

# A Vital Bridge with the Community

PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center

## 2022-2025 Community Health Needs Assessment



[MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP >](#)

[OUR REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY >](#)

[SUPPORTING HEALTH JUSTICE FOR ALL >](#)

[A YEAR THAT INSPIRED ACTION >](#)

[HOME: SAFE HARBOR WHEN HOME IS NOT >](#)

[HOPE: A HAVEN FOR SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN AND FAMILIES >](#)

[CARE: HELP ON THE ROAD TO HEALTH >](#)

[NOURISH: GROWING FOOD SECURITY BY KEEPING IT LOCAL >](#)

[FINAL THOUGHTS: FOR TIMES AHEAD >](#)

# Message from leadership:

Our coastal community is remarkable; often considered the most scenic stretch of the Oregon Coast and attracting visitors from all over the world. Florence and the surrounding coastal towns serve as a hub to rural engagement and a gateway to the past. An area rich in history, abundant change and a variety of different cultures, it also serves as a rural fulcrum of our community. Florence is connected to the rest of the state by only a few main roads, and members of the community are tightly connected to each other—not just by geography—but by a deep and abiding commitment to supporting one another.

Volunteerism is the machine that keeps this community running. So many stepped forward during these challenging times to care for our frontline healthcare and essential workers, our most vulnerable community members (including our large senior population), our youth, our unhoused and our low-income families.

Our community volunteers found innovative and safe ways to keep access to food, shelter, clothing and personal protective equipment flowing in our community. Our hospital and public health partners mobilized as a centralized hub for vaccine distribution up and down the Oregon Coast. The new Community Support Team – Mobile Crisis Response rose up to serve, providing first response to mental health and other traumatic crises in the community. Our schools, food banks and youth organizations ensured access to food, from drive-through food basket pickups to home-delivered meals. We say thank you to these resilient organizations and courageous individuals who kept our community cared for and safe.

There are still fundamental services in our community that are in such great demand—and in such small supply—that we have much work ahead to meet the need in housing, childcare, access to mental health and more. We are humbled by our community's response and realize through all of this, we are stronger together. PeaceHealth is committed to treating each person in a loving and caring way. We are honored to be a part of this work, and to continue the journey toward social and health justice for all.

With gratitude,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason".

Jason Hawkins  
Chief Administrative Officer



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan".

Susan Blane  
Director of Community Health

# Our report to the community

## The importance of a Community Health Needs Assessment

Every three years, each PeaceHealth location conducts a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) as required by the 2010 Patient Care and Affordable Care Act.

Tax-exempt hospitals like ours—as defined by IRS Section 501(r)—use the CHNA to report current community needs, statistics and activities. We are also expected to develop an implementation strategy outlining our plans to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

We see our CHNA report and implementation strategy as much more than a requirement or obligation. Through this narrative, we are presenting the story of our dedication and service to the community and people we serve. Beyond traditional medical services and care, we are committed to helping people in need—regardless of whether they ever step foot in our hospital.

Click to view previous editions of our [CHNA](#) and [implementation strategy](#)



## OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Live Healthy Lane Community Health Improvement Plan partners—PeaceHealth Oregon, Lane County Public Health, Lane Community Health Council, Trillium Community Health Plan and United Way—conducted extensive community-wide needs assessments from January through July 2020, engaging stakeholders from multiple sectors and referencing recent studies and reports that are integrated into our Community Health Needs Assessment findings.

As a unique part of Lane County, Western Lane possesses a vital contingent of community benefit organizations and social service providers with strong, engaged leaders who understand the community deeply. These leaders were individually surveyed electronically. Their responses were aggregated and are referenced throughout this report as key directional information on the needs of the Western Lane community.

## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

Known for its breathtaking coastline, our community is also home to one of the few critical care hospitals serving Oregon's coastal communities. Since 1989, PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center provides acute hospital care and primary and specialty care services, including obstetrics, surgical and cardiovascular care.



## OUR KEY FINDINGS

The need for **building community organization capacity** consistently rose to the top of our community's stated priorities. We identified a **critical call for improved health and service equity** for our most vulnerable neighbors: children and teens, low-income families, people with mental health and physical disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness. Live Healthy Lane data indicated that unequal access to health and other services led to an increase in behaviors such as substance use. This, in turn, resulted in higher rates of disease and death.

Investment in **crisis and preventative supportive service programming, including wraparound behavioral health services**, is a key theme. The need for **mental healthcare and substance abuse prevention** was nearly universal in response to the concerning trend of worsening mental health among Lane County residents, especially youth. Providing the right support at the right time will be a critical part of our PeaceHealth community care strategy moving forward.

