

Southcoast Health

Community Benefits Report

to the Attorney General



Fiscal Year 2023

 Southcoast® Health

More than medicine.

Community Benefits Report

to the Attorney General

FY23: OCTOBER 1, 2022 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2023



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Executive Summary

As a not-for-profit community-based health system, Southcoast Health is committed to our mission to provide ‘more than medicine.’ Our work extends beyond direct patient care and includes significant investments in programs and services that improve the health and wellness for all residents living in our communities. In fiscal year 2023 (FY23), Southcoast Health invested **\$25.5 million** in community benefits initiatives including charity care, hospital-based programs, collaboration with federally qualified community health centers, regional health and human service partnerships, and support of community health programs designed to address pressing health and related social needs across our region.

Throughout the year, Southcoast collaborates with several community partners to implement our community benefits programs, also known as our Southcoast CARES initiatives. Southcoast CARES works to address the most pressing health and social needs of our region through focusing on developing community wellness initiatives, increasing community engagement and care access, measuring, and evaluating impact, and facilitating strategic community health improvement planning.

During FY23, Southcoast supported and administered programs that addressed the following issues in our region: behavioral and mental health (including substance use disorder), maternal/child health, chronic disease, health access, and health equity. These programs worked within and beyond our health system to address issues including food insecurity, homelessness, and economic opportunity. The following are program highlights from FY23.

Behavioral Health/Substance Use Intervention

During FY23, The New Beginnings Program became formally recognized as a Moms Do Care (MDC) Site. MDC is a statewide program designed to provide multidisciplinary, peer-led, recovery-oriented, wrap-around support for pregnant, postpartum, and parenting women with a history of substance use. Eligible participants are 18 or older, are pregnant or parenting a child 36 months or younger and are concerned about their current or past experiences with substance use.

With this designation and additional support, the multidisciplinary care team has expanded to include family advocates, peer recovery coaches, and a social worker. In addition to maintaining prenatal support, postpartum support has increased to three years postpartum.

Cancer Outreach

Southcoast provided seven (7) cancer education, awareness, and prevention virtual seminars open to the public. Their topics focused on breast, lung, and colon cancer, due to the high rates prevalent in the South Coast region. These seminars saw an 89% increase in attendance from the previous fiscal year. In total, there were 206 individuals who attended a seminar.

Community Wellness Program

FY23 was the second year of the Community Wellness Program. The program utilizes two electric SUVs that travel throughout the community to provide preventative health screenings, education, vaccination services, and street outreach. The team is comprised of two Community Outreach Specialists, an LPN, and an RN Addiction Nurse Specialist.

The Community Outreach Specialists attended over 20 community-based events during FY23 to provide education and resources to attendees. Meanwhile, the Street Outreach program continued its work to support those who are homeless and living with SUD and/or mental health needs. Street outreach is done in partnership with SSTAR and SteppingStone’s project FAIRH program.

Coalitions to End and Prevent Homelessness

Southcoast has representation on the Executive Committee of the Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN). The HSPN addresses the most pressing issues around the complexity of homelessness and toward ensuring every individual and every family has access to appropriate, sustainable, safe, decent, and affordable housing. We work in coalition with community organizations and members throughout our service area to identify short- and long-term solutions to homelessness.

Economic Opportunity

As part of our efforts to improve early childhood development, we are the leading implementation partner of The Basics, Southcoast in partnership with The Health Equity Early Development (HEED) Coalition. Eighty percent of brain growth happens by the age of three. Given this statistic, The Basics program consist of five parenting and caregiving principles that support social, emotional, and cognitive development in children from birth to age three.

In addition to supporting early childhood development, Southcoast also has developed key pathways for high school and college level students learning and training through our clinical rotation programs. These opportunities include shadowing, mentorships, and rotational support in nursing, medical residency, radiology, rehabilitation, and more.

Health Access & Equity

This year, Southcoast continued utilization and expansion of the Southcoast Resource Connect platform, a resource directory for free or low-cost services with a wide range of behavioral health and community resources to assist individuals and families. This resource is now leveraged to provide support after Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) screenings, during which patients report needs relevant to social determinants of health (SDoH) such as housing instability and food insecurity.

During FY23, there were 12,173 unique users that accessed the resource directory, which is almost a 65% increase in usage from FY22; the most frequent searches were for food resources. Southcoast also provided 390 rides to individuals for transportation to and from medical appointments throughout the course of the fiscal year.

Healthy System and Environment Change

In FY23, Southcoast provided 40 free online seminars on health education topics such as breast cancer, weight loss, advance care planning, orthopedics, heart health, lung cancer, palliative care, colon cancer, and women's health. Southcoast also provided free monthly walks and chair yoga at the YMCA Gleason Facility in Wareham through the Be Well Wareham Program.

In addition, Southcoast works to address the region's high food insecurity needs through partnering with community organizations to provide local, healthy, low-cost produce and meal opportunities such as farmer's markets and mobile pop-up markets.

Maternal Child Health Education and Outreach

Our Baby Cafés initiative provides friendly and comfortable weekly hybrid drop-in sessions for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to learn more about breastfeeding. Mothers can relax, share tips and techniques, and socialize with other moms. Peer support and one-on-one help from specially trained health professionals is available, including professional lactation support. There were 674 individuals who attended at least one session.

Community Benefits & Mission Statement

At Southcoast Health we are committed to our mission of providing ‘more than medicine’ and extending beyond direct patient care. We know socioeconomic and environmental factors are among the greatest drivers of our ability to maintain health and overall wellness.

We accomplish this through:

- Identifying the unmet health-related social needs of the community through a needs assessment process that includes collaboration with relevant community health coalitions and networks and other community representatives and providers.
- Prioritizing health care needs and identifying which needs can most effectively be met through the resources of Southcoast Hospitals Group and its affiliated corporations, particularly the needs of the uninsured and the medically underserved who require enhanced access to care.
- Collaborating with local health providers, human services agencies, advocacy groups, and others to develop cooperative plans and programs to address pressing community health needs.
- Developing community benefits plans that incorporate social determinants of health, including environmental, social, and other demographic factors that may influence health status.

Health Equity & Population Health

At Southcoast Health, we understand that the social determinants of health (SDoH) such as income, education, race, housing, food insecurity, and other socioeconomic factors are among the best predictors of health outcomes, accounting for approximately 70% of a person’s health status. Because of this, inequitable access to resources can lead to disparities in health outcomes.

Poverty is a key driver of health status. Community members in the Southcoast service area experience higher poverty rates and lower levels of formal educational attainment compared to other regions in Massachusetts. Census data demonstrates that, on average, residents of the region earn incomes below the statewide median. Poverty affects 20% of the residents of the region and is particularly prevalent in the cities of Fall River and New Bedford.

At present, racial and ethnic minority populations face significant disparities in access to and utilization of care. As a health system that serves a diverse and changing region, our providers must ensure that they meet the needs of our community’s racial and ethnic groups, which is especially important as the region’s population grows increasingly more diverse. Notably, Fall River’s and New Bedford’s student population is much more diverse than the overall population. For example, only 46.2% of students in the Fall River Public Schools identify as White (compared to 73.4% of all residents) and only 37.5% of students in the New Bedford students identify as White (compared to 60.8% in the city as a whole. This pattern indicates that we can expect increasing diversity in terms of race and ethnicity in the coming years.

