



20/20 VISION

ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY

The Strategic Plan
& Framework



SERVING HUMANITY TO HONOR GOD



A letter from the CEO

We at Methodist Healthcare Ministries have a bold mission: Serving Humanity to Honor God. To serve humanity, we must respect humanity and hold firmly to the belief that we are all God's children and deserving of fair and just opportunities to reach our full potential for health and life. That's why we are committed to advancing health equity. We believe that to improve the wellness of the least served and fully live out our mission, we must recognize the inequities inherent in our communities that contribute to poor health outcomes. By building upon the strengths across our 74-county service area, we work in support of thriving people and thriving places.

This Strategic Plan is the result of a process led by our Board of Directors beginning in 2019. It is the culmination of lessons learned from those we serve, the partners with whom we collaborate to further our mission, and deep exploration of the social determinants of health and community conditions which contribute to well-being in our communities. Our learning was punctuated by the COVID-19 pandemic which cast a blinding light on inequities across our communities and which exacerbated the disparities in access to care, vaccinations and even mortality rates. We know that to shift community conditions for systems change, we must think differently about how we do our work.

We will build upon the 27 years of service to South Texas by leveraging our resources to broaden the definition of health care. We are looking further upstream at what is happening before individuals and families even reach our doors. We will walk alongside those we serve, providing clinical care for the economically disadvantaged and supporting efforts to improve living conditions that cause people to be sick in the first place. When we understand the foundation of health, we transform how we care—that is heart of our 20/20 Vision: Advancing Health Equity strategic plan.

Yours in Service,

PRESIDENT & CEO

Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.

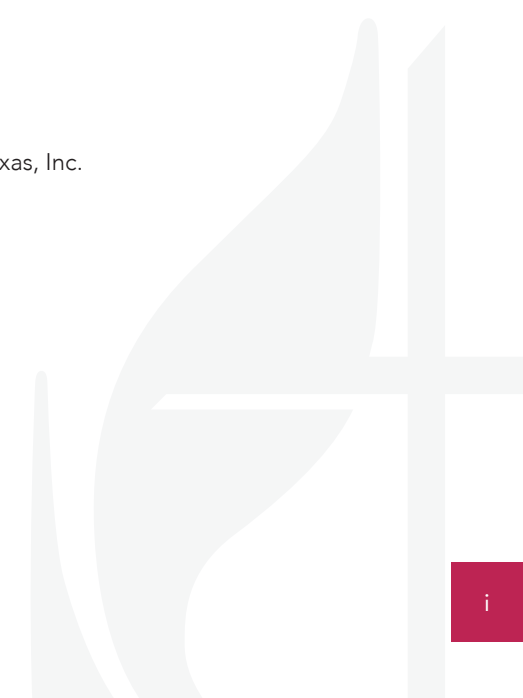




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What Methodist Healthcare Ministries believes

Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc. believes that to improve the wellness of the least served and fully live out its mission of “Serving Humanity to Honor God,” it must recognize the inequities inherent in communities across South Texas that contribute to poor health outcomes. Through a bold strategic plan and framework, Methodist Healthcare Ministries is committed to **advancing health equity**. Methodist Healthcare Ministries *defines health equity as a framework of thought and action that strives to reduce racial and socio-economic disparities and create fair and just opportunities for every person to reach their full potential for health and life and contribute to that of others.*

Methodist Healthcare Ministries’ strategic direction will build on its historic strength in creating access to health care for the least served while creating a paradigm shift in how it partners with communities. Key to achieving that shift will be engaging with communities in co-creating, co-designing and co-evaluating solutions for improving health.

Methodist Healthcare Ministries recognizes that approaching its work in communities with a charity mindset of need and inadequacy, rather than opportunity, strength, and effectiveness, will not improve long-term health and well-being across communities. To be effective in supporting sustainable health outcome changes, it must include community members in the change process, striving for the day when everyone lives into the fullness of who they were created to be.

As a part of this commitment to advancing health equity, Methodist Healthcare Ministries recognizes that it must broaden its definition of health care and expand its focus to include factors that impact the social determinants of health and improve community conditions across its 74-county service area.

