

# COMMUNITY BENEFITS REPORT

# 2024



Dartmouth  
Health

Cheshire Medical Center

# Letter from Our President and CEO

At Cheshire Medical Center, we strive to improve health outcomes for the communities we serve. To do this effectively, we must assess not only ourselves as an institution but the health needs of our fellow community members.

Cheshire's Center for Population Health makes this possible by conducting a Community Health Needs Assessment every three years. The assessment asks patients and local residents to identify what makes a community healthy, which we then review and design programs to help in those areas of need.

With help from the Healthy Monadnock Alliance, our stakeholders identified four priority areas in our last Community Health Needs Assessment: improving healthcare access, behavioral health supports, aging population services and substance use disorder prevention and supports.

This report highlights some implementation strategies we're employing to tackle the identified needs. At a glance, here is how we are making an impact:

- **Improving healthcare access:** We are helping ease anxiety surrounding a doctor's visit for children by hosting annual teddy bear clinics. Offered through our Family & Community Care Clinic on Maple Avenue—which, since its opening in October 2023, has also expanded our capacity for primary care patients—these events are proven to normalize medical equipment for kids and reduce their anxiety about future visits.
- **Behavioral health support:** To help children take charge of their mental wellbeing, Cheshire's Center for Population Health has the Wellpowered Schools program. Schools enrolled have access to a certified wellness advisor to help enhance wellness for their students, such as through new programming or grant opportunities.
- **Aging population services:** Cheshire's Center for Population Health offers a variety of no-cost or reduced-cost classes for older adults. Whether on our main campus in Keene or other community organizations, these classes help increase public access to wellness education.
- **Substance use disorder prevention and supports:** To increase access to naloxone—a life-saving opioid overdose reversal medication—Cheshire's Center for Population Health has been distributing NaloxBoxes throughout the Monadnock Region. These emergency boxes hang on the wall of public spaces, equipped with naloxone in case of an overdose.

In the following pages, you'll read more about the programs and people responsible for some of the initiatives that are helping us improve health outcomes and meet the needs of our community. Together, we are working to lead our community to optimal health and wellness through our commitment to clinical excellence, collaboration and compassion for every patient.

**Joseph L. Perras, MD**  
**President and CEO**  
**April 2025**



## Organizational and Community Context

Cheshire Medical Center is a unified physician-hospital organization and a member of the Dartmouth Health system. The hospital services the Monadnock Region of New Hampshire which includes 22 towns and the City of Keene in Cheshire County and 10 towns in western Hillsborough County.

In line with our mission statement, "To lead our community to optimal health and wellness through our clinical and service excellence, collaboration, and compassion for every patient, every time", Cheshire Medical Center has

a long history of serving those who live and work in our area through community health improvement activities. Whether they be individual efforts — giving a talk in the community, serving on a local Board of Directors, doing a health-related activity in a local school — or large programs sponsored by the hospital, all efforts make a significant difference in the health status of our community. We also remain committed to serving as the healthcare safety net provider in our area by offering charity care and other financial assistance for members of our community who may be uninsured or are considered low-income.

# Priority Health Needs Identified in the Greater Monadnock Region



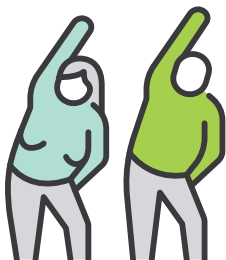
Improving healthcare access in our rural communities



Behavioral health supports



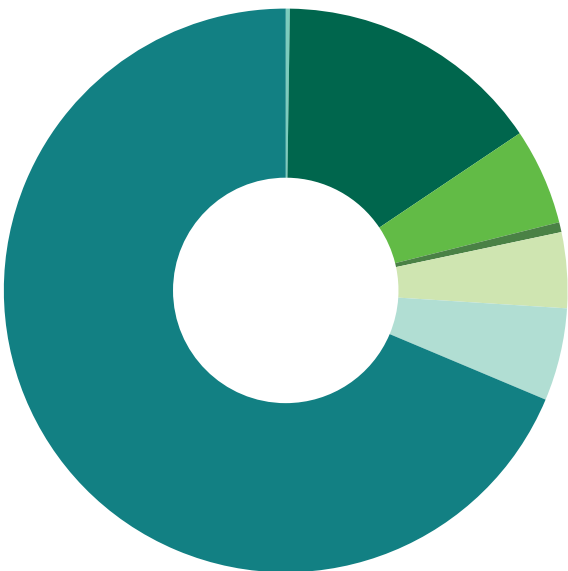
Substance use disorder prevention and supports



Aging population services

## Community Benefit Summary for Cheshire Medical Center, Fiscal Year 2024

In total, Cheshire Medical Center provided more than \$11.2 million in Community Benefits, such as unreimbursed charity care, behavioral health services, health professions education, subsidized health services, and community-building activities. These contributions are in addition to the more than \$23.2 million in unreimbursed Medicaid and Medicare costs absorbed by the Medical Center.



