

# SOUTHCOAST HEALTH

Community Benefits Implementation Plan FY22-24



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## About Southcoast Health

Southcoast Health is a not-for-profit, charitable, community-based health system with multiple access points, offering an integrated continuum of health services throughout southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

The system includes four hospitals — Charlton Memorial Hospital in Fall River (founded in 1885), St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford (founded in 1884) and Tobey Hospital in Wareham (founded in 1938). These hospitals merged on June 9, 1996, to form Southcoast Hospitals Group and operate under a single hospital license, with a total of 815 beds. Southcoast Health now also includes Southcoast Behavioral Health in Dartmouth.

In addition to its hospitals and a physician network of more than 450 providers, Southcoast has more than 55 service locations across the South Coast of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. This includes more than 40 physician practices as well as urgent care centers, a Visiting Nurse Association, the Centers for Cancer Care, outpatient surgery centers, and numerous ancillary facilities. Southcoast serves more than 719,000 residents in 33 communities, covering more than 900 square miles.

Southcoast is proud to serve as the community's only not-for-profit health system and the region's largest employer. Southcoast invest and reinvest in the community, always seeking to provide patients with the best services, programs, providers, technologies, and facilities. We collaborate with local leaders and organizations to promote and nurture a culture of health and wellness. With an unwavering commitment to our patients, communities, and all those we serve, we deliver on our promise — Exceptional Care from People Who Care.

The Southcoast Values include:

- **Be People Focused:** establish trusting partnerships with patients, families, colleagues, and our community.
- **Be Engaging:** model the Southcoast Health Service Behaviors
- **Be Accountable:** always expect and give your best
- **Be Supportive:** Southcoast Health is a team that is caring, compassionate and dedicated
- **Be Innovative:** positively embrace change, be a change agent
- **Be Proud:** you are a Southcoast Health Ambassador 24/7/365
- **Be More than medicine:** for our community, for each other

## Community Benefits & Mission Statement

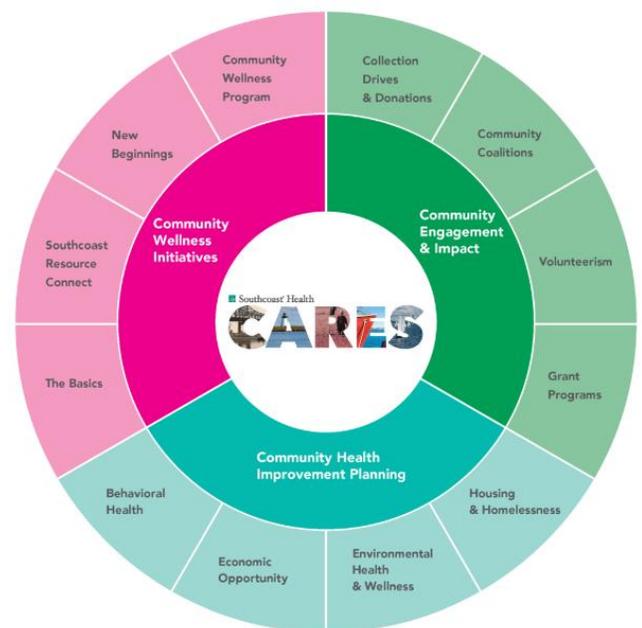
At Southcoast Health we are committed to our mission of providing healthcare that extends beyond direct patient care. We know that health-related behaviors, along with socioeconomic and environmental factors, are among the greatest measures of our ability to maintain health and overall wellness.

We are accomplishing this through:

- Identifying the unmet health needs of the community through a needs assessment process that includes collaboration with relevant community health coalitions and networks and other community representatives and providers.
- Prioritizing health needs and identifying which needs can most effectively be met through the resources of Southcoast Hospitals Group and its affiliated corporations, particularly the needs of the uninsured and the medically underserved who require enhanced access to care.
- Collaborating with local health providers, human services agencies, advocacy groups and others to develop cooperative plans and programs to address pressing community health needs.
- Developing community benefits plans that incorporate social determinants of health, including environmental, social, and other demographic factors that may influence health status.

During FY22 Southcoast implemented a new name for the Community Benefits department, called the Community Health & Wellness Department. This title change is meant to be more inclusive of the expanded role of the department including an increased focus on advancing health equity and health status through Southcoast CARES initiatives.

Southcoast CARES initiatives exemplify our commitment to community outreach, beyond clinical care, to best serve and support all residents of the South Coast region. In addition to administering Southcoast CARES initiatives, the Community Health & Wellness Department also manages Southcoast's community relations and community health data analysis and reporting.



## Health Equity & Population Health

At Southcoast Health, we are committed to our mission of providing healthcare that extends beyond direct patient care. We understand that the social determinants of health (SDOH) such as income, education, race, health behaviors and other socioeconomic factors are among the best predictors of health outcomes, accounting for approximately 70% of a person's health status. Because of this, inequitable access to resources can lead to disparities in health outcomes.

Poverty is a key driver of health status. Community members in the Southcoast service area experience higher poverty rates and lower levels of education compared to other regions in Massachusetts. Census data demonstrates that residents of the region earn incomes below the statewide median. Poverty affects 20% of the residents of the region and is particularly prevalent in the cities of Fall River and New Bedford.

At present state, racial and ethnic minorities face significant disparities in access to and utilization of care. As a health system that serves a diverse region, our providers must ensure that they meet the needs of different racial and ethnic groups as the region's population grows increasingly more diverse. Notably, Fall River's and New Bedford's student population is much more diverse than the population as a whole, which foreshadows that the region will become more racially diverse. For example, only 46.2% of students in the Fall River Public Schools identify as White (compared to 73.4% of all residents) and only 37.5% of students in the New Bedford students identify as White (compared to 60.8% in the city as a whole).

As we have come to realize, especially over the last few years and with the COVID-19 pandemic highlighting vulnerabilities, and addressing social and economic factors, not just health conditions is necessary to improve the health and wellness of our community. While we will continue to address health needs that arise, we will also implement upstream strategies that are proactive and focused on improving long-term outcomes.

To do this work, we have aligned our Community Health & Wellness Department with our Southcoast Health Network system. With this new alignment, there will be a stronger population health focus with additional resource and supports to improve regional health equity. In addition, Southcoast has developed a dedicated role to improve health equity through monitoring a streamlined data collection processes, participating in community engagement and developing programs in coordination with Community Health & Wellness to address the inequities in our community.

It is critical that Southcoast maintain a robust strategy to manage our region's health and provide outreach to achieve equitable access to preventative health services and education for all residents in our region.

