



# **Southcoast Health Community Benefits Report**

Fiscal Year 2025

# Table of Contents

|                                                                                                      |                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                                                                             | <b>Pg. 3-6</b>     |
| About Southcoast Health                                                                              | Pg. 3              |
| Community Benefits at Southcoast Health                                                              | Pg. 4              |
| Health Equity & Population Health                                                                    | Pg. 5              |
| Leadership Structure                                                                                 | Pg. 5-6            |
| <b>Community Benefits Strategic Plan &amp; Community Health Needs Assessment</b>                     | <b>Pg. 7-10</b>    |
| Methodology & Data Collection                                                                        | Pg. 7              |
| Defining the South Coast Region                                                                      | Pg. 8              |
| Priority Populations                                                                                 | Pg. 9              |
| Health Themes                                                                                        | Pg. 10             |
| <b>Program: Behavioral Health (<i>Including Mental health &amp; Substance use interventions</i>)</b> | <b>Pg. 11-15</b>   |
| <b>Program: Chronic Disease Interventions</b>                                                        | <b>Pg. 16-19</b>   |
| <b>Program: Homelessness &amp; Housing</b>                                                           | <b>Pg. 20 - 23</b> |
| <b>Program: Community Wellness Program</b>                                                           | <b>Pg. 24-25</b>   |
| <b>Program: Economic Opportunity</b>                                                                 | <b>Pg. 26 - 28</b> |
| <b>Program: Health Access &amp; Equity</b>                                                           | <b>Pg. 29 - 33</b> |
| <b>Program: Healthy Systems &amp; Environment Change</b>                                             | <b>Pg. 34 - 42</b> |
| <b>Program: Maternal &amp; Child Health</b>                                                          | <b>Pg. 43 - 48</b> |
| <b>Expenditures</b>                                                                                  | <b>Pg. 49</b>      |
| <b>Contact Information</b>                                                                           | <b>Pg. 50</b>      |

## Executive Summary

As a not-for-profit community-based health system, Southcoast Health is committed to our mission to provide “Advanced Medicine, More Care.” Our work extends beyond direct patient care and includes significant investments in programs and services that improve the health and wellness for all residents living in our communities.

In fiscal year 2025 (FY25), Southcoast Health invested **\$55.6 Million** in community benefit 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. **\$39.3 million** was spent as direct expenses that reached the disadvantaged, underserved and those at-risk, and provided services they otherwise may not have been able to access.

## About Southcoast Health

Founded in 1996, Southcoast Health serves communities across southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island as the largest provider of primary and specialty care in the region. The not-for-profit, charitable system includes three acute care hospitals: Charlton Memorial in Fall River, St. Luke’s in New Bedford (a Level II Trauma Center), and Tobey in Wareham, Massachusetts with a physician network of more than 900 providers.

The system has established more than 55 service locations across the South Coast of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, including six urgent care locations, Southcoast Health at Home, two cancer care locations, the region’s only Level II Adult Trauma Center and numerous ancillary facilities.

Southcoast Health has been recognized consecutively for seven years in a row as a Newsweek’s World’s Best Hospital from 2019-2025 and was named a Maternity Care Access Hospital from 2024-2025 by U.S. News & World Report. The organization was additionally recognized as a best place to work for the eighth consecutive year by SouthCoast Media Group’s Community’s Choice awards.

## Community Benefits at Southcoast Health

At Southcoast Health we are committed to our mission of providing “Advanced Medicine, More Care” and extending beyond direct patient care. We know socioeconomic and environmental factors are among the greatest drivers of our community’s ability to maintain health and overall wellness.

We accomplish this through:

- Identifying the unmet health-related social 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 care 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 drivers of health (SDoH), including environmental, social, and other demographic factors that may influence health status.

The Community Health and Wellness Department at Southcoast Health is an integral part of our population health strategy, dedicated to improving the overall health of the communities we serve through preventive care, health promotion, and addressing the social drivers of health (SDoH) that influence health outcomes. The work of the department is guided by the Community Benefits Advisory Council (CBAC), a diverse group of regional leaders who provide direction on activities and expenditures that support the health and well-being of the South Coast region.

The department designs and implements programs that address the unique needs of the community, informed by the Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) conducted every three years in partnership with local organizations and community members. The most recent assessment identified several opportunity areas, including housing, behavioral health, food access, maternal health and wellness, and access to medical care.

In response to community-identified needs, the Southcoast Cares initiatives were developed to promote equitable health outcomes, including programs such as the Community Wellness Program, which reduces barriers to care by bringing health education, vaccinations, and screenings to underserved populations across the region and the New Beginnings Program, which supports opioid-exposed newborns and their mothers, providing a seamless course of care and treatment aimed at improving long-term outcomes for both mother and child.

## Health Equity & Population Health

Population health focuses on improving outcomes for groups of people by addressing the wide range of factors that influence well-being. Health is influenced by much more than healthcare and personal behaviors—research shows that up to 80% of health outcomes are shaped by the conditions in which people live, work, play, and worship. These social drivers of health (SDoH) include access to economic opportunities, quality education, safe housing, supportive community resources, workplace safety, environmental conditions, and social relationships.

Health equity ensures that all individuals, regardless of background or circumstance, have fair and just opportunities to achieve their highest level of health. These two concepts are deeply interconnected: without equity, efforts to improve population health risk leaving behind those who face systemic barriers, further widening existing gaps. Likewise, without a population-level lens, equity challenges can remain hidden or unaddressed.

At the community level, aligning population health goals with health equity priorities ensures that strategies not only improve overall outcomes but also reduce disparities. By recognizing the influence of SDoH, communities can design interventions that respond to local needs—whether by strengthening education systems, improving housing stability, or building supportive environments. Integrating equity into population health efforts enables health systems, public health agencies, and community organizations to coordinate action, share resources, and foster inclusive progress.

## Leadership

The Community Health & Wellness Department falls 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. CBAC membership includes 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.

The Manager of Community Health & Wellness, who reports to the Vice President for Population Health, 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 and shared to the public on social media channels, public websites, and news articles.



| CBAC – Community Members |                                                                                                      |                                                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Name                     | Title                                                                                                | Organization                                           |
| Helena DaSilva Hughes    | CBAC Chair; Trustee Southcoast Health; President & CEO                                               | Immigrants Assistance Center (IAC)                     |
| Dr. Athena Xifaras       | Associate Director of Inpatient Pediatrics; Director of Health Services – New Bedford Public Schools | Boston Children’s Hospital, New Bedford Public Schools |
| 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 of Day Services                                                                             | LifeStream Inc                                         |
| 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, Brown University |
| Jeffery Pelletier        | Executive Director                                                                                   | Junior Achievement of SE MA                            |
| Katlyn Auty              | Chief Operating Officer                                                                              | Southcoast Behavioral Health                           |
| Michelle Hantman         | President & CEO                                                                                      | United Way of Greater New Bedford                      |
| Maria Rosario            | Executive Director                                                                                   | NorthStar Learning Center                              |
| Leimary Llopez           | YWCA Advocacy Coordinator                                                                            | YWCA of SE MA                                          |
| Liz Wiley                | Executive Director                                                                                   | Marion Institute                                       |
| Robert Mendes            | Executive Director                                                                                   | Boys and Girls Club of Greater New Bedford             |
| Wendy Botelho            | Chief Executive Officer (CEO)                                                                        | Child & Family Services                                |

Southcoast Health CBAC Representation includes, Ali LeBert, Manager Community Health & Wellness, Katelyn Ferreira, Manager Health Equity, Marissa Pillai, Senior Engagement Specialist, Lauren Melby Nieder, Vice President Population Health, Dr. Illana Feinerman, Trustee, Southcoast Health & Physician of Otolaryngology, Lauren DeSimon, Senior Vice President Chief Human Resource Officer, Stephen Canessa, Senior Vice President CCO – External Affairs, and William Burns, Executive Director External Affairs.

# Community Benefits Strategic Implementation Plan & The Community Health Needs Assessment

This Community Benefits Strategic Implementation Plan is informed by the 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), developed collaboratively through the South Coast Community Health Alliance (SoCHA), and aligns with the 2024–2026 New Bedford Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

Southcoast Health and the New Bedford Health Department previously partnered to complete the first Community Health Improvement Plan focused on the City of New Bedford. This cross-sector collaboration engaged more than 30 stakeholders to identify community-prioritized health objectives and strategies. The success of this effort led to the formation of the South Coast Community Health Alliance (SoCHA).

SoCHA brings together South Coast organizations that conduct community health needs assessments to coordinate efforts and reduce duplication. Through this alliance, the FY25 Community Health Needs Assessment represents a unified, comprehensive evaluation of the most pressing health needs across the South Coast region.

SoCHA partners include one health system (Southcoast Health); two local boards of health (the New Bedford and Fall River Health Departments); three Federally Qualified Health Centers (HealthFirst Family Health Center, New Bedford Community Health, and SSTAR); and two Community Action Agencies (Citizens for Citizens and People Acting in Community Endeavors [PACE]).

The 2025 SoCHA CHNA represents the first report produced by the Alliance. The CHNA serves as a critical tool to support institutions in meeting regulatory and accreditation requirements while advancing collaborative community health improvement efforts and serves as the foundation for Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP) by systematically identifying the most pressing health needs, disparities, and social drivers affecting a community through data analysis and stakeholder engagement.

## The CHNA aims to:

- \* Identify the health-related needs, strengths, and resources of the community in a systematic way to inform future planning.
- \* Understand the current health status of the South Coast region and its subpopulations within their broader social context.
- \* Engage and elevate the voices of historically marginalized and underserved communities.
- \* Meet regulatory requirements for institutional stakeholders, organizations, and agencies (e.g., IRS requirements for non-profit hospitals; Public Health Accreditation Board standards for health departments; Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) standards for FQHCs; EOHLC requirements for Community Action Agencies).
- \* Foster cross-sector collaboration to drive collective impact.

## Methodology & Data Collection

The 2025 SoCHA CHNA employed a mixed-methods approach to engage a diverse range of South Coast residents, community organizations, and local leaders. Primary and secondary data was collected and analyzed to guide the process.

**Primary Data** included input from organizational partners and direct-service providers, stakeholder interviews with experts and community leaders (30+), focus groups with residents (8 sessions), and a community health survey (1,329 respondents).

