

Allegheny Health Network — AHN West Penn Hospital

# Implementation Strategy Plan

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2025 Report



**AHN WEST PENN**

# 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 West Penn Hospital

Founded in 1848, AHN West Penn Hospital (AHN West Penn) has established itself as a premier health care institution in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and serves as a cornerstone of health and wellness for the western Pennsylvania community. With 356 beds, AHN West Penn is renowned for its commitment to excellence in patient care, education, and research.<sup>2</sup> Over the years, AHN West Penn has garnered an international reputation for its innovative approaches and high-quality services across a wide range of medical specialties.

AHN West Penn is recognized as a national leader in oncology, surgery, and women's health, providing advanced treatment options for conditions such as cancer, heart disease, severe burns, autoimmune diseases, and neurological disorders. The hospital's extensive medical staff includes 1,246 physicians who collaborate with experienced nursing teams to deliver comprehensive care.<sup>3</sup>

With a rich history and a forward-thinking approach, AHN West Penn remains committed to meeting the evolving health care needs of its community while striving to achieve the best possible outcomes through compassionate care and advanced medical technology.

## 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 West Penn primarily serving Allegheny County. 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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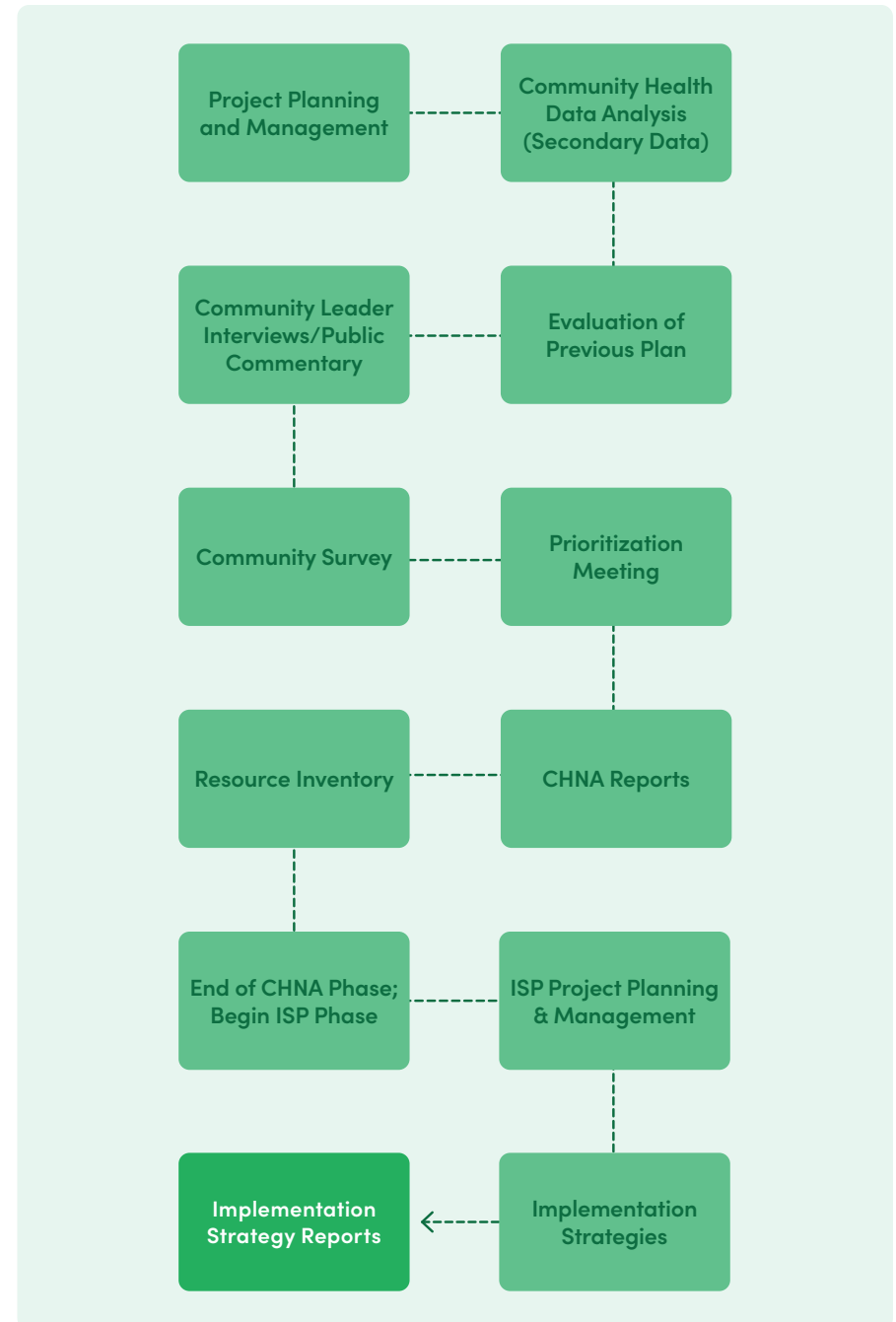
<sup>2</sup> Allegheny Health Network

<sup>3</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 West Penn 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).

