



Texas Children's Hospital  
**Community Health  
Needs Assessment**  
Implementation Strategy  
2026

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# Texas Children’s Hospital

Texas Children’s Hospital, a not-for-profit health care organization, is dedicated to advancing the health of children and women worldwide through leading patient care, education and research. Texas Children’s is consistently ranked as the top children’s hospital in Texas and among the best in the nation; its experts are recognized for their groundbreaking work in pediatric and women’s health. The hospital’s Medical Center campus includes the Lester and Sue Smith Legacy Tower, home of the nation’s #1-ranked Heart Center; the Mark A. Wallace Tower for outpatient clinics; the West Tower for inpatient care and the NICU; the Feigin Tower for pediatric research; and the Pavilion for Women, specializing in high-risk births. Texas Children’s also extends care through its West Campus in suburban Houston and The Woodlands, the region’s first hospital dedicated to children north of the city.

Beyond its hospitals, Texas Children’s is deeply committed to research and innovation through its partnership with Baylor College of Medicine and the Jan and Dan Duncan Neurological Research Institute. Ranked by U.S. News and World Report as one of the nation’s top 25 medical schools for research, Baylor College of Medicine is known for advancing the health of women, children and families through scientific discovery. The collaboration with this leading medical school in the areas of pediatrics, pediatric surgery and obstetrics and gynecology—and Texas Children’s work with Baylor physicians and researchers across hundreds of projects—enables continual improvements to treatments and outcomes for children and women throughout the community and beyond.

## Introduction

To fulfill the requirements of Section 501(r)(3) of the US Tax Code, not-for-profit hospitals must conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) at least once every three years. Shortly after, they are required to adopt an Implementation Strategy to address the health needs identified in the CHNA. The Texas Children’s Hospital 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment was approved by the Hospital’s Board of Directors in December 2025 and the Texas Children’s 2026-2028 Implementation Strategy was approved in May 2026.

## Community Served

Texas Children’s Hospital defines its community as “Greater Houston”, which consists of The Woodlands–Sugar Land Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). This U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-defined region is used by the U.S. Census Bureau and other agencies for statistical and planning purposes.

As of July 1, 2024, the Houston MSA’s estimated population is 7.8 million, making it the fifth-most populous metro area in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2025). The MSA encompasses nine counties; Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller across approximately 9,444 square miles of land, a footprint larger than several U.S. states (e.g., New Hampshire, New Jersey, Connecticut) (Texas Demographic Center, 2023; Understanding Houston, 2024).

## Methods

To assess the health needs of the community that Texas Children’s serves, a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) team was established, consisting of members of the Texas Children’s Community Benefits department, a PhD-level consultant and graduate students from UTHealth Houston School of Public Health and Rice University. The CHNA team embarked on a six-month effort to solicit and analyze input from persons representing the broad perspectives of Greater Houston, including those with specialized knowledge or expertise in public health.

The process incorporated key informant interviews, focus groups and community meeting surveillance in which trained team members observe and document themes, concerns and priorities expressed during public community meetings (i.e., neighborhood meetings, city council sessions, town halls) to inform a Community Health Needs Assessment. Together, these efforts provided a qualitative picture of the needs, assets and health concerns within Texas Children’s nine-county service area. Texas Children’s coupled these efforts with a review of community-level data to develop a comprehensive picture of the community needs in the Greater Houston area.

## Key Informant Interviews

The CHNA team engaged with 14 organizations across the Greater Houston area that represent the diverse views of the community. These organizations represented a variety of sectors that interface with vulnerable populations, including health and human service agencies, county and city health departments, nonprofit organizations, education partners, housing and food insecurity programs and behavioral health providers.

After building rapport with organizational representatives and describing the CHNA project, the team invited each partner to participate in a recorded virtual interview. Interviews lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes and were guided by a structured Key Informant Interview Guide (Appendix A) developed from prior CHNAs. Interviews were updated to include questions about current issues, including access to specialty care, food insecurity, maternal and child health, mental health and community resilience following extreme weather events.

Trained interviewers utilized probing questions to elicit detailed responses. All interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed using descriptive coding to identify recurring themes. Data were organized by sector, role and population served, allowing comparisons across counties and subgroups.

## Prioritized Community Health Needs

Texas Children’s Hospital identified four key health needs through key informant interviews, focus groups and community meeting surveillance. A team of graduate students from the UTHealth School of Public Health then utilized extant data sources and academic literature to investigate each of these health needs. The findings were brought before the hospital’s Community Benefits Executive Steering Team on September 3, 2025, for guidance on prioritization from the hospital’s network of care perspective.

The Community Benefits Executive Steering Team consists of physicians and administrative leaders across the Texas Children’s network of care, who provide critical guidance to the Community Benefits Department regarding community health issues. Their guidance is shaped by the institution’s mission to create a healthier future for children and women throughout our global community by leading in patient care, education and research. It is supported by the five core HEART values of Texas Children’s: humility, excellence, accountability, respect and trust. The Community Benefits Executive Steering Team prioritized our region’s key community health issues in the following order:

1. Mental and Behavioral Health
2. Social Drivers of Health
  - a. Food Insecurity and Nutrition
  - b. Economic Stability
3. Maternal Health
4. Chronic Disease and Unhealthy Lifestyle

## 2026-2028 Implementation Strategy Methods

The 2026 - 2028 Community Health Needs Implementation Strategy was developed through a structured, collaborative process to ensure alignment with the 2025 CHNA, organizational priorities and IRS requirements for nonprofit hospitals. In January 2026, Texas Children’s convened a multidisciplinary internal workgroup representing departments with community-facing roles and subject matter expertise, supported by executive sponsorship and project leadership. The workgroup reviewed and interpreted CHNA findings to confirm priority health needs and guide the overall direction of the Implementation Strategy, ensuring all significant needs identified through the CHNA were considered.

