



# 2026-2028 Community Health Implementation Plan

Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital  
PADUCAH, KY

# 2026–2028 Community Health Implementation Plan

## Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital

Adopted by the Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital Board of Directors,  
April 30, 2026

As part of Bon Secours Mercy Health, Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital is honored to uphold nearly two centuries of dedication to the communities we serve. This commitment has continually evolved to address the most pressing needs in each community, based on input from residents, businesses and other community members.

Guided by our Mission to extend the compassionate ministry of Jesus, Mercy Health continuously works to improve the health and well-being of our communities and bring good help to those in need — especially people who are poor, underserved and dying.

By listening to community voices from our partners and neighbors, Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital has identified the greatest needs in our community. The Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP) helps ensure our resources and strategies for outreach, prevention, education and wellness are directed where they can make the greatest impact.

We welcome written comments regarding the health needs identified in this CHIP. Please direct your feedback to Leigh Ann Ballegeer, Director of Community Health, at [LABallegeer@mercy.com](mailto:LABallegeer@mercy.com).

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### Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital

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# Introduction

This Community Health Implementation Plan will address the prioritized significant community health needs listed through the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The Plan indicates which prioritized needs Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital will address and how, as well as which prioritized needs will not be addressed and why.

Beyond the programs and strategies outlined in this plan, Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital will continue to address the needs of the community by operating in accordance with its mission to extend the compassionate ministry of Jesus by improving the health of its communities with an emphasis on the poor and underserved. This includes providing care for all individuals regardless of their ability to pay.

The strategies in the Implementation Plan will provide the foundation for addressing the community’s significant needs from 2026 to 2028. However, Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital anticipates some strategies and needs identified will evolve over that period. Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital plans a flexible approach to addressing the significant community-identified needs that will allow for the adaptation of potential changes and collaboration with other community agencies and partners.

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# Executive Summary

## Background and Process

Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital collaborated with the Purchase District Health Department and Baptist Health Paducah to develop and distribute a community health needs survey for the public. Survey results were analyzed, along with results from the Graves County Health Department and the Marshall County Health Department community surveys. Three focus groups and six key informant interviews were completed. Additional data analyzed included county-specific secondary data gathered to help examine specific health indicators and the social determinants of health from sources such as: County Health Rankings, Kentucky Cancer Registry, Kentucky Hospital Association, U.S. Census Bureau, Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center and others. Throughout the process, input from populations (or those who serve them) who are often not engaged in conversations about their health needs or gaps in services was made a priority. The CHNA was prepared in consultation with Blueprint Kentucky (formerly Community Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky - CEDIK) at the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. Blueprint Kentucky facilitated the primary data collection process by conducting focus groups and key informant interviews and analyzing the results of three community health needs surveys.

## Identifying Significant Needs

Primary and secondary data results were presented to the Community Steering Committee and Internal Workgroup. A prioritization process utilizing a multi-voting technique guided by the criteria from the American Hospital Association (AHA) and Association for Community Health Improvement (ACHI) was then used to identify significant health needs among both groups:

1. Magnitude of the problem
2. Severity of the problem
3. Need among vulnerable populations
4. Community's capacity and willingness to act on an issue
5. Availability of hospital and community resources
6. Whether the issue is a root cause of other problems

The Internal Workgroup of hospital leadership took the recommendations from the Community Steering Committee and then voted on the needs to prioritize over the next three years.

# Implementation Plan

Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital is committed to addressing the prioritized significant health needs of the community through the strategies described in this Implementation Plan.

## Prioritized Significant Health Needs

The table below lists the prioritized significant health needs that were identified through the CHNA and specifies which needs Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital will address. All significant health needs were prioritized in this CHIP.

Prioritized Significant Health Needs	Hospital Addressing Need
<b>Financial insecurity, including housing, homelessness and food insecurity</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mental health</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Chronic health issues, with an emphasis on obesity</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Substance misuse</b>	<b>Yes</b>

## Implementation Strategies to Address Community-Level Social Determinants of Health Needs

### Financial insecurity, including housing, homelessness and food insecurity

#### Description

Following the facilitated discussion of the results of the vote on health needs, it was decided, as in 2022, that similar needs could be grouped into the larger root issue of financial insecurity. Similar needs include, but are not limited to, the economy and the impact of inflation on housing and food costs, increased homelessness and the lack of availability and affordability of housing and the need for jobs with living wages. The lack of nutritious food impacts multiple chronic conditions, including diabetes and obesity. Housing and homelessness, along with food insecurity, remain the greatest of the financial issues impacting the community.

