

A Vital Bridge with the Community

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center

2022-2025 Community Health Needs Assessment



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PeaceHealth

Message from leadership:

Caring • Resourceful • Resilient. These words capture the spirit of our Alaska communities.

These last two years have challenged us—and brought us closer together to meet the needs of our communities. We are grateful to the City of Ketchikan for renewing our PeaceHealth hospital lease and trusting us with caring for the community. We are honored to be able to continue to provide care for our neighbors long into the future. Serving as Ketchikan’s sole hospital comes with great responsibility—and we cannot do this work alone. Our collaborations with local partners have showed great promise for how we can tackle challenges together. We also acknowledge the special privilege we have of caring for the first people on Saanya Kwaan and Taantakwaan land. Gunalchéesh to the first people of this land.

Our community partners tell us that the pandemic has impacted all facets of life in the region. Our local economy is feeling the constraints of a massively reduced tourism sector. The mental health of our youth and elders has suffered from months of isolation. Wait lists for community services are longer, and we’re all facing challenges to recruit and hire skilled workers.

We know better communication and coordination can make a difference. We also know that by focusing on solutions for the most underserved and historically marginalized, we can enhance the health of all.

Our work has also brought many bright spots, like joining with friends of the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition to till soil for new community gardens. Or catching fish with the amazing guides at Baranof Excursions, who taught local youth how to fish and harvest from our shores. Or packing hygiene kits for our unsheltered neighbors. Or celebrating with community at the Fil-Am Festival at the Plaza.

We look forward to many more bright spots on the horizon.



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

Dori Stevens
Chief Administrative Officer
Ketchikan Medical Center



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel" with a small heart symbol at the end.

Rachel Lucy
Director of Community Health
PeaceHealth Northwest Network

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 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.

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

WHAT IS OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

Our process began thanks to our partners at the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition (KWC), who published an excellent and detailed CHNA in November 2020. KWC surveyed 200 people, held discussion groups and interviewed people to arrive at a list of 10 priorities. Our assessment builds on this strong work, and also references other key reports produced locally, including the Ketchikan Homeless Assessment and school-based youth surveys. PeaceHealth leaders also met with leaders from local nonprofits and government agencies to hear first hand the needs they see in the community. The priorities we heard in these October 2021 meetings are referenced throughout this assessment.

KEY FINDINGS

- More supports are needed to **help people navigate complex systems of care**. Roles like community health workers, navigators, and caseworkers could help.
- Demand for services often outpaces supply. In areas like mental health and home-based care, we have a **shortage of healthcare professionals and vital supports**.
- Prevention, prevention, prevention. **Suicide prevention** was named as one of top three needs in the 2020 KWC assessment. **Early education to prevent substance use** among youth and adults was also named as a top need, along with **mental and behavioral health crisis care**.
- **Addressing critical barriers to health like housing and food insecurity** is especially important in this region where the cost of living is higher.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center is a critical access hospital serving rural and remote southern Southeast Alaska patients. PeaceHealth caregivers deliver an array of preventative care, emergency, hospital, and recovery services with care and compassion. The PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center and Medical Clinics are in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and operate in Prince of Wales.

Providing access to healthcare is challenged by the remoteness of rural island life in southern Southeast Alaska. Travel to and from Ketchikan for care from areas like Metlakatla, Prince of Wales and Wrangell is often hindered by the weather. The Ketchikan service area serves a diverse population that includes Alaska Native communities and a large Filipino population.

The Borough sits on an island that can only be reached by boats and planes. Known for its rainy climate, the City of Ketchikan broke its own record for most rainy summer days in 2020. Fishing, tourism and a resourceful community spirit define the area.



About PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center

8.69 Average daily census

25 Total licensed beds

3.77 Average length of stay
(days)

841 Inpatient discharges

39,687 Outpatient clinic
visits

468 Employees

159 Active medical staff

6,195 Emergency
Department visits

171 Births

1,712 Surgeries

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

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 recognize that change starts from within, believing that our caregivers can best focus on others when we put our focus on caring for them. This has been an essential element in preserving our 130-year legacy of community service and care.