## External & Internal Leadership

The Community Health & Wellness Department is under the overall direction of the Community Benefits Advisory Council (CBAC). The CBAC oversees and guides community benefits programming and focused efforts. Those who serve on the council are representatives from the various communities served by Southcoast and represent the diversity of our region with members who are active leaders in minority communities including the Cape Verdean, Hispanic and Portuguese communities. Our council members have expertise in matters concerning the health and welfare of the community and are active members of local and regional coalitions. The council meets quarterly to review, plan, and advise on activities and expenditures related to community benefits activities.

An internal committee, called the Southcoast CARES Champions meets quarterly to plan and coordinate community benefit projects and activities as guided by the CBAC. This team consists of representatives from departments that regularly engage in community outreach including staff from our Social Services, Diabetes Management, Behavioral Health Services, Patient Access and Financial Services, Cancer Outreach, Smoking Cessation, Southcoast's VNA, the Physicians Group (SPG) and Southcoast Health Network (SHN). Senior management responsible for the Program rests with Southcoast's Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, who also serves as a member of the CBAC.

The Manager of Community Health & Wellness, who reports to the Executive Director of Operations for Southcoast Health Network, manages the day-to-day community benefit activities. Updates and presentations on community benefit activities to Southcoast leadership at Vice President, Director, and Manager level meetings are given on a regular basis. Messaging of these activities are delivered to all employees through an internal e-newsletter.

<b>CBAC – Community Members</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Helena DaSilva Hughes	CBAC Chair & Trustee Southcoast Health, Executive Director	Immigrants Assistance Center (IAC)
Dr. Ilana Feinerman	Trustee Southcoast Health, Physician of Otolaryngology	Southcoast Health
Beth Purdue	Editor, Senior Scope	Coastline Elderly Services, Inc
David Borges	Principle	Springline Research Group
Rev. David Lima	Executive Director	Interchurch Council of Greater New Bedford (ICC)
Dennis Demarinis	Director; Chairperson; Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC)	Director of Day Services, Lifestream, Inc.

		Commission for Citizens with Disabilities New Bedford
Erik Rousseau	Administrator	Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA)
Gaelen Adam	Librarian/Editor/Senior Research Associate, Center for Evidence Synthesis in Health Program Manager	Brown Evidence-Based Practice Center
James Reid	Executive Director	Veterans Transition House
Jeffery Pelletier	Executive Director	Junior Achievement of SEMA
Kathy Downey	Retired Public Health Nurse	Board of Health, Marion
Katlyn Auty	Director of Business Development	Southcoast Behavioral Health
Michelle Hantman	President & CEO	United Way of Greater New Bedford
Robert Mendes	Executive Director	Boys and Girls Club of Greater New Bedford
Ron Ponte	Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC)	Community Member
Sandi Montour	Partner Experience Director; Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC)	Mitel
Sylvia Nobre-Hilton	Chief Operating Officer	Coastline Elderly Service, Inc

<b>CBAC - Southcoast Health Members</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Alison LeBert	Manager, Community Health & Wellness
Katelyn Ferreira	Health Equity Program Manager
Lauren DeSimon	Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resource Officer
Lauren Melby Nieder	Executive Director of Operations for Southcoast Health Network
Stephen Canessa	Senior Vice President, Chief Brand & Strategy Officer
Wade Broughman	Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer
William Burns	Executive Director, External Affairs & Planning

## Coalition Building

Coalition building is an important activity that promotes coordination and collaboration through the effective use of limited community resources and every year Southcoast staff lead and participate in a number of community coalitions across the region.

These coalitions are comprised of various stakeholders from the community including health providers, teachers, law enforcement, businesses, religious leaders, and others who come together with a shared goal to improve the health and wellbeing of those in our community.

Name	Health Need Focus	Area Served
Building Our Lives Drug Free (BOLD) Coalition	SUD, Youth development	Greater Fall River
Bristol County Regional Alliance to End the Opioid Crisis	SUD, Mental health	Bristol County
Bristol County District Attorney's Youth Substance Use Prevention Task Force	Youth, SUD, Mental Health	Bristol County
Confronting Discrimination Coalition	Racial/ethnic/minorities/LGBTQ+ inequities, advocacy	Greater Fall River
Coalition Against Period Poverty (CAPP)	Menstrual inequities, advocacy	Greater Fall River
ERASE--Human Trafficking Coalition	Human Trafficking, homelessness, SUD	Southern New England
Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community (CHNA 25)	Health & wellness, health equity, advocacy	Greater Fall River
Greater New Bedford Allies for Health & Wellness (CHNA 26)	Health & wellness, health equity, advocacy	Greater New Bedford
Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force	SUD, Mental Health	Greater New Bedford
Greater New Bedford Suicide Prevention Coalition	Mental health, SUD	Greater New Bedford
Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance	Youth, health & wellness, advocacy	Greater New Bedford
Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN)	Homelessness, housing, advocacy	Greater New Bedford
Let's Talk Tuesday	Health & wellness, health equity, advocacy	Greater Fall River
Mental Health Providers Network	Mental Health	Bristol County
Near North End Alliance	Youth, economic development, recreational development, advocacy	Greater New Bedford
SE MA Community Health Worker Collaborative	Advocacy, education, workforce development	Southeastern MA

Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Education	Early childhood education, advocacy	South Coast - Regional
Southcoast Community Response Corps	Health & wellness, health equity, advocacy	Greater New Bedford
Southcoast Food Policy Council	Food insecurity, food access	South Coast - Regional
Substance Abuse Task Force of Greater Fall River	SUD, Mental Health	Greater Fall River
Substance Exposed Newborn Committee of Southeast MA (SENSE)	SUD, Maternal Health, Mental Health, Infants	South Coast - Regional
Wareham Community Services Collaborative	Health & wellness, health equity, advocacy	Wareham
Worksite Wellness Collaborative	Well-being, health & wellness, DE&I initiatives	South Coast - Regional
Zero Suicide Coalition	Mental Health, SUD,	Bristol County



## Needs Assessment

As a community-based health delivery system, Southcoast continually strives to identify the priority health needs of the community and to ensure that its services align with these needs. Every three years, we conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that assists with this goal by documenting the major demographic, socioeconomic and health trends among South Coast residents. The overarching goal of this effort is to inform data-driven goals, objectives, and strategies that can be implemented by the health system to improve the health outcomes of South Coast residents, particularly among the region's most vulnerable marginalized, at-risk populations.

The 2022 CHNA was produced in collaboration with the New Bedford Health Department, the Fall River Health Department, and Springline Research Group using a social determinants of health framework and adopting a health equity lense. The CHNA identifies the region's top health priorities through a collaborative approach that incorporates socioeconomic and health data along with community input.

