

# Community Health Implementation Strategy

FY 2022 – 2025

# Executive Summary

ECU Health Medical Center (formally Vidant Medical Center), one of four academic medical centers in North Carolina, is the flagship hospital for ECU Health and serves as the teaching hospital for the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University. ECU Health Medical Center is located in Greenville, NC and serves as a regional resource for all levels of health services and information. The medical center is a tertiary referral center and provides acute, intermediate, rehabilitation and outpatient health services to more than 1.4 million people in 29 counties. In an average year, about 44,500 inpatients and more than 171,000 outpatients are treated within ECU Health Medical Center facilities. More than 3,500 babies are born at the hospital in a typical year.

Clinical education is an important part of the hospital's mission and helps demonstrate its commitment to the community. ECU Health Medical Center is a teaching site for medical students and residents, nurses and other health professionals.

The Medical Center's mission is "to improve the health and well-being of eastern North Carolina." Our vision is to become a national model for rural health and wellness by creating a premier, trusted health care delivery and education system. Integral to our mission is our commitment to be responsive to our community's needs and to provide high quality, cost-effective health care services. ECU Health Medical Center has a strong commitment to supporting community health improvement programs that focus on the most compelling health issues that affect the community.

## Description of Community

Incorporated in 1760, Pitt County encompasses an area of 655 square miles. Pitt County is located in the heart of eastern North Carolina and situated in between the Outer Banks of NC and the State Capital, located in Raleigh, NC. The Tar River runs through the Center of the County. The County is comprised of ten municipalities with Greenville serving as the county seat. Pitt County's population has continued to grow since the 2010 Census reported the County's population as 168,148. According to the US Census Bureau, there were 170,243 individuals residing in Pitt County in 2020 and an estimated 172,169 in 2021. It is projected that Pitt County's population will grow to an estimated 203,250 by the year 2029.

The White population comprises the County's largest population group (57.2%) followed by the Black or African American residents, who represent 34.7%. The Hispanic or Latino population comprises 6.3% of Pitt County's residents.

In 2021, Pitt County shifted from a Tier One to a Tier Two economic ranking. The County's economic distress rank was #44 in 2021 as compared to #33 in 2020. While the County's population growth rank and unemployment rate rank improved, the county's median household income rank declined. Pitt County's median household income (\$47,437) was lower than the median household income in North Carolina (\$54,602).

Pitt County has a higher rate of poverty than NC and the Health ENC region. Twenty-three (23.0%) of Pitt County's population lives below the poverty level, compared to 15.0% of the population in NC and 17.5% for the Health ENC region. Pitt County's most common racial or ethnic group living below the poverty level in Pitt County is Black, followed by White, and Hispanic. The rates of poverty among children, older adults, and disabled individuals living in Pitt County are all higher than the rates for NC.

## Participants

Health ENC – 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment:

As a Health ENC partner, community opinion surveys were made available to the Pitt County community in both paper and online formats using the REDcap software from April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021. All 928 responses (922 English and 6 Spanish) were submitted electronically. The survey was comprised of 44 core questions and 15 optional questions related to both the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

The majority of Pitt County residents, who completed the survey, were white females, over the age of 55, who had obtained a bachelors or graduate degree, and whose family income surpassed \$100,000 annually. Since the community opinion survey did not reach some of Pitt County's most vulnerable populations, key informant interviews/ focus groups were also conducted due to their historical value of providing critical primary data for the CHNA. Seven (7) focus groups were held during the summer of 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, six (6) focus groups were conducted virtually, and one was held in a face-to-face format. Participants included community health workers, health providers, community organization professionals and community members of various ages. The focus groups conducted within Pitt County were strategically planned to ensure an accurate representation of the overall community with an emphasis on individuals who serve members, or who are members, of the most vulnerable populations. The majority of the selected groups were highly concentrated with professionals representing the healthcare, human services, and education professional arenas. These individuals interact regularly with the community and could readily identify health issues that are most prevalent among the people they serve. The focus groups representation included the following: Gold Path Seniors (Senior Citizens), Pitt County Aging Coalition, Pitt County Emergency Management First Responders, Pitt County School Social Workers, Pitt County School Nurses, Healthy Lives Healthy Choices Lay Health Advisors, and the Pitt-Greenville Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Group. A date was reserved for members of AMEXCAN (the Association of Mexicans in NC), but was not held due to conflicting schedules. Focus group participants were not provided any form of compensation or incentives in exchange for the information they provided. Eight (8) core questions were asked among all groups.

