

Morton Hospital  
Community Benefits Plan  
**2022**



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# Morton Hospital

A STEWARD FAMILY HOSPITAL



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# Table of Contents

Mission and Values	5
About Morton Hospital	6
Community Benefits Mission	6
Community Health Needs Assessment	7
Population of Focus	9
Priority 1: Chronic Disease Management	10
Priority 2: Obesity Prevention and Support	11
Priority 3: Mental Health Support	11
Priority 4: Substance Use Disorder Support	13
Priority 5: Improving Access to Care	14
Priority 6: Unemployment Support	15
Priority 7: Educational Advancement and Support	16
Priority 8: Violence Prevention	17
Priority 9: Capacity Building & Community Support	17
Priority 10: Infectious Disease – COVID-19 Response & Services	18
Community Benefits Advisory Committee	19



## Mission Statement

**Steward Health Care is committed to providing the highest quality care with compassion and respect.**

We dedicate ourselves to:

- *Delivering affordable health care to all in the communities we serve*
- *Being responsible partners in the communities we serve*
- *Serving as advocates for the poor and underserved in the communities we serve*

## Values

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### Compassion:

Providing care with empathy in such a way that the person experiences acceptance, concern, hopefulness and sensitivity

### Accountability:

Accepting responsibility for continuous performance improvement, embracing change and seeking new opportunities to serve

### Respect:

Honoring the dignity of each person

### Excellence:

Exceeding expectations through teamwork and innovation

### Stewardship:

Managing our financial and human resources responsibly in caring for those entrusted to us.



## About Us

Morton Hospital, founded in 1889, is a 112-bed acute care hospital providing comprehensive inpatient, outpatient and 24/7 emergency services to Taunton and the communities of southeastern Massachusetts. The hospital is a Joint Commission-accredited healthcare facility, offering state-of-the-art technology and innovative procedures in a local community setting. The hospital's strengths include emergency medicine, imaging services, pain management, orthopedics, rehabilitation services, surgery (including general, breast, vascular, podiatric and bariatric weight loss surgery) and wound healing.

Through continuous assessment of unmet community health needs, participation on local action committees and funding of community-based health and wellness initiatives, Morton Hospital is able to respond to low-income, under or uninsured populations, providing access to comprehensive care across Central Southeastern Massachusetts - primarily Taunton, East Taunton, Raynham, Berkley, Dighton, North Dighton, Middleboro, and Lakeville.

Morton Hospital is part of Steward Health Care, the largest private, tax-paying physician-led health care network in the United States. Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, Steward operates 37 hospitals in the United States and the country of Malta that regularly receive top awards for quality and safety. The company employs approximately 42,000 health care professionals. The Steward network includes multiple urgent care centers and skilled nursing facilities, substantial behavioral health services, over 7,900 beds under management, and approximately 2.2 million full risk covered lives through the company's managed care and health insurance services.

The Steward Health Care Network includes 5,000 physicians across 800 communities who help to provide more than 12 million patient encounters per year. Steward Medical Group, the company's employed physician group, provides more than six million patient encounters per year. The Steward Hospital Group operates hospitals in Malta and nine states across the U.S., including Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah.

## Community Benefits Mission Statement

Morton Hospital's community benefits mission and the guiding philosophy of our community initiatives is to establish a data-driven, evidence-based Community Benefits Program that improves the status of our community and provides access to comprehensive, high quality, compassionate, and efficient health services in the community setting. We accomplish this by:

- Assessing and addressing the unmet health needs of our community;
- Participating on local action committees/task forces;
- Providing accessible, high quality care and services to all those in our community, regardless of their ability to pay;
- Collaborating with staff, providers, and community representatives to deliver meaningful programs that address statewide health priorities and local health issues and;
- Encouraging the community to engage in healthy lifestyles, be active participants in their health care, and educate themselves of the risks associated with unhealthy behaviors and poor lifestyle choices.

This community benefits philosophy expands upon the mission of Morton Hospital to identify and address community needs; particularly those that affect the health and wellness of residents throughout the greater Taunton area. Morton Hospital aims to provide culturally-sensitive, linguistically-appropriate, accessible health care services to the communities it serves. The hospital also fosters an internal environment that encourages involvement in community benefit activities and includes in its mission and goals, the development of organization-wide cultural diversity programming, addressing the cultural needs of our community.

