



Executive Summary and Evaluation of the Community Health Needs Assessment

MOUNT DESERT ISLAND HOSPITAL & HEALTH CENTERS

DBA

MDI HEALTH

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MDI HEALTH

ENCOMPASSING: MDI HOSPITAL, HEALTH CENTERS, AND BIRCH BAY RETIREMENT VILLAGE

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Executive Summary

The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) serves as an important framework for understanding and responding to the evolving health needs of the Mount Desert Island community. In partnership with Healthy Acadia and numerous community organizations, Mount Desert Island Health (MDIH) completed its 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment using the nationally recognized Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) framework. Through community surveys, stakeholder engagement, and analysis of regional demographic and health data, the assessment identified six priority areas affecting the health and wellbeing of the community: Access to Care, Aging in Place, Basic Needs, Community Connectedness, Housing, and Mental and Behavioral Health, including Substance Use. This detailed work along with the State-wide Community Health Needs Assessment for Hancock County provides both quantitative and qualitative support of our programming approach.

Rather than creating a standalone implementation program, MDI Health intentionally integrated these priorities into the organization's FY25 – FY27 Strategic Plan. This approach ensured that community health needs became foundational to organizational decision making, influencing quality improvement initiatives, patient safety efforts, health equity work, workforce development, patient experience, strategic growth, and long term planning. By embedding the identified CHNA based initiatives into existing organizational and strategic priorities, MDI Health strengthened its ability to translate community input into measurable action while maintaining accountability for continuous improvement. The table below illustrates how the priorities identified through CHNA were incorporated into the hospital's Strategic Plan and translated into organizational initiatives throughout the implementation period.

Community Health Priority	Strategic Plan Objectives Supporting Implementation
Access to Care	Quality Management & Performance Excellence; Clinical Excellence and Safety Goals; Strategic Growth & Market Positioning
Aging in Place	Provider & Nursing Performance; Strategic Growth & Market Positioning; Health Equity Promotion
Basic Needs & Social Determinants of Health	Health Equity Promotion

Community Connectedness	Patient Satisfaction & Patient Relations; Health Equity Promotion
Housing	Health Equity Promotion; Long Term Campus Planning
Mental & Behavioral Health	Strategic Growth & Market Positioning; Health Equity Promotion

Throughout the implementation period, MDI Health focused on initiatives that directly addressed community identified needs while recognizing that many complex issues require coordinated action among healthcare organizations, municipalities, educational institutions, nonprofit agencies, businesses, and public health partners. Partnerships with organizations such as Healthy Acadia, MDI YWCA, MDI YMCA, Jesup Memorial Library, Bar Harbor Bank & Trust, the Bar Harbor Food Pantry and more worked together to strengthen access to community resources and reinforced the collaborative approach necessary to improve population health.

MDI Health continued to invest in initiatives that improve both the quality and accessibility of healthcare throughout the region. During the implementation period, MDI Health also strengthened access to care, expanded workforce development initiatives, and achieved several organizational milestones that are described throughout this report.

This report summarizes the implementation activities completed during the 2024–2026 Community Health Needs Assessment cycle and demonstrates MDIH's commitment to improving community health through collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. The accomplishments described throughout this report reflect not only the work of MDI Health, but also the collective efforts of community partners working together to strengthen the health of the Mount Desert Island community. As MDI Health begins the next CHNA cycle, the lessons learned and partnerships developed during this implementation period provide a strong foundation for addressing emerging community needs while continuing to fulfill the organization's mission to provide compassionate care and strengthen the health of our community by embracing tomorrow's methods while respecting time honored values.

Quality, Safety, and Access to Care

Ensuring access to safe, high-quality healthcare remained a central focus throughout implementation of the Community Health Needs Assessment. Community members

consistently identified access to care as a priority, including concerns related to specialty services, timely access to care, care coordination, and maintaining high quality healthcare close to home. In response, MDI Health aligned numerous strategic initiatives with these community priorities while continuing to strengthen clinical quality, patient safety, and care coordination across the continuum of care.

One of the organization's most significant accomplishments during the implementation period was continued advancement of its stroke program. An interdisciplinary team worked tirelessly to develop standardized emergency department workflows, rapid diagnostic processes, and to monitor ongoing performance, MDI Health strengthened its ability to provide timely, evidence-based stroke care within a rural setting. These efforts culminated in achievement of the American Heart Association's Get with the Guidelines® Rural Stroke Bronze Recognition, reflecting the hospital's commitment to delivering high quality care and improving outcomes for patients experiencing time sensitive neurological emergencies.

