

**Mercy Hospital**  
**Community Service Plan Executive Summary**  
**2019-2021**  
**Year Two Update (2020)**

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***We, at Catholic Health, humbly join together to bring Christ's healing mission and the mission of mercy of the Catholic Church expressed in Catholic health care to our communities.***

Catholic Health (CH) is an integrated health care delivery system with some of the region's finest health and human services agencies. CH includes six hospitals, three skilled nursing facilities, a regional home nursing service, hospice and a multiservice, community-based agency for persons with special needs. Under the sponsorship of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, CH serves hundreds of thousands of Long Islanders each year, providing care that extends from the beginning of life to helping people live their final years in comfort, grace and dignity.

***Selection of Community Health Priorities for 2019-2021***

As a faith-based organization, the interventions and outreach provided to the community is rooted in our mission and is part of the health care ministry of the Catholic Church. These programs address needs of the community and the New York State (NYS) Prevention Agenda priorities for 2019-2021 to improve the health and well-being of all Long Islanders and to promote health equity in all populations who experience disparities.

Mercy Hospital is a member of the Long Island Health Collaborative (LIHC), a grant-funded Population Health Improvement Program for Long Island. Collaborators include hospitals, Nassau and Suffolk County Health Departments, academic partners, community-based organizations, physicians, health plans, schools and libraries, local municipalities and other community partners who held a vested interest in improving community health and supporting the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Prevention Agenda.

In 2019, members of the LIHC reviewed extensive data sets selected from both primary and secondary data sources to identify and confirm prevention agenda priorities for the 2019-2021 community health needs assessment cycle. For detailed information about the data review, please refer to the hospital's Community Health Needs Assessment.

Community partners selected the following areas of focus for Long Island from the New York State Prevention Agenda priorities:

1. Prevent Chronic Disease  
Focus Area 4: Chronic Disease Preventive Care and Management

## 2. Promote Well-Being and Prevent Mental and Substance Use Disorders

### Focus Area 2: Mental and Substance Use Disorders Prevention

The health disparity that partners are focusing on is the inequities experienced by those in low-income neighborhoods. As such, low income—one social determinant of health—precludes members from these communities from accessing preventive and/or medical care due to their difficulty in affording copayments/deductibles (if insured) or care at all if they are uninsured. Additionally, financially-stressed individuals have difficulty affording nutritious foods, leaving them more vulnerable to poorer chronic disease management outcomes, since nutrition and diet play a pivotal role in almost every chronic disease.

Mercy Hospital partners with community-based organizations in select communities to hold culturally relevant chronic disease management educational programs.

Due to COVID-19, many outreach activities traditionally held in the community were paused in mid-March; however, some were offered as virtual events. Some outreach activities held in the community resumed fall 2020, when it was deemed appropriate and safe to do so.

### ***Summary of Interventions, Strategies and Community Outreach Activities***

#### ***Prevent Chronic Disease***

Goals and selected interventions concentrate on Focus Area 4: *Chronic Disease Preventive Care and Management*, with additional programming addressing other focus areas.

Interventions include:

- The Cultural Competency Health Literacy train-the trainer program (offered by the LIHC) concluded in January 2020.
- The Live Better public information campaign (developed and managed by LIHC) concluded in January 2020.
- To prevent illnesses, disease and other health problems, or to detect illness at an early stage, offer regularly scheduled preventive health screening in local communities, particularly those in medically-underserved communities, including blood pressure, body mass index (BMI), mammography, vein and mental health screenings
  - Mercy Hospital participated in eight outreach events between January and mid-March in collaboration with community partners, senior centers, rehabilitation centers, local libraries and health fairs serving more than 200 community members. In May, the hospital began virtual health education webinars for the community with physicians and specialists presenting. As of November 20 outreach presentations were offered.
  - The hospital offers free screening mammograms through a grant from Pink Aid. Pink Aid's mission is to help underserved local women survive breast cancer treatment with support and dignity, to provide screening to women in financial need and to empower breast cancer survivors to heal by helping and inspiring others. Screenings traditionally offered by Mercy in May were postponed due to COVID-19, but resumed in the fall, with screenings offered September 23,