The comprehensive 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment for ECU Health Medical Center included significant input from community members, as well as a wealth of information from local, state, and national data sources. In Pitt County, the Pitt Partners for Health community coalition serves as the key stakeholder group that participated in the planning, data review and prioritization process for the 2022 Pitt County CHNA. ECU Health Medical Center serves as the administrative agency for Pitt Partners for Health, providing a Coordinator for the coalition. Their member organizations include, but are not limited to:

- Access East/Health Assist
- AmeriHealth Caritas
- Amexcan
- Catholic Charities
- Churches Outreach Network
- Community Crossroads
- ECU Health/ECU Health Medical Center
- Eastern AHEC
- East Carolina University
- Fountain Presbyterian Church
- Healthy Lives Healthy Choices
- Greenville Housing Authority
- Greenville Police Department
- Local municipalities
- NC CIVIL
- NC Cooperative Extension
- Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation Department
- Pitt County Council on Aging
- Pitt County Department of Social Services
- Pitt County EMS
- Pitt County Family Development Cooperation
- Pitt County Health Department
- Pitt County Planning Department
- Pitt County Schools
- Saint John Missionary Baptist Church
- Sycamore Hill Missionary Baptist Church
- Trillium Health Care
- Third Street Academy
- West Greenville Health Council

## **Community Benefit Grants Program**

ECU Health Medical Center is committed to improving the health and well-being of eastern North Carolina. With our mission at the forefront of our efforts, ECU Health Medical Center (formerly Vidant Medical Center) makes a substantial contribution to the Foundation’s Community Benefit Grants Program. Grantees from not-for-profit organizations in the community are required to align their proposals with health priorities established through the triennial Community Health Needs Assessment.

## **2022 Community Health Priorities for ECU Health Medical Center**

Pitt Partners for Health reviewed primary and secondary data. Followed by an in-depth discussion of the assessment data and existing community resources, the coalition selected three health priority categories to focus on over the next three years. PPH members voted for the top three health priorities/indicators to address over the next three years, based upon the needs represented by the data, and availability of adequate support in the PPH coalition and the community.

# Implementation Strategies

These include:

- Access to Care/Social Determinants of Health (Individuals living below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level);
- Healthy lifestyles (Limited access to healthy foods); and
- Mental /Behavioral Health (Adverse childhood experiences; Individuals living below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level).

The ECU Health Medical Center's Implementation Strategy includes the health priority categories/indicators and associated goals and strategies. Since community health improvement does not happen in isolation, the Medical Center's strategy includes planned initiatives with community partners through Pitt Partners for Health, but are funded by the Medical Center or led by ECU Health Medical Center team members. Implementing planned collaborative community health improvement initiatives or programming can result in improved coordination of efforts, reduce duplication, and improve the efficient use of hospital resources for population health.

**Health Priority Category/Indicator(s):** Access to Care/Social Determinants of Health (Individuals living below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level)

**Goal: Advance Care Planning:** To improve access to care and quality of life of patients and families in Pitt County through advance care planning.

**Strategy:**

1. Provide advance care planning education and clinics in community-based sites to help ensure that one's treatment preferences are discussed, documented and honored by family, friends, and medical providers.

**Goal: Chronic Disease Prevention:** To increase access to health education/promotion resources and services among individuals with chronic health conditions in socially vulnerable populations.

**Strategies:**

1. Provide health education and health promotion resources and services:

- a) Community based chronic disease screening and referral services
- b) Health education: Utilize Great 8 Health Habits with SMART goals.
- c) Sound Care-On Hold Message Line: Provides general health education and resources to listeners
- d) Health information dissemination via print and electronic media, social media, and in-person or virtual educational sessions.

2. Provide diabetes education and prevention programming that includes, but not limited to:

- a) Diabetes Alert Day commemoration
- b) Diabetes awareness with consistent messaging- electronic and print media, billboards, and social media.
- c) Winning with Diabetes event

3. Provide stroke prevention programming that include, but not limited to:

- a) “Project Garden” for stroke survivors and caregivers in collaboration with Pitt County Community Garden and NC Cooperative Extension
- b) School-based stroke education for children in grades 3-5.
  - School Assembly’s : featuring stroke risk factors
  - Train the trainer program (PE, Health Ed.)
  - Publish a Stroke book featuring children’s art work and real-life stroke stories

4. Provide cancer prevention programming that include:

- a) Community education, awareness, focused screening, and education concentrating on top preventable cancer sites.

5. Offer cardiovascular health programming that may include:

- a) Heart health education and awareness campaigns focusing on women and other vulnerable populations.

6. Implement evidence-based interventions of the Healthy People Healthy Carolinas initiative that include, but not limited to “Know it Control It”.

**Goal: NCCARE 360:** To improve access to resources related to social determinants of health.

**Strategy:**

- 1. Promote use of NCCARE360 among health and social support partners.

**Goal: Faith Health:** Partner with faith based organizations in Pitt County to increase access to health care and health promotion resources.

**Strategy:**

- 1. Partner with local churches to provide chronic disease screening and referral services and health promotion programming.

**Goal: School Health:** To improve the health and well-being of Pitt County School’s students and staff.

**Strategies:**

- 1. Coordinate care for students with chronic health issues, including but not limited to identification of students at risk, development of individual health and emergency action plans, and oversight of medication administration and medical procedures in the schools.

2. Provide case management services to students with complex medical and mental health needs.
3. Provide health education and health promotion programming for students and staff.
4. Coordinate student health screenings and refer for follow-up care as needs are identified.

