

Allegheny Health Network — AHN Jefferson Hospital

# Implementation Strategy Plan

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2025 Report

# Implementation Strategy Plan 2025

## About Allegheny Health Network (AHN)

Allegheny Health Network (AHN) is a leading nonprofit health system based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, dedicated to providing exceptional quality, comprehensive health care services to the communities it serves. AHN, part of the Highmark Health enterprise, operates 14 hospitals, employs over 22,000 people, and has more than 250 locations providing care. The facilities have nine surgical centers, six regional cancer centers, and six health and wellness pavilions. Its staff includes over 3,000 physicians, residents, and fellows; 6,000 nurses; and 22,000 employees.<sup>1</sup> AHN is an integrated health system dedicated to providing exceptional care to people in the local communities. Serving 12 Pennsylvania counties and two counties in New York, AHN brings together the services of AHN Allegheny General Hospital, AHN Allegheny Valley Hospital, AHN Canonsburg Hospital, AHN Forbes Hospital, AHN Grove City Hospital, AHN Jefferson Hospital, AHN Saint Vincent Hospital, AHN West Penn Hospital, AHN Westfield Memorial Hospital, AHN Wexford Hospital, and AHN Neighborhood Hospitals (AHN Brentwood Neighborhood Hospital, AHN Harmar Neighborhood Hospital, AHN Hempfield Neighborhood Hospital, and AHN McCandless Neighborhood Hospital).

AHN encompasses a wide range of health care services, including acute care, outpatient services, rehabilitation, emergency care, and specialty programs. AHN is also recognized for its cutting-edge technology and research initiatives, focusing on advancing medical science and enhancing patient care. AHN is a vital component of the health care landscape focused on delivering high-quality, patient-centered care. Through its extensive services, community engagement, and commitment to health equity, AHN strives to improve the health and well-being of the communities it serves. With a dedication to innovation and excellence, AHN continues to play a crucial role in shaping the future of health care in the region.

### Mission

To create a remarkable health experience, freeing people to be their best.

### Vision

A world where everyone embraces health.

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<sup>1</sup> Allegheny Health Network

## About Allegheny Health Network Jefferson Hospital

AHN Jefferson is a modern, 341-bed facility located 13 miles south of Pittsburgh. The hospital is deeply committed to providing exceptional medical care in a convenient location to residents of the South Hills communities.<sup>2</sup>

The facility offers a comprehensive range of health care services, including emergency treatment, diagnostic testing, medical and surgical treatment, inpatient and outpatient care, and laboratory and pathology services. Additionally, AHN Jefferson provides specialized care programs for cancer, heart and lung conditions, behavioral health, and rehabilitation.

Patient care programs are delivered by a medical staff of more than 856 physicians, supported by experienced nursing teams. Primary nursing has been a cornerstone of the hospital's approach to care since its inception, with skilled nursing units where nurses collaborate directly with physicians to develop personalized recovery plans for patients.

Most notably, many physicians, nurses, and administrative staff at AHN Jefferson share a strong sense of community with their patients. Since numerous employees reside in the South Hills, they are personally dedicated to delivering the highest quality medical care to their neighbors.

## Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Strategy Plan Background

In 2024, Allegheny Health Network (AHN) partnered with Tripp Umbach to conduct a comprehensive community health needs assessment (CHNA) for AHN Jefferson primarily serving Allegheny and Washington counties. The CHNA process included input from persons who represent the broad interests of the community served by the hospital, including those with special knowledge of public health issues and representatives of social service agencies. As a continuation of the CHNA, AHN, with the assistance of Tripp Umbach, proceeded to the Implementation Strategy Plan (ISP). The ISP process delineates and describes the hospital's plan for addressing the community health needs identified in the CHNA. The overall CHNA and ISP involves multiple steps, as depicted in the flowchart on the next page.

