



Ocean Springs Hospital & Singing River Hospital

# 2022-2024 Implementation Strategy

Responding to the 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment

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## INTRODUCTION

Singing River Health System, comprised of Ocean Springs Hospital and Singing River Hospital, is pleased to present the joint 2022-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategy for their defined community of Jackson County, Mississippi.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 added new requirements which nonprofit hospital organizations must satisfy in order to maintain their 501(c)3 status. One such requirement is that nonprofit hospitals must conduct a community health needs assessment and corresponding implementation strategy at least once every three years. Gulfport Hospital, Ocean Springs Hospital and Singing River Hospital's joint 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment was approved by the Board of Trustees on August 29, 2021 and published to the website September 2021. This report satisfies the implementation strategy requirement. Both reports can be found at [www.singingriverhealthsystem.com](http://www.singingriverhealthsystem.com)

This implementation strategy was developed based on the findings and priorities established by the joint 2021 Gulfport Hospital, Ocean Springs Hospital and Singing River Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment and review of the existing community benefit activities. The hospitals reserve the right to amend this plan as circumstances warrant. Beyond the initiatives and programs described herein, the hospitals address, to an extent, some of these needs simply by providing health care to the community regardless of ability to pay.

## ABOUT

Singing River Health System is both a mission-driven provider of health services and one of the largest employers on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Every day our dedicated team of caregivers makes an impact on the lives of almost everyone in our community. Providing critical health services, community outreach programs, charitable services and health education programs. Singing River Health System serves as the safety net provider for the uninsured/underinsured in our community. We deliver on our mission to improve life and save lives every day. We strengthen the local economy by recruiting over 300 of the very best physicians and other professionals to our community while providing good jobs, wages and benefits to more than 3,000 employees and their families.

Singing River Health System is comprised of three hospitals – Gulfport Hospital, Ocean Springs Hospital, and Pascagoula Hospital. Additionally, our primary care medical clinics, community medical parks and specialty centers serve guests throughout the area.

Singing River Health System provides:

- 24-hour emergency services
- Heart and vascular services
- Cancer care
- Women's and children's services
- Inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services
- State-of-the-art radiology, laboratory, pharmacy
- Behavioral health services
- Wound care and hyperbaric medicine
- Hospice Care
- Skilled Nursing Care

## Singing River Health System Quick Facts

- A community owned, not-for-profit health system
- Second largest employer in Jackson County with more than 3,500 employees, physicians, and volunteers
- Economic impact exceeding \$270 million per year
- One of the largest emergency departments in the state, caring for more than 100,000 patients per year
- Home to award winning Blue Distinction® Centers of Excellence in cardiac care, stroke care and spine and joint surgery

Singing River Health System provides access to primary care with clinics in Biloxi, Gulfport, Hurley, Ocean Springs, Pascagoula, and Vanclave.

## SINGING RIVER HEALTH SYSTEM

### HEALTH NEEDS

The Community Benefit Department reviewed and analyzed all primary and secondary data for recurring themes, scope, severity, and urgency of identified health needs for our area. Feasibility and effectiveness of possible interventions were considered, as well as alignment with the mission of Singing River Health System, existing programs, and the importance that the community placed on the health need. With additional input solicited from health system leadership this process identified the following prioritized health needs for the communities we serve:

1. Obesity
2. Behavioral Health
3. Chronic Conditions
4. Cancer
5. Access to Healthcare

While the following health needs are listed separately, it is important to note that they are all interconnected. As such, by addressing any needs, the others are also affected. For example, any illness or condition is generally exacerbated by poor mental health, as well as by virtue of being ill, mental health can be negatively affected. Similarly, poor dietary habits can result in obesity, chronic illness, and/or cancer.