**Secondary data** on health outcomes, health behaviors, and social drivers of health were collected from national, state, and city sources using the Metopio platform. This platform supplemented the primary data from surveys, focus groups, and interviews, providing a broader context for understanding the community's health needs.

## Defining the South Coast Region of Massachusetts

The 2025 CHNA focuses on the South Coast region of Massachusetts. The South Coast encompasses a mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities, including the cities of New Bedford and Fall River and surrounding towns. The area is home to a diverse population with rich cultural traditions, shaped by waves of immigration over time. Historically known for its fishing, textile, and manufacturing industries, the region today faces both economic challenges and opportunities for growth.

For the purpose of the report, the South Coast region was defined as including the following cities and towns: Acushnet, Assonet, Fairhaven, Fall River, Freetown, Dartmouth, Lakeville, Marion, Mattapoisett, New Bedford, Rochester, Somerset, Swansea, Wareham, Westport.



## Priority Populations and Priority Areas

During the development of the 2025 SoCHA CHNA, alliance members met monthly to oversee the process of data collection, analysis, interpretation, prioritization, and the dissemination of findings. The alliance prioritized a set of indicators for inclusion in the assessment, and outlined a consistent, inclusive, and robust community engagement strategy. The alliance leveraged the Metopio platform, a data analytic tool that transforms data into clean, actionable insights. The priority population and health themes (also known as priority areas) were identified based on the insights gathered from surveys, focus groups, interviews, and the culmination of Metopio data.

### Priority Populations

The Southcoast Health's Community Benefit Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) includes strategies and activities that will support residents throughout its service area and from all segments of the population. Southcoast's SIP will prioritize certain demographic and socio-economic segments of the population that have complex needs or face barriers to care, service gaps, or adverse social drivers of health that can put them at greater risk.

Specifically, the assessment identified the following groups of community members as the Priority Populations for the SIP:

|                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>People Living in Poverty / Low-Income Individuals and Families</b> | Individuals and families whose income is below the federal poverty line or who struggle to meet basic needs such as housing, food, healthcare, and transportation.                              |
| <b>Non-English Speakers &amp; Recent Immigrants</b>                   | People who primarily speak languages other than English and/or who have recently immigrated, often facing barriers to services due to language, cultural differences, or lack of documentation. |
| <b>BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)</b>                 | Communities who experience health inequities and systemic barriers linked to racism, discrimination, and historical trauma.                                                                     |
| <b>People Experiencing Housing Insecurity/Homelessness</b>            | Individuals lacking stable, safe, and adequate housing, including those in shelters, transitional housing, or unsheltered settings.                                                             |
| <b>People Living with Substance Use Dependency</b>                    | Individuals with dependence or problematic use of alcohol, opioids, or other substances, who may face stigma and barriers to care.                                                              |
| <b>Older Adults (65+)</b>                                             | Aging individuals who may face increased risk of chronic disease, social isolation, mobility challenges, or need for caregiving support.                                                        |
| <b>LGBTQ+ Population</b>                                              | People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or gender-diverse, who may face discrimination, stigma, or lack of affirming services.                                       |
| <b>Women &amp; Girls /Birthing People</b>                             | Someone who gives birth, regardless of their gender identify, which may be female, male, nonbinary or other.                                                                                    |

## Health Themes (*Priority Areas*)

The 2025 CHNA identified the health themes as the Priority Areas for the SIP:



### **Socio-economic Factors**

Social and economic conditions, including income, poverty, education, and employment, that influence health outcomes and equity.



### **Housing**

Safe, stable, and affordable housing as a foundation for physical, mental, and social wellbeing.



### **Built Environment**

Community infrastructure and design, including transportation, green space, and neighborhood safety, that influence health and wellbeing.



### **Food Access & Security**

Availability of affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods that support healthy eating and reduce food insecurity.



### **Access to Care**

Availability, affordability, and accessibility of healthcare services, including preventive, primary, specialty, and dental/oral health care.



### **Behavioral Health**

Mental health and substance use, with a focus on prevention, treatment, and reducing stigma.



### **Chronic Disease**

Prevention, management, and treatment of conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and respiratory illnesses.



### **Maternal & Child Health**

Health and well-being of mothers, infants, and children, including prenatal care, birth outcomes, child development, and family support.



### **Overall Health**

General physical, mental, and social wellbeing, encompassing quality of life and healthy lifestyles across the lifespan.

## Program: Behavioral Health

Behavioral health is a broad, multifaceted field that encompasses mental health as well as substance use and overall emotional well-being. Mental health concerns are an increasing issue across the South Coast Region, affecting individuals of all ages, including youth, adults, and seniors. The region faces high prevalence rates of mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and other disorders, alongside challenges related to substance use, including alcohol and opioid use.

Access to behavioral health services is limited by factors such as cost, availability of providers, long waitlists, stigma, and insufficient integration with primary care. These barriers are further compounded by a lack of culturally competent providers who can effectively serve diverse populations. Addressing these challenges requires expanding access to behavioral health care, integrating services into primary care, providing community-based support programs, and implementing strategies to improve outreach, engagement, and equity in care across the South Coast Region.

*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.*

## Southcoast Health Initiatives & Collaborations:

### New Beginnings: A Moms Do Care Program

New Beginnings Moms Do Care uplifts and empowers pregnant and parenting individuals impacted by substance use to heal, grow, and thrive in their recovery. The program is dedicated to supporting pregnant and parenting patients impacted by substances through individualized care coordination, peer recovery coaching, support groups and nursing support.

In January 2025, the first physical location for the program was opened in New Bedford. The new location provides a dedicated space for the program outside of the hospital setting and seamless connection with maternity services. With private meeting rooms and a child-friendly, spacious open floor plan, the new facility was curated to meet the individual needs of all participants and foster a sense of community on their journey toward resilience and recovery.



*\*New Beginnings: A Moms DO Care Program is primarily funded by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) in collaboration with the MA Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS), along with private foundation philanthropic donations.*

## Community Wellness Program: Street Outreach

The **Community Wellness Program's Street Outreach team** is a community-centered initiative designed to improve access to health, behavioral health, and social support services for individuals experiencing barriers to care. The program prioritizes outreach to populations disproportionately impacted by health inequities, including individuals who are unsheltered, experiencing housing instability, and those with mental health and substance use needs.

Through a multidisciplinary team including a **RN Addiction Nurse Specialist, and two Community Health Workers**, who are certified in Peer Recovery and Harm Reduction, the program provides direct, relationship-based outreach in community settings such as encampments and other high-need locations. Services include care coordination, health education, harm reduction support, referrals to medical and behavioral health services, and connections to housing, food, and other essential resources.

During FY25, the Street Outreach Team received funding from the **OPIOID-7 CARES** (Care of Addiction through Resilience and Empathetic Support) Program, which was developed in response to the Fall River Abatement funds. This funding allowed for the expansion of the team with the addition of a second Community Health Worker. This new team member is dedicated exclusively to serving the Greater Fall River community, providing outreach, encampment engagement, care coordination, and referrals to essential services, while the rest of the team continues outreach and services across the broader South Coast region.

The Street Outreach team works in close collaboration with local health departments, healthcare providers, community-based organizations, and social service agencies to ensure coordinated, responsive, and culturally competent care. By meeting individuals where they are and addressing both immediate needs and long-term stability, the program supports improved health outcomes and advances health equity across the community.

In addition to direct outreach and service delivery, the team plays an active role in broader community initiatives aimed at prevention, awareness, and systems-level change. Program staff participate in community planning and implementation efforts that address substance use and behavioral health challenges across the region. This includes serving as members of the planning and implementation team for the annual Overdose Awareness Day in Fall River, contributing to event coordination, community education, and resource engagement to honor lives lost and promote overdose prevention, harm reduction, and recovery supports.



### ED Overdose Awareness Program:

The ED Overdose Awareness Program was developed in response to the high prevalence of substance use within the South Coast region to prevent unnecessary opioid overdose deaths. The Southcoast emergency departments provide individuals and patients who are at risk of an opioid overdose with a nasal naloxone kit and education on how to administer.

**During FY25 a total of 105 kits** were distributed through Southcoast's three Emergency Departments.



### Strategic Partnership Program:

In FY25, Strategic Partnership Program funding supported the continued partnership with the **YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts** to strengthen its residential services program. During the prior year, this partnership supported the expansion of a new facility that introduced additional single-occupancy beds to the region. Building on that progress, FY25 funding supports the provision of an in-house, culturally competent **Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)** for all program residents, ensuring quicker and more accessible mental health care to meet residents' needs.

### Community Education:

The Street Outreach team provides **community education focused on substance use and the importance of reducing stigma and bias**. In addition, the RN Addiction Nurse Specialist conducts trainings for community partners on evidence-based practices, including **xylazine wound care**, and delivers **guest lectures to students in training at local colleges**. These efforts promote compassionate, informed care and support the reduction of bias in clinical and community-based settings.

### Coalition Participation:

In collaboration with the New Bedford Health Department and as part of the Community Health Improvement efforts, the **Mental Health Providers Task Force and the Greater New Bedford Suicide Prevention Coalition** were consolidated into a single, joint coalition. This consolidation reduced duplication, as many attendees had participated in both groups, and created a **unified platform focused on mental health awareness in Greater New Bedford**.

The coalition now meets monthly to review goals and track progress. Over the past year, initiatives included the formal launch of the coalition, an **increase in Mental Health First Aid trainings for organizations and youth-serving staff**, and a **community screening of the documentary *Can't Look Away***, followed by a panel discussion featuring educators and local resource providers.

Southcoast employees are active participants in the **Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force**, including holding a co-chair position. Members of the Street Outreach Team and New Beginnings actively engage in workgroup initiatives to address opioid misuse and overdoses through a coordinated, evidence-based approach encompassing prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery. The coalition's efforts aim to reduce both fatal and nonfatal overdoses and to improve community access to services and support.

Southcoast's New Beginnings program established and leads the **Substance Exposed Newborn Committee of Southeast Massachusetts (SENSE)**, which focuses on education, provider collaboration, and comprehensive support for substance-exposed infants and their families.

