



St David's
FOUNDATION

South Austin Medical Center

Community Health Needs Assessment
Strategic Implementation Plan 2023

St David's Foundation

St. David's Foundation strives to be a community-focused and equity-driven organization supporting health and wellness in five Central Texas counties – Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson. Since the Foundation's inception in 1996, we have invested more than \$800 million throughout our five-county region through grantmaking, charity dental care, and scholarships. Many of our peer funders have also contributed substantial funds to address the ongoing and growing needs in our community. And yet, community health indicators have stagnated or in some cases worsened.

The pandemic catalyzed our thinking about how St. David's Foundation serves our Central Texas community in a time of enormous need. We looked inside our own organization and examined our ways of working — as a result, we made and continue to make significant changes to ensure that our actions reflect our commitment to advancing health equity.

Purpose

The 2023 Implementation Plan summarizes the prioritized health needs reflected in the five Community Health Needs Assessments concerning Central Texas, outlines high-level strategies for the Foundation, and provides a framework to track yearly progress towards goals. The Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan are requirements for tax purposes for all non-profit hospitals and, as part of the requirement, both are made widely available to the public. Current and previous reports and plans can be found on the Foundation's website [here](#).

Beyond satisfying compliance requirements, St. David's Foundation also views the Community Health Needs Assessment and the associated Implementation Plan as an opportunity to co-create strategies with the communities we serve. Among other internal uses, this Implementation Plan will primarily be utilized to inform and influence the broader organizational Strategic Plan currently being developed.

Prioritization Process

Following the completion of the five individual Community Health Needs Assessments, several “sense-making” sessions were conducted to ensure that the prioritization of needs was informed by community. Participants of the sense-making sessions included internal foundation staff, representatives from St. David's Hospitals, board leadership, and community leaders representing each of the five counties. One of the sessions was held in a rural community in Williamson county to provide the unique rural perspective.

With contracted assistance from Texas Health Institute, a brief overview of the most critical quantitative and qualitative findings was presented to the groups. The criteria for selecting data points to present included the following:

- Health indicators significantly worse than the national and/or state averages
- Health indicators that have worsened over time, compared to previous years
- Health indicators that represent significant disparities between demographic groups, such as gender, race and ethnicity, and/or geographic regions
- Health indicators that represent common challenges across counties, as well as unique needs that are significantly worse in one or more counties
- Quantitative health indicators that are also of deep concern to communities, as supported by qualitative data

Following this presentation, a facilitated discussion was led to explore the findings and begin identifying the potential roles St. David's Foundation could take to address the most common community health needs. The following high-level themes were identified, which we have further categorized:

Sense-Making Discussion Themes	SDF Categorization of Needs
Access to affordable, culturally competent healthcare	1. Remove barriers to better living today
Mental health issues more broadly (stress management, social isolation, etc.)	
Economic stability as a key driver of health	2. Address conditions to support health and wellbeing (non-medical drivers of health)
Population explosion, rising cost of living, and housing	
Structural issues require system-level strategies	3. Change systems to improve outcomes for a healthier community tomorrow

The St. David's Foundation Board approved new strategic vision and direction language that summarizes our strategy: We focus on removing barriers to better living **today** and changing systems and conditions to improve outcomes for a healthier community **tomorrow**.

Implementation Strategy and Approaches

Strategy 1. Remove barriers to better living today

Related Barriers: Cost of care, lack of insurance, provider availability (primary care, dental, behavioral health, and specialty care), transportation, lack of trust between healthcare system and historically marginalized populations

Approaches:

1. Operate a mobile dental program that delivers free dental care to low-income children who lack access to quality, affordable oral healthcare.
2. Invest in accessible, effective, and culturally competent care across the lifespan and across urban and rural communities.

Strategy 2. Address conditions to support health and wellbeing (non-medical drivers of health)

Related Barriers: Lack of affordable housing, low paying jobs, food insecurity, transportation, barriers to leadership or decision-making roles within the community, ineffective community spaces

Approaches:

1. Operate a scholarship program that supports Central Texas students in completing higher education degrees in healthcare professions.
2. Support initiatives that address non-medical drivers that are barriers to health and wellbeing.
3. Support the capacity of community-based organizations to serve as effective hubs for health.

Strategy 3. Change systems to improve outcomes for a healthier community tomorrow

Related Barriers: Historical and current policies and practices that either advertently or inadvertently make it harder for certain populations to access and benefit from community resources

Approaches:

1. Establish strategy to address structural issues in Central Texas.
2. Generate and disseminate knowledge, catalyze collaborations, and shift narratives on what drives health inequities.

Centering Health Equity in our Work

In addition to the above high-level themes, several **priority populations** were identified. The Community Health Needs Assessments uncovered stark health disparities by gender, race/ethnicity, and geography. Shifting our mindset to equity requires centering the people and communities whose lives we seek to impact in our goals, including **women and girls, people of color, and rural residents**. Our strategies also seek to influence lifelong and generational impact. To do so, we focus on periods of vulnerability and opportunity across the lifespan – from **children to older adults**. We also recognize the potential for **clinics** to serve as community hubs for health across all of our strategies. We acknowledge that meeting people in the trusted spaces where they gather, including **schools, libraries, and community centers**, is a key element of health equity.

