

# Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional

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2025 COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CHIP)



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## Executive Summary – Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

Cape Regional Health System, in partnership with the Biomedical Innovations Class of 2024–2025 at Lower Cape May Regional High School, conducted a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in 2023 to inform the development of this Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The assessment was further supported by key stakeholders including Ascenda Health, CARES, Cape Regional Physician Associates, Cape Assist, and the Cape May County Department of Health. These collaborations ensure that this CHIP reflects both community voice and expert insight.

The CHNA identified several priority health concerns and systemic barriers that will guide strategic planning and resource allocation over the next three years. The most frequently cited issues include:

- **Mental Health:** Identified by 65% of respondents as the top concern, highlighting the need for expanded behavioral health services and emotional wellness support.
- **Aging-Related Conditions:** Including mobility limitations, social isolation, and chronic illness, affecting 45% of respondents and reflecting the county’s aging population.
- **Cancer:** Gaps in prevention, screening, and treatment access were noted, underscoring the need for improved oncology services and early detection efforts.
- **Chronic Disease:** Heart disease and diabetes continue to drive health care utilization and impact quality of life.
- **Substance Use and Preventive Care Gaps:** Poor nutrition, substance use, and limited access to preventive services compound existing health disparities.

Barriers to care persist across the county and contribute to inequities in health outcomes:

- Shortages of medical specialists
- High out-of-pocket costs
- Limited awareness of available services

These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions, improved care coordination, and enhanced community outreach.

### Strategic Direction

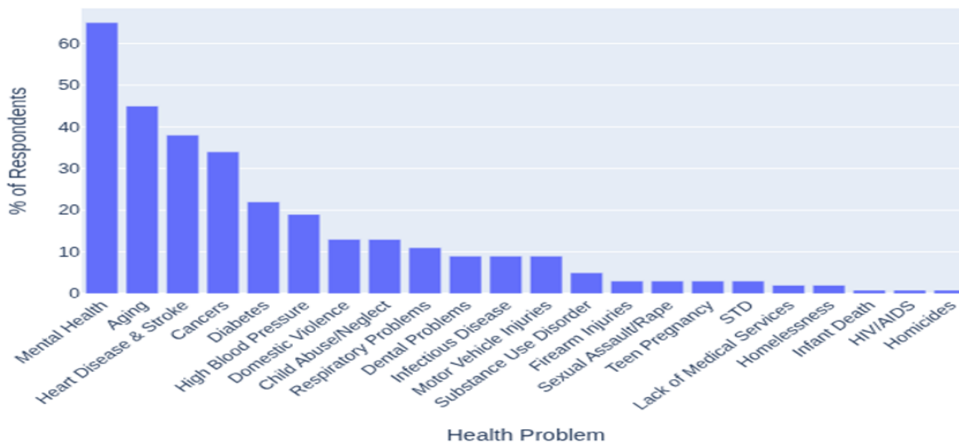
This CHIP outlines a multi-sector approach to address the identified priorities through:

- Expansion of mental health and substance use services
- Support for aging-in-place initiatives and chronic disease management
- Increased access to preventive care and health education

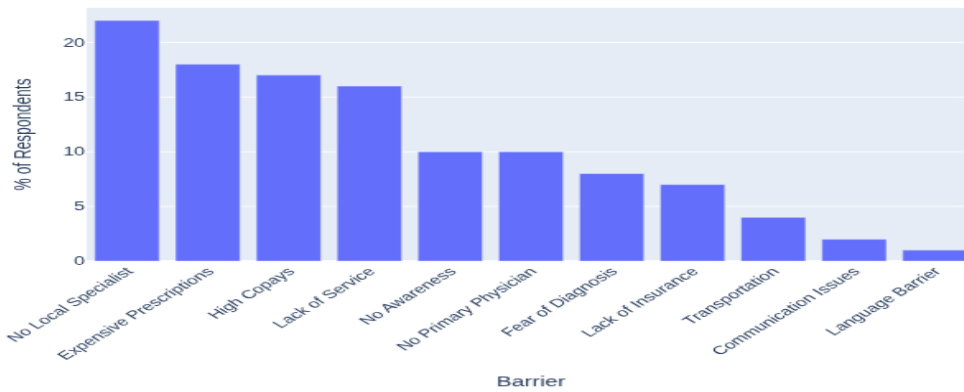
- Workforce development and training opportunities for local health care professionals
- Strengthened emergency preparedness and public health infrastructure

The merger between Cape Regional Health System and Cooper University Health Care enhances the region’s capacity to deliver high-quality, equitable care. Together, we are committed to building a healthier Cape May County—through collaboration, innovation, and sustained community engagement.

Top Health Problems in Cape May County



Barriers to Healthcare Access



## **Cape Regional Health System and Cooper University Health Care: A Strategic Partnership to Strengthen Health Care Delivery in Cape May County**

In a landmark initiative to advance health care access and quality across Cape May County, Cape



Regional Health System officially merged with Cooper University Health Care in 2024. This strategic partnership marks a significant milestone in the region's health care evolution, aligning local community-based care with nationally recognized medical expertise and resources.

Cape Regional Medical Center (now Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional) had long served as a cornerstone of health care in Cape May County, offering compassionate, accessible care to residents and seasonal visitors alike. Its deep-rooted presence in

the community has fostered strong relationships with patients, families, and local organizations. However, the 2023-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) revealed persistent gaps in access to specialized services, mental health care, chronic disease management, and preventive health resources. These findings underscored the need for a more integrated and responsive health care system—one capable of meeting the complex and evolving needs of the county's diverse population.

The merger with Cooper University Health Care directly responds to these challenges. Cooper brings to the partnership a robust infrastructure of advanced technologies, nationally ranked clinical programs, and a multidisciplinary team of specialists. With a reputation for excellence in trauma care, cardiology, oncology, and behavioral health, Cooper's involvement significantly enhances the region's capacity to deliver high-quality, specialized services close to home.

This merger is more than a structural change; it represents a transformative opportunity to reimagine health care delivery in Cape May County. Patients will benefit from:

- **Expanded access to specialty care**, including behavioral health, endocrinology, cardiology, and geriatric services.
- **Streamlined referral pathways**, reducing wait times and improving continuity of care.
- **Enhanced diagnostic capabilities**, supported by Cooper's advanced imaging and laboratory technologies.
- **Coordinated care models**, designed to improve outcomes and reduce unnecessary hospitalizations.

These improvements are especially critical for vulnerable populations, including older adults, individuals with chronic conditions, and those facing socioeconomic barriers to care.

By integrating services and leveraging shared expertise, the partnership aims to reduce disparities and promote health equity throughout the region.

Beyond clinical care, the merger supports broader public health goals identified in the CHNA and this Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Cooper’s resources will bolster emergency preparedness, health education, and community outreach initiatives. The partnership also opens new avenues for workforce development, offering training programs, internships, and career pathways for local health care professionals and students. By investing in the next generation of health care leaders, the merger contributes to long-term sustainability and resilience in the county’s health system.

The merger stands as a model for how strategic collaboration can drive meaningful change in rural and coastal health care settings, ensuring that every resident has access to the care they need- when and where they need it.

Together, Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional and Cooper University Health Care are building a more integrated, responsive, and equitable health care system—one that reflects the values and needs of Cape May County residents. This partnership is not only a response to current challenges but a proactive step toward a healthier future for all.



## OVERVIEW

As part of the 2023 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), Cape Regional Medical Center partnered with the Biomedical Innovations Class of 2024–25 at Lower Cape May Regional High School to gather extensive community input on the health challenges facing Cape May County. The assessment revealed a consistent set of concerns that reflect both longstanding issues and emerging needs. These findings are further validated by the Cape May County Department of Health’s recent survey, which echoed many of the same challenges. Together, these data sources provide a comprehensive picture of the county’s health landscape and inform the strategic priorities moving forward.

The following section outlines the most frequently cited health concerns and the barriers that continue to limit access to care for many residents.

### Key Findings

- Mental health emerged as the top concern, cited by 65% of residents.
- Aging-related conditions such as mobility, isolation, and chronic illness were identified by 45%.
- Heart disease and diabetes continue to affect quality of life and drive health care utilization.
- **Cancer:** Gaps in prevention, screening, and treatment access were noted, underscoring the need for improved oncology services and early detection efforts.
- Substance use, poor nutrition, and limited access to preventive care compound the county’s overall health burden.

### Barriers to Care

Residents reported persistent challenges in accessing care, including:

- Shortages of medical specialists
- High out-of-pocket costs
- Limited awareness of available services

These barriers contribute to delays in treatment and disparities in health outcomes, particularly among vulnerable populations.

## Looking Ahead

Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional is committed to strengthening clinical care and expanding workforce development throughout Cape May County. Through shared expertise and coordinated resources, the organization supports new training opportunities and career pathways for local professionals. It also enhances emergency preparedness and public health initiatives, ensuring a more resilient and responsive system.

Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional is ready to collaborate closely with community partners to improve health outcomes, advance equity, and build a healthier Cape May County—today and for generations to come.



**MISSION**  
TO SERVE, TO HEAL, TO EDUCATE

**VISION**  
We will be the best place to be a patient, the best place to work, and the best place to learn and practice medicine.

**VALUES**  
**COMPASSION**  
We are caring, kind, and empathetic, taking action to relieve the suffering of others.

**INCLUSION**  
We respect others, value differences, and promote a sense of belonging for all.

**EXCELLENCE**  
We are honest, professional, active, accountable, innovative, and passionate about quality.

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## Methods and Data Sources

The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) informing this Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was conducted by Cape Regional Health System using a multi-source approach to capture both quantitative and qualitative insights into the health status of Cape May County residents.

A central component of this effort was a comprehensive community survey, conducted in partnership with the Biomedical Innovations Class of 2024–2025 at Lower Cape May Regional High School, and administered between December 2023 and May 2024. This survey gathered firsthand perspectives on health concerns, service gaps, and barriers to care from a broad cross-section of residents.

To strengthen the validity of these findings, Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional also reviewed data from a separate countywide survey conducted by the Cape May County Department of Health. The alignment between both assessments—particularly around mental health, aging-related challenges, and chronic disease—reinforces the urgency of these issues and supports a unified, data-driven response.

Additional data sources included:

- Prior CHNA reports
- Demographic and socioeconomic analyses
- Health service utilization metrics

These sources were used to contextualize survey results and identify trends over time.

The development and implementation of strategies in response to these findings continue to be supported by trusted community partners, including Ascenda Health, Cape Addiction Recovery Services (C.A.R.E.S.), Cape Assist, and others. These organizations play a vital role in translating data into action through outreach, education, and service delivery.

### Prioritization Criteria

To determine strategic priorities for this CHIP, identified health needs were evaluated using the following criteria:

- **Magnitude:** The number of people affected and the prevalence of the issue
- **Severity:** The impact on morbidity, mortality, and quality of life
- **Feasibility:** The ability to address the issue given available resources, infrastructure, and community readiness
- **Alignment with Organizational Mission:** Consistency with Cooper University Health Care’s commitment to improving health outcomes and advancing equity

This structured prioritization process ensures that the CHIP focuses on the most pressing and actionable health challenges facing Cape May County.

## Cape May County Community Profile

Cape May County, served by Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional (Cooper Cape), spans a diverse geographic area with a service radius of approximately 30 miles from its central location in Cape May Court House. This coverage ensures access to health care for residents across the



county's full range of ZIP codes, including 08202 (Avalon), 08204 (Cape May), 08210 (Cape May Court House), 08212 (Cape May Point), 08214 (Del Haven), 08218 (Green Creek), 08219 (North Cape May), 08220 (Ocean View), 08223 (Seaville), 08224 (South Seaville), 08230 (Strathmere), 08242 (Villas), 08243 (Sea Isle City), 08245 (South Dennis), 08247 (Stone Harbor), 08248 (Whitesboro), 08251 (North Cape May), 08252 (Rio Grande), 08260 (Wildwood), 08270 (Woodbine), and 08272 (West Cape May).

This 30-mile radius allows Cooper Cape to serve both densely populated coastal towns and more rural inland communities, ensuring continuity of care across seasonal fluctuations and demographic diversity. The hospital's strategic location and outreach efforts help bridge gaps in access, particularly for older adults, seasonal workers, and residents in remote areas. By aligning services with the needs of each ZIP code, Cooper Cape supports a responsive and inclusive health care network throughout Cape May County.

Cape May County, located at the southernmost tip of New Jersey, is a region known for its picturesque beaches, vibrant tourism industry, and close-knit communities. With a year-round population of approximately 95,000 that swells to over 800,000 during the summer months, the county faces unique challenges in delivering consistent and comprehensive health care services. The demographic profile includes a significant proportion of older adults, with over 28% of residents aged 65 and above, contributing to a growing demand for age-related health care services.



The county's economy is heavily reliant on seasonal tourism, which affects employment stability and access to employer-sponsored health benefits. Despite its scenic appeal and community spirit, Cape May County grapples with health care access disparities, chronic disease prevalence, and behavioral health concerns. These factors underscore the importance of robust health infrastructure and strategic partnerships to meet the evolving needs of its residents.

## Cape May County Demographics



Cape May County experiences a dramatic population surge during the summer months, swelling from approximately 95,000 year-round residents to more than 800,000 due to seasonal tourism. This influx places unique demands on local infrastructure and health care services, requiring flexible planning to accommodate both permanent and temporary populations. The county’s demographic profile further complicates these needs, with a median age of 51 and nearly 28% of residents aged 65 or older, above national averages. This aging population drives increased demand for elder care, chronic disease management, and accessible health services tailored to older adults.

REGION	POPULATION CHANGE (2010-2022)	MEDIAN AGE (2023)
United States	+7.7%	39.2 years
New Jersey	+5.5%	40.4 years
Cape May County	-1.6%	52.7 years

The county’s racial composition is predominantly White (89%), and females made up 79% of survey respondents, suggesting potential gender-specific health priorities. These demographic trends underscore the importance of developing health care strategies that are both age-sensitive and responsive to seasonal fluctuations. Public health planning must account for the dual challenge of serving a large, transient summer population while meeting the long-term needs of an aging, year-round community.