With more than 4,000 employees in our Northwest network of northern Washington and Alaska—468 of those throughout the Ketchikan Medical Center service area—PeaceHealth is one of the largest employers in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and Prince of Wales Island. Our employees are a vital part of our community. Like others, they have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, PeaceHealth created a financial support fund to help employees weather difficult times. The fund helped 37 employees in our Ketchikan service area with housing and utilities. In addition to creating a supportive workplace, PeaceHealth continues to refine hiring practices to ensure a diverse workforce. We are committed to making cultural changes reflective of 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 assessment are crucial to our community's success. They enable all of us to address social determinants of health and improve care and access.

“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 SOUTHEAST ALASKA—AND BEYOND

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

Alaskan community populations...

ALASKA:

724,357

Population

1.95%

2010-20 population growth

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH:

13,991

Population

3.08%

2010-20 population growth

PRINCE OF WALES-HYDER:

5,889

Population

-5.18%

2010-20 population growth

Source: World Population Review

...are uniquely diverse

% Race/Ethnicity Data of Population				
	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	Prince of Wales-Hyder	Alaska	United States
White	64%	45%	60%	60%
American Indian/Alaska Native	16%	43%	16%	1%
Multi-Racial	8%	9%	8%	3%
Latinx	7%	4%	7%	19%
Asian	7%	1%	7%	6%
Black/African American	4%	<1%	4%	14%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%	<1%	1%	<1%

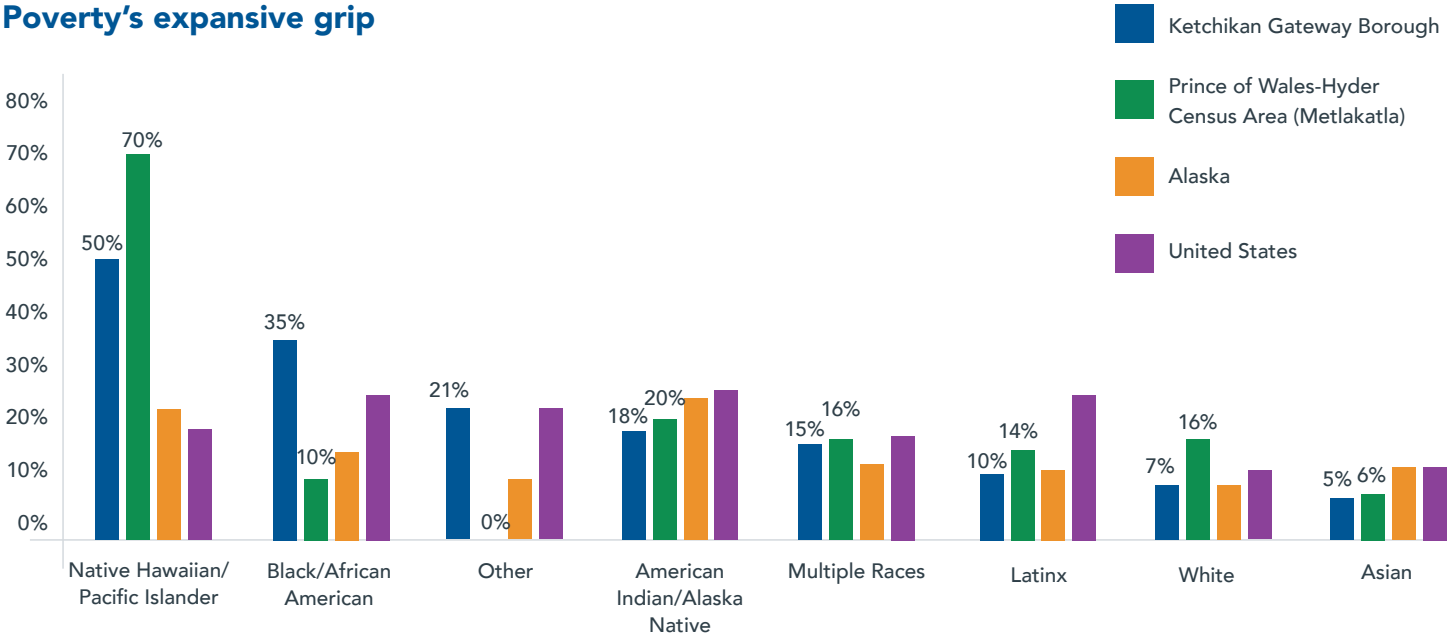
Source: U.S. Census

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 in essential worker jobs, these members of our community are also at a higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19.