Methodist Healthcare Ministries will continue to provide access to quality health care but will place an increasing focus on changing structures, systems, and policies that prevent poor health outcomes and ensure that every person has the opportunity to experience their highest level of health and well-being.



Commitment to Health Equity

Health Equity is both the process and goal by which Methodist Healthcare Ministries seeks to carry out its purpose.

Health Equity is a framework of thought and action that strives to reduce racial and socio-economic disparities and create fair and just opportunity for every person to reach their full potential for health and life and contribute to that of others.



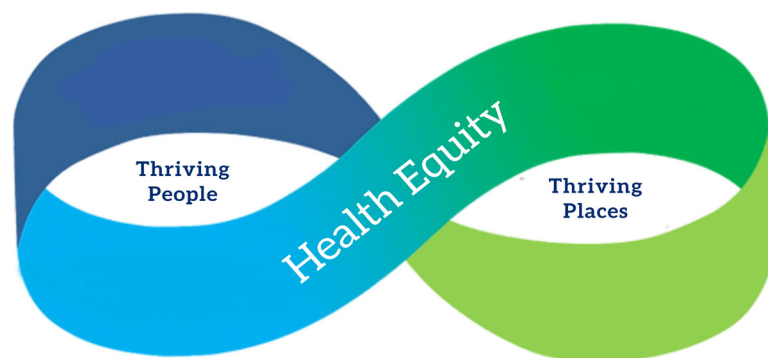
What are social determinants of health?

Conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. They may enhance or impede the ability of individuals to attain their desired level of health.

Strategic framework

Working with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), Methodist Healthcare Ministries' Board of Directors approved a framework adapted from IHI's Pathways to Population Health model. It was designed by 100 Million Lives, a global initiative of IHI, to help organizations like Methodist Healthcare Ministries deepen their ability to improve population health, well-being, and equity. This framework connects medical, mental, social and spiritual care **for individuals** and addresses **community** health and wellbeing efforts to advance health equity. The framework mirrors Methodist Healthcare Ministries' mission and values in supporting the health and well-being of individuals and communities. More importantly, the framework lays the foundation for a coordinated, organizational approach to support the evolution of Methodist Healthcare Ministries' work towards advancing health equity moving forward.

Methodist Healthcare Ministries' strategic framework is a continuum of care centered around two pillars:



Methodist Healthcare Ministries Strategic Framework

- 1. Fostering the development of empowered, resilient individuals and families (Thriving People); and**
- 2. Contributing to the overall health and well-being of communities by strengthening conditions of the environments in the places where people exist through long-term, sustainable collaboration. (Thriving Places).**