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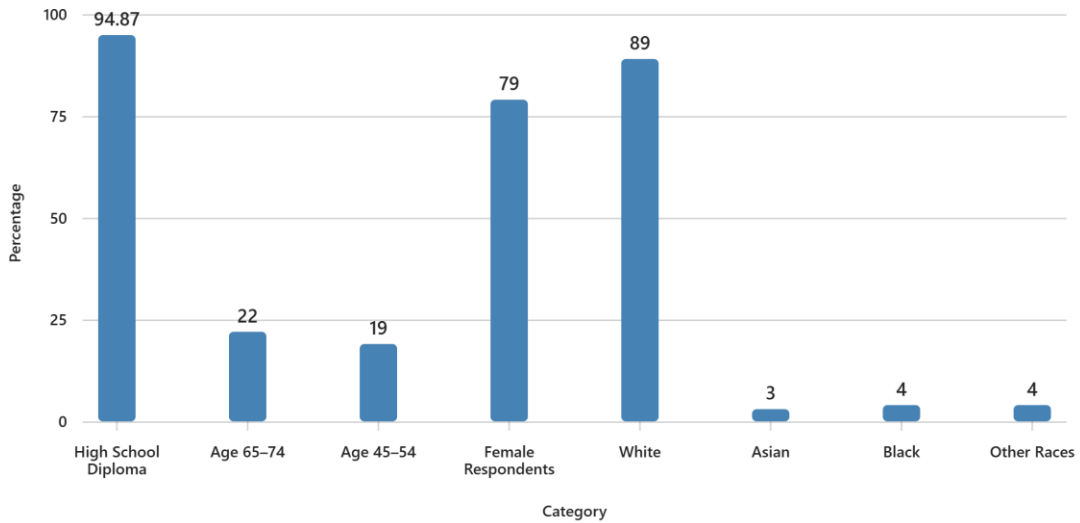
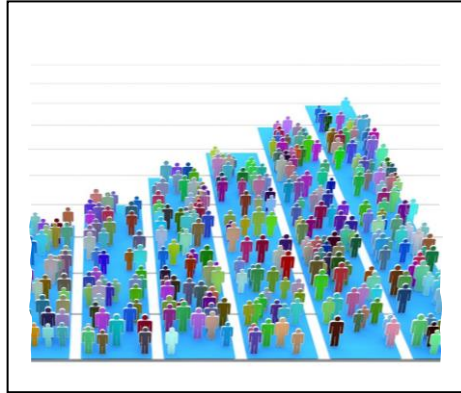
### Cape May County Racial and Ethnic Demographics

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- White: 89%
  - Black or African American: 3%
  - Asian: 3%
  - Mixed (White and Black): 0.84%
  - Hispanic: 0.84%
  - Mexican: 0.84%
  - American Indian: 0.84%
  - Alaska Native: 0.84%
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## Demographics continued

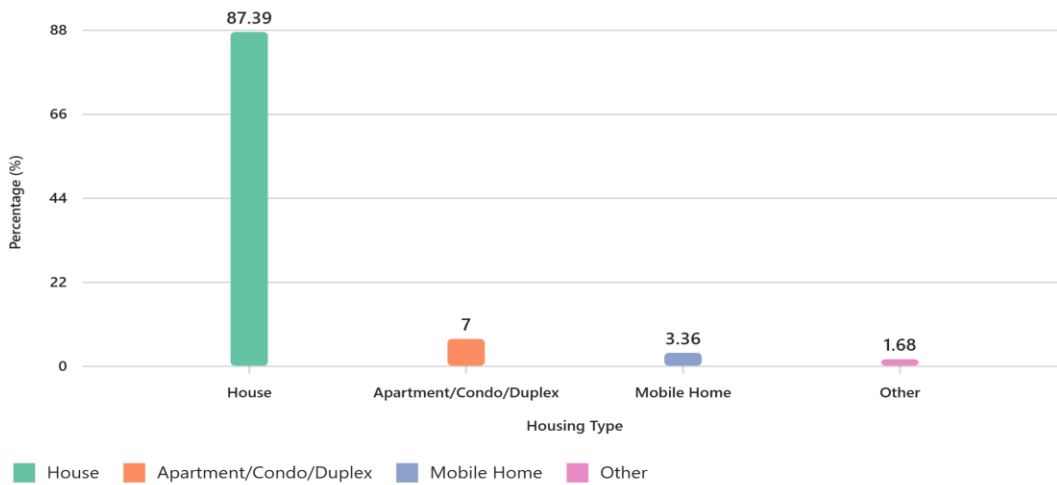
Survey data from Cape May County further illustrates the demographic and socioeconomic landscape shaping local health care needs. A striking 94.87% of respondents reported having at least a high school diploma, with age distribution concentrated in the 65–74 (22%) and 45–54 (19%) brackets. This reinforces the county’s aging profile and the importance of geriatric care. Females accounted for 79% of survey participants, and the racial makeup remained predominantly White (89%), with only small percentages identifying as Asian, Black, or other racial groups.



Housing and insurance trends also reflect the county's stability and health care access patterns. Most respondents (87.39%) live in houses, suggesting a largely residential community.



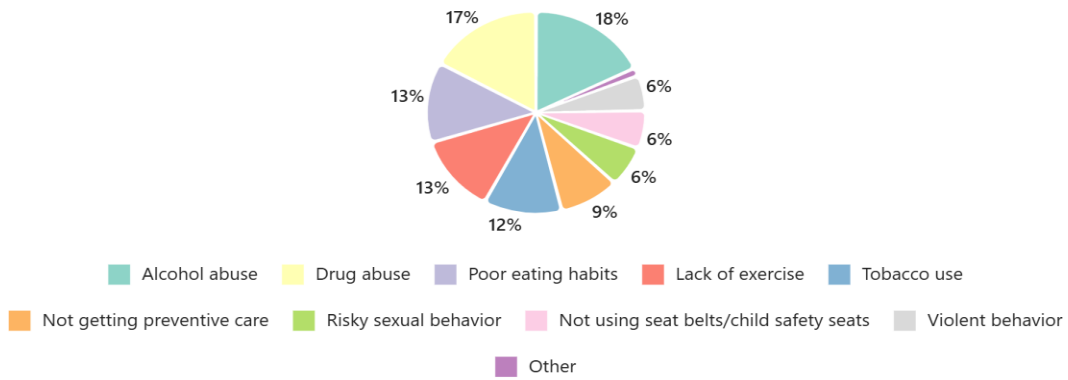
Health coverage is primarily through private or commercial insurance (59.32%), though gaps may exist for seasonal workers and underserved populations. Employment status is largely wage-based (64.87%), with retirees making up 22.69%, further emphasizing the need for health care services that cater to both working adults and older residents. These insights are critical for shaping responsive, inclusive health strategies across Cape May County.



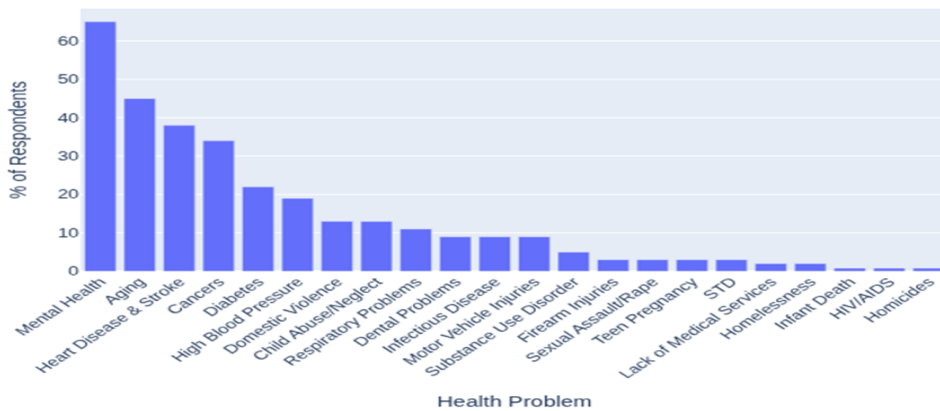
## Cape May County Significant Health Needs

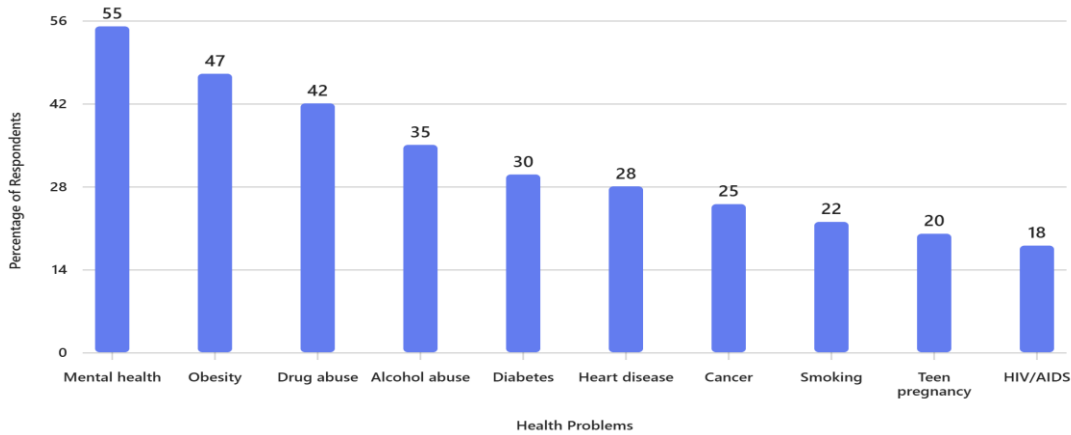
The survey results reveal pressing health concerns among Cape May County residents, with mental health emerging as the most critical issue—identified by 65% of respondents. This underscores the growing need for accessible behavioral health services and community-based mental wellness initiatives. Aging-related health challenges were the second most cited concern (45%), reflecting the county’s older demographic and the demand for geriatric care, mobility support, and long-term health planning.

Heart disease and stroke followed closely at 38%, highlighting the importance of cardiovascular health education and preventive screenings. Additional concerns included cancers, diabetes, high blood pressure, and various forms of abuse and chronic conditions, all of which point to the need for comprehensive, multi-disciplinary health care strategies. These findings emphasize the urgency of investing in both physical and mental health infrastructure to meet the evolving needs of Cape May County’s diverse and aging population.



Top Health Problems in Cape May County

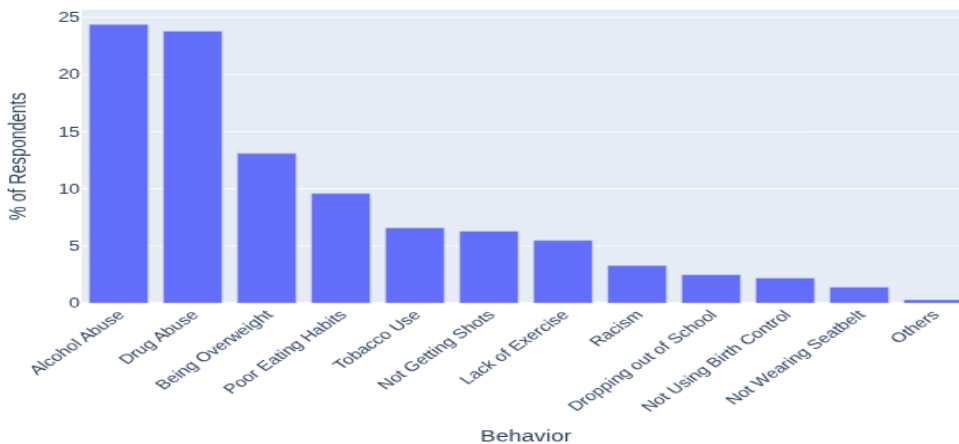




### Cape May County Harmful Behaviors

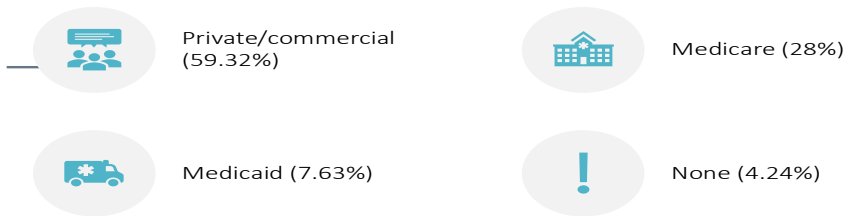
In addition to chronic health conditions, community perceptions point to behavioral health risks as a major concern in Cape May County. Alcohol and drug abuse were overwhelmingly identified as the most harmful behaviors affecting residents, reflecting widespread awareness of substance use challenges and their impact on families, public safety, and overall well-being. These concerns align with national trends and underscore the need for robust prevention programs, treatment access, and community education. Following substance abuse, issues related to weight management, poor diet, and tobacco use were also flagged as significant threats to public health. These lifestyle-related behaviors contribute to a range of chronic conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, and respiratory illnesses, and highlight the importance of integrated health promotion strategies that address both physical and behavioral health in a coordinated, community-driven approach.