## Community Health Needs Assessment

The 2018 Morton Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was developed in full compliance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office of Attorney General-*The Attorney General's Community Benefits Guidelines for Non-Profit Hospitals* released in February 2018. To conduct this needs assessment, Morton Hospital engaged various community organizations and members to ensure that varying perspectives on health and social topics were considered.

Methodology used to collect key data and community feedback included:

- A comprehensive public data pull, in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). Data sources used included U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Early and Secondary Education (DESE), Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Health indicator data, such as mortality, disease prevalence, hospitalizations and admissions to substance abuse programs was provided by the MDPH Office of the Commissioner and MassCHIP staff.
- A Key Informant Survey, developed and distributed electronically to all Morton Hospital staff, affiliated medical providers, community partner organizations, area health and human service organizations, as well as to the general public via the hospital's social media platforms. The survey was also shared within our local partner organizations, some of which also provided paper copies of the survey to their general community members. A total of 91 community members participated in the survey.
- Two focus groups, conducted in Taunton and including residents living within the Morton Hospital service area. Each focus group was conducted in collaboration with the Old Colony YMCA of Taunton and the Prevention & Wellness Network. Approximately 20 community members took part in the focus groups.
- A literature review of recent governmental, public policy, and scholarly works. The public health information was analyzed and a summary report which included common themes and public health trends among high-priority populations in the Morton Hospital service area was created to inform this Community Health Needs Assessment.

The results of the assessment concluded that the following issues were among the most prevalent health and wellness concerns with the hospital's service area:

- **Chronic Disease**
  - Taunton, East Taunton, Raynham, North Dighton, Middleboro, Lakeville, and Norton maintained a higher than state average incidence rate of mortalities due to chronic diseases in 2015, with Lakeville at the highest level, followed by Taunton. Cancer-related deaths accounted for the highest mortality rate, followed by heart disease-related



deaths, chronic lower respiratory disease and diabetes-related deaths at the lowest percentage.

- **Obesity**
  - Obesity and overweight rates among youth in the hospital's service area also were above or the same as the state level. Taunton has the highest level of overweight or obese youth at (38.5%).
- **Mental Illness**
  - Data shows that Taunton had the highest suicide death count within the Morton Hospital service area; however, that rate is lower than the state average. With regard to Emergency Department hospitalizations related to mental health disorders, Taunton had the lowest percentage of residents who were hospitalized, compared with the other cities and towns within the hospital service area. Dighton maintained the highest percentage, followed by Berkley, Lakeville, and Raynham.
- **Substance Abuse Disorder**
  - Based on the available data, within the Morton service area, Taunton had the highest count of alcohol/substance-related hospitalizations, while Lakeville had the lowest. Taunton had the highest number of alcohol-related deaths within the hospital's service area in 2015, but that figure was below the statewide rate.
- **Access to Care**
  - Key Informant Survey participants felt that access to health care and lack of preventive care services were concerns within our community. While the majority of survey participants noted that they had a primary care provider, nearly (40%) felt there were barriers to accessing primary and preventive care within the community such as lack of awareness of local providers, especially multilingual providers, issues with health insurance coverage and convenience of getting an appointment.

Additional areas of concern identified through the CHNA, related to social determinants of health, included:

- **Unemployment:** all towns in the hospital's service area have a higher-than-state incidence rate of unemployment in residents ages 16+;
- **Education:** Taunton and Lakeville maintained the lowest high school graduation rate, and Taunton maintained the highest high school dropout rate from 2012-2016 and;
- **Violence:** Taunton and Middleboro maintained the highest violent crime rate in the hospital's service area.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic which began in 2020, Morton Hospital implemented new programs and direct care services and invested in resources and equipment to serve the COVID-19 related needs of the community. Given COVID-19 related services and pandemic response initiatives were identified after the hospital's most recent Community Health Needs Assessment, the hospital amended its 2020 Community Benefits Implementation Strategy to include these COVID-19 response strategies and will continue to address these needs as part of the 2022 Implementation Strategy.

The hospital will complete its next triennial Community Health Needs Assessment by the end of the 2021 calendar year. Methodologies part of the CHNA process for 2021 will include:

- Examining social determinants of health that contribute to inequitable outcomes
- Analyzing available public health data

- Conducting a literature review
- Collecting feedback from health providers through a health provider survey
- Collecting community feedback via key informant interviews and focus groups
- Conducting an inventory of existing programs

The hospital plans to allocate community benefits funding to partner with an outside consulting agency to conduct the comprehensive assessment.