### **Obesity**

Obesity is defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater. Mississippi ranks number one in the nation for obesity, with 39% of adults being obese compared to 27.5 % nationally. The County Health Rankings measure of obesity serves as a proxy metric for poor diet and limited physical activity. Obesity increases the risk for health conditions such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, hypertension, dyslipidemia, stroke, liver and gallbladder disease, sleep apnea and respiratory problems (such as asthma), osteoarthritis, and poor health status. According to County Health Rankings, Jackson County performs marginally better than the state at 36% and Community Commons reports 35.2% of

Jackson County adults are overweight (BMI greater than 30.0). County Health Rankings further reports that 26% of Jackson County adults are physically inactive.

*Current programs and services that address obesity:*

- Bariatric Surgery Program. Provides surgical weight loss procedures, as well as offers guidance to help patients make lifestyle changes.
- Breastfeeding Resource Centers. Research has shown that breastfeeding decreases the risk of a child becoming obese (CDC, 2012). Both Ocean Springs Hospital and Singing River Hospital offer breastfeeding resource centers where breastfeeding support is offered, as well as breastfeeding supplies and pumps for rent or purchase.
- Healthy Partners. With convenient screenings, risk assessments, on-site events and other support, our Healthy Partner companies have a direct connection to all the resources of our award-winning care teams. Screenings for the most common conditions can improve health and save lives.
- Healthy Revolution Blueprint which is a simple-to-follow, nonsurgical healthy lifestyle & weight management program. There is a misconception that losing a large amount of weight is difficult and crash diets are the only way to improve health. Creating healthy habits and a few lifestyle changes can lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglyceride levels that can help and prevent, control, and even reverse type 2 diabetes. Singing River is actively promoting the Healthy Revolution Blueprint among our more than 2,500 employees and throughout our community to reduce obesity rates in our region. Visit [www.SingingRiverHealthSystem.com](http://www.SingingRiverHealthSystem.com) to find the full 12 week program.
- Healthy Revolution Program is a customized wellness initiative for Singing River Health System employees. The program includes a unique benefit plan structure, unprecedented team-based rewards programs, screening programs, multiple nutrition initiatives, and group programs for healthy living.
- Healthplex. Located in Pascagoula, Healthplex is a comprehensive health and wellness center offering state-of-the-art fitness equipment and group classes while providing trained staff to assist individuals with chronic conditions or those at risk of developing them. Singing River also partners with the MS Gulf Coast YMCA for health and wellness education, community projects and support.
- Nutrition Services. Dietary consults are available by appointment at both hospitals with physician referral.
- Community Education and Screenings. Subject matter experts provide educational presentations and speeches on a variety of topics in the community, including presentations for senior centers, schools, churches, and civic groups. Regular participation in health fairs is ongoing, with screenings offered for blood pressure, blood glucose, body mass index, and lung function.

*Partnerships and potential opportunities:*

- Singing River Health System is a founding partner and ongoing member of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Youth Health Coalition, whose first initiative “Let’s Go! Gulf Coast,” aims to combat

childhood obesity by encouraging healthy eating and active living for Mississippi Gulf Coast children, their families, and the communities in which they live, learn, work, and play.

*Anticipated Impact and Plan to Evaluate:* The programs are anticipated to improve the health of participants by assisting in weight loss, health promotion, physical fitness education, nutrition education, and increasing awareness of overall health. The partnership with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Youth Health Coalition is anticipated to raise awareness in Jackson County about obesity and how to make healthier choices. The plan to evaluate includes tracking patient participation and outcomes, where applicable, and reassessing the health needs of the community during the next community health needs assessment. Evaluation metrics are built-in to the Let's Go! Gulf Coast initiative and will be included in the data assessed during the next community health needs assessment.

### **Behavioral Health**

Jackson County, along with all of Coastal Mississippi has experienced numerous natural and environmental disasters in recent years such as Hurricane Katrina and the BP Oil Spill. These events, combined with the COVID 19 pandemic across the country, have left a toll on an already economically depressed region. This has created a ripe environment for behavioral health issues such as depression and anxiety. To compound the problem, there is a lack of mental health providers in the area, with a ratio of 630 people for every 1 Behavioral Health provider in Jackson County (County Health Rankings, 2021).