Most Harmful Behaviors in Cape May County



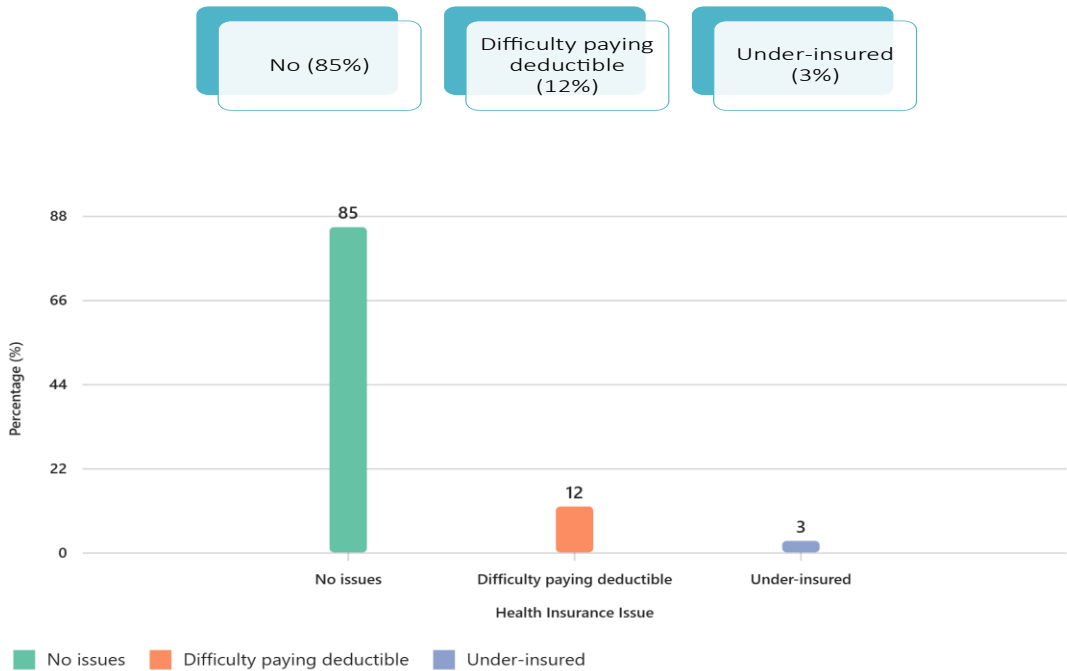
## Cape May County Health Insurance Issues

Despite the county's relatively high rate of health insurance coverage, many residents still face notable barriers to accessing care. A lack of local specialists was the most frequently cited obstacle, affecting 22% of respondents and pointing to gaps in specialty services such as cardiology, oncology, and mental health care. Additionally, 18% of participants reported that prescription costs were prohibitively expensive, and 17% noted that high copays discouraged them from seeking routine or preventive care. These financial constraints can lead to delayed treatment, unmanaged chronic conditions, and increased reliance on emergency services.



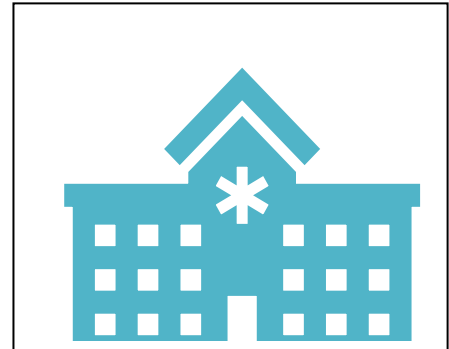
## Health Insurance Status

### Issues with Health Insurance



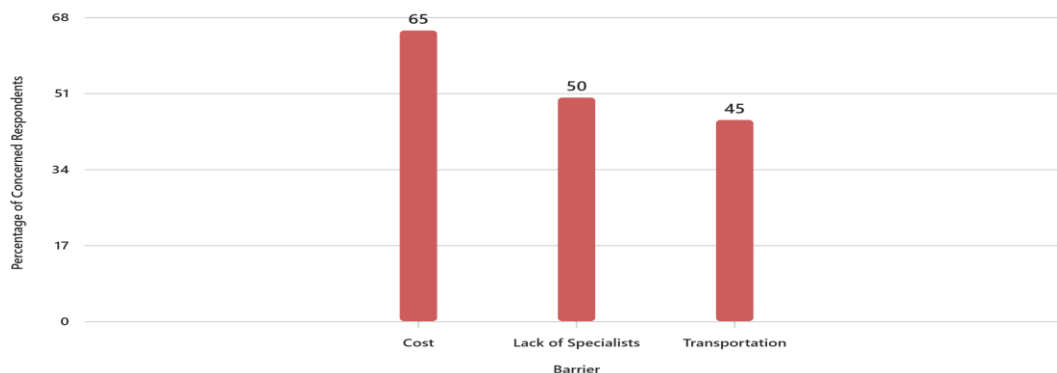
## Cape May County Barriers to Health Care

Cape May County faces significant barriers to health care access, largely driven by its rural geography, aging population, and limited provider availability. Many residents live in remote areas with few nearby clinics or hospitals, and public transportation options are scarce, making it difficult for seniors and low-income individuals to attend appointments. The county has been designated a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for both primary care and mental health services, reflecting a critical lack of physicians, specialists, and behavioral health providers. Seasonal fluctuations in population due to tourism further strain the system, with local facilities often overwhelmed during peak months and under-resourced during the off-season.



Financial barriers compound these access issues. A significant portion of Cape May County’s older adults live on fixed incomes and struggle with high out-of-pocket costs, especially for services not covered by Medicare—such as dental, vision, and long-term care. Many providers in the region do not accept Medicaid, and underinsurance remains a problem for working-age adults who lack comprehensive coverage. These financial constraints lead to delayed care, skipped medications, and increased reliance on emergency departments for non-urgent needs. Without expanded insurance acceptance and targeted financial assistance programs, vulnerable populations will continue to face disproportionate health risks.

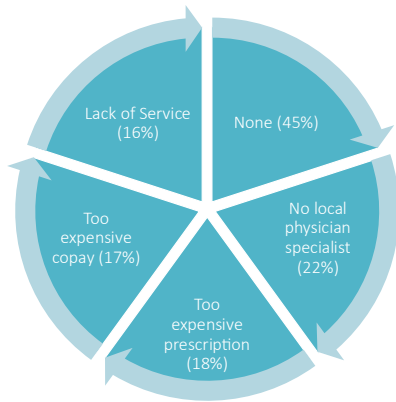
Key barriers to health care identified include lack of access to specialists, high costs of prescriptions and copays, and limited-service availability. Addressing these barriers is essential for improving health outcomes in the region.



While 45% of respondents indicated they experienced no barriers to care, a significant portion of the community still struggles with systemic and logistical challenges. Some cited limited

availability of services, especially in rural or underserved areas, while others pointed to a lack of public awareness about existing resources. Transportation also emerged as a recurring issue, particularly for older adults and individuals without reliable access to vehicles. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions—such as mobile health units, expanded telemedicine, and community outreach—to bridge the gap between health care availability and accessibility in Cape May County.

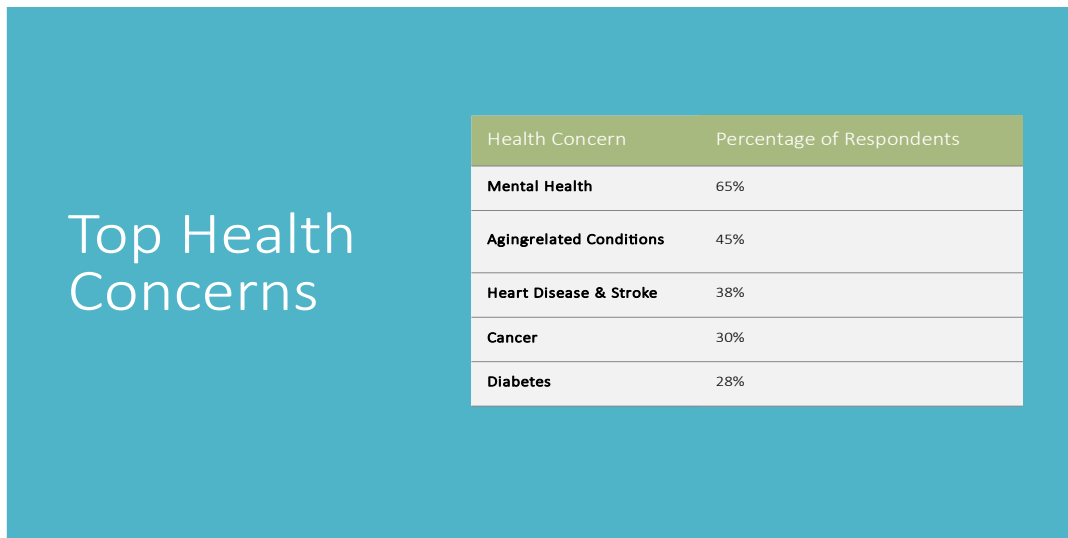
## Barriers to Healthcare



- Lack of public awareness (10%)
- No local primary physician (10%)
- Fear of diagnosis (8%)
- Lack of insurance (7%)
- Lack of transportation (4%)
- Communication issues (2%)
- Language barrier (1%)

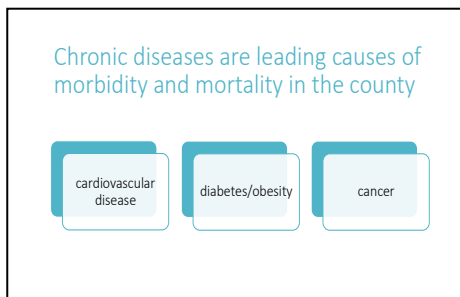
## Prioritization of Health Needs for Cape May County

Building on long-standing community input and consistent survey results, several persistent health priorities continue to shape the landscape of Cape May County. Foremost among these is mental health, which has repeatedly been identified as a top concern across age groups and demographics. The ongoing prevalence of anxiety, depression, and substance-related disorders highlights the sustained need for expanded behavioral health services, including crisis intervention, counseling, and long-term psychiatric care. Community members have also emphasized the importance of reducing stigma and increasing awareness through education and outreach—priorities that remain central to public health efforts in the region.



Aging-related conditions represent another critical focus area, reflecting the county’s older population and the unique challenges they face. From mobility limitations and cognitive decline to chronic pain and social isolation, older adults require a comprehensive continuum of care. This includes geriatric specialists, home health services, and accessible transportation to medical appointments. The growing demand for elder care also calls for caregiver support and resources to help families manage the complexities of aging in place.

Chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes continue to affect a significant portion of the population, contributing to long-term health complications and increased health care costs.



Prevention and early detection are vital, and residents expressed a need for more community-based screenings, nutrition education, and physical activity programs. Addressing these conditions holistically—through lifestyle interventions, coordinated care, and culturally competent services—can improve outcomes and reduce disparities.

Substance use and access to health care round out the top priorities. The community voiced concern over the availability of addiction treatment and recovery support, particularly for youth and underserved populations. Meanwhile, barriers such as

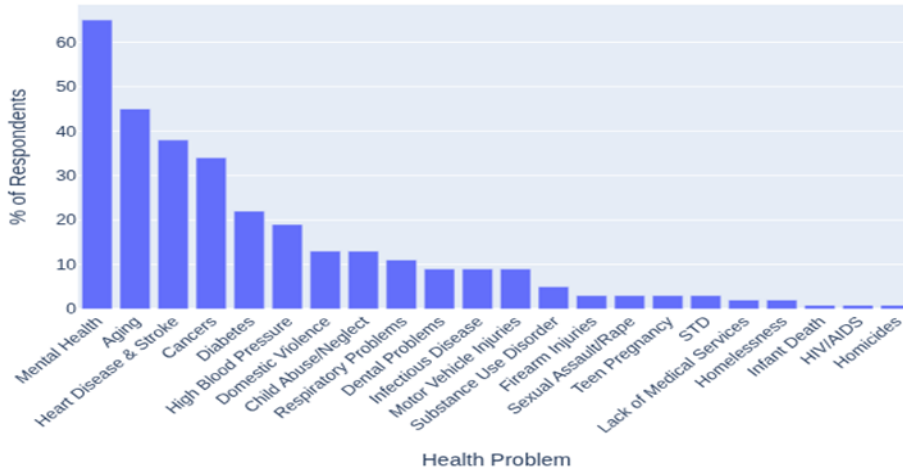
cost, lack of specialists, and transportation continue to limit access to essential services. Tackling these issues requires a multi-sector approach, including policy advocacy, infrastructure investment, and partnerships between health care providers, schools, and local organizations. Together, these priorities form the foundation for a responsive and equitable health strategy tailored to Cape May County's evolving needs.



## Cape May County Top Health Problems

Survey results revealed that mental health concerns remain the most pressing issue among residents, cited by 65% of respondents. Aging-related challenges such as mobility, isolation, and chronic conditions were identified by 45%, while heart disease and stroke followed closely at 38%.

Top Health Problems in Cape May County



Other significant health concerns included:

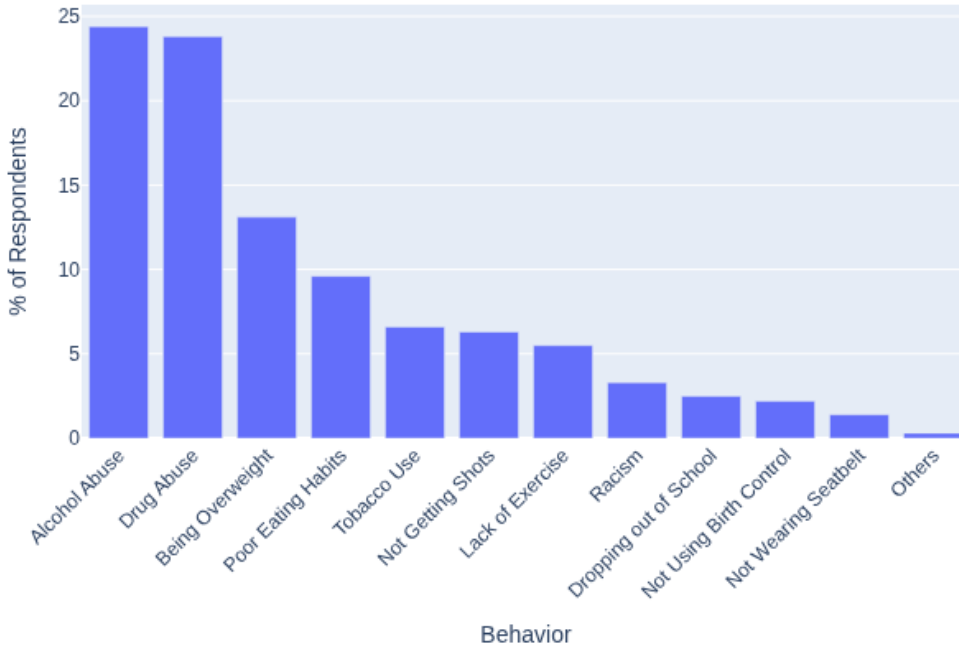
- Cancer (prevention, screening, and treatment)
- Diabetes and high blood pressure
- Social issues such as domestic violence and child abuse, which continue to affect family stability and long-term health outcomes.