## Populations of Focus

Race, gender identity, age, disability status, etc. influence the social environment that an individual may experience. The social environment impacts many mental and physical health outcomes, including mental health, violence, risk behaviors (tobacco and drug use), physical health and well-being, and disease morbidity and mortality. Individuals are influenced by the social environment on three levels: interpersonal, community, and society (MDPH, 2017).

Across all three levels, systems of oppression such as structural racism and gender bias lead to social isolation, social exclusion, poor mental health, increased risk of violence, increased rates of poverty, higher hospitalizations, longer recovery times, and higher mortality rates for many conditions. Social isolation, social exclusion, racism, discrimination, and poverty disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color and all negatively impact many aspects of health. Communities of color are more likely to have lower levels of resources and connectedness with other neighborhoods and higher levels of racial segregation. They also face more challenges when engaging in group action in neighborhoods to shift these conditions (Hobson-Prater & Leech, 2012).

The hospital will target populations in their primary service area and the surrounding communities to address health disparities specific to disadvantaged populations in the Morton Hospital service area. These groups include:

1. Uninsured and/or underinsured residents in the hospital's service area;
2. Individuals at risk for or diagnosed with chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, heart disease and lung disease;
3. Residents without a primary care provider;
4. Behavioral health patients;
5. Individuals dealing with substance use disorder (SUD);
6. Those who are obese or overweight;
7. Unemployed residents (of working age);
8. Students/youth within the hospital's service area;
9. Poor/low income residents and;
10. Taunton community;
11. People with, at risk for, or suspected of having COVID-19

Morton Hospital will partner with local community-based organizations to better target these groups and the specific disparities experienced by each group.

## Priority 1: Chronic Disease Management

Chronic diseases are a public health concern within the communities that make up the Morton Hospital service area. For cancer, heart disease, respiratory disease, and diabetes certain cities/towns exceed the state level of disease prevalence for these conditions.

The Morton Hospital service area as a whole, maintained a higher than state average rate of cancer-related deaths in 2015. Lung cancer was the most prevalent type of cancer in the hospital's service area, followed by breast, prostate and colon cancer respectively. During the same period of time, the Morton Hospital service area maintained a slightly higher than state average prevalence of heart disease-related mortality. North Dighton and Dighton maintained the highest rates, followed by Taunton and Lakeville. East Taunton, Berkley and Middleboro maintained a rate lower than the state average.

Data indicates that respiratory disease continues to be a public health concern for the hospital's service area. Looking at COPD-related hospital visits alone, Taunton's rate of hospitalization per 100,000 (169.66) was nearly triple that of the average state rate of 62.28. All other towns in the hospital's service area also maintained higher than state average COPD-related hospitalization rates. Within the hospital's service area, both Taunton and Middleboro reported diabetes-related deaths in 2015, with Taunton's rate above state average.

Morton Hospital will maintain a focus on the following most prevalence chronic diseases in the hospital's service area: cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and respiratory and lung disease.

**Target Population:** Individuals at risk for or diagnosed with the priority chronic diseases; Tobacco users

**Geographic location:** Taunton, Southeastern Massachusetts

**Health Indicators:** Cancer, Heart Disease, Diabetes, Respiratory Disease

**Gender:** All

**Age Group:** Adults

**Ethnic Group:** All

**Language:** All

**Statewide Priority:** Chronic Disease Management in Disadvantaged Populations, Promoting Wellness of Vulnerable Populations

**Partners:** American Heart Association, community partners/organizations

### Short Term Goals:

- Provide at least four educational sessions on chronic disease related topics throughout the year (virtually or in-person).
- Participate in community-based cancer awareness campaigns and events, such as Relay for Life of Greater Taunton, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Lung Cancer Awareness Month.
- Increase the hospital's participation at community health fairs and health and wellness events to share health education and resources.
- Offer monthly diabetes support groups free to the community.
- Offer health education via the hospital's weekly radio show

### Long Term Goals:

- Increase the number of women in the hospital's service area who receive their annual screening mammogram at Morton Hospital by 5%.
- Increase the number of patients screened through the hospital's lung cancer screening program by 10%.