To inform action planning, an internal asset mapping exercise was conducted to identify existing programs, partnerships and initiatives aligned to each priority area. Using these findings, the workgroup participated in facilitated planning sessions to develop broad, impact-focused action items designed to be flexible and responsive over the three-year period. Draft action items were refined through iterative feedback from workgroup members and hospital leadership to ensure feasibility, alignment with enterprise initiatives and clarity of intent. The resulting Implementation Strategy reflects a strengths-based approach, outlining intended actions, anticipated impact, committed resources and collaboration opportunities (Appendix B), and was prepared for formal review and adoption by the hospital Board in accordance with required timelines.

# Implementation Strategy



## 1. Mental and Behavioral Health

The Community Benefits Steering Team identified Mental and Behavioral Health as the greatest community health need for the Greater Houston area. Mental health issues are widespread in the United States and locally, with approximately 23% of adults (nearly 59 million people) experiencing a diagnosable mental illness in 2022 (National Institute of Mental Health, 2025).

Additionally, an estimated 20% of Texas youth (0–17) report a mental, emotional, behavioral or developmental problem, affecting approximately 1.2 million children in Texas (Every Texan, 2023). National Institute of Mental Health (2025) reports that despite this high prevalence, access to mental health care remains limited, with only 50.6% of those with a mental illness having received treatment in the past year.

Barriers such as provider shortages, geographic maldistribution, insurance coverage gaps and high costs further exacerbate the challenge of meeting mental health needs, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Action 1	Improve Access to Community-Based Behavioral Health Services
Description	Bring age-appropriate behavioral health screening, services and education closer to where children and families live, learn and receive services.
Anticipated Impact	Improved access to screening, brief intervention and referral services outside of traditional clinical settings has demonstrated benefits in increasing identification and engagement of at-risk individuals. Evidence shows that universal behavioral health screening, when used alongside provider referral, captures individuals who would otherwise be overlooked, accounting for up to 40% of referrals, resulting in strengthened early identification, increased follow-up with services and more timely access to appropriate mental and behavioral health care (Pulgaron et al., 2023).
Resource Commitment	<p>Texas Children’s Mobile Behavioral Health Unit (MBHU) focuses on increasing access to behavioral health care for youth and families who experience systemic barriers to care in traditional settings. The MBHU partners with community agencies that have many children, adolescents and families facing challenges in accessing behavioral health care. Clinicians provide high-quality, individualized and evidence-based behavioral health therapeutic screening and services in the community.</p> <p>Government Affairs continues to identify opportunities to advocate for strengthened mental health investment in Medicaid and workforce development. Additionally, Government Affairs advocates for support of the bipartisan EARLY Minds Act (S.779/H.R.1735) at the federal level to enable states to better invest in prevention and early intervention behavioral health services for kids and adults.</p>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas Children’s Mobile Behavioral Health Unit (MBHU)</li> <li>• BakerRipley</li> <li>• Fort Bend Independent School District</li> </ul>

Action 2	Strengthen Perinatal and Postpartum Mental Health Supports
Description	Advance early identification and support for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders and strengthen the parent-child dyad post-delivery.
Anticipated Impact	Increased participation of postpartum mothers in evidence-based services is supported by research demonstrating that greater social connectedness is associated with significantly lower postnatal anxiety and depression, underscoring the importance of strengthening perinatal and postpartum mental health care (Feinberg et al., 2022).
Resource Commitment	<p>Texas Children’s is committed to strengthening Perinatal and Postpartum Mental Health through the upLIFT program, the Women’s Place, Team HOPES, and perinatal support groups.</p> <p>The Division of Public Health Pediatrics offers the upLIFT program to pregnant and postpartum women in the community that are experiencing symptoms of depression or anxiety. The program is delivered in a group or individual format and led by licensed social workers. The program uses evidence-based tools and strategies to ease symptoms of depression and anxiety and strengthen emotional well-being.</p> <p>The Women’s Place Center for Reproductive Psychiatry is one of only a handful of programs in the United States dedicated to the care and treatment of women’s reproductive mental health. This is a short-term reproductive psychiatry clinic. Referrals can be from providers internally or externally, and patients can also self-refer.</p> <p>Team HOPES (Holistic Obstetric Patient Emotional Support) is a continuum of emotional, physical and informational support to patients &amp; families that experience an adverse obstetric event during their hospitalization.</p> <p>Reach Out, Stay Strong, Essentials (ROSE) is a perinatal support group open to all expectant mothers designed to teach skills to help with stress, manage relationships and make future plans.</p>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorial Hermann</li> <li>• Lactation Foundation</li> <li>• Legacy Community Health</li> <li>• The Women’s Place Center for Reproductive Psychiatry</li> <li>• Team HOPES (Holistic Obstetric Patient Emotional Support)</li> <li>• Reach Out stay Strong Essentials (ROSE)</li> </ul>

Action 3	Support Community Education, Prevention and Behavioral Health Awareness
Description	Strengthen community education, prevention and awareness efforts by sharing clinical expertise, participating in community-based collaboratives and supporting coordinated approaches that promote early identification, prevention and continuity of mental and behavioral health care for children, caregivers and families across Greater Houston.
Anticipated Impact	Greater community awareness and understanding of mental and behavioral health needs and available resources. Mental health education initiatives have been shown to improve knowledge, adaptive functioning and help-seeking behaviors, thereby strengthening prevention and early identification efforts (Jin, 2022).
Resource Commitment	<p>Texas Children’s both leads and participates in various community collaboratives focused on mental health. Specifically, Texas Children’s supports the Houston Area Suicide Prevention Coalition (HASPC) as a leader and co-founder of the organization, which is focused on decreasing suicide in the Greater Houston Area through community engagement and suicide awareness, prevention and post intervention. Texas Children’s is also an active participant in the Harris County Child Fatality Review team and the Harris County Suicide Mortality Review Team, which brings together local partners to review child deaths, and identify trends and prevention strategies to decrease preventable child deaths.</p> <p>Through coordinated partnerships between mental and behavioral health leadership and Marketing and Public Affairs, Texas Children’s invests staff time and communications resources to deliver timely, evidence-based and age-appropriate guidance to families and caregivers, particularly in the wake of traumatic community events. As a trusted leader in mental and behavioral health, Texas Children’s shares clinical expertise and responds to community needs during times of heightened stress or crisis. As a trusted community resource, clinical leaders engage in timely, accurate, public-facing education and media outreach that extends behavioral health support beyond clinical settings, promotes early identification and intervention, reduces stigma and strengthens community resilience.</p> <p>The Behavioral Health team is committed to strengthening community partnerships to support coordinated care, successful discharge planning and continuity of mental and behavioral health services. The team invests clinical expertise and care management resources to establish and maintain direct partnerships with community-based organizations, including BakerRipley and Fort Bend Independent School District, to connect patients and families to appropriate educational, therapeutic and social supports.</p>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Houston Area Suicide Prevention Coalition (HASPC)</li> <li>• Harris County Suicide Mortality Review Team</li> <li>• Harris County Child Fatality Review team</li> <li>• BakerRipley</li> <li>• Fort Bend Independent School District</li> <li>• DePelchin Children’s Center</li> <li>• YES to YOUTH</li> <li>• Communities in Schools</li> </ul>