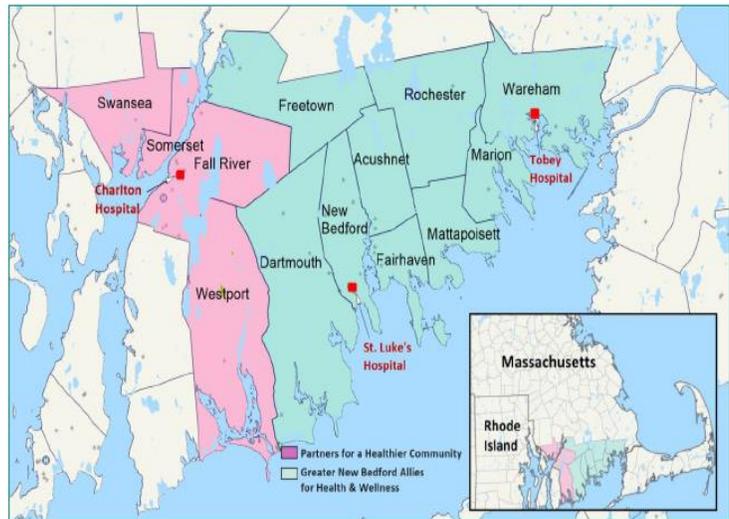
The major components of this analysis include:

1. **Socioeconomic Profile:** Understanding the community by describing its residents in terms of population, age, gender, and other demographic indicators. The analysis, where possible, presents these data in the context of social determinants of health by highlighting disparities in terms of income, education, and race, all of which are factors that affect health outcomes.
2. **Health Data Assessment:** Identifying major health issues and needs by presenting a variety of health indicators from sources such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, New Bedford Health Department, Fall River Health Department, and Southcoast Health.
3. **Qualitative Activities:** Engaging community leaders and residents through surveys, interviews, and events to add context to the health data and refine our understanding of the region's primary health issues and challenges.



The South Coast region is composed of thirteen communities located in the Southeastern portion of Massachusetts. This regional definition coincides with Community Health Network Area 25, Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community and Community Health Network Area 26, Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness.

Fall River and New Bedford are two of the state's many Gateway Cities, which are defined as midsize urban centers that anchor regional economies. These cities are primarily former industrial centers that were traditional gateways for immigrants. As has been the case across most of the state's Gateway Cities, Fall River, New Bedford, and surrounding communities have not experienced benefits from the Boston metro area's knowledge economy, with many of the region's service-related jobs requiring relatively low levels of formal training or education and paying comparatively low wages. Accordingly, Fall River and New Bedford, and some of the region's suburban communities, fall below state averages on most socioeconomic metrics.



The COVID-19 pandemic brought many pre-existing issues to light, particularly those related to health equity and social determinants of health. Food insecurity, homelessness, and access to care for immigrant populations all became increasingly apparent, as did barriers in access to mental health care.

As we work to address these issues and advance health equity, the 2022 CHNA will serve as the blueprint for the next three annual Community Health Benefits Implementation Strategies. Southcoast's CBAC will engage in an ongoing evaluation of progress made on the short- and long-term goals of the Implementation Strategy, recommending adjustments to the plan as needed to positively impact and advance the health-related needs of the populations to be served.

The complete 2022 CHNA is available by request or for viewing online:  
<https://www.southcoast.org/community-benefits/community-benefits-reporting/>

## Community Benefits Plan & Documented Health Priorities

Southcoast's Community Benefits Strategic Action Plan was first formulated in 1998 as the result of an extensive needs assessment and since is updated annually.

Our current plan is based on the 2022 CHNA. Through the needs assessment process, five priority health issues were identified based on the available health data, surveys of providers and community members, and interviews with key community leaders.

These priorities are:

Priority Issue	Sub-Categories
Economic Opportunity	Social Mobility, Income, Education
Behavioral Health	Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder, Youth Trauma
Housing	Affordability, Stability, Homelessness
Wellness & Chronic Disease	Unhealthy Behaviors, Health Outcomes, Prevention
Health Access & Equity	Underserved Populations, Obstacles to Care, Health Literacy

## Target Populations

From the findings of the 2022 CHNA, Southcoast will focus our community benefits programs and initiatives on individuals and families who are most vulnerable<sup>1</sup> and experiencing health disparities due to racial, ethnic, or economic factors such as:

- Those who suffer disproportionately from chronic disease such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory disease
- Those who are suffering from poverty, are disadvantaged, or medically underserved
- Those who lack access to regular primary health care due to being underinsured or uninsured
- Those who face barriers to care due to limited English proficiency, other language and cultural barriers, documentation status, and health literacy
- Those who are impacted by behavioral health issues, including mental health and substance use disorder
- Those who suffer from homelessness and lack of access to affordable housing
- Those who are most at-risk/suffering from domestic violence, sexual abuse, other forms of violence and trauma
- Those who suffer from or are at-risk of food insecurity

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<sup>1</sup> *Vulnerable populations: racial/ethnic minorities, low-income individuals & families, homeless, high-risk youth, LGBTQA+ community, elderly, disabled, those with mental health needs and/or substance use disorder (including expecting mothers), maternal/child health*

## Priority Area 1: Economic Opportunity

*Sub-priorities: Social mobility, income, poverty, education, employment*

Economic opportunity can be defined as the ability of a person to reach their personal potential. Opportunity includes having access to resources that are essential to maintaining a good quality of life, such as education, affordable housing, healthy foods, childcare, and stable employment. Unfortunately, many economic, social, and structural barriers prevent some South Coast residents from achieving their potential. These include obstacles such as concentrated poverty, racial discrimination, low wages, unequal educational access, and lack of quality opportunities for childhood learning.

Economic opportunity begins with developing strategies for families to become economically stable so they can better support healthy children and break the cycle of poverty. Above all, it requires a coordinated effort among the many organizations working to lessen the impacts of poverty on the South Coast. Poverty is a major driver of health. Those in poverty often have less opportunity and access to resources that can assist in improving and maintaining one's health. Resources that contribute to educational attainment, employment, housing status, health care opportunities, and social activities are all less accessible to those living in poverty.