## Priority 2: Obesity Prevention and Support

In the Key Informant Survey, the following question was asked: “What do you think are the top 3 health issues in this community?” Obesity was ranked the 3<sup>rd</sup> most significant concern among those who completed the survey. Obesity was also the highest response for the question “Are you or someone in your household in need of assistance or services related to any of the following?”

Survey results demonstrated that community members agree there are barriers to being physically active, such as time, cost of recreational activities and access to recreational activities. Barriers to eating healthy included affordability and lack of education about how to prepare healthy meals.

Focus group participants noted the need for increased education within the community regarding nutrition and healthy eating on a budget. Focus group participants also felt that community sidewalks are not well-maintained, and that more walking paths and recreational areas are needed to promote fitness.

**Target Population:** Residents who are obese/overweight or at risk for becoming obese/overweight

**Geographic location:** Taunton, Southeastern Massachusetts

**Health Indicators:** Overweight and Obesity

**Gender:** All

**Age Group:** Adults

**Ethnic Group:** All

**Language:** All

**Statewide Priority:** Chronic Disease Management in Disadvantaged Populations, Promoting Wellness of Vulnerable Populations

**Partners:** Steward Medical Group, City of Taunton

### Short Term Goals:

- Reintroduce monthly weight loss surgery and info sessions virtually following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Increase awareness and utilization of the hospital’s weight loss surgery program through promotions in the community and acquisition of “Center for Excellence” designation for the hospital’s Center for Weight Control.
- Sponsor and/or promote community programs such as walks and runs, including the Myles with the Mayor 5k and the Cancer Care Community Advisory Board 5k engaging a minimum of 200 community members.

### Long Term Goals:

- Increase utilization of the hospital’s Center for Weight Control services by 10%.
- Reduce the incidence of obesity in the greater Taunton community by 5%.

## Priority 3: Mental Health Support

Mental health intersects with many areas of public health, including addiction, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and HIV/AIDS, therefore requiring various services and resource mobilization efforts. Integrated treatment is critical for treating people with co-occurring disorders and can ultimately achieve better

health outcomes and reduce costs. Increasing awareness and building capacity in service systems are important in helping identify and treat co-occurring disorders. Treatment planning should be client-centered, addressing clients' goals and using treatment strategies that are acceptable to them<sup>1</sup>.

Furthermore, focus group and survey participants felt strongly that there is a major need for change in mental health services, including a need to offer more beds to psychiatric patients and better mental health training for medical and first responder staff. Although local support systems are available, many don't know how to access them, and long wait times and insurance barriers prevent those who need the services from getting help.

**Target Population:** Those at increased risk of developing or experiencing behavioral health issues

**Geographic location:** Taunton, Southeastern Massachusetts

**Health Indicators:** Mental Health

**Gender:** All

**Age Group:** All

**Ethnic Group:** All

**Language:** All

**Statewide Priority:** Promoting Wellness of Vulnerable Populations

**Partners:** Taunton Opiate Task Force, Community Counseling of Bristol County, local EMS partners, NORCAP Lodge, Steward Medical Group

### Short Term Goals:

- Decrease the length of time behavioral health patients are held in the hospital's emergency department before being referred to or admitted to a treatment facility by 10%.
- Increase referrals to the hospital's new Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) program to support patients with severe behavioral conditions.
- Maintain the hospital's Behavioral Health Navigator Program in the emergency department with the goal of assisting a minimum of 200 patients enter detox or another appropriate level of care facility.
- Offer at least one training program to staff in the Emergency Department and throughout the hospital, providing education on screening patients for mental illnesses and promoting suicide prevention.
- Support a minimum of 2 community-based task forces and committees focused on coordinating care for patients with mental health issues, including the Taunton Opiate Task Force.
- Implement strategic partnerships with community organizations such as Community Counseling of Bristol County that are able to provide services to community members, particularly high priority populations.
- Provide educational resources and information, about support services available to patients/families in the emergency department.

### Long Term Goals:

- Reduce the incidence of boarding of behavioral health patients in the Morton Hospital's emergency department through enhanced access to inpatient treatment.

