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### Your Feedback Makes Us Better

We welcome your comments, ideas and questions about this report, and all Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Implementation Plan documents at Northwestern Medicine.

Please share your feedback by calling the Northwestern Medicine Community Affairs Department at 312.926.2301 (TTY: 711) or by emailing [communityhealth@nm.org](mailto:communityhealth@nm.org).

Please include your name, organization (if applicable), and any questions or feedback you have about the report content.

**Public availability**

This report and all Northwestern Medicine Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Implementation Plan documents are public information. You can access them at [nm.org/about-us/nm-community-impact/reports](https://nm.org/about-us/nm-community-impact/reports).

You can also request reports at no cost by calling the Northwestern Medicine Community Affairs Department at 312.926.2301 (TTY: 711) or by emailing [communityhealth@nm.org](mailto:communityhealth@nm.org).



# Introduction

## Northwestern Medicine is committed to:

- Providing quality medical care, regardless of a patient's ability to pay
- Transforming medical care through clinical innovation, breakthrough research and academic excellence
- Improving the health of the communities we serve

We are a nonprofit, integrated academic health system committed to serving a broad community. We provide world-class care at 11 hospitals, two medical groups, and more than 200 diagnostic and ambulatory locations in communities throughout Chicago and the surrounding suburbs.

Our hospitals are pillars in their respective communities and lead efforts to positively impact the health of the populations they serve. From collaborating with community organizations to serving as a major economic driver, Northwestern Medicine makes communities stronger.

Northwestern Medicine is a strategic partnership between Northwestern Memorial HealthCare and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.



**11**  
hospitals



**2**  
medical groups



**200+**  
locations



## About Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital

Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital is a 406-bed, acute care hospital located in Palos Heights, Illinois, that serves Chicago's southwest suburbs, including southwestern Cook County and northeastern Will County. The complete range of services includes a comprehensive emergency department, an intensive care unit, comprehensive cardiovascular services, home health services, orthopaedics, oncology, maternity care and women's health, pediatrics, physical and occupational therapy, and psychiatry and behavioral health.

Palos Hospital is committed to continuously reviewing and analyzing the changing needs of our community and responding quickly and effectively with services that positively impact our community. We realize that to have the greatest impact, we need to work with our neighbors and learn from them. Palos Hospital has a rich history of caring for its community and will continue to uphold its promise to meaningfully improve access to high-quality health care and implement targeted programs that address the priority health needs of the community.

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### Community Benefits Plan

Northwestern Memorial HealthCare and Palos Hospital are guided by a Community Benefits Plan. The Community Benefits Plan includes comprehensive financial assistance and presumptive eligibility policies, as well as vast research, education and other community benefit activities. This Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP) is aligned and coordinated with the Community Benefits Plan. Together, these strategies help to improve the health of the communities we serve.

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## About the Community Health Implementation Plan

In alignment with our mission and in accordance with the requirements of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Palos Hospital works with community organizations every three years to complete a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that identifies the significant health needs of residents of the community it serves.

This CHIP is a companion document to the Palos Hospital 2022 CHNA, which can be accessed at [nm.org/about-us/nm-community-impact/reports](https://nm.org/about-us/nm-community-impact/reports). The goal of the CHIP is to use CHNA data to guide initiatives that improve the health of our community.

In this report, we summarize the significant health needs identified in the 2022 CHNA. We identify which of these needs we will prioritize over the next three years and explain why we will not be addressing other significant health needs identified in the 2022 CHNA.

In addition, for each priority health need, we will explain:

- Actions or strategies planned to address each need
- Anticipated impact of those strategies
- Resources we intend to commit to those strategies
- Planned collaborations between Palos Hospital and other organizations to address the need

## We rely on the voice of the community

Palos Hospital values and utilizes the voice of the local community during development of the CHIP. One way we gather feedback is through our two councils:

**The Community Engagement Council is a diverse group of representatives from the Palos Hospital CSA.** Council members are people who have broad-reaching areas of expertise and have demonstrated a strong, ongoing commitment to improving the health of the communities we serve.

