

South Peninsula Hospital, Inc.
**Community Health Needs Assessment
Implementation Strategy**

Adopted January 2024

[FY 24 Update](#)

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South
Peninsula
Hospital

Introduction

South Peninsula Hospital conducted a community health needs assessment (CHNA) for the southern Kenai Peninsula in 2023, in cooperation with MAPP of SKP Health Coalition. This CHNA was conducted in compliance with IRS Section 501(r), and identified health needs of the residents of the South Kenai Peninsula Hospital Service Area of the Kenai Peninsula Borough. The final assessment was adopted by the SPH Board of Directors on June 28, 2023, and made available to the public on the organization's website www.sphosp.org free of charge. The complete CHNA report can be found in the separate document link titled CHNA on the South Peninsula Hospital website www.sphosp.org. Numerous presentations were made of the report findings from June through October, including at meetings of the hospital's Board of Directors, Homer City Council, SPH general hospital staff, SPH general medical staff, Rotary and *MAPP of the Southern Kenai Peninsula* local community health coalition made up of twelve partnering local agencies representing the eight dimensions of wellness.

Health Needs Priorities

The findings were reviewed internally by management and input received during presentations was taken into account in order to prioritize the most significant health needs to address. Consideration was given to the magnitude of the issue, consequences if issue was not addressed, and feasibility to affect change. Impact of the pandemic was found to be wide spread. Complete assessment findings, details and breakdown of the data can be found in the complete assessment report. The key findings in no particular order were:

- 1) **Mental Health**
- 2) **Housing**
- 3) **Substance Use**
- 4) **Childcare**
- 5) **Physical Health**
- 6) **Aging Population**
- 7) **Barriers to Care**
- 8) **Social Isolation**
- 9) **Staff Workforce Shortages**

MAPP of Southern Kenai Peninsula health coalition has identified as priorities for the Community Health Improvement Plan: 1) Lack of affordable housing concerns and 2) Developing a communications plan to help connect people of the service area to existing resources related to the findings above. Hospital representatives will be actively engaged in these community-wide strategies and solutions.

Listed below are the strategies South Peninsula Hospital will utilize to address the top nine concerns affecting the health and wellness of the community. Annual updates will be reported out in the Critical Access Hospital annual program report.

Implementation strategies for 2024-2026

Priority Finding #1: Mental Health

1. Increase capacity and awareness of internal and external available resources

- a) Recruit a Behavioral Health Nurse Practitioner to increase capacity at the Serene Waters Mental Health Clinic

- Implemented integrated behavioral health services at Seaside Women’s Care—including medication management, counseling, care coordination, and support connecting patients to community resources—at no cost to patients through State of Alaska grant funding.
- b) Provide a community resource guide pamphlet and ensure updated version remains in circulation, both on paper and electronically, internally and externally
 - Updated and circulated in the community at 25 partnering agencies 4x/year
- c) Strengthen relations with other providers in the community for seamless transition of care
 - Updated and circulated in the community at 25 partnering agencies 4x/year
 - Discussed with South Peninsula Behavioral Health the idea to co-locate some providers
 - Working with South Peninsula Behavioral Health to ensure seamless coverage of inpatient and ER patient mental health needs.
- d) Recruit and retain ample outpatient and inpatient psychiatric providers
 - Applied for a behavioral health grant to add behavioral health component to women’s health
 - Hired a Mental Health Nurse Practitioner and Counselor via a state behavioral health grant to plan for integrated behavioral health at Seaside Women’s Care.
 - Recruited an additional full-time Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner increasing the number of full-time psychiatric providers to three.
- e) Support regular, free wellness programs in the community
 - Weekly free community programing offered through various programs including Wellness Wednesday
 - o Established quarterly mental health provider meet-ups, open to independent and private practice providers, to identify and address service gaps, care coordination challenges, and emerging community needs.
 - Added free weekly walks at SPARC, the local indoor recreation center