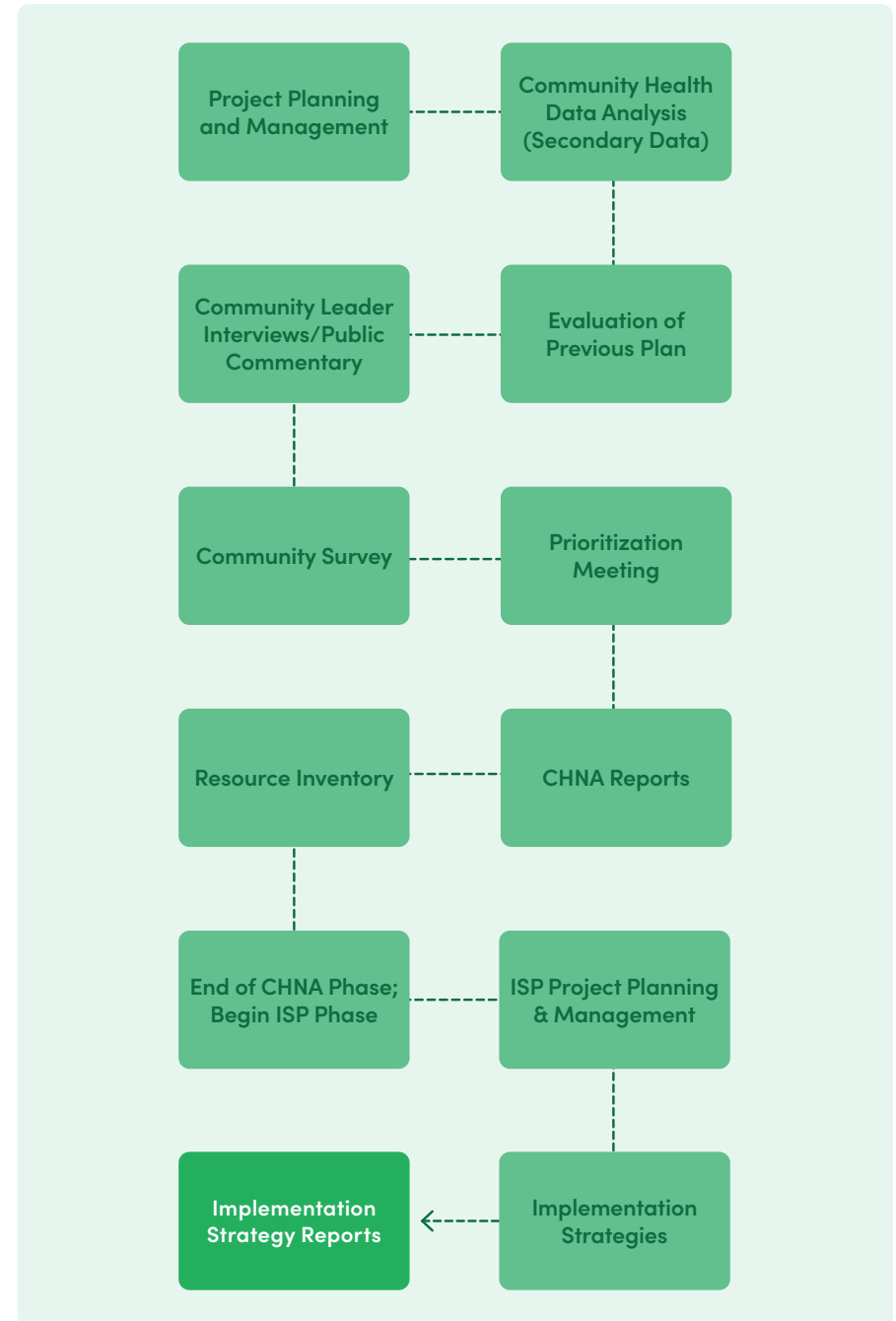
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<sup>2</sup> Allegheny Health Network


## Overall CHNA and ISP Process Flow Chart

Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), all nonprofit hospitals are required to conduct a CHNA every three years. This process ensures hospitals remain responsive to the changing health needs of their communities. The CHNA must identify the hospital's service area, gather input from a wide range of stakeholders, including public health experts and community members, and evaluate the most critical health challenges in the region. After identifying these health needs, hospitals must prioritize them based on their importance and develop an implementation strategy to address them. The strategy should outline potential actions, partnerships, and resources to effectively address the identified needs, ensuring hospitals align their efforts with the health and well-being of their communities.