## 2. Social Drivers of Health

In Houston, social drivers of health represent fundamental sources of health inequities across the community. Limited access to reliable public transit and walkable infrastructure impedes access to health care, employment and nutritious foods. Workforce and income disparities leave nearly half of households (44%) struggling to afford necessities (Greater Houston Community Foundation, n.d.), undermining both economic stability and long-term financial security. Food insecurity further exacerbates these inequities. In 2024, an estimated 39% of households in Houston and Harris County were food insecure, significantly exceeding the national rate of 14% (Kinder Institute for Urban Research, 2025). These economic vulnerabilities limit the ability of households to consistently access healthy food, stable housing and preventative health care, perpetuating cycles of poor health. Gaps in early childhood education and childcare further reduce opportunities for long-term health and economic advancement (Kofron & Meier, 2025). Together, these structural challenges underscore the need for integrated, cross-sector approaches to improve health outcomes and advance equity in the Houston region.

Action 1	Expand Access to Nutritious Food for Families Affected by Food Insecurity
Description	Ensure children and caregivers have reliable access to nutritious food during and after care encounters.
Anticipated Impact	Reduced unmet food needs through timely identification and connection to food resources, as health care-based screening and referral partnerships have been shown to strengthen access to food assistance and improve follow-through among food-insecure families (Bhatia et al., 2025).
Resource Commitment	<p>By investing clinical, care coordination and philanthropic resources to connect patients and families to reliable nutrition support, Texas Children’s is committed to addressing food insecurity. Across the Texas Children’s enterprise, families are screened for food insecurity and referred to community partners for food resources. For example, through a partnership with the Houston Food Bank, food insecure families that receive care at 25 Texas Children’s Pediatrics locations are referred to the FoodRx program. This program provides enrolled families with direct food assistance of up to 30 pounds of food twice per month, supporting improved nutrition, health outcomes and household stability.</p> <p>Through the Caregiver Tray Program, clinical teams extend nutrition support to caregivers and family members of admitted patients who are identified as food insecure. Families receive caregiver trays to ensure consistent access to meals during hospitalization, recognizing that caregivers often miss meals due to limited resources and prolonged time spent at the bedside. By addressing the nutritional needs of both patients and their caregivers, this program supports family well-being, reduces stress during hospitalization and reflects a commitment to family-centered approaches to food insecurity support.</p> <p>Texas Children’s is also exploring opportunities to expand direct food assistance for food insecure families through internal and external programs, particularly in light of reduced funding and access to governmental assistance programs such as SNAP. This includes reviewing existing processes to provide immediate food support when community referrals alone do not meet family needs. These efforts reflect a commitment to responding to gaps in assistance and reducing barriers to consistent access to food.</p>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Houston Food Bank</li> <li>• Montgomery County Food Bank</li> <li>• Kids Meals</li> </ul>

Action 2	Strengthen Cross-Sector Partnerships Addressing Food and Economic Stability
Description	Coordinate with community organizations that provide food, benefits navigation and wraparound supports to stabilize families.
Anticipated Impact	Expanded reach and effectiveness of food and economic stability supports, as Ault-Brutus and John (2024) demonstrate that health systems partnering across sectors with community-based organizations improve service coordination, strengthen responses to social drivers of health and promote overall health and well-being.
Resource Commitment	<p>The hospital system demonstrates a consistent commitment to addressing food and economic stability reflected through ongoing investment in community partnerships and scalable referral resources for patients and families. Families are screened for social drivers of health and families that would like assistance are connected to community-based food assistance and social support programs. As partnerships evolve and capacity expands, referral pathways are strengthened to improve access to food, employment support, public benefits, financial counseling, housing stability services and other resources that influence long-term stability for affected households. For example, Texas Children’s has established strong partnerships with local food banks and refers families for food resources and assistance with applications for SNAP benefits.</p> <p>Similarly, Texas Children’s is committed to supporting the economic stability of families through our network of community partners. For example, the United Way’s Integrated Client Journey is a coordinated model designed to address interconnected social and economic needs. Texas Children’s is exploring partnership opportunities with United Way to strengthen community resource navigation for patients and families utilizing this tool. By aligning with a network of nonprofit partners and navigation support, these efforts aim to improve referral integration, support individualized pathways to stability and enhance access to services that support long-term financial and household well-being.</p> <p>Texas Children’s is committed to enhancing community resource navigation through investment in FindHelp, a directory and referral platform of community resources and social supports that can be utilized by team members, patients and families. Individuals are able to search for community resources by zip codes and for select community partners and submit referrals through the FindHelp platform. Ongoing efforts focus on staff training, expanding referral capacity and advancing closed-loop referrals to improve coordination, accountability and follow-up between health care teams and community organizations.</p>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Houston Food Bank</li> <li>• Montgomery County Food Bank</li> <li>• Kids Meals</li> <li>• United Way of Greater Houston</li> </ul>