A separate community survey conducted by Cape May County confirmed the findings of Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional's CHNA, reinforcing mental health, aging-related issues, and heart disease as top concerns among residents.

These insights reinforce our strategic focus on integrated care, prevention, and community-based support systems. Cooper Cape remains dedicated to collaborating with local partners to address these concerns through targeted programs, education, and accessible services.

## Cape May County Most Harmful Behaviors

Most Harmful Behaviors in Cape May County



This survey together with Cape May County’s 2025 Community Health Needs Assessments and public health data consistently identify several harmful behaviors that contribute to poor health outcomes across the region. Among the most concerning are tobacco use, excessive alcohol consumption, and sedentary lifestyles. Smoking rates in the county remain higher than the state average, particularly among older adults and individuals with lower socioeconomic status. This behavior is linked to elevated rates of chronic respiratory conditions, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. Excessive alcohol use, including binge drinking, is also prevalent—especially among younger adults and seasonal workers—leading to increased emergency room visits, motor vehicle accidents, and domestic violence incidents.





## **Strategies and Recommendations for Improvement**

The 2024 merger between Cooper University Health Care and Cape Regional Health System marks a pivotal moment for Cape May County's health care landscape. By combining Cooper's academic medical expertise with Cape Regional's deep community roots, this partnership creates a more robust and integrated system capable of addressing long-standing health disparities. The merger brings expanded access to specialists, improved care coordination, and enhanced infrastructure—critical upgrades for a county facing provider shortages, an aging population, and geographic isolation. With Cooper's affiliation to a medical school, the region is better positioned to attract and retain health care professionals, including those trained in geriatrics and behavioral health.

Community partnerships are equally vital in building healthy, resilient populations. Local nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and public agencies play a frontline role in addressing social determinants of health—such as food insecurity, transportation, and housing. When health care systems collaborate with these groups, they can extend their reach beyond clinical settings and into the neighborhoods where people live and age. For example, partnerships with food pantries and senior centers can help identify at-risk individuals and connect them with preventive services before health issues escalate. These alliances also foster trust, cultural competence, and more personalized care.

The merger also opens the door for shared investment in community health initiatives. Cooper's population health model emphasizes data-driven outreach, chronic disease management, and wellness programming—all of which can be scaled locally through joint efforts with Cape May County's health department and community organizations. Together, they can launch mobile clinics, telehealth hubs, and health education campaigns tailored to the county's unique needs. By aligning resources and goals, these partnerships ensure that care is not only accessible but also equitable and sustainable.

Ultimately, building a healthy community requires more than hospital beds and medical equipment—it demands collaboration, compassion, and a shared vision. The Cooper merger, when paired with strong community engagement, lays the foundation for a health care system that is proactive, inclusive, and responsive to the people it serves. Cape May County now has an opportunity to redefine what rural health can look like: connected, comprehensive, and community driven.

## Data Insights and Implementation Strategies

### **Cancer: Data Insights and Implementation Strategies**

#### **Cancer Prevalence and Screening**

Cape May County has one of the highest cancer incidence rates in New Jersey, with significant cases of prostate, breast, skin, colorectal, and lung cancers. Community screening programs have been implemented to detect early signs and improve outcomes.

The merger between Cooper University Health Care and Cape Regional Health System, along with strategic partnerships with MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper and the Brodesser Cancer Center, marks a transformative moment for cancer care in the region. Historically, residents in this rural area faced limited access to advanced oncology services, often traveling long distances for screenings, diagnostics, and treatment.

Now, Cooper's affiliation with The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center—one of the nation's leading cancer institutions—brings world-class cancer care directly into the local health care ecosystem. This integration dramatically expands the scope and quality of services available to Cape May County residents.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- **Enhanced Screening Programs:** Evidence-based screening for breast, colorectal, lung, and prostate cancers will be expanded through mobile units, community outreach, and extended clinic hours.
- **Upgraded Facilities:** The Brodesser Cancer Center will serve as a regional hub, receiving investments in technology, staffing, and treatment capabilities.
- **Advanced Therapies:** Access to immunotherapy, targeted treatments, and clinical trials through Cooper's academic affiliations.
- **Multidisciplinary Care Teams:** Oncologists, radiologists, surgeons, and support staff will collaborate to deliver personalized treatment plans.
- **Support Services:**
  - Oncology social work for emotional support and care coordination
  - Nutrition counseling for treatment support and recovery
  - Survivorship programs addressing post-treatment challenges
  - Palliative care and symptom management
  - Genetic counseling and risk assessment
  - Patient navigation to streamline access to care

- Financial counseling and assistance programs
- Community Engagement: Education and outreach to promote early detection and reduce stigma.
- Telemedicine Access: Virtual consultations to support rural and mobility-limited patients.

### **Looking Ahead**

The merger enables a comprehensive, patient-centered approach to cancer care, emphasizing prevention, early detection, and personalized treatment. By embedding MD Anderson's gold-standard practices and leveraging Cooper's clinical expertise, Cape May County is poised to achieve equitable, high-quality cancer care for all residents.

## **Mental Health: Data Insights and Implementation Strategies**

### **Community Mental Health Landscape**

Mental health was identified as the top health concern in the CHNA, with 65% of respondents citing it as a priority. Residents reported challenges including limited access to behavioral health services, long wait times, stigma, and a lack of emotional wellness support. These issues affect all age groups, with particular concern for youth, older adults, and individuals with co-occurring conditions.

The merger between Cooper University Health Care and Cape Regional Health System creates a powerful platform to address these challenges. By combining resources, clinical expertise, and infrastructure, the merged system can significantly expand mental health services across Cape May County.

### **Implementation Strategies**

**Integrated Behavioral Health Services:** Embed mental health professionals within primary care settings to improve access and reduce stigma.

**Expanded Outpatient Capacity:** Increase the number of outpatient behavioral health clinics and providers, including psychiatrists, psychologists, and licensed counselors.

**Crisis Intervention and Mobile Response:** Develop mobile crisis units and 24/7 response teams to support individuals in acute distress.

**School-Based Mental Health Programs:** Partner with local schools to provide early intervention, counseling, and mental health education for students and families.

**Senior Mental Health Support:** Create targeted programs addressing isolation, depression, and cognitive decline among older adults.

**Tele-behavioral Health Services:** Utilize virtual platforms to reach rural and mobility-limited populations, ensuring timely access to care.

**Community Education and Stigma Reduction:** Launch public awareness campaigns to normalize mental health conversations and promote available resources.

**Workforce Development:** Invest in training and recruitment to build a sustainable pipeline of behavioral health professionals.

**Peer Support and Recovery Services:** Expand peer-led programs for individuals managing mental illness and substance use disorders.

**Data-Driven Care Coordination:** Use shared data systems to identify high-risk individuals and ensure continuity of care across providers.

## **Looking Ahead**

The merger enables a comprehensive, community-based approach to mental health, emphasizing prevention, early intervention, and integrated care. By aligning Cooper's behavioral health expertise with Cape Regional's local presence, Cape May County is positioned to build a resilient, accessible, and equitable mental health system that meets the needs of its residents.

## **Aging-Related Conditions: Data Insights and Implementation Strategies**

### **Community Aging Profile**

Cape May County has one of the oldest populations in New Jersey, with a growing number of residents aged 65 and older. The CHNA revealed that 45% of respondents identified aging-related concerns—such as mobility limitations, chronic illness, and social isolation—as major health challenges. Older adults in the region often face barriers to accessing care, including transportation, financial constraints, and limited availability of specialized geriatric services.

The merger between Cooper University Health Care and Cape Regional Health System offers a strategic opportunity to enhance care for older adults by integrating geriatric expertise, expanding service capacity, and improving care coordination across the continuum.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- **Integrated Geriatric Care Models:** Develop multidisciplinary teams including geriatricians, primary care providers, social workers, and rehabilitation specialists to deliver holistic care.
- **Home-Based and Mobile Services:** Expand home health programs and deploy mobile units to reach seniors with mobility challenges or transportation barriers.
- **Chronic Disease Management:** Implement evidence-based programs for managing conditions such as arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, and dementia.
- **Fall Prevention and Mobility Support:** Offer physical therapy, home safety assessments, and community workshops to reduce fall risk and promote independence.
- **Social Engagement Initiatives:** Partner with local organizations to create senior centers, volunteer opportunities, and peer support groups to combat isolation.
- **Caregiver Support Services:** Provide education, respite care, and counseling for family caregivers to reduce burnout and improve patient outcomes.
- **Telehealth Access:** Utilize virtual visits for routine check-ins, medication management, and mental health support, especially for homebound seniors.
- **Transportation Solutions:** Collaborate with local agencies to improve non-emergency medical transportation options.
- **Advance Care Planning:** Promote discussions around goals of care, palliative services, and end-of-life planning through community education and provider training.
- **Data Integration for Care Coordination:** Use shared electronic health records to track patient needs, reduce duplication, and ensure continuity of care.

## **Looking Ahead**

The merger enables a comprehensive, age-friendly health system that prioritizes dignity, independence, and quality of life for older adults. By leveraging Cooper's clinical depth and Cape Regional's community connections, Cape May County is well-positioned to become a model for innovative, compassionate aging care.

## **Chronic Disease: Data Insights and Implementation Strategies**

### **Chronic Disease Burden in Cape May County**

Chronic diseases, particularly heart disease and diabetes remain leading causes of illness, hospitalization, and reduced quality of life in Cape May County. The CHNA highlighted these conditions as persistent challenges, especially among older adults and low-income populations. Contributing factors include poor nutrition, limited access to preventive care, and gaps in disease management support.

The merger between Cooper University Health Care and Cape Regional Health System presents a critical opportunity to strengthen chronic disease prevention and management through coordinated care, expanded resources, and data-driven strategies.

### **Implementation Strategies**

**Integrated Care Models:** Embed chronic disease management into primary care practices using multidisciplinary teams that include physicians, nurses, dietitians, and care coordinators.

**Community-Based Education:** Launch programs focused on lifestyle modification, including nutrition, physical activity, smoking cessation, and stress management.

**Preventive Screenings:** Expand access to blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose screenings through mobile units, health fairs, and community clinics.

**Diabetes Self-Management Programs:** Offer evidence-based education and support groups to help patients manage their condition and prevent complications.

**Cardiac Rehabilitation Services:** Enhance post-acute care for heart disease patients through structured rehab programs and remote monitoring.

**Telehealth Expansion:** Provide virtual consultations and follow-ups to improve access for rural and mobility-limited patients.

**Nutrition and Wellness Counseling:** Integrate registered dietitians into care teams to support dietary changes and long-term wellness.

**Data Analytics for Risk Stratification:** Use shared electronic health records to identify high-risk patients and tailor interventions.

**Medication Management and Adherence Support:** Implement pharmacy-led initiatives to improve medication compliance and reduce adverse events.

**Community Partnerships:** Collaborate with local organizations to address social determinants of health, such as food insecurity and housing instability.

## **Looking Ahead**

The merger enables a comprehensive, proactive approach to chronic disease care, emphasizing prevention, early intervention, and coordinated management. By aligning Cooper's clinical expertise with Cape Regional's community reach, Cape May County is positioned to reduce the burden of chronic illness and improve long-term health outcomes for its residents.

## **Substance Use and Preventive Care Gaps: Data Insights and Implementation Strategies**

### **Community Health Challenges**

The CHNA revealed persistent gaps in preventive care access and rising concerns around substance use, particularly among youth and underserved populations. Contributing factors include poor nutrition, limited transportation, stigma, and lack of affordable services. These issues compound existing health disparities and increase the burden on emergency and acute care systems.

The merger between Cooper University Health Care and Cape Regional Health System offers a strategic opportunity to address these challenges through expanded service delivery, integrated care models, and community-based outreach. Together, the systems can build a more responsive and equitable approach to prevention and recovery.

### **Implementation Strategies**

**Expanded Substance Use Treatment Services:** Increase access to outpatient and inpatient treatment programs, including medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and behavioral therapies.

**Youth-Focused Prevention Programs:** Partner with schools and youth organizations to deliver education on substance use, mental health, and healthy decision-making.

**Community-Based Outreach:** Deploy mobile health units and peer recovery specialists to engage individuals in high-need areas and connect them to care.

**Integrated Behavioral Health and Primary Care:** Screen for substance use and mental health concerns during routine medical visits, with warm handoffs to treatment providers.

**Nutrition and Wellness Initiatives:** Promote healthy eating and physical activity through community gardens, cooking classes, and fitness programs.

**Preventive Screenings and Immunizations:** Expand access to routine screenings (e.g., blood pressure, cholesterol, cancer) and vaccinations through community clinics and events.

**Transportation and Access Solutions:** Improve non-emergency medical transportation options and explore telehealth services to reduce barriers to care.

**Culturally Competent Care:** Train providers in trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches to better serve diverse populations.

**Data-Driven Outreach:** Use population health data to identify gaps in care and target interventions to high-risk communities.

**Public Awareness Campaigns:** Reduce stigma and promote available services through coordinated messaging across media and community channels.

## **Looking Ahead**

The merger enables a comprehensive, prevention-focused strategy that addresses both the root causes and consequences of substance use and care gaps. By leveraging Cooper's behavioral health and addiction medicine expertise alongside Cape Regional's community presence, Cape May County is poised to build a more resilient, accessible, and equitable health system for all residents.

## **CHNA Summary: Strategic Priorities and Systemwide Transformation**

The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) identified several priority health concerns and systemic barriers that will guide strategic planning and resource allocation over the next three years. These findings reflect the unique challenges facing Cape May County's population, including its aging demographics, rural geography, and disparities in access to care.

The merger between Cooper University Health Care and Cape Regional Health System marks a turning point in regional health care delivery. By combining Cooper's academic and clinical depth with Cape Regional's community-based strengths, the merged system is positioned to implement innovative, equitable, and sustainable solutions across all priority areas.