There continues to be a gap in **available and adequate temporary shelter and affordable housing options**, including the need for **integrated support services addressing whole-person care**. Additional opportunities for growth include supporting childcare solutions pursued by our lead partners and grassroots organizations, as well as increasing **access to healthy and affordable food** and promoting **multiple entry points into the healthcare system**. Investing in **community health workers, peer support specialists, navigators and other, more traditional health worker roles**—and locating them in a variety of community settings—is also a community priority.

We hear these needs, and we are committed to leveraging our resources, relationships and voices to reduce disparities and close gaps in medical and mental healthcare in Florence and the surrounding area.

## About PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center

**7.19** Average daily census

**21** Total licensed beds

**3.39** Average length of stay (days)

**773** Inpatient discharges

**80,052** Outpatient clinic visits

**447** Employees

**180** Active medical staff

**8,761** Emergency Department visits

**51** Births

**1,909** Surgeries

*Source: PeaceHealth FY 2021; Active medical staff as of October 2021*

Our emergency department cares for our community in times of urgent illness and accidents—24 hours a day, seven days a week—and cares for and protects those experiencing mental health and other situational crises in partnership with community service providers. Throughout the summer months, our population swells significantly due to tourism, and our hospital and medical group stand ready to serve.

We know we can't care for our community alone. PeaceHealth has forged strong partnerships with the Mapleton and Siuslaw school districts to ensure health service delivery to children and teens through our development work with Western Lane Behavioral Health, providing more than \$350,000 in funding from PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center and PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Foundation for services and facilities renovations. We work closely with the Mobile Integrated Health team at Western Lane Ambulance District and the Mobile Crisis Response Team at Siuslaw Valley Fire & Rescue to ensure their first responders are supported and that the public receives the best care possible. Our long-standing relationships with, and recurring annual funding for, Florence Food Share, Mapleton Food Share, the Florence Farmers Market, Food Backpacks for Kids and Florence Free Lunch ensure that residents have the nutritional resources they need to get healthy and stay healthy.

# Supporting health justice for all

## From our very beginning to the present day

PeaceHealth was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, who traveled west in 1890 to care for early settlers and people in need. Their legacy continues today as we recognize that achieving health and well-being is a lifelong journey.

We are committed to our Mission: We carry on the healing Mission of Jesus Christ by promoting personal and community health, relieving pain and suffering, and treating each person in a loving and caring way. We are driven by our belief that good health, prevention and community well-being are fundamental rights. We support health justice for all and are especially called to be in service to the most vulnerable members of our community. And we believe that every person should receive safe and compassionate care—every time, every touch.

### **BUILDING A NETWORK OF CARE FROM THE INSIDE OUT**

Inspired by a challenge from the [Catholic Health Association's "We Are Called" Pledge](#), we have embarked on a journey to "put our own house in order." Change starts from within, and that's why we know that our caregivers can best focus on others when we focus on caring for them. Supporting the people who work for and with us is essential to our 130-year legacy of community service and care.

With more than 5,400 employees in Lane County—477 throughout the Florence area—PeaceHealth is one of the largest employers in the region. Our employees are a vital part of our community. They have been deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, carrying the heavy weight of caring for the sick and dying while experiencing their own hunger and financial worry.

Over the last two years, we've provided support for 85 PeaceHealth employees in the Florence area through housing and utilities (44%), access to basic services like the internet and transportation (31%), food access (21%) and childcare (5%). PeaceHealth is also refining our hiring practices to build a diverse workforce. We are committed to implementing change that reflects our Core Values: respect, stewardship, collaboration and social justice.

**But we need to do more—and we cannot do it alone.** This is why community-based partnerships like the ones described in this CHNA report are crucial to our community's success. They enable all of us to address social determinants of health and improve care and access—regardless of where individuals are in their health journey.

**“We have a responsibility to shine a light on the profound effect inequities have on health and well-being, and to do something about it. We are called to promote the inherent dignity of each person, to further the common good and seek justice through solidarity, especially in service to the most vulnerable.”**

– Liz Dunne, President and Chief Executive Officer, PeaceHealth



**PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE ACROSS LANE COUNTY—AND BEYOND**

PeaceHealth has taken steps to increase awareness of social inequities and promote health justice among patients, caregivers in our organizations and across the greater healthcare community. We also recognize the significant journey that lies ahead—with partners and with our community—to move the needle on health justice, equity and inclusion.

The people of Lane County still identify as predominantly white, but that is changing as our community grows. According to the U.S. census, the Lane County population increased by more than 10% from 2010 to 2020 while also becoming more diverse. This trend toward greater diversity has accelerated in the last three years, bringing with it the need for more awareness, inclusive education and different ways to bring healthcare and social services to the people most in need.