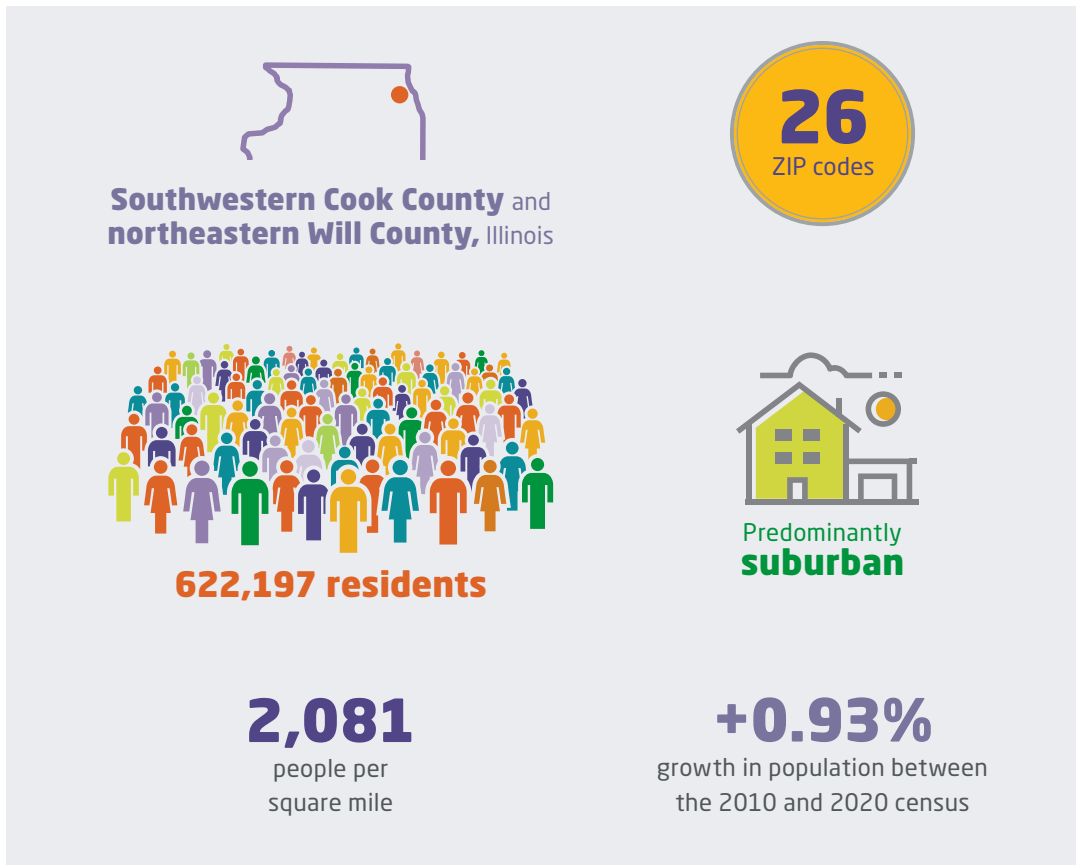
**The Community Health Council is made up of Northwestern Medicine staff from both clinical and operating departments.** Council members were invited based on their role and commitment to improving the health of the community.



## Community Served by Palos Hospital

The Palos Hospital Community Service Area (CSA) covers the following ZIP codes in southwest Cook County and northwest Will County, Illinois:

Palos Hospital CSA ZIP Codes			
City	ZIP Code	City	ZIP Code
Alsip	60803	Mokena	60448
Bridgeview	60455	Mt. Greenwood	60655
Burbank	60459	New Lenox	60451
Chicago Ridge	60415	Oak Forest	60452
Crestwood	60418	Oak Lawn	60453
Evergreen Park	60805	Orland Hills/Tinley Park	60487
Frankfort	60423	Orland Park	60462, 60467
Homer Glen	60491	Palos Heights	60463
Justice	60458	Palos Hills	60465
Lemont	60439	Palos Park	60464
Lockport	60441	Tinley Park	60477
Midlothian/Crestwood	60445	Worth	60482