### **Community Engagement Support:**

Community Meeting Space: Southcoast supports and provides meeting space for **Learn to Cope's (LTC)** peer-led support groups for parents and loved ones impacted by substance use disorder. Meetings are held twice a month, once in person at a Southcoast facility and once virtual. These sessions are a safe place for members to share their experiences, ask questions, learn about addiction, and hear from guest speakers who are either in long term recovery or professionals in the field. There is no cost to attend and overdose education and Narcan training are offered at every meeting.

Guardianship Support: Southcoast provides **guardianship support** for patients who are incapable of decision-making capacity and do not have an available legal surrogate. To ensure timely, safe medical decision-making and appropriate discharge planning, the hospital facilitates the guardianship process and covers the associated legal and administrative costs. This support helps prevent delays in care, promotes patient safety and dignity, and reduces prolonged hospital stays related to the absence of a legally authorized decision-maker.

Community Partner Support: Southcoast provided support to **Samaritans Southcoast's** suicide prevention hotline. By providing funding, Samaritans can support 19,000 callers from our local region through listening, safety planning, warm transfers to mobile crisis intervention, and lifesaving crisis intervention. Southcoast also supports the Spring Spectacular event hosted by the **Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) of Bristol County**, which raises awareness and funds to support CAC's mission of protecting children and families affected by abuse and violence.

Collaborative Training: Through collaboration with The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) of Bristol County, **specialized training** was developed for Emergency Department staff to strengthen their ability **to support the most at-risk youth, including those at risk of going missing**. The training is led by the Child Trafficking/Exploitation Manager and a PediSANE nurse from CAC.

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### **FY25 Goals & Outcomes:**

- Goal 1: Open a physical location for the New Beginnings Program to improve access to services and enhance programmatic capabilities.
  - ◆ In January 2025, the first physical location for the program was opened in New Bedford. The new location provides a dedicated space for the program outside of the hospital setting and seamless connection with maternity services. With private meeting rooms and a child-friendly, spacious open floor plan, the new facility was curated to meet the individual needs of all participants and foster a sense of community on their journey toward resilience and recovery.

- Goal 2: Continue to expand the capabilities and function of the Community Wellness Program's Street Outreach team to support those combating a substance use disorder and/or a Mental/Behavioral health need.
  - ♦ During FY25, the Street Outreach Team received funding from the OPIOID-7 CARES (Care of Addiction through Resilience and Empathetic Support) Program. This funding allowed for the expansion of the team with the addition of a second Community Health Worker. This new team member is dedicated exclusively to serving the Greater Fall River community, providing outreach, encampment engagement, care coordination, and referrals to essential services, while the rest of the team continues outreach and services across the broader South Coast region.

### FY26 Goals:

- Goal 1: Strengthen collaboration with the Mobile Crisis Center (Child & Family Services) to provide rapid on-site or virtual crisis evaluation, stabilization, and follow-up for children and adolescents presenting with behavioral health emergencies.
- Goal 2: Establish a multidisciplinary Addiction Consult Team to deliver inpatient and Emergency Department consultation and formalize partnerships with community wellness programs and the Street Outreach Team to improve referral pathways and follow-up for individuals with substance use disorders.

### Community Partners:

|                                               |                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Children's Advocacy Center of Bristol County  | New Bedford Public Schools                                  |
| Child & Family Services                       | Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction (PAACA)          |
| Community Counseling of Bristol County (CCBC) | Partners Substance Addiction Task Force                     |
| Fall River Health Department                  | Samaritans Southcoast                                       |
| Greater New Bedford Inter-Church Council      | Seven Hills Behavioral Health                               |
| Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force         | Stanley Street Treatment and Resources (SSTAR)              |
| High Point Treatment Center                   | Steppingstone                                               |
| New Bedford Health Department                 | Substance Exposed Newborn Committee of Southeast MA (SENSE) |
| New Bedford Police Department – LEAD Program  | United Neighbors of Fall River                              |

## Program: Chronic Disease Interventions

Chronic diseases—such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory conditions—represent a significant public health challenge in the community. These conditions are long-lasting, often preventable, and can lead to substantial morbidity, reduced quality of life, and premature mortality. Risk factors for chronic disease include poor nutrition, physical inactivity, tobacco use, excessive alcohol consumption, obesity, and limited access to preventive healthcare services.

*Populations Served: South Coast residents who are disproportionately affected by chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory illness.*

*\*Note—the former program “Cancer Outreach” is now included under this program.*

### Southcoast Health Initiatives & Collaborations:

#### Southcoast Cancer Centers

The **Southcoast Health Fairhaven and Fall River Cancer Centers** are specialized facilities dedicated to providing comprehensive cancer care to the South Coast community. These centers offer a full spectrum of services, including prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship programs.

Through these facilities, individuals seeking care have access to **twelve (12) Oncology Navigators** and **five (5) Oncology Social Workers** who provide guidance and support to patients and their families throughout the cancer journey. These professionals assist with care coordination, treatment planning, emotional support, and connecting families to resources, helping to ensure that patients receive comprehensive, personalized care from diagnosis through treatment and survivorship.

#### Smoking Cessation Program

As part of our commitment to community health, Southcoast offers a **Smoking Cessation** support designed to help individuals quit tobacco use and improve their overall well-being. Numerous Southcoast employees — including Community Health Workers, Peer Recovery Coaches, and Nurses — have been trained as **Tobacco Treatment Specialists (TTS)** to provide free, one-on-one counseling tailored to each participant’s unique needs and goals. Through personalized support, education, and evidence-based strategies, these trained specialists empower patients and community members to build the skills and confidence needed to quit smoking successfully. This service not only promotes long-term health but also fosters a healthier, smoke-free community for all.

## Community Screenings

Each fall, Southcoast hosts its annual **Lung Cancer Screening Event**, now in its third year, to provide the community with education and same-day screening opportunities. The event is free and open to the public, held at the Fairhaven Cancer Center with convenient transportation access.

This year, **16 Southcoast staff** volunteered their time to support the event. Looking ahead to FY26, plans are underway to expand the event to the Fall River site to reach more individuals in the region.

The **Community Wellness Team** offers chronic **disease management services in the community, including no-cost point-of-care testing, A1C screenings, cholesterol assessments, and blood pressure checks**. These services are vital because they provide accessible, early detection and monitoring of conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension; diseases that disproportionately affect underserved populations.



By bringing screenings directly into the community, the team helps identify health risks before they become more serious, promotes timely interventions, and connects individuals with appropriate follow-up care. This proactive approach not only improves individual health outcomes but also reduces long-term healthcare costs, increases health awareness, and empowers community members to take an active role in managing their chronic conditions. In FY25, there were **39 preventative screenings** provided by the team (*documented as well under the Community Wellness Program section*).

## Community Education

As a leader in healthcare for the South Coast region, Southcoast provides comprehensive **chronic disease education** by distributing informational materials in multiple languages and ensuring accessibility through a variety of channels. This approach helps reach diverse populations, addresses language and literacy barriers, and empowers community members to make informed decisions about their health.

- During FY25, the **Health Education Seminar Series** hosted **27 virtual seminars**, providing education on chronic disease prevention, management, and overall health awareness.
  - Cancer Care Topics: Breast Cancer, Lung Cancer, Colon Cancer and Thoracic Surgery (78 total attendees).
  - Heart & Vascular Topics: Diabetes & Heart Health, Heart Health Tips, Aortic Valve, Heart Attack & Stroke, Heart Failure, Pulsed Field Ablations, Women's Heart Health, CAD, & Afib (393 total attendees).
  - Orthopedic Condition Topics: Knee, Hip, TenJet procedure, Osteoporosis, and Sports Medicine (362 total attendees).
  - Weight Management Topics: Weight loss (97 total attendees).

## Community Engagement Support

Support Groups: A variety of **Cancer support groups** are offered for individuals who have been diagnosed with cancer or are cancer survivors, providing a space to share experiences, find encouragement, and connect with others facing similar challenges. All groups are **free and open to the public**, and participants are welcome to bring an additional support person if they wish. These groups aim to reduce feelings of isolation, foster community, and support emotional well-being throughout the cancer journey and are hosted in person or virtually.

- Breast Cancer Support Group, Lung Cancer Support Group, General Cancer Support Group, Post Treatment Support Group, Multiple Myeloma, Leukemia & Lymphoma (MLL) Support Group.

Community Partner Support: Southcoast is proud to participate in events and provides financial support to the **Gloria Gemma Flames of Hope: A Celebration of Life**, the **Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk**, the **Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition** and the **Fly Foundation** to increase access to advanced compassionate, high-quality cancer care for patients and families in our community.

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## FY25 Goals & Outcomes:

- Goal 1: Provide at least three (3) cancer screening events to improve access to services for our most vulnerable populations.
  - ◆ Due to challenges, around scheduling and resource constraints, only one cancer screening event was held, falling short of the goal of three events. Despite this, the screenings that were conducted still reached individuals from vulnerable populations and provided valuable access to preventive services and follow-up resources.
- Goal 2: Support trainings for the Community Outreach Specialists (Community Health Workers), to become Tobacco Treatment Specialist (TTS) and to increase their knowledge of Smoking Cessation education. This will enhance the mobile outreach teams capabilities to provided education and targeted group support in the community on smoking cessation.
  - ◆ Five staff members from different teams across Southcoast completed Tobacco Treatment Specialist training, strengthening Southcoast's to provide smoking cessation education, counseling, and group support in the community.

## FY26 Goals:

- Goal 1: Expand the Lung Cancer Screening Event to the Fall River Community.
- Goal 2: Develop a program around youth vaping education and interventions with local community partner agencies.

## Community Engagement Support

|                                              |                                         |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| American Cancer Society (ACS)                | Making Strides Against Breast Cancer    |
| Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) | Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition   |
| Fall River Health Department                 | Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation Program |
| Fall River Housing Authority                 | New Bedford Community Health            |
| Fall River Public Schools                    | New Bedford Health Department           |
| Fishing Partnership                          | New Bedford Housing Authority           |
| Fly Foundation                               | QuitWorks                               |
| Gloria Gemma Foundation                      | Seven Hills Behavioral Health           |
| Greater Fall River Boys & Girls Club         | SSTAR                                   |
| HealthFirst Family Health Center             | Wareham Housing Authority               |
| Immigrants Assistance Center                 | YMCA Southcoast                         |

## Program: Homelessness & Housing

Housing quality and affordability play a crucial role in shaping health outcomes, as they directly influence multiple aspects of well-being. High housing cost burdens, eviction rates, vacant or unused housing, and crowded living conditions are closely linked to poorer socioeconomic and health outcomes, including housing instability and homelessness. Addressing these housing challenges is essential for promoting stable, healthy communities and reducing disparities in health and economic opportunity.

