



# Community Benefits Report

FY21: October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As a not-for-profit community-based health system, Southcoast Health is committed to our mission to provide healthcare that extends beyond direct patient care and significantly invests in programs and services that improve the health and wellness for all residents living in our communities. In fiscal year 2021, Southcoast Health invested \$22.7 million in community benefits initiatives including charity care, hospital-based programs, collaboration with federally qualified community health centers, regional health and human service partnerships and support of community health programs designed to address pressing health and related social needs across our region.

As documented throughout Southcoast's 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), the region served by Southcoast Health faces numerous challenges. Residents of Fall River and New Bedford experience increased rates of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and obesity compared to the state and the nation. In Fall River and New Bedford adults report smoking at nearly twice the national and statewide rates.

The region's poor health outcomes are not limited to physical health. Nearly one in five adults in New Bedford and Fall River reported having 14 or more days of poor mental health, which is almost double the national rate and the number of opioid related deaths continue to increase. In addition, the Southcoast service area exhibits many health inequities resulting from the social influencers of health, including much higher poverty rates and lower levels of education in comparison to other regions in Massachusetts. In general, residents with low socioeconomic status are more mistrustful of the healthcare system, lack access to care, do not regularly engage in preventative care, and are undereducated regarding the potential negative outcomes of unhealthy lifestyle choices.

These factors, when taken together, make it critical that Southcoast Health maintain a robust health equity strategy to manage our region's health and provide outreach to reduce disparities and achieve equitable access to preventative health services and education for all residents in our region.

Transformational change requires addressing social and economic factors, not just health conditions. While we will continue to address current needs that arise, we will also implement upstream strategies that are proactive and focused on improving long-term health outcomes through generational change. To do this work, we will leverage our leadership, credibility, and influence to bring the right people and organizations to the table to achieve collective impact.

## **FY21 COMMUNITY BENEFITS HIGHLIGHTS**

Throughout the year, Southcoast collaborates with a number of community partners to implement our community benefits programs, also known as our Southcoast CARES initiatives. Southcoast CARES works to address the most pressing health and social needs of our region through focusing on developing community wellness initiatives, increasing community engagement and impact, and facilitating strategic community health improvement planning.

### **Community Health Needs Assessment & Community Health Improvement Plan**

In December 2019, Southcoast Health's Community Benefits team convened and led a morning long workshop that brought Southcoast and community leaders together for a presentation of the 2019 community health needs assessment (CHNA) and to begin developing a strategy for a community-driven Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). During this event, it was established that the overarching goal of the CHIP would be to achieve improved health status and health equity among all residents by identifying and addressing root causes that disproportionately and negatively affect certain populations. Using the CHIP framework, in FY21 Southcoast commenced to bring together a collaborative of partners that will develop, monitor, evaluate and refine a continually evolving plan that will provide the roadmap for improving health outcomes in the region.

### **Community Grants**

In FY21 Southcoast Health released the new Access to Technology grant program. This program was made possible by the Southcoast Health Management Information System's decommission and recycle initiative, is a competitive grant process focused on improving access to and knowledge of technology on the South Coast. The grant proposal aligned with the nine priority areas and target populations that were identified in the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment. We received 9 applications and awarded 6 grants for a total of \$34,405 plus in-kind donations.

### **Collaboration & Coalition Building**

For years, Southcoast staff has led and participated in more than 30 community coalitions across the region. In regular times, coalition building is an important activity that promotes coordination and collaboration through the effective use of limited community resources. This activity became a critical component of our strategy to understand and address health and social needs that increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Smoking Cessation & Prevention**

Southcoast Physician Dr. Georgina Nouaime and Community Health Worker Jamie Berberena collaborated on a public service announcement (PSA) for the Southcoast service area of Wareham, which has extremely high rates of smoking. The PSA focused on the promotion of tobacco education and how to access the QuitWorks referral program. This PSA was released in partnership with Wareham Community TV on their network station and YouTube channel.

### **Community Health Worker Projects**

In partnership with the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, in October 2021 we developed a new Community Health Worker role to provide education and outreach on COVID-19 testing, safety guidelines, personal protective equipment, and to help reduce vaccine hesitancy to Spanish and K'iche speaking populations. This role continues to expand to provide additional health education specific to this population.

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

The number of women breastfeeding across the system upon discharge increased by 8% compared to FY20. Southcoast also offers Baby Cafés led by Southcoast Lactation Team, which are free drop-in

sessions for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to learn more about breastfeeding, socialize with other moms, and have access to peer support and one-on-one help from specially trained health professionals is available. These classes transitioned to a virtual platform in response to COVID-19. In FY21, there were 617 moms and their babies that attended the cafes, for a total of 1,234 patients served.

### **Health Access & Health Professions Education**

The patient financial service team assisted \$15,228 unscheduled individuals seeing insurance and financial guidance. These individuals are captured as they did not have a pre-scheduled appointment and still came to seek support. PSF saw a 45% increase in this type of support over FY20.

Southcoast provided 645 student nurses the opportunity to participate in group clinical placements. In addition, there were 60, one to one mentorship opportunities provided to student nurses. We also provided 52 Radiology, CT, Nuclear Medicine and Ultrasound students with a clinical placement opportunity. Our rehab team spent over 4,000 hours of their time to provide education and clinical opportunities to rehab students with the focus of Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Speech Therapy, and there were 56,000 hours spent supporting education and clinical opportunities for Medical Residents and Nurse Practitioners.

### **Behavioral Health/Substance Use Intervention**

With the South Coast regions diverse population and the high rates of NAS, Southcoast implemented the New Beginnings (NB) Program in an effort to provide a more seamless course of care and treatment for opioid exposed newborns and their mothers with the goal of improving long-term outcomes for both mother and child. The program is overseen by the RN Team Leader and Program Coordinator and supported by two Family Advocates.

NB is available to all pregnant and postpartum women with Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and their families at no cost, and provides outreach, education, support and connection to health care services and community resources. The NB team works collaboratively with mom in the development of her Plan of Safe Care, assessing for the need of additional supports, services and/or resources, and facilitating those referrals as needed.

During FY21 the program saw a 21% increase in referrals from the previous year, with 105 moms referred to the program. Of those referred, 95 moms completed an intake to engage in prenatal services, and 77 engaged in postpartum coordination services. The majority of referrals are received prenatally (69 of the 105) between 20 and 36 weeks. During FY22, the NB team will complete community outreach to partners in the hopes to receive increased referrals before 20 weeks gestation as our outcomes show increased placement with moms after delivery (86%) compared to 77% engaged anytime prenatally and 55% when referral is received at birth.

### **Healthy System and Environment Change**

During FY21 Southcoast engaged in multiple initiatives focused on addressing nutrition and food insecurity. Partnerships included United Way of Greater New Bedford mobile market, Coastal FoodShed, Farm to Community Collaborative: Nourish our Neighbors, A.D. Makepeace, My Brothers Keeper, and the Salvation Army of New Bedford, Fall River and Aquidneck Island. Southcoast also joined the Southcoast Food Policy Council, led by the Marion Institute, and provided information and feedback regarding the completion of a regional food assessment.