The Palos Hospital CSA was determined by:

- Geographic area served by the hospital
- Main functions of the hospital
- Areas that have been historically under-resourced
- Areas where we are currently working on addressing priority health needs, including work with community partners

The defined CSA takes into account populations that are:

- Medically underserved
- Low-income
- Historically under-represented, minority populations

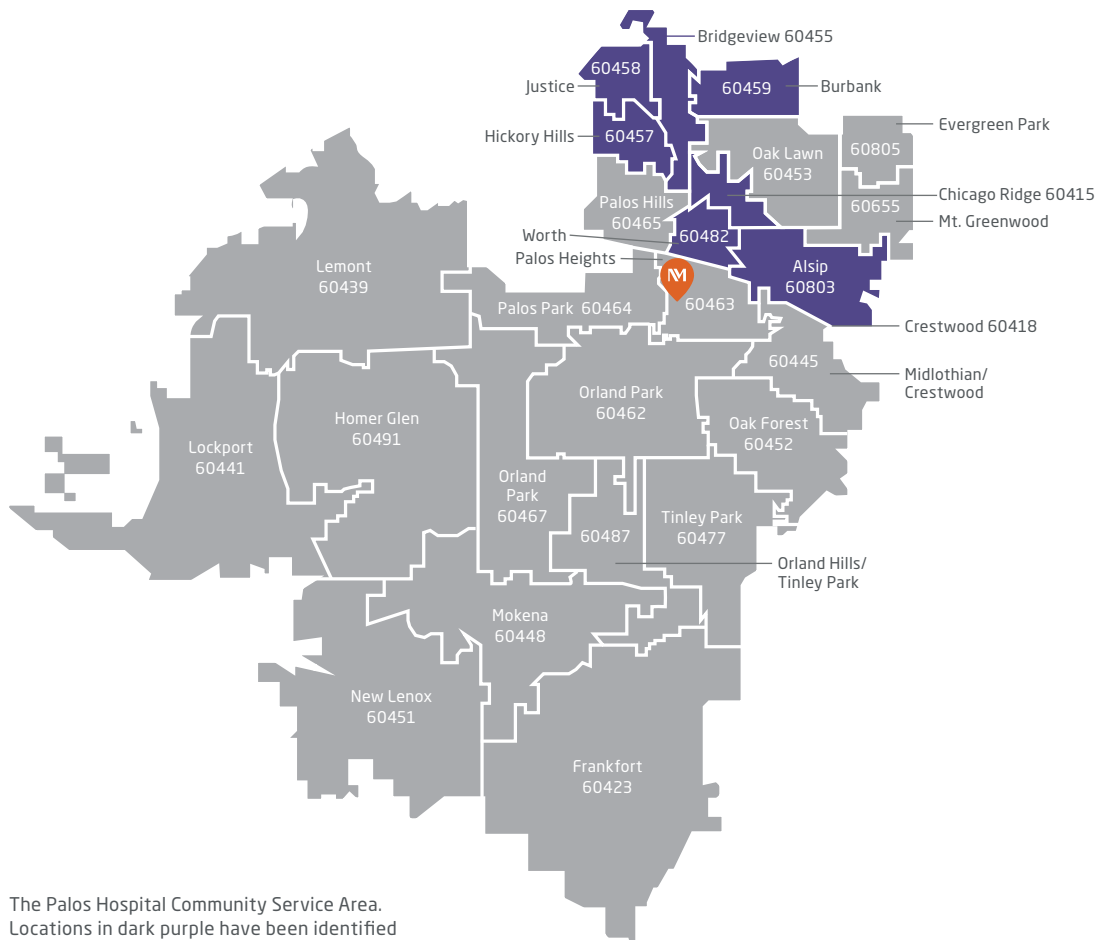
Our CSA definition does not take into account how much patients or their insurers pay for care or whether patients are eligible for financial assistance through Northwestern Medicine.

