



**The Delaware Healthcare Association's  
Health Equity Report**



**December 2022**

Message from our President & CEO

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to present this first *Health Equity Report* to our members and the public.

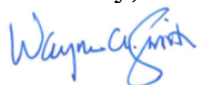
Advancing health equity is a top priority for all our members. Our members are in alignment in believing hospitals have a key role in ensuring every person can obtain the health care they need without bias, without discrimination, and with equal access to the health resources and information that will enable all to achieve their best possible health.

Our Board unanimously adopted a resolution, *Achieving Health Equity: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement and Agreement* (contained in this document) one year ago. We also committed to presenting this report describing how we are advancing equity both collectively and as individual hospitals and health systems.

The significance of our member commitment is demonstrated by Delaware becoming the first state to see 100% of our general acute care and pediatric hospitals commit to the American Hospital Association’s *Health Equity Roadmap*. Our members are incorporating national resources available through the American Hospital Association to help on their equity journey. Our association is proud of our early alignment and commitment to the *Roadmap*.

This report will describe some of the steps members are taking to fulfill our pledge made in the *Achieving Health Equity: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement and Agreement* resolution. It is important to note this is a long journey that has just begun. This initial report describes our start but is by no means the end to a process pursuing equal access without barriers so all can realize the best health they can achieve as an individual.

Sincerely,



Wayne A. Smith  
President & CEO  
Delaware Healthcare Association



## Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, health equity is achieved “when everyone can attain their full potential for health and well-being.”<sup>1</sup> This goal aligns well with the Delaware Healthcare Association’s mission to provide policy and advocacy leadership in creating an excellent environment to support our members in *helping every Delawarean to be as healthy as they can be*.

Delaware hospitals are committed to ensuring the delivery of health care in a manner that respects diversity and inclusivity with the full intent of achieving better health outcomes for all. While providing high-quality health care to all we serve has always been a guiding principle of our hospital and health system members, more needs to be done to fully execute our mission.

The COVID-19 pandemic shined a spotlight on existing health equity challenges in our nation. Across the country, minority groups were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, experiencing increased rates of infection, hospitalizations, and deaths. The pandemic underscored that reducing health disparities is a major public health need.

Delaware hospitals share as a top priority the promotion of health equity internally within their own health systems and externally through partnerships and investments in the community that seek to improve population health.

The following report highlights how Delaware hospitals are prioritizing programs and initiatives to address health equity.

## Taking A Stand

In the midst of the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Delaware Healthcare Association Board of Directors, made up of the chief executives of each acute care hospital in Delaware, met to discuss the challenges facing our nation. Health equity was a focus of each leader within their own health systems. The Board agreed that a common set of principles would help emphasize that Delaware’s hospital industry is united in moving toward the goal of equity for all.

As a result, in 2021, the [\*\*Achieving Health Equity – DHA’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement and Agreement\*\*](#)<sup>2</sup> was developed by DHA’s hospital members and approved by the Association’s Board of Directors. Included in this statement is the commitment to treat everyone in a dignified and respectful manner regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, [https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-equity#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-equity#tab=tab_1)

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix or visit: <https://www.deha.org/Resources/DHA-Equity-Anti-Racism-Statement>

The statement also contains an agreement of accountability intended to be action steps that each hospital takes to become more diverse, inclusive and culturally competent.

These steps include:

1. Ensure that equity and inclusion are embedded in organizational values; operationalize these values through policy and practice; apply a racial equity lens in evaluating performance.
2. Provide diversity, equity, inclusion and implicit / unconscious bias training for all staff, volunteers, and physicians in order to provide care in a culturally sensitive manner.
3. Hire and promote leaders of diverse backgrounds and increase diversity in governance. Identify and remove systemic barriers to advancement.
4. Collaborate with educational institutions to grow the number of health care professionals of diverse backgrounds.
5. Re-examine institutional policies with an equity lens and make any policy changes that promote equity and opportunity.
6. Advocate for increased funding for social needs, social services and programs that promote social justice.
7. Build trust and partner with community through meetings and events that encourage communication and improving relationships.