### Strategic Priorities and Systemwide Implementation

- **Cancer**  
Expanded access to screening, diagnostics, and treatment through partnerships with MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper and the Brodesser Cancer Center. Enhanced survivorship, palliative care, and clinical trial opportunities will improve outcomes and reduce travel burdens.
- **Mental Health**  
Integration of behavioral health into primary care, expansion of outpatient services, and development of crisis response teams will address access gaps and reduce stigma. School-based programs and senior mental health initiatives will target vulnerable populations.
- **Aging-Related Conditions**  
Multidisciplinary geriatric care, mobile health services, and caregiver support will improve quality of life for older adults. The merger enables broader reach and coordination across home-based and facility-based care settings.
- **Chronic Disease (Heart Disease and Diabetes)**  
Systemwide chronic disease management programs, preventive screenings, and lifestyle education will reduce hospitalizations and improve long-term health. Data analytics will support targeted interventions for high-risk populations.
- **Substance Use and Preventive Care Gaps**  
Expanded treatment services, youth prevention programs, and mobile outreach will address substance use and care disparities. Nutrition, wellness, and telehealth initiatives will strengthen preventive care access across the county.

### Looking Forward

The merger enables a unified health system capable of delivering comprehensive, community-responsive care. By aligning strategic priorities with enhanced infrastructure, clinical expertise, and community partnerships, Cape May County is poised to achieve measurable improvements in health outcomes, equity, and patient experience.

## **Access to Health Care in Cape May County**

Access to health care is a foundational component of community well-being, yet many residents of Cape May County continue to face significant challenges in obtaining timely, affordable, and appropriate care. This section outlines the current landscape of health care access in the county, identifies key barriers, and highlights opportunities for improvement.

### **Current Landscape**

Cape May County's rural geography, seasonal population shifts, and aging demographics contribute to a complex health care environment. While the establishment of Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional has expanded clinical capacity and specialty services, access remains uneven across the county.

### **Key Barriers to Access**

- **Provider Shortages:** The county faces a shortage of medical specialists, particularly in behavioral health, geriatrics, and chronic disease management. This limits residents' ability to receive timely diagnoses and treatment.
- **Transportation Limitations:** Limited public transportation options, especially in remote areas, hinder access to care for individuals without reliable personal vehicles. This is particularly challenging for seniors and low-income residents.
- **Financial Constraints:** High out-of-pocket costs and gaps in insurance coverage prevent many residents from seeking preventive and routine care, contributing to delayed treatment and poorer health outcomes.
- **Limited Awareness of Services:** A lack of awareness about available health resources, including community clinics, assistance programs, and transportation **services, further restricts access—especially among underserved populations.**

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional, in collaboration with community partners such as Ascenda Health, Cape Assist, CARES, and the Cape May County Department of Health, is actively working to address these barriers. Key strategies include:

- Expanding provider recruitment and retention efforts
- Enhancing transportation infrastructure and service coordination
- Increasing community outreach and health literacy initiatives
- Supporting affordable care models and insurance navigation programs

## **Commitment to Equity and Collaboration**

Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional is deeply committed to building a health care system that is both responsive and equitable. Recognizing the needs of Cape May County's residents, the organization is focused on removing barriers to care and ensuring that services are tailored to meet the unique challenges faced by the community.

Central to this mission is a strong emphasis on collaboration. Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional is ready to work hand-in-hand with community partners, local organizations, and public health leaders to develop innovative solutions that improve access, quality, and outcomes. By fostering these partnerships, the hospital aims to create a more integrated and supportive health care environment.

Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that every resident—regardless of age, income, or location—can access the care they need to thrive. Whether addressing cancer, chronic conditions, promoting preventive care, or expanding mental health services, Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional is dedicated to advancing health equity and building a healthier future for all.

## **Continuity and Progress: Building on Past Strategies to Shape the Future**

The health needs identified in this Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) are not new to Cape May County. Over the past decade, recurring themes—such as mental health, chronic disease management, aging-related challenges, and barriers to care—have consistently surfaced in community feedback. Cape Regional Health System has long recognized these concerns and responded with targeted strategies, including the expansion of primary care access, integration of behavioral health services, community education initiatives, and partnerships with local organizations to address social determinants of health.

Cape Regional's commitment to community-based care has laid a strong foundation for progress. Programs such as the Behavioral Health Navigator, chronic disease self-management workshops, and mobile health outreach have helped bridge gaps in care and improve health literacy. These efforts have been supported by longstanding collaborations with local agencies, schools, and public health department relationships that continue to be vital in addressing the county's evolving needs.

The recent merger with Cooper University Health Care marks a pivotal moment in Cape Regional's journey. While the structure of health care delivery is changing, the mission remains rooted in community responsiveness and equity. Cooper's nationally recognized expertise, advanced technologies, and robust specialty services will amplify the impact of Cape Regional's legacy programs. Together, the merged system will be better equipped to tackle persistent challenges such as specialist shortages, delayed diagnoses, and fragmented care pathways.

This strategic alignment ensures that past efforts are not only preserved but strengthened. The merger represents a continuum from local innovation to regional integration designed to enhance access, improve outcomes, and build a healthier Cape May County. As the health care landscape evolves, the shared vision of Cape Regional and Cooper remains clear: to deliver compassionate, coordinated, and comprehensive care for all residents, now and into the future.

### **Closing Statement**

As we conclude this Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), we reaffirm our commitment to improving the health and well-being of the communities we serve. This plan reflects the voices, data, and shared priorities of our residents, stakeholders, and partners.

Through collaboration, innovation, and accountability, we will address the identified needs with targeted strategies that promote equity, access, and measurable outcomes. Our work does not end here, it begins anew with every action we take to close gaps, uplift underserved populations, and build a healthier future for all.

We invite community members, organizations, and leaders to join us in this journey. Together, we can transform insight into impact.

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## APPENDIX

## Summary of the 2020-2022 Cape Regional Health System’s Cape May County Community Health Needs Assessment

Following the completion of Cape Regional Health System’s 2019 community survey, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly reshaped the health care landscape in Cape May County. In response, Cape Regional shifted its priorities to address the urgent needs of both residents and visitors affected by the virus. This included implementing rigorous safety protocols to mitigate transmission, conducting widespread community testing in collaboration with the Cape May County Health Department, administering vaccines, and serving as a vital source of public health information throughout the crisis.

Based on the CHNA from December 2019, Cape Regional planned and executed activities addressing a set of priority health needs. The core priorities identified in the CHNA were:

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes / Obesity
- Mental health / Substance use
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

Here are the main implementation strategies / programs the hospital used to address them:

Priority Need	Key Strategies / Actions
<b>Cancer</b>	Screening and outreach programs: e.g. expanding access to cancer screening; likely collaboration with the Thomas & Claire Brodesser Jr. Cancer Center; public education/outreach to promote early detection.
<b>Cardiovascular Disease</b>	Chronic disease management (hypertension, cholesterol); patient education; possibly lifestyle programs via wellness center; prevention efforts (diet / exercise) to reduce risk factors.
<b>Diabetes / Obesity</b>	Lifestyle management programs to support weight loss, healthy diet, physical activity; possibly programs for glucose monitoring and diabetes education; community health education.
<b>Mental Health / Substance Use Disorders</b>	Screening / referral services; partnerships with local mental health providers; outreach and education; possibly support groups or counseling services.
<b>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)</b>	Early intervention programs; could include trauma-informed care; education for parents; school or community-based programs to support youth; possibly screening and referrals.

Additionally, the hospital’s outreach and community wellness activities were used as mechanisms to engage with the community, increase awareness, and provide preventive care.

## Evaluation of Impact: 2022-2025

Following the completion of Cape Regional Health System's 2019 community survey, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly reshaped the health care landscape in Cape May County. In response, Cape Regional shifted its priorities to address the urgent needs of both residents and visitors affected by the virus. This included implementing rigorous safety protocols to mitigate transmission, conducting widespread community testing in collaboration with the Cape May County Health Department, administering vaccines, and serving as a vital source of public health information throughout the crisis.

The 2019 CHNA identified the following five (5) issues as a priority area for health improvement:

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Diabetes and Obesity
- Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder
- Adverse Childhood Experiences

### Evaluation of Impact: Cancer Prevention and Control (2019–2022)

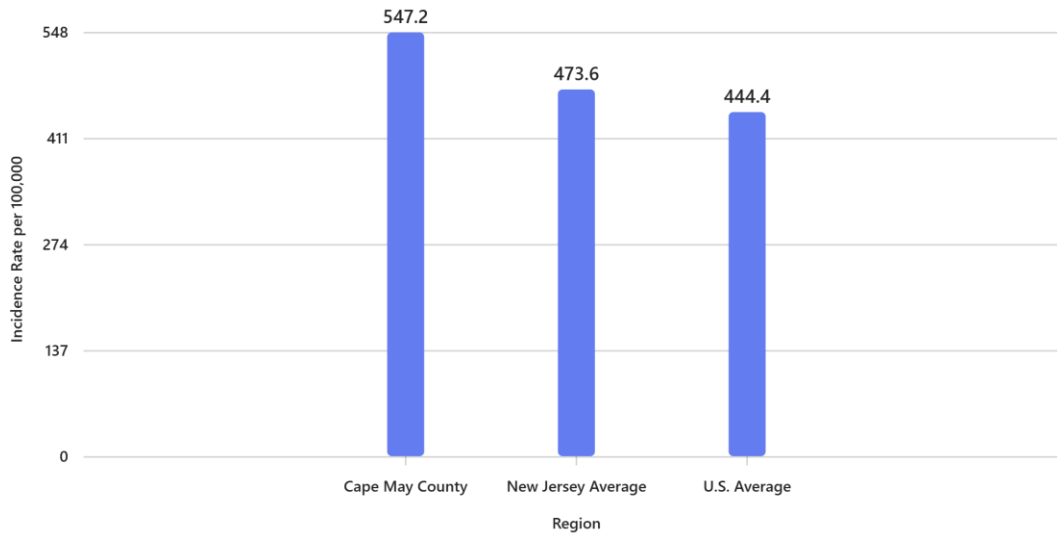
During the 2020-2022 CHIP cycle, cancer prevention and control remained a top priority for Cape May County due to its disproportionately high cancer burden. In 2019, Cape May County recorded the highest age-adjusted cancer incidence rate in New Jersey, at 547.2 cases per 100,000 residents. This rate significantly exceeded both the state average (473.6) and the national average (444.4), underscoring the need for focused interventions.

The CHIP aimed to address this disparity through expanded screening efforts, public education campaigns, and improved access to oncology services. Initiatives included mobile screening units, partnerships with local providers for early detection programs, and outreach to underserved populations. Despite these efforts, community feedback revealed persistent barriers to care. Residents cited long wait times, limited transportation options, and a lack of awareness about available services. One participant shared, *“Delayed care and screenings increased severity and missed early diagnoses,”* while another noted, *“Even crisis care has wait lists.”*

While some progress was made in increasing screening rates and community engagement, the overall cancer incidence remained elevated. This suggests that while the CHIP interventions were directionally appropriate, additional resources and system-level changes are needed to achieve measurable reductions in cancer rates. Future efforts should focus on strengthening care coordination, expanding culturally competent education, and enhancing access to preventive services, particularly for older adults and rural residents.

The evaluation highlights the importance of sustained investment in cancer prevention and the need for a more integrated approach in the next CHIP cycle to reduce the county's cancer burden and improve long-term health outcomes.

## 2019 AGE-ADJUSTED CANCER INCIDENCE RATES



### Evaluation of Impact: Cardiovascular Disease (2019–2025)

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) remained a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Cape May County throughout the CHIP cycle. The county consistently reported higher rates of heart disease and stroke compared to state and national averages, reflecting the need for sustained public health interventions. Contributing factors included an aging population, high prevalence of obesity and diabetes, and limited access to preventive care and specialty services.

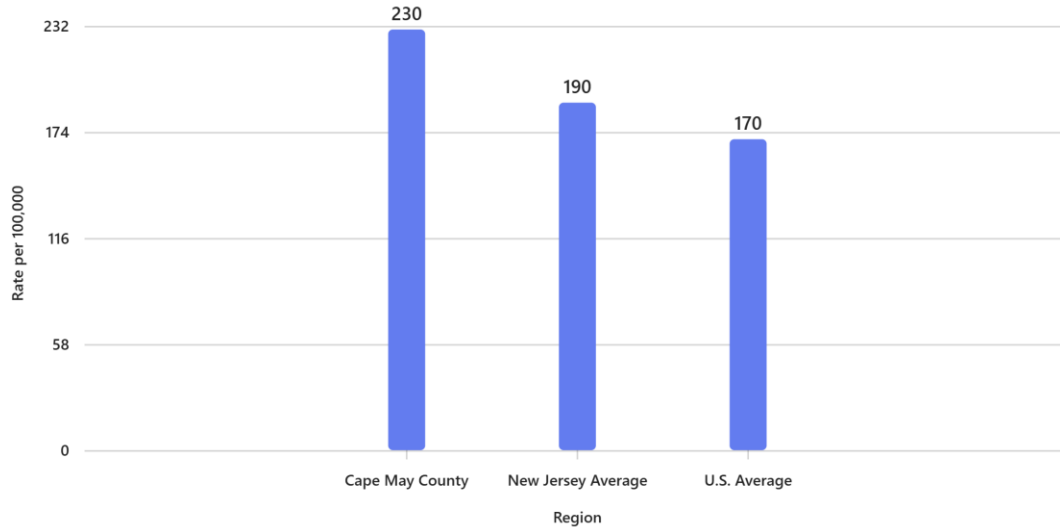
The CHIP prioritized cardiovascular health through initiatives aimed at improving screening rates, promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors, and enhancing care coordination. Programs included blood pressure and cholesterol screenings at community events, nutrition and physical activity education, and partnerships with primary care providers to support chronic disease management. Despite these efforts, community feedback revealed ongoing challenges. Residents cited barriers such as transportation, cost of medications, and difficulty navigating the health care system. One participant shared, “*I know I need to manage my blood pressure, but I can’t afford the prescriptions,*” while another noted, “*There’s no cardiologist nearby, and I don’t drive.*”

While some progress was made in increasing awareness and engagement, the overall burden of cardiovascular disease remained high. Data suggest that while CHIP interventions helped raise awareness and improve access in targeted areas, broader systemic issues, such as health care workforce shortages and socioeconomic disparities continue to limit impact. Future CHIP efforts should focus on expanding access to affordable medications, increasing availability of specialty care, and strengthening

community-based prevention programs, especially for older adults and low-income residents.