Improving transitions of care was another key area of focus. Building upon partnerships with Community Care Partners of Maine (CCPM) and internal care management teams, MDI Health enhanced discharge planning, strengthened post discharge follow up, and expanded care coordination for patients at increased risk of readmission. These initiatives emphasized communication across care settings, timely follow up appointments, medication reconciliation, and support for patients managing chronic conditions after leaving the hospital. By improving continuity of care, the organization worked to reduce avoidable hospital utilization while helping patients remain healthy within their communities.

MDI Health also continued expanding services designed to improve access to preventive care and early intervention. Cognitive Evaluation Screenings were introduced to support earlier identification of dementia and cognitive decline, allowing patients and families to access appropriate treatment, community resources, and future care planning sooner in the disease process. As the population served by MDI Health continues to age, these services have become an increasingly important component of comprehensive, patient centered care. Although MDI Health closed its inpatient Labor and Delivery service, the Hospital has continued to expand access to prenatal and postnatal care. In addition, the Hospital has broadened access to urogynecology and pain management services, added psychiatric services, expanded mammography screening and scholarships, and increased access to general surgery consultations at the Trenton Health Center

Community education also played an important role in improving access to care and promoting healthier lifestyles. During the implementation period, MDI Health held four community education sessions as part of a series of Topics in Modern Health. The series included sessions on understanding menopause; emergency and first response care; common eye issues, glaucoma, and optical health; and new approaches to cancer prevention and treatment. The hospital also expanded preventive health programming through initiatives such as Bright Bodies, encouraging healthy lifestyles for children and families; the Diabetes Education Program, supporting chronic disease prevention and self-management; and Breathe Easy Together, a revitalized smoking cessation program providing education and support for individuals seeking to quit tobacco use. These programs demonstrate the hospital's commitment to improving health before illness occurs while empowering community members to take an active role in managing their health.

Throughout the implementation period, quality and patient safety remained foundational to every aspect of care delivery. Ongoing investments in infection prevention, medication safety, emergency preparedness, survey readiness, patient safety, and continuous quality improvement strengthened organizational reliability while supporting exceptional clinical care. These efforts contributed to improved patient outcomes, enhanced patient confidence, and reinforced MDIH's mission of providing compassionate, high-quality care close to home.

Health Equity and Community Partnerships

Improving health equity and strengthening community partnerships were foundational components of MDI Health implementation of the Community Health Needs Assessment. The assessment reinforced that a person's health is influenced by far more than access to medical care alone and outcomes should not be predicted by geography. Factors such as food security, stable housing, transportation, financial resources, education, and social support all play an important role in overall health and wellbeing. Recognizing these influences, MDI Health continued to expand efforts to identify barriers to care while working alongside community organizations to connect patients with available resources.

Another significant accomplishment during the implementation period was the expansion of Health-Related Social Needs screening throughout the organization. Following evaluation of existing workflows, MDI Health transitioned to the Accountable Health Communities screening tool to provide a more standardized and meaningful assessment

of patient needs. Initially implemented within inpatient services and later expanded into outpatient practices, the screening process allows care teams to identify patients experiencing food insecurity, housing instability, transportation challenges, utility concerns, and personal safety issues. Positive screenings prompt referrals to Care Management, Social Work, and community organizations that can assist patients in accessing available resources.

This work strengthened the hospital's ability to understand the needs of the community while improving coordination among clinical staff and community partners. Information gathered through routine screening has helped inform organizational planning, identify trends in unmet social needs, and ensure that patients receive support extending beyond traditional medical care.

Community partnerships remained essential to the success of these efforts. Throughout the implementation period, MDI Health continued collaborating closely with its community partners, remaining dedicated to improving the health of the community. These partnerships expanded access to education, food resources, financial assistance, wellness programs, and supportive services that no single organization could provide independently.

MDI Health also continued investing in programs that promote healthier lifestyles and increase community awareness of available resources. During the implementation period, the hospital hosted three Community Health Fairs that brought together healthcare providers and community organizations to provide health education, preventive screenings, and information about local services. The hospital also continued offering the Diabetes Education Program, revitalized its smoking cessation program through *Breathe Easy Together*, and introduced Bright Bodies, an evidence-based program designed to encourage healthy lifestyles among children and families. These initiatives support the hospital's commitment to disease prevention while empowering individuals to take an active role in improving their health.