As we have come to realize--especially with the COVID-19 pandemic highlighting vulnerabilities--addressing social and economic factors, not just health conditions, is necessary to improve the health and wellness of our community. While we will continue to address health needs that arise, we will also implement upstream strategies that are proactive and focused on improving long-term outcomes.

To do this work, we have restructured to situate our Community Health & Wellness Department within our Southcoast Health Network. With this new alignment, there is a stronger population health focus

with additional resources and supports to improve regional health equity. In addition, Southcoast has developed a dedicated full-time role to improve health equity (Health Equity Program Manager). This includes monitoring a streamlined data collection process, participating in community engagement, and developing programs in coordination with Community Health & Wellness to address the inequities in our community.

It is critical that Southcoast maintain a robust strategy to contribute to our region’s health and provide outreach to achieve equitable access to preventative health services and education for all residents in our region.

Leadership

The Community Health & Wellness Department falls under the overall direction of the Community Benefits Advisory Council (CBAC). The CBAC oversees and guides community benefits programming and focused efforts. Those who serve on the council are representatives from the various communities served by Southcoast. CBAC membership includes members who are active leaders in minority communities including the Cape Verdean, Hispanic, and Portuguese communities. Our council members have expertise in matters concerning the health and welfare of the community and are active members of local and regional coalitions. The council meets quarterly to review, plan, and advise on activities and expenditures related to community benefits activities.

The Manager of Community Health & Wellness, who reports to the Executive Director of Operations for Southcoast Health Network, manages the day-to-day community benefit activities. Updates and presentations on community benefit activities to Southcoast leadership at Vice President, Director, and Manager level meetings are given on a regular basis. Messaging of these activities are delivered to all employees through an internal e-newsletter.

CBAC – Community Members		
Name	Title	Organization
Helena DaSilva Hughes	CBAC Chair & Trustee Southcoast Health, Executive Director	Immigrants Assistance Center (IAC)
Dr. Athena Xifaras	Associate Director of Inpatient Pediatrics, Director of Health Services – New Bedford Public Schools	Southcoast Health, New Bedford Public Schools
Beth Purdue	Editor, Senior Scope	Coastline Elderly Services, Inc
David Borges	Principle	Springline Research Group
Rev. David Lima	Executive Director	Interchurch Council of Greater New Bedford (ICC)
Dennis Demarinis	Director; Chairperson; Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC)	Director of Day Services, Lifestream, Inc. Commission for Citizens with Disabilities New Bedford
Erik Rousseau	Administrator	Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA)
Gaelen Adam	Librarian/Editor/Senior Research Associate, Center for Evidence	Brown Evidence-Based Practice Center

	Synthesis in Health Program Manager	
James Reid	Executive Director	Veterans Transition House
Jeffery Pelletier	Executive Director	Junior Achievement of SE MA
Jim Scherer	Executive Director & CEO	YMCA Southcoast
Kathy Downey	Retired Public Health Nurse	Board of Health, Marion
Katlyn Auty	Director of Business Development	Southcoast Behavioral Health
Michelle Hantman	President & CEO	United Way of Greater New Bedford
Leimary Llopez	YWCA Advocacy Coordinator	YWCA of SE MA
Liz Wiley	Executive Director	Marion Institute
Robert Mendes	Executive Director	Boys and Girls Club of Greater New Bedford
Ronald Ponte	Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC)	Community Member
Sandi Montour	Partner Experience Director; Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC)	Mitel
Sylvia Nobre-Hilton	Chief Operating Officer (COO)	Coastline Elderly Service, Inc
Wendy Botelho	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Child & Family Services

CBAC - Southcoast Health Representatives	
Name	Title
Alison LeBert	Manager, Community Health & Wellness
Katelyn Ferreira	Health Equity Program Manager
Dr. Ilana Feinerman	Trustee Southcoast Health, Physician of Otolaryngology
Lauren DeSimon	Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resource Officer
Lauren Melby Nieder	Executive Director of Operations for Southcoast Health Network
Stephen Canessa	Senior Vice President, Chief Brand & Strategy Officer
Wade Broughman	Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer
William Burns	Executive Director, External Affairs & Planning

Community Benefits Plan & Documented Health Priorities

Southcoast's Community Benefits Strategic Action Plan was first formulated in 1998 as the result of an extensive needs assessment and since is updated annually.

Our current plan is based on the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). Through the needs assessment process, five priority health issues were identified based on the available health data, surveys of providers and community members, and interviews with key community leaders.

The activities of Community Benefits are completed in accordance with the 2022 CHNA's Identified priorities. These activities include conducting on-going community health needs assessments, as well as coalition-building and collaborating with community partners in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of Community Benefits programs. In FY23 Southcoast administered eight overarching programs.

The five identified priority areas are:

Economic Opportunity:

- Social Mobility, Income, Education

Behavioral Health:

- Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder, Youth Trauma, Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

Housing:

- Affordability, Stability, Homelessness

Wellness & Chronic Disease:

- Unhealthy Behaviors, Health Outcomes, Prevention, Food Insecurity

Health Access & Equity:

- Underserved Populations, Obstacles to Care, Health Literacy

Target Populations

From the findings of the 2022 CHNA, Southcoast will focus our community benefits programs and initiatives on individuals and families who are most vulnerable¹ and experiencing health disparities due to racial, ethnic, or economic factors such as:

- Those who live with chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory disease.
- Those who are suffering from poverty or are otherwise socioeconomically disadvantaged.
- Those who lack access to regular primary health care due to being underinsured or uninsured.
- Those who face barriers to care due to limited English proficiency, other language and cultural barriers, documentation status, and health literacy.
- Those who are impacted by behavioral health issues, including mental health and substance use disorders.
- Those who suffer from homelessness, lack of access to affordable housing, and other housing insecurity.
- Those who are most at-risk/suffering from domestic violence, sexual abuse, other forms of violence and trauma.
- Those who suffer from or are at-risk of food insecurity.

¹ *Vulnerable populations: racial/ethnic minorities, low-income individuals & families, homeless, high-risk youth, LGBTQA+ community, elderly, disabled, those with mental health needs and/or substance use disorder (including expecting mothers), maternal/child health*

Coalition Building

Coalition building is an important activity that promotes coordination and collaboration through the effective use of limited community resources. Each year, Southcoast staff lead and participate in several community coalitions across the region.

These coalitions are comprised of various stakeholders from the community including health providers, teachers, law enforcement, businesses, religious leaders, and others who come together with a shared goal to improve the health and wellbeing of those in our community.

