

Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Implementation Plans Polk County 2023–2025





BayCare's mission
is to improve the health
of all we serve through
community-owned services
that set the standard
for high-quality,
compassionate care.



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Letter from the Leaders

What you'll find in these pages is a manifestation of BayCare's mission to improve the health of all we serve.

In 2022, our hospitals in Polk County and across BayCare joined with the All4HealthFL Collaborative for a second time to engage with our communities to make sure, as we plan our Community Benefit investments for the next three years, we're directing them to where it'll make a difference.

The process is called conducting a community health needs assessment (CHNA). The Collaborative, including BayCare, AdventHealth, Bayfront Health St. Petersburg, Tampa General Hospital, Moffitt Cancer Center, Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital and the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas and Polk counties, worked together to collect and review the region's health data and to also listen to our residents to develop collective impact goals to increase the chance of improving health outcomes.

In 2022, that listening involved hearing from Polk County residents, community leaders and other key advocates. The listening helped further illuminate the health needs data, showing which needs were most pressing and where the greatest needs were so that BayCare's Polk County hospitals could develop coordinated strategies to address those needs. This book lays out those implementation plans, including advancements in clinical service, education and policy interventions.

These plans build on BayCare's longstanding commitment to Community Benefit work, which in 2021 totaled more than \$497 million and included \$91 million in charity care to ensure high-quality, timely and appropriate care for those who otherwise couldn't afford it. Every day, we're working hard to improve the health and well-being of our communities, and we know there's more work to do.

We encourage you to use this summary to gain a better understanding of our community's needs and the commitment of Bartow Regional Medical Center, Winter Haven Hospital and Winter Haven Women's Hospital to address those most pressing unmet health needs.

Thank you to all who contributed to our 2022 CHNA process. We look forward to sharing successes of the implementation plan and continuing community conversations throughout the 2023-2025 CHNA cycle.

Sincerely,

Lou Galdieri
Co-Chief Operating Officer, BayCare

Karen Kerr
President, Bartow Regional Medical Center



Lou Galdieri



Karen Kerr

Listening to Polk County

Bartow Regional Medical Center and Winter Haven Hospitals recognize that Polk County's health improvement plan must start with a deep understanding of the issues affecting health and the community resources available to improve related health outcomes.

To provide as complete an overview as possible of the health behaviors and perceptions of Polk County, a 59-question community survey was developed. The primary purpose of using a community survey was to ensure that the voices of Polk County residents were heard, engaging those most impacted by health issues where they live, work, play and raise families. The survey addressed health and lifestyle behaviors, quality of life and access to care.