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Department of Public Health. (2017). Massachusetts State Health Assessment. Boston, MA. Retrieved from: [www.mass.gov/dph/2017StateHealthAssessment](http://www.mass.gov/dph/2017StateHealthAssessment)

## Priority 4: Substance Use Disorder Support

Misuse of alcohol or other drugs over time can lead to physical and/or psychological dependence on these substances, despite negative consequences. Substance misuse alters judgment, perception, attention, and physical control, which can lead to the repeated failure to fulfill responsibilities and can increase social and interpersonal problems. There is a substantially increased risk of morbidity and death associated with alcohol and drug misuse. The effects of substance misuse are cumulative, significantly contributing to costly social, physical, mental, and public health challenges. Examples of these include domestic violence, child abuse, motor vehicle crashes, physical fights, crime, homicide, suicide, (HIV/AIDS), and other sexually transmitted infections. Substance misuse can also impact one's social determinants of health, such as employment, income, social network, and housing<sup>2</sup>.

It is worth noting that Taunton had the largest number of individuals attending DPH funded substance and alcohol abuse programs, followed by Middleboro. Taunton also maintained the highest level of alcohol/substance use related hospitalizations in data captured in our 2018 CHNA.

**Target Population:** Low-income communities, Homeless, Veterans, Those with a SUD diagnosis and their caregivers

**Geographic location:** Taunton

**Health Indicators:** Substance Abuse, Alcohol and Substance Abuse

**Gender:** All

**Age Group:** All

**Ethnic Group:** All

**Language:** All

**Statewide Priority:** Promoting Wellness of Vulnerable Populations

**Partners:** NORCAP Lodge, Plymouth County Outreach

### Short Term Goals:

- Offer at least one training program to staff in the Emergency Department and throughout the hospital, providing education on caring for substance use patients and their caregivers.
- Partners with community-based service providers to learn of and promote services that may be available to community members in need of services at a minimum of 3 events or health fairs.
- Collaborate with Plymouth County Outreach (PCO) to assist in implementing PCO's new opiate outreach program by extending PCO's services to patients and families in need of SUD treatment.
- Support community-based programs who provide direct services for individuals with substance abuse issues.
- Offer support groups in partnership with local organizations such as Learn to Cope, AA, NA and AI-ANON.

### Long Term Goals:

- Decrease the amount of opioid and or narcotics being prescribed by hospital-affiliated providers by 5%.

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<sup>2</sup> BPHC. (2017). Boston Public Health Commission. Retrieved from Health of Boston 2016-2017:

[http://www.bphc.org/healthdata/health-of-boston-report/Documents/HOB\\_16\\_17\\_FINAL\\_SINGLE%~s20PAGES.pdf](http://www.bphc.org/healthdata/health-of-boston-report/Documents/HOB_16_17_FINAL_SINGLE%~s20PAGES.pdf)

- Decrease emergency department visits due to substance use/abuse by 5%.

In 2021, Morton Hospital also plans to develop and open a new Level IV Medically-Managed Inpatient Substance Use Disorders Treatment Unit within the hospital, which will also include an Intensive Outpatient Program. The project will involve the investment of approximately \$8 million into the new service, including construction, planning and development, staffing, etc.

The project is pending approval from the Department of Public Health. Approval of the Determination of Need application will also initiate a Community-Based Health Initiative project, through which more than \$164,000 is allocated as funding to support community programs aligned with the Department of Public Health health priorities and the social determinants of health.

The hospital will partner with its existing Community Benefits Advisory Council, adding new members to represent sectors currently not represented on the council, to facilitate and complete each step of the CHI process in collaboration with an outside consulting agency.

## Priority 5: Improving Access to Care

In a Key Informant Survey conducted as part of our data collection for the 2018 CHNA, it was observed that participants felt that access to health care and lack of preventive care services was concerning within the community. While the majority of survey participants noted that they had a primary care provider, nearly (40%) felt there were barriers to accessing primary and preventive care within the community such as lack of awareness of local providers, especially multilingual providers, issues with health insurance coverage and convenience of getting an appointment. Transportation was also noted as a major concern, noting that many people in the community may not be aware of available resources to get to appointments. Participants also felt there needed to be more general health education, and more support groups and programs.