Name	Health Need Focus	Area Served
Building Our Lives Drug Free (BOLD) Coalition	SUD, Youth development	Greater Fall River
Bristol County Regional Alliance to End the Opioid Crisis	SUD, Mental health	Bristol County
Bristol County District Attorney's Youth Substance Use Prevention Task Force	Youth, SUD, Mental Health	Bristol County
Confronting Discrimination Coalition	Racial/ethnic/minorities/LGBTQ+ inequities, advocacy	Greater Fall River
Coalition Against Period Poverty (CAPP)	Menstrual inequities, advocacy	Greater Fall River
Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community (CHNA 25)	Health & wellness, health equity, advocacy	Greater Fall River
Greater New Bedford Allies for Health & Wellness (CHNA 26)	Health & wellness, health equity, advocacy	Greater New Bedford
Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force	SUD, Mental Health	Greater New Bedford
Greater New Bedford Suicide Prevention Coalition	Mental health, SUD	Greater New Bedford
Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance	Youth, health & wellness, advocacy	Greater New Bedford
Health Equity & Early Development Coalition (HEED)	Early childhood education, advocacy	South Coast - Regional
Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN)	Homelessness, housing, advocacy	Greater New Bedford
Let's Talk Tuesday	Health & wellness, health equity, advocacy	Greater Fall River
Mental Health Providers Network	Mental Health	Bristol County
Near North End Alliance	Youth, economic development, recreational development, advocacy	Greater New Bedford
SE MA Community Health Worker Collaborative	Advocacy, education, workforce development	Southeastern MA
Southcoast Community Response Corps	Health & wellness, health equity, advocacy	Greater New Bedford
Southcoast Food Policy Council	Food insecurity, food access	South Coast - Regional
Substance Abuse Task Force of Greater Fall River	SUD, Mental Health	Greater Fall River
Substance Exposed Newborn Committee of Southeast MA (SENSE)	SUD, Maternal Health, Mental Health, Infants	South Coast - Regional
Wareham Community Services Collaborative	Health & wellness, health equity, advocacy	Wareham

Community Health Needs Assessment

As a community-based health delivery system, Southcoast continually strives to identify the priority health needs of the community and to ensure that its services align with these needs. Every three years, we conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that assists with this goal by documenting the major demographic, socioeconomic and health trends among South Coast residents. The overarching goal of this effort is to inform data-driven goals, objectives, and strategies that can be implemented by the health system to improve the health outcomes of South Coast residents, particularly among the region's most vulnerable marginalized, at-risk populations.

The 2022 CHNA was produced in collaboration with the New Bedford Health Department, the Fall River Health Department, and Springline Research Group using a social determinants of health framework and adopting a health equity lense. The CHNA identifies the region's top health priorities through a collaborative approach that incorporates socioeconomic and health data along with community input.

The major components of this analysis include:

1. **Socioeconomic Profile:** Understanding the community by describing its residents in terms of population, age, gender, and other demographic indicators. The analysis, where possible, presents these data in the context of social determinants of health by highlighting disparities in terms of income, education, and race, all of which are factors that affect health outcomes.
2. **Health Data Assessment:** Identifying major health issues and needs by presenting a variety of health indicators from sources such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, New Bedford Health Department, Fall River Health Department, and Southcoast Health.
3. **Qualitative Activities:** Engaging community leaders and residents through surveys, interviews, and events to add context to the health data and refine our understanding of the region's primary health issues and challenges.

The South Coast region is composed of thirteen communities located in the Southeastern portion of Massachusetts. This regional definition coincides with Community Health Network Area 25, Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community and Community Health Network Area 26, Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness.

Fall River and New Bedford are two of the state's many Gateway Cities, which are defined as midsize urban centers that anchor regional economies. These cities are primarily former industrial centers that were traditional gateways for immigrants. As has been the case across most of the state's Gateway Cities, Fall River, New Bedford, and surrounding communities have not experienced benefits from the Boston metro area's knowledge economy, with many of the region's service-related jobs requiring relatively low levels of formal training or education and paying comparatively low wages. Accordingly, Fall River and New Bedford, and some of the region's suburban communities, fall below state averages on most socioeconomic metrics.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought many pre-existing issues to light, particularly those related to health equity and social determinants of health. Food insecurity, homelessness, and access to care for immigrant populations all became increasingly apparent, as did barriers in access to mental health care.

As we work to address these issues and advance health equity, the 2022 CHNA will serve as the blueprint for the next three annual Community Health Benefits Implementation Strategies. Southcoast's CBAC will engage in an ongoing evaluation of progress made on the short- and long-term goals of the Implementation Strategy, recommending adjustments to the plan as needed to positively impact and advance the health-related needs of the populations to be served.

The complete 2022 CHNA is available by request or for viewing online:

<https://www.southcoast.org/community-benefits/community-benefits-reporting/>

Program: Behavioral Health/Substance Use Intervention

Documented health need: Mental health emerged throughout the CHNA as one of the region's most prominent health issue. Behavioral health is also a blanket term that includes mental health and substance use disorder. As one might expect, COVID-19 exacerbated mental health and substance use issues significantly. Substance use disorder (SUD) continues to be identified as a major challenge in the region, particularly in terms of the links between substance use disorder, other mental health issues, poverty, and homelessness. Another outcome of the opioid crisis is the rate of newborns born with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). NAS is a group of conditions that babies experience after being exposed to narcotics in the womb.

Services offered:

- The **New Beginnings Program** provides support to opioid exposed newborns and their mothers. This program provides a seamless course of care and treatment for newborns and their caregivers with the goal of improving long-term outcomes for both mother and child.
 - During FY23, The New Beginnings Program became formally recognized as a **Moms Do Care (MDC) Site**. MDC is a statewide program designed to provide multidisciplinary, peer led, recovery oriented, wrap-around support for pregnant, postpartum, and parenting women with a history of substance use.
 - Eligible participants are 18 or older, are pregnant or parenting a child 36 months or younger and are concerned about their current or past experiences with substances. With this designation and additional support, the multidisciplinary care team has expanded to include family advocates, peer recovery coaches, and a social worker.
 - In addition to maintaining prenatal support, postpartum support has increased to three years post-birth.
- **Southcoast Resource Connect** is an online platform that features a wide range of behavioral health and community resources that serve to assist individuals and families. The platform features local, free or low-cost services that address basic needs such as food, housing support, financial support, workforce and education development opportunities and other supportive services This platform is available for use by anyone, including Southcoast staff, patients, community members, and community agencies.
 - 12,173 unique users accessed the platform, which is almost a 65% increase from the previous fiscal year.
 - 6,917 searches were conducted, which is an increase of 4% from the previous fiscal year.
 - Food pantries and food delivery were the highest need searched, followed by disease management, help finding housing & utilities support, and individual counseling.
- **ED Overdose Awareness** was developed in response to the high prevalence of substance use within the South Coast region to prevent unnecessary opioid overdose deaths. The Southcoast emergency departments provide individuals and patients who are at risk of an opioid overdose with a nasal naloxone kit and education on how to administer.
 - During FY23 a total of **311 kits** were distributed through our three Emergency Departments.
- Southcoast supports and provides meeting space for the **Learn to Cope (LTC)** peer-support groups for parents and loved ones impacted by substance use disorder.
- Provide **informational and educational opportunities** to nurses enrolled in local nursing programs about changing the culture of caring for persons with substance use disorder and reducing stigma.

- Southcoast supports the Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community **Advocacy Fund** which provides funds to individuals who need support to get into treatment for their addiction. This fund also supports coverage of rent or a security deposit for places like halfway houses, detox facilities or sober homes.
- The **Bristol County Regional Alliance to end the Opioid Crisis** promotes communication, coordination, and collaboration among diverse stakeholders to work together to raise awareness and develop strategies to end the opioid crisis in Bristol County. This Alliance is co-chaired by the CEO of Southcoast Health.
 - In June 2023, the Alliance hosted a region-wide conference with two breakout sessions for a total of 4 workshops for individuals to participate in and over 25 exhibitors sharing local resource information. In addition, a panel discussion focused on work being done in our region. Discussion topics included Public Safety partnership, working with the homeless population, harm reduction strategies and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome.
- Members of our staff participate in **local community coalitions** to address various behavioral health issues including, the misuse of prescription drugs, underage substance use, risk behaviors in youth, maternal mental health, substance-exposed newborns, suicide prevention, and overdose prevention/intervention.