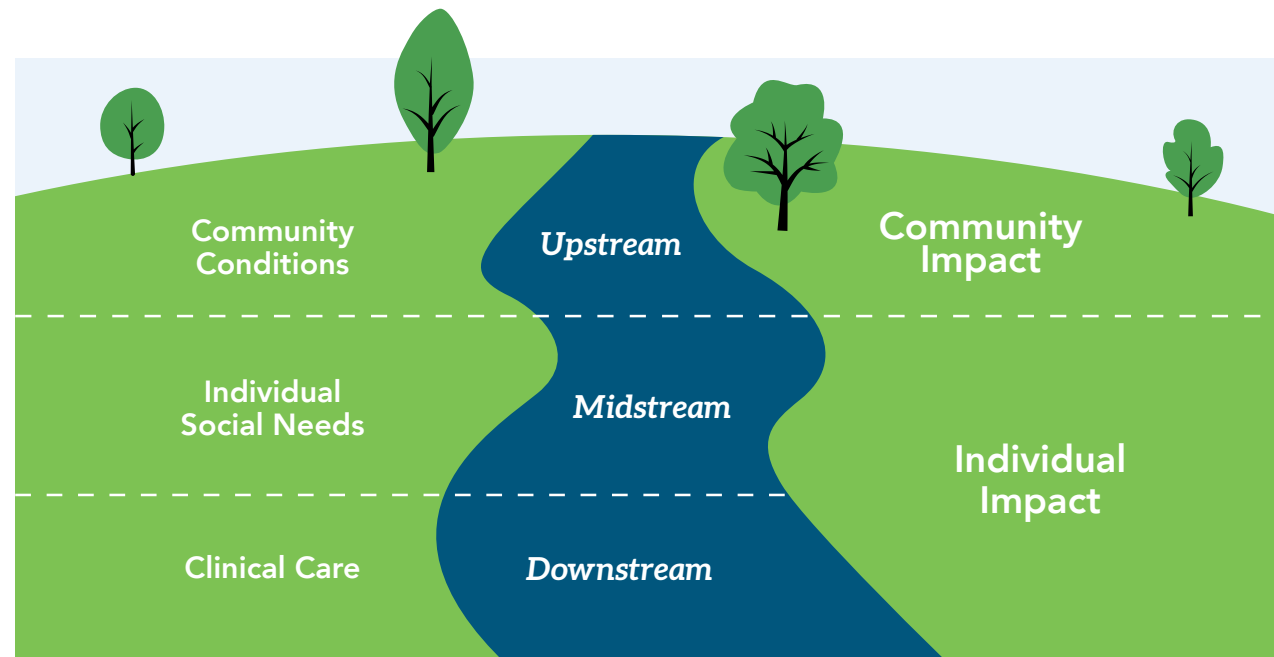


Figure 1. Making Shifts to Move Upstream
(source: <https://shelterforce.org/2019/04/09/meeting-individual-social-needs-falls-short-of-addressing-social-determinants-of-health/>)



Thriving People encompasses:

- Physical and/or Mental Health: Improving the physical and/or mental health of patients and clients through an integrated care model.
- Social and/or Spiritual Well-Being: Screening for and addressing patients' and clients' social and spiritual needs and drivers of health and well-being. (Social needs/drivers encompass socioeconomic factors, such as food, housing, education, transportation, and income, as well as social connectedness. Spiritual drivers include factors that contribute to a sense of purpose, meaning, self-worth, hope, and resilience.)



Thriving Places encompasses:

- Community Conditions: Working together with community partners to improve specific health and well-being outcomes for a place-based population.
- Root Causes: Working with communities of color and other marginalized groups to address historic and present-day structural inequities, and to shift narratives, policies, and investments to grow community power and build a more equitable system.

This framework ensures Methodist Healthcare Ministries is, and will continue to be, a provider and funder for primary care clinical services. As part of its health equity journey it

is engaging in transformative work internally and externally. To change the trajectory of health outcomes for entire communities, it will advocate for, and invest in, upstream opportunities to improve the underlying conditions that shape health and well-being

Going Upstream:

Upstream refers to improving community conditions before people get sick; upstream interventions are focused on *community* (not individual) impact. Midstream efforts address individuals' social needs and are focused on *individual* impact. Downstream focuses on providing and ensuring access to care.

To move upstream, Methodist Healthcare Ministries is:

- Moving from supporting a "sick care system" to strengthening a "health and well-being system"
- Changing strategy to address the root causes of inequities that impact health and well-being
- Shifting mindset from "doing for" people and communities experiencing poverty and inequities to "partnering with" individuals, families, and communities

Successfully implementing this strategic framework requires the coordination of all Methodist Healthcare Ministries' efforts, streamlined into a singular organizational strategy that leverages all of its internal and external assets. And, it recognizes and centers the stakeholders who directly or indirectly experience the impact of the decisions being made. This approach assures the proper balance of stakeholder voice, power, and interest in the development of strategies and within decision making. Methodist Healthcare Ministries is shifting power dynamics regarding who and

Who/What is a stakeholder?



A person (or entity) who can affect and/or be affected by your organization who has a stake in your work. Stakeholders influence your ability to fulfill your mission; they are also the people who experience the consequences of your choices and actions

Strategic plan

Moving forward, Methodist Healthcare Ministries wants to move the needle on improving the community conditions that impact health outcomes (length and quality of life).

The strategic plan is a road map that will guide the organization moving forward. The plan includes three focal areas that aim to: Transform internal processes and culture; strengthen communities; and impact systemic change. This allows the organization to look at new and innovative ways of achieving its overall goals of impacting community-level conditions with a focus on the social determinants of health.