**Target Population:** Residents without a primary care provider, Poor/low income residents, Students/youth in the hospital's service area, Uninsured or underinsured individuals in the hospital's service area

**Geographic location:** Taunton, Southeastern Massachusetts

**Health Indicators:** Access to Health Care, Immunization, Uninsured/Underinsured

**Gender:** All

**Age Group:** All

**Ethnic Group:** All

**Language:** All

**Statewide Priority:** Address Unmet Health Needs of the Uninsured, Promoting Wellness of Vulnerable Populations, Reducing Health Disparity, Supporting Healthcare Reform,

**Partners:** Steward Medical Group

### Short Term Goals:

- Recruit at least one new primary care provider to the community to reduce wait times for appointments and ensure residents have access to a provider when needed.
- Implement a program to connect patients who do not have an established primary care provider with a provider prior to discharge from the hospital.

- Continue to provide assistance to community members looking to enroll in public health insurance programs via the hospital’s Community Enrollment Specialists and financial counselor program with the goal of assisting a minimum of 300 community members.

### Long Term Goals:

- Reduce the rate of uninsured residents in the hospital’s service area by 5%.
- Decrease the number of patients requiring assistance from the hospital’s community health advocates year over year by 5%.

## Priority 6: Unemployment Support

Income, poverty, and unemployment are each profoundly linked with health<sup>3</sup>. Income influences where people choose to live, ability to purchase healthy foods, opportunity to participate in physical and leisure activities, and to access health care and screening services. Having a job and job-related income provide individuals the opportunities to make healthy choices, engage in healthy behaviors, access necessary health care services, and enjoy a long life<sup>4</sup>. Unemployment is also associated with poor health, including increased stress, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, arthritis, substance use, and depression; and the unemployed population experiences higher mortality rates than the employed<sup>5, 6</sup>.

**Target Population:** Unemployed and/or underemployed residents (of working age), Students/youth in the hospital’s service area, Veterans, Immigrants

**Geographic location:** Taunton, Southeastern Massachusetts

**Health Indicators:** Unemployment

**Gender:** All

**Age Group:** Adults, Adolescents, Youth

**Ethnic Group:** All

**Language:** All

**Statewide Priority:** Education, Employment

**Partners:** Taunton Area School to Career, Taunton Public Schools, Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School, local colleges and universities, health training schools, Taunton Career Center-The Bristol Workforce Investment Board

### Short Term Goals:

- Participate on at least one community task force/committee focused on addressing unemployment.
- Participate in at least four career fairs and career exploration programs throughout the hospital’s service area throughout the community.
- Host at least four hiring events throughout the year.

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<sup>3</sup> Braveman PA, C. C. (2010). Socioeconomic disparities in health in the United States: What the patterns tell us. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100: S186-S196.

<sup>4</sup> Massachusetts Department of Public Health. (2017). *Massachusetts State Health Assessment*. Boston, MA. Retrieved from: [www.mass.gov/dph/2017StateHealthAssessment](http://www.mass.gov/dph/2017StateHealthAssessment)

<sup>5</sup> Henkel, D. (2011). Unemployment and substance use: a review of the literature (1990-2010). *Current Drug Abuse Reviews*, 4(1):4-27.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2013). *How does Employment--or Unemployment--Affect Health?* Health Policy Snapshot Public Health and Prevention. Retrieved from [http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2013/rwjf403360](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2013/rwjf403360)



- Partner with local schools like Taunton High School and Coyle and Cassidy High School to offer student volunteer and internship programs as a bridge to employment.
- Continue to partner with a minimum of two nursing schools to offer student nursing programs aimed at training students and opening up career opportunities at the hospital.
- Continue to support a co-op program in collaboration with Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School with a goal of hiring at least three students into the program to help create a pathway to careers in health care.
- Reintroduce the hospital's New Graduate Nurse residency program, designed to train new graduates and mentor them as they enter into nursing careers at Morton Hospital.
- Continue to partner with Taunton Area School to Career and local high schools to host career exploration and career mentor programs to promote interest in health care careers.

#### Long Term Goals:

- Reduce the rate of unemployment in the hospital's service area by 5%.

## Priority 7: Educational Advancement and Support

It has been well documented that higher educational levels are associated with better health outcomes and access to more health and wellness services. Lower levels of educational attainment are associated with increased prevalence of certain chronic diseases including diabetes. Low levels of educational attainment are also associated with lower social economic status levels and often the increased prevalence of poverty and unemployment. Morton hospital is committed to improving educational access, in particular, educational opportunities leading to health careers. Morton hospital will work alongside its partnering organizations to increase access to educational programs aimed at engaging youth in exploring the healthcare industry.