In addition, our Alaskan communities are struggling with the deep effects of poverty and lack of access to medical and mental healthcare. In Ketchikan and Prince of Wales, racial and ethnic minorities experience poverty at a higher rate than white individuals. According to the American Community Survey, more than 1 in every 4 American Indian/Alaska Natives experiences poverty compared to 1 in 10 people who are white.

Poverty's expansive grip



Source: [U.S. Census](#)

Further intensifying inequities is the high number of underinsured individuals in our region. A significant portion of adults in the area—one in six—does not have adequate health insurance. That’s nearly 50% higher than the national average. A third of Black or African American residents are uninsured, representing the most uninsured population segment in Ketchikan, with Native American or Alaska Natives following close behind. While there are services in the Ketchikan region that directly help Indigenous people, a coverage gap still exists.

In response, PeaceHealth works collaboratively with other community providers and service partners, like Ketchikan Indian Community, public health, Residential Youth Care, Community Connections, Prince of Wales Health Network and many others, to meet the healthcare needs in our community. These collaborations are essential in Southeast Alaska.



A year that inspired action

Answering the call of an unprecedented time in history

2020 saw a remarkable convergence of critical challenges in the United States: racial and social justice and COVID-19. The pandemic has cast a brighter light on how continuing inequities in income, education and access to health and social services inordinately affect Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities. As the COVID-19 pandemic has progressed, it has become clear that vulnerable members of our community are more at risk for infection, hospitalization and death.

PeaceHealth took a closer look at data from the State of Alaska, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area and our PeaceHealth facilities. Recently released state COVID-19 data offers insight into how Alaskans have been affected by the virus and which groups experienced the most severe impacts. Alaska Natives make up just 16% of the state’s total population but accounted for 29% of COVID-19 deaths and a quarter of virus-related hospitalizations as of September 2021. Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders account for less than 2% of Alaska’s population but over 5% of COVID-19 deaths and 8% of COVID-19 hospitalizations¹.

COVID-19 VACCINATION EFFORT

According to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, as of November 2021, approximately 53% of all Alaskan residents were fully vaccinated and 61% had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. The department reports that 59% of Ketchikan Gateway Borough and 50% of Prince of Wales-Hyder residents had received at least one dose of any COVID-19 vaccine (Moderna, Pfizer or Johnson & Johnson). While behind the national single-dose numbers overall, Alaska was tracking ahead of the nation in some population sub-groups.

Partners across Alaska mobilized to address COVID-19 challenges and work together to vaccinate residents. Despite a strong response, Alaska’s sheer size and lack of access to remote areas continue to pose vaccination barriers. The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the great need for creative ways to provide rural healthcare, education and outreach.

Many villages are remote and lack regular access to coordinated care and public services, including internet connectivity. Eighty percent of Alaska Native communities are located off the state’s road system, and travel an average of 147 miles one way, often by a combination of air and surface transportation, to access acute medical services.

In order to meet growing care needs, it has never been more important for us to promote collaboration with our community partners while expanding community-based care options.

COMMUNITY PHYSICIANS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN OUTREACH

Our PeaceHealth physicians play an essential role in working with the

Vaccination rate by race and ethnicity (Received at least 1 dose)		
	Alaska	United States
American Indian/Alaska Native	69%	25%
Asian	63%	46%
Black/African American	49%	37%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	46%	80%
White	43%	44%
Latinx	35%	40%

Source: [USA Facts-Alaska Coronavirus Vaccination Progress](#), as of November 12, 2021

1. Source: Alaska Division of Public Health, September 2021.

community to come up with creative solutions for care, including increased COVID-19 vaccination education and outreach. Pediatrician Tim Horton, MD—or “Dr. Tim” as he prefers to be called—is one of a number of PeaceHealth Medical Group physicians who have made community rounds to get the word out. Many people have shared that talking with Dr. Tim, Dr. Sean Bhagat, and other PeaceHealth physicians convinced them to seek care and to get a COVID-19 vaccination. Dr. Charlie Jose has also played an active health promoter role lending his voice to promote health equity for the Filipino community and even giving vaccines at the Fil-Am Festival. These physicians continue to record radio broadcasts and social media videos promoting the importance of community health. Their incredible work is making a difference, but there is more work to be done.