Southcoast intends to take to address this health need through the following key strategies and programs in collaboration with our community partners:

Key Strategies	Programs & Coalitions that Support
Promote The Basics program throughout the South Coast to improve early childhood development	The Basics, Southcoast, Coalition building – Economic Opportunity, Community Wellness Program
Integrate the Basics program into Southcoast facilities	The Basics, Southcoast, Coalition building – Economic Opportunity
Work with local schools and colleges to promote education and training in the healthcare field	Health Professionals Education
Develop local opportunities for Community Health Workers to participate in professional development courses & trainings	Community Health Worker Projects, Coalition building – Economic Opportunity
Provide support to local and regional educational coalitions and support programs	Coalition building – Economic Opportunity

### Goals:

- Improve the social determinants of health, specifically poverty, education, employment through upstream efforts such as advocacy and policy change, and downstream efforts such as bringing localized education and training to the South Coast region
- Improve well-being and overall improved health outcomes

- Improve early childhood literacy to increase level of kindergarten readiness
- Increase diversity in the healthcare workforce

## **Programs:**

### ***The Basics, Southcoast***

The Basics, Southcoast initiative, is led by NorthStar Learning Center, in partnership with the Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Education and Southcoast Health. The Basics are five parenting and caregiving tools and techniques that support social, emotional, and cognitive development in children from birth to age three.

Target Population: Parents or caregivers of 0–5-year-old children, service providers who interact with families with children 0-5 years old, racial/ethnic minorities, low-income families

Community Partners: NorthStar Learning Center, Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Education

### ***Health Professionals Education***

Throughout the Southcoast System, there are opportunities for local students to complete their clinical rotations, enhance their skills, and develop a pathway to a future career. Currently, Southcoast offers opportunities for nursing clinical rotations and mentorships, radiology rotations, observation opportunities for rehabilitation, and a residency program. During the group clinical rotations and observation opportunities, students work with their peers and Southcoast staff to learn and provide care to patients. Preceptorships give students the opportunity to work one on one with a mentor in their desired field.

Target Population: Students from local colleges entering the healthcare field

Community Partners: University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Bristol Community College, Salve Regina University, Rhode Island College, Salve Regina University

### ***Coalition Building – Economic Opportunity***

Southcoast engages in a number of community building activities that promote infrastructure improvement in communities and the development of policies and programs that address social determinants of health and improving health equity in the South Coast region. Southcoast leads and convenes collaborative groups and actively participates on numerous coalitions that work to improve the health and wellness of our community.



Southcoast serves on the steering committee for the Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Education, which is dedicated to ensuring every child has the best start in life and enters kindergarten ready to reach their fullest potential. Southcoast is also an active participant in the SE MA Community Health Worker Collaborative, which brings education, advocacy, and workforce development to the South Coast region for local Community Health Workers.

Target Population: racial/ethnic minorities, low-income families,

Community Partners: Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Education, SE MA Community Health Worker Collaborative, Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance

## Priority Area 2: Behavioral Health

*Sub-priorities: Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder, NAS, Youth Trauma*

Mental health emerged throughout the CHNA as one of the region's most prominent health issue. Behavioral health examines how a person's habits affect their mental and physical well-being. This includes behaviors related to nutrition, exercise, smoking, sleep, and stress.

Behavioral health is also a blanket term that includes mental health and substance use disorder. As one might expect, COVID-19 exacerbated mental health and substance use issues significantly, with three primary mental health issues stressed by community members and providers: (1) the shortage of mental health professionals, (2) the overall behavioral health system, particularly the shortage of beds, and (3) equity in mental health, including issues of access and stigma.

Substance use disorder (SUD) continues to be identified as a major challenge in the region, particularly in terms of the links between substance use disorder, other mental health issues, poverty, and homelessness. Another outcome of the opioid crisis is the rate of newborns born with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). NAS is a group of conditions that babies experience after being exposed to narcotics in the womb.

Southcoast intends to take to address this health need through the following key strategies and programs in collaboration with our community partners:

<b>Key Strategies</b>	<b>Programs &amp; Coalitions that Support</b>
Identify women during prenatal care with substance use disorder and offer additional supports	New Beginnings, Coalition building – Behavioral Health
Support moms with substance use disorder and their babies for up to 12 months postpartum	New Beginnings, Coalition building – Behavioral Health
Provide education and Narcan kits to individuals in the ED who are at-risk of an overdose	ED Overdose Awareness, Coalition building – Behavioral Health, Community Health & Wellness Program
Support ongoing initiatives in the community around the stigma surrounding mental health	Help & Hope South Coast, Coalition building – Behavioral Health, Community Health & Wellness Program
Develop pathways to increase access to resources supporting mental health and substance use disorder	Help & Hope South Coast, Coalition building – Behavioral Health
Provide support to local and regional mental health and substance use prevention coalitions and support programs	Coalition building – Economic Opportunity

## Goals:

- Increase access to mental healthcare and substance use disorder (SUD) supports through programs and infrastructure changes that offer education and support to individuals and families
- Reduce the stigma around mental health and substance use disorder in the community
- Improve access to prenatal care for women with substance use disorder
- Improve positive health outcomes for babies with NAS
- Reduce the impact of substance use disorders through increased prevention, reducing overdoses, and developing recovery-based intervention

## Programs:

### ***New Beginnings***

Southcoast established the New Beginnings program in 2015 in response to our region's disproportionate incidences of Substance Exposed Newborns, including those born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) and provides a seamless course of care and treatment for newborns and their caregivers with the goal of improving long-term outcomes for both mother and child. This program follows pregnant individuals during their prenatal journey and up to twelve (12) months postpartum to provide continuous support.

Target Population: Pregnant individuals planning to deliver a baby that are at risk for NAS, this includes pregnant individuals with untreated substance use disorder (SUD), pregnant individuals who are being treated for SUD with pharmacotherapy, and pregnant individuals on opioid pharmacotherapy for pain management without SUD.

Community Partners: High Point Treatment Center, Gifford Street Wellness, Citizens for Citizens, Health Care Resource Centers, Recovery Connection Centers, United Way of Greater New Bedford, BMC, Child and Family Services, Healthy Families, Kennedy Donovan Center, WIC, Learn 2 Cope, Clean Slate, Greater New Bedford Health Center, Early Head Start, HealthFirst, JRI/Children's Advocacy Center, PAACA, Peer to Peer, People Inc, River to Recovery, Seven Hills, SSTAR, United Neighbors

### ***ED Overdose Awareness***

Due to the high prevalence of substance use in the region and to prevent opioid overdose deaths, the Southcoast emergency departments provide patients who are at risk for an opioid overdose a nasal naloxone kit and education on how to administer.

Target Population: Individuals and families that are at risk over an opioid overdose, individuals with substance use disorder

Community Partners: High Point Treatment Center, Gifford Street Wellness, Health Care Resource Centers, Recovery Connection Centers, Learn 2 Cope, Clean Slate, Greater New Bedford Health Center, PAACA, Peer to Peer, River to Recovery, Seven Hills, SSTAR

### ***Help & Hope South Coast***

Help & Hope South Coast was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic by service providers and professionals in the healthcare field to help our community come together to address mental health needs and end the stigma around mental illness. This program helps to connect individuals to local resources for mental health support, provides educational discussions with local professionals, and raises advocacy and awareness for the ongoing stigma surrounding mental health.

