

Community Benefit





Our mission — Lowell General Hospital is committed to improving the overall health status of our community and, specifically, the health problems of the underserved populations of Greater Lowell. This is achieved by identifying existing and future health needs in the community, and addressing those needs through new or existing health initiatives, including education, prevention, and screening programs, both independently and in collaboration with other community resources.

LOWELL GENERAL HOSPITAL'S FISCAL YEAR 2017 COMMUNITY BENEFIT PLAN FOCUSED ON FOUR MAJOR HEALTH PRIORITY AREAS USING DATA OUTLINED THE 2016 GREATER LOWELL COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT – MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE, CHRONIC DISEASE AND HEALTH IMPROVEMENT.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is considered the top health priority in the region. The assessment's focus groups further identified stress, depression, post traumatic stress syndrome and anxiety as specific issues facing local residents. These groups also acknowledged an increase in mental health issues in children and young adults.

RESPONSE

In response, Lowell General Hospital sought to improve education, resources and support with the objective to increase the availability of such services.

- Supported trainings in the internationally recognized and evidence-based curriculum known as Mental Health First Aid, an 8-hour program that teaches individuals how to help a person who is developing or struggling with a mental health problem or is in crisis.
- Offered 85 free or low-cost programs on depression, anxiety, self-harm and adolescent suicide prevention in the community. Providing these programs to nearly 650 youth and adults combined has helped increase education and awareness within our population.
- Expanded mental health education programming, focusing on a variety of areas, including stress reduction, suicide prevention, caring for the caregiver, Mental Health 101, anger management, depression and anxiety, ultimately reaching more than 800 members of the community.

Community Benefit (cont.)

SUBSTANCE USE

Lowell saw 2,144 hospital admissions per 100,000 due to substance abuse in 2011, a rate nearly double the Massachusetts state average. Community groups expressed concern at the lack of services and care available for those suffering from a substance use disorder.

RESPONSE

- Continued promotion of our Opioid Awareness Campaign in partnership with the Greater Lowell Massachusetts Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative (MOAPC), which highlighted the risk of heroin addiction linked to opioid use.
- Developed the Greater Lowell Grandparents as Parents (GAP) Support Group in response to the growing number of grandparents (or kinship caregivers) raising children, an estimated 80% of whom are raising children due to substance use disorder.
- Developed a deeper partnership with Megan's House, a residential treatment home for women ages 18-26, located in Lowell, providing four separate programs for residents, including healthy cooking, personal safety and self-defense and stress management.
- Funded a \$50,000 grant to Lowell's Initiative on Non-Opioid Drug Use, a two-year program in the Lowell public schools to implement a prevention curriculum for grades 5-8, reaching more than 1,800 students, or 42% of the middle school population.
- Maintained active participation on several community task forces addressing substance abuse issues within Greater Lowell, including the District Attorney's Greater Lowell Opioid Task Force, the City of Lowell's Opioid Task Force and the Greater Lowell Health Alliance's Substance Use and Prevention Task Force.

CHRONIC DISEASE

Chronic disease is the leading cause of death and disability in the U.S. – with nearly 50% of all adults reporting at least one condition. Heart disease, stroke, cancer, type 2 diabetes, obesity and arthritis are among the most common, costly, and preventable of all health problems.

RESPONSE

- Offered preventative health screenings, including blood pressure, body mass index, body fat percentage and blood glucose to over 1,100 community members.
- Partnered with several local nonprofits including the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA), Lowell Housing Authority and Lowell Community Health Center to provide health screenings and educational programs on-site for their members and clients in an effort to serve vulnerable and at-risk populations.
- Coordinated more than 70 programs and outreach events within the community from heart disease prevention to nutrition workshops, serving more than 3,000 residents.
- Focused efforts to improving access to healthy foods for local residents by collaborating with Mill City Grows, a non-profit organization working to improve food justice in Lowell, and the Merrimack Valley Food Bank, providing fresh produce to more than 2,000 community members.
- Provided supplementary funding through Project Fit America to install an outdoor Fit-Pit, a state-of-the-art playground designed to enhance children's fitness, at the McCarthy Middle School in Chelmsford.

TARGET POPULATIONS

IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES • ELDERLY • LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES • YOUTH
MINORITY POPULATIONS • INDIVIDUALS CLASSIFIED AS "AT RISK" • INDIVIDUALS WITH CHRONIC DISEASE
INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND/OR SUBSTANCE USE ISSUES