**RECOGNIZING INEQUITIES AND ELEVATING PARTNERSHIPS**

During these unprecedented times, it has become evident that Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities are at higher risk for chronic medical conditions. With less access to healthcare, immigration concerns, language barriers, higher poverty rates and the likelihood of working in close contact with other people due to essential worker jobs, these members of our community are at a higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19.

In response, PeaceHealth created county-wide partnerships with White Bird Federally Qualified Health Center, HIV Alliance, Volunteers in Medicine, the NAACP of Eugene/Springfield and Catholic Community Services of Lane County. These organizations are uniquely positioned in our community as trusted service providers supporting the needs of the Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities, as well as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex communities.

PeaceHealth awarded \$35,000 to these organizations in 2021 to support pop-up COVID-19 vaccine clinics in rural areas of Lane County, with special outreach to vulnerable populations. This is in addition to \$10,000 in community benefit funding we gave to Lane County Public Health for COVID-19 vaccination education. The

**A growing community...**

<p><b>FLORENCE:</b></p> <p><b>9,329</b></p> <p>Population</p> <p><b>10.19%</b></p> <p>2010-20 population growth</p>	<p><b>LANE COUNTY:</b></p> <p><b>382,971</b></p> <p>Population</p> <p><b>10.57%</b></p> <p>2010-20 population growth</p>
---	--

*Source: World Population Review*

**...is becoming an increasingly diverse one**

% Race/Ethnicity Data of Population				
	Florence	Lane County	Oregon	U.S.A.
White	90	81	75	60
Latinx	4	9	13	19
Multi-Racial	3	5	4	3
Asian	2	3	5	6
American Indian/ Alaska Native	1	2	2	1
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	<1	<1	<1	<1
Black/African American	<1	1	2	13

*Source: U.S. Census*

### Poverty's expansive grip

Percentage of population  
in poverty by race



100% Black/African American



39% Multiple Races



39% Other



25% American Indian/  
Alaska Native



24% Latinx



15% White



10% Asian

<1% Native Hawaiian/  
Pacific Islander

Source: [U.S. Census](#). Please note that data reflects only those who have identified on the US Census as a particular race or ethnicity.

Community Vaccination Collaborative organized by the Lane Community Health Council has supported all efforts to bring COVID-19 vaccines to those who need them most, and we're honored to support this work.

### A TEAM RESPONSE TO CRISIS

In 2019, Siuslaw Valley Fire & Rescue launched the Mobile Crisis Response Team. Modeled after the successful Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) public safety system created in Eugene 32 years ago, the Mobile Crisis Response Team offers 24/7 community response. From conflict resolution to suicide threats, their teams provide assessment and intervention—as well as community resources and follow-up—to people dealing with a wide range of mental health crises.

The team includes a counselor, medical assistants, a licensed clinical social worker, EMTs and other first responders and serves the greater Florence area and surrounding rural communities. Funded by Lane County, the Mobile Crisis Response Team fills the gap that traditionally exists between law enforcement and emergency transport teams, hospitals and the mental health system by meeting people in crisis where they are—whether that is on the street, at home or anywhere else.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mobile Crisis Response Team saw an increase in calls from community members struggling with suicidal thoughts, initially in the senior population but eventually expanding to involve younger people—a crisis complicated by drug or alcohol abuse. The team reports that fear of illness, isolation, job loss and unemployment, and sometimes the loss of housing has exacerbated mental health issues in the community.

**“We can’t just hunker down at home and be fearful. We’ve got to find a new way to get out there that is safe for everybody. The main thing is to give people hope and baby steps in the right direction.”**

– Lori Severance, Siuslaw Valley Fire & Rescue Coordinator of the Community Support Team-Mobile Crisis Response (CST-MCR) Source: *The Siuslaw News*

# A year that inspired action

## Answering the call of an unprecedented time in history

2020 saw a remarkable convergence of two critical challenges in the United States: social justice and COVID-19. The pandemic cast an even brighter light on how continuing inequities in income, education and access to health and social services inordinately affect people of color. As the pandemic progressed it became clear that already vulnerable populations in the community were more at risk for infection, hospitalization and death.

PeaceHealth took a closer look at data from Lane County and our PeaceHealth facilities. For example, while 9.6% of the Peace Harbor community identify as Latinx, the percentage of Lane County patients admitted for COVID-19 who identified as Latinx was 26.5%. This and other data suggest that, like other healthcare systems across the U.S., our facilities have seen double the rate of hospitalization in the Latinx community compared to the white community.

