

Community Health Improvement Plan *2023 Annual Report*

Central Vermont Medical Center



THE
University of Vermont
HEALTH NETWORK

Central Vermont Medical Center

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A Message From Leadership



**Anna Tempesta-Noonan,
RN, BSN, MS**

President and Chief Operating Officer
Central Vermont Medical Center

Central Vermont Medical Center is committed to improving the health and well-being of people in the communities we serve. Every three years, we engage in a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to solicit input and feedback from community members, partner organizations, and government agencies. Their perspectives, combined with pertinent data and consideration of existing resources and programs, inform the identification of regional priorities we aim to address.

Achieving population-level health outcomes requires a unified effort. No single entity is solely responsible; it takes the collective effort of various community programs, organizations, agencies, and systems working together to optimize resource use and maximize impact. Our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) identifies areas where CVMC can effectively develop strategies to address these needs during the current three-year cycle. Publishing an annual report underscores our commitment and accountability to fostering community health and equity.

CVMC is committed to becoming an anti-racist organization and promoting greater access and inclusivity. Our priority is ensuring that the voices of those most impacted are centered in the conversation and development of strategies. While we are making good progress, we recognize this is an ongoing endeavor.

This report offers a glimpse of the excellent work happening every day. We are proud of our collaborative efforts to advance community health and are excited to share stories of our 2023 accomplishments with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna D. Noonan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Introduction

Annual Report Overview

Adopting an 'Implementation Strategy' and evaluating the impact of our Community Benefit programs is a requirement of our health system's tax-exempt status. This demonstrates our commitment, accountability and effectiveness in addressing our communities' identified health priorities. An annual progress report is best practice for Community Benefit. This report spotlights programmatic highlights, investments made, and collaboration with our key partners to improve the health of our community in 2023.

Prioritization

2022-2025 community health priorities for Central Vermont Medical Center (CVMC) were informed by 2022 CHNA findings, diverse stakeholder input, including community recommendations and partners' efforts and input, and CVMC strategic initiatives. CVMC worked in collaboration with THRIVE, the regional Accountable Community for Health (ACH), to select priorities and develop the Community Health Improvement Plan.

Thoughtful consideration of the needs CVMC is best positioned to address determined the priorities for the 2022-2025 planning cycle:

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Chronic Disease Prevention
- Mental Health
- Substance Use Disorders
- Social Drivers of Health

As a dedicated partner and fiscal agent for THRIVE, CVMC is committed to supporting the advancement of collaborative partners' work.

ABOUT US

Central Vermont Medical Center is the primary health care provider for 66,000 people who live and work in the 26 communities of central Vermont. We provide a comprehensive range of services through our hospital, 27 community-based medical practices and 153-bed skilled nursing facility.

For over half a century, CVMC has been a cornerstone of care in central Vermont, committed to nurturing a healthy community through innovative health care solutions, advanced treatment options and educational initiatives that empower individuals to lead healthier lives, while also driving economic growth and stability in the region.

Summary of Accomplishments

In 2023, CVMC has once again shown its commitment and resilience, coming together to support our community in the face of numerous challenges. An aging population is resulting in increased demand for health care at a time when we are experiencing extremely low rates of unemployment and workforce shortages. This puts stress on our systems of care. In response, CVMC has continued to innovate and expand our health care career pathway education programs. In partnership with Vermont colleges and universities, CVMC was able to offer seven training programs in 2023 with forty-seven participants and is aiming to increase these numbers in 2024. Program focus areas included Licensed Practical Nursing, Registered Nursing and Surgical Technologists. The benefits and success of CVMC's approach have been recognized as a template to be emulated across the network ecosystem. In 2024 these workforce development programs will be continued and offered by UVM Health Network.



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In July, Central Vermont experienced severe flooding resulting in road, school and business closures, and evacuation of many community members from their homes while others found themselves stranded in place. CVMC is extremely proud of the way our team worked together to maintain operations and support those in need, with staff working beyond their scheduled shift and others navigating the most obscure routes to bypass high water and make it into work safely. The CVMC pharmacy team quickly established a process to provide 72-hour refills for patients who ran out or lost their medications in the flooding. CVMC staff established Flood Relief Pop Up First Aid/PPE stations in community centers to assist those who needed medical attention with many providers and staff volunteering their time to support this effort. Members of THRIVE, our accountable community for health, met regularly to identify community needs and mobilize their resources to support those impacted by the flooding. This level of collaboration, dedication and commitment is what makes Central Vermont unique and a wonderful place to live, work and thrive.

