

2026–2028 Implementation Strategy

Meeting the Significant Community Health Needs Identified in the 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment.



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About Licking Memorial Hospital

Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) remains responsive to the healthcare needs of the Licking County area that it has served for more than 125 years. The 227-bed facility offers a full spectrum of quality patient care services, from emergency medicine to home healthcare. In addition, LMH offers a number of specialized medical services unique for a Hospital of its size. Comprehensive services are available in areas such as cancer care, heart care, maternity services, and mental health. Licking Memorial Health Systems' (LMHS) mission is to improve the health of the community.

Purpose of Implementation Strategy

This Implementation Strategy was prepared to comply with federal tax law requirements in the Internal Revenue Code section 501(r) requiring hospitals owned and operated by an organization described in Code section 501(c)(3) to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) at least once every three years and adopt an implementation strategy to meet the community health needs identified through the CHNA.

This Implementation Strategy applies to tax years January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028, and describes LMH's planned response to the needs identified in the 2025 CHNA. This implementation strategy is approved by LMH's governing board and is available on LMH's website.

To receive a copy of the 2025 CHNA report or to provide written comments on the 2025 CHNA report and Implementation Strategy please contact our Director of Process Improvement at Licking Memorial Hospital, 1320 West Main Street, Newark, Ohio 43055 or info@LMHealth.org.

Community Health Needs Identified in 2025 CHNA Report

Licking County residents comprise the "community served" by LMH. The CHNA includes input from the community served, including those with special knowledge of or expertise in public health. LMH is a member of the Licking County Community Health Improvement Committee (CHIC). Please refer to LMH's 2025 CHNA report for a list of CHIC members and participating organizations.

The following significant health needs were identified and prioritized in LMH's 2025 CHNA.

1. Behavioral health – reduce the burden of addiction and reduce untreated depression and anxiety
2. Chronic disease – decrease negative health conditions associated with obesity, decrease the prevalence of tobacco use, and decrease the burden of cancer
3. Infant mortality – reduce infant mortality

LMH has chosen to address each of these significant health needs in this implementation strategy.

Participants in Implementation Strategy Development

LMH collaborated with the Licking County Health Department (LCHD) and other CHIC members to develop a plan to address the community's significant health needs. This implementation strategy focuses on LMH's actions and resources to address those needs.

Description of Significant Health Needs Identified

Need	Description
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH	
Reduce the burden of addiction	<p>In 2017, there were 31 deaths per 100,000 population due to unintentional drug overdoses in Central Ohio, compared to 44.1 per 100,000 for the state.</p> <p>In 2019, there were 36 unintentional overdose deaths in Licking County, down from 42 in 2018, a 14 percent decrease. Fentanyl was responsible for the increase in deaths.</p> <p>In 2020, there were 47 unintentional overdose deaths in Licking County, up from 36 in 2019, a 30 percent increase. Fentanyl was responsible for 75 percent of these deaths. The Licking County overdose death rate for 2020 was 31.1 deaths per 100,000.</p> <p>In 2022, there were 58 unintentional overdose deaths in Licking County, up from 47 in 2021, a 23 percent increase. Fentanyl was responsible for 60 percent of these deaths, with the number of fentanyl fatalities increasing by 21 percent.</p>
Reduce untreated depression and anxiety	<p>The rate of Licking County residents screened who scored severe depression (reported as the number of residents per 100,000 population found to score at high-risk), dating to 2020 are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020: 33.38 (lower than the Ohio average of 36.8) • 2021: 43.79 (lower than the Ohio average of 45.4) • 2022: 50.67 (lower than the Ohio average of 50.9) • 2023: 64.50 (higher than the Ohio average of 39.8) • 2024: 40.31 (higher than the Ohio average of 34.8) <p>The rate of Licking County residents reporting suicidal ideation (reported as the number of residents per 100,000 population with reported suicidal ideation):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020: 34.41 (lower than the Ohio average of 39.7) • 2021: 44.42 (lower than the Ohio average of 47.7) • 2022: 53.80 (lower than the Ohio average of 54.1) • 2023: 64.50 (higher than the Ohio average of 44.2) • 2024: 42.79 (higher than the Ohio average of 39.7)
CHRONIC DISEASE	
Decrease negative health conditions associated with obesity	<p>In 2015, 38 percent of Licking County adults polled were obese and 32 percent were overweight.</p> <p>In 2017, 3.2 percent of adults in Central Ohio were diagnosed with coronary heart disease, compared to 4.7 percent for Ohio; 4.1 percent of adults in Central Ohio were diagnosed with a heart attack, compared to 5.5 percent for Ohio; 32.8 percent of adults were diagnosed with hypertension, compared to 34.7 percent for Ohio; 9.3 percent of adults were identified by a health professional as having diabetes, compared to 11.3 percent for Ohio; 10.1 percent of adults in Central Ohio were identified by a health professional as having prediabetes, compared to 8.8 percent for Ohio.</p> <p>In 2019, 32 percent of Licking County adults polled were obese.</p> <p>In 2021, 33 percent of Licking County adults polled were obese.</p> <p>In 2022, the estimated prevalence of obesity among adults aged 18 years and older in Licking County was 36 percent.</p>