Cost of Care

The cost of health care is a significant factor in shaping social determinants of health (SDOH) because it directly influences individuals’ ability to access necessary medical services. When the cost of care is prohibitively high, people may delay or forgo medical treatments, leading to worse health outcomes. This issue is especially pronounced among uninsured or underinsured individuals, who often face higher out-of-pocket expenses. According to a West Health-Gallup Affordability Index Survey, an estimated 72.2 million (or nearly one in three) American adults did not seek needed health care because of cost, significantly impacting their ability to seek preventive care, manage chronic conditions, or receive timely treatments.<sup>4</sup>

The CHNA Community Survey results revealed cost barriers such as access to affordable healthy foods, or limited access to affordable care are prevalent in the AHN West Penn service area. Addressing the high cost of health care is essential for improving health equity and reducing the long-term societal costs of poor health outcomes. By tackling the cost of care, society can take a significant step toward reducing health disparities and improving the overall well-being of populations.

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH): Cost of Care				
Goal: Strengthen access to affordable medications.				
Impact: (1) Increased utilization of Care Partner Clinic and (2) increased education and awareness.				
Target Population	Strategies	Action Steps	Measures	Partners and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>General population</li><li>Team members</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increase access to affordable medications.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gain support from pharmaceutical assistance programs through AHN specialty and infusion centers.</li><li>Gain support from pharmaceutical grant foundation application assistance.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Number of specialty pharmacy grants — both Oncology and AHN for West Penn patients.</li><li>Number of free drug applications for infusions and through AHN specialty Rx (prescriptions) (free drug through manufacturer patient assistant programs).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Care partner clinic</li><li>Pharmacy and AHN 340B Department (for Oncology grants)</li><li>WPH Oncology Infusion Center Pharmacies</li></ul>

<sup>4</sup> West Health-Gallup Affordability Index

## 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>5</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>6</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>7</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: Strengthen access to specialty provider services and increase utilization of services.				
Impact: (1) Increased utilization of The Healthy Food Center; and (2) increased education and awareness.				
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>Increase access to the Healthy Food Center (HFC).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Utilize the HFC to educate on chronic diseases and healthy food choices.</li><li>Gain referrals to HFC.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Number of new visits</li><li>Number of follow-up visits</li><li>Total people served</li><li>Number of meals provided</li><li>Number of Epic referrals</li><li>Number of community support platform referrals</li><li>Pounds of produce grown in the garden</li><li>Number of patients utilizing transportation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>HFC</li><li>Physicians and health care extenders</li></ul>

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

<sup>6</sup> National Library of Medicine

<sup>7</sup> National Library of Medicine

## Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a significant mental health concern that affects many new mothers, impacting their emotional well-being and overall behavioral health. It is characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, and exhaustion, which can interfere with a mother’s ability to care for herself and her baby. Research suggests that approximately one in 10 women experience PPD, with prevalence rates even higher among individuals with a history of mental health conditions or those facing social and economic hardships.<sup>8</sup>

Early identification and intervention are critical in addressing PPD effectively. Routine depression screenings during prenatal visits and postpartum checkups can help health care providers identify at-risk individuals and ensure timely intervention. Expanding access to mental health resources — including counseling, support groups, and peer support programs — can empower mothers to seek help and manage their symptoms more effectively. Additionally, fostering community support systems that promote maternal mental health, reduce stigma, and provide accessible resources is essential in ensuring that new mothers receive the care and support they need during this critical period.<sup>9</sup>

Behavioral Health: Postpartum Depression (PPD)				
Goal: Increase utilization of outpatient behavioral health services for women.				
Impact: (1) Increased awareness of signs of perinatal and postpartum depressions; and (2) increased use of appropriate behavioral health services for women.				
Target Population	Strategies	Action Steps	Measures	Partners and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Women in West Penn service area</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify women at risk for perinatal or postpartum depression and anxiety disorders.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Conduct early screenings for perinatal and postpartum depression.</li><li>Conduct behavioral health assessment prior to discharge.</li><li>Provide access to appropriate level care.</li><li>Destigmatize postpartum depression and anxiety disorders.</li><li>Conduct behavioral health assessment at follow-up visits.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Number of referrals.</li><li>Number of appointments to Alexis Joy D’Achille Center for perinatal mental health.</li><li>Number of unique patients.</li><li>Number of educational events or program table events.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Alexis Joy D’Achille Center for Perinatal Mental Health</li></ul>