*Populations Served: South Coast residents who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless.*

### Southcoast Health Initiatives & Collaborations:

#### Community Wellness Program: Street Outreach:

The Community Wellness Program's **Street Outreach team** is a community-centered initiative designed to improve access to health, behavioral health, and social support services for individuals experiencing barriers to care. The program prioritizes outreach to populations disproportionately impacted by health inequities, including **individuals who are unsheltered, experiencing housing instability, and those with mental health and substance use needs.**

Through a multidisciplinary team including a RN Addition Nurse Specialist, and two Community Health Workers, who are certified in Peer Recovery and Harm Reduction, the program provides direct, relationship-based outreach in community settings such as encampments and other high-need locations. Services include care coordination, health education, harm reduction support, referrals to medical and behavioral health services, and connections to housing, food, and other essential resources.

In practice, the Street Outreach team conducts regular, **intentional visits to homeless encampments and other unsheltered settings, meeting individuals where they are and responding to immediate needs in a trauma-informed, nonjudgmental manner** through collaboration with partners such as Steppingstone, the New Bedford Police -LEAD Program, Seven Hills Behavioral Health, the FAST Team and SSTAR. Outreach activities include basic health assessments, wound care, blood pressure checks, distribution of harm reduction supplies such as naloxone and safer use materials, and on-the-spot health education related to overdose prevention, infection prevention, and chronic disease management. The team also **assists individuals with care coordination needs such as scheduling medical and behavioral health appointments, obtaining identification documents, enrolling in insurance, and connecting to emergency shelter or longer-term housing resources.**

In addition to encampment outreach, the **team hosts and leads weekly low-barrier drop-in centers** in collaboration with community partners including THRIVE for Humanity, HealthFirst Family Health Center, the Fall River Public Library, and Fall River Church of the Good Shepherd. These drop-in centers provide access to food, hygiene supplies, clothing, and harm reduction materials, as well as opportunities for one-on-one engagement with the outreach team.



During drop-in hours, participants may receive health education, referrals to primary care, behavioral health, and substance use treatment services, and ongoing peer support grounded in lived experience. These consistent, welcoming spaces allow the team to build trust over time, support incremental progress toward stability, and maintain continuity of care for individuals who face persistent barriers to traditional service systems.

During the cold weather months, the Street Outreach team plays a **critical role in assisting with the management and support of the Fall River Overflow Shelter**, working in close collaboration with the FAST Team and the City of Fall River. The team helps ensure the shelter operates as a safe, low-barrier environment by supporting participant engagement, coordinating services, responding to health and behavioral health needs, and connecting guests to longer-term housing and care resources. In addition, the team actively participates in the City of Fall River's annual **Point-in-Time Count**, leveraging their established relationships and street-level knowledge to help identify and engage individuals experiencing homelessness, ensuring a more accurate count and stronger linkage to services.

### Community Coalitions:

**The Bristol County Continuum of Care (BC3)**, formerly known as the Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN), serves as the HUD-designated Continuum of Care responsible for coordinating a countywide response to homelessness. BC3 works to address the complex needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness by promoting access to safe, decent, affordable, and sustainable housing through coordinated planning, data-driven decision-making, and system-level collaboration. Southcoast sits on the Executive Committee and assists with developing and influencing strategies and identifying resources.

The Street Outreach team leads the **Fall River Street Homeless Coalition**, a collaborative partnership of local municipal officials and community service providers focused on coordinating outreach efforts and developing ongoing, data-informed strategies to support individuals experiencing homelessness in Fall River. Through this coalition, partners work together to align services, share resources, and strengthen responses to unsheltered homelessness across the city.

### Community Engagement Support:

Community Collaboration: The **Medically Fragile Emergency Response Team** continued to meet monthly to refine and advance its goals and objectives for the coming year(s), with a focus on identifying individuals who are medically fragile and unhoused or otherwise medically compromised, and on demonstrating the need for a medical respite facility. The team brings together key Southcoast hospital staff and community partner agencies, including PAACA, the Interchurch Council of Greater New Bedford, the New Bedford Office of Community Development and Housing (OCDH), CCBC, and Steppingstone, to coordinate planning, share data and expertise, and strengthen system-level responses for individuals with complex medical and housing needs.

Cold Weather Shelters: In addition to the Street Outreach team's support of the Fall River Overflow Shelter during the cold weather months, **Southcoast Health provides financial support to surrounding cities and towns to strengthen their overflow shelter models**. This includes funding contributions to **Rise Up for Homes in New Bedford and WACH/Turning Point in Wareham**, helping to expand cold weather shelter capacity and ensure safe, low-barrier options for individuals experiencing homelessness across the region.

Community Events: The Street Outreach team actively participates in and **supports community-led events** that expand access to services for individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability. This includes engagement and planning of the **Summer of Kindness – Project Homeless Connect initiative**, hosted by THRIVE for Humanity in partnership with the Fall River Street Homeless Coalition, which provides free, low-barrier services such as foot clinics, haircuts, summer clothing, hygiene items, showers, and food. In addition, Southcoast Health supports the annual **New Bedford Connect** event, a one-day, centralized resource fair that brings together community volunteers and service providers to offer vital resources and services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Housing & Living Improvements: **Habitat for Humanity Buzzards Bay** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building and renovating homes for families in need, helping to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing in the region. Southcoast Health provided support for **funding for ramps** that were added to homes in the local community, improving accessibility and enabling the homeowner to live safely and independently.

In addition, Southcoast Health provided funding to **My Brother's Keeper's Furniture Assistance Program**, which delivers free essential household items such as beds, couches, and other furniture to individuals and families in need, helping to improve living conditions and support stability in the home.

Community Donations: As part of Southcoast Health's mission to give back to the community, **employees regularly come together to support individuals in need through donations and volunteer initiatives in collaboration with local community agencies**. For example, staff participating in the *Pathways to Excellence* program organized a collection and assembly of **over 80 care packages** containing essential items for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. These packages were then distributed to community organizations that collaborate directly with those individuals such as **YMCA Southcoast, Sister Rose House, Walts Closet and the YWCA of SE MA**, helping to meet immediate needs and demonstrate ongoing community support.

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## FY25 Goals & Outcomes:

- Goal 1: Identify at least one (1) partner in Fall River to discuss and replicate a Medical Respite program in the City for those who are medically fragile and unsheltered.
  - ◆ While the original goal of replicating a Medical Respite program in Fall River was not achieved, Street Outreach work highlighted a pressing need for a permanent, low-barrier drop-in center for unsheltered individuals. Such a center would provide consistent access to food, hygiene, health education, and connection to services, addressing critical gaps in care and creating a safe, centralized space for engagement and support. This is a focus for FY26.
- Goal 2: Increase collaboration with the YWCA's residential housing program to support integration of medical and/or behavioral health services for residents.
  - ◆ This goal was achieved through increased collaboration with the YWCA's residential housing program, supporting the integration of medical and behavioral health services for residents. For additional details on the behavioral health services provided, please see the Behavioral Health section earlier in this report.

## FY26 Goals:

- Goal 1: Establish a permanent low-barrier drop-in center in Fall River.
- Goal 2: Expand regional shelter support partnerships, specifically in Wareham.

## Community Partners:

|                                                                 |                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Bristol County Continuum of Care (BC3)                          | Our Daily Bread                                |
| Catholic Charities                                              | PAACA                                          |
| CCBC                                                            | PACE                                           |
| Child & Family Services                                         | Seven Hills Behavioral Health                  |
| Church of the Good Shephard – Fall River                        | Steppingstone                                  |
| Citizens for Citizens Inc                                       | Thrive for Humanity                            |
| City of Fall River                                              | Stanley Street Treatment and Resources (SSTAR) |
| City of New Bedford (Office of Community Development & Housing) | HealthFirst Family Health Center               |
| Fall River Comprehensive Treatment Center                       | Walts Mobile Closet                            |
| Fall River EMS                                                  | Turning Point                                  |
| Fall River FAST Team                                            | Wareham Area Committee for the Homeless (WACH) |
| Father Bill's & Mainspring                                      | Fall River Public Library                      |
| First Baptist Church of Fall River                              | Town of Wareham                                |
| Fishing Partnership                                             | YWCA of SE MA                                  |
| Kindness Kitchen                                                | The Women's Center                             |
| New Bedford Community Health                                    | YMCA Southcoast                                |
| New Bedford Health Department                                   |                                                |
| New Bedford Police Department – LEAD Program                    |                                                |

## Program: Community Wellness Program

Southcoast Health's Community Wellness Program (CWP) brings care directly into neighborhoods to reduce barriers and connect residents with preventive services and essential resources. The program includes two dedicated teams: The Community Wellness Team and the Street Outreach Team (*Note—the Street Outreach Team component is captured under Housing and Behavioral Health Program – additional information on the program is captured under Chronic Disease and Maternal Child Health*).

*Populations Served: Uninsured and underinsured individuals, low-income households, immigrants and non-English speakers, people experiencing homelessness, older adults with limited mobility, and residents in rural or transportation-limited areas.*

### Southcoast Health Initiatives & Collaborations:

#### Community Wellness Team

The Community Wellness Team is comprised of one LPN and a trilingual Community Health Worker. The team provides a variety of health-focused services, including education, screenings, and outreach. These offerings aim to improve health outcomes and provide accessible resources for all.