Target Population: Individuals and families in need of mental health and/or substance use supports

Community Partners: Child & Family Services, Coastline Elderly Services, High Point Treatment Center, Learn 2 Cope, Clean Slate, Greater New Bedford Health Center, Greater New Bedford Suicide Prevention Coalition, HSPN, Inter Church Council, Mental Health Providers Network, New Bedford Police Department, PAACA, Seven Hills, Southcoast Behavioral Health, Veterans Transition House

### ***Coalition Building – Behavioral Health***

Southcoast engages in a number of community building activities that promote infrastructure improvement in communities and the development of policies and programs that address social determinants of health and improving health equity in the South Coast region. Southcoast leads and convenes collaborative groups and actively participates on numerous coalitions that work to improve the health and wellness of our community.

Southcoast is the co-leader of the Bristol County Regional Alliance to end the opioid crisis, which a regional coalition focused on increasing communication and collaboration of all entities working to address the Opioid Epidemic across the South Coast Region. Southcoast is also the co-leader of the Substance Exposed Newborn Committee of Southeast MA (SENSE), which is dedicated to identifying gaps and bringing together resources to improve the health and outcomes for moms and babies with NAS.

Southcoast is also an active member of the BOLD Coalition, Greater New Bedford Suicide Prevention Coalition, Bristol County District Attorney's Youth Substance Use Prevention Task Force, Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force, ERASE – Human Trafficking Coalition, Mental Health Providers Network, Substance Abuse Task Force of Greater Fall River & the Zero Suicide Coalition.

Target Population: Individuals and families in need of mental health and/or substance use supports



Community Partners: High Point Treatment Center, Gifford Street Wellness, Citizens for Citizens, Health Care Resource Centers, Recovery Connection Centers, United Way of Greater New Bedford, BMC, Child and Family Services, Healthy Families, Kennedy Donovan Center, WIC, Learn 2 Cope, Clean Slate, Greater New Bedford Health Center, Early Head Start, HealthFirst, JRI/Children’s Advocacy Center, PAACA, Peer to Peer, People Inc, River to Recovery, Seven Hills, SSTAR, United Neighbors, BOLD Coalition, Greater New Bedford Suicide Prevention Coalition, Bristol County District Attorney’s Youth Substance Use Prevention Task Force, Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force, ERASE – Human Trafficking Coalition, Mental Health Providers Network, Substance Abuse Task Force of Greater Fall River & the Zero Suicide Coalition

## Priority Area 3: Housing

*Sub-priorities: Homelessness, Availability, Stability*

Housing emerged as a primary issue of concern for community leaders and community members throughout the needs assessment process. The lack of affordable housing contributes to housing instability and homelessness, both of which are strong predictors of poor health outcomes. Housing challenges have been made worse by COVID-19, although the pandemic primarily worsened existing housing issues.

The region's housing issue is primarily twofold: the focus in the region's cities is largely on rising rents and its implication on the working poor and people on fixed incomes. Conversely, the issue in many of the area's suburban communities is focused on the significant increase in single-family home prices. This dynamic is creating issues for seniors who want to remain in their homes but who are "house rich, cash poor" and for younger families who leave the region because they cannot afford homes in the area.

Housing insecurity disproportionately affects low-income households, people of color, and seniors. This trend is evident in Fall River and New Bedford where White households are less likely to be burdened by housing costs than their neighbors. Notably, lower-income households are primarily renters, and this group is more likely to have experienced a job loss during the pandemic because they are more likely to work in the industries impacted the hardest by the pandemic, either because of layoffs or the inability to work remotely.

Community leaders identified homelessness as a significant issue in the region, which is partly an outcome of the affordable housing shortage. Mental health and substance abuse disorder, which are highly prevalent among the homeless population, are also key factors in the homelessness equation. Often, experiencing homelessness in combination with these issues creates challenges for entering shelters and transitional housing.

In addition, the assessment captured that the use of the emergency department by homeless individuals is often their primary means of accessing health care. In doing so, community leaders point out that the homeless only engage with the healthcare system when they are experiencing a health crisis. Thus, not only is there concern that these individuals do not receive preventive care, but also that they do not receive adequate follow-up on their health issues.

Southcoast intends to take to address this health need through the following key strategies and programs in collaboration with our community partners:

Key Strategies	Programs & Coalitions that Support
Assist individuals who are at-risk or experiencing homelessness by providing tenancy supports	Housing Support Services

Develop pathways to provide preventive care in a community setting for individuals who are homeless	Community Wellness Program, Care Navigation, Coalitions to End and Prevent Homelessness,
Continue advocacy for affordable housing in the South Coast region	Coalitions to End and Prevent Homelessness
Provide support to local and regional housing & homelessness coalitions and support programs	Coalitions to End and Prevent Homelessness

**Goals:**

- Increase resources and preventative healthcare opportunities to support residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Support community efforts to increase housing stability and prevent homelessness.

**Programs:**

***Housing Support Services (Flex Program)***

In partnership with Community Counseling of Bristol County (CCBC), Southcoast assists members of the MassHealth ACO, who are at-risk or experiencing homelessness by providing tenancy supports.

Target Population: Individuals who are part of the MassHealth ACO that are at-risk or experiencing homelessness

Community Partners: Community Counseling of Bristol County (CCBC)

***Coalitions to End and Prevent Homelessness***

Southcoast engages in a number of community building activities that promote infrastructure improvement in communities and the development of policies and programs that address social determinants of health and improving health equity in the South Coast region. Southcoast leads and convenes collaborative groups and actively participates on numerous coalitions that work to improve the health and wellness of our community.

Southcoast serves on the steering committee for the Homeless Services Providers Network (HSPN), to combat homelessness, identify resources and raise awareness on the rising costs of local affordable housing. Southcoast also leads the Fall River Street Homeless Coalition, which in partnership with local city officials and other service providers, develops ongoing strategies and initiatives to help support the homeless in Fall River.

Target Population: Individuals who are at-risk of being homeless and/or are homeless



Community Partners: Catholic Social Services, City of Fall River, City of New Bedford, Fall River Street Homeless Coalition, First Step Inn, Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN), Inter Church Council, PAACA, Sister Rose House, Steppingstone, Turning Point, Wareham Area Committee for the Homeless

## Priority Area 4: Wellness & Chronic Disease

*Sub-priorities: Unhealthy behaviors, healthy outcomes, prevention, food insecurity*

For many, health and wellness fit within a larger framework of obligations, ranging from issues such as housing, finances, and childcare, to transportation, employment, immigration, access to food and safety. These responsibilities create obstacles to maintaining overall health and to adopting healthy habits that help to prevent or manage disease.