- October 10 and 14. Eight free screenings were provided and five individuals were asked to return for follow-up care with a Mercy physician.
- A free prostate screening event was offered September 22 at the hospital, following all COVID-19 safety guidelines; two free screenings were provided.
  - A colon cancer education event and spin class was held outdoors on September 23, following all COVID-19 safety guidelines. The event had 20 participants.
- *Healthy Sundays'* community outreach events held in collaboration with churches, houses of worship and communities. Events are held three to five times per year and include health screenings, education and referrals to care along with select partners offering free or discounted services.
    - A Healthy Sundays event was held on October 24 in partnership with the Tzu Chi Foundation in East Willison at their monthly community food distribution. Thirty-one free flu vaccines were provided.
    - Mercy Hospital will offering a free, drive-through flu vaccination event on November 6.
- Monthly lectures, symposiums and education events.
    - Hempstead Senior Center hosted a 2 lectures with hospital experts providing education about stroke and diabetes with 65 community members participating in each.
    - Youth from S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, Inc. in Uniondale participated in Teddy Bear and First Aid clinics teaching health care and first aid. There were 2 sessions held in February with 25 students participating in each clinic. S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, Inc. is a community development organization specializing in youth and gang violence prevention and intervention.
    - In January, a presentation on Vaping—Myths and Facts was provided by a hospital emergency department physician to more than 200 students at Westbury Middle School.
    - Mercy Hospital offered weekly virtual presentations for the Village Green Senior Living Center in Levittown. Presentations in May, June and July covered mental health, colon cancer awareness, hyperbaric medicine, diabetes awareness and balance. Virtual programming continued in September.
    - Bi-weekly, Healthy Thursdays virtual presentations began in August in collaboration with the Friedberg Jewish Community Center (JCC) in Oceanside. Topics included mental health, diabetes, movement for health, sleep, falls prevention, breast health awareness, breast health screening and stroke. Healthy Thursdays will continue until December.
    - Meditation and relaxation was introduced at the JCC and presented every Tuesday for an hour beginning in September and will continue through December
- A virtual presentation was offered September 18 covering *Self-Care: Coping During These Stressful Times*. Presented by a hospital physician, topics included sleep habits, nutrition, movement and overall health.
- A monthly Diabetes Support group began in June and serves 26 community members.

- Identified inpatients are counseled on smoking cessation to reduce the risk of diseases caused by or affected by smoking as part of the Get With The Guidelines—American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's hospital-based quality improvement program.
- Mercy staff participated in the *Sock it to Sepsis* program, whereby staff donated new socks that were distributed to communities in need with sepsis education attached to each pair of socks.
- Mercy Hospital was the recipient of a grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation for its Family Care clinic to purchase medical equipment, furniture, purchase a transport van and hire drivers, and to cover medical interpreter certification for nurses at Mercy. The Family Care clinic offers sliding-scale or free services to low-income and uninsured community members.
  - Mercy also received an additional COVID-19-related grant in 2020 to provide food to more than 4,000 underserved community members distributed through community partners and farmers markets.
  - Mercy also distributed personal protective equipment, including masks, hand sanitizer, Clorox wipes and Clorox spray to communities and day care facilities in Nassau county areas of need.

### *Promote Well-Being and Prevent Mental and Substance Use Disorders*

Goals and selected interventions will concentrate on Focus Area 2: *Mental and Substance Use Disorders Prevention* with additional programming in Focus Area 1: *Promote Well-Being*.

Interventions include:

- Promotion of all programs, events and education offered by LIHC members that speak to the prevention of mental and substance use disorders.
- Participation in local task forces addressing opioid use disorders.
- Support groups bring together people who are going through or have gone through similar experiences. Mercy Hospital offers free support groups open to all community members and their families.
  - Most onsite support groups were postponed due COVID-19 restrictions; support groups resumed virtually in September.
- Distribution of CH's Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services Guide to CH partners within the hospital and at hospital outreach events.
- Mercy Hospital participates in the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)-sponsored National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.
  - The National Prescription Drug Take Back Day was cancelled in April 2020. The October event was not held at Mercy due to limited DEA resources. However, the event was held at CH's St. Catherine of Siena Hospital. Mercy plans to participate in 2021.