Addressing food insecurity remained another important area of focus. MDI Health expanded the *Help Yourself Shelves* and *Produce Pop-Ups* are initiatives set to provide patients with immediate access to nutritious food while connecting individuals and families with longer term community resources. Through partnerships with local organizations and food assistance programs, the hospital helped reduce barriers to healthy nutrition while reinforcing the connection between food security and overall health. The organization collected more than 600 lbs. of food in 2025, which went towards providing access to food at the point of care throughout the organization.

While meaningful progress has been achieved, improving health equity remains an ongoing commitment. Housing affordability, transportation challenges, and access to behavioral health services continue to influence the health of many community members. By strengthening partnerships, expanding screening, and improving coordination of resources, MDI Health has established a sustainable framework for identifying community needs and responding through collaboration with organizations that share the goal of improving health for all.

Patient Experience and Workforce Excellence

A strong, engaged workforce is essential to deliver safe, compassionate, and high-quality healthcare. Through implementation of the Community Health Needs Assessment, Mount Desert Island Health recognized that recruiting, developing, and retaining healthcare professionals is directly connected to improving access to care, enhancing the patient experience, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of healthcare services within our community.

A ongoing and strategic investment made during the implementation period was the development of the Kogod Center for Medical Education. The Center was established to provide housing and educational space for medical students, residents, and other healthcare learners completing clinical rotations at MDIH. By expanding opportunities for rural clinical education, the organization is helping build the future healthcare workforce while increasing exposure to rural medicine and encouraging learners to pursue careers serving rural communities.

MDI Health also strengthened its workforce pipeline through creation of a you're your own Certified Nursing Assistant program and expansion of partnerships with nursing schools and other educational institutions. These initiatives provide students with opportunities to gain valuable clinical experience while supporting local workforce development and creating pathways to employment within the organization. Investing in education and professional development helps ensure that the community continues to have access to highly trained healthcare professionals for years to come.

Supporting the wellbeing of the current workforce remained equally important. During the implementation period, MDI Health expanded workplace violence prevention efforts through establishment of a multidisciplinary Workplace Violence Committee and implementation of AVADE training focused on recognizing, preventing, and safely responding to aggressive behaviors. The organization also strengthened reporting processes, conducted front line debriefings following workplace violence events, and

implemented environmental improvements designed to enhance staff safety. These initiatives foster a safer work environment while supporting staff retention and ensuring employees feel valued, safe and supported in their work.

Professional development remains a priority across the organization. Clinical education, competency validation, leadership development, emergency preparedness training, infection prevention education, and survey readiness activities reinforced a culture of continuous learning and organizational excellence. These efforts not only strengthen regulatory compliance but also ensure that patients receive care that reflects current standards, best practices, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Patient experience is central to the hospital's patient-partnered mission throughout the implementation period. MDI Health continued to strengthen patient centered care through ongoing service recovery efforts, patient feedback, and quality improvement initiatives designed to enhance communication, responsiveness, and compassionate care. The organization also reestablished the Patient and Family Advisory Council, providing patients and family members with meaningful opportunities to partner in organizational decision making and quality improvement efforts.

Recognition of exceptional care also became an important component of organizational culture. During the implementation period, MDI Health launched the DAISY Award program to recognize nurses who demonstrate extraordinary clinical skill and compassionate care, and the Be Excellent Everyday (BEE) Award to celebrate the exceptional non-nursing staff. Celebrating excellence reinforces the organization's values while recognizing the individuals who make a meaningful difference in the lives of patients and families every day.

By investing in workforce development, employee wellbeing, and patient experience, MDI Health has strengthened its ability to provide compassionate, high-quality care while preparing the organization to meet the evolving healthcare needs of the communities it serves. These efforts reflect the understanding that exceptional community health begins with exceptional people.

Preparing for the Future

The Community Health Needs Assessment reinforced that improving community health requires more than responding to today's needs. It also requires planning for the future by investing in infrastructure, workforce development, financial sustainability, and community partnerships that ensure healthcare services remain accessible for generations to come. Throughout the implementation period, Mount Desert Island Health continued

to make strategic investments designed to strengthen its long-term ability to meet the evolving needs of the communities it serves.