### **Southcoast Wellness Van**

The Southcoast Wellness Van held 75 community based COVID-19 vaccination clinics administering 1,529 lifesaving vaccines to 1,439 high-risk individuals who otherwise may not have had access.

### **Cancer Outreach**

In collaboration with the Immigrants Assistance Center the Get Screened Today program was created.

This program provided the opportunity for vulnerable populations who were uninsured or underinsured to receive a mammogram during select days in November. In addition to this, Southcoast provided six cancer education, awareness and prevention virtual seminars open to the public.

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

Southcoast Health supports various organizations across the region that provide a range of services for homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless. The Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN) addresses the most pressing issues around the complexity of homelessness and toward ensuring every individual and every family has access to appropriate, sustainable safe, decent, and affordable housing. Southcoast Health sits on the Executive committee providing data and assistance with developing and influencing strategies and identifying resources.

### **Economic Opportunity**

As part of our work to improve early childhood development we were announced as the lead implementation partner of The Basics, Southcoast in partnership with NorthStar Learning Center & The Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Development. Training on The Basics was provided to 37 community-based organizations with 633 cross-sector participants.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Southcoast Health is committed to providing healthcare that extends beyond direct patient care through improving the health and wellness of the communities we serve by identifying pressing health and related social needs and collaborating with community partners to prioritize and meet those needs.

We accomplish this through:

- Administering a comprehensive needs assessment process that includes collaboration with relevant community health coalitions, municipalities, policy groups, residents, community leaders and health and human services providers.
- Prioritizing health needs and identifying which needs can most effectively be met through the resources of Southcoast Health and its affiliated corporations, particularly the needs of the uninsured and high-risk populations experiencing disparities in care.
- Collaborating with local health providers, human services agencies, policy and advocacy leaders, community leaders to develop cooperative plans and programs to address the most pressing challenges, such as those that relate to health care and health equity.
- Developing community benefits plans that incorporate the social determinants of health framework, including environmental, social, and other demographic factors that may influence health status.
- Aligning community benefits initiatives with Southcoast's population health priorities to reduce health disparities and adopt meaningful programs and services that address unmet needs and improve the health of all members of our community.

## **OVERSIGHT OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

The Southcoast Health Community Benefits Program is under the overall direction of the Community Benefits Advisory Council (CBAC) and is chaired by a Southcoast Health Board Trustee. The CBAC oversees and guides Community Benefits programming and focused efforts.

The CBAC includes representatives from the various communities served by Southcoast Health 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 community members have expertise in matters concerning the health and welfare of the community and are active members of local and regional coalitions.

In addition to community members, the council includes internal leadership from Southcoast that regularly engage in outreach to the community including Southcoast Physicians Group and Southcoast Health Network.

The CBAC meets six times annually to review, plan and advise on activities and expenditures related to community benefits activities. Regular updates are provided to Southcoast leadership at Vice President, Director and Manager level meetings. Messaging of activities are delivered to all employees through an internal e-newsletter, Southcoast Weekly.

### **FY 2021 CBAC Membership**

Helena DaSilva Hughes, Executive Director, Immigrants Assistance Center, CBAC Chair and Trustee, Southcoast Health

Alison LeBert, Manager of Community Benefits, Southcoast Health

Beth Perdue, Editor of Senior Scope, Coastline Elderly Services, Inc

Chelsie Stephenson, Community Coordinator, Fall River WIC Nutrition Program

David Borges, Principle, Springline Research Group

Reverend David Lima, Executive Director, Inter Church Council of Greater New Bedford

Dennis Demarinis, Director of Day Services, Lifestream Inc.

Erik Rousseau, Administrator, Southeastern Regional Transit Authority

Gaelen Adam, Librarian/ Editor/Senior Research Associate, Center for Evidence Synthesis in Health Program Manager, Brown Evidence-based Practice Center

Dr. Ilana Feinerman, Physician of Otolaryngology, Southcoast Health

James Reid, Executive Director, Veterans Transition House

Jamie Berberena, Community Health Worker, Southcoast Health

Jeffrey Pelletier, Executive Director, Junior Achievement of SEMA

Kathy Downey, Retired Public Health Nurse, Marion Board of Health

Katlyn Auty, Director of Business Development, Southcoast Behavioral Health

Kimberly Shaver-Hood, Superintendent, Wareham Public Schools

Lauren DeSimon, Senior Vice President of Human Resources, Southcoast Health

Michelle Hantman, President & CEO, United Way of Greater New Bedford

Rachel Davis, Director of Community Benefits, Southcoast Health

Robert Mendes, Executive Director, Boys and Girls Club of Greater New Bedford

Ron Ponte, Patient Family Advisory Council Member, Southcoast Health

Sandi Montour, Patient Family Advisory Council Member, Southcoast Health

Stephen Canessa, Senior Vice President of Brand and Strategy, Southcoast Health

Sylvia Nobre-Hilton, Chief Program Officer, Coastline Elderly Services, Inc

William Burns, Director of Government and Community Relations, Southcoast Health

## COMMUNITY BENEFITS PLAN AND DETAILED ACTIVITIES

### Community Benefits Plan

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 2019 community health needs assessment. Through the needs assessment process, Southcoast identified ten priorities for addressing the most pressing health needs of the community. These priorities are:

1. **Reduction of the high rate of chronic disease** (including diabetes, asthma, cancer, and other diseases) in our region.
2. **Reducing Health Disparities** including racial and ethnic disparities, income-based disparities, and education-based disparities. One other aspect of this is increasing access to health care for vulnerable populations through insurance enrollment and outreach.
3. The development of programs and services that support **the reduction of homelessness** in our region including strategies for increased collaboration among agencies serving homeless residents.
4. **Innovative approaches to population health**, i.e. improving health and wellness for defined populations such as specific demographic or geographic groups.
5. **Reduction in the incidence of youth risk behaviors** such as teen violence, high rates of teen pregnancy and substance abuse.
6. **Behavioral health issues including substance abuse and mental health**, including improved coordination of behavioral health providers and systems.
7. **Development of healthy "System and Environment" change**, including healthy food options, increased access to free and low-cost opportunities for active living, such as public parks, bike trails etc., and reduction in the high rate of smoking in our communities.
8. **Maternal and Children's Health**, including fetal and infant health, abuse and neglect, hospitalizations, substance abuse, healthy weight, and mortality.
9. **Increasing Emergency Preparedness** in our cities and towns, including basic infrastructure equipment.
10. The development of programs and services that support **economic opportunity** in our region including strategies for early childhood development, educational attainment, workforce development, and achieving higher income and wealth status.