## Identifying communities with economic hardship

Once the CSA has been defined, Northwestern Medicine uses the Socioeconomic Resource Index (SERI) to identify areas experiencing economic hardship. Under-resourced areas are identified based on multiple indicators, including:

- Unemployment (over age 16)
- Education (over age 25 without a high school diploma)
- Per capita income level
- Crowded housing (more than one person per room)
- Dependents (under age 18 or over age 64)
- Poverty (income below 200% of the federal poverty level)

The strategies identified in this report focus on these under-resourced areas in an effort to address health equity within the CSA.



The Palos Hospital Community Service Area. Locations in dark purple have been identified as under-resourced communities by SERI.

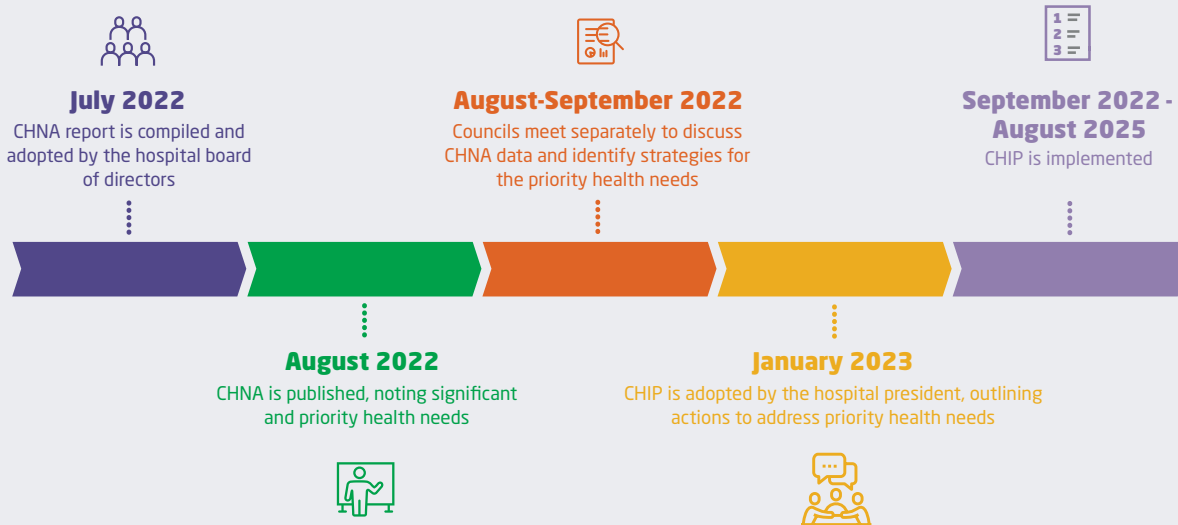






# Community Health Implementation Plan Overview

## CHIP Timeline



## CHIP development process

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### **CHNA: Identify significant health needs**

The Palos Hospital 2022 CHNA was conducted in collaboration with Alliance for Healthy Equity. Together, we completed a comprehensive analysis of the collected data. Analysis included getting input from people in targeted under-resourced populations.

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### **Prioritization: Select priority health needs**

Once the CHNA data analysis was complete, we convened the Palos Hospital Community Engagement Council and Community Health Council to assist in the prioritization process. We invited council members based on their strong collaborative efforts to improve the health of the community, and their varied backgrounds provided diverse insight into prioritizing significant health needs.

To help us prioritize, these council members used a structured process that included a review of guiding principles and CHNA data findings, as well as participation in robust conversations regarding community health needs for the Palos Hospital CSA.

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### **Strategy development: Identify actions to address priority health needs**

Following the prioritization process, we used a systematic approach to develop strategies to address the priority health needs. Once again working with the Palos Hospital Community Engagement Council and Community Health Council, we identified actions, resources, anticipated impacts and planned collaborations to make meaningful progress over the next three years.

In developing these strategies, we were mindful of our own strengths and those of other organizations in our CSA.

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### **Adoption: 3-year plan**

This CHIP will be active from September 1, 2022, to August 31, 2025, in alignment with our fiscal year calendar. It will be reviewed and updated as needed during the three-year span to ensure it remains viable and to maximize our impact. We will regularly share our efforts with reporting agencies and our community.