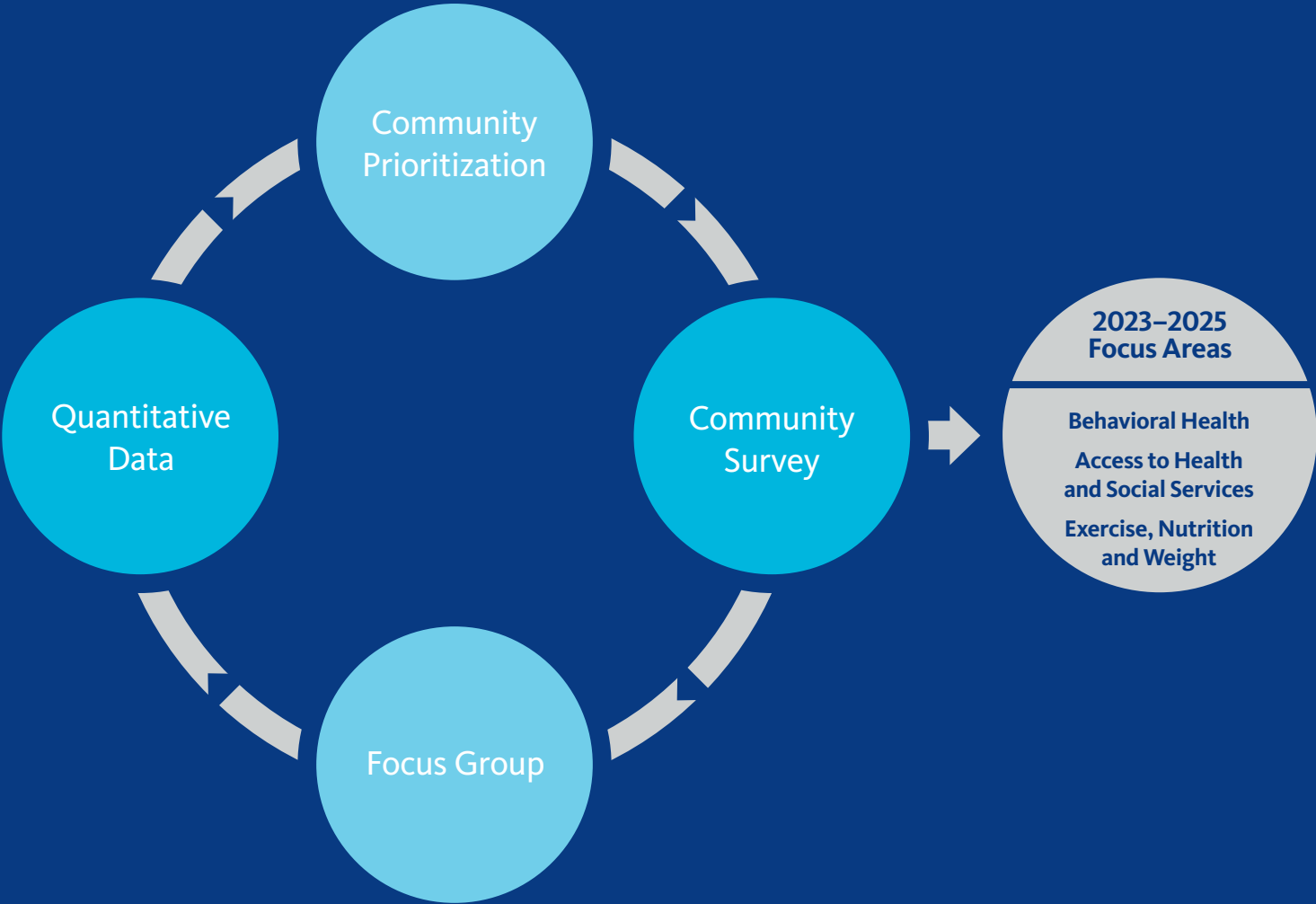
The community survey used validated and reliable questions obtained from state and national needs assessments, passed a rigorous literacy review and was available in English, Spanish and Creole. In addition, the All4HealthFL Collaborative engaged a health equity expert to validate the verbiage of survey questions and responses to ensure equity for all respondents.

Intentional and strategic outreach was integral in getting a robust and representative response rate. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, surveys were primarily deployed electronically, using either a direct link or QR code for easy access. The collaborative was prepared for this and leveraged our partners across the county to ensure that the voices of our residents were heard. Even during the challenges the pandemic posed, the survey was disseminated in libraries, churches, food pantries and community centers. This strategy allowed for engagement of low-income, minority and medically underserved populations. Through the collaborative's efforts, nearly every zip code in Polk County was represented in the survey collection.



After Hurricane Ian tore through Polk County, the team at Winter Haven Hospital's Center for Behavioral Health worked with the Florida Department of Children and Families to provide on-site emotional support and access to mental health resources at the Federal Emergency Management Agency's disaster recovery center.

Identifying Priorities



Identifying Priorities

Six health issues were identified after a review of local community opinions from the 2022 CHNA survey, focus groups and related secondary health statistics data analysis:

- Access to health and social services
- Behavioral health (mental health and substance misuse)
- Cancer
- Exercise, nutrition and weight
- Heart disease and stroke
- Immunization and infectious disease

In addition, focus groups comprised of advocates and community partners convened to gain greater insight into these health issues. Guided by facilitators, the focus groups used a participatory analysis technique that engaged participants in guided discussion around specific topics using data placemats. The placemats displayed thematically grouped data, charts and graphs in an easy-to-understand format. Discussions were guided by four general questions:

- What social determinants are impacting this health issue?
- From your perspective, what has caused this to improve/worsen/remain the same?
- What efforts have you experienced that are working and how?
- From your perspective, what community/systems-level aspects need to change to positively impact lives and improve data?