This evaluation highlights the importance of a multi-sector approach to cardiovascular health, integrating clinical care, public health, and community resources to reduce disease burden and improve quality of life for Cape May County residents.

### ESTIMATED CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE RATES



## Miracles Fitness – CHIP Evaluation Summary (2022–2025)

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### Miracles Fitness: Advancing Community Health in Cape May County (2022–2025)

Miracles Fitness, now part of Cooper University Health Care, is Cape May County's only medically-based fitness and wellness facility. Through its partnership with Cooper, Miracles Fitness has expanded its capacity to support residents across all ages and fitness levels, offering personalized, medically-supervised programs that align with individual health needs and provider care plans.

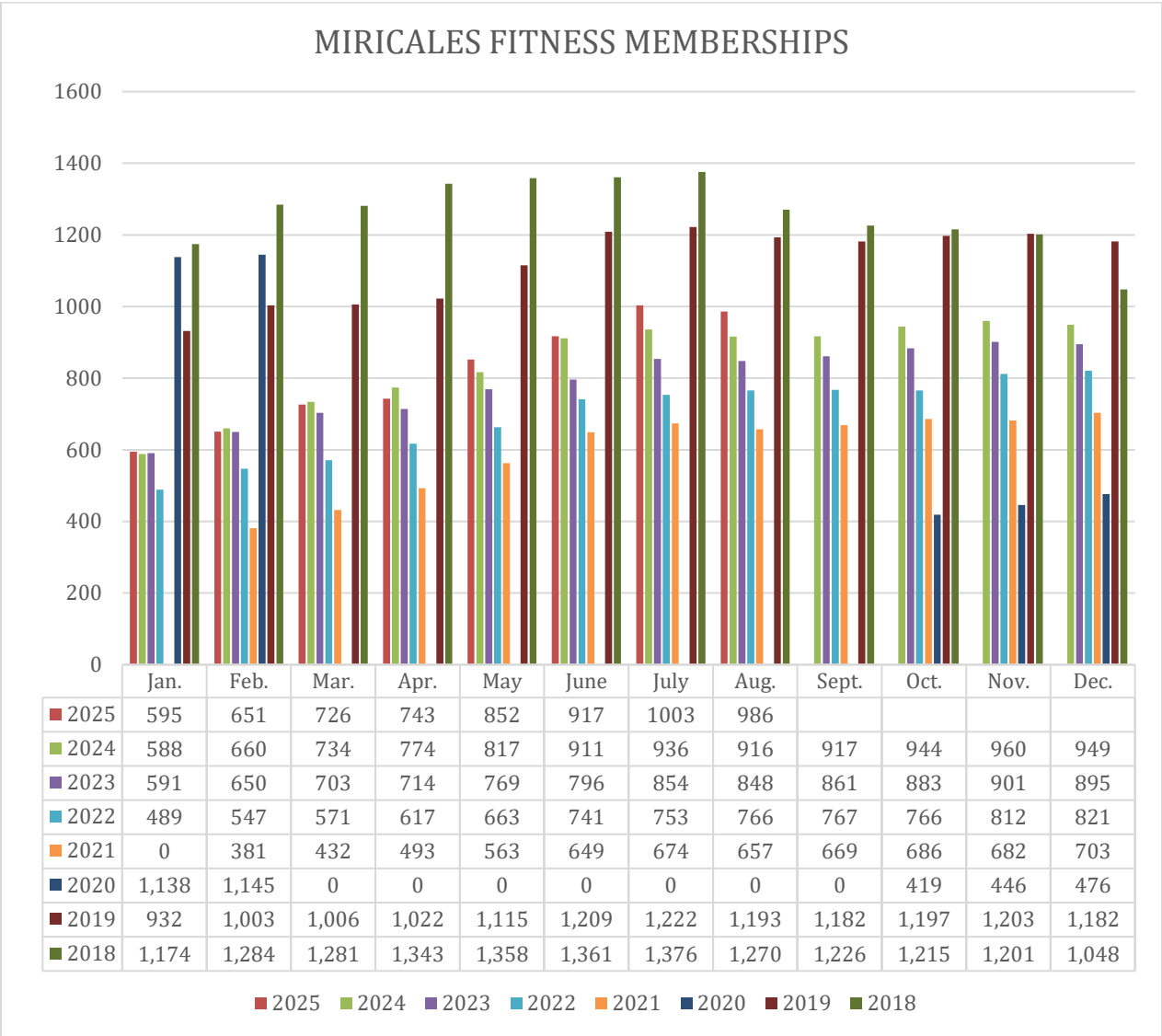
Key initiatives include:

- **Fit for Life Medically-Based Wellness Programs:** Tailored for individuals with chronic conditions or rehabilitation needs, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, Parkinson's, cancer recovery, and joint replacement. These programs are supervised by certified professionals and physical therapists, with ongoing evaluations to monitor progress. [[www.miracl...itness.com](http://www.miracl...itness.com)]
- **Active Aging Programs:** Designed to help older adults regain strength, flexibility, and mobility, supporting healthy aging and independence. [[www.miracl...itness.com](http://www.miracl...itness.com)]
- **Comprehensive Health Assessments:** Every new member receives a full wellness evaluation including BMI, blood pressure, pulse ox, and body composition, followed by a customized fitness plan. Monthly evaluations ensure continued progress. [[www.miracl...itness.com](http://www.miracl...itness.com)]
- **Community Engagement:** Miracles Fitness hosts events like the **Get Fit Cape May County Challenge**, a local version of "The Biggest Loser," promoting weight loss and healthy living in a supportive group setting. [[capemaycou...herald.com](http://capemaycou...herald.com)]
- **Insurance Partnerships:** Many programs are eligible for reimbursement through plans like **Silver Sneakers**, **Silver & Fit**, and **AARP United Health care**, increasing accessibility for older adults.

**Miracles Fitness: Advancing Community Health in Cape May County (2022–2025)**

<b>Program/Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Impact/Benefit</b>
Fit for Life Wellness Programs	Medically based fitness plans for chronic conditions and recovery	Adults with diabetes, heart disease, cancer, Parkinson’s, joint replacements	Supports disease management, recovery, and improved quality of life
Active Aging Programs	Strength, mobility, and balance training for older adults	Seniors	Promotes independence, reduces fall risk, and supports healthy aging
Health Assessments & Personalized Plans	Initial evaluations and monthly progress checks	All new members	Ensures tailored fitness plans aligned with health needs
Community Engagement Events	“Get Fit Cape May County Challenge” and other wellness campaigns	General public	Encourages healthy lifestyles and weight loss in a supportive group setting
Insurance-Based Access	Partnerships with Silver Sneakers, Silver & Fit, AARP United Healthcare	Older adults with qualifying plans	Reduces financial barriers to participation in wellness programs

**Miracles Fitness: Advancing Community Health in Cape May County (2022–2025)**



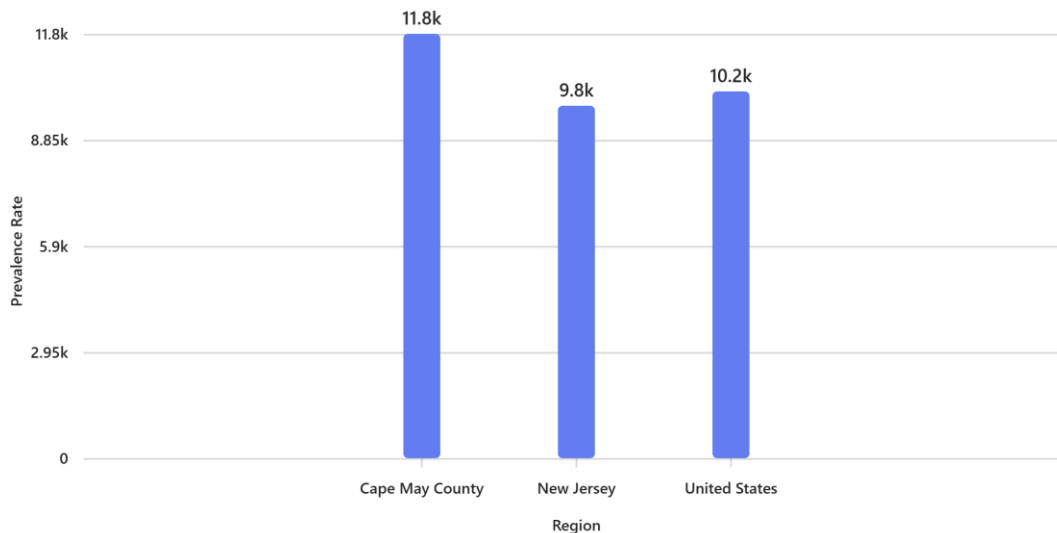
## Evaluation of Impact: Diabetes (2022–2025)

Diabetes remained a significant public health concern in Cape May County during the 2022–2025 cycle. The county’s estimated diabetes prevalence was approximately 12.5%, notably higher than both the New Jersey state average of 10.5% and the national average of 11.3%. This elevated rate reflects the intersection of multiple risk factors, including obesity, aging demographics, and limited access to preventive care and diabetes management resources.

CHIP initiatives focused on improving diabetes outcomes through community screenings, nutrition education, and chronic disease self-management programs. While these efforts increased awareness and engagement, community feedback highlighted persistent challenges. Residents reported difficulty accessing endocrinologists, affording medications, and maintaining consistent follow-up care. One participant shared, *“I was diagnosed but didn’t know what to do next. There’s no diabetes educator nearby.”*

Although progress was made in outreach and education, the overall prevalence remained high, indicating the need for more robust and sustained interventions. Future CHIP strategies should prioritize expanding access to diabetes specialists, enhancing care coordination, and supporting lifestyle change programs, particularly for older adults and low-income populations.

### Estimated Diabetes Prevalence Rates Comparison



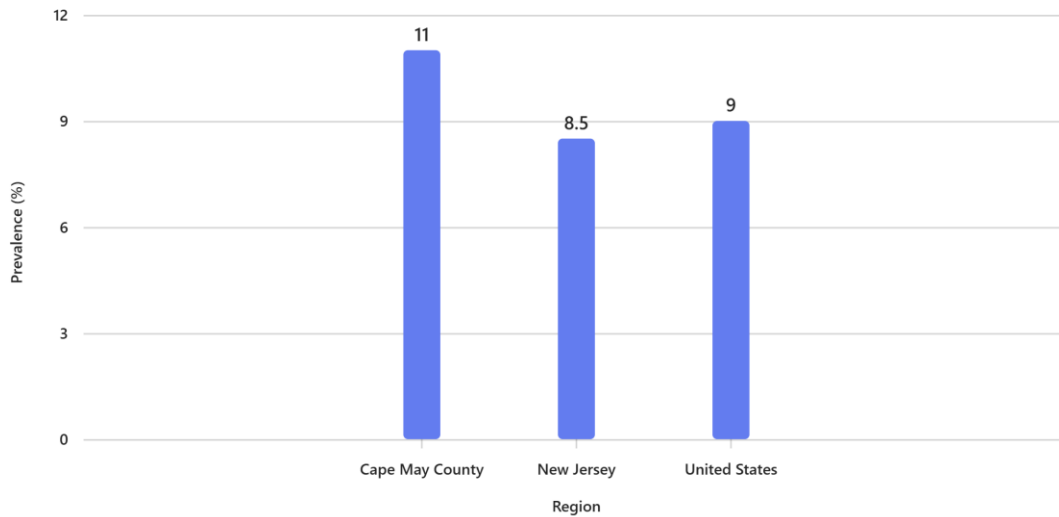
## Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder

### Evaluation of Impact: Substance Use Disorder (2022–2025)

Substance use disorder (SUD) remained a pressing concern in Cape May County during the 2022-25 CHIP cycle. The county’s estimated prevalence of SUD was approximately 11%, notably higher than both the New Jersey average (8.5%) and the national average (9%). This elevated rate reflects ongoing challenges related to opioid use, alcohol dependency, and limited access to behavioral health services.

CHIP initiatives focused on expanding access to treatment, increasing community education, and reducing stigma. Despite these efforts, community feedback revealed persistent barriers. Residents cited long wait times for detox and rehab services, lack of local providers, and difficulty navigating recovery resources. One participant shared, “*Even crisis care has wait lists,*” while another noted, “*Parents don’t know what to do and can’t get help.*” While outreach and engagement improved, the overall burden of SUD remained high, indicating the need for more integrated and sustained interventions in future CHIP cycles.

### Substance Use Disorder Prevalence Comparison





**CAPE ADDICTION RECOVERY PROGRAM (C.A.R.E.S.)**

Program Outcomes

January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

There were 33 overdoses between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024. Of these overdoses, the following outcomes were recorded.

Outcome	Count of Outcome	Percentage of Outcome
AA/NA/AR	0	0%
Death	0	0%
Inpatient	4	12%
Intentional Overdose	1	3%
MAT	6	18%
Medical Related	0	0%
Mental Health Referral	1	3%
Minor	0	0%
Non - OUD Related	5	16%
Non - Reporting	7	21%
Outpatient	2	6%
Peer Support	7	21%
Referred to OHH	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

**CAPE ADDICTION RECOVERY PROGRAM (C.A.R.E.S.)**

**Program Outcomes**

**January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024**

<b>Medical Transport to Hospital</b>	<b>Count Transport</b>	<b>Percentage Transport</b>
Accepted	16	48%
Declined	8	24%
Deceased	0	0%
Non-Reporting	9	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

Of the 33 peers in this analysis:

- 4 of the 33 peers (12%) were referred to inpatient treatment at a facility
- 1 of the 33 peers (3%) were referred to mental health resources
- 6 of the 33 peers (18%) were connected to MAT providers for their SUD
- 5 of the 33 peers (11%) were Non-OUd related and/or medical emergencies
- 7 of the 33 peers (21%) were unable to be seen by the ORT team, and have no corresponding data.
- 7 of the 33 peers (11%) were connected and accepted assistance from a non-clinical recovery specialist
- 1 of the 33 peers (3%) were intentional overdoses resources
- 2 of the 33 peers (6%) were referred to Outpatient services

**Transportation**

- 16 of the 33 peers (48%) accepted transportation to the hospital to meet with a CARES team member
- 8 declined transportation (24%)
- 9 individuals did not have information regarding their transportation after their overdose.

