

Next Steps and Recommendations

This community health needs assessment clearly identified the high burden of chronic disease and behavioral health conditions, limited access to health care and behavioral health services, and lack of affordable housing as the top community needs. Sturdy may wish to give special attention to the needs of older adults due to significant disparities in emergency department utilization. The next step is for Sturdy Health to collaborate with the Community Benefits Advisory Committee to refine and prioritize community health initiative options that could synergize existing resources and programs to meet these needs. There are great opportunities to partner with other organizations in the Sturdy service area to align efforts to address community needs. Key informant interviewees identified ways that Sturdy Health can leverage existing community initiatives and resources to increase the impact of its community benefits investments. There was a consensus that Sturdy Health could address gaps in healthcare access and community members' health-related social needs through these strategies

Based on feedback from community partners, including health care providers, public health experts, health and human service agencies, and other community representatives, we have committed to focusing our community health improvement efforts on:

- I. Increase Healthcare Access and Health Education**
- II. Improve Services for Older Adults**
- III. Address Top Health-Related Social Needs**
- IV. Prevent Escalation of Mental Health Needs**

Increase Healthcare Access and Health Education: Identify opportunities to expand primary care and build on behavioral health access and resources, especially among populations with health-related social needs, or other conditions that make them more vulnerable to adverse outcomes. This could include opportunities to bolster health education by utilizing non-clinical staff and community partners to augment the health education available from primary care practitioners who are challenged by high ratios of patients due to provider shortages throughout the state and nation.

Strategies	Metrics and Progress
Expand primary care, behavioral health, and telehealth access through community partnerships	•
Support care navigation and insurance enrollment support in community settings	•
Leverage mobile outreach and pop-up clinics	•

Explore Opportunities to Improve Services for Older Adults: Sturdy has opportunities to make an impact on the provision of care and services for older adults by examining service delivery improvement models. One example of such a model is Age Friendly Health Systems, an evidence based framework designed to meet the needs of older adults by looking beyond acute events, engaging the whole community, and achieving better health. It provides many tools to improve patient care, safety, and outcomes; improve patient and family engagement in care; and reduce outcomes such as length of stay and readmission. Age Friendly Health Systems work to support the needs of older adults by focusing on four key areas: what matters, medications, mobility, and mentation — better known as the 4Ms Framework. Pursuit of an Age-Friendly Health System framework would align with new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirements, effective FY 2025, for measurement and attestation from hospitals in five domains of clinical care for patients 65 years and older. They include:

- Eliciting Patient Healthcare Goals
- Responsible Medication Management
- Frailty Screening and Intervention
- Social Vulnerability
- Age-Friendly Care Leadership

Strategies	Metrics and Progress
Adopt the Age-Friendly Health Systems (4Ms) framework across care settings	•
Embed the 4Ms into EHR workflows and clinical documentation	•
Implement frailty and geriatric risk screening for adults 65+	•
Train staff on Age-Friendly care principles and geriatric best practices	•
Establish Age-Friendly care leadership and governance structures	•

Address Top Health-Related Social Needs: Collaborate with others in the service area to identify ways to expand access to affordable housing. Some older adults cannot afford to maintain large homes, and others cannot afford market rate housing at all. Sturdy Health may want to consider opportunities to take a more active role in supporting collective action to address affordable housing and increase housing stability.

Strategies	Metrics and Progress
Participate in local housing coalitions	•
Participate in community forums addressing health priorities	•
Implement care coordination services to assist with access to social services	•
	•
	•
	•

Prevent Escalation of Mental Health Needs: To address the ongoing crisis of social isolation among older adults, children, and youth that intensified during the COVID pandemic, Sturdy Health could work with partners to identify ways for those who are most isolated to come together, taking advantage of local parks and cultural resources, in addition to other strategies. Addressing social isolation can help prevent the exacerbation of behavioral health conditions.

Strategies	Metrics and Progress
Host community connection and social engagement events	•
Continue screening for behavioral health and substance use disorders, explore further opportunities for education and screening tools	•
Screening for Social and Emotional Health	•
Strengthen behavioral health referral pathways	•
Leverage community centers as engagement hubs	•
Implement group-based education and peer support	•