Furthermore, the Delaware Healthcare Association Board of Directors adopted a policy that each Delaware health system participate in the American Hospital Association's Health Equity Roadmap<sup>3</sup>. The Roadmap is a national initiative to drive improvement in health care outcomes, health equity, diversity and inclusion. This tool helps hospitals dismantle structural barriers and advance equitable health outcomes and systems in the communities they serve. We are happy to report that Delaware became the first state in the nation to have 100% of its general and pediatric acute care hospitals commit to the Roadmap.

### Avenues to Addressing Health Equity

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Healthy People initiative sets measurable goals each new decade to improve the health and well-being of people nationwide. The latest iteration, Healthy People 2030 places an emphasis on health equity and describes how it is closely tied to its focus on health literacy and social determinants of health.<sup>4</sup> Addressing social determinants of health, improving access to health services, and improving health literacy are all avenues to improve the health and well-being of every Delawarean and address health equity.

Although medical care is very important, it only impacts about 20 percent of a population's overall health outcomes. The other 80 percent is attributed to

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<sup>3</sup> American Hospital Association Health Equity Roadmap: <https://equity.aha.org>

<sup>4</sup> HHS Healthy People 2030 <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/health-equity-healthy-people-2030>

environmental and socioeconomic factors, collectively known as the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). An individual may get a medical check-up every year, but without the right foods to eat, clean water to drink, safe housing, a non-violent community in which to reside, and social support, it will be incredibly difficult to achieve positive health outcomes.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states, “addressing social determinants of health is a primary approach to achieving health equity.”<sup>5</sup> Understanding the importance of these non-medical factors impacting health outcomes, Delaware hospitals and health systems are finding ways to look beyond hospital walls and address SDOHs that shape a community’s health. For this reason, our health systems have launched multiple initiatives to tackle SDOHs and deliver the right resources to address these needs.

While Delaware hospitals and health systems provide high-quality care to all who enter their doors, there may still be access barriers and many additional factors outside of the system of healthcare, that impact our ability to stay healthy. Our capacity to thrive depends on having access to a consistent set of vital conditions, like humane housing, fair pay, clean air, early education, routine health care, and other basic necessities.<sup>6</sup> These vital conditions shape the opportunities and adversities we each encounter throughout our lives and serve as a useful framework for conceptualizing and addressing health in a broad manner. Delaware hospitals and health systems are deploying a number of initiatives to support the Seven Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being<sup>6</sup>, thereby approaching social determinants of health in a collaborative and comprehensive way. Some of these efforts include providing mobile health units or telehealth appointment options, implementing cultural competency training for staff, employing community health workers who are trusted members of the communities being served, and revamping communications to patients with an eye toward health literacy.



<sup>5</sup> CDC, NCHHSTP Social Determinants of Health FAQs: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/socialdeterminants/faq.html>

<sup>6</sup> Community Commons, Seven Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being: <https://www.communitycommons.org/collections/Seven-Vital-Conditions-for-Health-and-Well-Being>

## Addressing Disparities in Maternal and Infant Health

A critical part of addressing health equity is reducing and eliminating disparities. One of the most disturbing health trends in Delaware has been our history of high infant mortality. Progress has been made in that Delaware’s infant mortality rate is no longer higher than the national average<sup>7</sup>. Still, disparities remain as the infant mortality rate for Black and Hispanic babies is higher than that of White babies statewide.

Delaware hospitals and health systems are working together with state and community partners through the Delaware Healthy Mother and Infant Consortium and the Delaware Perinatal Quality Collaborative to continue to improve the outcomes for all mothers and babies in our state.



*Delaware Governor John Carney signs the “Momnibus” package of legislation sponsored by Representative Melissa Minor-Brown (left) into law (photo courtesy of Governor Carney’s office).*

DHA was also pleased to work with bill sponsors in 2022 to develop and see signed into law House Bill 344. This new law will provide licensed health care professionals and other health care staff with strategies for understanding and reducing the impact of their biases in order to reduce disparate outcomes and ensure that all patients receive fair treatment and quality health care. The law was specifically drafted to address disparities in maternal and infant health. HB 344 was part of a larger package of several bills – called the “Momnibus” package – seeking to improve the health of moms and babies in Delaware. DHA was pleased to support the “Momnibus” package of legislation.