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### **Implementation: Implement strategies to address priority health needs**

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## Significant Health Needs

The following significant health needs were identified through the Palos Hospital 2022 CHNA. Of these, three were selected as priority health needs.

Among the significant health needs not identified as priority health needs, many are being addressed through the ongoing, comprehensive services and programs at Palos Hospital, in collaboration with our community partners, and across Northwestern Medicine.

Health Need Identified in CHNA	Our Response
Age-Related Illness	This need is addressed through the hospital care delivery system.
► Behavioral Health	This need has been identified as a priority health need. See pages 14-15 for our plan to address it.
Cancers	This need is addressed through the hospital care delivery system.
Coordination and Connection to Community Resources	To advance equity for those we serve, this need will be incorporated in our work plans.
COVID-19	This need is addressed through the hospital care delivery system.
► Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Care	This need has been identified as a priority health need. See pages 16-17 for our plan to address it.
Diabetes	This need is addressed through the hospital care delivery system.
Education and Youth Development	Although not identified as a priority, we are developing resources to address this need.
Employment	Although not identified as a priority, we are developing resources to address this need.
► Food Access and Security	This need has been identified as a priority health need. See pages 18-19 for our plan to address it.
Heart Disease and Stroke	This need is addressed through the hospital care delivery system.
Homelessness and Housing Instability	This need is better addressed by community organizations specializing in this field.
Linkage to Quality Care	To advance equity for those we serve, this need will be incorporated in our work plans.
Obesity	This need is addressed through the hospital care delivery system.
Oral Health	This need is better addressed by community organizations specializing in this field.
Structural Inequities and Bias	To advance equity for those we serve, this need will be incorporated in our work plans.
Transportation	This need is better addressed by community organizations specializing in this field.
Trauma-Informed Care	Although not identified as a priority, we are developing resources to address this need.

► Indicates priority health need.



# Priority Health Needs for Palos Hospital

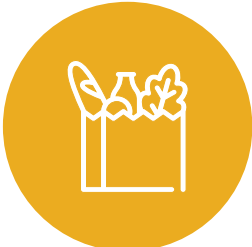
The following needs were identified as the priority health needs to be addressed by Palos Hospital over the next three years.



**Behavioral Health**



**Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Care**



**Food Access and Security**

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**Our commitment to health equity**

To achieve equity for those we serve, Northwestern Medicine continually works to:

- Overcome structural inequities and bias
- Improve coordination and connection to community resources
- Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care

These three areas are integrated in every strategy we have for addressing the priority health needs of our community. These are foundational issues that Northwestern Medicine is addressing both within the organization and across our communities. The long-standing resolve to address them is embedded throughout the work of Northwestern Medicine.

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## Priority Health Need: Behavioral Health



**Goal: Improve access to and utilization of behavioral health services within the Palos Health CSA.**

Behavioral health disorders are common and affect people of all demographics. Conditions like depression and anxiety can affect people's ability to take part in healthy behaviors.



**46%**  
Community survey respondents identified access to behavioral health services as a need within their community\*

Important reasons why this need should be addressed, according to community survey respondents:



High levels of chronic stress



Substance abuse and trauma



Stigma and effects of COVID-19

### Action 1: Resources

Improve access to behavioral health support services through the expansion of community-based programs

#### Anticipated Impact

Increase collaboration between community organizations and Northwestern Medicine, and provide additional funding to enhance and expand community-based programs that address behavioral health

#### Resources

Educational materials, material resources, funding and staff time

#### Collaborations

Community agencies and organizations (to be determined)

\*Within the Palos Hospital CSA, as reported in the Palos Hospital 2022 CHNA



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### **Action 2: Education**

**Expand behavioral health preventive and educational resources in collaboration with community organizations**

#### **Anticipated Impact**

Increased access to education, support groups, self-care and Mental Health First Aid

#### **Resources**

Staff time and educational materials

#### **Collaborations**

Mental Health First Aid, community agencies and organizations (to be determined)

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### **Action 3: Training**

**Expand behavioral health training and education for home health certified nursing assistants**

#### **Anticipated Impact**

Increased number of staff members who are better equipped to comfort and keep a patient or a caregiver safe until help arrives