While behavior and genetics play a role in chronic disease, social and environmental factors can also elevate the risk of developing these long-term health issues. Tobacco use, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition contribute to preventable chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and lung disease. It is essential that we work to dismantle barriers in access to health and healthcare, while educating residents on the importance of engaging in health-promoting behavior.

Southcoast intends to take to address this health need through the following key strategies and programs in collaboration with our community partners:

Key Strategies	Programs & Coalitions that Support
Provide a variety of Cancer prevention education and screening opportunities	Cancer Outreach & Prevention, Care Navigation, Community Wellness Program
Provide a variety of Diabetes prevention education and screening opportunities	Southcoast Cares About My Diabetes, Care Navigation, Community Wellness Program
Provide chronic disease self-management programs, and identify resources and referral opportunities to pre-diabetes prevention programs	Southcoast Cares About My Diabetes, Care Navigation, Community Wellness Program
Offer monthly support groups to those diagnosed with a chronic disease or grief due to the loss of a loved one	Chronic Disease & Greif Support Groups
Provide resources for smokers to successfully quit smoking	Smoking Cessation & Prevention, Care Navigation, Community Wellness Program
Removing barriers to care by delivering methods of care into community-based locations	Community Wellness Program, Southcoast Cares About My Diabetes, Care Navigation
Providing wrap around coordinated care services	Care Navigation
Provide medically tailored meals to individuals to support their chronic disease management	Nutrition Services Supports, Care Navigation
Promote local farmers markets, mobile markets, and CSA programs	Food is Medicine, Coalition Building – Wellness & Chronic Disease, Care Navigation, Community Wellness Program
Provide Baby Cafes in the community	Maternal Child Health Education and Outreach
Provide education and lactation classes for expecting parents	Maternal Child Health Education and Outreach

Provide wellness opportunities for local residents	Be Well Wareham
Provide support to local and regional coalitions and programs that promote and support health & wellness	Coalition Building – Wellness & Chronic Disease

**Goals:**

- Increase education on chronic diseases, prevention & management, and the associated health impacts
- Reduce incidence and long-term impacts of chronic disease, specifically cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and respiratory disease through prevention, screenings, education, and support
- Improve health outcomes and decrease total cost of care (TCOC) for individuals who are at high risk for poor health outcomes and excess utilization
- Increase access to free or low-cost healthy food options
- Increase social support for mothers, both prenatally and postpartum
- Increase enrollment in pregnancy and parenting education programs

**Programs**

***Community Wellness Program***

The Community Wellness program (CWP) breaks down traditional barriers to care by bringing health education, vaccinations and immunizations and health screenings to underserved and vulnerable populations across the region. This program improves accessibility for health access through mobile capabilities and supports Southcoast’s ongoing population health initiatives. *This program has replaced the Southcoast Health Wellness Van.*

Target Populations: Those who lack access to regular primary and preventive health care, particularly populations who have language, income, or geographic barriers to accessing care.

Community Partners: AD Makepeace, Acushnet Council on Aging, Adult Learner Programs on the Southcoast, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Fall River, Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford, Catholic Social Services, Cranberry Manor, City of Fall River, City of New Bedford, Coastline Elderly, Dennison Memorial, Fall River Housing Authority, Fall River Public Schools, First Step Inn, Fishing Partnership, Global Learning Charter Public School, Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community, Greater New Bedford Allies for Health & Wellness, Gifts to Give, Immigrants Assistance Center, Inter Church Council of Greater New Bedford, Junior Achievement of SE MA, New Bedford Housing Authority, New Bedford Parks & Recreation, New Bedford Public Schools, New Depot Crossing, Our Sister School, PACE, PAACA, Rochester Board of Health, Sister Rose House, Town of Wareham, Turning Point, United Neighbors of Greater Fall River, United Way of Greater New Bedford, Woods at Wareham, YMCA Southcoast, YWCA of SE MA

### ***Nutrition Services Supports (Flex Services Program)***

In partnership with Community Servings, Southcoast provides healthy meals for members of the MassHealth ACO, such as those with serious and long-term illnesses. As part of this program, eligible individuals receive a weekly delivery of medically tailored meals (MTM), access to nutrition counseling, and kitchen appliance/supplies purchasing support for up to 26 weeks.

Target Population: Individuals who are part of the MassHealth ACO that have been diagnosed with diabetes and/or COPD and have documented limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate, medically appropriate foods based on the individual's chronic disease status

Community Partners: Community Servings

### ***Cancer Education & Outreach***

Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care located in Fall River and Fairhaven offer experienced health care professionals who bring a higher level of technology, treatment, and expertise to the South Coast region. The Cancer Centers additionally provide support for individuals and their families by helping to coordinate services for support, counseling, and outreach.

In partnership with community-based organization, the Cancer Center provides preventative health education seminars in multiple languages to help raise awareness about the importance of cancer prevention and community-based screening opportunities. In addition, the Cancer Center supports individuals and their families with connecting to needed resources and sharing wellness opportunities through the patient and family resource centers.

Target Population: Those who are at-risk of or have been diagnosed with cancer

Community Partners: American Cancer Society, Bristol Elders, Coastline Elderly Services, Community Economic Development Center, Gloria Gemma, Immigrants Assistance Center, Junior Achievement of SE MA, Women's Center, YMCA Southcoast

### ***Chronic Disease & Greif Support Groups***

Southcoast offers a variety of support groups both virtually and in-person for individuals and their families who have been diagnosed with a chronic disease and for those who are suffering a loss. These support groups range from an individual recently diagnosed with cancer and in active treatment and those who are cancer survivors and in recovery offered through our Cancer Centers. In addition, through our VNA Supportive Care Center there are grief support groups and workshops for those suffering from a loss of a loved one.

Target Population: Those who are or have a family member who is at-risk of or currently has been diagnosed with a chronic disease, those who are suffering from the loss a loved one.

Community Partners: American Cancer Society, Bristol Elders, Coastline Elderly Services, Community Economic Development Center, Gloria Gemma, Immigrants Assistance Center, Junior Achievement of SE MA, Women's Center, YMCA Southcoast

### ***Southcoast Cares About My Diabetes***

Southcoast Cares About My Diabetes Program, is currently in partnership with and funded by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA). This is a systemwide program to improve health outcomes for patients with diabetes, with an emphasis on improved health equity for Black and Hispanic populations. The program offers community-based office visits, and on-going education and support through having access to Community Health Workers and Certified Diabetes Educators.

