

Health Equity Strategic Plan (HESP) Executive Summary for Southcoast Hospitals Group

As submitted on December 31, 2023

How the hospital defines health equity. “Health equity means that everyone has a chance to be as healthy as possible. Southcoast Health works towards this within and outside of the healthcare system. First, we work to make sure that each member of our community can access healthcare where, when, and how they need it. Second, we know that social drivers of health like housing, transportation, and work can affect our health, too. To help our patients with these needs, we make connections with community partners.” ([https://www.southcoast.org/health-equity/.](https://www.southcoast.org/health-equity/))

What the hospital hopes to achieve in the next four years related to health quality and equity. Over the next four years, Southcoast Hospitals Group will improve our ability to assess and address disparities and to build workforce capacity for excellence in advancing health equity. As outlined in section E, Southcoast has set specific goals to improve race, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity (RELD SOGI) data collection; standardize stratification of dashboards to facilitate identification of disparities; improve completeness of Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) screenings; and train patient-facing staff on disability-competent care.

How the hospital considers member and community experiences in overall health equity efforts. Southcoast values the integration of member and community experiences into overall health equity efforts, including in shaping this strategic plan. Southcoast Hospitals Group will continue to collaborate across the system in collaboration with the WellSense Southcoast Alliance ACO by identifying and participating in opportunities for patient and community engagement. We will continue leverage patient members on a number of our hospital-based quality committees and Patient and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC) and to invite PFAC members with relevant lived experience to participate in equity-focused initiatives. Via collaboration with our Community Health and Wellness team, we will also continue to participate in the Community Benefits Advisory Council (CBAC) and to engage in partnerships with governmental agencies and community organizations. These partnerships will enhance our capacity to address social determinants of health and are a key component of our coalition-building efforts to advance health equity. We will continue to dedicate time and resources to our Hospital Quality and Equity Steering Committee (HQESC) and make efforts to recruit members to the newly formed joint Health Equity Committee (HEC); fostering an inclusive, equitable, and accessible environment to facilitate member participation.