### FILLING THE NEED HERE IN FLORENCE

When COVID-19 vaccines became available in December 2020, the Florence and Western Lane communities were anxious for news of plans for local vaccination clinics. As the major healthcare provider in the area, PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center immediately stepped forward in partnership with city, county and state government officials to ensure COVID-19 vaccines were made available to the community as quickly and safely as possible.

Serving as the centrally located pharmacy site to receive and deliver COVID-19 vaccines to area hospitals and medical clinics, PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center faced this new challenge with resilience and flexibility. Our pharmacy team navigated special handling requirements and the constant flow of new information and orders as they worked

**“As our population ages, there is a greater need for healthcare. But many of our current providers of the same age group are retiring, so we need to attract new generations of providers. In order to do so, we must address workforce disconnections around skills, benefits, consideration for health and childcare because they are dangerous sources of stress for our communities.”**

– Meghan McCarthy, System Director of Community Health, PeaceHealth

### COVID-19's Disproportionate Impact

**8%**

of total patients identifying as Hispanic/Latinx

**26.5%**

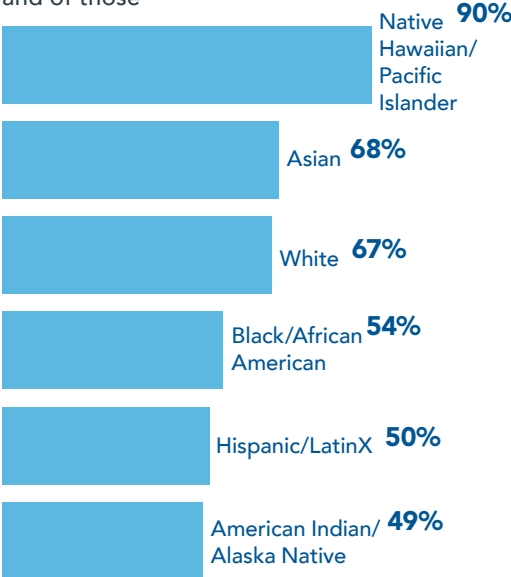
of patients testing positive for COVID-19 from Hispanic/Latinx population

Source: PeaceHealth

### Percent of fully vaccinated, by race and ethnicity

**60.8%**

of Lane County is fully vaccinated, and of those



Source: Oregon Health Authority, as of 10/29/2021



through challenges of transporting the fragile vaccine supply to this coastal community. PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center and PHMG Florence have been proud to serve Western Lane County and the community of Florence, administering 5,216 COVID-19 vaccinations as of October 2021.

By that same time period, 75.3% of Lane County residents had received at least one dose of any COVID-19 vaccine (Moderna, Pfizer or Johnson & Johnson). Yet disparities exist. With vaccination rates for Black, Indigenous and People of Color hovering near 50%, the pandemic highlights an ongoing need to address health disparities.

Race and ethnicity aren't the only factors hindering access to healthcare in our community. An influx of retirees and remote workers during the pandemic made the population of Florence and nearby coastal areas swell since 2020. With this growth comes the need for more caregivers, particularly in the areas of primary care, dentistry and mental health. Yet while demand rises, the number of medical providers is declining. This has created a significant gap in available healthcare services—driving up appointment wait times and creating waiting lists and making it nearly impossible to access care in more isolated communities.

There is an urgent need to address the workforce shortfall, improve the provider pipeline and establish quality community care options. In order to meet growing care needs, we are working to increase collaboration with our community partners while expanding our own community-based clinics, referral and care options, and alternative care practices.

## OUR VALUES IN ACTION: TAKING HEALTHCARE ON THE ROAD

Dr. Willy Foster has been a physician in our community for more than 13 years. As chief of staff and an emergency medicine physician at PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center, he has cared for and treated countless members of the community.

He also takes healing on the road across Lane County as medical director for Occupy Medical, an all-volunteer provider of 100% free healthcare in the Eugene-Springfield area. Occupy Medical believes that everyone, regardless of income or status, should have access to medical care. Operating at both a fixed location and through a mobile clinic, Occupy Medical provides much-needed basic healthcare support services alongside collaborative referral services for more complex needs.



**“I am excited that we, as a society, are beginning to see addiction as a health issue and not as a moral weakness or a bad choice. Addiction is a treatable medical condition that requires attentive and compassionate treatment and support.”**

– Dr. Willy Foster, Medical Director, Occupy Medical and Chief of Staff and Emergency Department Medical Director, Peace Harbor Medical Center

## KEY BENEFITS

- Mobilized community volunteers to provide critical community outreach and medical care.
- Built a foundation for mobile preventative and vulnerable population care.
- Reduced financial barriers for care services focused on people experiencing homelessness.