Action 3	Improve Access to Public Benefits Through Navigation and Enrollment Support
Description	Support community access to essential public benefits, including Medicaid and SNAP, by strengthening navigation, application assistance and education pathways that reduce administrative barriers and improve understanding of available supports.
Anticipated Impact	Increased enrollment in public benefit programs, including Medicaid and SNAP, as research by Ku et al. (2025) demonstrates that eligibility navigation and enrollment assistance delivered through health care and community settings reduces administrative barriers, improves application completion and increases insurance coverage among eligible populations, supporting improved health outcomes.
Resource Commitment	Texas Children’s is committed to helping community members enroll in public benefits through education, application assistance and referral pathways. Texas Children’s financially supports food banks to employ navigators to assist patients, families and community members with applications for public benefits including SNAP, TANF and Medicaid. Texas Children’s also tries to reduce barriers to applying for public benefits by supporting onsite navigators and community health workers to assist patients and families with applications for public benefits. Texas Children’s has also created referral pathways to community agencies to assist patients and families with public benefit applications.
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Houston Food Bank</li> <li>• Montgomery County Food Bank</li> </ul>

### 3. Maternal Health

Maternal, child and family health was identified as the third priority community health concern and encompasses a wide range of services that cater to prenatal care, pediatric health assessments, maternal care and resources to support family needs. Maternal health in the United States shows signs of improvement, yet persistent racial disparities continue to drive unequal outcomes. Recent data highlight both the overall decline in maternal mortality and the disproportionate burden faced by Black non-Hispanic women compared to other racial and ethnic groups. The U.S. maternal mortality rate declined from 22.3 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2022 to 18.6 in 2023, signaling progress (Hoyert, 2025). However, racial disparities remain stark. In 2023, Black non-Hispanic women experienced a maternal mortality rate of 50.3 deaths per 100,000 live births, more than three times higher than rates for White non-Hispanic (14.5), Hispanic (12.4) and Asian (10.7) women. Notably, while rates declined for White, Hispanic and Asian women from 2022 to 2023, the rate for Black women increased slightly from 49.5 to 50.3 in the U.S. (Hoyert, 2025).

Action 1	Advance Equitable Maternal and Infant Health Education and Community Engagement
Description	Increase access to culturally and linguistically appropriate maternal and infant health education and supports to reduce disparities in breastfeeding, safe sleep and perinatal well-being.
Anticipated Impact	Increased maternal and caregiver knowledge of key health topics, including breastfeeding, infant safe sleep and recognition of maternal warning signs. Research shows that maternal health education is associated with reductions in adverse maternal outcomes, lower risk of preterm birth and low birth weight and improved perinatal outcomes across diverse populations (Bello-Álvarez et al., 2026).
Resource Commitment	<p>The Pavilion for Women team supports maternal health and family wellness through community engagement and health education initiatives designed to increase awareness, access and trust across diverse populations. Team members participate in community-based educational events, panels and outreach activities that address women’s health topics across the lifespan, including reproductive health, menopause and postpartum support. Through these efforts, the Pavilion for Women promotes a broad range of women’s health services and engages directly with families in the community, with particular attention to advancing maternal health education and wellness in populations experiencing disparities.</p> <p>Texas Children’s Center for Childhood Injury Prevention advances child safety through the Safe at Home Program, which provides comprehensive education on home safety, water safety and infant safe sleep. The program teaches parents and caregivers how to childproof their homes, identify drowning and injury hazards and reduce the risk of sleep-related infant deaths for children under one year of age. As funding and resources allow, the program also distributes portable crib systems, firearm safe-storage devices and childproofing kits to support safe practices in the home. Program staff engage families through health fairs, community events, targeted neighborhood outreach and listening sessions to identify barriers. In partnership with Baylor College of Medicine, the Center works with community partners to use local sleep-related infant fatality data to inform prevention strategies. Together, these efforts strengthen infant safe sleep education, promote injury prevention and help reduce preventable injuries and deaths among young children.</p>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pavilion for Women</li> <li>• Center for Childhood Injury Prevention</li> <li>• University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work Doula Program</li> </ul>

Action 2	Improve equity, quality and safety in maternal care
Description	Improve maternal health outcomes through collaboration, quality improvement efforts and the delivery of patient-centered and culturally responsive care.
Anticipated Impact	Delivery of higher quality, patient-centered and equitable maternal care, as research shows that targeted quality improvement initiatives are associated with reductions in severe maternal morbidity and measurable decreases in racial disparities in maternal outcomes (Davidson et al., 2022).
Resource Commitment	<p>Through collaborative, data-driven clinical practice, the Pavilion for Women advances maternal care quality, safety and equity across the perinatal continuum. Pavilion clinical teams implement standardized, evidence-informed maternal safety bundles addressing high-risk conditions, including hypertension, hemorrhage, sepsis and safe sleep. Complementing these efforts, targeted quality improvement initiatives, such as the Respectful Care Survey, focus on improving patient experiences of dignity, autonomy and communication. Together, these strategies support continuous quality improvement, reduce racial and ethnic disparities in care and promote safer, more equitable maternal outcomes.</p> <p>The Pavilion for Women is also committed to improving maternal care quality and safety across the state of Texas. Team members actively participate and share expertise in statewide, data-driven collaboratives that strive to strengthen clinical practice and reduce preventable maternal morbidity and mortality in health systems across the state.</p>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM)</li> <li>• Lactation and Safe Sleep Opportunities in Texas (LASSO-TX)</li> </ul>