One of the organization's most significant investments is a major campus expansion project currently underway. Scheduled for completion in 2028, the project includes a new Main Street entrance designed to improve visibility, accessibility, and patient experience, along with construction of a new Emergency Department that will better support the growing and increasingly complex healthcare needs of the community. These improvements represent a long-term investment in the future of healthcare on Mount Desert Island and will enhance the hospital's ability to provide timely, high quality emergency care for decades to come.

Recognizing that community health extends beyond the walls of the hospital, MDI Health remained actively engaged with community partners working to address housing, transportation, food insecurity, and access to behavioral health services. While these issues cannot be solved by healthcare organizations alone, continued collaboration allows MDI Health to contribute to community wide solutions while advocating for the needs of patients and families.

Through implementation, the organization also recognized emerging challenges that will require continued attention during the next Community Health Needs Assessment cycle. Demand for behavioral health services continues to increase, particularly among patients requiring emergency and inpatient care. Limited availability of inpatient psychiatric beds throughout Maine has resulted in extended Emergency Department stays for individuals awaiting placement, creating challenges for patients, families, and healthcare providers alike. Similarly, affordable housing remains one of the most significant barriers affecting community health, workforce recruitment, and access to care. As the population continues to age, increasing rates of dementia and cognitive decline, along with the growing need for aging in place services, EMS support, community paramedicine, and food security initiatives, will continue to shape future planning efforts.

Although many of these challenges remain, the implementation period demonstrated that meaningful progress is achieved through collaboration, innovation, and sustained commitment. By integrating community priorities into strategic planning, strengthening partnerships, and investing in the future of healthcare delivery, Mount Desert Island Health has established a strong foundation for continued improvement and remains well positioned to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Overall Community Impact

The 2024–2026 Community Health Needs Assessment served as more than a regulatory requirement—it became a framework for organizational decision making. Rather than developing a separate implementation plan, MDI Health incorporated the identified community priorities into its Strategic Plan, ensuring that community needs influenced initiatives across quality improvement, patient safety, health equity, workforce development, patient experience, and organizational growth. This approach created greater alignment between community priorities and the organization's daily work while strengthening accountability for measurable progress.

Throughout the implementation period, MDI Health strengthened access to care, expanded community partnerships, increased screening for health-related social needs, invested in workforce development, and continued improving the quality and safety of care delivered across the organization. Many of these accomplishments were only possible through collaboration with community partners, healthcare providers, public health agencies, municipalities, schools, businesses, and nonprofit organizations working toward shared goals for improving the health of the region.

While many of the community's most significant challenges, including housing, behavioral health, transportation, and the needs of an aging population, remain. This implementation period established a strong foundation for continued progress. By integrating community priorities into organizational strategy and fostering lasting partnerships, MDI Health has strengthened its ability to respond to emerging needs while remaining committed to providing compassionate, high-quality care close to home.

Looking Forward

As MDI Health begins the next Community Health Needs Assessment cycle, many of the priorities identified in 2024 continue to shape the health of our community. Affordable housing, access to primary care and behavioral health, transportation, workforce shortages, food insecurity, and the needs of an aging population remain significant challenges that no single organization can address alone. Building on the partnerships and lessons developed throughout this implementation period, MDI Health will continue working alongside healthcare providers, public health agencies, municipalities, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and community members to develop sustainable, community driven solutions.

Looking ahead, MDI Health will continue investing in the people, partnerships, and infrastructure needed to provide exceptional healthcare close to home. Continued

development of the new Emergency Department and Main Street entrance, expansion of workforce development through the Kogod Center for Medical Education, and ongoing efforts to improve access to behavioral health services, aging in place resources, community paramedicine partnerships, and care coordination will help position the organization to meet the evolving needs of the communities it serves.

The Community Health Needs Assessment and implementation strategy also ensure continued compliance with IRS Section 501(r)(3) requirements through completion of a Community Health Needs Assessment every three years and development of implementation strategies that address identified community health priorities. The progress described throughout this report reflects the dedication of hospital employees, providers, volunteers, Board members, community organizations, and countless community partners working together toward a common purpose.

As we begin the next assessment cycle, MDI Health remains committed to fulfilling its mission to provide compassionate care and strengthen the health of our community by embracing tomorrow's methods while respecting time-honored values. Together, we will continue building a healthier community where every individual can achieve their highest level of health and wellbeing.