#### FY25 services included:

- **Health Education and Outreach:** Covering topics like women's health, nutrition, smoking cessation, and chronic disease management (e.g., cancer, heart disease, diabetes). **67 Health Education opportunities in the community.**
- **Confidential Health Screenings:** Including Body Mass Index (BMI), blood pressure, and advance care planning.
- **Vaccinations:** Offering COVID-19, flu, pneumonia, Hep A, and tetanus vaccines. **16 Vaccination Clinics.**
- **Point-of-Care Testing (POCT):** Includes Hemoglobin A1C, blood glucose, and cholesterol readings. **39 POCT opportunities in the community.**
- **Community Events:** Participation in health and resource fairs to bring services directly to the public. **18 community health and resource fairs.**



## FY25 Goals & Outcomes:

- Goal 1: Provide more than 15 vaccination clinics in partnership with community-based organizations.
  - ♦ The Community Wellness team provided 16 vaccination clinics in partnership with community-based organizations in FY25.
- Goal 2: Provide more than 50 education events in partnership with community-based organizations.
  - ♦ The Community Wellness team provided 67 education events in partnership with community-based organizations in FY25.

## FY26 Goals:

- Goal 1: Increase the number of preventive screenings provided to the community by 3%.
- Goal 2: Increase the number of education events provided to the community by 3%.

## Community Partners

|                                              |                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Acushnet Council on Aging                    | Lane Gardens                                       |
| All American Assisted Living                 | Marion Council on Aging                            |
| American Red Cross                           | Minority Action Committee                          |
| Boys & Girls Club of Metro South             | New Bedford Community Health                       |
| Brandy Hill Apartment                        | New Bedford Health Department                      |
| Catholic Charities—Solanus Food Pantry       | New Bedford Public Schools—Parenting Teens Program |
| Citizens for Citizens                        | Peabody Properties                                 |
| Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) | South Coast Smiles                                 |
| Cranberry Village                            | Southcoast LGBTQ+ Network                          |
| Eastern Fisheries                            | SSTAR                                              |
| Fallon Health                                | Town of Somerset                                   |
| Fall River Council on Aging                  | Town of Swansea                                    |
| Fall River Housing Authority                 | Tufts HealthPlan                                   |
| Fall River Public Schools                    | United Neighbors of Fall River                     |
| Fishing Partnership                          | United Way of Greater New Bedford                  |
| Freetown Council on Aging                    | Veteran's Association of Bristol County            |
| Freetown-Lakeville Public Schools            | Waits Mobile Closet                                |
| Happy Health Center                          | Wareham Council on Aging                           |
| HEED Coalition                               | Woods at Wareham                                   |
| Immigrants Assistance Center                 | YMCA Southcoast                                    |
| Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford  |                                                    |

## Program: Economic Opportunity

Overview: Socioeconomic status is closely tied to economic opportunity, influencing access to resources, stability, and long-term well-being. Individuals and families with lower socioeconomic status often face barriers to quality education, stable employment, and career advancement, which can perpetuate cycles of financial insecurity. Education and workforce development play a critical role in breaking these cycles by equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and credentials needed to secure meaningful employment and achieve economic mobility. By investing in educational programs, job training, and skill-building initiatives, communities can expand economic opportunities, reduce disparities, and empower residents to achieve financial stability and long-term success.

*Populations Served: Individuals and families facing barriers to economic opportunity, including low-income individuals, youth entering the workforce, underemployed adults, and historically underserved communities.*

### Southcoast Health Initiatives & Collaborations:

#### Health Professionals Education Programs

There were approximately **54,363 hours** spent by Nursing staff to support these clinical rotations, through providing oversight, education, and guidance. There were **530 student nurses** that participated in group clinical placements. In addition, there were **128 one-to-one mentorship** opportunities provided to student nurses, with approximately **13,107 hours** of nursing staff hours supporting this experience.

There were approximately **23,674 hours** spent by Radiology, CT, Nuclear Medicine, and Ultrasound staff to support this clinical education and student experience.

There were approximately **6,650 hours** spent by Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Speech Therapy staff to engage in clinical rotations and to gain experience in the workplace.

Medical Residents and Nurse Practitioners to engage in clinical rotations and to gain experience in the workplace with embedded staff. There were approximately **445,000 hours** spent by staff to support this clinical experience.

*During the reporting period, **23,674.5 staff hours** were dedicated to Health Professions Education, resulting in a **\$29,847,333** reportable community benefit expense.*

## University Relations Manager Role

Southcoast invests in the University Relations Manager role, situated within our Human Resources team, to advance workforce development by supporting observation, shadowing, and internship opportunities with local educational institutions, including high schools, colleges, and universities. This role helps build a pipeline for careers in healthcare within Southcoast, one of the region's largest employers, while also promoting economic mobility and career growth for community members.

As an outcome of this work, a program was launched for high school students from Global Charter Learning Public School and Dartmouth High School, allowing 18 students to come onsite to Southcoast facilities to shadow staff across multiple disciplines. Together, they completed over 93 hours of hands-on observation, gaining firsthand insight into healthcare careers and the day-to-day operations of a major regional health system.

## Community Coalitions:

Southcoast participates in the **Health Equity for Early Development (HEED)** Coalition, which works to improve early childhood development across the region. The coalition's lead program, **The Basics**, has been widely adopted by local organizations serving young children, helping to promote healthy development, positive parenting, and equitable access to early learning resources.

Southcoast is an active participant and member of **multiple local Chambers of Commerce**, including One Southcoast Chamber, the Cranberry Chamber, the Newport Chamber, the Taunton Area Chamber, and the Cape Cod Canal Chamber, engaging in regional business and community initiatives to support economic growth and collaboration.

## FY25 Goals & Outcomes:

- Goal 1: Increase the number of one-to-one mentorships for nursing students by 2% in FY25.
  - ◆ This goal was exceeded, with one-to-one mentorships increasing by 28%, demonstrating significant growth in student engagement and support through the mentorship program.
- Goal 2: Increase the knowledge of the Basics Southcoast throughout the South Coast region through collaboration with HEED.
  - ◆ Southcoast met with HEED leadership on multiple occasions to discuss support for their work around The Basics program and its integration within the health system. These collaborative efforts helped strengthen regional awareness and alignment. The HEED coalition is also on track to launch a new resource guide to support families and engagement in early 2026.

## FY26 Goals:

- Goal 1: Expand high school and college shadowing and internship opportunities by partnering with additional local schools.
- Goal 2: Expand nursing student mentorship and career development opportunities by 3%.

## Community Partners

|                                          |                                   |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Boys & Girls Club of Greater Fall River  | MCPHS                             |
| Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford | Meeting Street Early Intervention |
| Bridgewater State University             | New Bedford Health Department     |
| Bristol Community College                | New Bedford School Department     |
| CCRI                                     | NorthStar Learning Center         |
| CFC / Early Head Start                   | PACE/Early Head Start             |
| Child & Family Services                  | Sacred Birthing Village           |
| Children's Advocacy Center               | SER Jobs for Higher               |
| Dartmouth High School                    | Source Hub                        |
| Fall River Re-Creation                   | Salve Regina University           |
| Fall River School Department             | Simmons College                   |
| Family Resource Center (United Way)      | Sacred Heart University           |
| Family Services Association              | Our Sisters School                |
| Global Learning Charter School           | Umass Dartmouth                   |
| HEED                                     | University of Rhode Island (URI)  |
| Justice Resource Institute (JRI)         | Worcester State University        |
| Katie Brown Educational Program          | WIC                               |
| Kennedy Donovan Center (KDC)             | YMCA Southcoast                   |
| Lifespan School of Medical Imaging       | Youth Opportunities Unlimited     |
| Massasoit Community College              | YWCA of SE MA                     |
| MassHire                                 |                                   |

## Program: Health Access & Equity

Access to healthcare is essential for maintaining and improving individual and community health. It enables early detection and treatment of illnesses, reduces the risk of preventable complications, and supports overall well-being. Healthcare should be accessible to everyone, ensuring that all individuals—regardless of income, race, location, or other social drivers—can obtain the care they need. Equitable access helps reduce health disparities and promotes better long-term population health outcomes.

*Populations Served: Through an equity-focused approach, services are directed toward communities that experience disproportionate barriers to health care. This includes racial and ethnic minority groups, low-income individuals, people with limited English proficiency, those experiencing homelessness, older adults, and individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders. Our goal is to ensure accessible, high-quality care for all.*

### Southcoast Health Initiatives & Collaborations:

#### Southcoast Resource Connect

Southcoast Resource Connect is an online platform that provides a comprehensive directory of behavioral health and community resources to support individuals and families. It highlights local, free, and low-cost services that address essential needs such as food access, housing support, financial assistance, workforce development, educational opportunities, and other supportive services. The platform can also be used for inter-agency referrals and to connect individuals who screen positive on the Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) screener to appropriate social services. It is available for use by Southcoast staff, patients, community members, and partner agencies.

During FY25, **17,359 unique users accessed the platform**, representing approximately a 35% increase from the previous year. The most common community searches were for food pantries, housing assistance, and help with paying for housing.



<https://southcoastresourceconnect.org>

 Southcoast Health

#### With Southcoast Health Resource Connect, you can:

-  Find local programs, resources and support
-  Search anonymously and for free
-  Connect with social programs based on your unique needs and preferences
-  Southcoast Resources Connect is also accessible through MyChart



#### Get started with these 3 steps:

- + Visit <https://southcoastresourceconnect.org>
- + Enter your ZIP Code
- + Get connected to local services!

 Southcoast Health  
[www.southcoast.org](http://www.southcoast.org)

## Mobile Health

Over the past three decades, the Southcoast Health Mobile Wellness Van has been a trusted presence in our community, helping to bridge gaps in care and bringing vital health services directly to underserved individuals and families. As our community's needs evolved, the program was revitalized in 2021–2022 with the introduction of electric vehicles and a strategic shift away from the traditional large-van model, allowing for greater flexibility and sustainability in delivering services.

Now, in 2025, **the original Mobile Wellness Van has been donated to the Parents and Community Engagement Center (PACE) at Fall River Public Schools**, ensuring it continues to support the community in a new and meaningful way. The PACE Center plans to use it by collaborating with local partners such as EMS to host vaccine clinics, provide translation services, host ESL classes, and attend community events like the annual city summer block party.



## New Bedford Community Health

In FY25, Southcoast participated in the **Community Health Initiative (CHI)** as part of a Determination of Need (DoN) requirement of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Through this CHI investment, Southcoast provided funding **to New Bedford Community Health to support the development of a new 13,000-square-foot space designed to expand primary care capacity.**

The new site will include 30 treatment rooms and enable the hiring of two additional primary care providers, strengthening access to care for local residents. The investment also supports the continued growth of the community health worker (CHW) workforce, further enhancing outreach and patient support services.



