

Community Health Improvement Plan

Mercy Hospital Ozark
Fiscal Year 2026



Your life is our life's work.





Our Mission

As the Sisters of Mercy before us,
we bring to life the healing ministry of Jesus
through our compassionate care
and exceptional service.

Our Values

Dignity
Excellence
Justice
Service
Stewardship

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Introduction

Mercy Hospital Ozark is a 25-bed critical access facility located in Franklin County, Arkansas. As part of Mercy, a Catholic health system headquartered in St. Louis, the hospital is dedicated to meeting the health needs of rural communities in the River Valley region. Mercy Ozark offers a range of services, including inpatient care, outpatient services, emergency care, and the Mercy Swing Bed program, which provides skilled nursing and rehabilitation for individuals recovering from strokes, illnesses, injuries, or surgeries.

The hospital serves Franklin County and surrounding areas, with a population of approximately 17,489. The county is largely rural, with strong community ties but faces persistent challenges such as limited transportation options, housing insecurity, and access to specialty care.

Mercy Hospital Ozark is actively engaged in community-building efforts, participating in local boards, events, and partnerships that promote health and well-being. These efforts reflect Mercy's mission to deliver compassionate care and exceptional service, looking beyond the walls of the hospital to improve the lives of those it serves.



Introduction *(continued)*

Mercy's mission is to deliver "compassionate care and exceptional service" to every community member. In alignment with this mission, Mercy Hospital Ozark completed a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in 2024, which was formally adopted by the Board of Directors in April 2025. The CHNA was developed in collaboration with Franklin County Health Departments, local organizations, and community stakeholders, including underserved populations.

This Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) outlines Mercy Hospital Ozark's strategy to address identified priorities through coordinated programs, partnerships, and evaluation efforts. Together, the CHNA and CHIP provide a framework for improving health outcomes and reducing disparities in Franklin County.

This summary also serves as documentation that Mercy Hospital Ozark is meeting IRS requirements for conducting a CHNA and CHIP. The full CHNA report is available electronically at mercy.net/about/community-benefits.

Introduction *(continued)*

The CHNA identified five top-priorities, and of the five, one has been chosen as a health need for the Mercy Hospital Perry community. We will strive diligently to address these needs with a Health Equity Lens over the next three years:



Behavioral Health

As always, we seek to develop a rich and rewarding network of partnerships with our neighbors. We welcome any thoughts you may have on ways to achieve our goal for a healthier community.

Improvement Plan by Prioritized Health Need



Community Health Improvement Plan | 2026





Prioritized Need #1: Behavioral Health

GOAL

Increase access to behavioral health services for uninsured and at-risk persons.





Prioritized Need #2: Behavioral Health

Program 1 of 2: Collaborative Care

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Supporting primary care providers (family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics & gynecology, and pediatrics) in providing mental and behavioral health services to patients in need. The model provides a behavioral care manager to interact directly with patients, perform assessments, initiate treatment, and communicate and collaborate with primary care physicians. Concert Health provides a psychiatric consultant who meets with care managers regularly, reviews patient charts, and makes recommendations for medication and ongoing treatment.

ACTIONS THE HOSPITAL INTENDS TO TAKE TO ADDRESS THE HEALTH NEED:

Mercy will continue training and educating providers on the use of the care approach, identify gaps in care, and refer patients to Concert Health.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT OF THESE ACTIONS (OBJECTIVES):

- Increase patient referrals by 5% each year
- Increase patient satisfaction assessment participation by 10% from previous CHIP cycle

PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES THE HOSPITAL PLANS TO COMMIT:

- Cost of coworker and clinician time, including Regional Resource Behavioral Health RNs and LPNs, and Patient RN Advocates
- Operational budgeted support as appropriate
- Indirect expenses related to EMR and clinic operations

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS:

- Mercy Behavioral Health Service Line Leadership
- Mercy Virtual Behavioral Health (vBH)
- Substance Abuse Recovery Program (SURP)



Prioritized Need #2: Behavioral Health

Program 2 of 2: Virtual Behavioral Health (vBH)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Mercy's Virtual Behavioral Health (vBH) program provides integrated, regional support for patients with behavioral health needs. Based out of local and centralized Ministry locations, vBH co-workers provide virtual and telephonic behavioral health assessments to establish patients' level of care, and facilitate referrals for inpatient, intensive outpatient (IOP), and outpatient services, as well as for basic social needs in their home communities. vBH also provides virtual psychiatric consults to help with medication stabilization related to the exacerbation of behavioral health conditions.