Action 3	Increase the accessibility of maternal, child and family health programs and services
Description	Increase access to community-based services, education, and navigation that address maternal, child, and family health.
Anticipated Impact	Improved access to perinatal support services and maternal and infant outcomes. Studies show that community-based services, health education and navigation programs are linked to increased service utilization, improved breastfeeding outcomes and better maternal mental health and well-being (McLeish et al., 2023; Robinson et al., 2026).
Resource Commitment	<p>The upSTART community programs are a suite of community-based programs that address maternal, infant and child health. The programs are delivered in the community to pregnant women and families with young children by Texas Children’s and Baylor College of Medicine health educators, community health workers, nurses and speech language pathologists. The programs are offered virtually, in convenient community locations, and at the home of participants. The programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• upWORDS, a parenting program which focuses on early brain development</li> <li>• upWORDS2, a parenting program that focuses on positive parenting and emotional regulation</li> <li>• Bridges, an individualized support program for families with a child with a language or developmental delay</li> <li>• upLIFT, an individual or group-based program for women with perinatal depression or anxiety</li> <li>• upREACH, a home visitation program for pregnant women and parents of infants that focuses on maternal and infant health</li> <li>• Community Connections, which assists families with basic needs and connects families with community resources</li> <li>• Nurse Family Partnership, a home visitation program for pregnant, first-time moms</li> </ul>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring Branch Family Development Center</li> <li>• Small Steps Nurturing Center</li> <li>• Katy Independent School District</li> <li>• Children’s Museum Houston</li> <li>• Harris County Library System</li> <li>• Harris Health System</li> <li>• March of Dimes</li> </ul>

#### 4. Access to Health and Health Literacy

Families continue to face significant barriers to accessing care, including financial constraints, transportation limitations and provider shortages. In addition, many community members experience challenges with health literacy, such as understanding medical information and navigating complex health systems, which can hinder their ability to make informed decisions about their care. While structural and informational barriers can limit access and contribute to poorer health outcomes for a significant portion of the Houston population, they also highlight important opportunities for improvement. Strengthening access to convenient, high-quality care and enhancing accurate and trustworthy health communication are essential not only for physical health, but also for social well-being and mental health, supporting families in navigating the care system more effectively.

Action 1	Expand Access to Low-Cost, Community-Based Preventive and Primary Care Services
Description	Reduce access barriers by bringing affordable, high-quality care and immunizations directly into underserved neighborhoods.
Anticipated Impact	Increased access to preventive and primary care services for underserved children and families in high-need communities. Community-based and mobile health delivery models improve utilization of preventive services, increase vaccination rates and strengthen continuity of care among populations facing barriers to traditional clinic-based care (Malone et al., 2020, and Guay et al., 2025).
Resource Commitment	<p>Through the Texas Children’s Mobile Clinic Program, access to low-cost, community-based preventive and primary care services is available for uninsured and underserved children across Houston. Mobile clinic teams provide comprehensive services, including well-child care, acute and urgent care, immunizations, screenings, health education and referrals to insurance coverage, specialty care and permanent medical homes. Geo-mapping is used to identify and prioritize high-need areas, allowing services to be strategically deployed where barriers to care are greatest. Serving thousands of patients annually, the program functions as a critical safety net for families with limited access to traditional health care while supporting continuity of care and appropriate use of health services.</p> <p>Texas Children’s Pediatrics Community Cares Program serves as a committed resource to expand access to low-cost, community-based preventive and primary care services for children who face barriers to traditional health care access. Community Cares Clinics provide comprehensive pediatric care for children from birth through age 18, regardless of a family’s ability to pay, with a focus on preventive services, immunizations and non-emergency care that reduce reliance on emergency departments. Through long-term relationships with board-certified pediatricians and collaboration with community partners, the program also connects families to insurance enrollment assistance, social services and health education. These clinics are located in underserved communities and function as an essential access point for trusted, continuous care and support the overall health and stability of children and families in high-need communities.</p> <p>Government Affairs supports access to care for children by engaging in state and federal advocacy efforts related to Medicaid policy and pediatric workforce funding. This includes proactive advocacy to protect Medicaid from legislative and regulatory changes that could negatively impact access to pediatric services, as well as ongoing engagement with federal appropriations processes that support pediatric training programs. Government Affairs also advocates for sustained and increased funding for the Children’s Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program, which plays a critical role in expanding and strengthening the pediatric physician and subspecialty workforce. Together, these efforts support policy environments that sustain pediatric access, strengthen workforce capacity and protect essential coverage for children and families.</p> <p><b>(Continued on next page)</b></p>

Action 1	Expand Access to Low-Cost, Community-Based Preventive and Primary Care Services
Resource Commitment	<p><b>(Continued)</b></p> <p>To further expand access to community-based primary care, Texas Children’s has invested in clinical workforce capacity by training and funding five pediatricians to provide care at the Community Health Network Federally Qualified Health Centers. This investment strengthens access to pediatric primary care within the FQHC setting, increases access for children insured through Medicaid and other public coverage, and reinforces partnerships that serve high-need communities. By supporting clinician placement and training within community-based systems, these efforts enhance care access, continuity, and capacity for underserved pediatric populations.</p>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas Children’s Mobile Clinic</li> <li>• The Immunization Partnership</li> <li>• Texas Children’s Pediatrics</li> <li>• Community Health Network</li> </ul>