In addition to the two selected New York State priority and focus areas, Mercy Hospital also participates in community outreach activities that address other New York State Prevention Agenda priorities.

### ***Promote Healthy Women, Infants and Children***

- Mercy Hospital hosts a breastfeeding café to promote the health benefits of breastfeeding and provide peer support to nursing mothers.
- Free adult and pediatric CPR classes are offered.
  - Due to restrictions in place, the breastfeeding café and CPR classes have not been offered in 2020.

### ***Promote a Healthy and Safe Environment***

- Free, evidence-based fall prevention programs designed to improve balance and strength and help reduce falls and build confidence in older adults.
  - A virtual falls prevention education event facilitated by the Director of Therapeutic Services was offered in partnership with the Friedberg Jewish Community Center (JCC) in Oceanside.

### ***Prevent Communicable Diseases***

- Offer free flu vaccinations at events in underserved communities, at Healthy Sundays outreach, hospital health fairs and other community venues.
  - No vaccines were offered January through mid-March due to COVID-19 restrictions. Flu vaccinations resumed in the fall, with a free, drive-through flu vaccination program held on November 6.

To learn more about program data, projections and outcomes for the priority areas, please see the Mercy Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment and Attachment E found [at https://mercymedicalcenter.chsli.org/](https://mercymedicalcenter.chsli.org/).

### ***Living the Mission***

The CH mission is the driving force behind all community outreach activities. In addition to the interventions summarized above, Mercy Hospital, along with the CH Continuing Care Division, provide additional outreach programs that emphasize the health care ministry of the Catholic Church and social determinants of health.

### ***CH Mission and Social Determinants of Health***

- The American Heart Association Long Island Heart Walk was held virtually in 2020. Catholic Health staff collectively walked more than 23 million steps and was the official winner of the Long Island Steps Challenge.
- American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk was held virtually in 2020
- Programs that support staff resiliency such as Code Lavender and daily prayer

- Blood drives supporting New York Blood Services
  - Blood drives were held in January and March with 117 pints collected. Staff are being encouraged to donate at the New York Blood Services donation centers using the Mercy group code. Blood drives at the hospital will resume in November by appointment.
- Wounded Warrior Project Soldier Ride, supporting services and programs for wounded warriors. In 2020, the Soldier Ride became a virtual ride and fundraiser. Participants organized as a solo rider or with friends and family, in a socially safe way.
- EMS and EMT education events
  - In 2020, EMS education lectures were held virtually with a great community response. In June, 65 local EMS professionals attended a virtual presentation on Kawasaki Disease, and in July, there were 87 participants in a virtual presentation on stroke prevention. The September lecture covered trauma and Mercy's new cardiac catheterization lab and had 57 participants. Due to the remarkable response, virtual EMS lectures will be scheduled on a regular basis.
- Babies' and Children's Memorial and Community Burial of the Unborn
- Collection drives for food, clothing and school supplies
- Adopt-a-family collections at Christmas
- Bereavement camp for children (Good Shepherd Hospice) (not held in 2020)
- Continuous food collection/distribution (Maryhaven Center of Hope)

### ***Dissemination of the Plan to the Public***

The Mercy Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment and attachments are available to read or download from the hospital's website at <https://mercyhospitalcenter.chsli.org/>. Copies are also available upon request.

### ***Conclusion***

The Community Service Plan is intended to be a dynamic document. Using the hospital's strengths and resources Mercy Hospital, along with community partners, will continue to work to address health disparities and needs. The hospital strives to improve the overall health and well-being of individuals and families by expanding free health promotion and disease prevention education, screenings and programs in communities where they are most needed. Mercy Hospital is committed to living the CH mission, promoting good health, access to care and serving the community.