Decrease the prevalence of tobacco use	<p>In 2015, 24 percent of Licking County were identified as smokers.</p> <p>In 2019, 21 percent of adults reported smoking. 22.6 percent of adults, age 18 and up, in Licking County used tobacco, compared to 21.7 percent for Ohio.</p> <p>In 2021, 20.9 percent of Licking County adults reported smoking.</p> <p>In 2022, 19.4 percent of Licking County adults reported smoking – a continuous, slow decline over several years.</p>
CHRONIC DISEASE	
Decrease the burden of cancer	<p>As reported by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) in 2021 for data from 2014 to 2018, cancer deaths for Licking County were 491.8 per 100,000 residents, compared to 467.5 per 100,000 for Ohio and 450.5 per 100,000 for the U.S.</p> <p>For this same time period, the Licking County cancer mortality rate was 174.9 per 100,000 residents, compared to the Ohio rate of 172.3 per 100,000, and the U.S. rate of 155.5 per 100,000.</p> <p>Cancer incidence and mortality rates among males were higher than the rates among females in Licking County.</p> <p>The top five cancers by percentage of new cancer cases in Licking County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breast – 15% • Lung and bronchus – 14.7% • Prostate – 13.2% • Colon and rectum – 7.5% • Melanoma of the skin – 6.1%
INFANT MORTALITY	
Decrease the infant mortality rate	<p>For the state of Ohio, in 2020, 864 infants died before their first birthday, which was a 6.7 overall infant mortality rate (6.7 deaths per 1000 births).</p> <p>For the state of Ohio, in 2023 (the most recently available data), 904 infants died before their first birthday, which was an infant mortality rate of 7.1.</p>

Strategies to Address Health Needs Identified in the CHNA Report and Alignment with the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

The following identifies LMH's contributions to addressing the community's significant health needs over the next three years (January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028).

The ODH identified three priority health outcomes in the current SHIP: mental health and addiction, chronic disease, and maternal and infant health. As part of the state alignment process, ODH requires hospitals and local health districts to select at least two priority topics and at least one priority outcome for the topics chosen from the SHIP to address in their community improvement plan/implementation strategy. LMH identified significant health needs for Licking County that align with all three SHIP priority topics.

Significant Health Need: Behavioral Health – Addiction

Goal: Reduce the burden of addiction

LMH Action:

- In addition to continuing LMH's efforts over the last CHNA, LMH has implemented a new level of service to allow for the provision of residential substance abuse treatment. This level of care was not previously available in Licking County.
- Implement new screening/assessment protocols to identify patients with substance abuse issues within the framework of our Social Drivers of Health workflows, identify patients who may need support, and then refer those patients to relevant community agencies for ongoing care/management.
- LMH is working with the LCHD to implement the LCHD's Regional Prevention and Linkages to Care Collaborative Program. As a provider of this program, LMH Case Management staff will provide health navigation services to substance use disorder patients identified in the Emergency Department to expand access to overdose prevention, harm reduction, and linkage-to-care services.

Anticipated Impact:

- Improved community access to treatment for addiction
- Decrease in number of drug overdoses in Licking County
- Improve community referral patterns for patients identified as having substance abuse risks

LMH Resources:

- Staff to participate on committees and collaborations
- Funding for extended residential treatment and other programs
- Epic electronic medical record (EMR) build for screening/assessment content and Community Resource Navigator workflows

Collaborative Partners:

- Mental Health and Recovery for Knox and Licking County
- Behavioral Health Partners
- LCHD
- Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP)

Alignment with SHIP:

- Priority topic: mental health and addiction
- Priority outcome: reduce drug dependency/abuse
- Cross-cutting factor: public health, prevention and health behaviors
- Cross-cutting strategy: strengthen community substance abuse and addiction prevention services, including those provided in school settings as well as suicide prevention efforts
- Cross-cutting outcome indicator: number of unintentional drug overdose cases in the Emergency Department

Significant Health Need: Behavioral Health – Mental Health

Goal: Reduce untreated depression and anxiety

LMH Action:

- Continue to provide psychiatric and counseling services for behavioral health and substance use disorder
- Expand screening of patients, via the use of the PHQ-9 screening tool, to identify patients possibly suffering from depression, and using this assessment data to refer the patient to appropriate treatment modalities. Focus on ambulatory care patients in primary care office settings
- LMH has implemented and will offer a new service, Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) Therapy, for treatment of depression for patients where other treatments have been unsuccessful