*Current programs and services that address mental health:*

- Emergency Behavioral Assessment: 24-hour intake and evaluation for all ages with support from our Crisis Intervention Program team.
- Inpatient Medical-Psychiatric Program: Provides acute medical care as well as psychiatric care for adults who require 24- hour inpatient treatment.
- Pet Assisted Wellness Services (PAWS). Pet therapy program offered for the emotional wellbeing of inpatients at both hospitals.

*Anticipated Impact and Plan to Evaluate:* As the need for Behavioral Health services increases, Singing River is actively working with private providers, government and not for profit agencies to address capacity issues and alternatives to hospitalization where appropriate.

### **Chronic Conditions**

Chronic illnesses such as diabetes, high cholesterol, and heart disease (the leading cause of deaths in the United States) are rampant in Jackson County. These conditions significantly impact quality of life, and many are the result of lifestyle choices and/or lack of preventive care due to access issues. The high rate of obesity also puts residents at risk for developing a chronic condition.

*Current programs and services that address chronic conditions:*

- Board Certified Geriatrician. Geriatric medicine specializes in the complex medical and psychosocial problems of older adults.

- Cardiac Cath Lab. Offering cardiac diagnostic catheterization, coronary intervention procedures, balloon angioplasty, coronary stenting, rotational atherectomy, peripheral diagnostic catheterization and interventional procedures, electrophysiological studies and ablations, pacemakers and implantable cardioverter defibrillators, carotid stenting, and cardiac calcium scoring. Cath lab procedures are also part of the Blue Distinction Centers of Excellence for cardiac care.
- Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation. Comprehensive program for patients with chronic heart and/or lung disease.
- The Center for Cardiovascular Surgery. Offering coronary artery bypass surgery, valve repair and replacement, aneurysm repair, thoracic surgery, carotid artery surgery, and peripheral vascular surgery. Ocean Springs Hospital and Singing River Hospital were named Blue Distinction Centers of Excellence for cardiac care by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi. The designation acknowledges best practice care coordination with the goal of healthier outcomes through an emphasis on quality and prevention.
- Community Education and Screenings. Subject matter experts provide educational presentations and speeches on a variety of topics in the community, including presentations for senior centers, schools, churches, and civic groups. Regular participation in health fairs is ongoing, with screenings offered for blood pressure, body mass index, and lung function. Free onsite screenings have also been offered for alpha testing which detects risk for lung disease.
- Congestive Heart Failure Clinic. Offering short-term and long-term symptom management, drug therapies, education on lifestyle modification, and enhanced external counterpulsation.
- Encourage Fitness. Singing River Health System Foundation, with in-kind support from Singing River Health System, hosts the annual “Run Run Rudolph 5K and Fun Run,” as well as promoting/supporting other community runs and walks in an effort to cultivate a culture of healthful living.
- Healthplex. Located in Pascagoula, Healthplex is a comprehensive health and wellness center offering state-of-the-art fitness equipment and group classes while providing trained staff to assist individuals with chronic conditions or those at risk of developing them.
- Hospitalists. Ocean Springs Hospital and Singing River Hospital employ Hospitalists, which are physicians who specialize in the care of hospitalized patients. This specialized expertise results in better quality of care during the hospital stay.
- Regional Pulmonary Hypertension Center. Located in Ocean Springs, The Regional Pulmonary Hypertension Center is the only pulmonary hypertension clinic on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.
- Retail Pharmacy. Starting in 2015, Ocean Springs Hospital and Singing River Hospital now offer in-house retail pharmacies. This allows patients to be discharged with the medications that they need, which helps to eliminate gaps in treatment and provide continuity of care.
- Singing River Health System Clinics. There are five clinics total, with locations in Hurley, Ocean Springs, Pascagoula, and Vancleave. Extended and/or weekend hours are offered, as well as same day appointments and a board certified emergency physician offering fast-track services at the Pascagoula clinic.
- Sleep Center. Multidisciplinary medical clinic and sleep diagnostic laboratory.
- The Wound Care Center. Offering specialized equipment and a highly trained staff for the management of problem wounds. This is especially helpful for patients with diabetes.