ACTIONS THE HOSPITAL INTENDS TO TAKE TO ADDRESS THE HEALTH NEED:

Operate a hub-based model of virtual care, where clinical vBH co-workers respond to incoming referrals, conduct telephonic behavioral health assessments, and facilitate outgoing referrals for ongoing diagnosis, treatment, and support. Collaborate with external partners and behavioral health service providers to ensure a strong regional network for care coordination and social service navigation.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT OF THESE ACTIONS (OBJECTIVES):

10% decrease in hospital readmissions and ED visits by FY28

PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES THE HOSPITAL PLANS TO COMMIT:

- Cost of coworker and clinician time, including Regional Resource Behavioral Health RNs and LPNs and Patient RN Advocates
- Operational budgeted support as appropriate
- Indirect expenses related to EMR and clinic operations

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS:

- Mercy Behavioral Health Service Line Leadership
- Mercy Virtual Behavioral Health (vBH)
- Substance Abuse Recovery Program (SURP)

Other Community Health Programs

Mercy Hospital Ozark conducts other community health programs not linked to a specific prioritized health need. These programs address a community health need and meet at least one of the following community benefit objectives: improve access to healthcare services, enhance the health of the community, advance medical or healthcare knowledge, or relieve or reduce government burden to improve health. The need for these programs was identified through documentation of demonstrated community need, a request from a public health agency or community group, or the involvement of an unrelated, collaborative tax-exempt or government organization as partners in the activity or program carried out for the express purpose of improving community health. Although this is not an exhaustive list, many of these programs are listed on the next page.

Other Community Health Programs (Continued)

Community Benefit Category	Program	Outcomes Tracked
Community Building – Workforce Development	Volunteen Program	Number of students
Financial & In-Kind Contributions	Community Building -Cash/In-kind Contributions	Persons served, cost of services
Health Professions Education FY25 Q4	Health professions student education nursing, imaging, therapy, pharmacy, medical student, lab, emergency medical technician and advanced practice nursing	Number of Students
Community Health Improvement Services	Flu Vaccines	Persons Served
	Mercy Transport Van	Cost of Services



Significant Health Needs Not Being Addressed

In any case of prioritization, there will be some areas of need that are identified that are not chosen as a priority. Because Mercy Hospital Ozark has limited resources, not every community need will be addressed. Throughout the CHNA process, the following need arose as a community concern. However, it will not be addressed as a top priority because other organizations are more appropriate to address this need,

- **Transportation**

Mercy will engage in collaborative efforts with community partners to improve transportation access by supporting referral pathways, resource navigation, and awareness of existing transit services. While recognizing transportation as a key barrier to health and well-being, Mercy will not lead these efforts, as local transit authorities and mobility-focused organizations are better positioned to drive sustainable solutions.

- **Affordable Housing**

Mercy will support efforts to address housing insecurity by connecting individuals and families to community-based housing resources and programs. While acknowledging the critical role of stable housing in overall health, Mercy will not lead these initiatives, as housing agencies and public health entities are best equipped to implement long-term, systemic solutions. Mercy will maintain partnerships to ensure community members have access to housing assistance information when needs are identified.

Now What

Next Steps

After carefully reviewing the data and mapping existing resources, Mercy Hospital Ozark is developing an implementation plan with evidence-based strategies. The plan will be submitted to a committee of appointed members from Mercy Hospital Ozark, for their approval. The final version of the CHNA and Implementation Plan will be available to the public on the Mercy Hospital Ozark website, **www.mercy.net/communitybenefits**.



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