Anticipated Impact:

- Improved patient care and care planning
- Reduction in hospital re-admissions caused by behavioral and mental health issues

LMH Resources:

- Staff to participate on committees and collaborations
- LMHP
- Epic EMR build for screening/assessment content and Community Resource Navigator workflows

Collaborative Partners:

- Our Futures in Licking County
- Mental Health and Recovery for Knox and Licking County
- Behavioral Health Partners
- LCHD
- LMHP
- Community Health Clinic
- Local School Districts

Alignment with SHIP:

- Priority topic: mental health and addiction
- Priority outcome: reduce depression
- Cross-cutting factor: healthcare system and access
- Cross-cutting strategy: screening for clinical depression for all patients 12 years and older
- Cross-cutting outcome indicator: depression screening

Significant Health Need: Chronic Disease – Obesity

Goal: Decrease negative health conditions associated with obesity

LMH Action:

- Increase awareness of diabetes prevention and treatment
- Provide free diabetes screenings
- Provide community education programming focused on healthier food choices, exercise, and good lifestyle habits
- Maintain the Fruit and Veggie Rx program for targeted patient populations to improve patient access to healthy food choices, particularly for patients with specific health risks in which improved diet is important to reduce chronic disease risk

Anticipated Impact:

- Identify individuals with an unknown diagnosis of diabetes or pre-diabetes through the use of free diabetes screenings at community events
- Increase referrals for diabetes patients with chronic kidney disease to the Fruit and Veggie Rx program by LMHS providers

LMH Resources:

- Staff, marketing, and educational resources for wellness programs
- Staff, facilities, and educational resources for diabetes educational programs
- Staff and materials for free diabetes screenings
- Wellness Center
- Epic EMR build for screening/assessment content and Fruit and Veggie Rx program workflows

Collaborative Partners:

- LCHD
- LMHP
- Newark Advocate
- Ohio State University – Newark Campus
- Pathways of Central Ohio / 2-1-1
- Buckeye Valley Family YMCA

Alignment with SHIP:

- Priority topic: chronic disease
- Priority outcome: reduce diabetes
- Cross-cutting factor: public health system, prevention, and health behaviors
- Cross-cutting strategy: increase awareness of prediabetes
- Cross-cutting outcome indicator: prevalence of adults with diabetes

Significant Health Need: Chronic Disease – Tobacco Use

Goal: Decrease the prevalence of tobacco use

LMH Action:

- Provide tobacco cessation programming and support, including nicotine replacement therapy, to all interested community members free of charge
- Continue *Quit for You, Quit for Your Baby* initiative
- Continue tobacco cessation outreach efforts outside of LMHS to the community, such as area public schools

Anticipated Impact:

- Increased participation and completion of tobacco cessation programs by community members, with the goal to reduce the number of smokers and vape users in Licking County
- Reduction in number of pregnant mothers smoking

LMH Resources:

- Staff, facility, and educational material for free smoking cessation programs

Collaborative Partners:

- LCHD
- LMHP
- Community Health Clinic
- American Red Cross of Licking County
- Pathways of Central Ohio / 2-1-1
- Our Futures in Licking County
- Local School Districts tobacco cessation program

Significant Health Need: Chronic Disease – Colon Cancer

Goal: Decrease the burden of colon cancer

LMH Action:

- Improve access to colon cancer screenings through the addition of gastroenterologists, expanding appointment availability, and the adoption of Cologuard as an option for low-risk patients who are reluctant to undergo a colonoscopy procedure
- Partner with community agencies to offer reduced-cost colonoscopy screenings for low-income/uninsured community members with positive Cologuard tests
- Track performance/compliance of patients obtaining screening colonoscopies
- Maintain community education regarding the importance of timely screening, to include mass mailings and community education programs
- Maintain Commission on Cancer accreditation for the Hospital's cancer management program

Anticipated Impact:

- A decrease in the percentage of patients over 50 years of age with no screening colonoscopy
- Improve access to colon cancer screenings
- Improved community awareness of the need for colonoscopy screening to aid in the detection of colon cancer through the use of community education programs and colon cancer-specific educational offerings/materials

LMH Resources:

- Staff for expanded appointment availability
- Track performance/compliance of screened patients
- Educational material for mailings and educational programs
- Monitor quality metrics to determine any need for additional resources

Collaborative Partners:

- LCHD
- LMHP
- Newark Advocate
- Community Health Clinics and other non-LMHS healthcare providers in the community

Significant Health Need: Chronic Disease – Breast Cancer

Goal: Decrease the burden of breast cancer

LMH Action:

