

# Hackensack University Medical Center



## Community Health Improvement Plan 2026-2028

## About Hackensack University Medical Center

Hackensack University Medical Center, an 803-bed nonprofit teaching and research hospital, was Bergen County's first hospital founded in 1888. It is the first hospital in New Jersey and third in the nation to become a Magnet®-recognized hospital for nursing excellence, receiving its seventh consecutive designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center in 2024. U.S. News & World Report ranked the academic flagship of the Hackensack Meridian Health network, Hackensack University Medical Center, as the #1 Hospital in New Jersey and New York Metro Area and a Top 20 Hospital Nationally for 2025-26. Hackensack University Medical Center is the only New Jersey hospital with the #1 adult and children's hospital rankings and has the most nationally ranked specialties of any health network in New Jersey including: Cancer (#37 in nation, #1 in New Jersey); Cardiology, Heart & Vascular Surgery (#37 in nation, #1 in New Jersey); Ear, Nose & Throat (#49 in nation); Diabetes & Endocrinology (#29 in nation, #1 in New Jersey); Gastroenterology & GI Surgery (#47 in nation); Geriatrics (#32 in nation, #1 in New Jersey); Neurology & Neurosurgery (#33 in nation, #1 in New Jersey); Orthopedics (#20 in nation); Pulmonology & Lung Surgery (#23 in nation, #1 in New Jersey); Urology (#12 in nation, #1 in New Jersey). Hackensack Meridian John Theurer Cancer Center is the best cancer center in New Jersey and among the top 50 cancer centers in the nation, ranked #37 in the nation. Named to Newsweek's World's Best Hospitals 2025 list, Hackensack University Medical Center is also the recipient of the Patient Safety Excellence Award™ by Healthgrades as well as an "A" Hospital Safety Grade from The Leapfrog Group. Hackensack University Medical Center is one of only four hospitals in New Jersey to receive the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) 5-Star Quality Rating.

This award-winning care is provided on a campus that is home to facilities such as the Heart & Vascular Hospital; and the Sarkis and Siran Gabriellian Women's and Children's Pavilion, which houses the Donna A. Sanzari Women's Hospital and the Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital. Hackensack University Medical Center is listed on the Green Guide's list of Top 10 Green Hospitals in the U.S. The hospital's comprehensive clinical research portfolio includes studies focused on precision medicine, translational medicine, immunotherapy, cell therapy, and vaccine development. In 2023, the hospital completed the largest healthcare expansion project ever approved by the state: construction of the Helena Theurer Pavilion, a 530,000-sq.-ft., nine-story building housing 24 state-of-the-art operating rooms with intraoperative MRI capability, 50 ICU beds, and 175 medical/surgical beds including a 50 room Musculoskeletal Institute.

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

The Hackensack University Medical Center 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 35th Street Consulting to conduct primary data collection through qualitative focus groups with community leaders and members from priority populations, as well as one-on-one interviews with a variety of key informants. The purpose of these focus groups and interviews was to gather qualitative insights into community health priorities, access to and utilization of health care services, 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 eight people participated in the Northern Region Community Partner Forum on July 15, 2025 representing agencies and institutions throughout the region, representing diverse perspectives.

Additionally, Hackensack University Medical Center also participates in the Bergen County Community Health Improvement Partnership, which held a prioritization session on October 14, 2025. 13 people representing all the partner agencies of Bergen County Community Health Improvement Partnership (Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, Christian Health, Hackensack University Medical Center, Englewood Health, Holy Name Medical Center, Pascack Valley Medical Center, Valley Health System, and Bergen County Department of Health Services) attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to use the data collected for the 2025 CHNA to identify priority areas for collective action in the coming years. During both discussions, there was overwhelming endorsement to continue with the existing priority areas for 2026-2028.

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

Hackensack University 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, Hackensack University Medical Center will not be addressing the following sub-priorities within the Mental Wellbeing and Healthy Living priority areas:

- Mental Wellbeing:
  - Substance Use- (Alcohol-Induced Deaths, Marijuana/THC Use, Sought Help for Alcohol/Drug Issues)
- Healthy Living:
  - Injury & Violence- (Unintentional Drug-Related Deaths)

These priorities are outside the bandwidth of the organization, rendering them outside of Hackensack University Medical Center's feasibility of having an impact in the short or long term. As a member of the Bergen County Community Partnership, Hackensack University Medical Center remains open and willing to partner with community agencies to support their missions to address these and other issues impacting this community. Hackensack University 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 2025 CHNA for Hackensack University 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 2025 CHNA:

- “Fair/Poor” Mental Health
- Diagnosed Depression
- Symptoms of Chronic Depression
- Receiving Treatment for Mental Health
- Difficulty Obtaining Mental Health Services

<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/trainings related to substance use, healthy social, emotional, and mental health</li> <li>• Screen and refer for behavioral health needs</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 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>

## Priority Area: Healthy Living

The 2025 CHNA for Hackensack University 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 2025 CHNA:

- Cancer- (Leading Cause of Death, Prostate Cancer Incidence)
- Diabetes- (Borderline/Pre-Diabetes Prevalence)
- Heart Disease and Stroke- ( Leading Cause of Death, Heart Disease Prevalence, Taking Action to Control High Blood Pressure, High Blood Cholesterol Prevalence, Overall Cardiovascular Risk)
- Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Weight- (Food Insecurity, Overweight & Obesity [Adults])
- Tobacco Use- (Cigarette Smoking, Use of Vaping Products)

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
<b>Prevention and Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equip individuals with the tools to understand chronic health conditions</li> <li>• Build a healthier, more resilient community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize lectures/trainings related to chronic health conditions</li> <li>• Screen and refer for chronic health needs</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 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>

## Priority Area: Access to Care

The 2025 CHNA for Hackensack University 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 2025 CHNA:

- Barriers to Access- (Inconvenient Office Hours, Cost of Prescriptions, Cost of Physician Visits, Appointment Availability, Difficulty Finding a Physician, Lack of Transportation, Skipping/Stretching Prescriptions)

Priority Area: Access to Care		
Goal: To ensure all community members can achieve their full health potential		
	Objectives	Strategies/ Action Steps
<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) to provide referrals and community based 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 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 Hackensack University 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 2026-2028 reporting cycle. For more information about Hackensack University Medical Center's community health improvement initiatives, please visit <https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/en/About-Us/community-health-needs-assessment>