#### **Resources**

Staff time and educational materials

#### **Collaborations**

Mental Health First Aid

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### **Action 4: Access**

**Pilot a collaborative care model by embedding a social worker in a primary care practice to co-manage behavioral health issues and facilitate additional referrals to behavioral health practitioners as needed**

#### **Anticipated Impact**

Increased utilization of Behavioral Health Services and reduced stigma regarding specialty care for behavioral health

#### **Resources**

Staff time

#### **Collaborations**

Internal Northwestern Medicine initiative

Priority Health Need: Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Care

Hello  
Hola  
Cześć

**Goal: Promote inclusion for Palos Hospital patients and employees by offering training, programming and translations appropriate for communities served within the Palos Hospital CSA.**

Without sensitivity to cultural and language needs, medical professionals may miss aspects of a patient's experience that may improve outcomes.



Working with patients to find solutions within their culture allows for better patient outcomes as well as an improved patient experience.



The physician prescribes a diet that aligns with the patient's cultural background or spiritual beliefs.



The patient is able to follow through on their care plan.



A deeper trust is developed between the physician and patient.

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### **Action 1: Programming**

**Increase culturally and linguistically appropriate programs, including educational opportunities, cooking demonstrations, health screenings and opportunities to receive a flu vaccination in collaboration with community organizations**

#### **Anticipated Impact**

Increased number of screenings and/or vaccine clinics available in under-resourced communities, increased knowledge of and utilization of health resources available in the community, and increased knowledge about health and wellness

#### **Resources**

Staff time, health education tools and program materials

#### **Collaborations**

Community agencies and organizations (to be determined)

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### **Action 2: Training**

**Promote inclusion by educating staff members on the key components of delivering care while being sensitive to unique cultures, customs and religions**

#### **Anticipated Impact**

Improved patient satisfaction and improved patient outcomes

#### **Resources**

Staff time and educational resources

#### **Collaborations**

Community agencies and organizations (to be determined)

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### **Action 3: Access**

**Assess most commonly spoken languages and identify patient materials to be translated into those languages**

#### **Anticipated Impact**

Improved patient satisfaction with their care experience

#### **Resources**

Staff time and financial resources

#### **Collaborations**

Internal Northwestern Medicine initiative

Priority Health Need: Food Access and Security



**Goal: Improve access to healthy and affordable food options and nutrition education for communities within the Palos Hospital CSA.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly exacerbated the problem of food insecurity, not only in the Palos Hospital CSA, but across the United States. People, particularly children, who do not have enough to eat are at risk for developmental and learning delays as well as other physical and psychological challenges.



A healthy food environment reduces the risk for many illnesses:



Cardiovascular disease



Cancer



Obesity



Type 2 diabetes



Anemia

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**Action 1: Access**

**Ensure safe storage of unused food for use by community partner that addresses needs related to homelessness**

**Anticipated Impact**

Increased number of meals available to individuals facing hunger

**Resources**

Staff time and program materials

**Collaborations**

Beds Plus

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**Action 2: Access**

**Implement electronic medical record screening tool to connect patients with local agencies that assist with food resources**

**Anticipated Impact**

Increased number of patients referred to food resources available in the community

**Resources**

Staff time

**Collaborations**

Community agencies and organizations (to be determined)

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**Action 3: Access**

**Promote access to food and support nutrition education through funding in collaboration with community organizations**

**Anticipated Impact**

Enhanced access to food resources through funding support, expanded nutrition education focused on healthy cooking on a budget, and assessment of local programs to identify gaps and offer additional services as appropriate

**Resources**

Staff time and funding

**Collaborations**

Community agencies and organizations (to be determined)



## Community Health Implementation Plan Adoption

The adoption of this plan was authorized through a board resolution at the July 21, 2022, meeting of the Palos Community Hospital Board of Directors.

The Palos Hospital 2023-2025 Community Health Implementation Plan was adopted by the president of Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital on January 13, 2023.





**Northwestern Medicine Palos Hospital**

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