## EMS Donation

Southcoast Health recently supported local emergency medical services (EMS) through its **EMS Support Grant Program**, an initiative designed to strengthen pre-hospital care by funding training and essential medical equipment. The program was first launched in May 2025 during National EMS Week with the goal of supporting organizations that provide direct patient care throughout the South Coast region.

In its inaugural year, the program **awarded approximately \$100,000 to seven municipal EMS organizations** across southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island, enabling them to purchase critical training equipment that enhances the skills, preparedness, and overall readiness of EMS professionals.



## Interpreter Services & Translation Support

The **Interpreter Services Program** supports individuals whose preferred language is not English. The team provides medical interpreting services in Spanish, Portuguese, Cambodian, Cape Verdean Creole, and American Sign Language. Additionally, Southcoast offers a 24-hour language line, giving on-demand access to interpreters for a wide range of languages. The team also provides written translations for internal and external education and outreach materials.

In FY25, the program provided monthly article translations in Spanish and Portuguese for **Coastline Elderly's Senior Scope newsletter**, covering health education topics for seniors such as accessing nutritious foods, SNAP benefits, health insurance information, and stress management.

## Transportation to Care

Southcoast provides additional support to patients, individuals, and families in our community to help reduce transportation barriers to care. Support is offered in the form of vouchers or passes for local transit authority vehicles and on-demand transportation services, including round-trip rides to medical appointments and other essential services. In FY25, **Southcoast provided 341 Round Trip rides** to individuals needing transportation.



## Patient Financial Services

Southcoast helps individuals apply for state and public assistance programs through our **Patient Financial Services (PFS) team**. The team collaborates with patients to identify options to cover healthcare expenses, including payment plans. Southcoast's financial counselors are **Certified Application Counselors (CAC)** and **SHINE-certified** and can assist individuals in determining eligibility for various health insurance programs, completing enrollment paperwork, and submitting applications. The PFS team also provides these services at community locations in partnership with local social service organizations.

## Community Health Workers (CHWs)

**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 employs numerous CHWs throughout the system to support individuals navigate care.



## Community Engagement Support

Resource Guides: Southcoast supported the printing and distribution of the **Fall River Resource Guide**, a comprehensive booklet detailing the most up-to-date programs and services available in the Fall River region. The guide is also available in multiple languages, ensuring accessibility for diverse community members.

Primary Care for All: Southcoast provided funding support to the newly developed Primary Care for All chapter in New Bedford, aimed at expanding access to primary care services across the South Coast region.

Community Donations: During the holiday season, Southcoast partnered with local organizations such as the **United Way of Greater New Bedford and My Brother's Keeper** to provide essential items and support to community members in need, in addition to volunteering at holiday events such as the annual potluck hosted by the **Fall River Pride** Committee.

## Coalitions & Board Membership

Southcoast holds an active seat on the **Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community Area CHNA** and serves on its **Executive Board Committee**. In addition, Southcoast is an active participant in the **Health Equity Community of Practice (HECoP)** within New Bedford focused on policy driven initiatives.

In addition to coalition participation, Southcoast staff actively **serve on local community boards** during work hours to support our community partners. Currently, staff engage with **Coastline Elderly and Primary Care for All**, to advance regional initiatives and strengthen community partnerships.

## FY25 Goals & Outcomes:

- Goal 1: Identify opportunities for employees and community partner organizations (clinical to community linkages) to collaborate and partner to give back to the community.
  - ◆ This goal was achieved through donation and volunteer initiatives during the holiday season, in which Southcoast employees partnered with local organizations such as the United Way of Greater New Bedford and My Brother's Keeper to provide essential items and support to community members in need.
- Goal 2: Increase the number of unique users on the Southcoast Resource Connect platform by 3%.
  - ◆ During FY25, 17,359 unique users accessed the platform, representing approximately a 35% increase from the previous year.

## FY26 Goals:

- Goal 1: Increase community engagement with the Find Help platform (Southcoast Resource Connect) to improve access to local resources.
- Goal 2: Expand Community Health Worker (CHW) training and professional development in the region.

## Community Partners

| Catholic Social Services                     | Partners for a Healthier Community          |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Citizens for Citizens                        | New Bedford Community Health                |
| Coastline Elderly Services                   | New Bedford Health Department               |
| Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) | PAACA                                       |
| Councils on Aging                            | PACE                                        |
| Fall River Health Department                 | Stanley Street Treatment & Recovery (SSTAR) |
| Fall River Housing Authority                 | Steppingstone                               |
| Fall River Public Schools                    | United Way of Greater New Bedford           |
| Immigrants Assistance Center                 | YWCA of SE MA                               |

## Program: Healthy Systems & Environment Change

Creating healthier communities depends heavily on the environments in which people live—their homes, neighborhoods, and broader community settings. For many, health and wellness are shaped by a wider set of responsibilities, including housing, finances, childcare, transportation, employment, immigration concerns, food security, and overall safety. These intersecting obligations can make it challenging to maintain overall wellness, build healthy habits, and consistently access nutritious foods essential for long-term health and disease prevention.

*Populations Served: South Coast residents experiencing food insecurity and low levels of physical activity, with a particular focus on low-income individuals living in Fall River and New Bedford, where data show these risk factors occur at higher rates than in the surrounding region.*

### Southcoast Health Initiatives & Collaborations:

#### Be Well Wareham

The **Be Well Wareham** program is a monthly event that invites participants to walk with a Southcoast physician and then engage in healthy activities led by Southcoast staff, including chair yoga, meditation techniques, and health education. The program is offered in partnership with the YMCA Gleason Family Facility. In FY25, the program served **91 participants**, which is almost a 50% increase in participation from last year.



#### Healthy Aging Podcast

The **Healthy Aging Podcast** continued through FY25, releasing 3 episodes before transitioning into the new fiscal year. This free podcast is designed to help listeners manage their health and adopt habits that support living a longer, healthier life. Featured speakers on the podcast are local physicians and care providers who discuss important topics and practical steps for maintaining health and well-being.



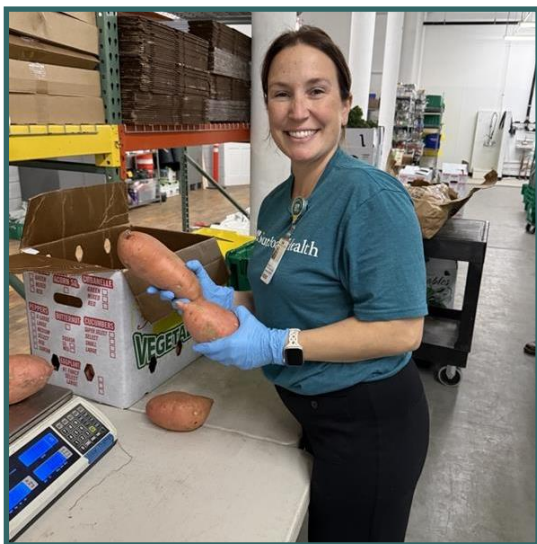
## Strategic Partnership Program

In FY25, Southcoast also selected two food-related organizations, Coastal Foodshed and the Marion Institute for investment to help address the growing need for food security across the South Coast.

From January through May 2025, Southcoast Strategic Partnership Program played a critical role in supporting **Coastal Foodshed's Farm to Food Relief Program**. While the program was primarily funded by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) through the federal Local Food Purchasing Assistance (LFPA) Grant Program, those federal dollars could only be used to purchase local foods for emergency distribution.

Southcoast's contribution was essential in covering the staff and operational costs needed to conduct the program effectively. During this period, Coastal Foodshed purchased and distributed nearly \$240,000 in locally grown fruits and vegetables, seafood, meat, dairy, and other foods to 28 Southcoast food pantries, in partnership with PACE, the United Way of Greater New Bedford's Hunger Commission, Damien's Food Pantry, and Round the Bend Farm's Manifest Love Program. In total, food was sourced from 44 local farms, directly investing in and strengthening the regional farm economy while improving food security across the South Coast.

Southcoast Health has partnered with the **Marion Institute, Frogfoot Farm, and local chef Danny Minkle** to launch **Cooks for Community**, a pilot program that delivers fresh, locally sourced meals to residents who are unhoused or unable to prepare their own meals. The program began on September 5 and will continue through the end of the year, supported by funding from Southcoast Health. Each week, Chef Danny prepares 50 nutritious meals that are distributed by the Community Wellness Street Outreach team, with an anticipated total of 1,000 meals delivered by year's end.



The Strategic Partnership Program funds **larger-scale initiatives** that improve community health through a **health equity lens**. Annual funding priorities are based on the **Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)**, most frequent **Health Related Social Needs (HRSN) screener responses**, and alignment with Southcoast's existing resources and infrastructure.

## Athletic Training Program

The **Southcoast Athletic Training Program supports ten (10) local high schools**, with Southcoast-employed athletic trainers providing on-site coverage for all offered sports. Services include emergency care, initial injury evaluation, treatment, prevention, rehabilitation, and reconditioning to ensure the safety and well-being of student athletes. In addition, staff Athletic Trainers volunteer their time to support the annual New Bedford Half Marathon.

## Injury Prevention Program

At hospitals designated as Level II trauma centers, the role of the **Injury Prevention Coordinator** is essential to advancing community health and safety. This position is responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating programs that reduce the incidence of preventable injuries across the region. By engaging in community trainings, fostering partnerships with schools, public safety agencies, and local organizations, and participating in outreach events, the coordinator ensures that evidence-based strategies reach diverse populations. Their work not only supports the hospital's trauma mission but also strengthens community resilience by promoting awareness, education, and collaboration.

During FY25, the Injury Prevention Coordinator participated in **13 community-based events**, providing fall prevention education, distracted driving education and CarFit services in partnership with local community organizations. The Injury Prevention Coordinator serves as a vital link between the trauma center and the broader community, helping to reduce injury-related morbidity and mortality while building lasting connections that improve public health outcomes.