The activities of Community Benefits are completed in accordance with these priorities. These activities include conducting ongoing community health needs assessments, awarding Community Benefits Impact Opportunity Grants to community organizations working on projects aligned with our priorities, and coalition-building and collaborating with community partners in the planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating of Community Benefits programs.

## Target Populations

Target populations are determined by our comprehensive health needs assessment and are reviewed on an annual basis.

Our target populations include:

- South Coast residents who suffer disproportionately from chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory disease. Focus is given to residents who experience barriers to care due to language, culture, race, income, or education.
- Area youth who are at substantial risk for problems such as teen pregnancy, violence, substance abuse, lack of educational attainment and other risky behaviors that affect health and wellbeing. This includes Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender (GLBT) youth.
- Residents who lack access to regular primary health care due and preventative screenings to lack of health insurance and related social influencers of health.
- Residents and their families who are impacted by mental/behavioral health issues, including substance use disorder, particularly those who experience barriers to or breaks in care and are forced to rely on the Southcoast Emergency Department for regular care.
- Area Boards of Health, Emergency Medical Services, and other municipal agencies whose programs impact a number of aspects of health for their residents, and who have experienced severe budget cuts that have impacted these programs. This may include smoking cessation and prevention, chronic disease management and emergency preparedness.
- Public housing residents, who suffer disproportionately from health disparities and have high rates of unhealthy risk factors including smoking, obesity, and hypertension.
- Homeless residents on the South Coast, particularly in the town of Wareham, where the rate of unsheltered homeless exceeds other towns in the region and approaches South Coast cities that have five times the population.
- Those in our communities who experience health disparities due to racial, ethnic, or economic factors. These include residents for whom English is not a first language, especially undocumented immigrants.
- The fishing community in New Bedford, who experience higher rates of chronic health issues due to barriers to health access and care.
- Children and families in the region who are at a higher risk of social and economic factors that will impact their long-term health outcomes.



## **COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

As a community-based health delivery system, Southcoast Health System 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 that assists with this goal by documenting the major demographic, socioeconomic and health trends among South Coast residents and by engaging the community to develop information-driven priorities and strategies that can be implemented to improve the overall health of South Coast residents. We worked with the Public Policy Center at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, to conduct our 2019 community needs assessment that included three primary activities:

- 1. Demographic and Socioeconomic Analysis:** Understanding the community by examining the region's people in terms of population, race, education, income, poverty, wages, and employment.
- 2. Health Assessment:** Identifying major health issues and needs by analyzing a variety of health indicators, with a focus on health outcomes and disparities.
- 3. Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups:** Engaging stakeholders to provide qualitative analysis that enriches the primary data.

The geographic definition of the South Coast Region for this report includes the 13 towns and cities served by the Southcoast Health System. Data are reported and compared by city (Fall River and New Bedford), by town when available or relevant (e.g., Wareham), by Community Health Network Area or CHNA (CHNA 25 is reported as Greater Fall River and CHNA 26 is reported as Greater New Bedford), and by region overall (all 13 towns/cities). Data are compared to Massachusetts averages and/or with past years to examine trends.

Overall, Fall River and New Bedford continue to lag the region in most socioeconomic metrics, including lower levels of educational attainment, higher poverty levels, and higher unemployment, although many of the region's towns also struggle with these issues, particularly in comparison to state averages.

Residents also trail their counterparts statewide on many health metrics, particularly in terms of health outcomes. The following results represent the most significant findings based on the five categories included in the health assessment analysis: clinical care, physical environment, health behavior, health outcomes, and children's health, with a focus on health disparities.

The community needs assessment presents data on a variety of health indicators. However, the analysis goes a step further by presenting this 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. The combination of highlighting disparities and identifying census tracts with vulnerable populations allows Southcoast Health System to direct policies and programs to the areas in which they are most needed. The assessment also provides context and validation to the health data through key informant interviews and focus groups.

The complete 2019 Southcoast Health Community Needs Assessment is available by request or for viewing online: <https://www.southcoast.org/community-benefits/>.

## **COMMUNITY BENEFITS ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY GRANT PROGRAM**

This year, Southcoast Health released the new Access to Technology grant program. This year's new program was made possible by the Southcoast Health Management Information System (MIS) departments decommission and recycle initiative, which started in 2019. This initiative recognizes that old computers and hardware devices that are often outdated and no longer used can be repurposed to sell for useful parts. While we were unable to donate these items outright, we had the ability to use the funds from this initiative to support a new program to provide community partners the opportunity to secure funding to support their technological needs.

This is a competitive grant process focused on improving access to and knowledge of technology on the South Coast. The grant proposal aligned with the nine priority areas and target populations, that were identified in the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment. We received 9 applications and awarded 6 grants for a total of \$34,405, plus an in-kind donation.

The selected grantees for 2021 represented a variety of programs that positively impact communities across the South Coast and serve those who are most vulnerable and in need of technological support. The proposals ranged from technology to support educationally underserved youth learning a new language, virtual training opportunities for disabled individuals, and virtual trainings and improved systems for those counseling on suicide prevention and emotional support.

2021 Grant & in-kind recipients:

- Boys and Girls Club of Greater New Bedford
- Discover Language Academy
- Fall River Deaconess Home
- Immigrants Assistance Center
- Samaritans Southcoast
- SHARE Foundation Inc
- South Coast LBGTQ+ Network

## **COLLABORATION AND COALITIONS**

Coalition building is an important activity that promotes coordination and collaboration through the effective use of limited community resources and every year Southcoast Health 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 make our communities safer, healthier, and drug-free.

During FY 2021, Southcoast Health supported the following community coalitions across the region:

- Age Friendly Coalition in New Bedford
- BOLD Coalition
- Bristol County Regional Alliance to End the Opioid Crisis
- Bristol County District Attorney's Youth Substance Use Prevention Task Force
- Confronting Discrimination Coalition
- Coalition Against Period Poverty
- ERASE – Human Trafficking Coalition
- Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community (CHNA 25)
- Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness (CHNA 26)
- Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force
- Greater New Bedford Suicide Prevention Coalition
- Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance
- Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN)
- Let's Talk Tuesday – Greater Fall River Coalition
- Mental Health Providers Network
- Near North End Alliance
- Plymouth County Substance Abuse Task Force
- SE MA Community Health Worker Collaborative
- Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Education
- Southcoast Community Response Corps
- Southcoast Food Policy Council
- Southeast Community Health Worker Collaborative
- Substance Abuse Task Force of Greater Fall River
- Substance Exposed Newborn Committee of Southeast Massachusetts
- United Neighbors Community Coalition
- Voices for a Healthy SouthCoast coalition
- Wareham Community Services Collaborative
- Worksite Wellness Collaborative
- Zero Suicide Coalition

## **COMMUNITY BENEFITS PROGRAMS**

Throughout the year, Southcoast collaborates with a number of community partners to implement our community benefits programs, also known as our Southcoast CARES initiatives. Southcoast CARES works to address the most pressing health and social needs of our region though focusing on developing community wellness initiatives, increasing community engagement and impact, and facilitating strategic community health improvement planning.

