

# Community Health Needs Assessment

Virginia Mason Medical Center



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*Hospitals and health systems in King County continue to support advocacy efforts to address homelessness and increase access to safe and affordable housing. One example is Virginia Mason Franciscan Health's Bailey-Boushay House overnight shelter for homeless clients in their HIV Outpatient Program, which is the first – and only – homeless shelter in the country that exclusively serves people with HIV.*

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**King County hospitals and health systems are uniquely positioned to improve community health by offering comprehensive healthcare services as well as through collaborations and investments that address the root causes of health outcomes and inequities, such as access to housing, transportation, food, and chronic disease prevention.** To best serve the needs of the community, hospitals and health systems assess health and social outcomes across changing demographics, as well as engage with and listen to the emerging priorities voiced by local communities.

Since the last CHNA, community-based organizations and clinics, state and local agencies, coalitions, schools, and hospitals have continued to engage with the people they serve to help elevate specific community concerns and strengths. To enhance our understanding of King County residents' priorities leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, we reviewed 48 community needs assessments, strategic plans, or reports produced between 2018 and 2020 (see Appendix A for a full list). We sought publicly available information representing regions throughout King County, specific populations, and focus areas including food, physical activity, housing, and transportation. Each resource had a community engagement component from which we summarized themes shared across the documents.

Priorities expressed by multiple communities include housing and homelessness, access to healthcare and other services, support for youth and families, and community growth and development as areas of need.

## HEALTH NEED: HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

### BAILEY-BOUSHAY HOUSE

- Created an overnight shelter for the homeless population, which can accommodate up to 50 people per night.
- Provided housing stability project, which helped those experiencing homeless transition to permanent housing with ongoing support.
- Operated a rental assistance program that targets HIV+ people of color and women that houses 50 individuals and families previously homeless.

### MARY'S PLACE

- Provide staff time to provide wellness education to residents at the Northshore Family Center.
- Donate supplies to shelter residents.

### PLYMOUTH HOUSING

- Provided financial support for housing and stabilization programs.

### SOLID GROUND

- Provided financial support for Solid Ground's housing programs.

### LGBTQ ALLYSHIP

- Supported the "Let's Build! Housing, Community and Support" conference.

## WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

During the previously conducted 2018/2019 Community Health Needs Assessment, HHC members focused on the following joint priorities for collective and individual focus:

- Mental health and substance use disorders
- Access to healthcare and transportation
- Physical health with a focus on obesity, cancer, and diabetes
- Housing and homelessness

## Identified Health Needs



By analyzing data on Hospitals for a Healthier Community's (HHC) identified health needs with input from community organizations about assets, resources, and opportunities related to those needs and combining it with health data from our Kitsap and Snohomish county supplement, we created the following list of identified health needs:

### **Access to Care and Transportation**

Despite an abundance of health care resources in King County, access to health care remains the biggest need among Puget Sound-area residents. Specifically, lack of mental health services, language barriers, system navigation, transportation and location of facilities, wait times and hours of operation, access to specialty care services, and inability to pay.

### **Housing and Homelessness**

Stable and safe housing plays a crucial role in maintaining a sense of community connection and overall quality of life. King County has continued struggling to develop sufficient resources to meet the needs of our growing homeless population.

### **Access to Affordable and Healthy Food**

In many King County communities, problems with access to food are compounded by low wages, unaffordable housing, and the increasing

costs of other basic needs such as childcare, transportation, and health care. Food insecurity cannot be separated from systemic problems of poverty, transportation and housing.

### **Access to Vaccinations and Screenings**

Based on research from Public Health – Seattle & King County, many King County-area residents — especially people who live in underserved areas — do not always have convenient access to basic vaccinations, like flu shots, and health screenings, like lead testing.

### **Firearm Violence Prevention**

Gun violence is a public health issue across the country. In King County, more people are killed by firearms than by car crashes, with an annual financial cost of nearly \$200 million in medical charges and lost productivity. From 2012 to 2016, 747 King County residents died by firearms, representing more than 30,500 years of potential life lost.