## Community Spotlight Program

The **Community Spotlight Program, presented by Southcoast Health in collaboration with FUN 107**, showcases the vital work of community-based organizations across the South Coast. Through interviews with radio hosts, local leaders share their missions, highlight the challenges they address, and demonstrate the positive impact they have on the region. This initiative provides audiences with an accessible way to learn about these organizations and encourages community members to engage further by visiting their websites, supporting their programs, and contributing to their ongoing success.

During FY25, over **20 community partner organizations were spotlighted through this program.**

To listen to the most recent interviews, visit—[Southcoast Health Community Spotlight - Southcoast Health](#).



### Episode 17:

[Walt's Mobile Closet](#) is dedicated to creating an inclusive community where everyone feels respected and supported, no matter their background or identity. With a strong focus on serving the local area, the organization strives to make a meaningful difference. Partnering with other groups along the South Coast, they offer free clothing to those in need.

The name honors Founder and Executive Director Whitney Tully's father, Walter, who had a deep love for beautiful clothing and always strived to look his best, whether tending to his expansive garden or working on his cherished Corvette.

**LISTEN:** Michael Rock, Michaela Johnson, Gazelle and Executive Director Whitney Tully

▶ 0:00 / 4:01 🔊 ⋮

## Community Engagement Support

**Community AED Donations:** Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are life-saving devices that should be available in public spaces, including schools, workplaces, sports arenas, shopping centers, and local parks where families gather. Sudden cardiac arrest can strike without warning, and immediate defibrillation is critical to improving the chances of survival. AEDs are simple to use, provide step-by-step guidance, and, when combined with CPR, significantly increase the likelihood of recovery.

To support access to AEDs in the community, Southcoast provided funding support to **Damien's Food Pantry** in Wareham to support the **purchase and installation of an AED**, providing staff and patrons with access to this life-saving device. Southcoast also collaborated with the **New Bedford Health Department** and **New Bedford Parks and Recreation** to **purchase five AEDs**, which will be installed throughout the city in high-need areas and public parks, helping ensure a quick, life-saving response in public spaces. In addition, **two AEDs** were purchased and donated to **Bishop Stang High School** to support their school's sports fields, further expanding access to life-saving equipment in the community.

**South Coast Community Wellness Initiatives:** Southcoast supports community wellness initiatives and events that promote exercise and movement, such as local 5K walk/runs and fitness challenges. **In FY25, Southcoast provided support to and participated in events including the Nemasket Group 5K Walk/Run, local elementary school "Fun Runs," the Fairhaven Father's Day Road Race, the Aquidneck Island 10K, the New Bedford Half Marathon, and the Bike Newport 10-Spot Ride**, encouraging community members to engage in regular physical activity.

**Southcoast Food Donations & Drives:** Throughout FY25, Southcoast staff at Tobey Hospital partnered with the Community Health & Wellness Department to **collect and donate food items to Damien's Pantry**, supporting local families in need. In addition, the **Food Service team contributed over \$5,000 worth of food and essential items to the local pantries**, further strengthening resources for the community. Southcoast staff also lead a collection drive to support the **Eastbay Food Pantry** in Bristol, RI, extending their impact to neighboring communities.



United Way of Greater New Bedford: Wareham Mobile Markets: The **United Way of Greater New Bedford's Wareham Mobile Market** is a free, seasonal program designed to increase access to fresh, locally grown produce for working residents who may struggle to visit traditional food pantries. The market functions like a no-cost farmers market where individuals and families can select the fruits and vegetables they need.

During FY25, the Wareham Mobile Market **served 3,347 individuals**, including 604 children, across 929 households. Southcoast Health staff played an active role in supporting the program, contributing a total of **92 volunteer hours** throughout the market season.



My Brother's Keeper: During FY25, Southcoast Health continued its partnership with **My Brother's Keeper** by **supporting their food assistance program**, which provides healthy groceries at no cost to Southcoast residents in need. In addition to financial support, Southcoast staff volunteered alongside the MBK team to help prepare and deliver these essential food packages, further strengthening community connections and ensuring access to nutritious meals for residents.



Farm & Community Collaborative: Southcoast Health continued its support of the **Nourish Our Neighbors program through the Farm & Community Collaborative**, an initiative dedicated to alleviating food insecurity for local families. The program provides farm shares containing fresh fruits, vegetables, and essential groceries to families in need. Southcoast's contribution allowed 14 families to receive free farm shares for the 2025 season, helping to ensure access to nutritious, locally grown food.

Frogfoot Farm: **Frogfoot Farm**, operated by the Marion Institute, is a sustainable, community-focused farm that provides fresh, locally grown produce to support food security programs and farm-to-table initiatives across the South Coast.

Over the summer, Southcoast employees volunteered at the farm, assisting with harvesting crops and loading them onto trucks for delivery to Damien's Food Pantry. **Overall, the staff harvest totaled just over 600 pounds of produce**, ensuring that nutritious fruits and vegetables were accessible to community members relying on the local food pantry and strengthening both the local food system and community health.



Round the Bend Farm: **Round the Bend Farm** is a family-owned, sustainable farm located in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, dedicated to producing high-quality, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and other farm products. The farm focuses on environmentally responsible practices, supporting both community health and local food security. Over the summer, Southcoast employees volunteered at the farm, assisting with harvesting crops and supporting the distribution of fresh produce to the community.

YMCA Southcoast: Sharing the Harvest Farm & the Full Plate Project: **YMCA Southcoast's Sharing the Harvest Farm** grows fresh, local produce to support community food programs, while the **Full Plate Project** distributes these nutritious foods to families facing food insecurity, helping ensure access to healthy, seasonal meals across the South Coast. Throughout the year, Southcoast employees volunteered at the farm, assisting with harvesting crops, and also supported the Full Plate Project by helping prepare and distribute food to families in need, strengthening both community engagement and access to healthy foods.



Field to Fork Program: Southcoast's Community Health and Wellness team partnered with **Tufts Health Plan and Lane Garden Farm** to host the **Field to Fork Program**. This program included four events in the Fall River region, during which **100 bags of fresh produce** were distributed at each event. Each event lasted approximately two hours or until the food ran out. Held from February through June, these events provided community members with access to fresh, locally grown produce.



First Baptist Church: Community Supper: The **Community Supper at Fall River First Baptist Church** is a long-standing initiative that provides hot, nutritious meals to residents in need while fostering community connection and engagement. In support of this initiative, Southcoast employees and **Southcoast Ambassadors donated an evening of meals and volunteered their time** to serve food, helping ensure that community members enjoyed both nourishment and a welcoming, supportive environment.



United Neighbors of Fall River: Crock Pot Initiative: The **Crock Pot Initiative** through **United Neighbors of Fall River**, is a community-driven program that helps local families facing food insecurity prepare warm, home-cooked meals. Through the initiative, volunteers and community members work together to distribute crockpots and provide guidance on preparing nutritious meals, fostering both food access and community connection.

Southcoast supported this initiative by allocating funds that supported the purchase of **50 crockpots**, enabling more families to participate and benefit from the program.

## Coalitions & Board Membership

Southcoast holds an active seat on the **Community Advisory Board (CAB)** of the **Southcoast Food Policy Council (SFPC)**, led by the Marion Institute. The Council connects and convenes local food producers, consumers, and community leaders, advocating for policies and systems that strengthen the regional food system, improve community health, and reduce food insecurity.

In addition to CAB participation, Southcoast staff actively **serve on local community boards** during work hours to support our community partners. Currently, staff engage with the **Marion Institute, My Brother's Keeper, Coastal Foodshed, YMCA Southcoast, The Southcoast Ambassadors, the United Way of Greater New Bedford and Mo Life**, to advance regional initiatives and strengthen community partnerships.

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## FY25 Goals & Outcomes:

- Goal 1: Increase the number of individuals served at the Wareham Mobile Markets by 3%
  - ♦ The number of individuals served (3,347) at the Wareham Mobile Market increased by over 100% from last fiscal (599).
- Goal 2: Develop or support the creation of a Cooking and Crockpot program in the Greater Fall River to support the community.
  - ♦ A Cooking and Crockpot initiative was successfully developed and launched in the Greater Fall River area through United Neighbors of Fall River, providing community members with practical nutrition education, hands-on cooking skills, and strategies for preparing healthy, affordable meals. The program increased access to resources that support healthier eating habits and strengthened community engagement around food and wellness.

## FY26 Goals:

- Goal 1: In collaboration with community partners, promote nutrition and healthy habits by delivering nutrition and wellness education opportunities.
- Goal 2: Increase and develop through the Community Wellness Program, culturally and linguistically appropriate health education curriculums.

## Community Partners

| Bike Newport                                          | My Brother's Keeper                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bishop Stang High School                              | MO Life                               |
| Citizens for Citizens                                 | Nemasket Group                        |
| Coastal Foodshed                                      | New Bedford Health Department         |
| Damien's Food Pantry                                  | New Bedford Parks and Recreation      |
| Eastbay Food Pantry                                   | Round the Bend Farm                   |
| Fall River Housing Authority                          | Southcoast Ambassadors                |
| Farm & Community Collaborative                        | Southcoast Food Policy Council (SFPC) |
| First Baptist Church of Fall River                    | Tufts Health Plan                     |
| Frogfoot Farm                                         | United Neighbors of Fall River        |
| Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community | United Way of Greater New Bedford     |
| Lane Gardens                                          | YMCA Southcoast                       |
| The Marion Institute                                  |                                       |

## Program: Maternal Child Health Education & Outcomes

Maternal and child health is a critical area of public health that emphasizes the well-being of mothers, infants, children, and adolescents. It encompasses key factors such as access to quality prenatal care, safe maternal health outcomes, healthy child development, and preventive measures like immunizations. Ensuring equitable access to pediatric healthcare services and early interventions supports both physical and emotional health during formative years. Strengthening maternal and child health not only improves individual outcomes but also fosters healthier families and communities across generations.

*Populations Served: Families with a focus on maternal and child health, including pregnant individuals, parents, fathers, siblings, and newborns.*

### Southcoast Health Initiatives & Collaborations:

#### Baby Cafés

The Southcoast **Baby Cafés** are a welcoming, free community space that supports breastfeeding and early parenting. Open to parents and caregivers, the Baby Cafés provide peer support, education, and resources in a relaxed and friendly environment. These Cafés are overseen by trained lactation consultants and peer counselors, participants receive one-on-one guidance, group support, and practical tips to help with breastfeeding challenges, infant nutrition, and overall newborn care.