**CAPE ADDICTION RECOVERY PROGRAM (C.A.R.E.S.)**

**Program Outcomes**

**January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Count of Gender</b>	<b>Percentage of Gender</b>
Male	24	73%
Female	9	27%
Non-Reporting	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

As shown above, the majority of individuals seen by the ORT team identify as male (73%), while 27% identify as women.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Count Ethnicity</b>	<b>Percentage Ethnicity</b>
White	29	88%
Black	1	3%
Hispanic	3	9%
Non-Reporting	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

Additionally, most individuals seen by the ORT team identify as white (88%), while 1 individual identified as black (3%), 3 as Hispanic (9%).

<b>Marriage Status</b>	<b>Count Marriage</b>	<b>Percentage Marriage</b>
Divorced	0	0%
Married	5	15%
Non-Reporting	8	24%
Single	16	48%
Separated	4	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

**CAPE ADDICTION RECOVERY PROGRAM (C.A.R.E.S.)**

**Program Outcomes**

**January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Count Age</b>	<b>Percentage Age</b>
20 - 25	2	6%
26 - 30	2	6%
31 - 35	9	9%
36 - 40	10	31%
41 - 45	2	6%
46 - 50	2	6%
51 - 55	4	12%
56 - 60	4	12%
61 - 65	0	0%
66 - 70	2	6%
NA	2	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

As evident from the provided chart, the age distribution of individuals who experienced overdoses in Lower Township is notably diverse, primarily spanning from 36 to 56 years old. A majority is observed within the 36 to 40 age group, constituting 31% of the total.

This information, in conjunction with the data on racial demographics and reported marriage status, suggests that the predominant profile within the ORT program comprises single, white males aged 36 to 60, with a noteworthy concentration in the 36 to 40 age bracket.

**CAPE ADDICTION RECOVERY PROGRAM (C.A.R.E.S.)**

**Program Outcomes**

**January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024**

<b>Times</b>	<b>Count Times</b>	<b>Percentage Times</b>
12 a.m. - 2 a.m.	1	3%
2 a.m. - 4 a.m.	0	0%
4 a.m. - 6 a.m.	0	0%
6 a.m. - 8 a.m.	3	9%
8 a.m. - 10 a.m.	4	12%
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.	9	25%
12 p.m. - 2 p.m.	5	15%
2 p.m. - 4 p.m.	4	12%
4 p.m. - 6 p.m.	12	6%
6 p.m. - 8 p.m.	3	9%
8 p.m. - 10 p.m.	0	0%
10 p.m. - 12 a.m.	1	3%
NA	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

**CAPE ADDICTION RECOVERY PROGRAM (C.A.R.E.S.)**

**Program Outcomes**

**January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024**

<b>Days</b>	<b>Count Days</b>	<b>Percentage Days</b>
Sunday	3	9%
Monday	7	21%
Tuesday	8	24%
Wednesday	3	9%
Thursday	1	3%
Friday	5	16%
Saturday	6	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data above reveal a significant concentration of overdoses occurring between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m., constituting 25% of the total incidents. While the available population and sample size may not be robust enough to definitively establish a strong correlation between days of the week, substance use, and overdoses, there appears to be a noteworthy association with the time frame of 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Within this period, 25% of the relevant cases experienced an overdose, though it is acknowledged that the sample size may limit the ability to draw conclusive determinations.

**CAPE ADDICTION RECOVERY PROGRAM (C.A.R.E.S.)**

**Program Outcomes**

**January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024**

**General Trends**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Count Month</b>	<b>Percentage Month</b>
Jan. 2024	3	9%
Feb. 2024	0	0%
Mar. 2024	2	6%
Apr. 2024	1	3%
May 2024	8	25%
Jun. 2024	5	15%
Jul. 2024	2	6%
Aug. 2024	5	15%
Sept. 2024	2	6%
Oct. 2024	3	9%
Nov. 2024	0	0%
Dec. 2024	2	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data illustrates a notable reduction in overdoses in Lower Township since the initiation of the program. Initially accounting for approximately 61% of the total between May 2024 and August 2024. Displayed above, there is a 16% decrease from the second half of the timeframe to the first half. Increased community partner and outreach efforts, coupled with a significant influx of Narcan in the community and a heightened presence of recovery resources, may have contributed to the program's success. The multifaceted approach reflects a comprehensive strategy in tackling the complex issues surrounding overdoses in the community.

**YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISON**

RP/Expansion														
2021	Overdose	NonOverdose	NonOpioid	Outreach	2022	Overdose	NonOverdose	NonOpioid	Outreach	2023	Overdose	NonOverdose	NonOpioid	Outreach
January	8	14	14	19	January	4	8	27	45	January	2	7	24	34
February	3	16	44	17	February	6	13	21	66	February	4	5	22	12
March	11	9	51	18	March	7	21	38	56	March	7	10	27	52
April	9	9	28	23	April	9	5	16	54	April	3	12	22	55
May	17	15	30	20	May	2	40	28	41	May	2	9	34	24
June	9	13	43	24	June	10	23	34	38	June	1	9	35	28
July	7	22	35	9	July	14	21	25	43	July	6	9	54	30
August	7	15	31	11	August	3	14	25	41	August	7	12	39	31
September	9	25	30	91	September	14	20	30	54	September	3	12	38	35
October	10	6	33	43	October	8	13	31	86	October	2	18	26	24
November	9	18	32	57	November	10	6	20	50	November	4	9	31	37
December	5	7	25	29	December	3	7	27	48	December	4	10	22	53
Total	104	169	396	361	Total	87	191	322	622	Total	45	122	374	415



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## Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional

Priority Area: Mental Health & Substance Use Substance Use Referral and Recovery Support Timeframe: 2023–2025		
GOAL	STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED	OUTCOMES & LESSONS LEARNED
<p>Cape Regional Health System aimed to strengthen the continuum of care for individuals struggling with alcohol and drug addiction by establishing a coordinated referral system that connects patients to community-based recovery programs, including the CURE program at Lighthouse Church and Cape Addiction Recovery Services (C.A.R.E.S.).</p>	<p><b>Referral System Development</b> We collaborated with Cape Assist, ACENDA Integrated Health, and local partners to create a streamlined referral process for patients identified with substance use disorders. This system ensured timely and compassionate transitions from clinical care to community-based recovery support.</p> <p><b>Integration of C.A.R.E.S. Program</b> Launched on August 1, 2017, Cape Addiction Recovery Services (C.A.R.E.S.) became a cornerstone of our response to opioid addiction. Recovery Specialists meet overdose survivors at bedside within 30 minutes. Each participant receives one year of follow-up support, including navigation to housing, employment, and treatment services. The program operates 24/7 and is funded by the NJ Department of Human Services.</p> <p><b>Community Partnerships and Outreach</b> We partnered with Lighthouse Church’s CURE program to provide faith-based recovery pathways. Outreach efforts included educational campaigns, resource fairs, and engagement with law enforcement and civic organizations to promote awareness and reduce stigma.</p> <p><b>Cross-Agency Coordination</b> Regular coordination meetings with Cape Assist, ACENDA, and other stakeholders helped monitor referral outcomes, share data, and refine service delivery. This collaborative approach strengthened our ability to respond to the evolving needs of the community.</p> <p><b>Wraparound Support Services</b> Patients referred through our system were connected to counseling, peer mentorship, transportation assistance, and other critical supports to ensure continuity of care and long-term recovery success.</p>	<p>Increased utilization of both CURE and C.A.R.E.S. programs.</p> <p>Improved coordination between emergency care and community recovery services.</p> <p>Identified ongoing challenges including transportation gaps, housing instability, and the need for expanded peer support.</p> <p><i>Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional remains committed to addressing substance use with compassion, innovation, and collaboration. These efforts reflect our dedication to building a healthier Cape May County—one recovery at a time.</i></p>

<b>Diabetes Management &amp; Complication Reduction</b> <b>Timeframe: 2023-2025</b> <b>Priority Area: Chronic Disease – Diabetes</b>		
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED</b>	<b>OUTCOMES &amp; LESSONS LEARNED</b>
<p>At Cape Regional Health System, our goal from 2019 to 2022 was to reduce the risk of diabetes-related complications among residents of Cape May County by expanding access to education, screening, and coordinated care.</p>	<p><b>Expanding Diabetes Education</b>  We enhanced our Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) offerings, providing culturally sensitive and bilingual workshops in collaboration with local clinics and community centers. These sessions focused on blood sugar control, nutrition, medication adherence, and foot care.</p> <p><b>Community-Based Screening &amp; Early Detection</b>  Cape Regional hosted free A1C screenings at health fairs, senior centers, and outreach events. We worked closely with primary care providers to identify high-risk individuals and connect them to early intervention resources.</p> <p><b>Nutrition and Lifestyle Support</b>  In partnership with local food banks, farmers markets, and wellness organizations, we promoted healthy eating and physical activity. Our team supported walking clubs, group fitness classes, and nutrition counseling to empower patients to make sustainable lifestyle changes.</p> <p><b>Care Coordination and Access Expansion</b>  We strengthened referral pathways to endocrinologists, diabetes educators, and support services. Recognizing transportation as a barrier, we provided ride assistance and expanded telehealth access for patients in rural and underserved areas.</p> <p><b>Community Engagement and Awareness</b>  Cape Regional led annual Diabetes Awareness Month campaigns, engaging faith-based organizations, schools, and civic groups to raise awareness and promote prevention strategies.</p>	<p>DSME participation increased by 35% over the three-year period.</p> <p>Emergency department visits related to uncontrolled diabetes declined measurably.</p> <p>Persistent barriers such as transportation, digital literacy, and food insecurity remain areas for future focus.</p> <p><i>This work reflects Cape Regional's ongoing commitment to improving chronic disease outcomes and advancing health equity across Cape May County. We remain dedicated to building on these efforts in the 2025–2028 implementation phase.</i></p>

<b>Obesity Prevention &amp; Healthy Lifestyle Promotion</b> <b>Timeframe: 2023-2025</b> <b>Priority Area: Chronic Disease – Obesity</b>		
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED</b>	<b>OUTCOMES &amp; LESSONS LEARNED</b>
<p>Cape Regional Health System aimed to improve awareness of healthy eating, promote active lifestyles, and connect residents of Cape May County with local resources to address weight-related health issues.</p>	<p><b>Nutrition Education and Outreach</b>  Hosted community workshops and cooking demonstrations focused on balanced diets, portion control, and reading nutrition labels.  Distributed multilingual educational materials through clinics, schools, and local businesses.</p> <p><b>Healthy Lifestyle Promotion</b>  Partnered with local gyms, YMCAs, and wellness centers to offer discounted memberships and free trial classes.  Supported walking clubs, family fitness events, and workplace wellness challenges.</p> <p><b>School and Youth Engagement</b>  Collaborated with Cape May County schools to integrate nutrition and physical activity into health curricula.  Sponsored healthy snack initiatives and school garden programs.</p> <p><b>Resource Awareness Campaigns</b>  Developed a county-wide directory of weight management programs, dietitians, and fitness resources.  Promoted services through social media, local radio, and community health fairs.</p> <p><b>Clinical Integration</b>  Trained primary care providers to screen for obesity and refer patients to lifestyle modification programs.  Expanded access to registered dietitians and behavioral health support for weight management.</p>	<p>Increased participation in nutrition and fitness programs across Cape May County.</p> <p>Strengthened partnerships with schools, wellness providers, and local government.</p> <p>Identified persistent barriers including transportation, affordability, and cultural perceptions of weight.</p> <p><i>Cape Regional remains committed to empowering residents with the knowledge, tools, and support needed to lead healthier lives. These efforts reflect our dedication to reducing obesity-related complications and promoting long-term wellness throughout Cape May County.</i></p>

<b>Cardiovascular Disease Awareness &amp; Prevention</b> <b>Timeframe: 2023-2025</b> <b>Priority Area: Chronic Disease – Cardiovascular Health</b>		
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED</b>	<b>OUTCOMES &amp; LESSONS LEARNED</b>
<p>Cape Regional Health System aimed to increase awareness and education about heart disease, promote heart-healthy lifestyles, and improve communication around available resources and treatments for residents of Cape May County.</p>	<p><b>Community Education and Outreach</b>  Hosted heart health seminars, blood pressure clinics, and CPR training events.  Distributed educational materials on risk factors, warning signs, and prevention strategies through primary care offices, pharmacies, and senior centers.</p> <p><b>Lifestyle Promotion Initiatives</b>  Partnered with local fitness centers and wellness organizations to offer heart-healthy exercise programs.  Supported walking clubs, nutrition workshops, and smoking cessation programs.  Promoted the American Heart Association’s “Life’s Simple 7” framework for cardiovascular wellness.</p> <p><b>Clinical Screening and Early Detection</b>  Expanded access to cholesterol, blood pressure, and BMI screenings at community events and health fairs.  Integrated cardiovascular risk assessments into routine primary care visits.</p> <p><b>Resource Navigation &amp; Access Expansion</b>  Developed a Cape May County cardiovascular resource guide listing cardiologists, rehabilitation programs, and support groups.  Improved referral pathways to Cape Regional’s Cardiac Rehab Program and affiliated specialists.  Enhanced telehealth access for follow-up care and medication management.</p> <p><b>Public Awareness Campaigns</b>  Led annual Heart Month campaigns each February, featuring local media outreach, social media engagement, and community challenges.  Collaborated with schools and employers to promote heart health in everyday environments.</p>	<p>Increased participation in cardiac screenings and rehab programs.</p> <p>Improved public understanding of heart disease risk factors and prevention.</p> <p>Identified ongoing barriers including transportation, insurance coverage, and health literacy.</p> <p>Future plans will include expanding mobile screening units and peer-led heart health ambassadors.</p> <p><i>Cooper Cape Regional remains committed to advancing cardiovascular health through education, prevention, and compassionate care. These efforts reflect our dedication to building a heart-healthy Cape May County.</i></p>