“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

OUR FOUR PILLARS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

Our pillars of community health ensure that we are creating a healthy community beyond the walls of our medical center and clinics. Across these pillars is the awareness of our solemn responsibility to care for the most vulnerable and underserved people in our communities while promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in everything we do.

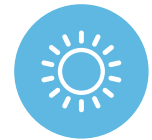
Improving health for all requires we focus on serving the historically marginalized in Ketchikan and surrounding areas. We will continue to seek out projects that improve community health and well-being for:

- Elders and youth
- Filipino-American community members, Alaska Native communities and all Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities
- Families and individuals experiencing poverty and housing insecurity
- Veterans
- Individuals with a history of trauma or are currently experiencing trauma



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 shelter for those in need

Providing shelter day and night

The supply of available housing in Ketchikan has been historically low. Ketchikan faces a 6% rental vacancy rate and only a 1% owner vacancy rate for those looking to buy a home. The high demand is driving up housing costs. A household is considered cost-burdened when it spends greater than 30% of its total income on housing. Based on that measure, 53% of renters and 30% of owners in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough are cost-burdened. Low vacancy and high costs put our residents at greater risk for experiencing homelessness. These same housing challenges are amplified on Prince of Wales Island, which is even more remote.

Ketchikan faces significant barriers to housing development: lack of available land and the high costs associated with shipping construction materials and building infrastructure in remote areas. There is also a growing need for accessible housing, senior housing and low-income housing. (Source: [KGB Comprehensive Housing Assessment Project](#), 2019)

Housing realities of Ketchikan

1 in 2

renters in Ketchikan are cost-burdened

1%

homeowner vacancy rate

Source: [American Community Survey, 2013-2018 5-Year Estimates](#), [ESRI Data 2020](#)

THE COMMUNITY SPOKE—AND WE LISTENED

We're working with our partners on efforts that prevent homelessness and approaches for whole-person care.



“Our community has faced many challenges in providing shelter during COVID. What’s clear is more funding and services will be needed, but we’re well-positioned as a community to have these important conversations about prevention and housing.”

– Donita O’Dell, community volunteer

First City Homeless Services and other housing partners are hard at work responding to the needs of unsheltered people. During the pandemic, they responded quickly by standing up an emergency shelter at the Gateway Recreation Center. First City Homeless Services also opened a local warming shelter in winter 2020. PeaceHealth provided \$37,450 over three years to help support this effort. These funds went toward shelter improvements and operations and helped First City Homeless Services staff make a big impact. Each month, the organization served an average of 40 people in the overnight winter shelter and an average of 100 people in day shelter care.

Women in Safe Homes, alongside First City Homeless Services and other community partners, conducted a "[Ketchikan Homeless Assessment](#)" in fall 2020 by interviewing people experiencing homelessness in the region. One in two of those surveyed reported experiencing homelessness for more than three years and many for five to 10 years or more. Loss of job or income was the most commonly reported cause of homelessness. Eviction was the second-highest reason given in interviews.

Findings also confirmed that adverse childhood experiences, such as being placed in foster care, are associated with greater risk of homelessness. The data show the importance of investing in children and teens—which can help prevent homelessness among adults in Ketchikan.



HOME - Community priorities: Housing improves health

We share a belief that affordable housing should be a human right. When we provide for housing in our communities, everyone is better off, and health is more attainable.

This is especially true for individuals with a disability, our community elders, medically fragile individuals and youth. Prioritizing collaborations that serve these groups and prevent people from becoming unhoused is the important work ahead.