The following examples highlight programs and initiatives that Delaware hospitals and health systems are leading to support the Seven Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being and address Social Determinants of Health, access to health care, and health literacy in their communities to positively impact health equity in our state.

<sup>7</sup> Delaware Infant and Maternal Health, Access, and Workforce presentation: <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dhcc/files/hussainipresentation100622.pdf>

## Delaware Hospital Initiatives

### Bayhealth - Feeding Our Neighbors

Bayhealth is partnering with the Food Bank of Delaware and the American Heart Association to help combat food insecurity.

Caring for the community goes beyond the Bayhealth Hospital campuses and Bayhealth Medical Group provider offices. Nonmedical variables such as environment, housing and food insecurity —some of the social determinants of health (SDOH)—play a critical role in people’s well-being and lifelong journey to good health.

Patient screenings at Bayhealth hospitals and provider offices have identified food insecurity as a top nonmedical concern among respondents (second only to financial need). There are 93,900 people in Delaware who face food insecurity; that is 1 in 10 people. Not having enough nutritious food to eat puts people at increased risk for heart disease, obesity and other chronic conditions. Food-insecure children may also be at higher risk for developmental problems or mental health concerns.

Bayhealth is helping to address food insecurity among their patients, along with other social concerns, through various community partnerships. One such collaboration is a first-in-the-nation partnership with the Food Bank of Delaware, the American Heart Association and Food Rescue Hero. The initiative officially launched in fall 2022 with a 302 Food Rescue app that connects nonprofits that serve food-insecure Delawareans with produce, prepared meals and other usable healthy food items that would otherwise have gone to waste.



*Bayhealth Chief Nurse Executive Rosi Wurster, DNP, RN, MPH, NEA-BC, discusses 302 Food Rescue during the program's launch event.*

The initiative leverages the Food Bank’s existing network of volunteers and food donors (including local restaurants, grocery stores, caterers, hotels, and farms) to connect community centers, shelters, and other resource hubs with food that they can pass on to those in need.

Bayhealth’s 302 Food Rescue app is powered by the Food Rescue Hero® app to alert volunteers about fresh food rescues in real time. Say a grocery store has a donation of food that it can’t sell to customers (think fruit, vegetables, day-old bread or prepared meals that are still good but have a short shelf life in the home). The app pushes

notifications to registered users —called the 302 Food Rescue Crew—with food rescues to claim near them; then the volunteer driver picks up the food.

In addition to the app, AHA and Bayhealth are partnering on Healthy for Life, an education component that will roll out over the next three years and provide information on smart cooking, nutritious foods, grocery shopping and more. The programming will be geared toward the whole family, including children.

Having a food-rescue collaboration take place at the statewide level is a first for the country and will pave the way for similar programs in other areas. “This is a serious game-changer for the state,” said David Morris, executive director, Delaware American Heart Association. “It’s not only going to save lives here in Delaware, it is going to be an example for others. We are going to reduce the rates of hypertension, diabetes, and ultimately cardiovascular disease and stroke. By consuming healthier foods, people will naturally lead healthier lives.”

To find out more about 302 Food Rescue and volunteering as a food rescuer, visit [302FoodRescue.org](https://302FoodRescue.org). “Delaware is one big family and we take care of each other,” said Bayhealth’s Senior Marketing Communications Manager Amanda Bowie. “We have an opportunity to impact our neighbors up and down the state by becoming food rescuers or donating food. Just imagine the sense of pride you’ll have knowing that you made it possible for a family to have a healthy meal when they may have gone without had you not volunteered your time.”