Dr. Foster frequently conducts medical rounds on the streets and makes sure that community members experiencing homelessness are cared for and receive follow-up. Due to the pandemic—which put further strain on the poor and unsheltered—Occupy Medical saw a sharp increase in the need for mobile medical care and expanded their service times.

As the healthcare representative on the Lane County Poverty and Homelessness Board, Dr. Foster campaigns tirelessly for social and health justice and was recently recognized for his dedication to the community.

**OUR FOUR PILLARS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**

We are determined to help create a healthy community beyond the walls of our medical centers and clinics. That purpose is informed by our four pillars of community health. Across these pillars is the awareness of our solemn responsibility to protect the most vulnerable and underserved people in our communities while promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in everything we do.

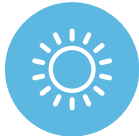
**BRIDGING THE GAP IN OUR COMMUNITY**

Our priority is to provide the overall best care possible to our entire community. In order to do this, we need to provide an equitable system of support that recognizes needs, focuses on overcoming barriers and builds resiliency for key segments in our community, including:



**HOME**

Improve access to service-enriched housing



**HOPE**

Increase education, access to treatment and prevention of dependence



**CARE**

Expand knowledge, access and engagement with community caregivers



**NOURISH**

Address food insecurities to enhance family and child well-being



# Safe harbor when home is not

## Emergency services for people affected by domestic violence

A large number of Lane County residents can't afford to purchase a home—and there are few housing options for them. As of 2019, 58% of county residents rented versus owned the place they live and, by 2021, the county's vacancy rate had plunged to little more than 2%. In the Florence area, the number of local households seeking rent assistance rose rapidly. Although the local eviction moratorium has helped keep some families and individuals out of homelessness during the pandemic, these protections will soon be ending. Our communities will most likely see rent increases—and a fresh wave of people living on the streets.

The pandemic also exacerbated behavioral health issues, including domestic violence. Government "stay at home" orders, workplace shutdowns and resulting job losses, and temporary fluctuations in landlord-tenant laws caused further stress for many people already experiencing domestic violence.

### Rising Challenges in Western Lane County

**200** people experiencing homelessness year-round

**60%** increase in domestic violence survivors

**40%** increase in households seeking rent assistance

*Source: Siuslaw Outreach Services Summer 2021 Newsletter*

### THE COMMUNITY SPOKE—AND WE LISTENED

Heading into 2020, homelessness and domestic violence had been steadily rising in Lane County, including the Florence area. An estimated 200 people experiencing chronic homelessness live here year-round and, in 2020, the number of local domestic violence survivors increased more than 60%.

In 2020, Siuslaw Outreach Services reported the number of domestic violence survivors in the Florence community had increased by more than 60%. As of October 2021, that number was more than 70%. In addition, the number of sexual assaults has more than doubled, as has the number of calls to local crisis lines.



Compounding the problem is a volunteer shortage; many partner agencies along the Oregon Coast temporarily or permanently closed their doors due to staffing shortfalls, and three-fourths of the Siuslaw Outreach Services volunteers had to stay home as well. That's why PeaceHealth provided a \$50,000 community benefit donation to Siuslaw Outreach Services.

**“Community support makes our programs possible. Working together, we have literally saved lives. In the past three months, numerous clients expressed a deep sense of hopelessness. Some even sharing they had suicidal thoughts and planned to act on them. After connecting with our team and receiving services, their outlook changed and once again they found hope. Our community made that possible. You made that possible. Together we are changing lives.”**

– Bob Teter, Executive Director, Siuslaw Outreach Services

They provide emergency services for domestic violence intervention, alongside a comprehensive array of family support services, education, housing and financial assistance programs focused on keeping families whole during times of crisis. With that support, along with government funding and private foundation grants, Siuslaw Outreach has been able to give \$1 million in direct aid to clients.



## HOME - Community priorities: Innovative housing and social service

The success of Siuslaw Outreach Services proves the value of appropriate healthcare and service navigation. Yet individuals with complex medical needs and those experiencing homelessness continue to fall through the cracks.

PeaceHealth continues to build strong partnerships with community organizations that support and fund the development of innovative housing and social service models that help the unhoused or at-risk of homelessness make permanent change in their lives.



### Siuslaw Outreach Services by the Numbers, 2020

**9,492**

client visits for services

**2,669**

clients served

**2,013**

clients receiving emergency vouchers, clothing and/or rent assistance

**477**

clients receiving domestic violence advocacy services

**97**

responses to after-hours calls from police/hospital

*Source: SOS Summer 2021 Newsletter*

### KEY BENEFITS

- Promotes safe housing options focusing on domestic violence survivors.
- Supports positive mental health and childhood development experiences.
- Increases availability of crisis response system providing family intervention services.





