

LOWELL GENERAL HOSPITAL
FY 2019 - 2020 COMMUNITY BENEFIT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY PLAN



Lowell General Hospital

Proudly wellforce 

This document provides an overview of Lowell General Hospital's health improvement priority areas as well as a detailed Community Benefit Implementation Strategy Plan (ISP).

The hospital utilizes two documents as reference: the [2016 Greater Lowell Community Health Needs Assessment \(CHNA\)](#) and the [2017 Greater Lowell Community Health Improvement Plan \(CHIP\)](#). In addition, Lowell General Hospital takes guidance from its Community Benefit Advisory Committee (CBAC), a group of nearly 40 individuals who represent the diversity of the Greater Lowell region. The CBAC consists of hospital staff and community members who best represent the public health interests of the eight communities of Greater Lowell. The hospital also hosts an annual Community Engagement Forum to encourage understanding of the Community Benefit Program and provide an opportunity for community members to provide valuable feedback.

Lowell General's ISP is then reviewed by the hospital's Board of Trustees and revised annually to ensure it continues to address the identified health needs of the hospital's target populations and meets the hospital's vision for "improved community health and access to quality care for all."

COMMUNITY BENEFIT MISSION STATEMENT

Lowell General Hospital is committed to improving the overall health status of our community and specifically, the health problems of the underserved populations of Greater Lowell. This mission is achieved by identifying existing and future health needs in the community, and addressing those needs through new or existing health initiatives, including education, prevention, and screening programs, both independently and in collaboration with other community resources.



COMMUNITY BENEFIT PROGRAM INITIATIVES, 2019-2020

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

• LOWELL HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS PROGRAM

Goal Statement: To increase accessibility of fruits and vegetables to low-income adults and families in the Lowell community over the next two years.

Brief Description: Food and nutrition is a top unmet community need in Greater Lowell, with 22% of residents surveyed selecting this as a barrier, according to the CTI Community Health Needs Assessment. Low-income families are more vulnerable to diet-related health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, which are exacerbated by limited access to healthy foods. Lowell General Hospital will work with food justice partners in Lowell to increase methods of accessing fresh fruits and vegetables among patients and community members.

• YOUTH GARDEN PROGRAM

Goal Statement: To improve overall eating habits among school-aged youth through participation in an educational gardening program over the next two years.

Brief Description: Lowell General Hospital will work with its partners to install two youth gardens in the Greater Lowell region in FY 2019. Youth gardens will be created on-site at local after-school programs during spring and continue through the summer and fall. An accompanying educational curriculum will assist youth in learning about the gardening process and the nutritional value of fresh fruits and vegetables.

- **HEALTHY HOMES FOR ASTHMA CONTROL**

Goal Statement: To reduce in-home risk factors that trigger asthma and respiratory diseases.

Brief Description: Lowell General Hospital will work with its partners to investigate the feasibility of a health homes program that would aim to reduce known and common triggers of asthma and respiratory diseases.

- **ASTHMA EDUCATION**

Goal Statement: To increase community members' awareness of effective asthma controls and treatments.

Brief Description: Lowell General Hospital will disseminate important asthma education through public outreach, including health fairs, social media, web content and local news outlets.

• YOUTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SCREENING PROGRAM

Goal Statement: To normalize the use of behavioral health screenings for youth in Greater Lowell over the next two years.

Brief Description: Universal behavioral health screening in pediatric primary care is recommended, but studies report slow uptake and low rates of patient follow-through after referral to specialized services. Several research-based screening methods are currently in use across the nation, but not all pediatric healthcare providers put them into practice. Lowell General Hospital intends to work with pediatric providers across Greater Lowell to encourage use of behavioral health screening tools for all patients and provide the necessary training and education. Lowell General will provide access to resources and tools for providers, youth and parents more accessible to best serve youth in Greater Lowell.

• MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Goal Statement: Expand access to mental health and wellness education by providing all programs offered through Lowell General Hospital at reduced or no cost to Greater Lowell residents over the next two years. There will be a particular focus on ensuring vulnerable populations are aware of these programs.

Brief Description: Lowell General Hospital's Center for Community Health and Wellness will provide mental health and wellness workshops, classes and trainings to residents of Greater Lowell with a focus on vulnerable populations. Current classes include: Anger Management, Anxiety Relief, Stress Management, Meditation, Mental Health First Aid and more.

• GREATER LOWELL TRANSIT TO TREATMENT PROGRAM – SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

Goal Statement: Improve accessibility for community members who have substance use disorder through transportation provisions over the next two years.

