

Identifying Needs and Gathering Community Feedback

Boston Children's requests and is grateful to receive direct feedback from leaders and staff at community organizations and health centers, as well as from youth, residents, families, and members of our Community Advisory Board. This feedback informs our understanding of the top health and social concerns for families and how the hospital can address these issues. This Community Health Improvement Plan is an important document that reflects their input and outlines the strategies, goals, and objectives that Boston Children's will implement to make an impact on community health and address concerns. It is also in response to the findings of the community health needs assessment process. Every three years, Boston Children's reviews public health data and seeks input from the community as part of its assessment process. It uses interviews with key stakeholders, holds focus groups, distributes surveys, and hosts other forums to collect data and hear different voices from the community.

Priority Areas for 2022- 2025

Based on the assessment process and feedback gathered from community stakeholders, Boston Children's has identified the following priorities to focus the Community Health Improvement Plan for 2022-2025:

Community Health Plan Priorities:

- **Promote mental health and emotional wellness**
- **Support affordable and stable housing for children and families**
- **Promote healthy youth development**
- **Increase access to affordable and nutritious food**
- **Improve early childhood education, health, and developmental supports**
- **Improve the health of children and families managing asthma and obesity**

This document shares how Boston Children's will address each priority area through programs, directing resources, and in partnership with others. It is expected that the plan will continue to evolve and be refined as needed during the next three-year period. The Office of Community Health will oversee and support the implementation of these strategies through the summer of 2025.

Developing the Improvement Plan

Boston Children's Office of Community Health oversees the needs assessment process and coordinates with other assessments such as with the Boston CHNA-CHIP Collaborative and the review of needs in the Route 128 area. The Office of Community Health reviewed the findings from its 2022 needs assessment with the Community Advisory Board (CAB) and facilitated a discussion to gather further reflections. They recommended that Boston Children's continue to look at strategies and opportunities around youth development staff salaries, the impact of social media on youth mental health, continue to address the pediatric mental health boarding crisis, and the focus on engagement of youth. CAB members also emphasized the following priority areas: mental health supports and well-being/prevention services, housing, food access, early childhood, asthma, and healthy weight as primary focus areas for Boston Children's.

Summary 2022-2025 CHIP Goals and Objectives

Goal 1.	Promote mental health and emotional wellness by nurturing resilient communities and building equitable, accessible, and supportive systems of care
Objectives	Increase the number of diverse, culturally/linguistically competent licensed clinical behavioral health workers and community-based behavioral health caregivers
	Provide services and supports, and identify resources to increase mental health and trauma services where children live and learn
Goal 2.	Support safe, stable, healthy, equitable, affordable housing for children and families
Objectives	Make direct investments in housing stabilization and affordable housing production and work toward policy and systems changes that would decrease the number of low/moderate-income families with children who are homeless or housing insecure.
	Increase pathways to mobility for low-income families through approaches that build assets and facilitate homeownership.
Goal 3.	Promote healthy youth development through youth-centered programming and career pathways
Objectives	Foster personal development of youth through leadership skill-building, mentorship, interest exploration, and identity formation
	Expand career pathways for youth through college, trades/training, and direct employment
	Strengthen capacity of youth workforce
Goal 4.	Increase access to affordable and nutritious food
Objectives	Provide culturally relevant food and nutrition education to children and families
	Strengthen community infrastructure for healthy food
Goal 5.	Improve early childhood education, health, and developmental supports
Objectives	Expand training and quality improvement supports for early education and care (EEC) community-based providers
	Enhance engagement and skill building for parents and families with children birth to 5-years old through community programming
	Advocate and collaborate to sustain and increase the amount of flexible, affordable, high quality child care for children birth to 5-years old
Goal 6.	Improve the health of children and families managing asthma and obesity
Objectives	Implement community health programs that reduce the racial disparities in care and health outcomes for children with asthma and obesity

Goal 1: Promote mental health and emotional wellness by nurturing resilient communities and building equitable, accessible, and supportive systems of care

Objective 1: Increase the number of diverse, culturally/linguistically competent licensed clinical behavioral health workers and community-based behavioral health caregivers

Strategies:

A. Work with the funded partners in the Collaboration for Community Health, Mental Health Systems Initiative to increase awareness of pathways, incentives and supports (e.g. educational grants, loan forgiveness, licensure support), for underrepresented individuals including communities of color, individuals from low-income backgrounds, and/or first-generation college students to join the behavioral health workforce.