Target Population: Those who are at-risk of or have been diagnosed with diabetes

Community Partners: Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford, Community Economic Development Center, Council on Aging, Immigrants Assistance Center, YMCA Southcoast

### ***Care Navigation***

Care Navigation provides wrap around support for individuals and assist with coordinating all aspects of their care and provide guidance and resource identification and referral support. Care Navigators are made up of RNs, LPNs and Community Health Workers. Navigators are offered to those who have been diagnosed with Cancer, those with a behavioral health need and those are part of the MassHealth ACO, on Medicare and/or Medicaid.

Target Population: Those who are at-risk of or have been diagnosed with a chronic disease, those with a behavioral health need including SUD, those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, at-risk populations on Medicaid and/or Medicare

Community Partners: American Cancer Society, Boys & Girls Club, Bristol Elders, CCBC, Child & Family Services, Councils on Aging, My Brother's Keeper, Southcoast Behavioral Health, Steppingstone, Women's Center, YMCA Southcoast

### ***Food is medicine***

Southcoast combats food insecurity and encourages the idea that food is medicine by supporting local initiatives throughout the South Coast to provide our community members with easy access

to healthy, locally grown food. Southcoast partners with and promotes opportunities for individuals and families to access local farmers markets, mobile markets, and CSA programs.

Target Population: Those who are at-risk of or currently food insecure, those who lack access to health and nutritious foods

Community Partners: AD Makepeace, American Heart Association, Boston Foodbank, Coastal Foodshed, Damien's Food Pantry, Elliot Farm, Farm & Community Collaborative, The Greater Fall River Food Pantry, The Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, HealthFirst, Immigrants Assistance Center, The Marion Institute, MO LIFE Food Pantry, My Brother's Keeper, PACE, Southcoast Food Policy Council, Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP), Steven's Farm Stand, United Neighbors, United Way of Greater Fall River, United Way of Greater New Bedford, YMCA Southcoast

### ***Be Well Wareham***

In partnership with the YMCA Gleason Family Facility, this once-a-month program provides healthy physical activity options such as a walking with a Southcoast Physician and offering chair-yoga, mindfulness techniques and nutritional knowledge and education.

Target Population: Those who are suffering or at risk of chronic diseases, those who have low rates of physical activity

Community Partners: Town of Wareham, Woods at Wareham, YMCA Gleason Facility

### ***Maternal Child Health Education and Outreach***

Southcoast offers Baby Cafés which are led by the Southcoast Lactation Team and are drop-in sessions for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to learn more about breastfeeding, socialize with other moms, and to have access to peer support and one-on-one help from specially trained health professionals. In addition to this, Southcoast also offers Childbirth & Parenting education classes to educate parents on how to prepare for birth and what happens afterwards.

Target Population: Individuals who are pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding, caregivers, new parents

Community Partners: HealthFirst, Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, YWCA of Southeastern MA, WIC

### ***Smoking Cessation & Prevention***

Due to the high rates of smoking in the South Coast region, smoking cessation promotion reduces risk for many adverse health effects, including poor health outcomes and chronic diseases such as

cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and cancer. Southcoast staff utilize QuitWorks to refer individuals to that use tobacco/nicotine to provide them with resources to quit.

Target Population: Those who actively smoke, utilize tobacco products, those at risk for smoking or vaping, particularly youth.

Community Partners: American Cancer Society, Seven Hills Behavioral Health, Tobacco-Free Community Partnership, QuitWorks

### ***Coalition Building – Wellness & Chronic Disease***

Southcoast engages in a number of community building activities that promote infrastructure improvement in communities and the development of policies and programs that address social determinants of health and improving health equity in the South Coast region. Southcoast leads and convenes collaborative groups and actively participates on numerous coalitions that work to improve the health and wellness of our community.

Southcoast sits on the Board of Directors for the Greater New Bedford Allies for Health & Wellness (CHNA 26), whose mission is to promote healthy living and serve the needs of vulnerable children and adults in our communities. Respectively, Southcoast sits on the steering committee for the Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community (CHNA 25), whose mission is to improve the health equity within our community through developing sustainable programs and initiatives in collaboration with community partners. In addition, Southcoast also sits on the advisory board for the Southcoast Food Policy Council, which connects, convenes, and advocates for local food producers, consumers, and community leaders who seek policy and systems that strengthen our regional food system, improve community health, and eliminate food insecurity.

Southcoast also leads the Worksite Wellness Collaborative, which focuses on health & well-being and local diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Southcoast actively participates on the Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance, Near North End Alliance, Let's Talk Tuesday, Southcoast Community Response Corps coalitions.

Target Population: Those who lack access to regular primary and preventive health care, particularly populations who have language, income, or geographic barriers to accessing care. Those who suffer from chronic disease, and those who are food insecure.

Community Partners: Greater New Bedford Allies for Health & Wellness (CHNA 26), Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community (CHNA 25), Southcoast Food Policy Council, Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance, Near North End Alliance, Let's Talk Tuesday, Southcoast Community Response Corps, Worksite Wellness Collaborative

## Priority Area 5: Health Access & Equity

*Sub-priorities: Underserved populations, obstacles to care, health literacy*

Regular access to health services is essential in managing health conditions, preventing new conditions from arising, and promoting and maintaining overall good health. This includes access to a wide variety of health services such as preventive care, mental health services, and emergency services. People who do not have access to health care are at a greater risk of having poor overall health and negative health outcomes.

Racial and ethnic health gaps continue to afflict the region and is related to a myriad of access issues such as health literacy, insurance coverage and cost, transportation, and the need for more culturally competent care. Equity and access issues prevalent in the health care system intensified due to the pandemic.

Southcoast intends to take to address this health need through the following key strategies and programs in collaboration with our community partners:

Key Strategies	Programs & Coalitions that Support
Provide culturally competent and reduce language barrier when receiving care	Interpreter services, Community Wellness Program, Community Health Worker Projects, Care Navigation, Telehealth & Remote Monitoring Services
Assist residents with applications or re - applications for health insurance	Patient Financial Services
Develop programs and services that address and increase access to the social factors that impact health	Community Wellness Program, Community Health Worker Projects, Care Navigation
Eliminate transportation barriers to receive care	Southcoast Supports, Community Wellness Program, Telehealth & Remote Monitoring Services
Provide increased awareness and access to local community resources	Southcoast Resource Connect, Community Wellness Program, Community Health Worker Projects, Care Navigation
Host annual awareness & necessities drives for individuals, families, children, and low-income residents	Diversity Equity & Inclusion Council, Coalition Building – Health Access & Equity
Provide support to local and regional coalitions and programs that promote and support health access and equity	Coalition Building – Health Access & Equity

### Goals:

- Increase health equity in the South Coast region

- Increase access to healthcare, especially for uninsured and vulnerable populations
- Increased number of people with health insurance
- Decreased number of people experiencing barriers to care

## **Programs:**

### ***Community Health Worker Projects***

Community Health Workers (CHW) are the frontline lay workers who represent the community and populations they serve culturally and linguistically. A CHW builds individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge, reducing the social determinants of health and barriers to equal access to care through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support, and advocacy.