*Potential Opportunities:*

- Explore population health programs targeting chronic conditions with a possible pilot program for employees, with the intent of extending corporate health strategies to the community.
- Developing a Better Breathing program to begin again.

*Anticipated Impact and Plan to Evaluate:* The inpatient and outpatient services are expected to improve care and quality of life of people with chronic conditions, including specialized care from hospitalists and geriatricians. Continuity of care should be enhanced by the internal retail pharmacy. The Better Breathers Club is anticipated to improve the emotional health and well-being of chronic lung disease sufferers, and community education and screenings should enhance health knowledge and awareness. Impact of the potential population health program is not possible to determine at this time since the program is under development. The plan to evaluate includes tracking patient participation and outcomes, where applicable, and reassessing the health needs of the community during the next community health needs assessment.

**Cancer**

According to data available on the Community Common platform, Jackson County residents have a higher incidence of all cancers than the US average. These specifically include breast cancer, lung cancer, and prostate cancer. More males die of cancer than females in the county, state, and nation. The cancer incidence rate is 459.8 cases per 100,000 for Jackson County.

Breast cancer is a leading cause of cancer death among women in the United States. According to the American Cancer Society, about 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer and about 1 in 36 women will die from breast cancer in our region. Breast cancer is associated with increased age, hereditary factors, obesity, and alcohol use.

*Current programs and services that address cancer:*

- Discounted cancer screenings
- Healthplex Cancer Exercise Program. This four week exercise and lifestyle modification program focuses on the individualized needs of the cancer patient.
- Smoke-free campus. All Singing River Health System properties, including both hospitals and outlying facilities, are smoke-free.
- American Cancer Society Partnerships: Singing River Health System helps to advocate, support and raise funds for the American Cancer Society.
- Community Education and Screenings. Subject matter experts provide educational presentations and speeches on a variety of topics in the community, including presentations for senior centers, schools, churches, and civic groups.
- Singing River Health System Regional Cancer Center: Our nationally accredited cancer center offers state of the art diagnostics and treatment for a wide variety of cancer related conditions. We have recently expanded access to cancer treatment and support services with the opening of a new Regional Cancer Center location at our Singing River Gulfport Hospital location.

### Cancer Screening & Genetic Testing

We utilize cutting edge pathological tests such as tumor markers, genetic testing, bone marrow testing, peripheral blood testing and an assortment of biopsies in the search for diagnosis.

### Imaging & Radiology

Singing River Health System's team of technicians, radiologists, surgeons, pathologists, and oncologists diagnose and treat a variety of cancers with the latest technologies including:

- 3D Digital Mammogram
- Breast MRI
- CT Scan
- PET Scan
- MRI
- Nuclear Medicine

### Treatments

Cancer treatments are ever-changing, and at Singing River Health System's Cancer Centers, we are on the cutting edge of these treatments. In addition to chemotherapy and radiation treatments, we employ immunotherapy and oral chemotherapy treatments that target the cancer on a cellular level.

#### *Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy*

Cancer patients with smaller, isolated tumors benefit from minimally invasive, highly effective Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT) administered by the Trilogy® System Linear Accelerator with Gated RapidArc®.

#### *Brachytherapy*

HDR Brachytherapy is a safe, effective treatment for certain tumors. During the treatment, the Radiation Oncology team delivers a very high dose of radiation directly inside a tumor. This highly localized treatment avoids treating the healthy tissues that surround the tumor, leading to less side effects and better outcomes.

### Accreditations

Our Cancer Centers have been accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer for eight consecutive years. The Commission on Cancer recognizes cancer care programs for their commitment to providing comprehensive, high-quality, and multidisciplinary patient-centered care.