Partners: William James College, UMass BIRCh Project, Boston College School of Social Work, Children's Services of Roxbury, Simmons University School of Social Work, Springfield College Department of Social Work

B. Continue supporting the implementation of a training curriculum for staff in school communities, childcare programs, afterschool programs and other youth-serving organizations on bias / implicit bias, stigma, mental health, behavioral health and trauma-informed approaches with referral protocols to link clients with relevant services.

Partners: Boston Public Health Commission

Objective 2: Provide services and supports, and identify resources to increase mental health and trauma services where children live and learn

Strategy:

A. Support training, coaching, and technical support interventions that support MH/BH providers in Boston communities, with a focus on underserved neighborhoods and communities that are impacted by long-standing stress and exposure to trauma.

Partners: Children's Services of Roxbury, Boston College School of Social Work, Simmons University School of Social Work, William James College, UMass BIRCh, Springfield College Department of Social Work, Surround Care Coalition

B. Continue supporting the implementation of behavioral health curricula in pre-K-12 schools and appropriate community settings to support teachers and families, that includes psychological First Aid, trauma informed approaches to working with youth, building resilience and coping skills, social and emotional learning, etc.

Partners: Boston Public Schools, Boston Children's Hospital Neighborhood Partnership

C. Sustain support for city's neighborhood trauma teams (NTTs) to ensure adequate citywide funding and coverage for mental health services available in response to community violence.

Partners: Boston Public Health Commission

Goal 2 : Support safe, stable, healthy, equitable, affordable housing for children and families

Objective 1: Make investments in housing stabilization and policy and systems changes that would decrease the number of low/moderate-income families who are homeless or housing insecure

- Strategies:**
- A. Expand pool of flexible cash resources to assist families at risk of displacement
Partners: Casa Myrna Vasquez, HomeStart, Metro Housing Boston
 - B. Support community and tenant organizations to provide housing-insecure families with training, tools and resources to advocate/negotiate with landlords, Housing Court and public officials to avoid displacement
Partners: City Life/Vida Urbana, HomeStart Metro Housing Boston
 - C. Support community organizations to work with homeless families to secure permanent, affordable housing
Partners: Higher Ground
 - D. Support community and tenant organizations to advocate with elected/appointed officials for policy and systems change that will result in more affordable housing for low income families
Partners: City Life/Vida Urbana, Chinatown Land Trust, Metro Housing Boston
 - E. Support innovative models that enable renters to purchase their unit
Partners: Urban Edge

Objective 2: Increase pathways to economic mobility for low-income families through approaches that build assets and facilitate homeownership

- Strategies:**
- A. Support community organizations that enable low income families to achieve homeownership as a means of building wealth
Partners: Mass Affordable Housing Alliance
 - B. Support community and labor organizations that provide training and family supports that enable women with children to achieve economic self-sufficiency
Partners: Community Labor United

Goal 3: Promote youth development through youth-centered programming and career pathways

Objective 1: Foster personal development of youth through leadership skill-building, mentorship, interest exploration, and identity formation