- Use mammography imaging technology with greater levels of sensitivity, to include high-sensitivity detection systems
- Provide free mammogram screening days for patients without health insurance or who otherwise would not receive a mammogram for financial reasons
- Maintain option for patients to self-schedule their mammogram in order to reduce barriers to testing
- Continue to work on reducing time-to-schedule mammograms, screening mammogram to diagnostic mammogram times, and diagnostic mammogram to biopsy times, which has been an area of intense focus by the Hospital's Comprehensive Cancer Care Committee
- Maintain Commission on Cancer accreditation for the Hospital's cancer management program
- Refer breast cancer survivor patients to the Hospital's Fruit and Veggie Rx Program to maximize dietary needs following chemotherapy treatment

Anticipated Impact:

- Higher rates of breast cancer detection in an early stage
- Reduction in number of women who did not receive a timely mammogram
- Reduced elapsed time between screening mammograms and surgical intervention for patients with suspicious mammography findings

LMH Resources:

- Tomosynthesis screenings
- Free mammogram screenings
- Staff for participation on committees
- Staff, facility, and educational material for educational programs
- Dietitian consultation and referrals, as appropriate

Collaborative Partners:

- LCHD
- LMHP
- Community Health Clinic

Significant Health Need: Chronic Disease – Lung Cancer

Goal: Decrease the burden of lung cancer

LMH Action:

- Provide low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) scanning for patients at high risk for lung cancer
- Provide robust tobacco cessation programs
- Provide community-based preventive education on smoking and vaping, to include younger members of the Licking County population, in an effort to prevent youth from starting smoking/vaping

Anticipated Impact:

- Increase in early detection of lung cancer
- Reduction in late-stage lung cancer diagnoses
- Positive impact on 5-year survival rates for diagnosed patients

LMH Resources:

- LDCT scanning
- Navigator for patient education and follow-up
- Staff to participate in lung screening registry and monitor trends
- Staff, facility, and educational material for smoking cessation programs
- Staff, facility, and educational material for lung cancer educational programs

Collaborative Partners:

- LCHD
- LMHP
- Newark Advocate
- Community Health Clinic

Significant Health Need: Infant Mortality

Goal: Reduce infant mortality

LMH Action:

- Provide “Safe Sleep” education to all new parents in an effort to ensure that they are knowledgeable about the risks of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and precautions that they can take to protect their newborns
- Use “Safe Sleep Sacks” for all newborn babies and those admitted to the hospital nursery – Safe Sleep Sacks are also provided to every newborn at the time of discharge
- All newborns receive a onesie that states, “This Side Up” to promote safe sleep at home
- Remain designated as a “Baby Friendly” Hospital
- Continue robust tobacco cessation programming available at the LMHP Women’s Health practice location for mother’s identified as smoking during pregnancy, in an effort to help reduce low-birth-weight babies and other delivery complications.
- Maintain a Medication Assisted Therapy Clinic specifically targeting pregnant mothers suffering from addiction
- Maintain a Level II Special Care Nursery on site to provide immediate and ongoing care for infants with critical needs
- Participate in Ohio Perinatal Quality Collaborative’s Moms Plus Project for pregnant mothers suffering from addiction and share data with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to promote physician coordination for overall health of patients
- Moms Plus Program – Provide prenatal class/support group for pregnant mothers suffering from addiction where mothers meet individually with a physician as well as participate in a support group while free childcare is offered for participants

Anticipated Impact:

- Improved new mother knowledge of safe sleep habits
- Reduction in number of pregnant women smoking during pregnancy
- Increase number of perinatal visits for mothers suffering from addiction
- Decrease infant mortality rates in Licking County
- Decrease length of stay in Level II Special Care Nursery for infants suffering from opiate and other substance abuse withdrawal

LMH Resources:

- Staff and educational material to educate parents on safe sleep
- Safe Sleep Sacks
- Newborn onesies
- Staff to promote infant feeding and bonding
- Staff, facility, and educational material for smoking cessation programs
- Medication Assisted Therapy Clinic
- Level II nursery
- Staff to enter and evaluate data for the Moms Plus Project
- Staff, facility, and childcare for Moms Plus Program

Collaborative Partners:

- LCHD
- LMHP
- Community Health Clinic
- Ohio Hospital Association

Alignment with SHIP:

- Priority topic: maternal and infant health
- Priority outcome: reduce infant mortality
- Cross-cutting factor: Healthcare system and access
- Cross-cutting strategy: smoking cessation programming
- Cross-cutting outcome indicator: percent of women who smoke during pregnancy

REFERENCES

Licking Memorial Hospital 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment
Ohio State Health Improvement Plan 2020 – 2022
Licking County Community Needs Assessment (2023)



**Licking Memorial
Health Systems**

LMHealth.org