### **Beebe Healthcare – Providing Vaccines to At-Risk Populations**

Healthcare equity is at the forefront of Beebe Healthcare’s values and goals. Much of Beebe’s five-year strategic plan, One Beebe, focuses on increasing access to healthcare across Sussex County in an equitable manner for all people.

In recent years, Beebe has been designated a LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRC). This designation means Beebe received an evaluation of 100 for the “Leader” designation due to its patient-centered focus when it comes to providing inclusive and equitable care for LGBTQ+ patients, their families, and Beebe team members.

Most recently, Beebe’s efforts turned to the focus of the outbreak of Monkeypox Virus. Beebe stepped up to partner with the Division of Public Health to become a hub for vaccine distribution throughout Sussex County. The partnership with the state allowed Beebe to get the vaccine for those who were most at-risk or who met risk categories.

This was a public health concern for all, but state and federal guidelines identified certain populations as being high risk. One of the populations identified included individuals who are living with HIV, as well as those receiving pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV, and gay, bisexual and transgender or nonbinary persons having sex with men.





*A Beebe Healthcare nurse prepares a vaccine during the AIDS Walk Delaware event in Rehoboth Beach.*

Rehoboth Beach has a strong LGBTQ+ community, who Beebe has been proud to serve for inclusive, patient-centered healthcare needs for many years. As the virus spread, many were looking for answers. Beebe held a virtual town hall for all communities and partnered on vaccination events for those who met criteria. Beebe partnered with CAMP Rehoboth and the AIDS Walk Delaware event held in Rehoboth Beach in September 2022 to provide vaccinations.

“Our care team’s quick response to this public health concern and continued dedication to the people of our diverse community is what Beebe Healthcare is all about,” said David A. Tam, MD, MBA, CPHE, FACHE, President & CEO, Beebe Healthcare. “We remain committed to providing the best care to our patients and our community and closing the gap to equitable care across Sussex County. We want to be your healthcare provider of choice because Sussex County is Our Specialty.”

Beebe providers welcome all members of the community, and provide LGBTQ-centered services, such as trans-affirming gynecology, hormone therapy, and referrals. To learn more about these services and the partnerships Beebe has in the community, visit [beebehealthcare.org/beebe-lgbtq-inclusive](https://beebehealthcare.org/beebe-lgbtq-inclusive).

### **ChristianaCare - Gender Wellness Program for Transgender and Gender Diverse Individuals**

In June of 2022, ChristianaCare announced the launch of its [Gender Wellness Program](#) to provide psychotherapy and support services for individuals age 13 and older who are exploring their gender identity or experiencing gender dysphoria—a sense of incongruence and distress that a person may have because of a mismatch between their gender identity and their sex affirmed at birth.

The program also provides treatment for any behavioral health condition the individual may be struggling with, such as anxiety and depression. People who identify as transgender have higher rates of suicide attempts than individuals who do not identify as transgender, according to the [National Institutes of Health](#).

“ChristianaCare aims to provide the safest, highest quality health care and the best experience possible for our entire community, guided by our values of love and excellence,” said Mustafa A. Mufti, M.D., interim chair of the ChristianaCare Department of Psychiatry. “Caring for our entire community means providing sensitive, compassionate, and state-of-the-art behavioral health and medical care to transgender and gender-diverse individuals. Our Gender Wellness Program will help improve health equity and outcomes for individuals and families who need these services. We know that

transgender and gender-diverse individuals face health disparities, and our program will help address that.”

The program follows the guidelines of the [World Professional Association for Transgender Health](#) (WPATH). WPATH promotes the highest standards of health care for the health of transsexual, transgender and gender-nonconforming people based on the best available science and expert professional consensus.



*Kristopher Snedeker of Newark, Del. speaks with Brett Herb, DSW, LCSW, program manager of the Gender Wellness Program.*

“Our Gender Wellness Program is ready to support anyone age 13 or older who is exploring their gender identity, experiencing gender dysphoria or who needs education and support around social and medical transition,” said Brett E. Herb, DSW, LCSW, program manager of the Gender Wellness Program. Dr. Herb has been in clinical practice for more than 25 years as a psychotherapist and a clinical and administrative manager for numerous behavioral health programs, and has been working with the transgender and gender-diverse populations for the past 17 years.