- Strategies:**
- A. Support youth development programs and services, especially initiatives that address barriers to participation and provide low or no cost activities across all seasons
Partners: Bikes Not Bombs, Brookview House, Center for Teen Empowerment, Greatest MINDS, Hyde Square Task Force, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, Madison Park Development Corporation, Mildred C. Hailey Youth Center, MissionSAFE, Mothers for Justice and Equality, Peer Health Exchange, Silver Lining Mentoring, Sociedad Latina, South Street Youth Center, Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center, Young Man with a Plan, Youth Enrichment Services
 - B. Promote opportunities for youth voice, empowerment, and healing in supportive community settings
Partners: Bikes Not Bombs, Brookview House, Bridges Homeward, Children’s Services of Roxbury, Center for Teen Empowerment, Greatest MINDS, Haley House, Hyde Square Task Force, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, Madison Park Development Corporation, Mothers for Justice and Equality, Peer Health Exchange, Project RIGHT, Silver Lining Mentoring, Sociedad Latina, South Street Youth Center, Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center, Young Man with a Plan
 - C. Engage youth and residents in leadership and advocacy opportunities with city-wide decision-making bodies
Partners: Center for Teen Empowerment, Fields Corner Crossroads Collaborative, Greatest MINDS, Hyde Square Task Force, Living Safely in Jackson Square, Mildred C. Hailey Youth Center, Project RIGHT, WalkBoston

Objective 2: Expand career pathways for youth through college, trades/training, and direct employment**Strategies:**

- A.** Support programs that provide youth employment, college readiness, direct-to-workforce training, and internship opportunities
Partners: BAGLY, Boston Private Industry Council, Freedom House, Greatest MINDS, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, Madison Park Development Corporation, Nubian Neighborhood Network, Silver Lining Mentoring, Sociedad Latina, West End House
- B.** Support programs that strengthen young people's academic and professional skills
Partners: BAGLY, Boston Private Industry Council, Bridges Homeward, Freedom House, Greatest MINDS, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, Madison Park Development Corporation, Silver Lining Mentoring, Sociedad Latina, West End House
- C.** Employ local high school and college students each summer at Boston Children's Hospital
Partners: Boston Children's Hospital COACH Program

Objective 3: Strengthen capacity of youth workforce**Strategies:**

- A.** Support trauma-informed professional development trainings and workshops among youth-serving staff
Partners: Resilient Families, Boston Private Industry Council, Brookview House, Bridges Homeward, Children's Services of Roxbury, Center for Teen Empowerment, Madison Park Development Corporation, MissionSAFE, Silver Lining Mentoring, Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center
- B.** Promote curriculum development that focuses on social-emotional wellness in youth development programs
Partners: Brookview House, Bridges Homeward, Children's Services of Roxbury, Center for Teen Empowerment, Freedom House, Madison Park Development Corporation, Silver Lining Mentoring, West End House
- C.** Support youth workforce in advocating for increased investments with city and state officials
Partners: Resilient Families, Bridges Homeward, Center for Teen Empowerment, Project RIGHT

Goal 4: Increase access to affordable and nutritious food**Objective 1: Provide culturally relevant food and nutrition education to children and families****Strategies:**

- A.** Increase access to healthy food and resources/incentives for families at community health centers and in community settings
- B.** Provide opportunities for culturally relevant nutrition education and activities at community health centers and in community settings
Partners in A and B: Dorchester Food Co-op, Haley House, Mattapan Food & Fitness Coalition, Sociedad Latina, Somali Parents Advocacy Center for Education, The Food Project, Urban Farming Institute of Boston, Boston Children's at Martha Eliot Health Center, Boston Community Pediatrics, Bowdoin Street Health Center, Brookside Community Health Center, Charles River Community Health, The Dimock Center, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, Mattapan Community Health Center, South End Community Health Center, Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center, Upham's Corner Health Center
- C.** Increase resident and patient utilization of community food pantry, Family Food Connections, in local housing development
Partners: Boston Housing Authority (Mildred C. Hailey Housing Development), Greater Boston Food Bank