It also allows the organization to build upon its legacy of providing high quality access to care and commit to expanding its “upstream” work. That means Methodist Healthcare Ministries will intentionally address conditions and circumstances across entire communities that affect the health and well-being of patients and clients before they might reach Methodist Healthcare Ministries or its partners for assistance.



Transforming Internal Processes and Culture

Recognizing that health equity is both a process and an outcome, and to authentically support Methodist Healthcare Ministries’ journey in advancing health equity across South Texas, it must start from within by transforming how it carries out its work. Methodist Healthcare Ministries is committed to embedding a health equity lens into organizational processes, policies, and culture to support its new journey. This means every team member contributes to advancing health equity and building a culture of continuous learning and improvement. It also means embracing the value of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the organization’s operations.

Strengthen Communities:

Working with individuals, families, and communities to reach their full potential of health and well-being is central to Methodist Healthcare Ministries’ mission and commitment to health equity. This can be seen in its access to care services, community investments, policy work, programs to address clients’ social needs, church connections, and partnering with communities in developing their own health equity strategies. This also includes building upon existing assets and changing the ways in which the organization partners with community members, in recognition of the inherent strengths and expertise within communities. METHODIST HEALTHCARE MINISTRIES respects the expertise of those closest to the problems, those experiencing inequities in their communities, and allows others to lead in designing solutions.

Impact Systemic Change:

Methodist Healthcare Ministries commits to understanding the “upstream” community-level factors that contribute to health and well-being long before individuals and families reach its doors for services. Upstream interventions are focused on community (not individual) impact. For example, pursuing laws, policies, and regulations that create community conditions supporting health for all people.

In addition to access to care, the organization has identified the following areas where it could address systems-level and root causes of health inequities that would help disrupt the cycle of intergenerational poverty: digital inclusion, economic mobility, and food security.



What is meant by “upstream”?

Improving community conditions. Upstream interventions are focused on community (not individual) impact.

Commitment to systemic change

Methodist Healthcare Ministries is committed to supporting approaches and initiatives that disrupt the cycle of intergenerational poverty. These approaches may include convening cross-sector partnerships, investing in community infrastructure, policy/legislative action, creating opportunities, eliminating barriers, and/or addressing the long-term needs of individuals, families, and communities.

A combination of solutions and an integrated approach are needed as disrupting the cycle of poverty is complex. Selected strategic initiatives have been identified as priorities within the systems change focus area to address the root causes of health inequities, including:



Digital Inclusion: Broadband

Identify, invest in, and support broadband and telehealth approaches that help close the digital divide. The three legs of the stool of digital inclusion include: Infrastructure, Affordability/Tools, and Digital Skills Training.



Economic Mobility: Financial Independence

Identify, invest in, and support approaches that address root causes of poverty and financial outcomes for individuals and families living in poverty. Financial Independence focuses on strengthening low-income people's financial inclusion, knowledge, behaviors and opportunities through financial information, education and coaching opportunities, along with capital and asset building to develop financial capability and security.



Food Security

Identify, invest in, and support approaches that improve food security in neighborhoods and communities by improving access to healthy and affordable foods. To create equitable and sustainable food systems, this includes supporting community-led food initiatives that are linked to local food production, distribution, and labor practices.

These crosscutting organizational strategic initiatives intentionally intersect and overlap creating an opportunity for Methodist Healthcare Ministries to focus on various short- and long-term goals that include down-, mid-, and upstream approaches. The intergenerational poverty initiatives included in the strategic plan move the organization closer to advancing health equity in South Texas for the least served and most vulnerable populations.

Each initiative is part of an integrated and layered set of interventions that will address and chip away at disrupting the cycle of intergenerational poverty while building stronger, safer communities where all people can realize their full potential. Each initiative on its own will not solve these problems but will help to advance the strategic focal areas in its plan and move the organization further upstream.