Community Health Services.....	\$79,269
Health Professions Education.....	\$5,201,937
Subsidized Health Services.....	\$1,871,470
Financial and In-Kind Contributions.....	\$192,460
Community-Building Activities .....	\$1,468,805
Charity Care/Financial Assistance.....	\$1,802,000
Government-Sponsored Healthcare.....	\$23,265,264

**Cheshire Provided Community Benefit..\$10,615,941**  
no government-sponsored healthcare

**Full Community Benefit ..... \$33,871,516**

\*numbers reported to Attorney General in February 2025



# Teddy Bear Clinic normalizes medical setting for kids

Going to the doctor's office can be scary, especially for children. To help ease these anxieties, Cheshire Medical Center's Family & Community Care Clinic hosted a Teddy Bear Clinic for local children.

These annual events allow for children and their caregivers to familiarize themselves with the medical setting. With the guidance of Cheshire's volunteer staff members, children are gifted a teddy

"The best thing about the teddy bear clinic was watching my child learn and feel more comfortable."

Local caregiver



Geraldine Rubin, MD

## 2024 TEDDY BEAR CLINIC BY THE NUMBERS

**32** Cheshire staff members volunteered to help with the clinic

**64** children and **54** caregivers attended the clinic

Participating children reported a **25%** increase in positive feelings about having a medical visit

bear or can bring their favorite stuffed animal and care for them as a provider would through different medical experiences, from regular office visits to putting on a cast.

Teddy bear clinics are proven to empower children by normalizing medical equipment and experiences, reducing anxiety of future doctor visits and increasing their knowledge of their body. For caregivers, these events give them an opportunity to address a child's health questions and concerns.

These outcomes, in turn, help improve access to health care in our community.



Family & Community Care is open from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, by appointment only.

To establish care at Family & Community Care, or to schedule an appointment, please call 603-354-6900.

To learn more, visit [cheshiremed.org/FCC](https://cheshiremed.org/FCC)





# Wellpowered Schools gives kids opportunities to grow

Children who learn how to take charge of their physical and mental wellbeing are more likely to follow a healthy lifestyle as an adult.

To help empower local kids in this way, Cheshire Medical Center's Center for Population Health has been offering the Wellpowered Schools program since 2015.

Schools who enroll in the program work with a certified wellness advisor to explore strategies

## 2024 WELLPOWERED SCHOOLS BY THE NUMBERS

**25** schools involved

**4,200** students involved

Out of the 25 participating schools, **12** either maintained all four Healthy Designation badges or increased their number of badges from the year prior



“I love the program because it fosters collaboration with local libraries, schools and hospitals while supporting health literacy in the Monadnock Region. Its flexibility allows each organization to adapt it to their community’s needs.”

Marissa Mannion-King, senior population health coordinator

to enhance wellness in their school. This can include providing resources, revising wellness policy language, introducing programming and offering grants.

One of these strategies is the Read-a-Marathon program, offered to any Monadnock Region school. Each student receives a race-themed reading tracker and tracking stickers to tick off each mile they’ve “run” when completing a book. After each completed book, children will log the title on the back of the tracker and place a tracking sticker to complete that “mile.”

The program runs through May and “runners” who complete the marathon receive certificates of completion, as well as a Read-a-Marathon brag tag.

The initiative encourages reading and increases equitable access to books. Additionally — with 70% of the selected books offered focusing on social, emotional

and physical health — the program promotes youth wellbeing literacy, the ability to use knowledge to improve your own or others’ wellbeing.