Southcoast values these important roles within our organization to support our ongoing population health and health equity efforts. Southcoast prioritizes professional development forums (PDFs) for CHWs and has a focus on bringing these opportunities to the South Coast region through collaboration with regional and statewide groups, such as Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW), the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center and local Health Departments.

Target Population: Vulnerable populations such as racial/ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, limited to no-English speaking individuals, homeless, elderly, and individuals with mental health disorders and substance use disorder

Community Partners: Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW), Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, New Bedford Health Department, Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness

### ***Patient Financial Services***

Patient financial counselors at Southcoast can help determine an individual eligibility for various health insurance programs and can also assist with the enrollment process. Individuals can schedule a time to meet one on one with a counselor or can drop in at a Southcoast location and receive this service. There is also a dedicated financial counselor to support those who have been diagnosed with Cancer. In addition, these counselors provide this service at community locations through partnerships with various social service organizations.

Target Population: Those who are uninsured, underinsured, need to renew public insurance plans, or denied coverage by a government healthcare program. Those who have lost their employment and as a result, their health insurance.

Community Partners: Boston Medical Center HealthNet, Councils on Aging, Fall River Housing Authority, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, HealthFirst, New Bedford Housing Authority, PACE, Stanley Street Treatment and Recovery (SSTAR)

### ***Interpreter Services***

The Interpreter Service team works to assist those whose first language is other than English. The team provides medical interpreting services in Spanish, Portuguese, Cambodian, Cape Verdean Creole, and sign language. In addition to this, Southcoast offers the language line service which provides 24-hour access to a multitude of on-demand interpreters to assist individuals with their needs. The interpreter team partners with our community outreach program to provide translation assistance when out in the community providing screenings or basic health education. In addition, the team provides written translation assistance to our community partner organizations for newsletters and flyers as needed.

Target Population: individuals who are non-verbal or speak limited to no-English

Community Partners: Coastline Elderly, Councils on Aging, Fall River Housing Authority, Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, New Bedford Housing Authority

### ***Southcoast Resource Connect***

Southcoast Resource Connect is an online platform that features a wide range of behavioral health and community resources that serve to assist individuals and families who may be facing difficult life challenges. The platform features local, free or low-cost services that address basic needs such as food, housing support, financial support, workforce and education development opportunities and other supportive services.

This platform is utilized by Southcoast providers after a patient identifies as needing support or completed the THRIVE screening tool. The THRIVE screening tool is used to assess a patient's social determinants of health needs and provide them with local resources to reduce the burden of these. In addition to providers, local social service organizations can claim their program to receive direct referrals and outreach to those who might be in need of their services.

Target Population: Those in the South Coast region in need of free to low-cost resources available in the community

Community Partners: Coastline Elderly, Councils on Aging, Fall River Housing Authority, Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, Immigrants Assistance Center, Inter-Church Council, Kennedy Donovan Center, Marion Institute,

New Bedford Housing Authority, PACE, PAACA, United Way of Greater New Bedford, YMCA Southcoast

### ***Southcoast Supports***

Each year Southcoast provides additional supports to patients, individuals, and families in our community in order for them to receive care. In order to reduce barriers such as transportation to and from appointments, Southcoast provides support in the form of vouchers or passes for the use of local transit authority vehicles and on-demand transportation services.

In addition to providing support to reduce transportation barriers, the role of a Health Promotion Advocate was developed. This role helps assist individuals and families navigate the health care system and identify any barriers to care and assists with access to local support services resources.

Target Population: Vulnerable populations such as racial/ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, limited to no-English speaking individuals, homeless, elderly, and individuals with mental health disorders and substance use disorder

Community Partners: Catholic Social Services, Coastline Elderly, Councils on Aging, Fall River Housing Authority, First Step Inn, Grace House, Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, Inter-Church Council, New Bedford Housing Authority, PAACA, Sister Rose House, SSTAR, Steppingstone

### ***Southcoast's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council***

Southcoast actively supports and embraces a welcoming and inclusive environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Council was formed during the summer of 2019 by Southcoast Health employees and has been meeting monthly ever since.

As part of the council's on-going work, two major initiatives have been implemented, the Race, Ethnicity, Language and Disability (RELD) and Sexual Orientation Gender Identify (SOGI) data collection efforts to improve how we as a health system can provide appropriate care to our patients and reduce the health disparities in our community.

In addition to this, the council seeks to increase awareness through educational campaigns and panel events of the challenges caused by healthcare disparities in our community. This year, the Black Lives Matter coalition will host a community-wide event with a panel of five speakers to explore local health disparities data, efforts from health equity warriors to achieve true improvements in health disparities, as well as the accelerated efforts that Southcoast Health is taking to address the health disparities in our community.

Target Population: Vulnerable populations such as racial/ethnic minorities

Community Partners: Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community, Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, YWCA

### ***Telehealth & Remote Monitoring Services***

Southcoast's Visiting Nursing Association (VNA) provides individuals with the technological devices to remain in their home and have aspects of their health conditions monitored. Monitoring an individual remotely helps to provide continued attention to the individual's condition, remove barriers to care such as transportation costs and reduce the risks of infection.

Target Population: Those who have been diagnosed with a chronic disease, those who have barriers to seek care

Community Partners: Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community, Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, HealthFirst

### ***Coalition Building – Health Access & Equity***

Southcoast engages in a number of community building activities that promote infrastructure improvement in communities and the development of policies and programs that address social determinants of health and improving health equity in the South Coast region. Southcoast leads and convenes collaborative groups and actively participates on numerous coalitions that work to improve the health and wellness of our community.

Southcoast actively participates on the Coalition Against Period Poverty (CAPP), Confronting Discrimination, Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community (CHNA 25), Greater New Bedford Allies for Health & Wellness – Health Equity Committee, Wareham Community Services Collaborative

Target Population: Vulnerable populations such as racial/ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, limited to no-English speaking individuals, homeless, elderly, and individuals with mental health disorders and substance use disorder

Community Partners: Coalition Against Period Poverty (CAPP), Confronting Discrimination, Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community (CHNA 25), Greater New Bedford Allies for Health & Wellness (CHNA 26), Wareham Community Services Collaborative