Phase III Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, Parkinson's Disease Programs, Fitness Classes, Personal Training Services, and access to the amenities of the facility through membership and program participation;
- Pulmonary Services will seek to incorporate a phase III pulmonary rehabilitation program in partnership with The Miller Center joint venture;
- Utilize Mobile Health of Evangelical to reach populations with known care gaps in areas such as dental care and diabetes education, screening, and management;
- Evangelical will continue participating in the Nurse-Family Partnership Program, for at-risk young expectant women. The goals of the program include:
  - Improvement in pregnancy outcomes
  - Improvement in child health and development
  - Improvement in the economic self-sufficiency of the family;
- Care Coordination will continue to collaborate and strengthen relationships with community agencies that focus on addressing social determinants of health (SDoH) and disease specific management and treatment;
- Evangelical Community Health and Wellness will seek opportunities to collaborate with medical students on youth mentorship opportunities within Evangelical's service area, in an effort to build tomorrow's healthcare provider workforce;
- Identify and appropriate approved vendor for the implementation of a remote therapeutic rehabilitation monitoring platform. This will allow for continuity of care and support to patients across a digital online platform outside a clinic setting;

- Continue marketing efforts focused on improving patient use and ease of access to the Hospital's digital patient portal;
- Evangelical will seek to identify opportunities to expand and improve ease of patient access to telehealth and virtual care platforms in both inpatient and outpatient care settings;
- Evangelical will continue to provide patients with easy access to financial assistance resources, while also increasing price transparency for out-of-pocket expenses.

**Chronic Disease Prevention and Management** – continue to focus on education, healthy lifestyle programming, and prevention screenings.

- Utilize Mobile Health of Evangelical to deploy chronic disease care through Evangelical's specialty care services in areas of need;
- Offer diabetes education and screening internally and through partnerships with local agencies;
- Collaborate with community organizations such as schools, YMCAs, and youth camps to offer healthy lifestyle programming focused on priority topics of need as identified in the CHNA;
- Utilize the Evangelical Community Health and Wellness health coaching program to address chronic disease management through lifestyle-based approaches in collaboration with internal and external partners;
- Continue offering healthy lifestyle programming to the adult and senior population both in community and worksite settings with a focus on referrals from clinical service lines such as metabolic and bariatrics as well as primary care service lines;
- Continue coordination of services to address health and social disparities with various community health and social agencies. Outcomes will be monitored through review of SDoH screening report data;
- Continue to expand the Evangelical Fresh Local Food Project, which involves school-based education as well as employee and community access to fresh and local food options through partnership with local farms;
- Continue efforts to expand the Low Dose Lung Screening program through the work of two designated lung screening coordinators and seek Accreditation of American College of Radiology;
- Cardiovascular services will implement a Cardiac Calcium Score Screening program for patients who do not qualify for the service as medically necessary but wish to have an early cardiac screening.

**Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder** – specifically targeting mental health concerns like depression and anxiety, which can be linked to social drivers like income, employment, and environment, and can pose risks of physical health problems by complicating an individual’s ability to keep up other aspects of their healthcare and well-being.

- Continue to offer stigma training to all Emergency Department (ED) staff to improve care and compassion for patients who present to the ED with medical conditions exhibiting behavioral health and substance use disorder characteristics;
- Continue providing Naloxone reversal kits and fentanyl/xylazine test strips to community organizations as directed through funding from The Pennsylvania Overdose Prevention Program (POPP), a joint initiative between the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP);
- Expand collaboration with Columbia Montour Snyder and Union (CMSU) Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and continue warm hand-off referral process to connect patients with Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS) to provide access to services;
- Continue to serve on the Susquehanna Valley Recovery Coalition, which covers a five-county region focusing on addressing issues and challenges related to substance use disorder, stigma reduction, and reentry into the community;
- Continue offering community based educational programming on the topics of stress management, resiliency, and burnout;
- Continue to facilitate Plans of Safe Care for mothers who deliver children identified as substance affected;
- ERMMS will begin participating in the First Responder Addiction and Connection to Treatment Program, which includes naloxone leave-behind kits for incidents involving opioid overdose;
- Explore opportunities to incorporate facility and programming changes in an effort to improve care pathways to better serve the behavioral health needs of the community;
- Departments across the organization are implementing processes for SDoH screening with patients as a routine component of inpatient and outpatient visit. Aggregate screening results will be analyzed by a committee seeking to identify disparities and opportunities to improve outcomes.

Evangelical’s efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of our community are not limited to the previously mentioned action items. We are committed to focusing our expertise and resources in areas of greatest need and where we see we can make the greatest impact. Along with our internal providers and educators we will look to community agencies for collaboration to move the needle on our key identified needs.

Evangelical will focus on the following identified needs. Below are our main goals and how we will work to meet these need objectives:

1. Evangelical aims to expand the Wellness 360 program to older adults within Evangelical's service area with the goal of increasing outreach and access to community resources, to improve the quality of life for the older adult population by June 30, 2027.
  - Conduct thorough review of data to define specific needs of older adults and develop a plan for community partner outreach by December 31, 2024;
  - Identify, establish, and develop partnerships to gain understanding of existing frameworks, resources, needs, and challenges by June 30, 2025;
  - Develop a plan for expanding Wellness 360 program specific to the identified disparities and root causes by December 31, 2025;
  - Implement strategy to expand Wellness 360 programming by June 30, 2026;
  - Track and monitor outcomes. Adapt, adjust and scale program as indicated by outcome measures by June 30, 2027;

The identified population at risk will be the aging, rural population within Evangelical's service area. Aligning resources and effort with this project will aim to improve access to resources for our patients, thus managing the progression, preventing, or reversing the effects of chronic disease and improving access to care.

2. Evangelical aims to increase awareness and improve knowledge of mental health and substance use and contributing factors through the Hospital's school-based programming targeting children kindergarten through grade 12 by June 30, 2027.
  - Collaborate with Psychology of Evangelical providers to evaluate programming with the intent to provide professional guidance for adjusting curriculum and/or collaborate with existing community-based resources by December 31, 2024;
  - Develop new and/or adjust program curriculum to meet recommendations of professional guidance and community collaborations by June 30, 2025;
  - Develop plan for offering new curriculum and identify area school districts willing to collaborate by December 31, 2025;
  - Facilitate the new curriculum by June 30, 2026;
  - Track and monitor outcomes. Adapt, adjust, and scale program as indicated by outcome measures by June 30, 2027.

The identified population at risk will be the youth (grades kindergarten through 12) within Evangelical's service area. Aligning resources and effort with this project will aim to increase awareness and improve knowledge of mental health and substance use issues and contributing factors for youth within Evangelical's service area.