Populations served: South Coast residents who experience behavioral health issues such as substance use disorders, mental health diagnosis (e.g., major depressive disorder), or dual diagnosis with both substance use and mental health disorders.

FY 2023 goals:

- Increase the capacity within the New Beginnings program by developing new roles to support individuals in the program for up to three (3) years postpartum.
- Increase referrals to the New Beginnings program before 20 weeks gestation to improve engagement and patient outcomes.

FY 2023 outcomes:

- As part of the New Beginnings Program becoming a Mom’s Do Care Site, the multidisciplinary care team has expanded to include family advocates, peer recovery coaches, and a social worker. The program has also been expanded to support up to three (3) years postpartum.
- There was a 10% increase in referrals to the New Beginnings program before 20 weeks gestation from the previous year.

FY 2024 goals:

- Increase the number of unique users who utilize the Southcoast Resource Connect Platform by 3%.
- Provide educational opportunities for providers and community partner agencies through the Community Wellness program, specifically the RN TL Addiction Nurse Specialist to reduce stigma and increase knowledge around the chronic disease of substance use disorder.

Community partners:

AdCare North Dartmouth	Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction (PAACA)
Bristol County Regional Alliance Against the Opioid Crisis	Partners Substance Addition Task Force
Children’s Advocacy Center of Bristol County	River to Recovery

Child & Family Services	Samaritans Southcoast
Fall River Health Department	Seven Hills Behavioral Health
Greater New Bedford Inter-Church Council	Stanley Street Treatment and Resources (SSTAR)
Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force	Steppingstone
Greater New Bedford Suicide Prevention Coalition	Substance Exposed Newborn Committee of Southeast MA (SENSE)
High Point Treatment Center	Turning Point
Mental Health Providers Network	United Neighbors of Fall River
New Bedford Health Department	Veterans Transition House

Program: Cancer Outreach

Documented health need: Southcoast has seen an increase in rates of cancer from 2009 to 2021, with the most prevalent forms of cancer being breast, lung, and prostate.

Services offered:

- Provide a variety of **Cancer education** through the distribution of educational materials in multiple languages.
- A variety of **Cancer Education Seminars** are hosted by Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care Physicians and Nurse Navigators to provide prevention education and awareness on Cancer.
 - Seminars are virtual and focused on the following topics:
 - **Breast Health:** Three (3) seminars with 44 attendees
 - **Lung Cancer:** Two (2) seminars with 63 attendees
 - **Colon Cancer:** Two (2) seminars with 99 attendees
 - The seminars saw an 89% increase in attendance from the previous fiscal year. In total, there were 206 individuals who attended a seminar.
- In collaboration with the Fishing Partnership, the New Bedford Heritage Center and the Southcoast Cancer and ENT Center hosted an **Oral Cancer Screening** event specifically to support the fishing-marine community and their families.
- A variety of **Support Groups** are held for those who have been diagnosed with cancer and/or are a cancer survivor to help individuals feel encouraged and that they're not alone. All of these groups are free and open to the public. Individuals who participate may also bring an additional support person if they wish.
 - Transitioned to a hybrid format (*ability to join the groups virtually and/or in-person*)
 - Monthly Support Groups:
 - Three (3) Breast Cancer support groups, one (1) Lung Cancer support group, one (1) Gyn Oncology support group, one (1) Multiple Myeloma support group, one (1) Post Treatment support group, and two (2) General Support groups
- Southcoast invests in the important roles of **Oncology Patient Navigators** and **Oncology Social Workers**, specific to supporting individuals and their families who have been diagnosed with Cancer.
- Our annual **Podkowa 5k Walk/Run** raises awareness about breast cancer; this year, participants could join in person or virtually. There were 756 individuals who participated in this year's event.
- Southcoast participates and supports the annual American Cancer Society, **Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk**, to raise awareness about breast cancer support, prevention, and research.
- Southcoast participates and support the **Gloria Gemma Flames of Hope: A Celebration of Life** to honor Breast Cancer Awareness Month and inspire awareness, compassion, and support. The weekend long celebration embraces anyone who has been impacted by cancer.
- The **Wellness Page** was created as a resource guide for managing wellness during an individual's cancer journey. This includes videos and information on medication techniques, yoga & fitness techniques, healthy eating tips and recipes, and financial resources support.
- Provide targeted **smoking cessation education** on addressing the changing tobacco landscape related to the rapidly emerging market for electronic smoking products, including e-cigarettes and vaping.
 - The **QuitWorks referral program** is an evidence-based service that provides tools for providers to help individuals quit tobacco.

Populations served: Those who suffer disproportionately from chronic disease such as cardiovascular

disease, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory disease.

FY 2023 goals:

- Provide a youth targeted cancer prevention and awareness education event in partnership with a local community partner organization.
- Provide at least one (1) cancer screening event to improve access to services for our most vulnerable populations.

FY 2023 outcomes:

- The youth cancer prevention and awareness education event was postponed until FY24.
- In collaboration with the Fishing Partnership, the New Bedford Heritage Center and the Southcoast Cancer and ENT Center held an Oral Cancer Screening event, specifically to support the fishing-marine community and their families.

FY 2024 goals:

- Provide a targeted cancer prevention and awareness education event focused on Colon Cancer due to the rising rates in the region.
- Provide at least two (2) cancer screening events to improve access to services for our most vulnerable populations.

Community partners:

American Cancer Society	Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford
Community Economic Development Center (CEDC)	Junior Achievement of SE MA
Fall River Health Department	Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation Program
Fall River Housing Authority	New Bedford Health Department
Fishing Partnership	New Bedford Heritage Center
Fly Foundation	New Bedford Housing Authority
Gloria Gemma Foundation	QuitWorks
Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community	Seven Hills Behavioral Health, Tobacco-Free Community Partnership
Greater New Bedford Allies for a Healthier Community	Wareham Health Department
Greater New Bedford Community Health Center	Wareham Housing Authority
HealthFirst Family Health Center	YMCA Southcoast
Immigrants Assistance Center	

Program: Coalitions to End and Prevent Homelessness

Documented health need: Homelessness was identified as a significant issue in the region, which is partly an outcome of the affordable housing shortage. Housing insecurity disproportionately affects low-income households, people of color, and seniors. This trend is evident in Fall River and New Bedford where White households are less likely to be burdened by housing costs than their neighbors. Mental health and substance use disorder, which are highly prevalent among the homeless population, are also key factors in the homelessness equation. Often, experiencing homelessness in combination with these issues creates challenges for entering shelters and transitional housing.