It is important to note that the ISP is not intended to provide a comprehensive list of how AHN Jefferson addresses the community's needs. Instead, it focuses on key actions the hospital commits to taking and monitors its progress of the identified priorities. Although the strategy includes internal and external partners, many clinical departments and AHN institutes will collaborate on these initiatives. Their roles may involve participating in clinical programs and protocols or contributing to educational outreach by sharing expertise, individually or as a team, to address the community's health needs.



## Overall Prioritized Needs of Allegheny Health Network Hospitals

2024 Prioritized Needs	Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)					Behavioral Health			Chronic Diseases and Aging					Health Equity
	Transportation	Workforce Development	Cost of Care	Access to Care*	Food Insecurity, Diet, & Nutrition	Substance Use Disorder	Mental Health Services	Postpartum Depression	Diabetes	Heart Disease	Cancer	Aging	Obesity	Social and Workforce Programs**
Allegheny General Hospital	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X			X
Allegheny Valley Hospital	X				X	X	X		X	X				X
Canonsburg Hospital		X		X										X
Forbes Hospital		X		X	X	X	X				X			X
Grove City Medical Center					X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Jefferson Hospital		X			X		X				X			X
Saint Vincent Hospital		X	X		X		X				X			X
West Penn Hospital			X		X			X					X	X
Westfield Memorial Hospital				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Wexford Hospital		X			X		X	X		X		X		X
Brentwood Neighborhood Hospital			X	X										X
Harmar Neighborhood Hospital			X	X										X
Hempfield Neighborhood Hospital			X	X										X
McCandless Neighborhood Hospital			X	X										X

\* Access to care includes primary care, specialty care, EMS/trauma services, and access to general services.

\*\*Social and Workforce Programs includes, for example, cultural competency and Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS).

## Workforce Development

Workforce development plays a crucial role in addressing social determinants of health by cultivating a skilled labor force, ensuring that health care systems and other industries have the workforce to deliver quality services. For instance, training programs for health care workers help address provider shortages and expand access to medical care. In both rural and urban areas, workforce training initiatives that strengthen local health care capacity can increase the number of professionals serving these regions, ultimately improving health care access and outcomes.

Beyond health care, workforce development contributes to broader societal improvements by tackling systemic inequities. Many populations encounter significant barriers to obtaining quality education and stable employment. Workforce programs that prioritize equity — such as vocational training, mentorship, and job placement services — can help break the cycle of poverty and reduce health disparities. When individuals access stable jobs and financial security, they are better equipped to afford necessities like housing, transportation, and other essential factors that influence health and well-being.

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH): Workforce Development				
Goal: Provide support and career opportunities to the community.				
Impact: Educate the community in the Allied Health fields and onboard graduates into full-time careers at family-sustaining wages.				
Target Population	Strategies	Action Steps	Measures	Partners and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>High school students, external adults looking for a new career track, and internal entry level employees</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Further develop and strengthen the Talent Attraction Program (TAP).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Promote the TAP program to all staff internally through literature, events, and departments.</li><li>Support TAP students with mentors, gas cards, academic bonuses, access to food, etc., as needed throughout their training.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Number of students enrolled by calendar year.</li><li>Number of students graduating from TAP and onboarding into full-time careers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) &amp; other educational institutions</li><li>Local school districts</li><li>Community organizations</li></ul>

## Food Insecurity, Diet, and Nutrition

Food insecurity — a major social determinant of health — affects millions of individuals and families, particularly in low-income communities where access to nutritious food is often limited. Many areas are classified as food deserts, meaning residents cannot access affordable, healthy food options. Instead, many rely on highly processed, high-calorie foods that lack essential nutrients, increasing the likelihood of diet-related health conditions. Poor nutrition not only exacerbates chronic disease prevalence but also impacts mental health, contributing to stress, anxiety, and depression.<sup>3</sup>