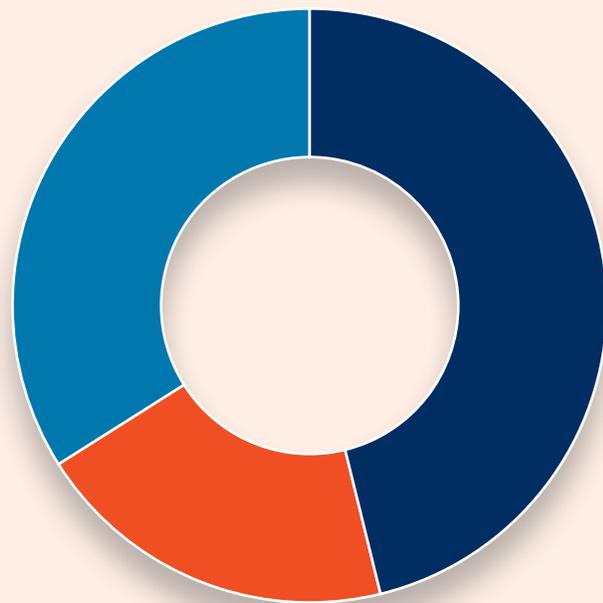
COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

The Healthy People 2020 report identified five key areas of social determinants of health that impact health outcomes: economic stability, education, social and community context, access to health and healthcare, and built environment.

RESPONSE

- Invested in the future of quality healthcare by working with local schools, colleges and universities through our Careers in Healthcare student program, student internships and clinical practicums, totaling approximately 15,000 staff hours dedicated to nearly 800 students.
- Staff actively participated in more than 30 community boards, coalitions, committees, and task forces throughout the Merrimack Valley.
- Provided support to Habitat for Humanity to assist in community builds to renovate homes for new families in need. In addition to financial support, the hospital participated in three community builds.
- Provided primary support through both financial and human resources for the Greater Lowell Health Alliance, which brings together healthcare providers, business leaders, educators, and civic and community leaders with a common goal to improve the overall health of our communities.
- Partnered with the GLHA on the development of the first-ever Greater Lowell Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which will be used as a roadmap for health improvement over a 3-5 year period to guide the investment of resources of all organizations that have a stake in improving the health of the residents of Lowell and the surrounding communities.
- Provided nearly 700 Tdap (tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis) and influenza vaccination clinics to members of the community.

To view Lowell General Hospital's 2018 community benefit plan, visit www.lowellgeneral.org/communitybenefit.



Net Charity Care
\$10,047,552

Community Benefit & Service Programs
\$5,872,393

Uncompensated Care
\$13,653,234

Lowell General Hospital
Total Community Benefit:
\$29,573,179

Funding uncompensated and net charity care:
Lowell General Hospital is committed to providing care to members of our community regardless of their ability to pay.

Community benefit and service programs:
Lowell General Hospital provides community benefit and service programs that address the unique needs of distinct groups in our region; these programs include health and wellness outreach and education, sponsorships and funding of key initiatives locally.

“We would only be able to do half of what we do without our local partners like Circle Health.”

TEWKSBURY
POLICE
HEADQUARTERS

\$10,000

Funding from Circle Health
to hold Crisis Team Law
Enforcement Trainings



Tewksbury Police and Circle Health collaborate for a safer community

At Circle Health, our focus goes beyond providing traditional healthcare services for patients. To provide *Complete connected care*, we seek out strategic partnerships that benefit the overall well-being of the communities we serve.

The Tewksbury Police Department shares that commitment, putting a sharp focus on caring for its community beyond its day to day duties enforcing the law.

“Without the generosity offered through grants and programs from Circle Health, we would not be able to offer these programs and services to our community,” Chief Timothy Sheehan says. “We are convinced that our community is better served thanks to this partnership.”

The collaboration between the Tewksbury Police Department and Circle Health has impacts in a number of areas, from behavioral health to child safety.

In 2017, the Tewksbury Police Department was the recipient of a grant from the Circle Health Ball for Community Health Initiatives for the department’s Crisis Intervention Team Law Enforcement Trainings, which focused on improving officers’ de-escalation skills when interacting with those suffering from mental illness on scene, reducing Emergency Department visits in the process.

Working closely with Maria Ruggiero, Program Director for the Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative, and Community Services Officer Jennie Welch, Circle Health’s Community Health and Wellness team has worked to facilitate a number of other programs for the department.

For Ruggiero, who is leading the department’s efforts to combat the opioid crisis in her community, Circle Health has helped carry out a program called Mental Health First Aid for all of the department’s officers to develop the skills needed to identify and help someone who may be developing a mental health issue or is potentially in crisis.

Ruggiero believes the program helps officers refer individuals dealing with mental health issues to places that can help them, rather than sending the person to the emergency room or jail.

“There are ways you can interact with these people that can de-escalate a situation,” Ruggiero says. “The officer, the person, and the whole system benefits.”

Welch, who does outreach and events focused on the community’s youth and families, has also found Circle Health to be there when she needs us.

Efforts on which Welch has partnered with Circle Health include self-defense and anti-bullying programs for kids, educational and car seat programs for new parents, and health education at the department’s annual Safe Halloween event.

“We would only be able to do half of what we do without our local partners like Circle Health,” Welch says.



Making an Impact Across Greater Lowell