# A haven for school-aged children and families

## Emergency childcare and family services in a time of need

For families experiencing poverty, the pandemic has made life more harrowing. Many lost their source of income, putting them behind on rent and living expenses. On top of struggling to keep their families safe and fed, parents and caregivers found themselves in the unexpected role of homeschool teachers.

Many had to serve as full-time caregivers, workers and schoolteachers. The struggle to maintain care for themselves—and each other—often threw youth, parents and families into emotional chaos.

During school closures, 60% of families have experienced a disruption in their childcare, according to the Oregon Department of Education. There are few options for those families that need care during non-traditional hours, drop-in care when standing arrangements undergo a change, and even fewer options for those with young infants and special needs children.

Costs of care have increased significantly over the last 20 years, but federal poverty guidelines have not changed, leaving many low-income families unable to access publicly funded care. The childcare workforce has decreased 37% and is significantly undercompensated for the skillset and training required, according to Oregon State University data.

With strict licensure standards in place and few training and certification programs available—and without support to attract and train a new generation of caregivers—the childcare workforce will continue to shrink.

### THE COMMUNITY SPOKE—AND WE LISTENED

We are working in collaboration with community partners to address a longstanding but newly recognized need in our community: the availability of adequate, reliable, licensed childcare services available to all families.

To help fill the gap in a community that lost almost all childcare options during the COVID-19 pandemic, Boys & Girls Club of Western Lane quickly pivoted during workplace shutdowns and school closures.

### Childcare realities for Lane County families

**60%**

families experiencing childcare disruption during pandemic

*Source: Oregon Department of Education*

### All 36 OR counties

qualify as childcare deserts for infants and toddlers

*Source: Oregon State University*

**↓ 16%**

decrease in Lane County childcare facilities, March 2020-August 2021

*Source: Oregon Department of Education*

**Up to 98%**

of all occupations pay more than early childhood education jobs

*Source: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment*

Their commitment to families and students from kindergarten through grade 12 was unwavering: replacing meals lost when school programs shut down, creating distance learning programs with Wi-Fi and supervision for kids trying to learn online, addressing the lack of childcare that prevented parents from working, and supporting kids in vulnerable family situations.

Boys & Girls Club recognized that the pandemic and its restrictions created new inequities for families, especially those with limited internet access, limited parental presence at home, and a greater risk of hunger and food insecurity due to job loss and delayed unemployment benefits.

The organization switched to all-day programming, expanding from 3 to 10 hours a day for youth services to provide more support for low-income and special needs families.

When the Club closed in April and May of 2020 due to the Governor's Emergency Order, the staff prepared take-and-bake meals for those needing food. Staff members even served popcorn and sno-cones to children every week.

In addition to serving families, Boys & Girls Club made supporting essential workers a primary focus. Using \$40,000 over two years from PeaceHealth's community benefit fund, the Club applied to become an Emergency Child Care Center so that first responders, healthcare workers and other essential workers had a safe place to send their children each day.



**Boys & Girls Club of Western Lane by the numbers, 2020-21**

**7,800**

hot meals and snacks served

**300**

take-and-bake meals provided, April/May 2020

**88%**

families making less than \$50,000 a year

**43%**

families making less than \$30,000 a year

**50%**

single-parent families served

**8%**

grandparents raising grandkids served

*Source: Boys & Girls Club of Western Lane October 2021 report*

**KEY BENEFITS**

- Supports youth and families to mitigate isolation and ensure food access and food security.
- Connects in-need populations to continuum of care services and builds community resilience.
- Engages schools and partners in maximizing resources and promoting solidarity.

After reopening in June 2020, the Club keeps kids and families safe through partnerships with Oregon Health Authority, Lane County Health Authority, Department of Education Early Learning Division, Office of Child Care and regional partnerships with all 12 Boys & Girls Clubs in Oregon. Together, they have developed a Health Safety Plan that included screenings, temperature checks, contact tracing logs, sanitization and other safety protocols.



### HOPE - Community priorities: Prevent addiction, provide alternative care

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every segment of our society: young and old, rich and poor, urban and rural. PeaceHealth is committed to exploring and supporting partnered childcare solutions that will create quality, affordable and accessible childcare in all of our Lane County communities.

Childcare is a community concern, and it must be addressed in order to support a thriving and well-balanced future economy in our region. In addition, there is an urgent need in our community and in our schools for increased access to behavioral healthcare and addiction treatment.