Objective 2: Strengthen community infrastructure for healthy food**Strategies:**

- A.** Support local food infrastructure such as urban farms, community gardens, farmers markets, community food hubs, and food co-ops
Partners: Dorchester Food Co-Op, Haley House, Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition, Sociedad Latina, The Food Project, Urban Farming Institute of Boston
- B.** Engage youth and residents in opportunities to grow food and coordinate food access initiatives for the community
Partners: Dorchester Food Co-Op, Haley House, Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition, Sociedad Latina, The Food Project, Urban Farming Institute of Boston

Goal 5: Improve early childhood education, health, and developmental supports**Objective 1: Expand training and quality improvement supports for early education and care (EEC) providers****Strategies:**

- A.** Support programs that provide TA and training for family child-care provider networks, increasing quality rating and services.
Partners: Urban College of Boston, Boston Opportunity Agenda/United Way DRIVE Program, Nurtury, Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corp.
- B.** Support increased training of EEC providers in social emotional learning, child health and nutrition, and developmental (ASQ) screening.
Partners: Urban College of Boston, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Boston Opportunity Agenda, Raising a Reader
- C.** Continue implementing the Endorsement system infrastructure for early childhood mental health (ECMH) training and competencies to professionalize the field and increase the workforce of ECMH providers statewide.
Partners: MSPCC/Mass AIMH

Objective 2: Enhance engagement and skill building for parents and families with children birth to 5-years old through community programing**Strategies:**

- A.** Support parenting education and leadership programs and increase parent leadership roles in CBOs across Boston.
Partners: First Teacher, Families First, The Basics/Children's Services Roxbury
- B.** Expand access to new parent education for families in early ed., community health centers, housing, and other community settings.
Partners: East Boston Social Centers, Neighborhood Villages, JPNDC, Nurtury, The Community Builders, Room to Grow

Objective 3: Advocate and collaborate to sustain and increase the amount of flexible, affordable, high quality childcare for children birth to 5-years old.**Strategies:**

- A.** Advocate to improve employer efforts and policies to provide childcare resources to their employees and workplace communities.
Partners: Massachusetts Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education, Boston CHNA-CHIP Collaborative
- B.** Collaborate with key strategic leaders to leverage existing efforts to improve quality and access to early education and care services.
Partners: MA Department of Early Education and Care, MA Early Childhood Funders Collaborative, Boston Office of Early Childhood, Boston Public Schools UPK Program, Community Labor United Care That Works Initiative

Goal 6: Improve the health of children and families managing asthma and obesity**Objective 1: Implement community health programs that reduce the racial disparity in care and health outcomes for children with asthma and obesity****Strategies:**

- A.** Continue implementing comprehensive, proactive asthma population management strategies in primary care clinics at Boston Children's.
Partners: Children's Hospital Primary Care Center and Martha Eliot Health Center
- B.** Continue implementing Boston Children's Hospital Community Asthma Initiative, a home-visiting program for asthma that provide a full spectrum of case management including family/patient education, asthma self-management and environmental remediation supports.
Partners: Boston Public health Commission Asthma Home-visiting Program, Boston Community Health Centers
- C.** Provide education and resources on asthma management for health care providers in schools and the community.
Partners: Boston Public Schools Health Services; Boston Community Health Centers, including The Dimock Health Center, Mattapan Health Center, and Bowdoin Health Center, Primary care pediatric providers in the community, including Boston Community Pediatrics
- D.** Continue implementing weight management and obesity prevention programs in community health centers and Boston Children's Primary Care
Partners: Boston Children's at Martha Eliot Health Center, Boston Community Pediatrics, Bowdoin Street Health Center, Brookside Community Health Center, Charles River Community Health, The Dimock Center, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, Mattapan Community Health Center, South End Community Health Center, Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center, Upham's Corner Health Center
- E.** Increase alignment and collaborations among Boston Children's healthy weight programs, community health centers, and community partners
Partners: New Balance Foundation Obesity Prevention Center at Boston Children's Hospital, and all Community Health Centers listed above in strategy "D"