Eliminating health disparities cannot be accomplished without seriously addressing the underlying non-medical drivers of health, many of which are shaped and perpetuated by bias, injustice, and inequality. Interventions targeting systemically caused differences in health status hold the greatest promise for promoting and achieving health equity.

Resources Available to Address these Needs

Through a unique partnership with St. David's HealthCare, we strategically reinvest proceeds from the hospital system back into the community, with a goal of advancing health equity and improving the health and well-being of our most underserved Central Texas neighbors. Beyond our grantmaking work, we operate the largest mobile dental program in the country providing charity care and offer the largest healthcare scholarship program in Texas, the St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship Program.

Through **investment** and **action**, we are committed to centering health equity in all that we do so that all Central Texans have a fair chance to achieve optimal health with no avoidable, unjust, or systematically caused differences in health status due to ethnicity, race, age, ability, or geography. Put simply: we support individuals and families in our community who face barriers to flourishing. We are committed to and will evolve towards **upstream** and **transformational** work to improve **systems** and **conditions** for a healthier community.

Additional Needs Identified in the CHNA

While additional needs are listed under the various Community Health Needs Assessments, the strategies of the Foundation are broad enough to encompass these other themes. Particularly upstream strategies are often cross-cutting which impact general health outcomes and/or address health disparities.

Goals and Progress Indicators

Remove barriers to better living today	Measurement
Approach 1: Operate a mobile dental program that delivers free dental care to low-income children who lack access to quality, affordable oral healthcare.	
1. Explore shifting program model to increase reach to outlying communities in rural counties.	Patients Served and Demographics
2. Develop strategies to actively connect patients to long term dental homes and their families with resources to improve overall well-being and resilience.	Narrative Description of Progress
Approach 2: Invest in accessible, effective, and culturally competent care across the lifespan and across urban and rural communities.	
1. Fund clinics and other healthcare providers, including FQHCs, to provide free and low-cost care to the uninsured.	Grants Awarded
2. Support initiatives that increase access to care, such as outreach and awareness campaigns for insurance enrollment.	Narrative Description of Progress

Address conditions to support health and wellbeing (non-medical drivers of health)	Measurement
Approach 1: Operate a scholarship program that supports Central Texas students in completing higher education degrees in healthcare professions.	
1. Expand outreach efforts to increase racial, ethnic, and geographical diversity of scholarship recipients.	Scholarships Provided and Demographics
2. Align internally operated scholarship program with additional grant funded scholarship programs for health professions to increase the impact on Central Texas.	Narrative Description of Progress
Approach 2: Support initiatives that address non-medical drivers that are barriers to health and wellbeing.	
1. Provide grants to organizations to maintain services that address barriers for children, women, older adults, and people of color.	Grants Awarded
Approach 3: Support the capacity of community-based organizations to serve as effective hubs for health.	
1. Shift grantmaking practices towards general operating support and multiyear terms.	Narrative Description of Progress
2. Support efforts to develop and strengthen community linkages outside of clinic settings to improve community health and well-being.	Narrative Description of Progress
3. Fund projects that build on community assets.	Grants Awarded
4. Fund capacity-building and field-building.	Grants Awarded

Change systems to improve outcomes for a healthier community tomorrow	Measurement
Approach 1: Establish strategy to address structural issues in Central Texas.	
1. Ensure community voice informs planning and practice.	Convenings Held
2. Adopt upstream strategy for foundation that employs a wider variety of tools to create meaningful change.	Narrative Description of Progress
Approach 2: Generate and disseminate knowledge, catalyze collaborations, and shift narratives on what drives health equity.	
1. Lead research and strategic communication efforts focused on highlighting inequities and sparking community conversations.	Projects Completed
2. Support the mobilization of communities to achieve their own priorities.	Narrative Description of Progress

Evaluation Methodology

The Foundation is committed to evolving our strategies and goals based on what we are learning through data and evaluation. We evaluate our efforts in a variety of methods which are dependent on the resources and tools employed to advance change.

- Community Programs:
 - For goals related to internally operated dental and scholarships programs, data is collected and analyzed by staff, allowing us to track progress in more detail.
- Grantmaking:
 - For goals related to grants awarded, data is collected at time of application and grant partners are required to report progress towards goals either annually or semi-annually, which are then reviewed by foundation staff. Total number of clients served by the grant partner is presented, regardless of the proportion of the project supported by St. David's Foundation.
- Community Leadership:
 - For goals related to collaboration, communication, and research, progress will be assessed by tracking activities as well as outputs and outcomes. External evaluation support will be employed for emergent initiatives and a longer time frame for assessment will be needed.