Highlights of 2023

- VT Community Health Equity Partnership grant
- Central Vermont Prevention Coalition
- Health Care Career Pathway Programs
- July 2023 Flood Response

Investments

Central VT Prevention Coalition (CVPC): \$25,000

The UVM Health Network Community Benefit Investment dollars were used on the following community projects:

1. NaloxBox project: Ensuring access to emergency use naloxone in community organizations and businesses.
2. Project BEACON: A community based post-overdose response project in partnership with EMS that links overdose survivors at high risk of subsequent fatal overdose to community resources in harm reduction, treatment and recovery.

As a member of THRIVE, CVMC provided \$25,000 of VTCHEP funds in support to nine organizations and projects that directly support diverse and underserved populations within our community. The distribution is as follows:

- Working Bridges: \$2,500
- Vermont Kindness Project: \$3,500
- Pride Rides: \$3,500
- Peer Plus: \$1,000
- Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools Partners in Education (MRPSPIE): \$5,000
- Mosaic Vermont: \$1,000
- Education Justice Coalition of Vermont: \$2,000
- Community Resilience Organizations: \$3,500
- All Brains Belong: \$3,500

TOTAL: \$50,000

Key Community Partnerships

- THRIVE
- Vermont Department of Health
- Family Center of Washington County
- Green Mountain United Way
- Capstone Community Action Coalition
- Turning Point Center
- Washington County Mental Health Services
- Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice

Work in Progress/Anticipated for 2024

- Continue our DEI journey and be a leader in the community.
 - ◆ In 2024, CVMC has set a goal for 80% of leaders, defined as those with direct reports, to complete Everyday Inclusion education.
 - ◆ In 2024, increase by 25% patient and family advisor engagements to help develop organizational priorities to ensure high-quality care.
 - ◆ Review hospital-wide communications for cultural sensitivity and health literacy.
 - ◆ Plan to promote newly launching the UVM Health Network Cultural Resource Guide to adopt organizational and institutional practices that advance equity.
 - ◆ Work continues to enhance understanding of perinatal mental health expectations for Afghan cultures.
- Preparing for our 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA).

Calendar Year 2023: Work to Date



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



GOAL: Create a care environment that honors the diversity of our community, continually expands cultural knowledge, and adapts services to meet the culturally unique needs of patients, Woodridge residents, staff and our community.

Calendar Year 2023 Progress Made

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase cultural awareness and humility among staff and providers.

Strategy 1: Provide opportunities for leadership, staff, providers and community stakeholders to connect, share and learn via cross-cultural engagement in a safe, inclusive environment.

- In FY 2024, CVMC set a goal for 80% of leaders, defined as those with direct reports, to complete Everyday Inclusion education; baseline of 59% in October 2023.

Strategy 2: Incorporate diverse stakeholders on hospital-wide committees to develop organizational priorities for ensuring high-quality care.

- Patient and Family Advisors have been recruited to sit on committees and bring the patient experience to improvement efforts.
- In FY 2023, CVMC had 27 patient and family advisor engagements and aims to increase that by 25% in FY 2024.

Strategy 3: Monitor and track patient experience surveys to ensure members of the BIPOC community who receive care at CVMC experience equitable care.

- A newly-implemented internal dashboard of patient concerns is maintained, and tracks events related to elements of diversity, equity or inclusion. This will be trended over time to understand themes and areas for continued improvement.
- Baseline data being established.

BY THE NUMBERS

Through their VTCHEP Grant, CVMC and THRIVE Accountable Community for Health supported several active listening and learning sessions with diverse stakeholders:

27 staff members across 6 THRIVE leadership partner organizations engaged in **Coffee & Chat conversations**

74 community members engaged in conversations around **diversity, health equity and their experiences** within the system of care

27 **Patient and Family Advisor Engagements**

Aim to increase by **25%** in FY 2024



OBJECTIVE 2: Reduce disparities in outcomes among vulnerable patient populations.

Strategy 1: Accurately collect sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) and race ethnicity and language (REal) data in medical records.

- CVMC has a process to assess and collect SOGI data upon admission. We leverage stratus iPads for interpreter services to ensure all patients have access to clear communication with their care team members.

Strategy 2: Track and compare patient treatment and outcomes across vulnerable populations.

- CVMC received a grant through the Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care to address disparities in rates of screening for colon cancer. Early data indicates patients with Medicaid are screened at a rate 20% lower than the general population.
- The grant efforts included incorporation of an algorithm for selecting the most appropriate colon cancer screening method, provider-facing and patient-facing education sheets, and a conversation decision aid to help guide providers and patients in making the best choice for the patient. Over the year, we observed fecal immunochemical tests (FIT) becoming a larger percentage of completed colon cancer screening studies. This work is advancing health equity by increasing access to lower barrier options for this preventive service.