Brief Description: The lack of transportation options in Greater Lowell, specifically public transportation, is identified as a key barrier to accessing jobs or support services by 22% of residents surveyed as part of the CTI Community Health Needs Assessment. Lowell General Hospital will partner with local police departments to reduce these barriers to treatment access for individuals coping with substance use disorder. The Transit to Treatment program gives individuals access to a shared or private ride service that can bring them to treatment programs, including residential treatment, outpatient day treatment, detoxification services, non-emergency medical appointments, therapy appointments, etc. Case workers and community health workers will identify community members who can arrange rides for immediate pickup or up to 30 days in advance.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Goal Statement: Improve access to physical fitness activities by providing all programs through Lowell General Hospital at a free or reduced cost to Greater Lowell residents, particularly vulnerable populations, over the next two years.

Brief Description: Lowell General Hospital's Center for Community Health and Wellness will provide physical activity workshops, classes, outreach and trainings to residents of Greater Lowell with a focus on vulnerable populations. Current classes include Yoga, PiYo, Zumba, and more.

- **SAFE AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM**

Goal Statement: Improve collaborations with local communities to improve accessibility to physical fitness activities and resources over the next two years.

Brief Description: Lowell General Hospital will work with local municipalities and school districts to provide mini-grants for projects that improve access to physical activity for community residents.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

• GREATER LOWELL RESOURCE HUB PROGRAM

Goal Statement: Improve awareness of social service resources in the Greater Lowell region over the next two years.

Brief Description: The process of finding and applying for social services in the United States is unnecessarily complicated. Currently, the Greater Lowell region lacks a single, dedicated destination for resources, an issue repeatedly identified as an unmet public health need. Lowell General Hospital will implement a comprehensive online system that will allow community members and professionals to find and connect with resources/services that can address social determinants of health. In addition to identifying resources, the system will allow for specific referrals and assistance with applications for social service programs like food assistance, housing options, and education programs.

• GREATER LOWELL TRANSIT TO TREATMENT PROGRAM – CHRONIC DISEASE

Goal Statement: Improve accessibility for community members who experience chronic disease through transportation provisions over the next two years.

Brief Description: The lack of transportation options in Greater Lowell, specifically public transportation, is identified as a key barrier to accessing jobs or support services by 22% of residents surveyed as part of the CTI Community Health Needs Assessment. Lowell General Hospital will partner with Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley to remove barriers to accessing treatment for chronic diseases, including: hypertension, diabetes, obesity, asthma and respiratory diseases. The Transit to Treatment Program specifically gives individuals access to a shared or private ride service that can bring them to treatment programs and non-emergency medical appointments. Case workers and community health workers will identify community members who can arrange rides for immediate pickup or up to 30 days in advance.

• HOUSING SEARCH SPECIALIST PROGRAM

Goal Statement: Create infrastructure within Lowell General Hospital to effectively provide homeless and housing-insecure patients with housing search assistance over the next two years.

Brief Description: Homelessness is the top unmet community need in Greater Lowell, with 43% of surveyed residents identifying this as a barrier, according to the CTI Community Health Needs Assessment. Housing and health care professionals, as well as researchers in public health and public policy, have found convincing evidence that affordable and stable housing is associated with better health outcomes. The two year project will integrate housing supports offered by CTI into the treatment plans offered by Lowell General Hospital by embedding a Housing Search Specialist at both Lowell General Hospital campuses.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY BENEFIT EXPENDITURES

Associated Expenses

Determination of Need Expenditures

Employee Volunteerism

Other Leveraged Resources

Net Charity Care

Approved Corporate Sponsorships

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Join the Community Benefit Advisory Committee

The Lowell General Hospital Community Benefit Advisory Committee (CBAC) performs a variety of functions to support Community Benefit work, including oversight of the triennial Community Health Needs Assessment process, development and implementation of the Community Benefits Implementation Strategy Plan, and review of the annual Community Benefits Report filed with the Massachusetts Attorney General. The CBAC also supports the transparent process to inform the community of the hospital's Community Benefits mission, activities and programs.

Community Engagement Forum

Each year, Lowell General Hospital hosts a Community Engagement Forum as a way to gain important insight and feedback from our community members in regards to Community Benefit Programs. The forums are held in September of each year and are open to all residents of the Greater Lowell region.

For more information on the Lowell General Hospital Community Benefit Program, please email community.benefit.program@lowellgeneral.org.