#### Goal

Build capacity among community partners to address homelessness and food insecurity for Mercy Health patients and vulnerable populations in the community.

#### Strategy

Provide financial support and increase awareness of community organizations that address homelessness and food insecurity.

- **Strategic Measures**
  - Percentage of patients screening positive and requesting housing and/or food resources through social determinants of health screening (inpatient, outpatient)
  - Usage of community resource kiosks
  - Financial investment in community organizations addressing homelessness and food insecurity
  - Number of people served by partnership programs addressing homelessness and food insecurity
- **Expected Impact of Strategy**
  - Community resources available adequately address the housing and food needs of the target population
  - Increased access to food and housing resources for Mercy Health patients
  - Increased awareness of community resources available to address homelessness and food insecurity
- **Targeted Populations**
  - Vulnerable populations experiencing housing and/or food insecurity

## Accountable Partners

Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital will work with the following accountable partners on the above-listed strategy to address financial insecurity, including housing, homelessness and food insecurity:

- Internal partners: Care Management, Nursing, Mercy Health Physicians, Quality, Foundation
- External partner: Paducah Cooperative Ministry
  - In 2025, the BSMH Community Health Fund provided funding to Paducah Cooperative Ministry to establish a Client Choice Food Pantry, the first of its kind in the region. This innovative initiative is designed to combat food insecurity, promote healthier eating options and restore dignity to those in need. Paducah Cooperative Ministry also aims to open the region’s first emergency overnight homeless shelter in 2026.
- External partner: Washington Street Warming Center
  - In each year since Paducah’s Warming Center opened in 2021, Mercy Health has financially supported Washington Street Baptist Church to help sustain this necessary shelter. The Warming Center is open nightly when temperatures are below 40 degrees.
- External partner: Heart USA
  - Mercy Health supports Heart USA by providing in-kind rental space on its campus. Heart USA is a nonprofit organization assisting those in need with prescription medication assistance, durable medical equipment, Community Health Workers, an on-site food pantry and a medical transportation program.
- External partner: Family Scholar House
  - Mercy Health sponsors 11 digital community resource kiosks across the region, owned and operated by Family Scholar House. The kiosks provide easy access to vital resources that connect individuals and families with essential resources, such as food, housing, medical assistance, financial and legal help, educational support, crisis lines and more.

## Implementation Strategies to Address Individual-Level Health-Related Social Needs

### Transportation

#### Description

Transportation issues were highlighted in community surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and both committee meetings. Transportation barriers impact access to health care (primary care and specialty care), food and groceries and medications from pharmacies. The Community Steering Committee and the Internal Workgroup reached consensus on this as a prioritized need.

## Goal

Increase use of transportation program partnerships, including Heart USA, PATS and the radiation therapy program.

## Strategy

Identify patients in need of transportation resources and connect them to the applicable transportation program.

- **Strategic Measures**
  - Percentage of patients screening positive and requesting transportation resources through social determinants of health screening (inpatient and outpatient)
  - Number of rides and/or people transported to medical appointments through each partnership program
- **Expected Impact of Strategy**
  - Community resources available adequately address the medical transportation needs of the target population
  - Reduce transportation as a barrier to health care
- **Targeted Populations**
  - Vulnerable populations with a lack of transportation to medical appointments

## Accountable Partners

Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital will work in partnership with the following accountable partners on the above-listed strategy to address transportation:

- Internal partners: Care Management, Nursing, Mercy Health Physicians, Quality, Oncology, Foundation
- External partner: Heart USA
  - Thanks to funding from the BSMH Community Health Fund in 2024, Heart USA launched a new medical transportation program aimed at serving clients needing transportation to essential medical appointments, who do not qualify for any other transportation benefits.
- External partner: Paducah Area Transit (PATS)
  - In 2024, Mercy Health established a partnership with PATS to support patient transportation needs through scheduled service rides. This transportation is available to those who are wheelchair-bound.