<sup>8</sup> BMC Public Health

<sup>9</sup> BMC Public Health



Obesity

Obesity remains a major public health challenge in Pennsylvania, affecting over 3.4 million adults — approximately 33.4% of the state’s adult population. Engaging in regular physical activity is essential for longevity and reducing the risk of serious health conditions, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers. For individuals already managing chronic diseases, staying active can help control symptoms and prevent further complications. Despite these benefits, only one in four U.S. adults meets the recommended guidelines for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities. The lack of sufficient physical activity contributes to significant health and economic burdens, leading to an estimated \$117 billion in annual health care costs nationwide.<sup>10</sup>

Chronic Diseases and Aging: Obesity				
Goal: Reduce rate of obesity in the service area.				
Impact: (1) Increased awareness of healthy behaviors among children; (2) increased number of community events; and (3) increased awareness of options for weight management.				
Target Population	Strategies	Action Steps	Measures	Partners and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Adults with obesity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Implement programs to reduce obesity in adults.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Offer meal planning and nutrition counseling.</li><li>Offer medical weight loss programs.</li><li>Provide a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to surgical intervention.</li><li>Provide education sessions on surgical interventions.</li><li>Provide support groups.</li><li>Provide web-based education and cooking classes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Number of community-based education events</li><li>Number of participants in medical weight loss program</li><li>Number of patients with surgical interventions</li><li>Number of support group meetings</li><li>Number of attendees</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Metabolic Center at West Penn Hospital</li></ul>

<sup>10</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## 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: Remove barriers to care for women.				
Impact: (1) Improve access to care; (2) educate community on resources available; and (3) increase awareness of social and workforce programs.				
Target Population	Strategies	Action Steps	Measures	Partners and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborating with women's institute on access to care evaluate barriers.</li> <li>Opportunities to decrease barriers to care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with Mobile Moms – part of Travelers Aid Medical Assistance Transportation Program.</li> <li>Provide support to patients one day per week from a social worker at OB-GYN residency program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of clients who use Mobile Moms</li> <li>Types of support the social worker provides</li> <li>Number of staff trainings</li> <li>Number of staff who attend trainings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women's Institute</li> <li>Mobile Moms</li> <li>Various OB-GYN practices on-site</li> </ul>
Goal: Improve cultural and linguistic services within our health care organization.				
Impact: Advance health equity, decrease healthcare 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> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in utilization of language services (vendor reports provided)</li> <li>Number of employees trained</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>

\*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 Needs Reevaluated as Priorities Are Met

In looking forward to the current CHNA cycle, AHN West Penn has chosen to deprioritize certain health needs based on progress made and community feedback. Regarding workforce development, the hospital has successfully established strong partnerships with community organizations and implemented programs for underserved youth, facilitating over 120 shadow experiences annually. With these initiatives well-established and ongoing, the hospital has deemed its goals met. For diabetes management, the Bariatric and Metabolic Institute, particularly its endocrinology services, has experienced significant growth, with high patient satisfaction and increased referrals. While diabetes care remains important, the hospital has prioritized obesity for the 2024 CHNA, which intersects with diabetes management, allowing for integrated health strategies. Lastly, although AHN West Penn collaborates with the Cancer Institute to provide annual screenings, community surveys indicated that cancer was not a high-ranking priority. Consequently, the hospital will continue to offer localized resources but will not prioritize this area in the upcoming CHNA cycle. Overall, AHN West Penn's decision to shift its priorities reflects a commitment to building on established successes while responding to community needs as identified.

## Conclusion

AHN West Penn is committed to addressing the cost of care, food insecurity, obesity, postpartum depression, and health equity. Through targeted initiatives, AHN West Penn aims to improve access to affordable medications, expand nutrition and food security programs, enhance postpartum mental health services, and provide comprehensive obesity management strategies. Additionally, efforts to increase cultural and linguistic services will ensure that all patients receive equitable and high-quality care.

By leveraging community partnerships, data-driven strategies, and patient-centered programming, AHN West Penn is taking a proactive approach to improving health outcomes for the populations it serves. These efforts not only address immediate health concerns but also foster long-term well-being by reducing disparities and improving access to essential services. Through continued collaboration and innovation, AHN West Penn remains dedicated to advancing health equity and enhancing the quality of life for all individuals in its service area.