Following the guided discussions, Healthy Communities Institute (HCI) led the participants in a prioritization exercise. Each of the six health issues was presented for ranking based on the scope and severity of the issue and the ability to impact. Each attendee was provided a link to an online voting system and allowed a single vote in each category for each health issue. The top three focus areas for the 2023–2025 CHNA implementation plans are:

- Access to health and social services
- Behavioral health (*including mental health and substance misuse*)
- Exercise, nutrition and weight

The three remaining health needs—cancer, heart disease and stroke, and immunization and infectious disease—are significant, but they aren't directly addressed in the 2023-2025 implementation plan strategies. However, these health issues will continue to be impacted through existing BayCare hospital strategies for clinical excellence as well as other efforts in the community, including collaborative efforts with partners such as the Florida Department of Health in Polk County.

Improving Health Is More Than Just Accessing Health Care



Policies and Programs



Health Factors



Health Outcomes

Health Behaviors (30%)

- Tobacco Use
- Diet and Exercise
- Alcohol and Drug Use
- Sexual Activity

Clinical Care (20%)

- Access to Care
- Quality of Care

Social and Economic Factors (40%)

- Education
- Employment
- Income
- Family and Social Support
- Community Safety

Physical Environment (10%)

- Air and Water Quality
- Housing and Transit

Length of Life (50%)

Quality of Life (50%)

Developing a Strategic Implementation Plan

Through the comprehensive CHNA process, Bartow Regional Medical Center and Winter Haven Hospitals have a better understanding of the community's health and opportunities for improvement. In addition, we recognize that the CHNA isn't perfect, nor does it reflect each person's unique health experience. In many cases, the assessment validated some of what we already knew about the community, and in other cases we learned about significant shortfalls in the community's health. There are many needs in Polk County, some of which are reflected in disparities of race, ethnicity, income, geography and education.

Because of our commitment to improving the health and well-being of our Polk County residents, the Bartow Regional Medical Center Board of Directors and the Winter Haven Hospitals Board of Trustees approved strategies to drive health improvement and approved their respective 2023-2025 implementation plans.

The 2023–2025 implementation plans for Bartow Regional Medical Center and Winter Haven Hospitals were thoughtfully developed to leverage hospital and community resources, while also working collaboratively across multiple sectors to engage new community partners. To align with population and public health best practices and acknowledge that improving health is more than just accessing health care, the plan includes a strong and directed focus on the social determinants that impact health.



Upon discharge, patients at BayCare hospitals who self-identify as food insecure are offered a “Healing Bag,” which includes a two- to three-days’ supply of food plus information about other food resources in the community.



Behavioral Health

Behavioral health includes mental health, substance misuse and addiction intervention including prevention. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community. Mental health problems and substance use disorders sometimes occur together. This is because:

- Mental health and substance use disorders share some underlying causes, including changes in brain composition, genetic vulnerabilities and early exposure to stress or trauma.
- Mental health problems can sometimes lead to alcohol or drug use, as some people with a mental health problem may misuse these substances as a form of self-medication.
- Certain illegal drugs can cause people with an addiction to experience one or more symptoms of a mental health problem.

In Polk County, mental health and substance use have consistently been identified in both the primary and secondary data as a top health priority. Domestic violence rates and unintentional injuries remain significantly higher than the state rate. Suicide rates remain steady and are higher than the state rate. Disparities of age and income exist in those seeking, but unable to get, mental health treatment in these communities.

Behavioral Health Goal

Work to elevate the community's understanding of behavioral health needs and support investment in appropriate and related services.

Objective:

By December 31, 2025, use an equity lens to implement a multifaceted, cross-sector behavioral health campaign to reduce stigma while increasing access to resources.