## Implementation Strategies to Address Clinical Health Needs

### Mental Health

#### Description

Mental health needs were discussed in depth in focus groups, interviews and with the two committees tasked with identifying significant and priority needs. In addition, the three health departments and the neighboring regional hospital prioritized mental health as an identified health need in the service area. The need for additional providers, especially psychologists, and increased appointments for older adults, children and youth assessments, were the top issues. Wait times for appointments have seen some improvements since the last assessment but remain a concern for many. Both the Internal Workgroup and the Community Steering Committee prioritized mental health as a clinical health need.

#### Goal 1

Increase Mercy Health staff and community knowledge of mental health care.

#### Strategy 1

Provide training and educational opportunities to Mercy Health staff and the community to enhance knowledge and skills for mental health support, including QPR and Mental Health First Aid.

- **Strategic Measures**
  - Number of no-cost training opportunities provided
  - Number of employees and community members completing each training opportunity
- **Expected Impact of Strategy**
  - Enhanced knowledge and skills among those who work with populations with mental health concerns
  - Increased community capacity to care for individuals with mental health concerns
- **Targeted Populations**
  - Mercy Health employees
  - Community members serving those with mental health concerns

#### Goal 2

Improve mental health support and reduce stigma through community outreach and education.

## Strategy 2

Enhance knowledge and build comfort using mental health services through providing mental health education at community events and sharing mental health resources with the public.

- **Strategic Measures**
  - Number of community events, programs and initiatives providing mental health education
  - Number of new outpatient behavioral health patients
- **Expected Impact of Strategy**
  - Increase in those proactively seeking mental health services and resources due to decreased stigma
- **Targeted Populations**
  - General public within the CHNA service area
  - Community members with mental health concerns who currently do not seek treatment or resources due to stigma or other barriers

## Accountable Partners

Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital will work with the following accountable partners on the above-listed strategy to address mental health:

- Internal partners: Behavioral Health, Nursing, Foundation
- External partner: Four Rivers Behavioral Health Regional Prevention Center
  - The Regional Prevention Center staff provides trainings such as Mental Health First Aid (adult and youth), QPR and more. Mercy Health has previously worked with and hosted these trainings provided by RPC for employees and the community.
- External partner: Purchase District Health Department (PDHD)
  - The PDHD hosts an annual free one-day educational event focused on substance misuse and prevention, of which Mercy Health sponsors and helps plan. PDHD staff is also able to provide Mental Health First Aid trainings.
- External partner: United Way of Western Kentucky
  - Mercy Health is the underwriting sponsor of the United Way Bridges Out of Poverty training program, which helps organizations comprehensively address poverty. It provides ideas and concrete tools a community needs to reduce, alleviate and work with people living in poverty.

## Chronic health issues, with an emphasis on obesity

### Description

Chronic health issues and overweight/obesity were both highlighted in secondary data and through focus groups, interviews and survey responses. Obesity was emphasized among the chronic health issues due to its specific prevalence in all primary and secondary data collection. Cancer and high blood pressure were also noted as significant chronic health issues in the service area. The Community Steering Committee and the Internal Workgroup agreed that continued work on chronic health issues, with a specific focus on obesity, will lead to better health outcomes for the communities served.

### Goal

Increase access to care through community-based screenings to identify chronic health issues earlier and reach those who may not otherwise seek health care.

### Strategy

Provide no-cost preventive health care screening opportunities for vulnerable populations facing access barriers in the community.

- **Strategic Measures**
  - Number of community events in which Mercy Health provides no-cost health screenings
  - Number of community members receiving a no-cost preventive health care screening
  - Number of community members receiving a no-cost flu vaccine
  - Number of participants in the Heartstrong Kentucky program
- **Expected Impact of Strategy**
  - Reach populations who may not otherwise be screened or receive a flu vaccine due to access barriers
  - Identify chronic health issues earlier and connect those at high risk to treatment options
  - Reduced cardiovascular disease in Paducah's Census Tract 302 as part of the Heartstrong Kentucky program
- **Targeted Populations**
  - Community members experiencing barriers to accessing preventive health care
  - Community members with undiagnosed and untreated chronic health conditions
  - Paducah's Census Tract 302 (Southside of Paducah)