“We provide referrals to compassionate, gender-affirming health care experts,” Dr. Herb said. “Often, families find themselves having to educate their primary care providers, schools, neighbors and family members about how to appropriately care for gender-diverse individuals. Our program provides individuals and families with access to specially trained gender therapists they can trust who can get them the answers they need to help navigate the complexities they may encounter.”

The Gender Wellness Program provides referrals to trans-competent primary care providers who prescribe gender-affirming hormone treatment, along with specialists for gynecological and obstetrics care. The program offers individual, couples, family and group therapy sessions. It also provides existing patients with assistance with personal documentation changes and letters of surgical support.

“Brett Herb and the Gender Wellness Program have helped me grow the confidence I needed,” said Kristopher Snedeker of Newark, Delaware. “Working with the professionals at the program has provided resources to help further my gender transition to become who I truly am.”

Individuals who would like to learn more can contact the Gender Wellness Program at [genderwellnessprogram@christianacare.org](mailto:genderwellnessprogram@christianacare.org) or call [302-623-6773](tel:302-623-6773). For more on ChristianaCare’s LGBTQ+ health initiatives, visit [LGBTQ Health Initiatives](#).

## Nemours – Providing Access to Care at School

In August 2022, Nemours Children’s Health announced a new partnership with Seaford School District in Sussex County to provide physical and behavioral health services at Frederick Douglass Elementary School. The new state-funded School-based Health Center is a new partnership that builds upon Nemours Children’s existing elementary SBHC with the Colonial School District in New Castle. As part of a program with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, the initiative seeks to assist elementary-aged children.

The state of Delaware is seeking to expand SBHC services to high-needs elementary schools that have 90% of its students classified as low-income, English learners, or minority. SBHCs are not a replacement for a student’s medical provider but serve as a vehicle for access. Nemours will invest in opening additional centers over the next two years. These services are vital for families in circumstances where leaving work is particularly challenging due to transportation or other demands.

SBHCs are a unique opportunity for preventative care. The investment by the state of Delaware is a recognition of the much-needed health care services for specific communities in the state.

Parental consent is required for any service. Nemours provides the following services at all SBHC locations:

- Well exams and sports physicals
- Sick visits
- Preventative health care, including immunizations and health education
- Behavioral health counseling, including ADHD
- Nutrition counseling
- Assistance applying for insurance programs and other health and social services

As an example of how SBHCs can improve health equity and closes care gaps, in August Nemours providers based in the Colonial School District encountered a family that recently moved to Delaware and were able to identify several urgent needs.

The SBHC provider was able to arrange child well visits for the school-age children, refer the family to a primary care physician and a dentist, and refer the family to financial services to establish health insurance. The SBHC is also working to obtain car seats for the family’s youngest children.

This family’s experience is just one example of how early detection and access to care – in this case in an elementary school setting - can improve health equity in Delaware. Nemours will continue to go well beyond medicine and pursue opportunities to replicate the success of the SBHC program with larger populations of Delaware Valley children.

## Saint Francis Hospital - Fostering Partnerships for the Public Good

Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic’s executive leadership and Community Health and Well-Being teams had been working on a plan for some time – one that would be of even greater value to Wilmington residents than the hospital already was.