Action 2	Strengthen Care Navigation, Education and Diagnostic Understanding for High-Needs Populations
Description	Improve patient and caregiver ability to understand diagnoses, follow care plans and engage confidently in their care journey.
Anticipated Impact	Increased adherence to care plans and improved continuity of care for high-needs populations, as evidence shows that structured care navigation and patient education interventions enhance follow-up, reduce care gaps and support better engagement during transitions across the health care continuum (Howitt et al., 2024).
Resource Commitment	<p>The Department of Social Work and Care Coordination is committed to strengthening care navigation, caregiver education and diagnostic understanding for high-needs populations. Social Work and Care Coordination teams partner closely with families and multidisciplinary care teams to provide tailored caregiver education and support the development of comprehensive, individualized care plans. In this role, team members assess caregiver health literacy, comprehension levels and potential language or communication barriers to ensure diagnoses, treatment plans and available resources are clearly understood. These efforts promote informed decision-making, enhance care coordination and support equitable access to high-quality care for patients and families with chronic conditions and complex needs.</p> <p>Texas Children’s supports quality improvement initiatives that strengthen care navigation, caregiver education and diagnostic understanding for high-needs populations, with a focus on equitable communication and patient-centered care. This includes participation in multidisciplinary quality improvement projects aimed at ensuring patients receive care in their preferred language and have a clear understanding of diagnoses and care plans. Learnings from unit-based initiatives, such as standardizing identification of preferred language, expanding access to interpretation resources and educating clinical teams on culturally and linguistically appropriate care, inform broader system efforts and educational dissemination. These initiatives reinforce consistent, high-quality communication practices and improve access, understanding and care experiences for diverse patient populations.</p> <p>The Immunization Partnership supports access to preventive care through immunization education, outreach, advocacy and policy efforts designed to strengthen vaccine confidence and uptake among children and families. The organization develops and disseminates culturally and linguistically appropriate educational materials, elevates evidence-based information on immunization safety and effectiveness and works with partners across health care, public health and community sectors to address vaccine hesitancy. Texas Children’s supports this work through physician engagement, with several Texas Children’s physicians serving on The Immunization Partnership’s Scientific Advisory Board, contributing clinical expertise to inform education strategies and public dialogue. Together, these efforts reinforce immunizations as a foundational component of primary care, support informed decision-making and complement community-based access initiatives across Texas Children’s service areas.</p>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas Children’s Department of Social Work</li> <li>• Texas Children’s Department of Care Coordination</li> </ul>

Action 3	Enhance Data-Driven Access Strategies to Address Inequities
Description	Use equity-centered data to identify barriers, prioritize outreach and remove barriers for families to access care.
Anticipated Impact	Improved identification and response to disparities in access to care based on language, race/ethnicity, geography and other equity indicators. Research shows that stratifying and systematically using access and outcome data enables health systems to identify gaps, prioritize interventions and guide equity-focused quality improvement efforts (Gallifant et al., 2023).
Resource Commitment	<p>Strategic Access Operations supports data-driven access strategies by developing and reviewing data that can be used to better understand access patterns and inform future opportunities. Direct scheduling workflows allow Community Cares Clinics to schedule a patient’s referral to a hospital subspecialty before even leaving their PCP’s office. This improves the compliance on the percent of patients that follow through on their referrals and improving the average days from referral to arrival. Access strategies also support exploration of opportunities to strengthen language translation capabilities within electronic medical records and patient communications, helping ensure information is accessible and responsive to patient needs. Together, these efforts enhance equitable access, improve navigation, and support more tailored, patient-centered care across the system.</p> <p>Texas Children’s Government Affairs team supports access to care for underserved and rural populations by identifying opportunities to advocate for funding through state led initiatives, including the Texas Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). The RHTP applies population-level data to assess rural health care needs, including workforce shortages, access to care, infrastructure and digital capacity and outcome variation, to inform future planning and investment decisions.</p>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas Children’s Department of Strategic Access Operations</li> </ul>

Action 4	Promote Community Health Literacy Through Education and Safety Programs
Description	Improve caregiver and youth understanding of health, injury prevention and care system navigation through culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach.
Anticipated Impact	Increased community awareness and understanding of health, injury prevention and care navigation through trusted community partnerships and public education channels. Research has shown community-based educational interventions for caregivers and families improve knowledge of injury risks, strengthen prevention practices and support safer homes and community environments (Laguna et al., 2024).
Resource Commitment	<p>Marketing and Public Affairs play a central role in delivering timely, accurate and accessible health education to the Greater Houston community by leveraging established media partnerships and coordinated outreach efforts. Working in close collaboration with physicians and clinical subject matter experts, these teams amplify evidence-based health information on priority topics, emerging public health concerns and prevention strategies. Through proactive media engagement and public-facing communications, this approach extends clinical expertise beyond care settings, supports informed decision-making and reinforces trust in reliable health information.</p> <p>The School Nurse Continuing Education program supports community health literacy and school-based safety through ongoing investment in professional education for school nurses. Monthly continuing education courses are offered based on feedback from school nurses and are designed to strengthen knowledge and confidence in managing common and complex health needs in the school setting. Topics include chronic disease management, mental and behavioral health conditions and substance use and safety concerns affecting children and adolescents. By providing accessible, relevant professional development opportunities, these efforts support school nurses as trusted health resources and promote safer, healthier learning environments for students across the community.</p> <p>Project ADAM - Texas Children’s Cardiology team actively supports schools across the community in meeting evolving state requirements related to cardiac emergency preparedness. The program partners with schools to strengthen compliance with recent legislation by supporting cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) training, readiness planning and emergency response coordination. Project ADAM assists schools in developing and maintaining cardiac emergency response practices, including staff education, AED access and maintenance and emergency drills, helping schools align with new regulatory expectations while improving preparedness to respond to sudden cardiac arrest on campus.</p> <p>Community Benefits supports community health literacy and school-based health initiatives by participating in the School-Friendly Health Systems collaborative, a national learning initiative led by Children’s National Hospital. Through this collaborative, Community Benefit engages with peer children’s hospitals and cross-sector partners to learn and apply best practices that strengthen alignment between health systems and schools. This participation supports ongoing efforts to improve health education, communication and safety practices in school settings and reinforces the role of health systems as partners in promoting children’s health.</p>
Planned Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center for Childhood Injury Prevention</li> <li>• Project ADAM (Automated Defibrillators in Adam’s Memory)</li> <li>• Spring Independent School District</li> <li>• Fort Bend Independent School District</li> <li>• School Friendly Health System Collaborative</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

Informed by a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment that engaged community leaders and health partners across the Greater Houston region, this Implementation Strategy translates identified needs into coordinated, measurable action. Texas Children’s Hospital 2025 CHNA confirmed four interrelated primary health priorities shaping the well-being of the Greater Houston community: Mental and Behavioral Health; Social Drivers of Health (including food insecurity and economic stability); Maternal, Child and Family Health; and Access to Care and Health Literacy.