## Accountable Partners

Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital will work with the following accountable partners on the above-listed strategy to address chronic health issues, with an emphasis on obesity:

- Internal partners: Mercy Health Physicians, Nursing, Radiology
- External partner: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
  - Mercy Health partners with Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity to host the Alpha Cares Community Health and Wellness Fair each year. Attendees learn from the keynote speaker and participate in the health fair with free screenings and education from community vendors.
- External partner: Local health departments and healthcare-focused community organizations
  - Mercy Health partners with local health departments and other health-related community organizations to host free health screenings, free flu shot events, and other outreach opportunities. The goal is to educate, provide resources and screen residents, breaking down access barriers to health care.
- External partner: Heartstrong Kentucky program
  - Healthy Paducah health coalition is the recipient of a five-year CDC grant aimed at addressing cardiovascular disease and improving health outcomes among residents of Paducah Census Tract 302, also known as Paducah’s Southside. Mercy Health leads this initiative, helping coordinate outreach events, screenings, education and free resources to this population.

## Substance misuse

### Description

One of the highest risk factors identified in the community surveys that affects respondents’ personal health is substance misuse. Substance misuse was also listed as an unmet health need and unhealthy behavior by focus groups and key informant interviews. According to CHR, all three CHNA counties have higher than the state average (20%) of adults who smoke. Graves and Marshall Counties (14%) were slightly below the state average (15%) for excessive alcohol use, with McCracken County (16%) higher than the state average. The Community Steering Committee and the Internal Workgroup agreed that continued work on substance use, including smoking, should be prioritized as a health need.

### Goal 1

Decrease the number of substance use disorder (SUD) diagnoses and overdoses.

## Strategy 1

Increase use of existing programs focused on substance misuse prevention, treatment and harm reduction, including Peer Support, Detera bags, Narcan and unused medication collection.

- **Strategic Measures**
  - Number of Detera bags distributed by Mercy Health
  - Number of Peer Support Program referrals
  - Pounds of prescription medication collected for proper disposal
- **Expected Impact of Strategy**
  - Decreased SUD diagnosis and overdoses in the community
  - Increased use of harm reduction programs to prevent substance misuse
- **Targeted Populations**
  - Mercy Health patients and family members receiving an opioid prescription
  - Community members struggling with substance misuse

## Goal 2

Decrease the smoking population.

## Strategy 2

Increase the number of participants in a smoking cessation program.

- **Strategic Measures**
  - Number of patients referred and/or enrolled in a smoking cessation program
- **Expected Impact of Strategies**
  - Decreased smoking population
  - Decreased chronic health issues related to smoking as a risk factor
- **Targeted Populations**
  - Smoking population within CHNA service area

## Accountable Partners

- Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital will work with the following accountable partners on the above-listed strategy to address substance misuse:
  - Internal partners: Pharmacy, Nursing, Care Management, Oncology, Mercy Health Physicians, Home Care, Emergency Department

- External partner: Community health coalitions
  - Mercy Health is an active member of many regional health coalitions focused on substance misuse prevention, including McCracken County ASAP (Agency for Substance Abuse Policy) and the West Kentucky Opioid Taskforce. Through these partnerships, Mercy Health receives funding and resources to help combat SUD and support initiatives, such as Detera bags provided through Mercy Health Pharmacy to patients receiving an opioid prescription.
- External partner: Turning Point Recovery Community Center
  - Mercy Health partners with Turning Point's Quick Response Team (QRT) of Peer Support Specialists (PSS) to connect patients struggling with substance misuse to a PSS, who has personal experience with substance use and can offer guidance and support from a unique, empathetic perspective.
- External partner: StepWorks
  - Mercy Health partners with StepWorks to provide an in-house PSS through the Kentucky Hospital Association's ED Bridge Program.
- External partner: Paducah Police Department
  - Paducah Police host two DEA Drug Take Back Days a year, held in collaboration with Mercy Health and other community partners. These events give the public the opportunity to properly dispose of unused, expired or unwanted prescription medications.
- External partner: Purchase District Health Department (PDHD)
  - PDHD is leading the Breathe Free MC petition to ban smoking in McCracken County, an initiative supported by Mercy Health. Additionally, PDHD has tobacco cessation resources available and partners with Mercy Health to provide resources, education and more.