Community Benefit Organizations like Western Lane Ambulance District, Siuslaw School District, Mapleton School District and others provide partnership opportunities in addressing mental health crisis among youths and young adults. Our goal is to prevent early addiction and provide alternative care options to help ensure a positive future of our community.

**“The simple things mean everything to kids who are facing overwhelming life circumstances right now: a hot meal, a safe place to be while parents are at work, a device to participate in school, help with homework, art supplies to stay creative and an adult who will be there no matter what. While so much in our world feels complicated, the support the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Lane County receives from PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center enables us to keep that promise to the kids in Florence and the surrounding communities.”**

– Chuck Trent, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Lane County.





# Help on the road to health

## Mobile care gets services out into the community

When patients leave PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center after an emergency room visit or an inpatient stay, they get instructions about their follow-up care to guide them through the recovery process. Many Western Lane residents live in remote locations with long drives to the hospital, making follow-up appointments easy to miss. People may be too sick to drive or to take public transportation and don't have the support of family or friends to get back to see their doctor.

### THE COMMUNITY SPOKE—AND WE LISTENED

Access to healthcare and emotional well-being are important factors that shape our health. When the pandemic threatened to limit access to healthcare services, PeaceHealth continued to work with our partners to ensure continued access to care for those leaving the hospital.

PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center's partnership with Western Lane Ambulance District launched in 2018 and, over the last three years, has filled the gap between healthcare services and home with the Mobile Integrated Health Community EMT program. The program continually strives to improve and increase community access to care, providing support to people discharging from care so that they can successfully transition back to their homes.

Here's how the program works. The hospital's discharge planning team and Western Lane Ambulance service meet daily to discuss patients who are ready to go home. When a vulnerable patient is at risk of missing their follow-up appointment, returning to the emergency room or being readmitted to the hospital, the Mobile Integrated Health Community EMT provides a home visit within seven days of discharge. During the visit, the EMT conducts an assessment including blood pressure checks, wound care, diabetes education, medication management support, home safety and referrals to community services as needed.

The program improves outcomes for patients and helps contain healthcare costs by keeping people healthier during their recuperation. Emergency services are also better utilized by reducing 911 calls and visits to crowded emergency rooms. The Mobile Integrated Health pilot was recognized in April 2019 by the American Hospital Association as a Delivery System Redesign Innovation.

**“Western Lane Ambulance District is very proud to be partnering with PeaceHealth in providing Mobile Integrated Health services to those in our community who need assistance following release from the hospital. This helps prevent readmissions and, in many cases, reduces 911 calls and emergency interventions, which not only improves the health of individuals in our community, but also lightens the burden on our emergency response system.”**

– Michael Schick, Western Lane Ambulance District, Fire & EMS Chief



**FOR EVERY DOLLAR SPENT, THE HOSPITAL SAVED \$5 IN HEALTHCARE COSTS**

In its first year, the program conducted 500 home visits with 60 clients. Among inpatients discharged to home, we reported a 200% decrease in avoidable readmissions. Among the 187 patients receiving palliative care from March to December 2018, the hospital saw a 50% decrease in emergency department visits.

**\$350k**

support from PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Foundation and PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center

**↓ 200%**

decrease in avoidable readmissions

**↓ 50%**

decrease in ED visits for palliative care patients

**\$5 saved**

in hospital costs for every dollar spent

Source: PeaceHealth

**KEY BENEFITS**

- Reduces length of hospital stay by allowing patients to discharge with follow-up plans in place.
- Decreases hospital readmission and avoidable ED visits with post-discharge services.
- Supports vulnerable patients and prevents isolation, yielding more positive health outcomes.



**CARE – Community priorities: Growing traditional health worker roles**

When it comes to community care, the engagement of community health workers to build a bridge between healthcare and social supports is an evidence-based path to success.

Our community has galvanized around this model of care delivery and is blessed with strong leadership focused on developing and funding community health worker training programs that are bilingual, multicultural and engage the full spectrum of healthcare roles: doulas, peer support specialists, community health workers, personal health navigators, peer wellness specialists and others.

These trusted, trained workers play a vital role in reducing healthcare disparities through advocacy and empowering individuals to achieve their healthcare goals—in schools, in community centers, and through mobile clinics. PeaceHealth is excited to be a part of building the infrastructure that will ensure a robust army of community health workers dedicated to serving everyone in the community.





NOURISH

# Cultivating local food security

## Alleviating hunger and preventing negative health consequences

Access to healthy, affordable food is a critical issue affecting everyone in our communities. We are called to nourish not just because we want to alleviate immediate hunger, but also to prevent a lifetime of negative health consequences. There is a clear connection between food insecurity and high levels of stress, poor nutrition and diet-related diseases like obesity and diabetes.