This Implementation Strategy reflects Texas Children’s Hospital’s commitment to addressing these complex challenges through a multifaceted, community-driven approach. Consistent with best practices among peer children’s hospitals, the strategy emphasizes cross-sector collaboration, culturally responsive and evidence-based interventions and targeted investment in upstream solutions that improve health outcomes and reduce inequities. Recognizing that factors like housing, food and income affect health, this strategy combines medical care with community partnerships to support families, improve access to care and strengthen health understanding across the Greater Houston community.

This strategy will be regularly reviewed and adjusted to meet community needs and track progress. Through this work, Texas Children’s Hospital remains a trusted partner committed to improving the health of children and families across Greater Houston.

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**TEXAS CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Resolution – Approval of Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategy**

I hereby certify that at a meeting of the Board of Directors of Texas Children’s Hospital, a Texas nonprofit corporation, held May 5, 2026, at which said meeting a quorum was present and acting throughout, the following resolution was approved:

**RESOLVED**, that the Texas Children’s Hospital Board of Directors hereby approves the Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategy, as presented.

DocuSigned by:  
*Afsheen Davis* 5/5/2026  
437EF4181D14417...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Afsheen Davis Date  
Secretary  
Board of Trustees  
Texas Children’s

## APPENDIX A | Texas Children’s 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment Key Informant Interview Guide

We are inviting you to share your views on community needs and community health through interviews conducted by Texas Children’s Hospital Community Benefits Department. We would like to learn more about the health of the Greater Houston community.

Participation in these interviews is voluntary. You do not have to share any information that you are not comfortable sharing. You can stop the interview at any time. The total time commitment is expected to be one hour.

We will be using the information you share in this interview and combining it with the perspectives of other individuals. Themes and quotes from the interviews will be published in a publicly available report. The identities of individual perspectives will not be included in the report.

For questions about this community assessment, please contact Texas Children’s Community Benefits Team at **832-824-8061**.

**Do you understand and agree to participate? ( Yes / No )**

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Printed name	Signature	Date
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### Introduction

- Introduce yourself and the project: “Hello, my name is [**Your name**], and I am part of a research team from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. We are conducting a Community Health Needs Assessment in [Houston/Austin], Texas.”
- Purpose of the interview: “The purpose of this interview is to gather insights from key community members like yourself to better understand the health needs and issues in our community.”
- Confidentiality: “Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes. You can choose not to answer any question and can stop the interview at any time.”
- Key informant introduction
- Have you or your organization worked with Texas Children’s Hospital in the past?
- Please tell us about the community you serve (demographics)

## Questions

### 1. Community Issues

- o What do you think are the most pressing issues in our community? (i.e. gun violence, access to parks, availability of fresh foods, childcare)

### 2. Community Health Issues

- o What do you think are the most pressing health issues in our community?
- o Are there any specific populations that are more affected by these issues?
- o When it comes to community health issues:
  - What are the strengths (things that are positive, unique, and/or beneficial) in our community?
  - What are the challenges (issues that prevent growth, cause a disadvantage, or obstacles) in our community?
  - Do you have ideas for improvement in these areas of our community?
  - Outside of your organization's area of focus, what are the most pressing health issues in our community?

### 3. Health of Women and Children

- o What are the key health challenges faced by women and children in our community?
- o Are there any specific programs or resources you believe would help improve the health of women and children in the community?
- o When it comes to women and children's health issues:
  - What are the strengths (things that are positive, unique, and/or beneficial) in our community?
  - What are the challenges (issues that prevent growth, cause a disadvantage, or obstacles) in our community?
  - What are the opportunities (areas that have potential for growth or improvement) in our community?

### 4. Access to Healthcare

- o How would you describe the accessibility of healthcare services in our community?
- o What barriers do people face when trying to access healthcare?
- o When it comes to access to healthcare:
  - What are the strengths (things that are positive, unique, and/or beneficial) in our community?
  - What are the challenges (issues that prevent growth, cause a disadvantage, or obstacles) in our community?
  - What are the opportunities (areas that have potential for growth or improvement) in our community?

### 5. Mental Health

- o How prevalent are mental health issues in our community?
- o What resources are available for mental health support?
- o When it comes to mental health issues:
  - What are the strengths (things that are positive, unique, and/or beneficial) in our community?
  - What are the challenges (issues that prevent growth, cause a disadvantage, or obstacles) in our community?
  - What are the opportunities (areas that have potential for growth or improvement) in our community?

### 6. Extreme Weather Events and Natural Disasters

- o How have extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, freezes, tornados or floods, impacted the health of your family or our community?

### 7. Community Strengths

- o What do you think are the strengths or assets of our community?
- o How can these strengths be leveraged to improve community health?

### 8. Suggestions for Improvement

- o What changes or improvements would you suggest to address the health needs of our community?
- o Are there any specific programs or initiatives you think would be beneficial?

### • Closing

- Thank the participant: "Thank you for your time and valuable insights. Your input is greatly appreciated and will help us better understand and address the health needs of our community."
- Next steps: "We will compile the information from these interviews and use it to inform our Community Health Needs Assessment report. If you have any further questions or thoughts, please feel free to contact us."

## APPENDIX B | Community Based Organizations

As part of this Implementation Strategy, Texas Children’s Hospital will engage with a range of community-based organizations that align with the priority health needs identified through the CHNA. The following organizations represent the types of expertise, services, and incredible community partners located in the Great Houston Community.

### **BakerRipley**

BakerRipley is the largest charitable organization in Texas and hosts a network of over 70 service sites that helps more than half a million people each year. Their mission is to bring resources, education, and connection by working with their neighbors’ side-by-side.

### **Children’s Museum Houston**

Children’s Museum Houston is a nationally recognized children’s museum that improves the lives of children in Greater Houston through innovative, hands-on learning experiences. For more than 45 years, the museum has helped children and families build skills, curiosity, and confidence through play-based, child-centered programs that support learning, belonging, and community connection.