An UthMpack Polk teen gets a firsthand look at what it takes to run a hospital on a group tour at Bartow Regional Medical Center. The group is dedicated to empowering teens to make healthy lifestyle choices, including avoiding alcohol, tobacco and drug use.



1 in 5 American adults
will experience a mental illness
in a given year

Behavioral Health In Polk County

19%

Residents who report a depression diagnosis¹

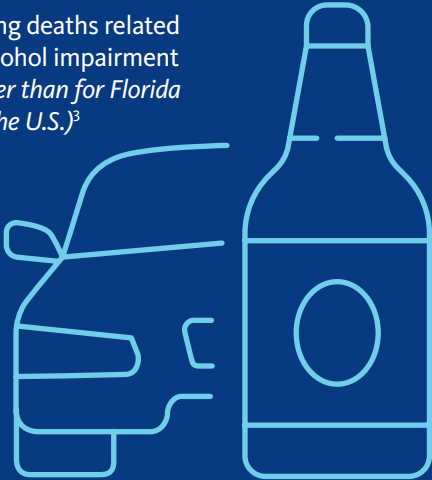


32.6

Drug overdose deaths per 100,000 population (higher than for Florida and the U.S.)²

25%

Driving deaths related to alcohol impairment (higher than for Florida and the U.S.)³



13%

Adults who binge drink⁴



960



Residents for every one mental health provider (250:1 among top U.S. performers)³

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019. Population Level Analysis and Community Estimates.

²Florida Health Community Health Assessment Resource Tool Set, 2020. Substance Use Dashboard: Overdoses.

³Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2020. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.

⁴Florida Health Community Health Assessment Resource Tool Set, 2019. Adults who engage in heavy or binge drinking.

Behavioral Health

Impact Objectives

- Launch a public awareness and resource campaign regionwide to break child mental health stigmas and educate families and advocates
- Provide mental health first aid training to at least 100 community members annually
- Implement strategies to educate on tobacco and vaping dangers in Polk County
- Explore community partnerships to expand behavioral health services and increase access to care for underserved residents of Polk County
- Promote behavioral health education and community-level resources through an awareness campaign

BayCare's Commitment to the Community

BayCare has a longstanding commitment to supporting the community's behavioral health needs and is currently West Central Florida's largest provider of services. BayCare is committed to addressing the behavioral health needs of Polk County residents through offering respite beds for homeless residents discharged from the hospital for behavioral health-related conditions and conducting mental health first aid (MHFA) training for partners that may interact with individuals in mental health crisis. BayCare also has taken the lead in addressing a lack of access to behavioral health support, from establishing a new psychiatric residency program to investing in additional behavioral health staff and inpatient facilities. BayCare also worked with community partners to launch Tampa Bay Thrives and helps underwrite efforts to expand behavioral health access in the community.



Photo of Lake Wales mural by BayCare team member Shirley Brandt.

Access to Health and Social Services

Access to comprehensive, quality health care services is important for promoting and maintaining health, preventing and managing disease, reducing unnecessary disability and premature death, and achieving health equality for all Americans. Health and social services influence quality of life by addressing social needs related to education, workforce development, social welfare, housing and reliable, high-quality health care.

Access to health care services can be disproportionately affected by variables such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geography, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and/or disability status. It requires gaining entry into the health care system (*usually through insurance coverage*), geographic availability of needed health care services, ability to receive services when needed and finding a health care provider the patient can communicate with and trust. Access to health care impacts one's overall physical, social and mental health status and quality of life.

In Polk County, both primary and secondary data indicate that access is a high health priority for the community. The county is a provider shortage area for primary care, dental and mental health providers, meaning there are too few providers compared to the number of residents.

Access to Health and Social Services in Polk County

Increase access to timely, affordable and appropriate health and social services for all residents.

Objective:

By December 31, 2025, expand access to health and social services through identification, screening and referral of underserved community members to address social determinants of health and their impact on health outcomes.