The COVID-19 pandemic erased decades of progress in reducing food insecurity. In 2018, [an estimated 1 in 9 Americans](#) was food insecure—or more than 37 million Americans, including more than 11 million children. That number peaked in 2020 and still has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

### THE COMMUNITY SPOKE—AND WE LISTENED

We are working with our partners, including Mapleton Food Share, to increase equitable access to culturally appropriate, nutritious food and breaking down social or structural barriers by addressing the underlying issues in food availability.

We are also expanding fruit and vegetable community programming, food education and low-barrier nutritional access points.

Food insecurity is part of a complex web of social and economic issues that affect people’s health and quality of life. Households experiencing even occasional food insecurity often struggle with a lack of access to affordable housing, healthcare, steady employment and a living wage. While food insecurity is related to poverty, not all people experiencing food insecurity live below the poverty line.

The federal Food Environment Index ranges from a scale of 0 (worst) to 10 (best) and equally weights two indicators: 1) limited access to healthy foods and 2) food insecurity.

### PROMOTING FOOD ACCESS AND HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS

While some areas of Lane County are on par with the national average for a positive food environment, a significant portion of our community faces food insecurity and limited access to healthy food. There is strong evidence that these “food deserts” are correlated with higher rates of obesity and premature death. Access to healthy, culturally appropriate food is critical for short- and long-term community health.

### Lane County Food Access

**7.5/10**

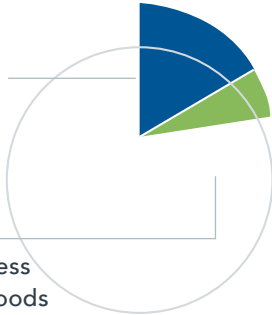
Food Environment Index  
in Lane County

**14%**

Food  
insecurity

**6%**

Limited access  
to healthy foods



Source: [County Health Rankings](#)

Creating affordable options for healthy food and strengthening relationships with food distribution centers—like food banks, mobile food options and subsidy programs including Veggie Rx and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—can improve food access for all members of our community.

Another effective strategy for addressing food deserts is to promote coastal farmlands and gardening co-ops that sell local produce to local markets. This can offset rising grocery store food costs, support local farmers and increase access to fresh food in the community.

**CURBSIDE AND CONTACTLESS FOOD DELIVERY AVAILABLE FOR ALL**

In 2020, PeaceHealth provided \$40,000 in community benefit funding to Florence Food Share, the community emergency food pantry providing healthy food to the people of Western Lane County. When the pantry faced restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, they continued to support the community by creating a no-contact food delivery system. Instead of people coming into the pantry to select their food, the pantry hired additional staff to prepare food boxes for curbside pickup or delivery.



**NOURISH – Community priorities: an Rx for healthy diets**

PeaceHealth Medical Group partnered with Florence Farmers Market in the summer and fall of 2021 to pilot a Veggie Rx program through which doctors issued “prescriptions” for fresh fruits and vegetables that can be filled at the farmer’s market. Veggie Rx is a healthy nutrition healthcare model that is gaining momentum in primary care and cardiology practices. Community partners like Coordinated Care Organizations, food pantries and farmers markets, and community gardens across Lane County have been central to this work.

Together, we’ve produced robust food pantries, community gardens, school gardens, Veggie Rx programs, Double Up food bucks and free produce pick-up programs where access to fresh fruits and vegetables is low-barrier and close to home.

The good news is that food insecurity, while still widespread, appears to have been lower than anticipated thanks to responses from federal and local governments and generosity in the private sector. But the future is still uncertain for many families, and young people are at particular risk for a lifetime of health concerns as a result of childhood food insecurity. We must continue to empower them with access to healthy food and education for healthy food choices.

**KEY BENEFITS**

- Ensures food security for those in need and the larger community during times of instability.
- Encourages partner resource sharing with other local food pantries to maximize impact.
- Improve access, reach and availability of food options for those in need.



**Enriching nourishment in the community**

**4,545**  
supplemental food program visits

**3,232**  
emergency food boxes provided

**2,500**  
individuals served

Source: Florence Food Share 2020-2021 Annual Report



# Final thoughts

## For times ahead

Our Community Health Needs Assessment process holds us accountable to listening and learning from our communities. PeaceHealth recognizes that our work is far from over. The needs are forever evolving—and so are we.

Valued community partners who help guide and inform PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center community benefit investments are the voice that will ultimately shape and grow the programs that build our community's future.

We are humbled and honored to serve and learn from our communities. We pledge to continue our collaborative work, standing beside our partners during these challenging times. We invite you to join us in our pursuit of health justice for all.

**TOGETHER WE WILL BUILD THE FUTURE.**