Services offered:

- The Community Wellness Program's **Street Outreach** team is overseen and conducted by the RN Addiction Nurse Specialist in partnership with SSTAR, and Steppingstone's Project FAHR Program. This multi-disciplinary collaboration provides direct outreach and services to encampments to support those struggling with SUD/MH/housing insecurity as well as chronic homelessness.
- The **Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN)** addresses the most pressing issues around the complexity of homelessness and toward ensuring every individual and every family has access to appropriate, sustainable safe, decent, and affordable housing. Southcoast sits on the Executive Committee and assists with developing and influencing strategies and identifying resources.
- Southcoast employees lead the **Fall River Substance Addiction Taskforce-Street Homeless Coalition**, which in partnership with local city officials and other service providers, develops ongoing strategies and initiatives to help support the homeless in Fall River.
 - Southcoast employees provide hands on support and donations for the **Point in Time Count (PIT)** which is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January.
 - The **Summer of Kindness Initiative** hosted over the summer by **THRIVE Against Humanity** and the Substance Addiction Taskforce-Street Homeless Coalition to provide free services to those who are homeless such as foot clinics, haircuts, summer clothing, hygiene items, showers, and food.
- Southcoast supports **Rise Up for Homes** which is a collaborative campaign to build community awareness as well as raise funds to meet the complex needs of individuals and families either on the verge of, or who are, experiencing homelessness in our community.
- Each year, Southcoast supports the annual **New Bedford Connect** event. This is a one-day event that brings together, in a single location, a wide variety of community volunteers, vital resources and services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless.
- Southcoast provides support The **Spindle City Church Timao Drop-In Center** which is open five days a week to support those who are homeless within the Fall River Continuum. Individuals can connect with various agency resources, take showers, do laundry, and receive daily meals.
- In Fall River, Southcoast supports the annual **Project Homeless Connect** provides homeless individuals in the city with essential goods and services. This event connects homeless individuals with providers of housing, mental health, legal, medical, and financial services.

Populations served: Individuals in the region who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

FY 2023 goals:

- Establish an internal and external group of stakeholders focused on identifying resources and developing a streamlined process to better assist the homeless individuals who present at the Emergency Departments during the cold weather months seeking shelter.
- Provide clinical services and health education at both homeless connect events this summer.

FY 2023 outcomes:

- During FY23, a working group was established that brought together internal stakeholders from Southcoast (including members of our Emergency Department, Public Safety, Population Health, Community Wellness and Care Navigation teams), and external stakeholder from the community who are committed to developing a system together to improve the ability to shelter individuals in our community, specifically during the cold weather months.
- Through our Community Wellness Program, our RN Addiction Nurse Specialist attended both Project Homeless Connect in Fall River and Homeless Connect in New Bedford to provide clinical support and resource connections and referrals.

FY 2024 goals:

- Increase collaboration with at least one (1) organization focused on housing support to improve health outcomes.
- Enhance the working group brought together in FY23, to include improving the support of homeless families in the South Coast region, with a focus on the cold weather months.

Community Partners:

Catholic Social Services	Citizens for Citizens
City of New Bedford	City of Fall River
Father Bill's & Mainspring	Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community Fall River
Greater New Bedford Community Health Center	Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN)
PAACA	PACE
Seven Hills Behavioral Health	Stanley Street Treatment and Resources (SSTAR)
Steppingstone Incorporated	Town of Wareham
Turning Point / Wareham Area Committee Homeless Committee (WACH)	United Way of Greater New Bedford
United Neighbors of Fall River	The Women's Center
Veterans Transition House	

Program: Community Wellness Program

(Licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health)

Documented health need: Many South Coast residents lack access to regular primary and preventive health care. The Community Wellness program (CWP) breaks down traditional barriers to care by bringing health education, vaccinations and immunizations, and health screenings to underserved and vulnerable populations across the region. This program improves accessibility for health access through mobile capabilities and supports Southcoast's ongoing population health initiatives. The staffing model for the program include a RN Addiction Nurse Specialist, a LPN, and two (2) Community Outreach Specialists with tri-lingual capabilities.

This program has replaced the Southcoast Health Wellness Van to better align with staffing capacity and community spaces. This shift allows us to be more agile in response to community needs.

Services offered:

- Services offered to the community include but are not limited to **health education and outreach**, including offering confidential **health screenings, vaccinations**, support with **pediatric immunization clinics**, and **point of care testing (POCT)**.
 - Preventative Screenings include Body Mass Index (BMI), Blood pressure readings and Advance Care plan documentation.
 - Adult vaccinations include COVID-19, Flu, pneumonia, Hep A and Tetanus
 - Point of Care Testing include Hemoglobin A1C, blood glucose, and cholesterol readings.
 - Health education provided includes but is not limited to chronic disease prevention such as stroke/heart disease, diabetes/pre-diabetes, nutrition/obesity, cancer education, harm reduction, and women's health.
- **Street Outreach** is overseen and conducted by the RN Addiction Nurse Specialist in partnership with SSTAR, and Steppingstone's Project FAHR Program. This multi-disciplinary collaboration provides direct outreach and services to encampments to support those struggling with SUD/MH/housing insecurity as well as chronic homelessness.
- Attend local resource fairs and events to provide health education and/or clinical services.

Populations served: Those who lack access to regular primary and preventive health care, particularly populations who have language, income, or geographic barriers to accessing care.

FY 2023 goals:

- Integrate the Community Wellness Program into the electronic health record system, EPIC to track outcomes and quality measures.
- Re-launch the clinical services aspect of the mobile service program such as providing vaccinations and point of care testing.
- Provide at least 20 education and outreach events throughout the region.

FY 2023 outcomes:

- As of August 2023, the electronic health record system build & integration had been completed for both the community wellness and street outreach teams.
- With delays in hiring a new LPN for the program, vaccination and point of care services were not resumed in fiscal 2023 but will resume in 2024.
- The Community Outreach Specialists held over 20 education and outreach events throughout the region.

FY 2024 goals:

- Provide more than 10 vaccination clinics in partnership with community-based organizations.
- Provide more than 15 Point of Care Testing events in partnership with community-based organizations.

Community partners:

Area Councils on Aging	New Bedford Health Department
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Fall River	New Bedford Housing Authority
Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford	New Bedford Public Schools
Cape Verdean Association	PAACA
Coastal FoodShed	PACE
Coastline Elderly	Seven Hills Behavioral Health
Fall River Health Department	Sister Rose House
Fall River Housing Authority	SSTAR
Fall River Public Schools	Steppingstone
First Step Inn	Turning Point/Baby Point
Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community	United Neighbors of Fall River
Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness	United Way of Greater New Bedford
Greater New Bedford Community Health Center	Woods at Wareham
HealthFirst Family Health Center	YMCA Southcoast
Immigrant Assistance Center	YWCA of SE MA
Inter Church Council of Greater New Bedford	
Mass In Motion	

Program: Economic Opportunity

Documented health need: Economic opportunity begins with developing strategies for families to become economically stable so they can better support healthy children and break the cycle of poverty. Above all, it requires a coordinated effort among the many organizations working to lessen the impacts of poverty in the South Coast. Poverty is a major driver of health. Those in poverty often have less opportunity and access to resources that can assist in improving and maintaining one's health. Resources that contribute to educational attainment, employment, housing status, health care opportunities, and social activities are all less accessible to those living in poverty.