During FY21 Southcoast supported and administered programs that addressed the following issues in our region: smoking cessation and prevention, community health worker projects, maternal/child health, health access and health professions education, behavioral health and substance use, healthy system and environment change, food security, chronic disease, homelessness, and economic opportunity.

### **Program: Smoking Cessation & Prevention**

Documented health need: The South Coast region has a smoking rate that is close to double the state average, particularly in the region's cities, Fall River, and New Bedford and in the town of Wareham.

#### Services offered:

- QuitWorks referral program (referrals and education provided to patients and community residents, (i.e., public housing residents, fishing partnership, youth serving agencies). In FY21, Southcoast made 192 referrals to QuitWorks.
- Smoking cessation education is provided throughout the prenatal education programs offered.
- Education on addressing the changing tobacco landscape related to the rapidly emerging market for electronic smoking products, including e-cigarettes and vaping.
- Partnerships with public housing coordinators, community & church leaders, to provide resources to help people quit smoking, Churches have virtual services & online bulletins to post/share resources.
- Provide smoking outreach, resources & health information using culturally appropriate language terms and concepts
- Smoke free campus along with cessation classes for employees, families, and the public.
- Smoking cessation services for residents through the Southcoast Health Wellness Van.

Populations served: Smokers and those at risk for smoking, particularly youth. Other audiences include Southcoast employees, inpatients and outpatients who smoke.

#### FY 2021 goals:

- Develop and share a PSA to raise awareness about the high rates of smoking, prevalence of smoking related illness and share smoking cessation resources to an area of high need.
- During at least 20 Wellness Van events, share information and education related to smoking cessation.

#### FY 2021 outcomes:

- Southcoast Physician Dr. Georgina Nouaime and Community Health Worker Jamie Berberena collaborated on a public service announcement (PSA) for the Southcoast service area of Wareham, which has extremely high rates of smoking. The PSA focused on the promotion of tobacco education and how to access the QuitWorks referral program. This PSA was released in partnership with Wareham Community TV on their network station and YouTube channel.

- At 20 Southcoast Wellness Van events, the team was able to share informational resources and education related to smoking cessation. The Southcoast Health Wellness Van provided COVID-19 testing and immunizations throughout the South Coast region over the last year. Negative health outcomes from COVID-19 have disproportionately affected smokers, leading to higher rates of infection and greater prevalence of hospitalization, giving the team the opportunity to discuss this throughout the community.

FY 2022 goals:

- In collaboration with the Southcoast's Cancer Center, develop an educational prevention activity focused on raising awareness in the youth population on the risks of smoking and vaping.
- Provide smoking cessation education in partnership with at least one community partner organization to raise awareness about how smoking can lead to negative health outcomes.

Community partners:

- American Cancer Society
- Fall River Health Department
- Fall River Housing Authority
- FreshStart Facilitator Tobacco Cessation
- Greater New Bedford Community Health Center
- Institute for Health & Recovery
- Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation Program
- New Bedford Health Department
- New Bedford Housing Authority
- QuitWorks
- Seven Hills Behavioral Health, Tobacco-Free Community Partnership
- Voices for a Healthy SouthCoast coalition
- Wareham Health Department
- Wareham Community TV
- Wareham Housing Authority
- YMCA Southcoast

**Program: Community Health Worker Projects**

Documented health need: Health status indicators demonstrate a number of significant health disparities in our region, both by racial and ethnic segmentation and by income. Financial insecurity poses a major barrier to obtaining needed health services and achieving better health. There are also perceived language barriers to care faced by residents with low levels of English proficiency.

Services offered:

- Professional Development Forums (PDFs) for Community Health Workers (CHWs): Southcoast, in collaboration with regional and statewide groups, played a leadership role in establishing ongoing PDFs for CHWs on the South Coast.
- Fishing Partnership: Southcoast continues to work with the regional Fishing Partnership in efforts to reach out to local fishing families, who suffer from a high rate of chronic disease and sometimes have difficulty maintaining health insurance and accessing care. The Southcoast Health Van works with a CHW at the Fishing Partnership to coordinate regular health

screenings and health insurance outreach with Southcoast's Patient Financial Services Department.

- Southcoast participates in the Southeast Community Health Worker Collaborative, which works to plan CHW trainings and promotes individual and team skill development for CHWs in Southeastern Massachusetts.

Populations served: Those in our community who experience ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic health disparities. These include ethnic groups such as Portuguese, Hispanic, Brazilian, and Mayan and Cambodian Khmer communities, African American residents, and the large percentage of residents in our region who live near the poverty level or below.

FY 2021 goals:

- Collaborate with community partners to facilitate at least one opportunity for local CHW training in FY21.
- Work with community partners to establish a response to an identified need to increase health education and outreach specific to Spanish and K'iche speaking populations.

FY 2021 outcomes:

- Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, there was no CHW training facilitated by the Greater New Bedford Allies.
- In partnership with the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, in October 2021 we developed a new CHW role to provide education and outreach on COVID testing, safety guidelines, PPE and help reduce vaccine hesitancy to Spanish and K'iche speaking populations. This role continues to expand to provide additional health education specific to this population.

FY 2022 goals:

- Collaborate with community partners to facilitate at least one opportunity for local CHW training in FY22.
- Create more job opportunities within the Southcoast Health organization for CHWs, such as developing new roles to support community engagement.

Community partners:

- Community Economic Development Center
- Fishing Partnership
- Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community
- Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness
- Greater New Bedford Community Health Center
- Health First Family Health Center
- Immigrants Assistance Center
- New Bedford Health Department
- SER Jobs for Progress
- Southeast Community Health Worker Collaborative
- Stanley Street Treatment and Recovery (SSTAR)
- YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts

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

Documented health need: Many segments of Southcoast Health's service region have high rates of smoking among pregnant women and low breastfeeding rates compared to state averages. Furthermore, despite recent declines, teenage pregnancy rates in New Bedford and Fall River are still above the state average.

### Services offered:

- Smoking cessation education among this target population (*as described in Smoking Cessation program section above*).
- Referral program for pregnant people who smoke through QuitWorks.
- Offer Baby Cafés led by Southcoast Lactation Team, which are free drop-in sessions for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to learn more about breastfeeding, socialize with other moms, and have access to peer support and one-on-one help from specially trained health professionals is available. These classes transitioned to a virtual platform in response to COVID-19. In FY21, there were 617 moms and their babies that attended the cafes, for a total of 1,234 patients served.
- Offer subsidized Childbirth & Parenting education classes to educate parents on how to prepare for birth and what happens afterwards. These classes transitioned to a virtual platform in response to COVID-19. There were 134 couples that participated at a subsidized rate in FY21.
- Early pregnancy education programming, including targeted expansion of childbirth education enrollment among BMC HealthNet enrollees.
- Parenting support through partnership with People Inc., PACE and Kennedy Donovan Center's Healthy Families program.
- Collaboration with GNB Allies for Health Access Committee, including distribution of resource information to community stakeholders, increasing awareness of postpartum depression through community events, and pre-implementation planning for support groups that will target socioemotional issues faced by postpartum parents.