Strategy 3: Review hospital-wide processes to incorporate culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS)

- CVMC utilizes both in-person interpreters as well as iPads to incorporate televideo interpreters for non-English speaking individuals.
- Baseline data being established.

OBJECTIVE 3: Encourage and seek input to improve health equity.

Strategy 1: Incorporate opportunities for qualitative input from patients, Woodridge residents, staff, providers and community stakeholders.

- VTCHEP grant funding of several projects supporting diverse populations.
- Through their VTCHEP Grant, CVMC and THRIVE Accountable Community for Health supported several active listening and learning sessions with diverse stakeholders, including:
 - ◆ 74 community members engaged in conversations around diversity, health equity and their experiences within our system of care.
 - ◆ 27 staff members across six THRIVE leadership partner organizations engaged in Coffee and Chat conversations. The testimonials and unique stories became the framework for the creation of a THRIVE Equity Commitment.

Strategy 2: Support and cultivate opportunities for community-wide cross-cultural engagement.

- Progress for this work is captured throughout.

Strategy 3: Invite diverse stakeholders to serve on committees that advance patient care and inform hospital-wide policies.

- The director of Patient Experience is actively recruiting Patient and Family Advisors to sit on committees and bring the patient experience to improvement efforts.

OBJECTIVE 4: Increase diversity of staff and providers.

Strategy 1: Modify recruitment and hiring processes to attract and support diverse staff and invest in workforce career ladders for entry-level positions:

- Medical Assistant program (CVMC-developed program)
- Licensed Nurse Assistant program (Partnership with VT board of nursing)
- Licensed Practical Nurse Pathway program (Partnership with Vermont State University)
- Phlebotomy program (Partnership with Central Vermont Career Center)
- Respiratory Therapy program launched (Partnership with Vermont State University)
- Associate degree nurse (Partnership with VTSU)
- Starting another cohort of MSN program with 5 CVMC enrollees and 20 from others in VT
- ABSN (Accelerated bachelors of nursing)

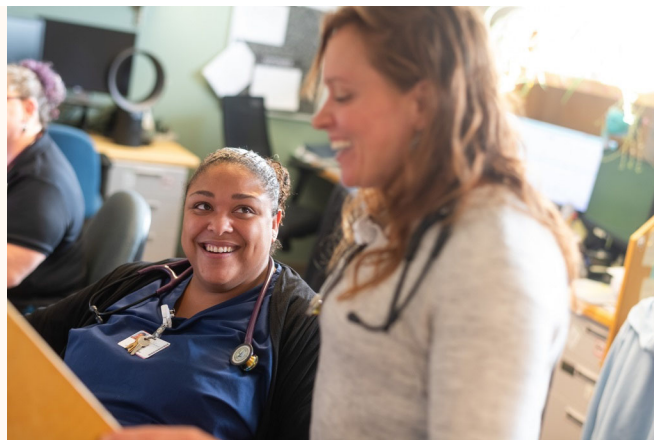
Strategy 2: Grow workforce pipelines, including international staff recruitment, to shepherd diverse candidates through hiring and successful long-term employment.

- CVMC has signed a contract with Avante to source international RNs. We presently have three in the pipeline and are aiming for 10 RNs.
- CVMC has hosted several Workforce Development Pathway information sessions dedicated to helping employees learn about other opportunities and grow their own career.

OBJECTIVE 5: Support a sustainable and equitable community.

Strategy 1: Evaluate hiring and supply chain processes.

- Nutrition and Food Services department launched an initiative to offer cultural recognition of cafeteria meal offerings throughout the year.
- HR is now collecting staff diversity data to better understand:
 1. Existing workforce dimensions of diversity; and
 2. Measure meaningful change over time
- Measuring the rate of self-reporting by staff of race/ethnicity within Workday. Measured as the percentage of staff for which race/ethnicity data in workday was left blank. Baseline was 5% and the goal by end of FY 2024 is 2.5%.



Strategy 2: Purchase goods from local and diverse vendors.

- Locally sourced food vendors include: Maple Wind Farm, Paul Mazza Produce, Cabot Creamery, Black River Produce and Meats, and MacKenzie Meats, among others.
- Maple Wind Farm was the most recent addition in 2023 as a local and sustainable source for fresh eggs and fresh chicken used in the kitchen at CVMC.
- Participate in the Vermont Fresh Network, as well as the Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge through the “Health Care Without Harm” national organization.

Strategy 3: Contribute expertise to advance community initiatives.