Cancer: Prevention, Screening and Treatment Timeframe: 2023-2025 Priority Area: Cancer: prevention, Screening and Treatment		
GOAL	STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED	OUTCOMES & LESSONS LEARNED
<p>To reduce cancer incidence and mortality in Cape May County by improving access to prevention, early detection, and treatment services—particularly for breast, colorectal, lung, and prostate cancers.</p>	<p><b>Community Screening Programs:</b> Partnered with local clinics and health departments to offer free or low-cost cancer screenings, especially targeting underserved populations.</p> <p><b>Public Education Campaigns:</b> Conducted outreach on the importance of early detection, risk factors, and available resources.</p> <p><b>Provider Training:</b> Enhanced clinical capacity through continuing education on evidence-based screening guidelines and referral pathways.</p> <p><b>Navigation Services:</b> Introduced patient navigators to assist with scheduling, transportation, and follow-up care.</p> <p><b>Partnership Development:</b> Strengthened collaboration with regional cancer centers to streamline referrals and improve access to advanced treatment options.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <p><b>Increased Screening Rates:</b> Notable uptick in breast and colorectal cancer screenings, particularly among older adults and low-income populations.</p> <p><b>Earlier Detection:</b> Cancers diagnosed at earlier stages, improving prognosis and reducing treatment intensity.</p> <p><b>Improved Care Coordination:</b> Patients reported better experiences navigating the health care system, with fewer delays in diagnosis and treatment.</p> <p>Expanded Community Awareness: Greater public understanding of cancer risks and the importance of regular screenings.</p> <p><b>Lessons Learned</b></p> <p><b>Access Barriers Persist:</b> Transportation, cost, and awareness remain significant obstacles, especially for seniors and uninsured individuals.</p> <p><b>Navigation Improves Outcomes:</b> Patient navigation significantly reduced missed appointments and improved follow-through on referrals.</p> <p><b>Need for Integrated Systems:</b> Fragmented care pathways highlighted the importance of system-level integration—will be addressed through the Cooper–Cape Regional merger.</p>

<b>ACES Grant &amp; Cape Regional Wellness Alliance</b> <b>Established:</b> June 2017 <b>Funding:</b> \$200,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation / NJ Health Initiatives (NJHI) <b>Timeframe:</b> 2023-2025		
GOAL	STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED	OUTCOMES & LESSONS LEARNED
<p>Purpose To reduce the impact of <b>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)</b> in Cape May County by building a Culture of Health through education, resilience-building, and community partnerships.</p>	<p><b>Community Education on ACEs</b> Developed a comprehensive education program about ACEs and their long-term health effects. Promoted awareness across Lower Township, Middle Township, Wildwood, and Woodbine—areas identified as having the most at-risk youth.</p> <p><b>Resilience-Building Programs</b> Supported school-based initiatives like Youth Law Enforcement Leadership Camps. Facilitated inter-agency agreements to provide on-site counseling and clinical services in schools. Partnered with Family Success Centers and School-Based Youth Services to strengthen family and student support.</p> <p><b>Cross-Sector Collaboration</b> Engaged over 35 organizations across health care, education, law enforcement, business, and mental health. Leadership team included representatives from Cape Regional Health System, Cape May County Chamber of Commerce, Lower Cape May Regional School District, Middle Township Police Department, and Cape Counseling.</p> <p><b>Community Engagement and Resource Development</b> Created partnerships with local businesses and faith-based groups to promote youth events and resilience programs. Developed a county-wide resource guide of health and social service organizations.</p> <p><b>Health and Lifestyle Promotion</b> Implemented activities that promote healthy living and emotional well-being for children and families. Supported trauma-informed care training for educators and service providers.</p>	<p>Impact and Recognition</p> <p>The Board of Chosen Freeholders proclaimed <b>November 2017 as ACES Awareness Month</b> in Cape May County.</p> <p>The initiative laid the foundation for ongoing trauma-informed care and youth resilience efforts across the county. Cape Regional Health System remains committed to addressing childhood trauma and promoting lifelong wellness through education, collaboration, and compassionate care.</p>

# Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional

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## Patient Stories and Testimonials

“After my heart attack, I didn’t know where to turn. Cape Regional’s cardiac rehab helped me rebuild my strength and confidence.”

— Patient Experience response

“I’ve had to wait weeks just to be seen for a routine check-up. We need more doctors in the area.”

-Cape May County Resident

“It would be great to have more specialists available locally. I often have to travel far for care.”

-Cape May County Resident

The staff treated me like family. I felt heard, respected, and truly cared for.”

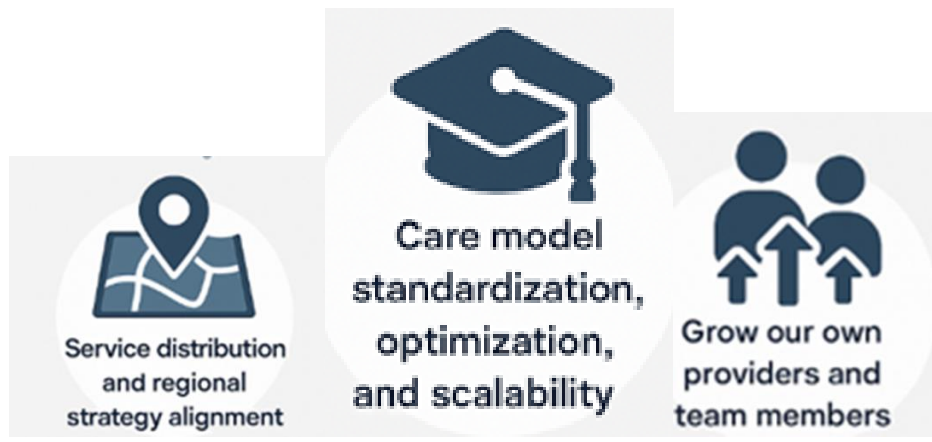
-Patient Experience response

## **Future Services and Strategies to Improve Access to Care in Cape May County**

At Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional, we are committed to addressing the persistent health challenges that impact Cape May County residents. Building on community input and consistent data from recent assessments, we are developing targeted strategies to improve prevention, early detection, treatment, and long-term management across several priority areas.

## **Cooper Cape Strategic Vision**

- Create ecosystem of care to ensure access.
- Leverage current system assets to add primary/specialty services.
- Execute a recruitment plan.
- Collaborate across institutes and enterprise on novel programs for patients/team members.
- Continue to build community relationships and confidence.



To address persistent barriers such as geographic isolation, provider shortages, and affordability, Cooper Cape is positioned to lead a comprehensive, multi-sector strategy focused on expanding access, improving equity, and strengthening care delivery across Cape May County. The following initiatives reflect a forward-looking approach grounded in community needs and public health best practices:

At Cooper Cape, we recognize that improving access to care in Cape May County requires a coordinated, multi-dimensional strategy. Our future efforts will focus on addressing long-standing challenges such as geographic isolation, provider shortages, affordability, and health equity—particularly for rural and aging populations

## **Community Partners**

- Cape May County Department of Health
- Acenda Health
- Cape Addiction Recovery Services (C.A.R.E.S.)
- Cape Assist
- Lower Cape May Regional School District
- Atlantic Cape Community College
- Rutgers Cooperative Extension
- South Jersey Behavioral Health Resources
- NJ Department of Human Services – Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Local senior centers and aging services agencies
- Faith-based organizations and churches
- Food banks and nutrition outreach programs (e.g., Community FoodBank of NJ)
- Transportation providers (e.g., Fare Free Transportation)
- Housing agencies and social service organizations
- Local fitness centers
- MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
- Community health workers and peer support networks
- Cape Regional Cancer Center
- American Cancer Society – South Jersey Chapter
- Local women’s health organizations
- Local advocacy groups

## **Local School Districts**

- Avalon School District
- Cape May City School District
- Cape May County Special Services School District
- Cape May County Technical High School District
- Cape May Point School District
- Corbin City School District
- Dennis Township School District
- Lower Cape May Regional School District
- Lower Township Elementary School District
- Middle Township Public School District
- North Wildwood School District
- Ocean City School District
- Sea Isle City School District
- Stone Harbor School District
- Upper Township School District
- West Cape May School District
- West Wildwood School District
- Wildwood City School District
- Wildwood Crest School District
- Woodbine School District

## **Municipal Police Departments:**

- Avalon Police Department
- Cape May City Police Department
- Lower Township Police Department
- Middle Township Police Department
- North Wildwood Police Department
- Ocean City Police Department
- Sea Isle City Police Department
- Stone Harbor Police Department
- West Wildwood Police Department
- Wildwood Police Department
- Wildwood Crest Police Department

## **Other Law Enforcement:**

- Cape May County Sheriff's Office – County-wide jurisdiction
- Cape May County Prosecutor's Office
- New Jersey State Police – Covers Dennis Township, Upper Township, and Woodbine

## Future Goals and Strategies to Improve Access to Care in Cape May County

ACCESS TO CARE	
Expand Access to Care in Cape May County Timeframe: 2026-2028	
GOAL	Strategy
<p>Improve Access to Care and ensure sustainable care delivery in Cape May County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance care delivery through satellite clinics and rotating specialist schedules for oncology, cardiology, behavioral health, and other high-demand services.</li> <li>• Leverage Cooper’s academic and clinical network to bring advanced diagnostics and specialty expertise directly into the community.</li> <li>• Provide primary care, screenings, and vaccinations directly in underserved communities.</li> <li>• Integrated primary care models that co-locate behavioral health, chronic disease management, and preventive services for streamlined care School-based and senior center health programs to bring care into trusted community spaces.</li> <li>• Expand the roles of nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and community health workers to fill gaps and extend care capacity.</li> <li>• Collaborate with academic institutions and local training programs to recruit and retain health care professionals.</li> </ul>

## Future Goals and Strategies to Improve Care in Cape May County

DIABETES AND OBESITY	
COMBAT RISING RATES OF DIABETES AND OBESITY TIMEFRAME: 2026-2028	
GOAL	STRATEGY
<p>Combat rising rates of Diabetes and Obesity in Cape May County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand community-based screening initiatives to increase early identification of prediabetes and metabolic risk factors among residents.</li> <li>• Integrate evidence-based nutrition counseling and lifestyle coaching into primary care workflows to support sustained behavior change.</li> <li>• Deliver comprehensive weight-management and diabetes education programs designed to meet the needs of children, adolescents, adults, older adults, and underserved populations.</li> <li>• Strengthen partnerships with schools and community centers to advance healthy eating, physical activity, and chronic disease prevention initiatives.</li> <li>• Leverage telehealth and/or mobile health units to improve access to chronic disease management services, particularly for rural and hard-to-reach communities.</li> </ul>

## Future Goals and Strategies to Improve Care in Cape May County

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE	
REDUCE THE BURDEN OF HEART DISEASE AND RELATED CONDITIONS TIMEFRAME: 2026-2028	
GOAL	STRATEGY
Reduce the burden of heart disease and related conditions in Cape May County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand access to preventive cardiovascular screenings, including blood pressure checks, cholesterol testing, and EKGs, to support early detection and risk reduction.</li><li>• Promote evidence-based smoking cessation, stress-reduction, and physical activity programs through coordinated partnerships with community organizations.</li><li>• Strengthen post-discharge care coordination for cardiac patients to improve transition-of-care processes and reduce avoidable readmissions.</li><li>• Integrate telecardiology services to enhance remote monitoring, follow-up care, and access to specialty expertise, particularly for residents facing transportation or geographic barriers.</li></ul>

## Future Goals and Strategies to Improve Care in Cape May County

CANCER SCREENING AND TREATMENT	
EXPAND ACCESS TO CARE IN CAPE MAY COUNTY TIMEFRAME: 2026-2028	
GOAL	STRATEGY
<p>Build on existing services to Improve Access to Cancer Care in Cape May County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand access to routine cancer screenings—including breast, cervical, colorectal, and prostate screenings—to increase early detection and reduce late-stage diagnoses.</li> <li>• Integrate MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper clinical protocols into local care delivery to ensure consistent, evidence-based oncology practice across Cape May County.</li> <li>• Develop and expand survivorship programs that provide mental health support, rehabilitation services, and long-term follow-up care for individuals completing cancer treatment.</li> <li>• Increase oncology social work and patient navigation resources to help patients successfully move through diagnosis, treatment, and supportive services.</li> <li>• Deliver community education and outreach initiatives aimed at improving cancer awareness, promoting early detection, and reducing stigma across diverse populations.</li> </ul>

## Future Goals and Strategies to Improve Care in Cape May County

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS	
ADDRESS THE ONGOING CRISIS IN CAPE MAY COUNTY TIMEFRAME: 2026-2028	
GOAL	STRATEGY
<p>Build onto existing services to address the ongoing mental health issues and substance use disorders in Cape May County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate behavioral health services into primary care and urgent care settings to increase timely access and improve coordination of care.</li> <li>• Expand access to crisis intervention, counseling, and psychiatric services to ensure residents receive appropriate support across the full continuum of care.</li> <li>• Strengthen partnerships with schools, senior centers, and faith-based organizations to deliver community-based mental health education, outreach, and early-intervention programming.</li> <li>• Enhance and expand peer support and recovery programs to better serve individuals with substance use disorders and support long-term recovery.</li> <li>• Advocate for increased state and county investment to support behavioral health workforce development and build sustainable service infrastructure.</li> </ul>

For questions and/or future collaborations please contact:

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