Early experiences of chronically homeless adults

1 in 2

had been in foster care

1 in 2

had been kicked out of the home

1 in 2

left home because they felt unsafe

1 in 5

had been pregnant or had a child
as a minor

1 in 4

had been homeless as a minor with-
out a parent (1 in 3 with a parent)

*Source: First City Homeless Services Annual
Report 2020-2021

KEY BENEFITS

- Provides a non-judgmental environment for critical homeless services and care.
- Upholds the dignity and respect of each individual in a safe, warm and dry facility.
- Breaks down barriers to engagement by meeting individuals where they are to provide support.





Resilience in the face of hardship

Delivering light in dark times

Suicide rates in Ketchikan are some of the highest in the nation, occurring at approximately twice the national average, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Ketchikan’s geographic isolation and rainy weather, and the trauma experienced by families over generations, contribute to a sense of hopelessness and despair. Getting help is even harder when behavioral health and substance use services are already stretched thin.

These statistics reflect the urgency behind our efforts to improve mental health supports for children and teens. It’s critical that young people feel that they matter and that they have supportive adults to talk to.

Our youth are our future, and local stakeholders agree that we must make a bigger investment in prevention programming along with improved access to services to support our children and teens. Medication-assisted detox is one such service the community has identified as essential. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated substance use and drug overdoses. Community members report losing loved ones at an alarming rate. That’s why local solutions for detox was one of the top 10 community priorities identified in the Ketchikan Wellness Coalitions’ 2020 needs assessment.

THE COMMUNITY SPOKE—AND WE LISTENED

Improving mental health well-being and resilience requires both protective factors and a coordinated system of prevention, treatment, and recovery options. Experiencing a mental health crisis or suffering from a substance use disorder can impact any family in our community.



Ketchikan Behavioral Health by the numbers, 2020-2021

2nd

Alaska’s national ranking for most deaths by suicide
(Source: www.afsp.org/statistics)

82%

of Alaskan communities lack enough mental health providers
(Source: www.afsp.org/statistics)

1 in 5

Ketchikan students have seriously considered suicide*

1 in 9

Ketchikan high schoolers reported attempting suicide*

Only **60%** of Kayhi and **40%** of Revilla High School students felt they mattered*

Only **60%** of Kayhi and **50%** of Revilla High School students were connected to a supportive adult*

*Source: Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019.

One opportunity to collaborate really captured our heart and led PeaceHealth to contribute \$13,000 to make it happen. Baranof Excursions and Residential Youth Care (RYC) teamed up in 2020 to create memorable, meaningful experiences for local children and teens. The program is called the Ketchikan Youth Fishing, Harvesting and Life Skills Program. Nearly 300 youth aged 10 to 18 participated in custom fishing charters that normally would have only been accessed by tourists. This program shows the impact that a caring adult can have in the lives of our youth.

In the same year, RYC co-launched the Ketchikan CARES Crisis Line. PeaceHealth awarded funds to both programs because they play a vital role in addressing both crisis and well-being.

KEY BENEFITS

- Charters create experiences youth will remember into adulthood.
- Getting youth walking in the forest, exploring a tide pool, or catching a fish is a good way to connect them with nature and caring adults.



HOPE - Community priorities: The importance of prevention

Demand for behavioral health and substance abuse services continues to outpace available supply in the region. In addition to finding ways to collaborate with partners and improve access now, we also see the importance of prevention. Programs that support families and reduce the likelihood of adverse childhood experiences are critical.

Increasing access to substance misuse education, suicide prevention, and early intervention services for adolescents and children is essential, as is the need to create safe medication-assisted detox services.

“The partnership with Baranof Excursions provided hundreds of Ketchikan kids with an amazing day on the water and positive lasting memories. Just knowing it was happening was the highlight of my summer.”