## 2024 READ-A-MARATHON BY THE NUMBERS

About **1,000** students participated in the program

**13** community partners — **7** schools, **4** libraries and **2** hospitals — participated in the program

**70%** of books read related to social or emotional learning

To learn more, visit [cheshiremed.org/community-programs/wellpowered-schools](https://cheshiremed.org/community-programs/wellpowered-schools)



# Opioid overdose kit installations save lives, reduce stigma

If there's an emergency in a public space, there are resources in place to help you, from first-aid kits to fire extinguishers. But what if you experience an opioid overdose?

That's where NaloxBoxes comes in.

To increase access to and awareness of naloxone — a life-saving opioid overdose reversal medication, also known as Narcan — New Hampshire's State Opioid Response Team equipped every public health network in the state with NaloxBoxes to distribute in their community.

## 2024 HARM REDUCTION BY THE NUMBERS

**36** NaloxBoxes implemented in the Monadnock Region

**2,362** Narcan kits distributed in Cheshire County

**114** reported opioid overdose reversals in Cheshire County

These opioid overdose rescue kits hang on the wall, just like other emergency equipment would, inside spaces such as libraries, area businesses, universities and mental health organizations. NaloxBoxes include naloxone, gloves, a face shield and instructions on how to administer the medication properly.

John Letendre, the continuum of care facilitator for Cheshire Medical Center's Center for Population Health, has been in charge of distributing NaloxBoxes throughout the Monadnock Region, with 36 put up since the fall of 2023.



“Saving lives with naloxone is a critical part of harm reduction. People who die from accidental overdose do not get a second chance at recovery. Most people do recover eventually with help, support and treatment.”

John Letendre, continuum of care facilitator for Cheshire Medical Center's Center for Population Health



“Cheshire County is grateful that we’ve been provided with public NaloxBoxes in our facilities. Similar to an AED, having these present provides a strong sense of confidence that we can provide life giving care if needed. This greatly reduces our response time in the case of an emergency. In addition, the training our staff was given was practical, timely and reduced anxiety associated with the potential to use this life-saving equipment.”

Steve Perrin, safety coordinator for Cheshire County

Ideally, the boxes would be used as often as any other emergency kit would, such as a defibrillator. But, having them in place is crucial, as opioid overdoses can quickly lead to death if no one intervenes.

In addition to saving more lives, these kits also help reduce the stigma often associated with opioid overdoses by treating these incidents like any other bystander-enabled medical response.



John Letendre (left) and Steve Perrin stand with the NaloxBox located at the Cheshire County Administration building.



## What if someone I care about needs help?

Whether you are seeking help for yourself or a loved one or are simply looking for information and resources related to drugs or alcohol, The Doorway is the right place.

To contact The Doorway, **call 211** anytime or visit 24 Railroad Street in Keene, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.

To learn more, visit [cheshiremed.org/doorway](https://cheshiremed.org/doorway)



# Community education helps residents live healthy lives

Whether you want to try out chair yoga or learn how to declutter your home, Cheshire Medical Center's Center for Population Health has a community education class for you.

These classes — offered for free or at a reduced cost — have been available to local residents since 1999 at the Keene hospital's main campus, as well as at other area organizations to increase accessibility throughout the Monadnock Region. In fiscal year 2024, nine of these workshops were held for community members.

The aim of these classes is to increase access,

resources and information on a variety of health topics, identified through Cheshire's tri-annual Community Health Needs Assessment.

"This [class] was inspiring. It was fun to be able to learn and socialize at the same time."

Local participant

In addition to employees of the Center for Population Health, classes are led by a variety of experts, including Cheshire providers and regional experts.

Community health programs like this help increase public access to wellness education, ultimately helping members of our community live healthy, well-balanced lives. And by offering these programs at a low cost, the Center for Population Health is aligning with our commitment to equity for the community.

## 2024 CLASSES BY THE NUMBERS

**216** people participated in a class

**5** Dartmouth Health employees volunteered their time to present at these classes

**54** people that attended the Healthy Aging class series “found value in attending” and “felt like they had new information ... to help make healthy lifestyle choices”

To learn more, visit [cheshiremed.org/health-wellness/events-and-classes](https://cheshiremed.org/health-wellness/events-and-classes)







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**Center for Population Health**

Cheshire Medical Center  
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603-354-5460

Visit the website to see archives of former reports, implementation plans, and community health needs assessment data.

[cheshiremed.org/about/community-benefits-reporting](https://cheshiremed.org/about/community-benefits-reporting)



**VIEW ONLINE**