- Supported the Washington County Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) by providing staff expertise and support.
- As a member of THRIVE, CVMC provided \$25,000 of VTCHEP funds in support to nine organizations and projects that directly support diverse and underserved populations within our community (*grants detailed on p.6 under Investments*).



Chronic Disease Prevention



GOAL: Identify barriers and change processes to ensure equitable access to health care and community-based services.

Calendar Year 2023 Progress Made

OBJECTIVE 1: Promote UVM Health Network population health management strategy through improved communication and coordination of care.

Strategy 1: Continue the development and implementation of our primary care delivery model and the UVM Health Network Population Health Services Organization (PHSO). The aim is to create an extended care team of resources including: care coordination, social services, health coaching, and mental health and resource coordination to positively impact clinical health outcomes for our patients, Woodridge residents and our community, while maximizing the value of the services we provide.

- Continue to support the development and implementation of the UVMHN Population Health Service Organization and associated High Value Care workflows. Screenings for social determinants of health (SDOH) and behavioral health concerns have been standardized and captured discretely within the medical record. Risk-based algorithms are being leveraged to assign patients into a value-based care pathway and align scheduled visit volumes, care management and additional resources to support the patient in managing their health, based on their level of need.
- Participating and actively promoting use of e-consults to improve access to specialty care. Rather than placing a referral and waiting for the patient to be seen, a provider can send a very targeted question to a specialist and receive a response they can incorporate into their care plan, avoiding further delays.

OBJECTIVE 2: Reduce disparities in chronic disease prevalence and death rates.

Strategy 1: CVMC Primary Care and community partners will identify collaborative opportunities to improve care and services.

- CVMC launched 12 evidence-based Healthy Living workshops aimed at improving health and well-being. Workshops focus on conditions of High Blood Pressure, Chronic Pain Management, Diabetes Prevention, Diabetes Self-Management and Tobacco Cessation and support participants in learning the skills and behaviors needed for sustained health.

- Work advances with our local partners at CVHHH, WCMHS, Woodridge and local SNFs to improve care coordination and transitions of care to get patients to the appropriate care setting and reduce hospital readmissions.
- CVMC Women’s Health and Washington County Mental Health have worked to ensure access to doula support services for pregnant individuals during and after delivery to support healthy families. All patients are screened for social determinants of health and teams work to connect patients to resources when needs are identified.
- CVMC continues to promote the benefits of physical fitness within the workplace and at home:
 - ◆ CVMC supported convening teams and the participation of 198 employees in the Vermont Corporate Cup Challenge, covering registration fees and providing CVMC T-shirts.

OBJECTIVE 3: Adopt organizational and institutional practices that advance equity.

Strategy 1: Partner with CVMC DEI Steering Committee and the Pride Center of Vermont to improve cultural competence of providers and adopt inclusive health care environments.

- Virtual training available across UVMHN: Med SafeZone, a facilitator-led LGBTQIA+ health course that has been reviewed by our Pride Center of Vermont partners.

Strategy 2: Assess existing patient education materials for literacy levels and language availability.

- Work completed translating several different patient materials into languages other than English, including translating the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) into Pashto, French and Spanish.
- Work continues to enhance understanding of perinatal mental health expectations for Afghan cultures.



Mental Health



GOAL: Strengthen and support community initiatives that promote mental wellness, recovery and resilience.

Calendar Year 2023 Progress Made

OBJECTIVE 1: Improve access to mental health services and support the continuum of care.

Strategy 1: Advance mental health integration within our primary care practices and leverage the PHSO mental health resource model to extend resources in our primary care practices.

- CVMC joined the state Community Health Team (CHT) Expansion pilot via the Vermont Blueprint for Health. The aim is to increase screening for mental health concerns and social drivers of health among our population to improve access to mental health care and initiate interventions.

OBJECTIVE 2: Support access to mental wellness services within the community.

Strategy 1: Work with community partners to support community mental health education and mental wellness programs (e.g., physical activity, yoga, meditation).

- CVMC's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offered numerous opportunities for staff to participate in workplace wellness events.
- 'Headspace' offered as an accessible resource to support healthy lifestyles.

Substance Use Disorders



GOAL: Strengthen and support a harmonized network where there is no wrong door, no wrong time to get help and support for substance use disorders, and to prevent the initiation of substance use (adapted from Central Vermont Prevention Council mission).

Calendar Year 2023 Progress Made

OBJECTIVE 1: Improve access to substance use disorder services and supports along a full continuum of care.

Strategy 1: CVMC providers, leaders and community partners will collaborate and support stronger integration of substance use interventions.