- Dustin Larna, CEO
Residential Youth Care



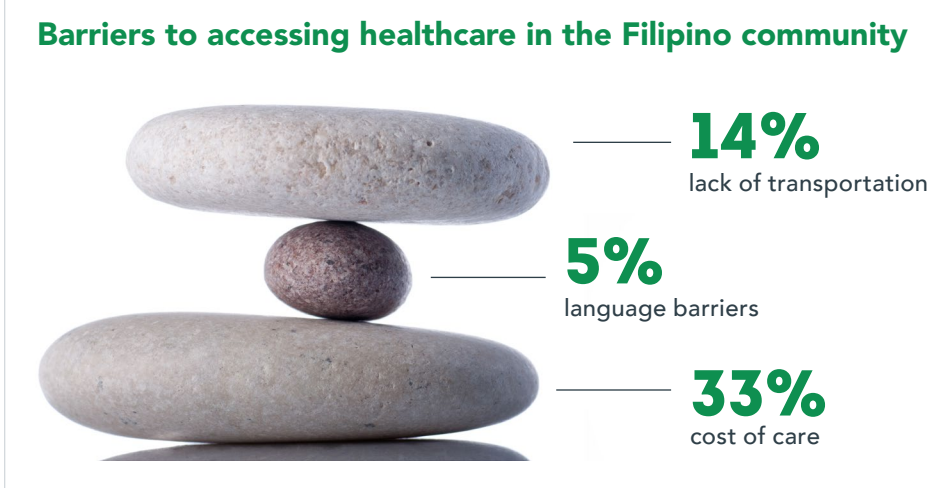


Improving inclusion in systems of care

Reducing barriers for Filipino residents

Difficulty navigating systems of care in Southeast Alaska is a commonly cited community concern. People use words like “complicated” and “struggle” to describe the frustration they often feel in trying to get medical, dental and mental healthcare. Caseworkers, navigators, and community health workers are professionals who can help guide patients through complicated systems of care. In Ketchikan, there is a great example of a partnership that is making it easier to get care for those neighbors that need it most.

Nearly 10% of the City of Ketchikan’s population are of Filipino descent—one of the highest concentrations in the state. Filipinos face several healthcare hurdles. According to the 2019 Ketchikan Public Health Filipino Health Survey, cost of care (33%), language barriers (5%) and transportation (14%) all influence the way healthcare is accessed by individuals in the Filipino community. Similar challenges are also reported by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities.



PeaceHealth team members are listening carefully to the community, and working to improve the healthcare experience, and health outcomes, for Filipino and other vulnerable populations.

THE COMMUNITY SPOKE—AND WE LISTENED

Access to mental healthcare is an important social determinant of health. When the COVID-19 pandemic threatened to limit access to services, we continued to work with our partners to bridge the gap and ensure continued access to care for those in need.

Sama Sama Tayo sa Kalusugan means ‘**Healthier Together**’ in the Tagalog language. It’s also the name of a special partnership. Ketchikan Wellness Coalition (KWC), in partnership with Filipino community members and PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center, was awarded a \$300,000 Community Solutions for Health Equity grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation’s largest health-focused philanthropy. The grant was awarded in a highly competitive process. The foundation received more than 1,000 applications nationwide and Ketchikan was one of only 10 grant recipients. The grant funding, issued over three years, will benefit Filipinos through community engagement and local health system improvements.



Photo of PeaceHealth grant team caregivers



Community members greet one another at the October 2021 Fil-Am festival at the Plaza.

KEY BENEFITS

- Eliminates access barriers for preventive health screening and visits for Filipinos.
- Promotes improvements in healthcare delivery.
- Encourages development of a community health worker model to build access to care.

“I have lived in Ketchikan for over 50 years and have seen the growth of the Filipino population. This community, most especially our elderly population, will benefit from the fruits of this work. Maraming salamat (thank you very much).”

– Linda Montecillo,
Grant co-author and Filipina Nurse



CARE – Community priorities: Collaboration is key

Using community health workers to build a bridge between healthcare providers and patients is an evidence-based path to success. This work becomes even more critical for isolated communities. For example, Prince of Wales residents rely on volunteer Emergency Medical Services for routine care. Some communities have one or two volunteers to meet their needs.

That’s why collaboration is paramount. Partnerships that use community health workers, caseworkers or navigators to support those with special healthcare needs—or those who face access and navigation challenges—are critical to improving community health.



Growing our community, one garden at a time

Planting gardens and sharing recipes

Access to healthy, affordable food is a critical local issue affecting children and families. There is a clear, evidence-based connection between food insecurity and high levels of stress, poor nutrition, and chronic 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—more than 37 million people, including more than 11 million children. That number peaked in 2020 and has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels.