Diet and nutrition are fundamental to overall health, influencing physical well-being to cognitive development. A lack of essential nutrients can weaken the immune system, lower energy levels, and increase vulnerability to illness. Inadequate nutrition during early childhood has severe and lasting consequences, contributing to developmental delays, learning difficulties, and a higher risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular conditions later in life.<sup>4</sup>

The consequences of food insecurity and poor diet extend beyond individual health, affecting educational achievement, workforce productivity, and economic stability. Children who experience hunger or malnutrition often struggle academically due to difficulties concentrating and increased absenteeism caused by illnesses.<sup>5</sup> Adults facing food insecurity may experience diminished work performance and higher health care costs due to preventable diet-related illnesses. Addressing food insecurity through policies that expand access to nutritious food — such as subsidized grocery programs, community gardens, and improved public transportation to grocery stores — can help mitigate these disparities and promote better health outcomes across populations. Ultimately, ensuring access to a healthy diet is not just a matter of personal choice but a critical factor in reducing health inequities and improving overall societal well-being.

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH): Food Insecurity, Diet, and Nutrition				
Goal: Identify and address food insecurity for AHN Jefferson patients.				
Impact: Assist with providing healthy and nutritious food to our AHN patients who are experiencing food insecurity.				
Target Population	Strategies	Action Steps	Measures	Partners and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AHN patients experiencing food insecurity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Healthy Food Center</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand opportunities to new and existing patients.</li><li>• Expand Jefferson Garden to provide patients with fresh produce during summer months.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of new patient visits</li><li>• Number of follow-up visits</li><li>• Pounds of produce grown</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physician offices</li><li>• Social workers</li></ul>

<sup>3</sup> National Library of Medicine

<sup>4</sup> National Library of Medicine

<sup>5</sup> National Library of Medicine

## Mental Health Services

Access to mental health services in Pennsylvania remains a critical public health concern, with many individuals facing significant barriers to receiving necessary care. The state has seen a growing demand for mental health services, a trend that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, economic stressors, and ongoing social challenges. Anxiety, depression, and substance use disorders have surged, yet many Pennsylvanians struggle to access timely and affordable treatment due to provider shortages, insurance limitations, and geographic disparities, particularly in rural areas.<sup>6</sup>

According to recent data, nearly 20% of adults in Pennsylvania experience some form of mental illness, yet over half of those affected do not receive the care they need. This gap in treatment is driven by factors such as long wait times for psychiatric appointments, insufficient mental health coverage in insurance plans, and a lack of mental health professionals, especially in lower-income and rural communities. Additionally, stigma surrounding mental health remains a barrier, discouraging individuals from seeking support. By prioritizing mental health services, AHN Jefferson and Pennsylvania can move toward a more equitable and effective mental health care system.<sup>7</sup>

Behavioral Health: Mental Health Services				
Goal: Provide behavioral health programming to local high schools.				
Impact: Strengthen and support our youth in regards to their behavioral health.				
Target Population	Strategies	Action Steps	Measures	Partners and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Local high school students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Implement AHN Chill Project at local high schools.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engage and promote the use of preventive interventions to students.</li><li>Promote school-based therapy options for students.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Number of students served</li><li>Number of total encounters</li><li>Number of fundamental lessons</li><li>Number of students in active school-based therapy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>School Districts: West Jefferson, Baldwin, Steel Center, Clairton, South Park</li></ul>

<sup>6</sup> Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
<sup>7</sup> Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



Cancer

Cancer is a significant and growing chronic disease in Pennsylvania, significantly impacting the health and lives of its residents. Each year, thousands of Pennsylvanians are diagnosed with cancer, and the disease remains a leading cause of death in the state. In Allegheny County, cancer is particularly devastating, ranking as the second-leading cause of death, accounting for 18% of all fatalities in 2020 alone.<sup>8</sup> This reflects a broader trend that highlights cancer’s profound impact on both individuals and communities.