Services offered:

- The **Basics Southcoast initiative** is led by the coalition for **Health Equity and Early Development (HEED)**, with Southcoast as an active supporter. The Basics are five parenting and caregiving tools and techniques that support social, emotional, and cognitive development in children from birth to age three.
 - The **HEED coalition Executive Director** role was developed and filled with the goal of improving early childhood developmental outcomes with a focus on maternal health justice.
- The new role of the **University Relations Manager** situated within our Human Resources team was developed to focus on building workforce development through supporting observation, shadowing, and internship opportunities with our local educational systems such as high schools, colleges, and universities. Through this work, the University Relations Manager role can help to create a pipeline for the pursuit of healthcare careers within Southcoast, which (as one of the region's largest employers) can help facilitate the economic mobility of our community members.
- The **Health Professionals Education program** partners with local universities and colleges for students to complete their clinical rotations, enhance their skills, and develop a pathway to a future career. During the group clinical rotations and observation opportunities, students work with their peers and Southcoast staff to learn and provide care to patients. Preceptorships give students the opportunity to work one on one with a mentor in their desired field.
 - There were approximately 7,050 hours spent by **Nursing staff** to support these clinical rotations, through providing oversight, education, and guidance. There were 540 student nurses that participated in group clinical placements. In addition, there were 67 one-to-one **mentorship opportunities** provided to student nurses, with 8,907 hours of nursing staff hours supporting this experience.
 - There were approximately 27,075 hours spent by **Radiology, CT, Nuclear Medicine, and Ultrasound staff** to support this clinical education and student experience. This is a 61% increase in hours spent from last fiscal.
 - There were approximately 2,341 hours spent by **Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Speech Therapy staff** to engage in clinical rotations and to gain experience in the workplace.
 - **Medical Residents and Nurse Practitioners** to engage in clinical rotations and to gain experience in the workplace with embedded staff. There were 172,800 hours spent by staff to support this clinical experience. This is over a 100% increase in hours spent from last fiscal.

- Southcoast serves on the **steering committee** for the **Health Equity and Early Development coalition**, which is dedicated to improving early childhood developmental outcomes with a focus on maternal health justice.

Populations served: Children and families in the region served by Southcoast Health who are at a higher risk of social and economic factors that will impact their long-term health outcomes. Students from local colleges enhancing their skills and knowledge to prepare them for the health care workforce.

FY 2023 goals:

- Fully integrate the Basics Southcoast into the New Beginnings program to learn best practices and education a targeted group of individuals prenatal and postpartum.
- Develop a designated role to oversee the Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Education’s coalition work and development.

FY 2023 Outcomes:

- Due to the New Beginnings program receiving the Mom’s Do Care (MDC) Grant funding, integration was put on hold for FY23.
- The HEED coalition Executive Director role was developed and filled with the goal to improving early childhood developmental outcomes with a focus on maternal health justice. Southcoast Coalition for Early Childhood Education coalition took on a new name in the summer of 2023.

FY 2024 Goals:

- Develop a shadowing program for local high school students interested in the health care field to learn and experience the Southcoast Health system.
- Increase the number of clinical rotations Southcoast provides to local colleges and universities by 3%.

Community Partners:

Baby Point	Meeting Street Early Intervention
Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford	New Bedford Health Department
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Fall River	New Bedford School Department
Bridgewater State University	NorthStar Learning Center, Inc
Bristol Community College	Our Sister’s School
Calmer Choice	PACE/Early Head Start
CCRI	Pulse Radiology
Child & Family Services	Sacred Birthing Village
Children’s Advocacy Center	Sacred Heart
Coalition for Health Equity & Early Development (HEED)	Salve Regina University
Community Youth Empowerment (CYE)	SER Jobs for Progress, Inc
Dartmouth High School	Simmons College
Elements Learning Collaborative	South Bay Early Intervention
Fall River Re-Creation	Umass Dartmouth
Fall River School Department	University of Rhode Island (URI)
Family Resource Center of United Way	Wareham School Department
Family Service Association (FSA)	Worcester State University
Global Learning Charter School	WIC

Junior Achievement Southeastern MA	YMCA Southcoast
Justice Resource Institute (JRI)	Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU)
Katie Brown Educational Program	YWCA Southeastern MA
Kennedy Donovan Center (KDC)	
Lifespan School of Medical Imaging	
Massasoit Community College	
Mass Hire	
MCPHS	

Program: Health Access & Equity

Documented health need: Regular access to health services is essential in managing health conditions, preventing new conditions from arising, and promoting and maintaining overall good health. This includes access to a wide variety of health services such as preventive care, mental health services, and emergency services. People who do not have access to health care are at a greater risk of having poor overall health and negative health outcomes. Racial and ethnic health gaps continue to afflict the region and are related to a myriad of access issues such as health literacy, insurance coverage and cost, transportation, and the need for more culturally competent care. Equity and access issues prevalent in the health care system became increasingly apparent due to the pandemic.

Services offered:

- Southcoast assists individuals in applying for financial assistance with state and public assistance programs through our **Patient Financial Services (PFS)** team. This team works with individuals to identify opportunities to cover patient expenses, including offering payment plans. Southcoast's financial counselors are **Certified Application Counselors (CAC) and Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone (SHINE)** certified and are available to assist individuals determine eligibility for various health insurance programs. These counselors can also assist with enrollment paperwork and application submissions. The PFS team also provides this service at community locations in partnerships with various social service organizations.
- The **Interpreter Services Program** works to assist those whose preferred language is one other than English. The team provides medical interpreting services in Spanish, Portuguese, Cambodian, Cape Verdean Creole, and sign language. In addition to this, Southcoast offers the language line service which provides 24-hour access to a multitude of on-demand interpreters to assist individuals with their needs. In addition, the team provides written translation for internal and external education and outreach.
 - Provided monthly article translations in Spanish and Portuguese for **Coastline Elderly's Senior Scope newsletter**. Articles focused on health education for seniors with topics that ranged from accessing nutritious foods, SNAP benefits, health insurance information and stress management.
- Provide **culturally competent outreach and education** to families, local schools, and other community entities, including outreach to public housing residents in Fall River, New Bedford, and Wareham.
- Provide **additional supports** to patients, individuals, and families in our community in order to reduce transportation barrier to receive care. Southcoast provides support in the form of vouchers or passes for the use of local transit authority vehicles and on-demand transportation services.
- **Community Health Workers (CHW)** are the frontline lay workers who represent the community and populations they serve culturally and linguistically. A CHW builds individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge, reducing the social determinants of health and barriers to equal access to care through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support, and advocacy.
 - Southcoast prioritizes **professional development forums (PDFs)** for CHWs and has a focus on bringing these opportunities to the South Coast region through collaboration with regional and statewide groups, such as Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW), the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center and local Health Departments.

- Southcoast’s **Visiting Nurse Association (VNA)** helps individuals of all ages recover or live well with illness or injury through compassionate and personalized care in the comfort and privacy of an individual’s own home.
 - **Community Support Group:** There were 48 group sessions offered with 104 unique attendees.
 - **Camp Angel Wings:** 67 children attended Camp Angel Wings which is a two-day bereavement camp for children and teens ages 6 through 15 who are grieving the loss of a loved one.
 - **Telehealth:** There were over 1,312 patients who received more than 60,833 days of telehealth/remote monitoring support to manage their conditions.
- Increase awareness through **educational campaigns** and panel events of the challenges caused by healthcare disparities in our community.
- Host annual awareness and basic necessity **collection drives** for individuals, families, children, and low-income residents.
 - The **Justice Flow Campaign** was developed to raise awareness of the menstrual inequities members of our community face every day. This campaign includes educational courses for employees, resources, and a collection drive component.
 - During FY23 **23,942 menstrual hygiene products**, such as pads, tampons, cups/discs, and underwear were donated to United Neighbors of Fall River, The Women’s Resource Center of Rhode Island, and the YWCA of Southeastern MA.

Populations served: Vulnerable populations such as racial/ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, limited to no-English speaking individuals, homeless, elderly, and individuals with mental health disorders and substance use disorders.

FY 2023 goals:

- In partnership with community partner agencies, provide at least two (2) local professional development opportunities for Community Health Workers.
- Host at least one (1) awareness and basic necessity collection drive focused on improving menstrual equity in the South Coast.

