



# Community Health Improvement Strategic Plan

Approved by the Stamford Health Board of Directors | 2022-2025

# Overview of the Full Cycle of a CHNA & CHIP

Upon the Board's approval of the CHIP, Stamford Health and community partners will execute the CHIP

**A Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)** identifies key unmet health needs and issues within a specific geographic area through systematic, comprehensive data collection and analysis

**A Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)** is a long-term, systematic effort to address public health problems based on the results of a CHNA

## Steps 1 - 6

### 1. Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)

- Helps communities identify the health priorities of the individuals they serve
- Confirms that services available align with the needs of the community
- Fosters collaboration among community partners

## Step 7

### 2. Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

- Provides a multi-year road map for how to address the priorities identified through the CHNA
- Coordinates resources of hospitals and community partners in a systematic manner
- Delineates the roles of partners in working to improve the health of the community
- Seek approval from the Board of Directors

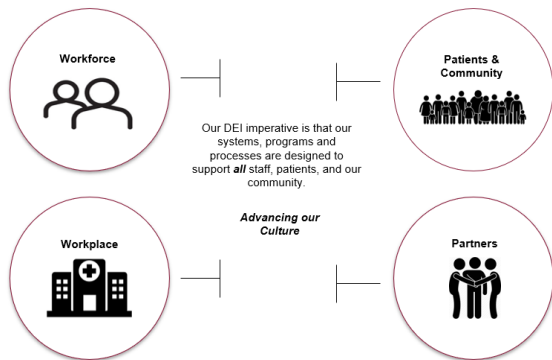
## Step 8 - 9

### 3. Implementation of the CHIP

- Execute initiatives outlined
- Refine as needed to continually adapt to and meet the needs of the community
- Incorporate additional resources as identified that may assist in the execution of the plan



## Stamford Health's approach to both the CHNA and CHIP demonstrates a continued commitment to advancing health equity in alignment with organizational strategic initiatives, our DEI action plan, and new regulatory requirements from CMS and Joint Commission



The CHIP supports Stamford Health's most recent DEI Action plan which outlines the following objective:  
*To Improve equitable outcomes for patients and address community-wide social determinants of health*

The CHIP advances the strategic initiatives including those pertaining to *Access, Consumer Experience, and Advancing Programs*

# Comprehensive development process included partners throughout

## Confirm Priorities & Areas of Focus

- Behavioral Health
- Access to Primary & Preventative Services
- Housing

## Plan Implementation Strategies

- Engage stakeholders (see *appendix*)
- Align strategies with existing interventions being led by the hospital and other organizations
- Identify collaborative strategies to increase potential for impact
- Select strategies to address priority areas
- Set goals and objectives for the implementation strategies

## Seek Feedback & Gain Support for Proposed Plan

- Conduct stakeholder meetings with existing groups:
  - Vita Innovation Team
  - Core Vita Members

## Obtain Feedback and Final Approval

- **Seek approval from:**
  - Executive Leadership Team
  - Board of Directors



# Engagement of Internal and External Stakeholders

Stamford Health engaged many stakeholders in the CHIP development, and we are grateful for their commitment to the development and implementation of the CHIP

## Community Organizations

- Rev Dr. Ford (Faith Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church)
- Carolina Grijalba-Rodriguez, LCSW (Stamford Police Department)
- Karen Gottlieb (Americares)
- John Hamilton (Liberation Programs)
- Amy Taylor (CHC)
- Vin Tufo (Charter Oak Communities)
- Bianca Shinn-Desras (Domus)
- Vita Innovation Team

## Town of Darien

- David Knauf (Dept of Health)
- Paula Sutcliffe (Dept of Health)

## City of Stamford

- Brittany Dube (Dept of Health)
- Marjorye Alday (Dept of Health)
- Jody Bishop-Pullan (Dept of Health)
- Emily Gordon (Director of Housing Services)
- Dr. Henry Yoon (Medical Director)
- Maria Millan (Outreach Coordinator)

## Stamford Health

- Shelly Costigan (Manager, Care Management)
- Roseann Cardi (Clinical Operations Director, Psychiatry)
- Deborah Fedeli (Director, Patient Centered Services)
- Dr. Nicholas Fiebach (Chair, Dept of Medicine)
- Cheryl Franz (Director, Education & Organizational Development)
- Josie Hartnett (Associate, Research)
- Parson Hicks (Executive Director, Revenue Cycle)
- Dr. Forugh Homayounrooz (Residency Program Director, Internal Medicine)
- Ellen Komar (CNO)
- Mary Laucks (Executive Director, Care Management)
- Beth Martin (Director, Patient Access Business Services)
- Dr. Madhoun (Director, Hospitalists)
- Dr. Narasimhan (Chair, Family Medicine)
- Chinomnso Nnodum (Executive Director, Access)
- Shannon Patterson (Executive Director, Patient Experience)
- Matt Simon (Director, Revenue Cycle / Patient Financial Counselors)
- Sarah Sanders (Clinical Operations Director, Emergency Department)
- Travata Stewart (Complex Care Manager / Community Care Team)