According to a recent study by the American Cancer Society, the burden of cancer in Pennsylvania is expected to continue increasing in the coming years.<sup>9</sup> In 2024, approximately 89,410 people were diagnosed with cancer and 27,570 would die from the disease. This marks a slight increase from the previous year’s projections, which estimated 88,450 diagnoses and 27,460 deaths. The steady rise in cancer diagnoses and mortality underscores the growing challenge this chronic disease presents to public health.

Several factors contribute to the rising incidence of cancer, including an aging population, environmental exposures, and lifestyle-related risks such as tobacco use, poor diet, and physical inactivity. Additionally, the increasing prevalence of chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease can further elevate cancer risk. With cancer rates expected to climb, there is an urgent need for robust public health strategies focused on prevention, early detection, and improved treatment options to combat this chronic disease.

The increasing number of cancer diagnoses and deaths highlights the importance of prioritizing cancer research, access to care, and public awareness campaigns. By addressing the underlying risk factors and promoting healthier lifestyles, Pennsylvania can work toward reducing the impact of cancer and improving survival outcomes for those affected by this devastating chronic disease.

Chronic Diseases and Aging: Cancer				
Goal: Reduce the number of cancer-related deaths.				
Impact: Reduce the number of community members who smoke.				
Target Population	Strategies	Action Steps	Measures	Partners and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>General population</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Partner with Adagio for their tobacco cessation program.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Educate staff on the referral process.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Number of referrals to Adagio tobacco cessation program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Adagio</li><li>Physicians</li><li>Nurses</li></ul>

<sup>8</sup> Allegheny County Health Department  
<sup>9</sup> American Cancer Society

## Social and Workforce Programs

Health equity is a crucial aspect of public health that aims to ensure that all individuals, regardless of socioeconomic status or geographic location, have equal access to health care resources and opportunities for optimal health. The importance of health equity lies in its potential to reduce health disparities, improve health outcomes, and enhance overall community well-being.

The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes that reducing inequities in health can lead to improved social and economic outcomes, as healthier individuals are more capable of contributing to their communities. Health equity is achieved when everyone can attain their full potential for health and well-being. Moreover, equitable access to health care develops a sense of trust and engagement among community members, encouraging them to seek necessary care and adhere to preventive measures. Health equity is essential for creating a fair and effective health care system that serves all individuals. Addressing the root causes of health disparities and promoting equitable access to care can improve health outcomes and advance a healthier, more resilient society.

## Health Equity – Social and Workforce Programs

**Goal: Continue to develop a workforce that reflects the Jefferson community.**

**Impact: Patients will feel more relaxed, understood, and represented when they are cared for by employees who share common backgrounds.**

Target Population	Strategies	Action Steps	Measures	Partners and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High school students, external adult and internal entry level employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the Talent Attraction Program (TAP) across the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote TAP at local high schools, community organizations, and JH entry level departments.</li> <li>Support TAP students with mentors, gas cards, academic bonuses, access to food, etc., as needed throughout their training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of students enrolled</li> <li>Number of students graduating and onboarding into full-time careers at AHN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CCAC &amp; other educational institutions</li> <li>Local school districts</li> <li>Community organizations</li> </ul>

