

## Carrier Clinic



## Community Health Improvement Plan 2026-2028

## Carrier Clinic

### *A Dedicated Behavioral Health Hospital*

Carrier Clinic, which opened in 1910, is a private, not-for-profit behavioral health care system specializing in psychiatric and substance use disorder treatment. Carrier's care delivery system includes an inpatient psychiatric hospital, detoxification and rehabilitation center, adolescent residential facility and a fully accredited middle and high school for students classified as emotionally disturbed. Outpatient services are provided for Electroconvulsive Therapy. All of these services are located on a bucolic 113-acre property nestled in the foothills of the Sourland Mountains.

Carrier Clinic's campus includes the Blake Recovery Center, a free-standing, state-licensed residential alcohol and substance use disorder treatment program. The Blake program, ranked No. 1 by Newsweek Magazine for several years on its list of Best Addiction Treatment Centers in New Jersey, provides medically monitored detoxification and residential rehabilitation care for individuals suffering from drug and alcohol addiction that may include psychiatric complications. Carrier also runs Retreat & Recovery At Ramapo Valley in Mahwah, which offers outpatient and intensive outpatient individual and group substance use disorder treatment services and medication-assisted therapy (MAT).

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

Hackensack Meridian Health is a leading not-for-profit health care organization and New Jersey's largest, most comprehensive, and integrated health network. Our network includes 18 hospitals, more than 500 patient care locations, and a complete range of services from innovative research and life-enhancing care to lifesaving air medical transportation. Our 38,000 team members and 7,000 physicians are committed to the health and well-being of the communities we serve, making Hackensack Meridian Health a distinguished leader in healthcare philanthropy.

## 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 Carrier Clinic completed a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that was adopted by the Hackensack Meridian Health Board of Directors on December 10, 2025.

The Carrier Clinic 2025 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). To supplement the other data collections, Hackensack Meridian Health engaged Moxley Public Health to conduct primary data collection through qualitative focus groups with community members from priority populations. The purpose of these focus groups was to gather qualitative insights into community health priorities, access to and utilization of health care services, maternal and infant health, and perspectives on care for all.

In addition to assessing health indicators, the 2025 CHNA took a close look at social drivers of health (SDoH) such as food insecurity, housing, transportation, education, and other factors.

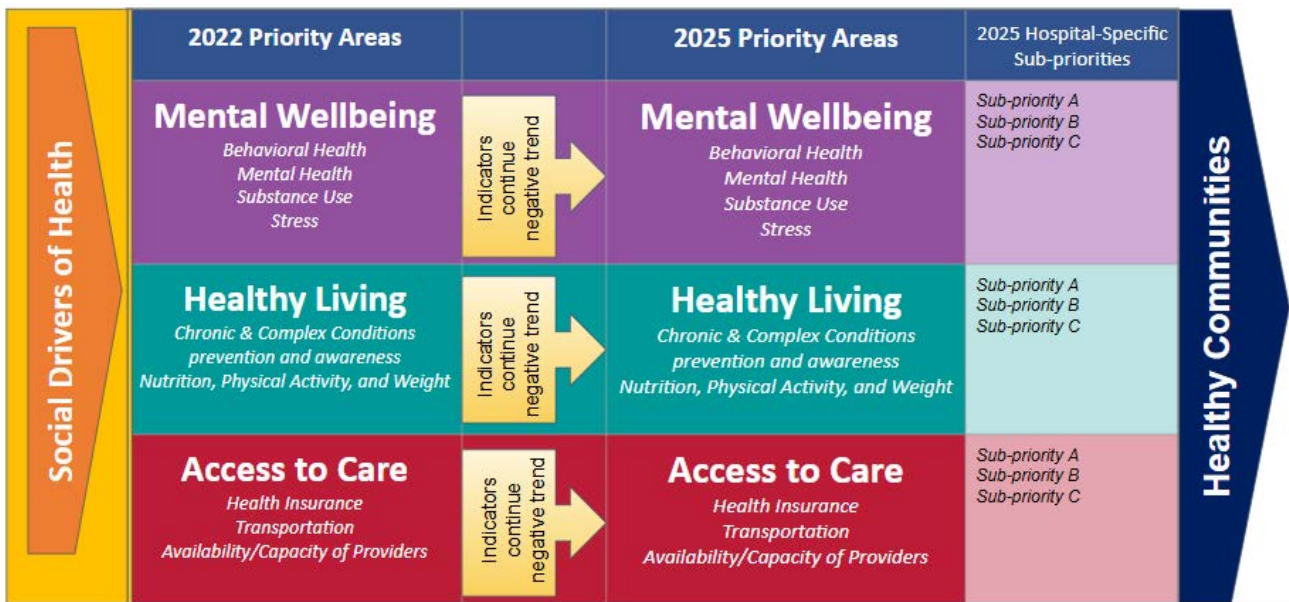
The complete CHNA report can be found at <https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/en/About-Us/community-health-needs-assessment>