FY 2023 outcomes:

- Southcoast in partnership with MACHW, Southcoast United Network of CHWs (SUN) & The Greater New Bedford Community Health Center hosted one (1) professional development opportunity for Community Health Workers focused on Domestic Violence.
- The Justice Flow Campaign was created to raise awareness and support a basic necessity collection drive, with the goal to educate on the menstrual inequities members of our community face every day.

FY 2024 goals:

- Host at least one (1) awareness and basic necessity collection drive focused on improving menstrual equity in the South Coast, that includes an “action item” that system will initiate and lead.
- Increase the number of individuals within the VNA receiving telehealth monitoring support to manage their conditions by 3%.

Community partners:

Bristol Elder Services, Inc	Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness
Catholic Social Services	Greater New Bedford Community Health Center
Citizens for Citizens	Immigrants Assistance Center
Coastline Elderly Services	New Bedford Health Department
Community Economic Development Center (CEDC)	New Bedford Housing Authority
Councils on Aging	PAACA
Fall River Health Department	PACE
Fall River Housing Authority	Stanley Street Treatment and Recovery (SSTAR)
First Step Inn	Sister Rose House
Grace House	Steppingstone

Program: Healthy Systems and Environment Change

Documented health need: Creating healthier communities depends a great deal on the environment that people live in, which includes their homes, neighborhoods, and wider communities. For many, health and wellness fit within a larger framework of obligations, ranging from issues such as housing, finances, and childcare, to transportation, employment, immigration, access to food and safety. These responsibilities create obstacles to maintaining overall health and to adopting healthy habits that help to prevent or manage disease.

While behavior and genetics play a role in chronic disease, social and environmental factors can also elevate the risk of developing these long-term health issues. Tobacco use, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition contribute to preventable chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and lung disease, all of which have high rates within the South Coast region.

Services provided:

- The **Be Well Wareham** program is a once-a-month event offering participants the opportunity to walk with a Southcoast physician and then join Southcoast staff in healthy activities such as chair yoga, meditation techniques, and health education. This program is in partnership with the **YMCA Gleason Family Facility**.
 - There were over **72 participants** in FY23.
- Southcoast provided **40 free online health seminars** focused on various education topics such as breast cancer, weight loss, advance care planning, orthopedics, heart health, lung cancer, hospital and palliative care, colon cancer and women's health.
- The **Health Aging Podcast** launched in June 2023, and provided **15 episodes**, before carrying into the new fiscal year. This free podcast is designed to help listeners to manage their health to live a longer and healthier life.
- Southcoast invests in the position of a **Trauma Injury and Prevention Outreach Coordinator** role. This role has the flexibility to develop and provide internal fall risk assessments with patients at the hospital and provide community outreach education events.
 - During FY23, there were **16 community outreach events** held at locations such as local Council on Aging's, Housing Authority community rooms, local high schools, and local community park and recreational activity areas. Education provided included **Stop the Bleed Trainings**, fall prevention, bike/helmet safter, and youth outdoor activity safety.
- The Southcoast **Athletic Training Program** supports ten (10) local High Schools providing coverage for all their offered sports. This included emergency care, initial evaluations, injury treatment, injury prevention, rehabilitation, and reconditioning.
- The **Food is Medicine** program combats food insecurity and encourages the idea that food is medicine by supporting local initiatives throughout the South Coast to provide our community members with easy access to healthy, locally grown food.
 - In partnership with the United Way of Greater New Bedford, 14 **Mobile Markets** were held distributing over 8,000 pounds of affordable, local, and healthy food in Wareham. There were 2,437 total residents benefiting from the market, with 579 being children. In addition, Southcoast staff participated in almost 55 hours of volunteer time to support these markets.
 - Southcoast supported **My Brother's Keeper** by providing a weeks' worth of healthy groceries to 833 families and individuals in need (approximately 2,665 adults and children).

- Southcoast has provided annual support to the **Farm & Community Collaborative, Nourish Our Neighbors program**. This program provides farm shares for local families in need. Southcoast provided 4 families with greater than 4 household members a season's worth of Farm Shares in FY23. These farm shares were valued at \$600 per family.
- The Community Outreach Specialist attended the **Farmers Markets at Cardinal Medeiros Towers** in Fall River, providing resources, education, and support to individuals.
- Southcoast provides annual support to Coastal FoodShed and their mission to bring fresh local foods to Greater Fall River, Greater New Bedford and Wareham through their mobile farm stands, farmers market and online virtual market platform.
- Southcoast supported the **YMCA Full Plate Project** which distributes food/meals through mobile markets at the five South Coast YMCA branches. These mobile markets are free and open to all South Coast residents; there is no proof of town residency, eligibility criteria or YMCA membership required.
- Southcoast maintains an active seat on the **Community Advisory Board (CAB) for the Southcoast Food Policy Council (SFPC)** led by the Marion Institute, which connects, convenes, and advocates for local food producers, consumers, and community leaders who seek policy and systems that strengthen our regional food system, improve community health, and eliminate food insecurity.
 - Southcoast provided support to have materials and surveys for the "**Know Your Local Food System**" campaign translated into Spanish and Portuguese.
- Support of **community wellness initiatives and events** that focus on exercise promotion and movement such as local 5k walk/runs and fitness challenges.
 - Southcoast provided support to and participated in the **Nemasket Group 5K Walk/Run**, local elementary school "**Fun Runs**", the **Fairhaven Father's Day Road Race**, and the **Aquidneck Island 10k**, to promote local exercise and movement opportunities.
 - The **Dennison Memorial Community Center, Double Dribble Pledge** was supported by Southcoast. This event allowed youth to participate in a dribble-a-thon as they dribble 20 laps around the Dennison Gymnasium in support of programs throughout the center.
- **Promote physical activity** and provide education to youth, families, and all South Coast residents on the importance of being active to improve health status and ways to incorporate accessible physical activity into daily life.
 - Southcoast provided an **AED Machine** with the necessary accessories to the Apponequet Junior Football Club, which is a youth football organization serving Freetown and Lakeville athletes.
 - Southcoast provided support to further the completion of the **Shangri La playground in Wareham**. The revitalization of the playground to address and reduce the ongoing flooding issues, install a new basketball court, and include two different play structures for varying ages. Additionally, picnic tables and chairs will be set up to host community gatherings and support community-building initiatives for families.
 - Southcoast provided support to the **Four Hearts Foundation**, to further the completion of the **Portsmouth Community Playground Rebuild**. This rebuild is intended to make the playground safe, inclusive, and adapted for all ages and abilities.

Populations served: South Coast residents who experience food insecurity and have low rates of physical activity, particularly low-income residents in the cities of Fall River and New Bedford, where data show these risk factors to be higher than the region.

FY 2023 goals:

- Expand the Food is Medicine program to support at least one (1) initiative in the Greater Fall River area.
- Increase the number of households served at the Wareham Mobile Market by 3%.

FY 2023 outcomes:

- During FY23, the Community Wellness Program’s Community Outreach Specialists attended the weekly Cardinal Medeiros Towers Farmer’s Markets, located in Fall River, to provide educations and additional resource support.
- During FY23, the number of households served at the Wareham Mobile Markets increased by nearly 50% from FY22.

FY 2024 goals:

- Increase collaboration with at least one (1) organization focused on food insecurity to improve health outcomes.
- Increase participation in the Be Well Wareham program by 2%.