Guiding Principles

Methodist Healthcare Ministries recognizes that advancing health equity and fully embracing its strategic direction requires intentionality in the way the organization carries out its work. Methodist Healthcare Ministries has adopted eight key principles to guide its work moving forward:

Our Commitment

1. Methodist Healthcare Ministries understands that health and wellness begin long before individuals seek clinical care and prioritizes the importance of the social determinants of health and access to quality resources and care as driving factors for the well-being of individuals, families and communities throughout their lives.
2. Methodist Healthcare Ministries realizes achievement of improved health and well-being of the people and communities we serve is a long-term commitment that requires intentional efforts focused on health equity.
3. Methodist Healthcare Ministries seeks to balance its work for the least served by providing the best quality clinical care, connecting individuals and families to needed resources, and working with communities to improve their health and well-being.
4. Methodist Healthcare Ministries recognizes it can't address the needs of every community alone, but it can support, convene, and/or partner with others engaged in and/or leading efforts to improve community health and well-being.
5. Methodist Healthcare Ministries builds relationships with churches and faith communities of all denominations to advance the health and well-being of families and whole communities.
6. Methodist Healthcare Ministries partners with people with lived experiences to co-design, co-create, co-evaluate changes that improve health and well-being of families and communities.
7. Methodist Healthcare Ministries supports place-based efforts to strengthen historically underserved communities.
8. Methodist Healthcare Ministries sustains a culture of continuous improvement and learning where innovation is welcomed, practiced, tested, and implemented



Why a new plan

Over the last 25 years, Methodist Healthcare Ministries has enhanced the health and well-being of countless individuals and families through its direct services, grantmaking and advocacy work. In striving to be the leader for improving wellness of the least served, the organization must continue to evaluate, not only the impact of its journey thus far, but also the overall health and well-being in its communities.

Despite the depth and impact of its efforts and investments, the broader, community-level health and well-being indicators had not improved. As Methodist Healthcare Ministries looks across communities over time, rates of premature death, health-related quality of life, and birth outcomes are not improving.

These outcomes indicate that some deep-rooted, large-scale, generational challenges that bring many individuals and families into Methodist Healthcare Ministries' care have yet to be fully addressed. In order to enact meaningful and impactful change, Methodist Healthcare Ministries will foster the development of empowered and resilient individuals and families such that they are physically, mentally, socially and spiritually healthy and thriving throughout their lives.

This new direction is spirited by the words often attributed to John Wesley, the founder of Methodism:

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

A legacy of service

When Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc., a private, faith based nonprofit organization was founded, its first board of directors challenged themselves to do something no other entity could, or would, do—and thoughtfully considered whom it would serve. As a faith-based organization, it was only natural that the mission serve man—and especially the least served. That led to the first mission statement of “Serving Man to Honor God,” but was no sooner restated out of the desire to be as inclusive as possible; it was revised to “Serving Humanity to Honor God.” Guided by that mission, Methodist Healthcare Ministries’ vision is to be the leader for improving wellness of the least served.

The Board of Directors continues to uphold this statement as a declaration of our mission—it defines who we serve and why we exist.

The organization’s mission also includes co-ownership of the Methodist Healthcare System (MHS) —the largest healthcare system in South Texas—with our long-time partner, HCA Healthcare. It also shares a strong connection to The United Methodist Church (UMC) through its history, charter, and current service area—the same 74 counties Methodist Healthcare Ministries serves are those that make up the Rio Texas Conference region of the UMC. Embedded within that connection are policies to ensure UMC representation at the board level and operations that are guided by the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church.

Core Values

Methodist Healthcare Ministries’ set of core values is embraced in the message of “I aM The Caring Servant,” which shapes its relationship with the people it serves and its team members. The core values are more than a philosophy at Methodist Healthcare Ministries; they are the compass that guides the organization and its continuous improvement.



Integrity

I am honest and trustworthy. I am accountable for the impact of my actions and my words.



Spirituality

I am committed to making time for my loved ones, my community and myself. I embrace faith, hope and forgiveness in my daily life.



Teamwork

I am collaborative and an open-communicator. I am innovative in my approach to working with others, and in finding solutions to challenges.



Compassion

I am respectful, and do not judge others. I have concern for others and a desire to help.



Making a difference

I am committed to a vision beyond myself. I am mission-focused.



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