2. Address youth mental health needs through trainings

- a) Offer trainings and certifications for SPH staff in teen mental health first aid.
 - Community Health and Wellness Educator Nurse trained in Teen Mental Health First Aid program
- b) Offer teen mental health first aid trainings to the community on a yearly basis
 - Offered parent nights and trainings to the communities of Nanwalek and Port Graham
 - Pediatric Nurse Practitioner offered a six week “Chaos Compass” mental health training for middle school students.
- c) Participate as a lead agency in the community Safe & Healthy Kids Fair.
 - Continued to lead and grow fair in collaboration with community partners
- d) Grow capacity at the SPH mental health clinic for youth services
 - a. Participated in Planet Youth Homer, a data-driven model based on the Icelandic Prevention Model, to help identify and address youth needs across the community

3. Increase accessibility and availability of mental health supports internally for SPH staff

- a) Offer no-cost targeted mental health programming for staff through employee health offerings
 - Continued to offer activities and lunch and learns with a focused towards mental health
 - Added Spring Health employee assistance program
 - Streamlined the incident stress debriefing program for staff
 - Hired a new Security Supervisor who is providing numerous educational offerings to staff for safety in the workplace by introducing the Gracie Medical Defense Training for all.
- b) Continue to support spiritual care for patients and staff through use of the reflection room
 - Created a contract position for a chaplain, the position would serve both patients and staff;
- c) Offer a robust employee engagement program focused on job satisfaction and positive work environment.
 - Continuation of wellness reimbursement program including coverage for a wide array of mental health supports

Priority Finding #2: Housing

1. Create SPH-owned housing for travelers, visiting physicians, new hires, and more, thus growing local capacity by returning up to 20 housing leases back into the community.
 - Solicited for proposals and selected a contractor for a 26 unit housing complex to be leased to SPH; assisted contractor with steps related to getting a conditional use permit.
 - Broke ground on the 26-unit housing complex; it is expected to be completed in spring 2026.
 2. Continue to have SPH representation at community meetings oriented towards housing solutions
 - Continued involvement in Guiding Growth forum: an ongoing discussion to inform what is driving change in Homer
 - Was a guest speaker at library forum on housing crunch
 - Attended a community wide housing forum.
 - Participated in the Homer Housing Summit planning process to convene key housing stakeholders and develop actionable, community-driven priorities and next steps for housing solutions in Homer.
- a) Involvement in MAPP taskforce on housing solutions as part of the community health improvement plan (CHIP)
 - Conceptualization of MAPP dashboard as centralized hub for housing solutions and efforts
 - MAPP coordinator served on borough-wide housing task force
 - b) Participate in city-wide discussions of the City of Homer Comprehensive Plan update
 - Continued to participate and facilitate community meetings regarding housing
 - SPH staff were interviewed by City representatives to ensure medical district was fully accommodated in the comp plan update.

Priority Finding #3: Substance Use

1. Continued partnership with local addiction prevention and harm reduction agencies to co-design solutions to advance community health.

- All Things Recovery Coalition – staff participation and support
- Megan’s Place Needle exchange – SPH provides free facility, advocacy assistance, and support
- Kachemak Bay Recovery Connection –SPH provided a grant writer who successfully wrote a opioid settlement grant application to expand recovery efforts; SPH has a representative on the board and provides funding for administrative support for additional grant acquisition and management
- Megan’s Place Needle exchange – SPH provides free facility, advocacy assistance, and support
- Kachemak Bay Recovery Connection –SPH has a representative on the board and provides funding for administrative support for additional grant acquisition and management
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2. Create awareness of Medication for Addiction Treatment (MAT) services at HMC by direct outreach efforts and continued representation

- MAT nurse staffed the community resource (homeless) connect, the food pantry, the rotary health fair and the kenai peninsula fair.
- MAT was featured at booth at Kenai Peninsula Fair
- Expanded the number of primary care providers providing MAT

3. Strengthen relations between inpatient, Emergency Department, outpatient clinics and local harm reduction organizations to ensure seamless transition of care and connection to resources

- a) Provide training staff on the science of addiction to better reduce the stigma associated with addiction.
 - b) Ensure ER staff are trained and empowered with up to date information on available resources.
- EPIC electronic health record training happened in spring 2025, ensuring all staff will have access to up to date resources.

4. Provide SART/SANE nursing services through the Emergency Department and continue partnership in the Child Advocacy Center to provide improved coordination and response to children in need.