Populations served: Families, including pregnant women, fathers, siblings and new parents, particularly teen mothers and mothers who smoke.

### FY 2021 goals:

- Increase the number of women breastfeeding upon discharge by 4%.
- Host an event, in partnership with the GNB Allies Health Access Committee to bring awareness to maternal health inequities.

### FY 2021 outcomes:

- In FY21, the number of women breastfeeding upon discharge increased by 8% across the system.
- In partnership with the GNB Allies Health Access Committee and the YWCA of Southeastern MA, a virtual health summit "The Impact of Structural Racism on Maternal Health" was held on January 14, 2021. There were 98 individuals in attendance for this event.

### FY 2022 goals:

- Increase the number of women breastfeeding upon discharge by 5%.
- Increase the number of participants in the Baby Cafés by 3%.

Community partners:

- Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan
- Fall River WIC Office
- Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness
- Greater New Bedford Community Health Center
- HealthFirst Family Health Center
- Kennedy Donovan Center
- Marion Public Health Nurse
- Meeting Street
- New Bedford WIC Office
- PACE
- People Incorporated
- YWCA of Southeastern MA

**Program: Health Access Outreach**

Documented health need: High unemployment rates in the South Coast region have led to loss of insurance coverage for many area residents. Additionally, many area residents who have state-subsidized health insurance are not aware of the renewal process. As a result, the South Coast has a higher rate of uninsured residents than the state as a whole.

Services offered:

- Provide insurance application assistance through Patient Financial Services (at Southcoast Hospitals, community outreach events and on the Health Van) to our patients that are uninsured, underinsured, or denied coverage by a government healthcare program.
- Provide culturally sensitive outreach and education to families, local schools and other community entities, including outreach to public housing residents in Fall River and New Bedford.
- Provide free interpreter services for non-English speaking patients across the Southcoast Health system and during community outreach events as needed.
- Provide the opportunity in collaboration with local universities and colleges for nursing students to engage in clinical rotations and to gain experience in the workplace with embedded staff. In FY21, there were 645 student nurses that participated in group clinical placements. In addition, there were 60 one to one mentorship opportunities provided to student nurses.
- Provide the opportunity in collaboration with local universities and colleges for Radiology, CT, Nuclear Medicine and Ultrasound students to engage in clinical rotations and to gain experience in the workplace with embedded staff. In FY21, there were 52 students that participated in a clinical placement opportunity.
- Provide the opportunity in collaboration with local universities and colleges for rehab students, with the focus on Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Speech Therapy to engage in clinical rotations and to gain experience in the workplace with embedded staff. In FY21, there were approximately 4,284 hours spent by staff to support this clinical experience.
- Provide the opportunity in collaboration with local universities and colleges for Medical Residents and Nurse Practitioners to engage in clinical rotations and to gain experience in the workplace with embedded staff. In FY21, there were approximately 56,000 hours spent by staff to support this clinical experience.



Populations served: Residents who lack health insurance or need to renew public insurance plans. Residents who have lost their employment and as a result, their health insurance.

FY 2021 goals:

- Partner with at least one community organization to provide translation services related to health information, access, and education for vulnerable population.
- Expand community outreach through participation in at least 34 community outreach events in FY21.

FY 2021 outcomes:

- In FY21, Southcoast interpreter service team partnered with Coastline Elderly services to provide monthly translations in Spanish and Portuguese for their Senior Scope Newsletter. The articles provided education on numerous health topics such as cancer prevention, COVID-19 vaccine information and mask safety, and dementia awareness and resources.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Patient Financial Services team was not able to participate in any community outreach events. The team instead focused efforts on assisting unscheduled individuals seeking financial and insurance support assistance. There were 15,228 unscheduled individuals assisted, which was an increase of 45% from FY20.

FY 2022 goals:

- Partner with at least one two community organizations or coalitions to provide translation services related to health information, access, and education for vulnerable population.
- Increase the number of unscheduled individuals assisted seeking financial and insurance support by 5%.

Community partners:

- Area Councils on Aging (*for senior health insurance assistance*)
- Boston Medical Center HealthNet
- Bristol Elder Services, Inc
- Coastline Elderly Services, Inc
- Citizens for Citizens
- Community Economic Development Center
- Fall River Health Department
- Fall River Housing Authority
- Greater New Bedford Community Health Center
- Immigrants Assistance Center
- New Bedford Health Department
- New Bedford Housing Authority
- PACE
- Stanley Street Treatment and Recovery (SSTAR)

**Program: Behavioral Health/Substance Use Intervention**

Documented health need: Over the last several years, the South Coast region has seen a steady increase in the number of admissions for substance use treatment and greater than state averages for hospitalization rates due to opioid related injuries and neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). Additionally, South Coast residents also report higher numbers of days of “poor mental health” than the state average.

### Services offered:

- Southcoast Resource Connect Platform is a comprehensive resource database offering information on regional behavioral health services and community resources. The database includes over 2,000 pages of searchable information on access to basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and other supportive services. This platform is available for use by anyone, including Southcoast staff, patients, community members and community agencies.
- Members of our staff participate in local community coalitions to address various behavioral health issues including, the misuse of prescription drugs, underage substance use, risk behaviors in youth, maternal mental health, substance-exposed newborns, suicide prevention, and overdose prevention/intervention.
- The Bristol County Regional Alliance to end the Opioid Crisis promotes communication, coordination, and collaboration among diverse stakeholders to work together to raise awareness and develop strategies to end the opioid crisis in Bristol County. This Alliance is co-chaired by the CEO of Southcoast Health.
- The New Beginnings Program provides support to opioid exposed newborns and their mothers with the goal of improving long-term outcomes. This program includes referral to medication treatment programs, education on NAS, assistance developing a plan of safe care for discharge and referral to community agencies as needed to address social determinant and health needs. The program's primary goals are to increase newborn/mother visitation (frequency and duration), decrease length of stay for newborns and newborn foster placements, and decrease postnatal opioid overdoses. During FY21 the program saw a 21% increase in referrals from the previous year, with 105 moms referred to the program. Of those referred, 95 moms completed an intake to engage in prenatal services, and 77 engaged in postpartum coordination services. The majority of referrals are received prenatally (69 of the 105) between 20 and 36 weeks.
- The Help and Hope South Coast campaign was created by community partners and supported by Southcoast Health. This campaign is focused on ending the stigma around mental health and raising awareness about the available resources in our area to seek support.
- Staff within the Emergency Department (ED) provide Narcan education to patients and distribute take home kits to patients in need.
- Provide informational and educational opportunities to nurses enrolled in local nursing programs about changing the culture of caring for persons with substance use disorder and reducing stigma.