A Bartow Regional Medical Center team member welcomes students during a back-to-school event. Participants received a hands-on and behind-the-scenes look at our operating room as they also received school supplies.

Access to Health and Social Services in Polk County

37%

Low-income residents who don't have a personal doctor, compared to 27.8% of all residents³



Barriers for those who can't get medical care:

64%

Cost¹



36%

Low-income residents who don't have insurance compared with 21% of all residents (*higher than Florida and the U.S.*)²



60%

Getting an appointment¹



11%

Parents who reported they couldn't get needed medical care for their child in the past year¹



44%

Survey respondents who went to the ER for a reason other than an emergency or life-threatening situation¹



¹Community Health Needs Assessment Community Survey, 2022.

²United States Census Bureau, 2021. Health insurance coverage status by ratio of income to poverty level in the past 12 months by age.

³FL CHARTS, 2019. Adults who have a personal doctor.

Access to Health and Social Services

Impact Objectives

- Leverage partnership with FindHelpFlorida.com to improve connections to community resources and close the loop of referrals in Polk County
- Expand access to affordable medications through support of the Medication Assistance Program
- Increase access to health care, health insurance options and community resources through support of health care navigator services
- Expand access to screening and educational opportunities through support of Faith Community Nursing and its congregational networks
- Improve access to health care through support of increased transportation resources
- Incorporate Z codes into BayCare's electronic medical record system that can identify and monitor social determinants of health that impact our patients' quality of life
- Expand collaboration with the Neighborhood Service Center
- Continue Bartow Regional Medical Center's existing partnership with Bartow Church Service Center by supporting the expansion of its food pantry and other supportive services
- Partner with Gospel Inc. to support a director for its wellness clinic while also contributing to the expansion of its food pantry
- Collaborate with Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine to support a new clinic serving Bartow Regional Medical Center's general public
- Continue collaboration with The Mission of Winter Haven to expand its existing food pantry system

BayCare's Commitment to the Community

BayCare's commitment to addressing barriers to health care and social services for Polk County residents includes supporting free clinics, partnering with FindHelpFlorida.com, an online resource to connect individuals to services and resources, and offering transportation assistance for disadvantaged individuals to receive follow-up care, among other efforts. While several of the current activities will continue from the 2020–2022 implementation plans, BayCare is eager to incorporate additional opportunities to deepen the impact of our access to services work in Polk County.



Exercise, Nutrition and Weight

Physical activity and proper nutrition are key drivers in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. The combination of these drivers decreases the likelihood of stroke, high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, depression and some cancers, and is a contributing factor in the prevention of many other health problems.

Obesity affects one in five children and one in three adults and costs the U.S. \$173 billion (*about \$530 per person*) annually. Efforts to improve weight must include a focus not only on individual behaviors, but on policy and environmental changes from tackling root causes of food insecurity to school-based interventions to safe places to be active outdoors. Primary and secondary data sources elevated physical activity, nutrition and weight as a high health priority for Polk County.

Exercise, Nutrition and Weight Goal

Pursue policy, systems and environmental change to maintain or increase the number of residents with healthy behaviors and weight while ensuring access to nutritious and reliable food sources.

Objective:

By December 31, 2025, improve overall health through interventions that are inclusive of health and nutrition education, screenings, exercise initiatives and place-based food access.

BayCare's Commitment to the Community

BayCare has a unique and abiding commitment to addressing food insecurity across Polk County. The Feeding Minds school-based pantry program in partnership with Feeding Tampa Bay supports seven school sites that provide food free of cost to students and their families. BayCare also has incorporated Healing Bags into our system of care, screening all patients for food insecurity and offering a two- to three-day supply of nonperishable foods and a connection to long-term food sources upon discharge. And questions about food insecurity are being incorporated into our system's routine patient screening questionnaires so we can help connect patients with resources through FindHelpFlorida.org. While these current activities will continue from the 2020–2022 implementation plans, BayCare is eager to incorporate additional opportunities to deepen the impact of our food insecurity and related work in Polk County.