**Goal: Improve cultural and linguistic services within our health care organization.**

**Impact: Advance health equity, decrease health care disparities, and improve our overall quality of care outcomes.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team members and patients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase utilization of interpretive services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review quarterly reports of language utilization data from the Institute for Strategic Social and Workforce Programs.</li> <li>Ensure all employees are trained* and prepared to engage language services.</li> <li>Implement I-Speak card program and language binder.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of employees trained</li> <li>Increase in utilization of language services (vendor reports provided)</li> <li>Number of complaints related to language services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Institute for Strategic Social and Workforce Programs</li> <li>CIH</li> <li>Integration Specialist</li> <li>Nurse Education</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team members and patients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve accommodation experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct inventory based on The Institute for Strategic Social and Workforce Programs.</li> <li>Accommodation Check List.</li> <li>Identify and acquire (with The Institute for Strategic Social and Workforce Programs) needed assistive technologies, interpreters, equipment, etc..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in patient accommodations available</li> <li>Number of complaints related to failure to accommodate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities</li> <li>The Institute for Strategic Social and Workforce Programs</li> <li>Patient Access</li> <li>Patient Experience</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team members and patients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve collection of REL/ SOGI data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate the data collection process smoothly into existing workflows.</li> <li>Collect REL and SOGI data based on workflow.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase of REL/SOGI data collection by 10% each year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Epic Team</li> <li>Patient Access</li> <li>The Institute for Strategic Social and Workforce Programs</li> </ul>

\*All AHN employees receive annual mandatory CLAS Standard training in Health Care Environment Training.

Reclassifying Health Equity programs as Social and Workforce Programs better reflects the broader scope of addressing disparities and improving health care access, outcomes, and workforce representation for all populations. It ensures a more direct focus on addressing systemic barriers to care, social determinants of health, and workforce development initiatives. The change aligns with Allegheny Health Network's health care priorities, emphasizing measurable strategies to improve community health outcomes and strengthen the health care workforce. By reframing this category, AHN aims to highlight tangible efforts to improve social well-being and create sustainable workforce solutions that enhance access to quality health care for everyone.

## CHNA Priority Changes

AHN Jefferson has transitioned its strategy for addressing certain community needs because of programmatic changes and challenges in data collection. The Front Door Initiative, a grant-funded program aimed at better understanding and addressing the social determinants of health issues that impact patients within AHN Jefferson's emergency department, ended this past year. Though the formal program has concluded, the organization remains committed to identifying and removing health barriers for patient populations across the hospital's footprint. AHN Jefferson's emergency department continues to screen patients for SDOH barriers as part of its regular intake process. For those in need of additional support, AHN caregivers will connect patients to community-based organizations and other local resources to address areas of concern, such as inadequate access to reliable transportation, nutritious food, and stable housing. In terms of transportation, the hospital previously reported metrics such as the number of patients receiving zTrips or bus vouchers in the emergency department, which was mainly a means to assist patients without resources to return home. Regarding the cost of care, the hospital relied on data from the Physician Partners of Western PA, which proved difficult to obtain and did not reflect a community-based program. Pharmacy-based metrics that focused on inpatients have also been largely dissolved. For substance use disorder, previous reporting metrics on referrals to the Squirrel Hill Health Center yielded minimal numbers and were tied to the Front Door Initiative. Lastly, metrics related to obesity came from the Metabolic Institute, which is neither a hospital-based nor a true community program, as it focuses on outpatients seeking medical weight loss services. As a result, AHN Jefferson has found it increasingly challenging to continue reporting on these specific community needs. The evolving landscape of program availability and funding challenges has also hindered AHN Jefferson's ability to address these community needs effectively. The reliance on external data sources for cost of care, and the limited impact of substance use disorder referrals all contribute to a gap in comprehensive community support. Furthermore, the metrics related to obesity reflect a focus on outpatient services rather than a holistic approach to community health. The 2025 – 2027 CHNA cycle reflects and corrects this changing landscape.

## Conclusion

AHN Jefferson's comprehensive approach to addressing workforce development, food insecurity, mental health services, cancer prevention, and health equity demonstrates a deep commitment to building healthier, more resilient communities. By leveraging strategic partnerships and data-driven solutions, AHN Jefferson is not only bridging employment gaps and enhancing referral programs but also fostering economic stability and improving health outcomes across the region. These initiatives extend beyond immediate health care needs, creating sustainable opportunities for individuals to thrive professionally and personally. Through continued collaboration with educational institutions, community organizations, and local school districts, AHN Jefferson is driving long-term, systemic change that strengthens the health care workforce, reduces disparities, and ultimately transforms community health for generations to come.