During FY25, three Baby Café sessions were held each week, each lasting two hours, in Dartmouth and Fall River, with **810 mothers in attendance** (not including support people or infants). This represents a **20.2% increase from FY24** (674 mothers). Increased participation helps promote healthier infants, strengthens family well-being, and fosters a more informed and connected community.

In addition to the increase in attendance at Southcoast Baby Cafés, the team **supported the training and expansion of Baby Cafés** across the South Coast region by providing guidance, resources, and drop-in teaching for **New Bedford Community Health**, helping them offer **multi-lingual, primarily Spanish-speaking Baby Cafés** to better meet the needs of the community at their location and at other community-based sites.



## Community Education

Southcoast offers **childbirth education classes** to prepare expectant parents for labor, delivery, and early parenthood. Led by experienced nurses and educators, the classes provide evidence-based instruction, practical skills, and supportive guidance on labor, pain management, postpartum care, newborn care, and breastfeeding. Classes are offered in-person and virtually and are open to the public, with no requirement to deliver at a Southcoast facility.

During FY25, **273 couples** attended the childbirth education series, which is an **increase of 35.1%** from FY24 (202 couples). By reaching more families, the classes help improve maternal and infant health outcomes, reduce anxiety around childbirth, and foster stronger family preparedness, ultimately supporting healthier, more resilient communities.



Southcoast offers **breastfeeding classes** to help new and expectant parents develop the skills and confidence needed for successful breastfeeding. Led by lactation consultants and nurses, classes cover latch and positioning, feeding schedules, common challenges, pumping, and milk storage. Classes are open to the public, available in-person and virtually, and do not require delivery at a Southcoast facility.

During FY25, **185 couples** attended a breastfeeding class, which is an **increase of 69.7%** from FY24 (109 couples). An increase in attendance at these classes positively impacts the community by equipping more parents with the knowledge and skills to successfully breastfeed, which supports infant nutrition and health, strengthens parent-infant bonding, and promotes long-term family well-being.



Southcoast's **Car Seat Safety Program**, funded through the Massachusetts Child Passenger Safety Education and Assistance Initiative, provides free car seats, safety checks, and education to families in need. Through this program, certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPST) ensure that caregivers receive the right seat for their child, learn proper installation techniques, and understand ongoing safety practices. During FY25, **11 car seats and car seat checks** were provided by the CPSTs. In addition, we partner with local organizations and agencies to host community car seat check events, expanding access to safety resources and support for families across the region. By combining access to equipment with hands-on education, we aim to reduce childhood injuries and keep our community's youngest passengers safe on the road.

## Strategic Partnership Program

For FY25, the **Sacred Birthing Village (SBV)** received funding through the Strategic Partnership Program to support their work in enhancing maternal and infant health outcomes for BIPOC communities. SBV serves as a maternal restorative sanctuary—a space for Black, Indigenous, and all Women of Color to remember, reclaim, and rise in their sacred power.

In addition, SBV supports Southcoast by providing insight on hospital policies and procedures around birthing supports and recommending strategies to improve the overall delivery experience. Through these efforts, SBV helps promote healthy pregnancies, strengthen parent-infant bonds, and improve maternal and infant health outcomes.

## Community Engagement Support

Parenting Teens Program: The Community Wellness Team provides ongoing support and supplemental health education each month to participants in the **Parenting Teens Program** at New Bedford High School, helping young parents build the knowledge and skills needed to support their own health and the well-being of their children. This partnership offers critical guidance during a pivotal time in participants' lives, fostering confidence, healthy decision-making, and stronger family foundations. To ensure inclusivity and accessibility, the team also delivers the class in Spanish, allowing participants whose primary language is Spanish to fully engage and benefit from the learning experience.

In January 2025, Southcoast hosted a **Resource Fair** for participants of the Teen Parent Program, providing an opportunity for young parents to connect directly with community organizations offering essential support and services. The event featured partners such as local medical providers, the United Way Family Resource Center, pediatric dentistry programs, and organizations offering baby supplies and other family resources. This collaborative effort helped ensure that young parents could easily access the tools, care, and community connections needed to support their families' health and stability.

Community Events: **Healthy Kids Day** is a national initiative by the YMCA designed to improve health and well-being of children and families through engaging community events. Annual, Southcoast employees attend the local YMCA Southcoast's event engaging children with fun and educational activities designed to promote healthy habits, wellness, and overall well-being.



Women's Health & Menstrual Equity: **Women's health and well-being are integral to advancing maternal and child health**, serving as the foundation for strong families and healthier communities. By addressing the physical, emotional, and social needs of women, we not only improve maternal and infant outcomes but also promote long-term family stability and community wellness.

The **YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts Red Dress Event** is an annual awareness initiative focused on **women's heart health**. Through a **red dress fashion show**, the event educates women—particularly those from underserved communities—about cardiovascular risks and encourages health screenings. Local designers, businesswomen, and community members participate as models and designers, making the event both community-centered and stylish. **Southcoast Health financially supports the event and staff attend to engage with the community and provide educational resources.**



A key component of supporting women's health is ensuring **menstrual equity**, which is access to safe, affordable, and reliable menstrual products for all who need them. Lack of access can lead to missed work or school, increased health risks, and social stigma. By improving the **availability and distribution of menstrual products**, Southcoast and its partners help reduce barriers to health and dignity, empowering individuals to fully participate in daily life and maintain their overall well-being.

Annually, Southcoast Health hosts a **Menstrual Equity Awareness Collection Drive** to gather menstrual products, which are then donated to local community organizations for distribution throughout the community. In FY25, an estimated **17,320 menstrual products** were collected and donated to four community organizations: **United Neighbors of Fall River, the YWCA of SE MA, the Taunton Diversity Network, and the Women's Resource Center.**

In addition to the collection drive, Southcoast has taken steps to **provide free menstrual products in public-facing restrooms at all three hospital locations** and is an **active participant in the Coalition Against Period Poverty**, supporting broader community efforts to improve menstrual equity.



Southcoast supported the **Women's Essentials Drive**, by partnering with **Walt's Mobile Closet** to provide essential items such as clothing, hygiene products, and personal care items to women in need throughout the community. Collected items are distributed directly to individuals and families via Walt's Mobile Closet, helping to address immediate needs and promote dignity, health, and well-being.

### Perinatal Health Equity Council

**The Perinatal Health Equity Council** is a cross-disciplinary team of Southcoast staff, strengthened by input and support from community experts, and committed to advancing equity for birthing people and their families. The council aims to (1) elevate patient-centered insights and lived experiences while identifying internal practices that contribute to disparities or create barriers for patients of color within the Southcoast Health System; (2) serve as a central hub for knowledge, collaboration, and action in Perinatal Health Equity, fostering a consistent exchange of ideas, resources, and support; and (3) provide outreach, education, and awareness to both internal and external Southcoast communities.

### Coalitions & Board Membership

Southcoast holds an active seat on the **Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness** Area CHNA and serves on its Executive Board Committee. One of the GNB Allies' main focuses is improving access to maternal health services in the region, and Southcoast contributes to advancing this priority through collaborative planning and initiatives.

In addition to coalition participation, Southcoast staff actively **serve on local community boards** during work hours to support our community partners. Currently, staff engage with the **Women's Center** and **YMCA Southcoast** to advance regional initiatives and strengthen community partnerships.

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### FY25 Goals & Outcomes:

- Goal 1: Increase the number of individuals who attend a Baby Café by 3%.
  - ◆ During FY25, there was a 20.2% increase in the number of individuals attending the Baby Café compared to FY24.
- Goal 2: Continue to strengthen partnership with Sacred Birthing Village to improve health care systems of care for birthing individuals during delivery.
  - In FY25, Southcoast Health selected the Sacred Birthing Village as a Strategic Partner to support initiatives focused on maternal and infant health outcomes.

### FY26 Goals:

- Goal 1: Increase the number of individuals who attend a Baby Café by 5%.
- Goal 2: Increase the number of menstrual products collected and donated to the community by 3%.

## Community Partners

| Birth to Third Partnership—New Bedford                 | People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE) |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Community Economic Development Center (CEDC)           | Sacred Birthing Village (SBV)               |
| Friends of Jack Foundation                             | Taunton Diversity Network (TDN)             |
| Greater New Bedford Allies for Health & Wellness       | United Neighbors of Fall River              |
| The Health Equity & Early Development (HEED) Coalition | United Way of Greater New Bedford           |
| Meeting Street                                         | Walt's Mobile Closet                        |
| New Bedford Community Health                           | The Women's Center                          |
| New Bedford Health Department                          | Women's Resource Center                     |
| New Bedford Public Schools                             | YMCA Southcoast                             |
| New Beginnings Program                                 | YWCA of SE MA                               |

## Expenditures

In FY25, Southcoast contributed **\$55.6 million** in total community benefit expenditures, representing **4.84% of the total Net Patient Service Revenue (NPSR)** reported for the fiscal year. NPSR reflects the revenue earned from patient care services after contractual allowances and discounts. Total community benefit expenditures include financial assistance, unreimbursed costs of Medicaid and other means-tested government programs, community health improvement initiatives, subsidized health services, health professions education, research, and community-building activities.

This increase reflects improvements in reporting, data collection, and attribution methodologies rather than a material increase in spending. While total dollar amounts may rise due to inflation and higher salary costs, underlying investment levels and programmatic priorities remain consistent.

|                             |                                             | FY24          | FY25                |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Community Benefits Programs | <b>Direct Expenses</b>                      | \$29,307,575  | <b>\$39,247,917</b> |
|                             | DoN Community-Based Health Initiative Funds | \$0           | \$112,320           |
|                             | Other Leveraged Resources                   | \$228,569.64  | \$915,295           |
| Net Charity Care            |                                             | \$13,420,643  | \$15,420,643        |
|                             | <b>Total Expenditures</b>                   | \$41,929,034  | <b>\$55,583,078</b> |
|                             | Net Patient Service Revenue (NPSR)          | \$994,599,492 | \$1,148,901,437     |

## Contact Information

### **Contact Information:**

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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 Health makes the annual Community Benefits Report available on the website, along with an archive of reports from prior years.  
<https://www.southcoast.org/community/>