Populations served: South Coast residents who experience behavioral health issues such as substance use disorders, mental health diagnosis (e.g., major depressive disorder), or dual diagnosis with both substance use and mental health disorders.

### FY 2021 goals:

- Increase the number of moms and substance exposed newborns referred to the New Beginnings program by 10% in FY21.
- Continue to expand the use of the Southcoast Resource Connect Platform and THRIVE screening tool, by rolling out to 10 additional primary care offices and at least one other department.
- Increase patient engagement of the THRIVE screening tool from FY20 by 5%.

### FY 2021 outcomes:

- In FY21, there were 105 moms and substance exposed newborns referred to the New Beginnings Program, which is an increase of 21% from last year.

- In FY21, there were no additional primary care offices or departments that begin utilizing the Southcoast Resource Connect Platform & THRIVE screening tool.
- Patient engagement of the THRIVE screening tool increase by 42% in FY21.

FY 2022 goals:

- Increase the number of moms and substance exposed newborns referred to the New Beginnings program by 5%.
- Increase patient engagement of the THRIVE screening tool by 3%.
- Provide at least 1 informational and educational opportunity for nurses enrolled in local nursing programs about changing the culture of caring for persons with substance use disorder.

Community partners:

- AdCare North Dartmouth
- Bristol County Regional Alliance
- Children's Advocacy Center
- Fall River Department of Children and Families
- Fall River Health Department
- Greater New Bedford Interchurch Council
- Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force
- Greater New Bedford Suicide Prevention Coalition
- High Point Treatment Center
- Mental Health Providers Network
- New Bedford Department of Children and Families
- New Bedford Health Department
- Partners Substance Addition Task Force
- Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction (PAACA)
- River to Recovery
- Samaritans Southcoast
- Seven Hills Behavioral Health
- Stanley Street Treatment and Resources (SSTAR)
- Substance Exposed Newborn Committee of Southeast MA (SENSE)
- Turning Point Wareham
- United Neighbors of Fall River
- Veterans Transition House

**Program: Healthy System and Environment Change**

Documented health need: Creating healthier communities depends a great deal on the environment that people live in, which includes their homes, neighborhoods, and wider communities. We recognize that many chronic diseases and health problems that afflict area residents relate to risk factors such as sedentary lifestyles and high rates of smoking. Significant health disparities exist in our region, evident in chronic disease and mortality rates. Residents in several of our communities, namely Fall River and New Bedford, often lack access to healthy nutrition such as fresh fruits and vegetables and safe and inexpensive exercise options. These communities also have extremely high rates of smoking.

### Services provided:

- The Be Well Wareham program is a once-a-month event offering participants the opportunity to walk with a Southcoast physician and then join Southcoast staff in healthy activities such as chair yoga and nutritional education. This program is in partnership with the YMCA Gleason Family Facility.
- Southcoast support wellness events that focus on exercise and movement including local 5k walks/runs, fitness challenges, etc. Many of these events occurred on a virtual platform due to COVID-19.
- Promote physical activity and provide education to youth, families, and all South Coast residents on the importance of being active to improve health status.
- Southcoast engages in many efforts to expand food security and food rescue programs through collaboration and support of accessible healthy food opportunities. Food is Medicine projects include:
  - Partner with the United Way of Greater New Bedford to host mobile markets for Wareham residents. Mobile Market aims to increase access to healthy food in targeted neighborhoods and operated as a free farmer's market, where residents are able to select the produce items and quantities that are right for their families. In addition, Southcoast employees supported these markets with more than 182 hours spent volunteering.
  - Partner with AD Makepeace to increase access to fresh locally, grown food in Wareham through 11 Rosebrook Farmers Markets. \$200 of fresh produce was bought back each week and donated to Damien's Food Pantry.
  - Support Coastal FoodShed and their mission to bring fresh local foods to Greater Fall River and Greater New Bedford through their mobile farm stands, farmers market and online virtual market platform. Over the year, \$90,000 in SNAP was spent to purchase local food from 1,064 unique SNAP customers.
  - Support and promote the opportunity for South Coast residents to participate in local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) opportunities through the Farm & Community Collaborative Nourish our Neighbors program, in which 10 families were provided 15 weeks' worth of farm shares.
  - Southcoast joined the Southcoast Food Policy Council, led by the Marion Institute, and provided information and feedback regarding the completion of a regional food assessment.
- In addition to our annual grants and charitable efforts, Southcoast made significant donations on behalf of staff in lieu of holiday events to the United Way Hunger Commission, Salvation Army in Fall River, New Bedford, and Aquidneck Island totaling \$22,500.
- Southcoast's participation in the holiday program with My Brother's Keeper resulted in 80 families across the region (120 adults and 208 children) supported with food, clothing and gifts made possible by Southcoast staff's contributions.
- Southcoast staff regularly participate on several coalitions focused on addressing social determinants that impact health including food insecurity, housing and homelessness, opportunities for active living, and access to education and employment opportunities.

Populations served: South Coast residents who experience food insecurity and have low rates of physical activity, particularly low-income residents in the cities of Fall River and New Bedford, where data show these risk factors to be higher than the region.

### FY 2021 goals:

- Work in collaboration with the Greater New Bedford United Way's Hunger Commission to bring Mobile Markets and health education to Wareham residents.
- Resume the "Be Well Wareham" programming in FY21 and offer at least 4 events.

#### FY 2021 outcomes:

- In FY21 in partnership with Greater New Bedford United Way's Hunger Commission 13 mobile markets that were held for Wareham residents. There were 625 households served with 1,789 residents benefiting from over 10,000 lbs. of produce distributed.
- Be Well Wareham resumed on June 26, 2021, with 4 events able to be held in partnership with the YMCA Gleason Family Facility during FY21.

#### FY 2022 goals:

- Increase the number of Be Well Wareham events offered by 3%.
- Increase the number of residents served at the Wareham mobile markets by 5%.

#### Community partners:

- AD Makepeace
- American Heart Association
- Catholic Social Services
- Coastal FoodShed
- Damien's Food Pantry
- Fall River Community Recreation Department
- Fall River Health Department
- Farm & Community Collaborative
- Greater Fall River Community Food Pantry
- Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community
- Hunger Commission of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Immigrants Assistance Center
- The Marion Institute
- MO LIFE Food Pantry
- My Brother's Keeper
- New Bedford Economic Development Council
- New Bedford Health Department
- New Bedford Office of Planning
- New Bedford Parks and Recreation
- Salvation Army of Aquidneck Island
- Salvation Army of Greater Fall River
- Salvation Army of Greater New Bedford
- Steven's Farm Stand
- Southcoast Food Policy Council
- Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP)
- Southeastern Massachusetts Food Security Network
- United Way of Greater New Bedford
- United Way of Greater New Bedford Hunger Commission
- Wareham Health Department
- YMCA Gleason Family Facility
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU)

## **Program: Southcoast Health Van**

*(Licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health)*

Documented health need: Many South Coast residents lack access to regular primary and preventive health care. There is a low rate of recommended colorectal screening in our region, due to cultural and health access barriers.