### Partnerships

Singing River's Cancer Center is a member of the The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Health System Cancer Community Network. This network includes community cancer centers across Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, and Tennessee to promote collaboration between UAB and community physicians in order to pursue high quality patient outcomes, improve access to early cancer detection and treatment, and optimize patient satisfaction at a local level.

Support Groups: Brave and Beautiful and Survivorship Program



*Anticipated Impact and Plan to Evaluate:* The inpatient and outpatient services are expected to improve care and quality of life for people with cancer, including specialized care from board certified oncologists, state-of-the-art equipment, and access to clinical research. Cancer education classes and support groups improve the health and well-being of patients with cancer, and community education and screenings enhance health knowledge and awareness. Our evaluation includes tracking patient participation and outcomes, where applicable, and reassessing the health needs of the community during the next community health needs assessment.

## **Access to Healthcare**

Access to affordable, quality health care is important for physical, social, and mental health. Health insurance helps individuals and families access needed primary care, specialists, and emergency care, but does not ensure access on its own—it is also necessary for providers to offer affordable care, be available to treat patients, and be in relatively close proximity to patients. Lack of health insurance coverage is a significant barrier to accessing needed health care and to maintaining financial security. Hospitalization for ambulatory-care sensitive conditions, diagnoses usually treatable in outpatient settings, suggests that access to quality care in the outpatient setting was less than ideal. This measure may also represent a tendency to overuse emergency rooms and urgent care providers as a main source of care. Preventable Hospital Stays could be classified as both a quality and access measure, as some literature describes hospitalization rates for ambulatory care-sensitive conditions primarily as a proxy for access to primary health care.

### *Current programs and services that address access to care:*

- Emergency Services. Ocean Springs Hospital and Singing River Hospital both offer 24-hour emergency services with board-certified emergency physicians. To ensure access to care, emergency services are provided to all individuals in Jackson County without regard for ability to pay.
- Lab Services for Volunteers in Medicine Gautier. Singing River Health System offers a set amount of free lab services for patients of Volunteers in Medicine Gautier, a free community healthcare clinic serving uninsured adults.
- Singing River Health System Clinics. Singing River Health System provides access to primary care with clinics in Biloxi, Gulfport, Hurley, Ocean Springs, Pascagoula, and Vancleave. Extended and/or weekend hours are offered, as well as same day appointments and a board-certified ER physician offering fast-track services at the Pascagoula clinic.
- Community Education and Screenings. Subject matter experts provide community education and free health screenings on a variety of topics in the community, including presentations for senior centers, schools, churches, and civic groups.
- Singing River Health System Financial Assistance Policy. Written policy that fully describes the eligibility criteria for obtaining free or discounted medically necessary care to assist those unable to pay for such services.

- Singing River Health System Foundation. Singing River Health System provides operational support for this not-for-profit, 501(c)3 charitable foundation whose mission is to provide programs and services that promote the overall health and well-being of the community.
- Singing River Health System Imaging Centers. Available in both Ocean Springs and Pascagoula, the imaging centers offer diagnostic imaging services in a more convenient setting than accessing these services in the hospitals.
- Singing River Health System Patient Transportation Service. Provides free transportation to healthcare services within Jackson County; designed for elderly and/or disabled patients lacking such transportation.
- Singing River Health System Physician Recruitment. Physicians are required to have appointments available for Medicare and Medicaid patients in order to improve access to care.
- Skilled Nursing Facility. An award-winning, short-stay transitional unit designed for patients who are not strong enough to go home after their hospital stay but are not sick enough to remain admitted to the hospital.

*Anticipated Impact and Plan to Evaluate:* Inpatient and outpatient services are anticipated to impact those needing medical care by helping to ease financial and geographic barriers by offering financial assistance and facilities placed in convenient locations. Free lab services and programs of the Singing River Health System Foundation are anticipated to impact those who would have otherwise avoided testing, equipment, and/or medical care. Patient Transportation Services are expected to assist those with transportation barriers to accessing medical care. The plan to evaluate includes tracking patient participation and outcomes, where applicable, and reassessing the health needs of the community during the next community health needs assessment.

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