# Resources Available

Due to the considerable and complex nature of the prioritized needs, several organizations within the community may be available to address one or more of the needs listed in this implementation plan:

## Health Care Facilities & Services

- **Baptist Health Paducah**
  - Mental health, chronic health issues, substance misuse
- **Four Rivers Behavioral Health and its associated programs**
  - Mental health, substance misuse
- **Independent alcohol and drug treatment facilities**
  - Mental health, substance misuse
- **Independent primary care and specialty providers**
  - Mental health, chronic health issues, substance misuse
- **Jackson Purchase Medical Center**
  - Mental health, chronic health issues, substance misuse
- **KentuckyCare**
  - Financial insecurity, transportation, mental health, chronic health issues, substance misuse
- **Marshall County Hospital**
  - Mental health, chronic health issues, substance misuse
- **Mercy Regional EMS**
  - Transportation, mental health, chronic health issues, substance misuse

## Health Departments

- **Graves County Health Department**
  - Financial insecurity, mental health, chronic health issues, substance misuse
- **Marshall County Health Department**
  - Financial insecurity, mental health, chronic health issues, substance misuse
- **Purchase District Health Department**
  - Financial insecurity, mental health, chronic health issues, substance misuse

## Other Local and National Resources

- **American Cancer Society**
  - Chronic health issues
- **Camp Graves**
  - Financial insecurity, transportation
- **Child Watch Counseling & Advocacy Center**
  - Mental health
- **County public libraries**
  - Financial insecurity, mental health, substance misuse
- **Family Service Society**
  - Financial insecurity
- **Gilda's Club**
  - Chronic health issues
- **Heart USA, part of KPAP** (KY Prescription Assistance Program)
  - Financial insecurity, transportation, chronic health issues
- **Kentucky Cancer Program**
  - Chronic health issues
- **LivWell Community Health Services**
  - Mental health, chronic health issues, substance misuse
- **Local churches**
  - Financial insecurity, transportation
- **Local health coalitions and community workgroups**
  - Financial insecurity, transportation, mental health, chronic health issues, substance misuse
- **Local housing authorities**
  - Financial insecurity
- **Local law enforcement**
  - Financial insecurity, mental health, substance misuse
- **Marcella's Kitchen**
  - Financial insecurity
- **Marshall County Caring Needline**
  - Financial insecurity
- **Mayfield Graves County Needline and Food Pantry**
  - Financial insecurity

- **Merryman House**
  - Financial insecurity, transportation, mental health, substance misuse
- **Paducah Community Kitchen**
  - Financial insecurity, transportation
- **Paducah Cooperative Ministry**
  - Financial insecurity
- **Paducah-McCracken County Senior Center**
  - Financial insecurity, transportation, mental health, chronic health issues
- **PATS (Paducah Area Transit System)**
  - Financial insecurity, transportation
- **Provider Enrichment Services**
  - Financial insecurity, mental health
- **Public school systems** (including family resource centers)
  - Financial insecurity, transportation, mental health
- **Purchase Area Development District**
  - Financial insecurity, transportation
- **River City Mission**
  - Financial insecurity
- **Saint Vincent de Paul**
  - Financial insecurity
- **The Salvation Army**
  - Financial insecurity
- **University of Kentucky Dental Program**
  - Financial insecurity
- **Washington Street Baptist Church** (Paducah's Warming Center)
  - Financial insecurity
- **WKCTC / University of Louisville Dental Program**
  - Financial insecurity

## Board Approval

The Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital 2026-2028 Community Health Implementation Plan was approved by the Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital Board of Directors on April 30, 2026.

Board Signature: 

Date: 04/30/2026

For further information or to obtain a hard copy of this Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP), please contact Leigh Ann Ballegeer, Director of Community Health, Mercy Health — Lourdes Hospital at [LABallegeer@mercy.com](mailto:LABallegeer@mercy.com).

Mercy Health CHIP Website: <https://www.mercy.com/about-us/mission/giving-back/community-health-needs-assessment>

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