### Services offered:

- Provided targeted health education and outreach to vulnerable populations in public housing, homeless shelters, senior centers, the fishing community, faith-based community, soup kitchens and ESOL programs.
- Provided access to and administered COVID-19 testing, outreach and education to vulnerable populations during the beginning of FY21.
- Administered pediatric flu vaccines for youth and their families in partnership with housing authorities in Fall River, New Bedford and Wareham, the public school system, and other community-based locations during flu season.
- Provided access to and administered COVID-19 vaccinations, outreach, and education to vulnerable populations throughout the spring, summer, and early fall.
- Provided education on health information for stroke prevention, diabetes prevention, heart health, healthy eating, smoking cessation and cancer education on breast, skin, cervical, prostate, lung, and colon cancers.
- Provided referrals for primary care and other health services including access to health insurance.

Populations served: South Coast residents who lack access to regular primary and preventive health care, particularly populations who have language, income, or geographic barriers to accessing care. The Southcoast Health Van serves an ethnically diverse population including Portuguese, Brazilian, Hispanic, Mayan K'iche and Cambodian immigrants.

### FY 2021 goals:

- Provide at least 20 COVID-19 vaccine clinics throughout the region to eliminate access barriers for the vulnerable populations.
- In order to better meet the needs of the community, develop a new strategy for the Wellness Van that would increase access in the community to preventative health education and screenings for underserved and vulnerable populations in the South Coast region.

### FY 2021 outcomes:

- The Southcoast Wellness Van held 75 community based COVID-19 vaccination clinics administering 1,529 lifesaving vaccines to 1,439 individuals who otherwise may not have had access.
- A new strategy was developed and scheduled to be presented before leadership and the Board of Trustees in early FY22. This strategy will increase access in the community to preventative health education, outreach, and screenings, for underserved and vulnerable populations in the South Coast region.

### FY 2022 goals:

- Launch the approved strategy for the continuation of Southcoast's Mobile Health Services.
- Provide at least 20 education and outreach events through the region.

Community partners:

- AD Makepeace
- Acushnet Council on Aging
- Adult Learning Programs on the South Coast
- Boys & Girls Club of Greater Fall River
- Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford
- Calvary Temple Assembly of God
- Cranberry Manor
- City of Fall River
- City of New Bedford
- Club Madeirense SS Sacramento
- Dennison Memorial
- Fall River Housing Authority
- Fall River Public Schools
- First Step Inn
- Friendly Sons of St. Patrick
- Global Learning Charter Public School
- Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community
- Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness
- Gifts to Give
- Immigrant Assistance Center
- Inter Church Council of Greater New Bedford
- Mt. Carmel Church
- New Bedford Housing Authority
- New Bedford Parks and Recreation
- New Bedford Public Schools
- New Depot Crossing
- Our Lady of Assumption
- Our Sisters School
- PACE
- Rochester Board of Health
- Sister Rose House
- St. Anthony de Padua
- Town of Wareham
- United Way of Greater New Bedford
- Veteran's Food Pantry
- Wareham Public Schools
- Woods at Wareham
- YMCA Southcoast
- Young House

**Program: Cancer Outreach**

Documented health need: The South Coast region has higher rates of cancer than state averages in many categories, with the top three highest incidences being breast cancer, prostate cancer, and lung cancer.

### Services offered:

- Breast cancer: Provided breast cancer education through the Wellness Van in multiple languages, and free mammograms to uninsured individuals during the month of October.
- Colorectal cancer: Assisted vulnerable residents overcome barriers to preventative and comprehensive care for colorectal cancer, utilizing community health workers to provide education and navigation.
- Prostate cancer: Through the Wellness Van, we distributed educational materials in both English and Spanish.
- Skin cancer: Through the Wellness Van, we distributed educational materials in both English and Spanish.
- Lung Cancer: The Lung Cancer Screening program has now become an open referral process. This will allow for necessary candidates to get into the program more efficiently.
- Support Groups: Southcoast provides three breast cancer support groups, a general cancer support group, a Lung cancer support group, a caregiver support group, a post treatment group, and a multiple myeloma leukemia, lymphoma (MML) support group. All of these groups are free and open to the public. Individuals who participate are also allowed to bring an additional support person if they wish. Groups were offered as hybrid which allowed for individuals to meet in person or virtually.
- Shine a Light on Lung Cancer Vigil: Due to COVID-19, this year's event was held virtually utilizing the Facebook Live platform. This event creates a voice for the millions affected by this disease and unites our community to show lung cancer patients, family members and caregivers that they are not alone.
- Celebration of Hope: Due to COVID-19, this year's event was held virtually utilizing the Facebook Live platform. This event is meant to pause and honor individuals who are living with a cancer diagnosis and their families.
- Podkowa 5k Walk/Run: Due to COVID-19, this year's annual event, that raises awareness about breast cancer was held virtually. There were about 500 participants in this year's event.
- Every year, Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care Physicians and Nurse Navigators donate their time by offering free seminars in the community on a variety of subjects. Due to COVID-19, these seminars were held virtually. Six seminars were offered that provided education and awareness on breast, colon, and lung cancer, with 97 individuals reached.
- A Wellness Page, open to the public and patients was created as a resource guide for managing wellness during an individual's cancer journey. This includes videos and information on medication techniques, yoga & fitness techniques, healthy eating tips and recipes, and financial resources support.

Populations served: General public and particularly racial, ethnic, and other groups who are at higher risk of a particular type of cancer or who get cancer at a rate higher than the rest of the population.

### FY 2021 goals:

- Create at least one public service announcement (PSA) related to preventative cancer methods in multiple languages.
- Partner with at least two community partner agencies to provide information and education on cancer prevention and awareness.

### FY 2021 outcomes:

- During FY21, Southcoast Cancer Center Physicians and Providers came together to develop a PSA focused on education about HPV and the importance of vaccination. This PSA was shared in English, Spanish and Portuguese.
- During FY21, in collaboration with the Immigrants Assistance Center the Get Screened Today program was created. This program provided the opportunity for vulnerable populations who



were uninsured or underinsured to receive a mammogram during select days in November. In addition to this, Southcoast provided six cancer education, awareness and prevention virtual seminars open to the public.

FY 2022 goals:

- Partner with at least one community partner agency to provide a cancer screening event for vulnerable populations.
- Increase the number of participants for cancer education, awareness and prevention seminars by 3%.