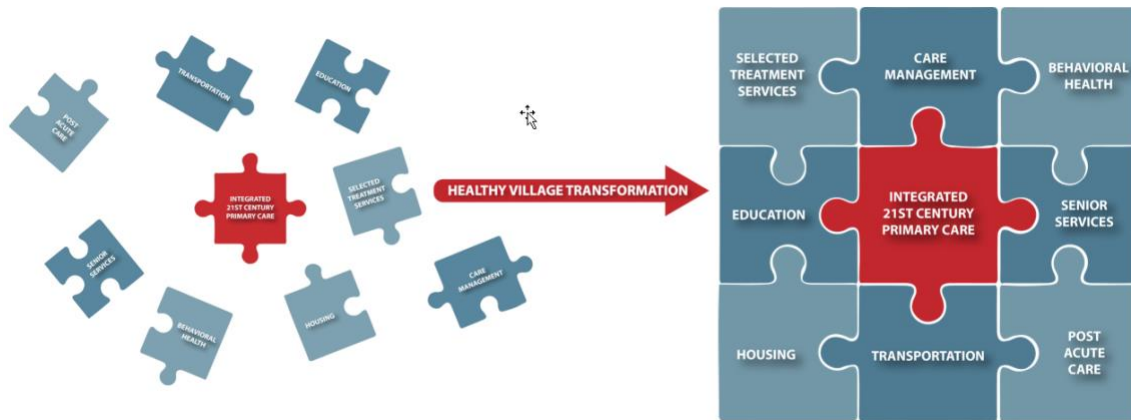
What they will be getting will change nearly every facet of their lives.

In July 2022, Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic CEO Jim Woodward announced that the system would be implementing The Healthy Village at Saint Francis Hospital, and at the time partnerships had already been formed with two leading healthcare organizations.

The Healthy Village concept has been around for more than 25 years. While some healthcare organizations across the U.S. have adopted the model, few have done so to the extent Saint Francis has while extending it into the community. The Healthy Village at Saint Francis Hospital will be one of the first of its kind in the nation.

What is a “Healthy Village®”?

Healthy Villages are communities of varying scale created at the intersection of neighborhood planning and community health. Through the coordination and integration of investments and services, Healthy Villages focus on improving quality of life and enriching the vitality of the neighborhoods while protecting their heritages, histories, and residents.



Healthy Villages are located in economically challenged neighborhoods and are designed to enhance the traditional safety net hospital model. The partners are typically organized and engaged according to investments in the Social Determinants of Health: Economic Stability (e.g., meaningful jobs and careers), Safe Neighborhoods (e.g., housing, transportation, parks, retail services), Education (from literacy to higher education and everything in-between), Food Security (including good nutrition), Social Support (e.g., childcare, adult daycare), and Healthcare (e.g., emergency services, short-term stays including observation beds, post-acute care such as behavioral health and skilled nursing, primary care, care management and access to quality specialty care when needed).

Any organization wishing to be part of the Healthy Village must have a commitment to improving the health and/or social status of the community the hospital serves. As of July, Delaware Hospice and Merakey had already been confirmed – with discussions underway to bring additional organizations aboard. Some will provide educational assistance; others are skilled in senior healthcare. Others are in the affordable housing, education, workforce training and skills development sectors. All will offer their service at Saint Francis Hospital, and all are united in their mission to play a part in transforming lives right here in Delaware.

Saint Francis is proud to be defining healthcare for other communities facing similar challenges, and to be creating and promoting partnerships, diversity and opportunities for the sustainable common good.

### **TidalHealth Nanticoke – Equity and Racial Justice in Health Care**

From October 2020 through March 2022, TidalHealth embarked on a journey with the Institute of Healthcare Improvement's Pursuing Equity Learning Network, an international collaborative focused on equity and racial justice in healthcare. While the initial iteration of the IHI collaborative has ended, the efforts to integrate systemic improvements to achieve equity at the workplace and in the community continue for TidalHealth.

During this journey, TidalHealth formed a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) task force dedicated to learning and promoting the IHI equity framework. The task force recently completed and reviewed health equity assessments from IHI, CMS, and the American Hospital Association. The task force compiled the assessment results and recommendations into a summary report for executive leadership to incorporate in TidalHealth's strategic plan and the Community Health Improvement Plan and Implementation Strategy.

In October, TidalHealth joined the national Leaders in Equity and Diversity (LEAD) Collaborative spearheaded by the AARP, Meritus Health, Luminis Health, the Maryland Hospital Association, and Advancing Synergy. The collaborative is a group of 34 organizations dedicated to mitigating health disparities.

In December, TidalHealth learned that the health system was selected by IHI to be one of 10 organizations to participate in a close-knit cohort for the Action Community to make progress on measurable clinical equity projects and advance the culture of equity.