# 2019 Community Health Implementation Plan: Key Accomplishments

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Stamford Health and its community partners made meaningful progress on its 2019 CHIP

Priorities	Actions Taken
Behavioral Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Developed a behavioral health strategic plan for SH, and hosted community-wide discussions to determine gaps and identify steps community can take to address them</li><li>Initiated a pilot with Liberation Programs to offer behavioral health services in select Medical Group offices</li><li>Advocated for the expansion of behavioral health services in our region and secured State funding to expand our program</li></ul>
Access to Health and Social Services & Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Completed an ambulatory network plan with the goal of increasing capacity to Stamford Health outpatient services. The Medical Group grew by almost thirty clinicians from 2019 – 2022 and added two pediatric practices to the organization, a specialty that was not previously represented in the Medical Group</li><li>To expand access to the COVID-19 Vaccine, worked with community partners to create and implement the No Barriers Program</li><li>Developed a Medical Weight Loss Program at Stamford Health</li><li>Supported Fairgate Farms' program offering free vegetables and fruit to economically distressed West Side residents</li><li>KIDS' FANS completed its 7th year of teaching nutrition education to 3rd graders in the Stamford Public Schools. The program was recently expanded to provide personalized nutrition counseling and medical nutrition therapy at the Cohen Children's Specialty Center at the Tully Health Center</li></ul>



# SH pursues a range of activities to advance community health and improve health equity

## Uncompensated Care

- \$94.2M uncompensated care (\$31.2M charity care; \$62.9M bad debt)
- 3.2% of total expenses

## Promoting Health

- Free preventative screenings for qualified individuals (e.g., lung cancer, mammograms)
- Pediatric Medical Home for Southwest CT
- Health Expo
- Physician speakers

## Helping vulnerable populations

- Optimus support (\$2M)
- Community Care Team
- Charitable donations
- Fairgate Farms

## Collaborating with Community Partners

- Vita Health & Wellness Initiative
  - Stamford Youth Mental Health Alliance
  - Vaccine Equity Program
- Kids FANS
- Teaching advocacy skills to nonprofits
- Board service

**Additionally, SH leverages stature in community to raise awareness and advocate for community health priorities**

# 2022-2025 CHIP Priorities

Behavioral Health

Access to Primary Care & Preventative Services

Housing



# Priority #1: Behavioral Health

## Areas of Focus from CHNA

- **Insufficient Services**
  - For individuals of all ages, there is a lack of behavioral health services in our community across all acuity levels
  - Extended wait times present challenges—especially in crisis
  - Capacity constraints due to a lack of clinicians
- **Concerns Among Youth**
  - In young children, mental health concerns are manifesting themselves through extreme behaviors.
  - In adolescents, there is increased anxiety and depression as well as higher rates of absenteeism
  - Serious mental health concerns such as mood disorders, severe depression and anxiety, and suicidal ideation are more prevalent
  - Students who are a part of the “New Arrivals” program often struggle with past trauma
- **Concerns Among Adults**
  - Mental health issues for adults were exacerbated by the pandemic
  - Providers have noticed an increase in substance use
  - Increased isolation, anxiety and fear have also been observed in older adults

## CHIP Strategies

**Optimize Stamford Health’s Behavioral Health Services and Explore Expansion of Services**

**Expand and Leverage Community Partnerships to Enhance Access to Programs and Services**

**Continually Assess the Needs of the Community**

# Priority #2: Access to Primary Care & Preventative Services

## Areas of Focus from CHNA

- **Availability of Services**
  - Individuals with all types of insurance lack easy access to primary care services, which connects patients to services
- **Navigation of Insurance Coverage**
  - Cost of care—specifically for under- and uninsured patients—is prohibitively expensive causing individuals to avoid care
  - Obtaining insurance coverage is often confusing
  - Limitations for those who are unemployed and/or undocumented
- **Cultural and Linguistic Sensitivity**
  - Individuals from different cultures may lack knowledge regarding how to navigate local health systems
  - A lack of linguistic or cultural sensitivity among providers can inhibit the ability of individuals to receive needed care or lead to the provision of inappropriate care
    - Miscommunication or lack of cultural sensitivity can lead to individuals feeling as though providers are dismissive of symptoms and concerns and mistrust of the system

