

Community Benefits Fact Sheet

Community Benefits Overview

Community Benefits are investments by hospitals and Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) that further their charitable mission of addressing their communities' health and social needs. Hospitals and HMOs in Massachusetts collectively report more than \$750 million in Community Benefits expenditures annually. About half of this spending is for charity care, and about half is for programs addressing community health needs.

What Do Community Benefits Programs Look Like?

Community Benefits programs must address a need documented in a Community Health Needs Assessment ("CHNA"). Examples of Community Benefits programs include: funding a high-risk pregnancy support group and community health workers to conduct home visits through a local Community Health Center, a community-based assessment of housing discrimination and implementation of identified remedies, and transportation/other community engagement costs for convening an inter-hospital Community Benefits collaboration meeting.

How to Learn More About Existing Community Benefits Programs

You can find out about Community Benefits programs by going to the [Attorney General's website](#) where you can browse and download reports or search for programs by keyword or by criteria such as region.

How to Get Involved with your CHNA

Under the new guidelines, hospitals and HMOs are encouraged to hold at least one public Community Benefits meeting annually, which you are encouraged to attend to learn about programs in your community. Additionally, CHNAs are generally posted on hospital websites.

How do community organizations already involved in the process provide feedback?

Under the new Guidelines, hospitals and HMOs are encouraged to make a "Community Feedback Form" available to community partners in order to provide feedback to the hospital or HMO on ways to improve their work. Under the current Guidelines, community groups are encouraged to provide feedback directly to the hospital or HMO. The AGO will publish on its website written comments related to a hospital's or HMO's Community Benefits annual report that are submitted in accordance with the Community Benefits Guidelines.

Key Updates to Community Benefits reporting beginning in FY2019

The updated [Community Benefits Guidelines](#) have a focus on:

- 1) **Social Determinants of Health**, which are the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work, and age, as well as the health systems they use;
- 2) **Updated Statewide Health Priorities** including chronic disease with a focus on cancer, heart disease and diabetes, housing stability/homelessness, mental illness and mental health, and substance use disorders;
- 3) **Community Engagement** including improving hospital and HMO engagement with community partners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs;
- 4) **Regional Collaboration** on needs assessments, program planning, and sharing of best practices;

For More Information

You can find out more about the Community Benefits Programs in your region, including contact information for hospital/HMO Community Benefits staff, through our [website](#). General questions about the program can be directed to CBAAdmin@state.ma.us.