In addition to participating in the collaboratives, the TidalHealth DEI task force developed a health equity dashboard and analytics in TidalHealth's Epic Electronic Medical Record (EMR) to analyze disparities among our workforce, patients and the community. Several service lines are now stratifying key performance metrics with REAL-G data (race, ethnicity, age, language, and gender) to design interventions to address disparities.

Additionally, TidalHealth Nanticoke is investing in population health strategies to promote health equity by building a Community Wellness team for Sussex County. The hospital received grant funding to purchase and outfit two mobile medical vans for mobile health screenings such as diabetes risk assessments and blood pressure checks as well as for point-of-care testing in hard-to-reach underserved



*TidalHealth Nanticoke's mobile medical van.*

communities. The hospital received another grant to hire new staff to support this effort. The mobile, multidisciplinary team will include a nurse practitioner, registered nurse and three community health workers.

TidalHealth continues to build relationships and alternative partnerships in Sussex County to increase access to care and achieve health equity. One of these partnerships is with the Seaford HELP Initiative.

TidalHealth is identifying high-risk patients in need of housing and home repairs that may have a direct impact on their health outcomes. For example, we may have a patient who is at risk for falls because of a need for basic home modifications or a wheelchair ramp, or we may have a family whose child is coming to the Emergency Department from complications from asthma. There may be something in the home environment triggering asthmatic episodes.

This partnership makes home repairs to improve health possible. Referrals are being made by case managers and care coordinators for Seaford residents. The Population Health team also connects referred patients to community health workers for additional assessments of social needs and wraparound services.

Another initiative to address the SDOH barriers includes the integration of TidalHealth's community health worker program with its school-based wellness center. When our wellness center identifies a student who lacks health insurance or a primary care provider, a referral is made to a community health worker so that a full assessment of health-related social needs may be conducted, and those needs addressed. Research shows that addressing SDOH supports achieving health equity.

## APPENDIX - The Delaware Healthcare Association's Health Equity Statement and Agreement

### **Achieving Health Equity Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement and Agreement**

#### **I. DHA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

The Delaware Health Association will support its members by prioritizing individual dignity and strive to promote a culture of diversity, inclusivity, and equity in a supportive patient care, learning, research, and work environment.

Our members commit to creating a community that recognizes and embraces diverse backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences. Discrimination will neither be tolerated nor condoned.

Our members commit to ensuring the delivery of health care in a manner that respects diversity and inclusivity with the full intent of ensuring an optimal patient and employee experience and achieving better health outcomes for all.

Our members commit to ensuring serving with compassion in every interaction, every decision, and in every opportunity. As we seek to understand others, we improve the quality of our internal and external relationships and in doing so, we build bridges of understanding as building blocks in building a healthier organization and community.

Our members:

- Commit to treating everyone in a dignified and respectful manner regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression.
- Develop and implement ongoing education and training programs
- Continue to implement strategy, development, action planning and execution on initiatives that are foundational to our health system
- Conduct self-assessments to determine any gaps in our policies, procedures, practices and services.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and culturally competent medical care will be the defining characteristics of members of our association.

#### **II. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement of Accountability Agreed to by Members**

**Our members agree that each will:**

1. Ensure that equity and inclusion are embedded in organizational values; operationalize these values through policy and practice; apply a racial equity lens in evaluating performance.

2. Provide diversity, equity, inclusion and implicit / unconscious bias training for all staff, volunteers, and physicians in order to provide care in a culturally sensitive manner.
3. Hire and promote leaders of diverse backgrounds and increase diversity in governance. Identify and remove systemic barriers to advancement.
4. Collaborate with educational institutions to grow the number of health care professionals of diverse backgrounds.
5. Re-examine institutional policies with an equity lens and make any policy changes that promote equity and opportunity.
6. Advocate for increased funding for social needs, social services and programs that promote social justice.
7. Build trust and partner with community through meetings and events that encourage communication and improving relationships.