**Goal: Senior Services:** To improve the health and well-being of older adults.

**Strategies:**

1. Implement health promotion and social support education services that are unique to the needs of older adults.
2. Provide dementia friendly education for team members at ECU Health Medical Center.

**Goal: Injury Prevention:** To provide access to injury prevention education and services that can reduce the potential for death and disability and improve the health and quality of life of children and the general population.

**Strategies:**

1. Implement driver and occupant safety initiatives.
2. Partner with community organizations for fall safety education and access to resources
3. Collaborate with local and state partners to promote and implement injury prevention campaigns that affect all age groups.
4. Implement innovative approaches for firearm safety and suicide prevention

**Goal: Pediatric Asthma:** To improve the health and quality of life of children with asthma.

**Strategies:**

1. Deliver case management and educational services for children with moderate to high-risk asthma.
2. Coordinate community-based asthma education based on National Institutes of Health guidelines.

**Goal: Prescription Medications:** To facilitate access to low cost or free prescription medications for vulnerable populations in Pitt County.

**Strategies:**

1. Provide free expert counseling during the Medicare Part D open enrollment period in collaboration with the Pitt County Council on Aging.
2. Connect children with asthma to free prescription medications.

**Goal: Re-entry Initiative:** To positively impact the re-entry experience of previously incarcerated individuals.

**Strategies:**

1. Explore opportunities for re-entry simulations with community partners to better understand the challenges of this high-risk population.
2. Explore a systematic way to collaborate with health and social support organizations to connect this population with resources to improve health and quality of life.

**Goal: Women's Health:** To improve birth outcomes among women in Pitt County.

**Strategies:**

1. Offer virtual childbirth education classes free of charge to the public.
2. Offer breastfeeding classes free of charge to the public.
3. Provide evidence based practice perinatal outreach education and simulation services for providers and nurses.

**Goal: Trauma Outreach:** To increase access to adult and pediatric trauma resources and education.

**Strategies:**

1. Implement trauma focused education and training for providers caring for the pediatric and adult Populations.

**Health Priority Category/Indicator:** Healthy Lifestyles (Limited access to healthy foods)

**Goal: Physical Activity and Nutrition:** To improve health and well-being through increased access to healthy lifestyle resources. (Access to fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and opportunities to be physically active)

**Strategies:**

1. Implement evidence-based interventions of the Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas initiative.
2. Promote policy, systems, and environmental change to make healthy choices accessible and practical for the community.
3. Implement healthy lifestyles education programming in socially vulnerable areas of the county.
4. Partner locally to improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables in geographically and socially vulnerable areas of Pitt County.
5. Partner locally to improve access to free or low cost physical activity resources in Pitt County.
6. Provide food boxes at discharge through the medical center's Medical Food Pantry for patients that identify as having food insecurity risk.
7. Connect vulnerable populations with lifestyle medicine efforts.



**Health Priority Category/Indicator(s):** Mental /Behavioral Health (Adverse childhood experiences; Individuals living below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level)

**Goal: Pitt County Students against Destruction Decisions (SAAD):** To promote positive decision making among vulnerable Pitt County students through adult mentorship, education, and easily accessible resources.

**Strategies:**

1. Collaborate with community stakeholders to develop, promote, and implement educational and awareness campaigns specific to data driven risk areas that are relevant to youth.
2. Partner with community stakeholders to develop and promote print and digital resources for youth and those that work with and interact with youth.
3. Partner with the local school system and other community organizations to provide students, school personnel, parents, and the community at large with education on how to better navigate the pressures, high-risk behaviors, and challenges encountered by school age children.
4. Partner with community stakeholders to offer classes relevant to the data driven risk areas relevant to youth.

**Goal: ECU Health Cancer Care Support and Survivorship program:** To increase access to support services for community members who are cancer survivors.

**Strategies:**

1. Provide support groups and integrative therapies such as yoga, massage, meditation, and Thai chi.
2. Partner with community organizations that offer art classes, gardening, kayaking, fishing, and one on one therapy.

**Goal: Community Partner Engagement:** To improve access to culturally appropriate mental health services for individuals living in Pitt County.

**Strategies:**

1. Engage with community partners for:
  - a) Mental health/mental disorder education
  - b) Asset mapping of available substance use disorder resources
  - c) Suicide and firearm prevention and training initiatives
  - d) Substance use education and prevention
  - e) BRACE: Addresses trauma through systemic and organizational change and community education.
  - f) Mental Health Matters virtual event

**Goal: Dementia Support:** To increase access to support services for community members who are caring for a loved one with some form of dementia.

**Strategies:**

1. Facilitate monthly support group
2. Connect community to resources specific for dementia care

**Approval**

ECU Health Medical Center's Implementation Strategy for 2022-2025 was approved by the ECU Health Medical Center Board of Trustees on August 23, 2022

  
Chair, ECU Health Medical Center Board of Trustees

9/20/22  
Date