- Peer recovery/support services in both community and emergency department settings.
- Access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) in the emergency department and coordination of follow-up treatment within the appropriate setting.
- Education and training related to: distribution and use of opioid overdose reversal medications, opioid prescribing, chronic pain management, and MAT protocols for prescribing practitioners.
- The CVMC MAT team, with our community partners, have continued our strong collaboration to address the impact of problematic substance use.
- Education and distribution of harm reduction supports and resources has been a key strategy with efforts made to expand clean needle distribution sites and increase easy access to harm reduction kits across our community.
- CVMC placed an emphasis on training primary care and express care staff and we now have nine sites offering harm reduction kits.

BY THE NUMBERS

In collaboration with **Central Vermont Prevention Coalition**, distribution of NaloxBox can be found in

8 sites in our community with
11 more pending

Members of the **ROAD team** interacted with

253 patients in the **CVMC ED**
17% successfully engaged in treatment

- In collaboration with Central Vermont Prevention Coalition, distribution of NaloxBox can be found in eight sites in our community with 11 more pending.
- Monthly meetings of the Central Vermont Opioid Council with representation from local Spoke providers, the regional Hub, CVMC Emergency Department and members of Turning Point Recovery Center occur to track, coordinate and modify services to better meet the needs of those seeking help for substance abuse.

OBJECTIVE 2: Promote a "community-wide systems" framework for the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders.

Strategy 1: CVMC serves as the convener for the Central Vermont Prevention Coalition (CVPC).

- Support monthly meetings and CVPC activities.
- Support CVPC in building safe harbor initiatives to prevent substance use.
- Support elimination of stigma and misunderstanding of substance use.
- Address equitable and affordable access to services.

OBJECTIVE 3: Improve access to treatment and services for alcohol use disorders.

Strategy 1: In partnership with community agencies and peer recovery services, support the Refocus on Alcohol Dependence (ROAD) program, an innovative hub/spoke approach to outpatient detox services.

- ROAD (Refocus on Alcohol Dependence) program collaboration continues with CVMC and several key community partners.
 - ◆ Through October 2023, members of the ROAD team interacted with 253 patients in the CVMC ED presenting with symptoms of alcohol use disorder, of which 17% successfully engaged in treatment through the program.
 - ◆ Several primary care sites have begun offering this as an outpatient treatment.



Social Drivers of Health



GOAL: Strengthen and support community initiatives that create social conditions that promote health.

Calendar Year 2023 Progress Made

OBJECTIVE 1: Support policies and infrastructure that create healthy communities.

Strategy 1: Conduct SDoH patient screening and partner with community agencies to align referrals and care management resources to meet identified needs.

Strategy 2: Serve as the convener for THRIVE, the regional Accountable Community for Health.

Strategy 3: Partner with THRIVE to implement the Barre area Working Communities Challenge to lower the rate of single female heads of household in poverty. Using the Working Bridges approach, services are delivered at the place of employment, using a navigator who works with employees and focuses on employer policy and practice changes.

Strategy 4: Partner with Vermont Youth Conservation Corps to continue the Health Care Share program to connect patients with fresh local food.

- Provided shares from June-October, never missing a week, even during the July floods. With distribution sites in Berlin, Northfield, Montpelier, Waterbury and five SASH sites in Barre, CVMC was able to provide around 165 families with organic veggies and some additional protein options for 17 weeks.

Strategy 5: Partner with the Vermont Foodbank and sponsor VeggieVanGo food distribution.

BY THE NUMBERS

Through the **Health Care Share program**, CVMC and VYCC provided around

165

families with organic vegetables for

17

weeks



- VeggieVanGo food distribution offered at no cost to members of the community at the Barre Auditorium year-round on the fourth Friday of each month. There is no application or barrier to access, and public health advocates are available to assist with connection to supports for WIC, SNAP benefits and other social supports.

Strategy 6: Explore opportunities to improve childcare and housing access for CVMC employees.

- CVMC is actively engaged with multiple private developers and non-profit organizations to support efforts to expand housing in central VT.
- THRIVE was a recipient of a Vermont Health Equity Partnership (VTCHEP) grant funded by the CDC to create a public health framework for reducing health inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A consultant was hired through the VTCHEP grant to conduct outreach and engage with diverse groups of individuals to gather information and better understand how these individuals experience the health care system. The testimonials were integrated into discussions when policy questions arose related to needs such as homelessness/housing.

OBJECTIVE 2: Support programs that promote resilience, connection and belonging.

Strategy 1: Support THRIVE strategic focus areas, including financial and food security for residents, homelessness health and well-being, social connection and digital equity, and community engagement.

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*This report was created in collaboration with the UVM Health Network
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