Exercise, Nutrition and Weight in Polk County

23%

Children who live in households at or below the poverty level (*higher than for Florida*)²



36%

Adults who are obese (*higher than for Florida and the U.S.*)⁵



79%

Residents who don't eat enough fruits and vegetables every day¹



86%

High school students who don't have sufficient vigorous physical activity⁴

13%



Residents who report being food insecure (*higher than for Florida*)³

32%



Those who have diabetes and are food insecure¹

¹Community Health Needs Assessment Community Survey, 2022.

²FL CHARTS, 2020. Individuals Below Poverty Level (ages 0-17).

³FL CHARTS, 2019. Food Insecurity Rates.

⁴FL CHARTS, 2020. Florida High School Youth Risk Behaviors.

⁵Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019. Population Level Analysis and Community Estimates.

Exercise, Nutrition and Weight

Impact Objectives

- Expand the Healing Bag program as a standard of care by screening every patient for food insecurity using the two-question validated USDA Food Insecurity screener and providing nonperishable food upon discharge
- Through a partnership with Feeding Tampa Bay, continue to provide access to food and other services for students and their families at seven schools across Polk County
- Provide funding to support a position for health care partnerships at Feeding Tampa Bay
- Expand access to healthy food for people with chronic conditions who are experiencing food insecurity by exploring and implementing a food clinic that offers wrap-around services
- Continue the BayCare Kids Wellness and Safety team's work with children's obesity prevention programs, nutritional workshops and large-scale community events
- Deepen the Community Health team's multidisciplinary partnerships across the service area to include prevention-based screening and/or classes
- Improve health outcomes for community members with prediabetes or type 2 diabetes by partnering with local free clinics to increase diabetes education and support for Polk County residents through an on-site Healthy Living Coach
- Explore community partnerships to encourage exercise and nutrition among Polk County residents
- Partner with the YMCA to provide education, support and prevention strategies for diabetes through the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)
- Partner with the YMCA to provide education, support and physical activity strategies to prevent falls in at-risk populations through the Enhance® Fitness program

Hospital Information



Bartow Regional Medical Center *Bartow, Florida*

Bartow Regional Medical Center, part of BayCare, is a 72-bed acute care hospital serving South Lakeland, Bartow, Fort Meade, Mulberry, rural south Polk County and northern Hardee County. Physicians and health care professionals at Bartow Regional Medical Center provide a variety of services. The hospital is equipped with four surgery suites and two gastroenterology suites. The emergency services department is staffed with board-certified emergency physicians and specially trained nurses, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to treat all types of emergency situations. The hospital is located at 2200 Osprey Boulevard in Bartow, Florida. For more information: BayCare.org/BRMC




Winter Haven Hospital *Winter Haven, Florida*

Founded in 1926, Winter Haven Hospital has an outstanding reputation for superior, patient-centered care. The 447-bed hospital concentrates on the treatment of heart disease, cancer, stroke and behavioral health. The hospital also provides emergency care, outpatient diabetes education, endoscopy services, neurological, orthopedic and in-patient rehabilitation, outpatient surgery and imaging services. Part of BayCare, the hospital is located at 200 Avenue F Northeast in Winter Haven, Florida. For more information: BayCare.org/WHH



Winter Haven Women's Hospital *Winter Haven, Florida*

Built in 1987, Winter Haven Women's Hospital is a 61-bed facility dedicated to the unique needs of women and newborns. The hospital, which is part of BayCare, provides on-site obstetric services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and has a level II neonatal intensive care unit, education classes, an outpatient surgery center and a breast and imaging center. The hospital is located at 101 Avenue O Southeast in Winter Haven, Florida. For more information: BayCare.org/WHWH



The 2023–2025 implementation plan for Bartow Regional Medical Center and Winter Haven Hospitals was thoughtfully developed to leverage hospital and current community resources, while also working collaboratively across multiple sectors to engage new community partners. To align with population and public health best practices and acknowledge that improving health is more than just accessing health care, the plans include a strong and directed focus on the social determinants that impact health.