**Target Population:** Low-income communities, immigrants, veterans, unemployed/underemployed, youth, minorities

**Geographic location:** Taunton

**Health Indicators:** Education

**Gender:** All

**Age Group:** Adults, Adolescents, Teens

**Ethnic Group:** All

**Language:** All

**Statewide Priority:** Education

**Partners:** Taunton Area School to Career, Taunton Public Schools, Catholic Schools Alliance

#### Short Term Goals:

- Participate in community task forces/committees focused on educational programming for adults and youth.
- Offer and promote hospital sponsored continuing education programs to the general public to encourage community participation, with the goal of having a minimum of 25 community members participate.
- Continue to partner with a minimum of 2 nursing schools to offer student nursing programs aimed at training students and opening up career opportunities at the hospital.

- Continue to partner with Taunton Area School to Career and local high schools to host career exploration and career mentor programs at the hospital to promote interest in health care careers engaging a minimum of 50 students.

#### Long Term Goals:

- Increase community participation in hospital-sponsored continuing education programs by 10%.

## Priority 8: Violence Prevention

Violence is a persistent problem in all communities, Morton Hospital holds an influential position to partner with local community-based organizations to prevent the occurrence of domestic and community violence.

**Target Population:** Hospital staff and providers, Community providers and first responders, Taunton residents

**Geographic location:** Taunton

**Health Indicators:** Violence

**Gender:** All

**Age Group:** Adults

**Ethnic Group:** All

**Language:** All

**Statewide Priority:** Violence

**Partners:** Stop the Bleed, Taunton Police Department

#### Short Term Goals:

- Provide active shooter training programs to hospital staff to educate staff on response during such a violence-related hospital emergency.
- Conduct an active shooter training exercise at the hospital in collaboration with the Taunton Police Department designed to train staff on appropriate response in the event of an active shooter situation and to further strengthen community collaboration related to incidence of violence in the community.
- Offer training programs to staff in the Emergency Department and throughout the hospital, providing education on caring for violent patients, de-escalation techniques, etc.

#### Long Term Goals:

- Reduce the incidence of violence related incidents in the hospital by 5% annually.
- Expand Stop the Bleed program to additional partners in the community.

## Priority 9: Capacity Building & Community Support

Following a decrease in community events and programming in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021 Morton Hospital aims to enhance its community presence and support of the great work of various organizations within the community through event participation and program and event sponsorship.

## Priority 10: COVID-19 Pandemic Response

**Target Populations:** General greater Taunton community, those with or at-risk for COVID-19 infection, hospital patients, hospital staff and providers

**Geographic location:** Southeastern Massachusetts

**Health Indicators:** Infectious Disease – Coronavirus

**Gender:** All

**Age Group:** All

**Ethnic Group:** All

**Language:** All

**Statewide Priority:**

**Partners:** Taunton Police Department, Taunton Fire Department, City of Taunton, Brewster Ambulance

### Short Term Goals:

- Maintain a COVID-19 Testing Clinic to support testing of all referred community members as demand remains.
- Hire additional resources as needed to support COVID-19 testing and vaccination, hospital screening, patient care, and other initiatives as needed to respond accordingly to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Partner with the City of Taunton and municipal sectors to support COVID-19 testing of first responders in the area.
- Coordinate with local and regional entities to participate in a unified response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Continue to operate a COVID-19 vaccine clinic to vaccinate hospital employees and providers as vaccine remains available.

### Long Term Goals:

- Reduce the rate of COVID-19 in the greater Taunton community by utilizing hospital resources to support testing, vaccination and other initiatives.

## Community Benefits Advisory Council

*Julie Masci, Marketing and Public Affairs Manager, Morton Hospital*

*Liliana Pavao, Interpreter Services Director, Morton Hospital*

*Sandra McGunigle, Manet Community Health Center*

*Andy Dawley, Community Counseling of Bristol County*

*Rita Celia, Triumph, Inc.*

*Erin Lombardo, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro South*

*Maribeth Ferreira, Our Daily Bread Meal and Resource Center*

*Glen Whittaker, Our Daily Bread Meal and Resource Center*

*Mark Cook, Matthew Mission Resource Center*