Community partners:

AD Makepeace	New Bedford Economic Development Council
American Heart Association	MO LIFE Food Pantry
Cardinal Medeiros Tower	New Bedford Health Department
Catholic Social Services	New Bedford Office of Planning
Coastal FoodShed	New Bedford Parks and Recreation
Damien’s Food Pantry	Salvation Army of Aquidneck Island
Fall River Community Recreation Department	Salvation Army of Greater Fall River
Fall River Health Department	Salvation Army of Greater New Bedford
Fall River Housing Authority	Steven’s Farm Stand
Farm & Community Collaborative	Southcoast Food Policy Council
Four Hearts Foundation	Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP)
Greater Fall River Community Food Pantry	Southeastern Massachusetts Food Security Network
Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community	Town of Wareham
HealthFirst Community Health Center	United Way of Greater New Bedford
Hunger Commission of Southeastern Massachusetts	United Way of Greater New Bedford Hunger Commission
Immigrants Assistance Center	Wareham Health Department
Mass in Motion	YMCA Gleason Family Facility
The Marion Institute	Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU)
My Brother’s Keeper	

Program: Maternal Child Health Education & Outreach

Documented health need: Women play an essential role in maintaining family health and are more likely than men to access the health care system for their needs and the needs of their children. In addition to the unique health care needs of women related to childbirth and care, their longer life expectancies mean that women are more affected by long-term and elder care issues than are men.

Services offered:

- The **Perinatal Health Equity Council** is a cross-disciplinary group consisting of Southcoast personnel dedicated to improving equity for birthing people and families. The council's goals are to (1) gain insights that center around the patient and their lived experience; identify and define the factors within our practices that drive disparities or create challenges of patients of color looking for services within the Southcoast Health System; (2) serve as the center for knowledge and action in Perinatal Health Equity (PHE) to foster a consistent exchange of ideas, resources, and support; and (3) provide outreach, education, and awareness to the internal and external Southcoast community.
- Southcoast invests in the important roles of **Child Life Specialists** and **Childbirth Educators**. These roles are vital to supporting individuals who are seeking care prenatally and/or during postpartum.
- **Baby Cafés** are friendly and comfortable weekly drop-in sessions for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to learn more about breastfeeding. Mothers can relax, share tips and techniques, and socialize with other moms. Peer support and one-on-one help from specially trained health professionals is available, including professional lactation support.
 - Sessions were offered via zoom and in person.
 - There were 674 individuals who attended at least one session, which is a 27% increase from last fiscal year.
 - Over 1,000 brochures distributed on various education topics.
- The **Childbirth education** series spans over four (4) weeks and discusses the changes that occur in the third trimester, such as the normal/unexpected processes of labor and birth, comfort measures and labor support and instruction on infant care and car seat safety.
 - Sessions were offered via zoom and in person.
 - There were 202 couples who attended, which is a 41% increase in participation from last fiscal year.
- The **Car Seat Safety** program is overseen by our certified technicians who identify and assist individuals and families who have difficulty acquiring a safe car seat.
 - 8 car seat checks performed.
 - 14 car seats provided.
- The **Breastfeeding Education Classes** are held monthly for individuals that are planning to breastfeed or are exploring their options regarding infant feeding choices. Topics include the benefits of breastfeeding, techniques, and positions.
 - Sessions were offered via zoom and in person.
 - There were 109 individuals who attended a class.
- **Parenting support** through partnership with People Inc., Citizens for Citizen's, PACE, and the Kennedy Donovan Center.
- Provide **smoking cessation education** for individuals who are pregnant and/or postpartum.
 - **Breathe Free: Supporting Smoking Cessation and Parental Well-being** program is a comprehensive smoking cessation program that integrates the principles of The Basics, with a focus on the first Basics Principle, Maximizing Love and Managing Stress, using breathing and mindfulness techniques. This program is overseen by the Coalition for

Health Equity and Early Development (HEED) and the Southeast Tobacco-Free Community Partnership at Seven Hills.

- Strengthened partnership with **Sacred Birthing Village**, which is an affiliate of Birthing Project USA. This organization is dedicated and committed to building sisterhood and standing with and supporting the BIPOC pregnant women in our community through their journey of childbirth.
- **The Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC) of Bristol County & Southcoast** have partnered on the **Wellness Initiative**. This initiative helps to educate the community about child sexual abuse, and support programming for children and families in Bristol County.
- **Provide education** in collaboration with the Greater New Bedford Allies for Health & Wellness’s Health Access Committee, to raise awareness of postpartum depression, maternal health inequities and Doula services.
- Southcoast supports the annual **Red Dress Event**, held by the YWCA of Southeastern MA which aims to raise awareness to women’s heart health.

Populations served: Families, including pregnant women, fathers, siblings, and new parents.

FY 2023 goals:

- Increase the capacity supporting the Baby Cafes to host in different community-based locations and increase outreach to vulnerable communities.
- Explore and develop the opportunity to implement a doula program at Southcoast Health.

FY 2023 outcomes:

- The childbirth education team increased collaboration with the New Bedford Health Department to provide additional training for staff and community members to become certified lactation consultants. In addition, multi-lingual Community Health Workers from the Greater New Bedford Health Center attended the Baby Café’s to provide support. They also became certified lactation consultants and intend to expand the Café’s presence with the Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) starting in the summer of 2023 and into 2024.
- Southcoast OBGYN leadership and important stakeholders from across the system met with different organizations to learn more about lessons learned and best practices through current Doula programs that already exist within Massachusetts and Rhode Island. This work will continue into fiscal 24.

FY 2024 goals:

- Increase collaboration with at least two (2) organizations focused on perinatal/maternal health equity to improve health outcomes.
- Continue to develop and launch a Doula program at Southcoast.

Community partners:

Children’s Advocacy Center of Bristol County	New Bedford Health Department
Citizens for Citizens (CFC)	New Bedford WIC
Fall River WIC	PACE
Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness (GNB Allies)	People Incorporated
Greater New Bedford Community Health Center (GNBCHC)	Sacred Birthing Village

HealthFirst Family Health Center	YWCA of Southeastern MA
Kennedy Donovan Center (KDC)	

Expenditures During the Reporting Year

In FY23, Southcoast contributed **\$25.5 million** in community benefit programs that reached the disadvantaged, underserved and those at-risk, and provided services they otherwise may not have been able to access. This is an increase from FY22 by 8%. Our major initiatives concerning health access, health equity, behavioral health, and economic opportunity all had significant impact, with growing programs that reached large numbers of South Coast residents.

		FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Community Benefits Programs	Direct Expenses	\$14,471,957	14,702,951	16,975,855.65	18,560,284
	DoN Community-Based Health Initiative Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other Leveraged Resources	\$197,227	659,179	\$449,843.00	\$315,007
Net Charity Care		\$8,360,323	\$7,339,792	\$6,183,069.00	6,681,832
	Total Expenditures	\$23,029,507	\$22,701,923	\$23,608,767.65	\$25,557,123
	Total Patient Care Expenses	\$761,771,916	\$804,538,919	\$845,401,021.00	\$914,238,255

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Public Access to this Report:

This report, along with those of other not-for-profit hospitals in Massachusetts, is available online from the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General.

www.mass.gov/ago/

Southcoast Health makes the annual Community Benefits Report available on the website, along with an archive of reports from prior years.

www.southcoast.org/communitybenefits/