## Determining Community Health Priorities

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 July 2025. During the forums, an overview of the findings from the 2025 CHNA report for each region was shared by PRC, Inc. In reviewing the data from the 2025 CHNA, it is evident that the priorities identified in 2022 remain pressing needs. Following the data presentation, HMM Leadership presented the proposed framework for this CHIP and led the prioritization discussion in the breakout groups. Sixty three people participated in the Central Region Community Partner Forum on July 16, 2025 representing agencies and institutions throughout the region, representing diverse perspectives.

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.

## Significant Health Needs That Will Not Be Addressed

Carrier Clinic acknowledges the wide range of health issues that emerged from the CHNA process. It is important to note that there are community health needs identified through Carrier Clinic's 2025 CHNA process that were not prioritized for inclusion in this CHIP. As a specialty inpatient behavioral health hospital, Carrier Clinic determined that it could effectively focus on only those health needs which are the most pressing, under-addressed and within its ability to influence. Therefore, the priority area of Healthy Living, while a network-wide priority, is not included as a priority area for Carrier Clinic. Additionally, the following sub-priorities of Mental Wellbeing and Access to Care were identified in the 2025 CHNA process for Carrier Clinic, but are not prioritized for this CHIP:

- **Mental Wellbeing:**
  - Receiving Treatment for Mental Health
  - Difficulty Obtaining Mental Health Services
  - Substance Use- (Alcohol-Induced Deaths, Excessive Drinking, Unintentional Drug-Induced Deaths, Illicit Drug Use, Personally Impacted by Substance Use)
- **Access to Care:**
  - Cost of Prescriptions
  - Cost of Physician Visits
  - Appointment Availability
  - Difficulty Finding a Physician
  - Culture/Language
  - Skipping/Stretching Medications
  - Lack of Financial Resilience
  - Specific Source of Ongoing Medical Care
  - Emergency Room Utilization

Because Carrier Clinic is a specialty hospital, these priorities are outside the bandwidth of the organization, rendering them outside of Carrier Clinic's feasibility of having an impact in the short or long term. Carrier Clinic remains open and willing to work with hospitals across the HMM network and other public and private partners to address these issues and others impacting health and wellbeing opportunities.

## Priority Area: Mental Wellbeing

The 2025 CHNA for Carrier Clinic 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 2025 CHNA:

- “Fair/Poor” Mental Health
- Diagnosed Depression
- Symptoms of Chronic Depression
- Stress

<b>Priority Area: Mental Wellbeing</b>		
<b>Goal: A community where all people have access to high quality behavioral health care, and experience mental wellness and recovery</b>		
	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies/Action Steps</b>
<b>Prevention and Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equip individuals with the tools to understand behavioral health</li> <li>• Build a healthier, more resilient community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize lectures and trainings related to substance use, vaping, healthy social, emotional, and mental health</li> <li>• Support public health in local prevention and emergency initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Build Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the ability to deliver care with greater impact and efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer care delivery options for at risk populations</li> <li>• Bridge the gap between acute and ambulatory services ensuring a seamless transition of care</li> </ul>
<b>Strengthen Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage partnerships for collective impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing educational opportunities to increase knowledge regarding mental wellness and addiction for healthcare professionals both in and outside the HMH network.</li> </ul>

## Priority Area: Access to Care

The 2025 CHNA for Carrier Clinic 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 2025 CHNA:

- Inconvenient Office Hours
- Lack of Transportation
- Difficulty Accessing Children’s Health Care

<b>Priority Area: Access to Care</b>		
<b>Goal: To ensure all community members can achieve their full health potential</b>		
	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies/ Action Steps</b>
<b>Prevention and Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce common barriers to accessing health care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screen for health related Social Drivers of Health (SDOH) and make referrals to community resources</li> <li>• Address Social Drivers of Health (SDOH) to reduce health disparities and improve population outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Build Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the ability to deliver care with greater impact and efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer care delivery options</li> <li>• Bridge the gap between acute and ambulatory services ensuring a seamless transition of care</li> </ul>
<b>Strengthen Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage partnerships for collective impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase, strengthen and evaluate partnerships with state and local community-based organizations</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.

## 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 Carrier Clinic 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 2026-2028 reporting cycle. For more information about Carrier Clinic's community health improvement initiatives, please visit <https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/en/About-Us/community-health-needs-assessment>