Community partners:

- American Cancer Society
- Community Economic Development Center
- Fall River Health Department
- Fishing Partnership
- Fly Foundation
- Gloria Gemma Foundation
- Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community
- Greater New Bedford Community Health Center
- HealthFirst Family Health Center
- Immigrants Assistance Center
- Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford
- New Bedford Health Department
- Wareham Health Department

**Program: Coalitions to End and Prevent Homelessness**

Documented health need: Homelessness is a problem throughout our region, particularly in the town of Wareham where the rate of unsheltered homeless residents approach numbers in our larger cities where there is more than triple the population.

Services offered:

- Southcoast Health supports various organizations across the region that provide a range of services for homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless.
- The Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN) addresses the most pressing issues around the complexity of homelessness and toward ensuring every individual and every family has access to appropriate, sustainable safe, decent, and affordable housing. Southcoast sits on the Executive Committee and assists with developing and influencing strategies and identifying resources.
- Southcoast supports events that assist vulnerable residents including Homeless Connect, which occurs in both the cities of Fall River and New Bedford. These events were created to connect homeless individuals or those at risk of being homeless to a better future by offering available resources and assistance.
- Charlton Memorial Hospital Emergency Department's Oskar's Closet provides donated items to patients who identify as homeless and are in need. Items that have been provided include hats, gloves, basic toiletries, socks, etc.

Populations served: Individuals in the region served by Southcoast Health who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless or individuals who were previously homeless and recently housed.

#### FY 2021 goals:

- Develop a clinical-community response for individuals that seek shelter in the emergency room during inclement weather and have been determined to not need medical care.
- Develop a standardized workflow in EPIC to capture resident's homelessness status at the time of registration. This data captured will be used to better understand and track prevalence of disease and other demographic data for this population to influence programming.

#### FY 2021 outcomes:

- In collaboration with community partners in Fall River and New Bedford, we developed an effective strategy to assist with individuals that sought shelter in the emergency room during inclement weather. The collaborative approach allowed for providers in the emergency department to have contacts at local cold weather shelters and improved the referral and transfer process.
- Southcoast has completed developing a standardized workflow in EPIC to capture residents' homeless status at the time of registration and is documented in numerous places in Epic so that all caregivers throughout the system can see the homeless alert.

#### FY 2022 goals:

- Provide direct street outreach in Fall River, New Bedford, and Wareham in collaboration with community partner organizations to provide support services and access to healthcare.
- Participate in the Street Homeless Task Force of Fall River, to provide direct support and to develop strategies and interventions to increase support this population.

#### Community Partners:

- Catholic Social Services
- Citizens for Citizens
- City of New Bedford
- City of Fall River
- Father Bill's & Mainspring
- Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community Fall River
- Greater New Bedford Community Health Center
- Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN)
- PAACA
- PACE
- Seven Hills Behavioral Health
- Stanley Street Treatment and Resources (SSTAR)
- Steppingstone Incorporated
- Town of Wareham
- Turning Point / Wareham Area Committee Homeless Committee (WACH)
- United Way of Greater New Bedford
- United Neighbors of Fall River
- The Women's Center
- Veterans Transition House

## **Program: Economic Opportunity**

Documented health need: Economic opportunity can mean many things, but it refers to a person's opportunity to realize personal potential. Many of the most acute differences in health outcomes are driven by the social influencers of health, including wide gaps in income, educational levels, and childhood development risk factors.

### Services offered:

- The Basics Southcoast initiative in partnership with NorthStar Learning Center and The Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Development was developed to enhance and improve early childhood development. The Basics are five parenting and caregiving principles that support social, emotional, and cognitive development in children from birth to age three.
- In partnership with NorthStar Learning Center, provide trainings for community-based organizations on The Basics.
- Implement the Basics Southcoast within the Southcoast Health System through different care touch points.

Populations served: Children and families in the region served by Southcoast Health who are at a higher risk of social and economic factors that will impact their long-term health outcomes.

### FY 21 goals:

- Identify and partner with community-based organizations that focus on improving early childhood education and development to better long-term health outcomes.
- Develop and begin implementation of a strategy starting at birth to 5 years old, with the goal of improving long-term health outcomes.

### FY 21 Outcomes:

- Southcoast partnered with NorthStar Learning Center to be the lead implementation partner of the Basics Southcoast initiative.
- As part of our implementation strategy with NorthStar Learning Center, the first step was to saturate the community with information and trainings on The Basics. Through NorthStar, there were 37 trainings for organizations offered with a total of 633 individuals that participated region wide.

### FY22 Goals:

- Provide at least two training opportunities for staff on The Basics, in order for them to educate the community and patients on this initiative.
- Begin implementation within the Southcoast system in partnership with NorthStar, through select departments that engage at important touchpoints in a child's life.

### Community Partners:

- Baby Point
- Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford
- Boys & Girls Club of Greater Fall River

- Bristol Community College
- Calmer Choice
- Child & Family Services
- Children's Advocacy Center
- Community Youth Empowerment
- Fall River Re-Creation
- Fall River School Department
- Family Resource Center
- Family Service Association
- Junior Achievement Southeastern MA
- Justice Resource Institute
- Katie Brown Educational Program
- Kennedy Donovan Center
- Mass Hire
- Meeting Street Early Intervention
- New Bedford Health Department
- New Bedford School Department
- NorthStar Learning Center, Inc
- Our Sister's School
- PACE/Early Head Start
- SER Jobs for Progress, Inc
- South Bay Early Intervention
- Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Education
- Umass Dartmouth
- Wareham School Department
- WIC
- YMCA Southcoast
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU)
- YWCA Southeastern MA

## EXPENDITURES DURING THE REPORTING YEAR

In FY 2021, Southcoast contributed \$22.7 million in community benefit programs that reached the disadvantaged, underserved and those at-risk, and provided services they otherwise would not have been able to access. Our major initiatives concerning health access, health equity, behavioral health, and economic opportunity all had significant impact, with growing programs that reached large numbers of South Coast residents.

		FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Community Benefits Programs	Direct Expenses	\$13,663,225	\$13,797,415	\$14,471,957	14,702,951
	DoN Community-Based Health Initiative Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other Leveraged Resources	\$1,245,184	\$537,095	\$197,227	659,179
Net Charity Care		\$7,183,943	\$8,310,708	\$8,360,323	\$7,339,792
	Total Expenditures	\$22,197,352	\$22,771,182	\$23,029,507	<b>22,701,923</b>
	Total Patient Care Expenses	\$704,153,311	\$747,642,844	\$761,771,916	\$804,538,919

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## **Public Access to This Report:**

This report, along with those of other not-for-profit hospitals in Massachusetts, is available online from the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General.

<[www.mass.gov/ago/](http://www.mass.gov/ago/)>

Southcoast also makes its annual Community Benefits Report available on its own Website, along with an archive of reports from prior years.

<[www.southcoast.org/communitybenefits/](http://www.southcoast.org/communitybenefits/)>