## CHIP Strategies

**Improve Knowledge of Primary Care and Preventive Services**

**Enhance Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity**

**Reduce Barriers to Accessing Care**

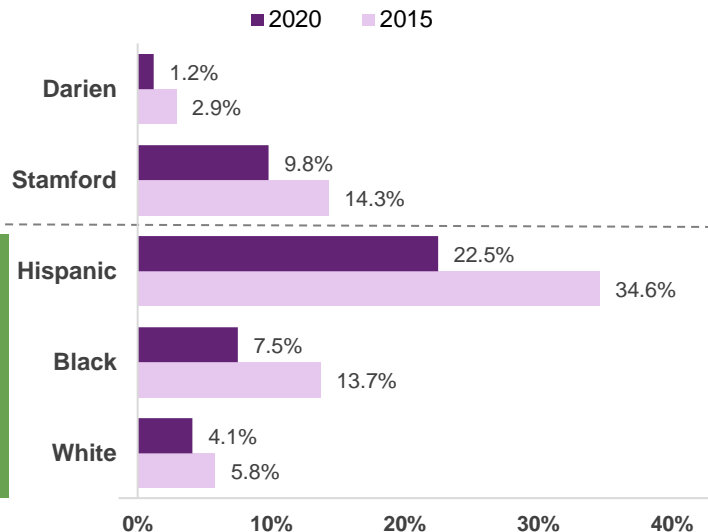
**Improve Access to Primary Care and Preventive Services**

## Priority #2: CHNA highlighted opportunities to advance health equity particularly around accessing primary and preventative care

These opportunities relate directly to new regulatory requirements provided by CMS and Joint Commission.

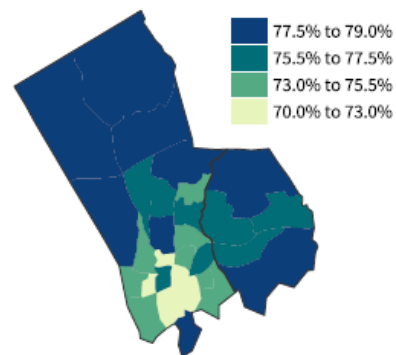
While we have seen improvements in certain measures related to the ability to access primary and preventative care, there are still disparities amongst sub-populations in Stamford. Despite a decline in the uninsured population since 2015, it is evident that the % of uninsured Hispanic individuals is still disproportionately higher than those who are White or Black. It is evident that geographic areas are disproportionately affected by barriers for accessing primary care.

% of the Population that is Uninsured  
American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Stamford  
Data by  
Race /  
Ethnicity

% of Adults who had an Annual  
Check-up as of 2018



As of 2018, between 70 – 79% of residents in Darien and Stamford had an annual check-up; the rate varied greatly by neighborhood in Stamford

# **Priority #2: Stamford Health and community partners have identified several initiatives to advance equitable access to primary and preventative care**

These opportunities relate directly to new regulatory requirements provided by CMS and Joint Commission.

## **Stamford Health and Community Partner CHIP Interventions**

### **Expanding Insurance Coverage**

- Promote enrollment into public insurance plans (e.g., HUSKY, Covered Connecticut) and other plans offered through the health exchange
- Continue to advocate for the expansion of state-funded insurance for the undocumented and uninsurable populations

### **Improving Access to Primary and Preventative Care**

- Identify opportunities to improve the transitions of care between various care settings and communication with primary care physicians (hospital-based services, outpatient offices, etc.)
- Create an infographic available in multiple languages that explains primary and preventative care and where it can be obtained—including at school-based health centers
- Organize our CBOs to encourage their clientele, which includes the Hispanic population, to obtain primary care available through FQHCs

### **Key community partners include:**

- B1C
- FQHCs
- Stamford Schools
- City of Stamford

## **Monitoring and Measuring Impact**

**We are currently evaluating ways to monitor the impact of these initiatives. Below are a few examples of measures being considered:**

- Number of individuals assisted in enrollment through community organizations and events
- Number of patients who present to the ED with a primary care provider
- American Community Survey estimates for uninsured populations and other open data sources

# Priority #3: Housing

## Areas of Focus from CHNA

- **Affordable Housing**
  - Concern over the cost of housing in the area is prevalent resulting in families having to make challenging decisions about whether to spend limited resources on shelter, food, or health care
  - Some individuals are unable to live in proper housing and resort to living in illegal rental units which present great safety concerns
- **Access to Shelters**
  - Some individuals must utilize shelters—a limited resource in the community
  - Shelters lack the resources to adequately accommodate and care for patients post-discharge; hindering the ability of patients to both receive care and maintain health
- **Safe Housing**
  - Increased concerns regarding safety within neighborhoods have risen as a result of gun violence and other incidents
    - Within certain demographics, individuals report feeling unsafe and lack trust in law enforcement to keep them safe

## CHIP Strategies

**Support Economic Opportunities for Vulnerable Populations so they May Better Access Affordable, Safe Housing**

**Advocate for an Increase in the Availability of Safe, Affordable Housing in Stamford**

**Identify Opportunities to Improve Access to Homeless Shelters**

**Stamford Health appreciates the support of partners who are committed to improving the health and quality of life throughout our community.**