### **Communities in Schools Southeast Harris and Brazoria County**

Communities In Schools (CIS) works inside schools to support students’ academic success and overall well-being by addressing barriers to learning. Through partnerships with schools and community providers, CIS connects students and families to critical supports such as academic assistance, mental health services, basic needs resources, and family engagement. Their in-school, student-centered approach helps students stay in school, succeed academically, and graduate prepared for the future.

### **Community Health Network**

Community Health Network (MyCHN) is a nonprofit health care organization providing comprehensive medical, dental, behavioral health, and pharmacy services across Greater Houston and the Gulf Coast. With 19 locations throughout the region, MyCHN delivers whole-person care to communities through integrated, accessible health services.

### **DePelchin Children’s Center**

DePelchin Children’s Center is a Houston-based nonprofit that has supported children and families in the region since 1892. DePelchin strengthens children’s mental, emotional, and physical well-being through services such as counseling, parenting education, foster care, adoption, and family support programs, with a focus on ensuring children grow up in safe, stable, and caring homes.

### **Harris County Library System**

Harris County Public Library (HCPL) supports communities across the county by providing free access to educational resources, technology, and learning opportunities for residents of all ages. Through its network of libraries and community programs, HCPL promotes literacy, digital access, workforce development, and lifelong learning, helping individuals and families build skills, stay connected, and access essential information.

### **Houston Food Bank**

Houston Food Bank works to improve lives by providing food for better health and long-term stability across Southeast Texas. Serving 18 counties, the organization distributes nutritious food and essential items through a network of more than 1,600 community partners. Houston Food Bank also offers programs such as nutrition education, health support, and assistance with public benefits to help families strengthen stability and reduce food insecurity.

### **Houston Area Suicide Prevention Coalition (HASPC)**

Houston Area Suicide Prevention Coalition is a collaborative network of organizations, professionals, and community members working together to reduce suicide and promote hope across Greater Houston. Through community involvement, education, and connection, HASPC supports informed, compassionate approaches to suicide prevention and emphasizes the power of presence, support, and shared responsibility.

### **Kids’ Meals**

Kids’ Meals is a Houston-based nonprofit that helps fight childhood hunger by delivering free, healthy meals directly to the homes of food-insecure children. Serving preschool-aged children and families year-round, Kids’ Meals works with community partners to support nutrition, stability, and overall well-being for families across the Greater Houston area.

### **Lactation Foundation**

The Lactation Foundation provides personalized, evidence-based breastfeeding support to families across the Greater Houston area. Through private consultations with board-certified lactation consultants, training for health care providers, and community partnerships, the foundation supports maternal and infant health while helping families meet their breastfeeding goals, with services available at low or no cost for many patients.

### **Legacy Community Health**

Legacy Community Health is a nonprofit, federally qualified health center providing comprehensive primary care and supportive services to communities across the Greater Houston area. Legacy offers medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, and specialty services, with a focus on increasing access to affordable, culturally responsive care for children, families, and underserved populations.

### **March of Dimes**

March of Dimes works to improve the health of mothers and babies by preventing premature birth, supporting healthy pregnancies, and addressing disparities in maternal and infant outcomes. In the Greater Houston area, March of Dimes partners with health care providers, community organizations, and families to promote health equity, advance education and advocacy, and support programs that strengthen maternal and child health.

### **Montgomery County Food Bank**

Montgomery County Food Bank is a nonprofit hunger relief organization dedicated to uniting the community to fight hunger. Montgomery County Food Bank provides nutritious food to hungry children, seniors, and families through a network of 90+ partner agencies.

### **Project ADAM**

Project ADAM (*Automated Defibrillators in Adam's Memory*) is a national nonprofit initiative focused on preventing sudden cardiac death in children, adolescents, and young adults. Through education, emergency planning, and placement of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in schools and community settings, Project ADAM helps organizations prepare for and respond effectively to cardiac emergencies, creating safer environments for children and families.

### **School Friendly Health System Collaborative**

School-Friendly Health System Collaborative is an initiative that helps health systems strengthen partnerships with schools to better support student health and well-being. Using a shared framework, the collaborative promotes clear communication, coordinated services, and alignment between health care providers and school communities to improve access to care, support student success, and reduce barriers for children and families.

### **Small Steps Nurturing Center**

Small Steps Nurturing Center is a Houston-based nonprofit that provides high-quality early childhood education and family support to economically at-risk children. Operating preschools in underserved Houston communities, Small Steps offers educational, social-emotional, and basic needs support at no cost to families, helping children build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and well-being.

### **Spring Branch Family Development Center**

Spring Branch Family Development Center (SBFDC) is a Houston-based nonprofit that strengthens families by coordinating education, health, and social services through partnerships with multiple community organizations. Serving the Spring Branch area and surrounding communities, SBFDC increases access to critical resources and supports long-term stability for children and families.

### **United Way of Greater Houston**

United Way's mission is to bring the community together to take action, solve problems, and create opportunities for everyone to thrive. Whether it's helping children succeed in school, connecting families to health services, or strengthening neighborhoods in times of crisis, United Way unites people, resources, and ideas that create lasting change in the Greater Houston Area.

### **University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work Doula Program**

University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work Doula Program is an initiative designed to advance perinatal health equity for Black mothers in the Greater Houston area. The program provides culturally responsive postpartum doula support, connects families to short-term economic and concrete assistance for emergent needs, and offers free community-based education on childbirth, breastfeeding, and newborn care. The project also invests in workforce development through postpartum doula certification, training, and mentorship, with a focus on supporting doulas from underrepresented backgrounds.

### **Yes to YOUTH**

YES to YOUTH (Montgomery County Youth Services) is a nonprofit organization serving the Greater Houston region that provides crisis counseling, mental health services, shelter, and prevention programs for youth and families. Through counseling, emergency support, and community-based prevention efforts, YES to YOUTH helps young people stay safe, emotionally supported, and connected to school and community during times of crisis.



For questions or comments about Texas Children's Hospital Implementation Strategies, please contact the following:

**Tarra Kerr**  
Vice President

**Nancy Correa**  
Director

**Shazia Arroyo**  
Community Benefits