5. Resume SPH internal Substance Use, Misuse and Addiction Task Force.

6. Sponsor trainings and resources for the community on responding to overdoses.

- a) Offer overdose response kits, fentanyl testing strips, and drug-disposal bags in clinic, ER settings, and at outreach events
- b) Hosted a training at the local movie theater in advance of the movie
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- c) Offer free community trainings on overdose response
 - Continuation of harm reduction trainings both planned as well as offered upon request

- Implemented a protocol to allow staff to distribute Narcan kits to patients and community members;
- trained Acute Care staff on Narcan administration and kit distribution procedures.
- Provided overdose response trainings at numerous community events and festivals

Priority Finding #4: Child Care

1. Create an SPH childcare facility for staff, to be open by fall of 2024, which will free up more than thirty spots in the community currently occupied by children of SPH staff
 - Construction delays has moved the opening of this to summer 2025
 - Renovations were finalized by end of June 2025; New Childcare Center administrative staff were hired; and several center staff were hired and trained; state of the art furnishings and equipment were acquired; curriculum and policies were established; state licensure was applied for.
 - State licensure was acquired; the center was opened in fall 2025; the center is licensed for up to 62 children ages 3 months to 6 years old
2. Utilize thread grant to train local personnel, and increase number of certified childcare workers in the service area
 - With the grant we have hired an administrator, and assistant administrator to date.
 - We reached 50% staffing levels by July 1, 2025, filling numerous entry-level positions in time to provide training in advance of opening, thus expanding the work force.
3. Partner with local high school and college for entry level workforce development
4. Offer quarterly safe sitter babysitting course to youth in grades 6th-8th , expanding outreach to rural parts of the service area.
 - Three trainings were offered at SPH; and one in the village
 - Three trainings were offered at SPH; and one in the village
5. Participate in local childcare solutions workgroup
 - SPH staff and MAPP staff were active in a local childcare solutions workgroup, and sponsored the first “networking” breakfast that brought together childcare providers across the service area.

Priority Finding #5: Physical Health

1. Focus on marketing and outreach to increase the number of annual or wellness visits a year, returning to pre-pandemic routines and behaviors
 - Hired full time in house marketing assistant with focus on marketing/outreach expansion efforts
 - Increased announcements of available PCPs and evening clinic offerings
 - Hosted Brake for Breakfast in October, giving out free breakfast with important health tips including breast health and cancer prevention
 - Hired additional PCP to meet growing demand of clinic visits

- Contracted a social media manager to do more regular health screening promotions and wellness tips.
 - Worked on a plan to merge OB/GYN and Midwifery as one clinic, in one location. Set to move in July 2025.
 - Increased marketing for the under-utilized Family Care Clinic and walk in laboratory.
 - Opened the Renew Clinic, staffed by a full-time plastic surgeon, and dedicated care team, to expand access to specialized physical health services in the community.
 - Added a full time Nurse Practitioner and Nurse to the Seaworthy Functional Medicine team
 - Started promoting the “Medicare Wellness Visits” at Homer Medical Center
 - Opened the new Seaside Women’s Care; sponsoring an open house in May.
2. Provide easy access to vaccines for preventable disease (flu, covid, STD, etc)
- Offered free vaccines during health fair blood draws
 - Contract with Kachemak Bay Family Planning to offer free STD testing at the clinic and at the needle exchange
 - Clinics offered free kids flu shots during designated hours
 - Offered free vaccines at health fair blood draws, health fair and numerous times at food pantry;
 - Integrated clinic data with state vaccine tracking to reduce need for manual entry
 - Provided “roving” vaccine stations with the hospital for employee ease of vaccinations.
3. Increase access to community programming for health education:
- a) Offer free weekly programing and education centered on health and wellness activities (annual community walking challenge, weekly yoga, health education offerings, etc.)
- Weekly Wellness Wednesday programming, free and open to all, includes a health presentation, a meal, and movement activity
 - Hosted Homer Steps Up free walking challenge, where over 700 individuals enrolled
 - Added the use of video to social media to share pertinent messages from subject matter experts. Examples include colonoscopy screening, heart health, kidney health, etc.
 - Added video health educational segments at local movie theater pre-movie screenings.
- b) Support nutrition education, obesity, diabetes and other related chronic disease prevention and care
- Sunrise Medical Weight loss offered community education presentations
 - Certified Diabetes Educator nurse at Homer Medical
 - Hired a second full time nutritionist
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- c) Support and promote physical activity among staff and community residents
- Launched a free weekly community walking group at the SPARC to support physical activity and wellness for all community members.