In the early months of the pandemic, Southeast Alaska communities were hit with two crises: bare shelves and a dramatic increase in food prices. The resulting food shortage inspired community partnerships that work to ensure nutritious food is locally available.

Ketchikan Gateway Borough Child Food Insecurity Report 2019		
	Borough	State
Food-insecure children	530	28,160
Food-insecure children likely ineligible for federal nutrition programs	34%	28%
Food-insecure children eligible for federal nutrition programs	66%	72%
Average meal cost	\$3.63	\$3.63

Source: [County Health Rankings](#)

THE COMMUNITY SPOKE—AND WE LISTENED

We are working with partners to increase access to culturally appropriate, nutritious food and break down social or structural barriers by addressing the underlying issues affecting food availability. We are also expanding fruit and vegetable offerings, food education, and low-barrier nutritional access points.

Ketchikan Food Access by the numbers 2021

1 in 2

people who feel securing affordable nutritious food is a major priority

90

people served through the Ketchikan Community Gardens

20

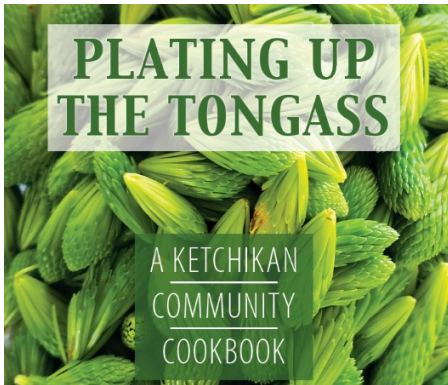
individuals and their families benefitting from Fruit and Veggie Rx voucher program

500

\$10 Fruit and Veggie Rx vouchers distributed to families during launch year

Source: Ketchikan Wellness Coalition 2020 CHNA; PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Group, 2021.

PROMOTING ACCESS TO HEALTHY AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE FOODS



Over two years' time, PeaceHealth invested in a number of projects with Ketchikan Wellness Coalition focused on increasing healthy food access and relieving hunger. The Ketchikan Community Gardens project is a series of demonstration gardens that build connection, increase food resiliency and knowledge, and provide a place for food education. People can learn how to create a raised garden bed, build their own worm bin and harvest from the garden.



The Coalition also published a community cookbook, "Plating Up the Tongass," that features recipes from local residents. All proceeds from cookbook sales go to programs and initiatives that support nutrition and wellness in Ketchikan.

Fruit and vegetable prescription programs can also help vulnerable members of our community to get access to healthy and culturally sensitive foods. PeaceHealth has a Fruit and Veggie Rx (FVRx) voucher program for food-insecure patients who come to our clinics for care. Patients enrolled in this program receive \$10 vouchers for fresh, frozen or canned fruit and veggies at the neighboring A&P Markets.



NOURISH – Community priorities: Expanding food partnerships

Imagine a community where healthy, nutritious foods are offered as an integrated part of healthcare. Innovative programs that combine healthcare access and food security are happening in our community right now and we'd like to see them grow. With a focus on expanding access to affordable, nutritious food, PeaceHealth will continue to seek ways to support partnerships with food pantries, community meals, fruit and veggie prescription programs, community gardens, and programs that focus on serving hard-to-reach communities.

KEY BENEFITS

- Residents are taught sustainable gardening practices and how to grow their own food.
- Youth and children are encouraged to try new fruits and vegetables.
- Families get encouragement for healthy eating habits and empowerment to choose healthy foods.

"Food is often the driving force of health and well-being, with stories and relationships playing a key role. These two projects, the "Plating Up the Tongass" cookbook and the Ketchikan Community Gardens, were designed to strengthen this important connection to land, food, stories, and community."

– Romanda Simpson, Ketchikan Wellness Coalition Executive Director

Final thoughts

For times ahead

Our Community Health Needs Assessment process holds us accountable to listen and learn from our communities. PeaceHealth recognizes that our work is not over. Needs are forever evolving—and so are we.

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.