Priority Finding #6: Aging Population

1. Increase services for a rapidly growing senior population

- a) Open a free standing wound care clinic to care for patients with referrals from any of the family practice providers in the service area
 - The clinic is being formulated within the primary care clinic; set to relocate in 2025
- b) Generate community support for funding of an expanded Oncology/Infusion Clinic unit, and the addition of nuclear medicine; finalize plans and begin construction; open in 2026.
 - Though the community voted down the general obligation bond to fund this, the hospital is seeking other funding for this project.
 - Architectural drawings were completed
 - Numerous community meetings took place to share information and generate continued support.
 - RHTF application submitted for potential funding
- c) Focus on specialty provider retention and recruitment, adding audiology, dermatology and other much needed senior services
 - Audiology has joined the specialty clinic; A upper extremity expert joined orthopedics; a full time neurologist started a practice.
 - Plastic Surgery opened;
 - Dermatology recruited
 - Dermatology opened
 - Recruited full time ENT; scheduled to start summer 2026
- d) Strengthen senior based services, including but not limited to outpatient surgery, rehabilitation, swing bed, home health, etc.
 - Worked with the local senior center to develop solid infrastructure during turbulent times with their administration
- e) Develop specific senior care offerings as subsets of services
- f) Utilize the employee wellness program to address health concerns of an aging employee base.
- g) Actively promote and utilize Home Health Services to decrease hospitalization due to chronic disease.
- h) Relocate SPH Rehabilitation Department to city center, for easier access and parking.
 - The Rehabilitation clinic has relocated to downtown location.

2. Create ways to reach senior population with health messaging and offerings, such as sponsoring senior day at Kenai Peninsula State Fair, Health Fair and Wellness Wednesdays

- Continuation of Senior Day at fair, and senior focused offerings through Health Fair and Wellness Wednesdays
- Launched an annual senior-centered wellness fair to improve access to health education, screenings, and community resources.

- Expanded collaboration with the Senior Center to better coordinate services and strengthen supports for older adults in the service area.
- Sponsored Senior Day at the Kenai Peninsula State Fair to increase outreach and health messaging to the senior population.

Priority Finding #7: Barriers to Care

1. Acute care nurses will begin collecting limited data related to the social determinants of health (SDOH) at time of admission to ensure patients receive the appropriate support services when discharged. SPH will work with local, borough and statewide coalitions and resources to identify and help address significant gaps of services and resources in the hospital's service area. Starting 2025, SPH will fully implement SDOH screenings for food insecurity, housing instability, transportation needs, utility difficulties and interpersonal safety, work to connect patients to services upon discharge, and report measures and data to CMS.
 - Training and planning was conducted for this project.
 - This data collection was initiated. Continued routine collection of social determinants of health (SDOH) data at the time of acute care admission to support discharge planning and connection to community resources.
2. Offer free financial navigators at SPH registration to strengthen awareness of financial assistance options Review and update policies and practices related to self-pay discounts, prompt pay discounts, financial assistance and charity care, utilizing a sliding scale based on income when possible; this information and application will be readily available to the community at time of registration, including posting on the hospital website.
 - Numerous financial navigators were hired; advertising has started; brochures are at registration windows.
 - Radio and newspaper advertising was launched, and a new brochure created and distributed.
3. Partner with existing agencies to boost accessibility of available resources community wide through community events and offerings (Community Resource Connect, Rotary Health Fair, Veterans StandDown, Brake for Breakfast, etc)
4. Create and promote a Patient Assistance fund for taxi vouchers and travel reimbursement for patients experiencing transportation or travel costs a barrier to seeking much needed care.
 - The foundation has developed the fund; eligibility guidelines are still being finalized
 - Eligibility guidelines were finalized and vouchers were distributed to all outpatient services and clinics.
5. Increase trauma-informed care practices system wide, ensuring all residents feel welcomed seeking services at SPH
6. Continue to partner with the Kachemak Bay Rotary Club to offer deeply discounted blood draws on an annual basis.
 - The blood draws were offered, with over 800 individuals taking advantage in 2023;
 - 714 individuals took part in the 2024 blood draws, and over 400 attended the one day fair.
7. Update campus and building signage and offer adequate parking for patients to connect to care.
 - Implementation of upgraded signage system throughout SPH campus and outbuildings, creation of a campus map

- Updated campus and outpatient building signage to improve wayfinding and enhance the overall patient experience.
- Improved the Rotary Health Fair discounted lab draw program, significantly reducing the cost of blood tests for community members, therefore increasing the number of people reached and increasing the fundraising ability for Rotary.

Priority Finding #8: Social Isolation

1. Address the epidemic of loneliness through increased free community seasonal offerings
 - a) Continue to offer space for nurturing connections through shared meals and shared health education at weekly Wellness Wednesday events, offered fall through spring
 - Attendance fluctuates between 30 and 50 at this popular event;
 - The hospital cafeteria is growing with popularity, becoming a senior gathering place
 - b) Facilitate community-wide Steps Up walking challenge
 - Over 700 were in the 2023 event
 - Over 700 in the 2024 event
 - c) Sponsor partner offerings to support a robust variety of free and engaging opportunities to connect in the community.
3. Hospital representatives will continue to work on collective improved community health through participation in MAPP of the Southern Kenai Peninsula local health coalition and MAPP workgroups.
 - Two employees are on the coalition; numerous others serve on committees and help with the CHNA
4. Offer volunteer opportunities at the hospital
 - Gift shop, pet therapy, long term care visitors and event assistance are but a few of the volunteer opportunities
 - A new volunteer position was created to be a companion to swing bed patients hospitalized.
5. Embrace a healing arts program at SPH to create welcoming, friendly environments patients and the community desire to be in.
 - Established a Healing Environment Committee; group working on a policy, color palette and framework to guide future decisions based on healing arts best practices

Priority Finding #9: Staff Workforce Shortages

1. **Prioritize retaining current staff through increased job and employee satisfaction**
 - a) Continue offer incentives and appreciation to current staff across all departments
 - National Hospital Week gifts; nurses day gifts; thanksgiving and Christmas bonuses;
 - A generous and attractive employee retention program continues; added off-hours offerings, like free family passes to SPH employee events at ice rink, movie theater, etc.

- b) Improve and monitor employee engagement through two-way communication, promotion of employee benefits and compensation and use of organizational values.
- c) Offering trainings and advanced education opportunities
 - Increased staffing for Human Resources and Education to help.
 - Added an internal C.N.A. earn to learn program; around 6 students per semester
- 2. Increase recruitment efforts
 - a) HR to continue offer desirable recruitment and relocation incentives
 - Ran a radio campaign in Anchorage and valley to recruit nurses
 - Offered temporary housing and a sign on bonus
- 3. Maximize SPH Foundation scholarship funds to ensure continuation of scholarships for allied health programs and C.N.A.
- 4. Support the Kachemak Bay Campus in their C.N.A., nursing and allied health curriculums and clinical rotations.
 - Continues each semester
- 5. Promote and train entry-level positions on-site when possible.
 - a) Offer tours to high school students of all departments, with emphasis on career tracks
 - Hosted three high school career site tours
 - Hosted three high school career site visits
 - b) Offer a C.N.A. on the job earn to learn program
 - Trained six per semester, two total cohorts
 - Trained six per semester, two total cohorts
 - c) Partner with UAA and HHS to be the site for an annual AHEC career boot camp
 - 17 students participated for a one day job shadow program
 - 12 students participated in the 2025 boot camp; one of whom now works at the facility.
 - d) Offer as many preceptor or intern programs as possible
 - Expanded Human Resources staffing and consolidated HR operations into a new, centralized office space to improve organizational structure, accessibility, and support for staff needs.