

Community Benefits Report to the Attorney General

FISCAL YEAR 2011



SOUTHCOAST
HOSPITALS GROUP

Charlton ■ St. Luke's ■ Tobey

www.southcoast.org

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Fiscal Year 2011**



Southcoast Hospitals Group

363 Highland Avenue
Fall River, MA 02720
Serving the region of Southeastern Massachusetts

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SECTION I: Mission Statement

Southcoast Hospitals Group, including Charlton Memorial Hospital, St. Luke's Hospital and Tobey Hospital, is committed to improving the health status of the communities we serve, by identifying pressing health needs and collaborating with community partners to prioritize and meet those needs.

We will accomplish this through:

- Identifying the unmet health needs of the community by working in collaboration with the relevant community health networks established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and other community representatives and providers.
- Prioritizing the identified health needs, utilizing criteria inclusive of the severity of the problem, the availability of alternative resources to address the issue, the benefit to be derived and the potential of collaboration with others to address the need.
- Identifying which needs can most effectively be met through the resources of Southcoast Hospitals Group, and its affiliated corporations, particularly the needs of the uninsured and the medically underserved needing enhanced access to care.
- Collaborating with local health providers, human services agencies, advocacy groups and others to develop cooperative plans and programs to address pressing community health needs. Providing educational resources to educate the community regarding health promotion and wellness, particularly to address health issues that disproportionately affect the South Coast.
- Recommending to the Southcoast Hospitals Group Board of Trustees the adoption of meaningful programs and services to address specifically unmet needs and to improve the health of the community.

Our **target population** is determined by our comprehensive health needs assessment and is reviewed on an annual basis. Our target populations include:

- South Coast residents who suffer disproportionately from chronic disease such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and respiratory disease. Particular focus is give to residents who experience barriers to care due to language, culture, race, income or education.
- Area youth who are at high risk for problems such as teen pregnancy, violence, substance abuse and other risky behaviors that impact health and wellbeing.
- Residents who lack access to regular primary health care due to lack of health insurance or other barriers.
- Residents and their families who are affected by substance abuse.
- Area Boards of Health and other municipal agencies whose programs impact a number of aspects of health for their residents, and who have experienced severe budget cuts that have impacted these programs, which may include smoking cessation and prevention, chronic disease management and emergency preparedness.

Educational initiatives shall incorporate recognition of the cultural and demographic aspects of accessing the health care system.

SECTION II: Internal Oversight & Management of Community Benefits

The Southcoast Community Benefits Program is under the overall direction of a trustee-level Community Benefits Committee that meets regularly to review and authorize activities and expenditures related to community benefits. This committee reports to the Southcoast Hospitals Group Board of Trustees. The committee includes representatives from the various communities served by Southcoast Hospitals as well as members with expertise in matters concerning the health and welfare of the community. This board represents the diversity of our region, with members who are active leaders in minority communities including the Cape Verdean, Hispanic and Portuguese communities.

Advisory groups, comprised of community members and hospital staff, plan and carry out activities related to Southcoast's major community benefits initiatives: cardiovascular health and youth risk behaviors. Other initiatives focus on health access issues and chronic disease prevention. Also, a number of Southcoast staff participate and provide leadership in collaborative groups, including CHNAs in Fall River and New Bedford, the Wareham Community Services Collaborative, regional coalitions including Voices for a Healthy SouthCoast and Mass in Motion, a regional Worksite Wellness Collaborative, a Health Access Task force in Greater New Bedford, a substance abuse coalition, a regional Food Council and a committee addressing health disparities in the Greater New Bedford region.

Community benefits activities by Southcoast staff are organized through an internal Community Benefits Task Force that meets monthly to plan and coordinate programs and activities. This team consists of representatives from departments that regularly engage in outreach in the community, including staff from our Southcoast Health Van, social services, stroke outreach, Patient Financial Services, cancer outreach, our Cardiac Prevention Team, smoking cessation, diabetes and other patient education, teen pregnancy outreach and others.

Senior management responsibility for the Community Benefits Program rests with Southcoast's Vice President of Marketing & Public Affairs, who co-chairs the trustee-level Community Benefits Committee. The Community Benefits Manager, who reports to the Vice President of Marketing & Public Affairs, manages Southcoast's day-to-day community benefits activities and leads the internal Community Benefits Task Force.

Southcoast also conducts regular updates and presentations on community benefits activities to Southcoast leadership through Directors and Managers/Supervisors meetings at all three hospital sites along with presentations on community benefit activities which are periodically made to all levels of employees. Information is also presented through articles in our internal hospital publication, *Coastlines*, in a community newsletter, *Your Health Matters*, and in our monthly public electronic newsletter, *Southcoast eNews*. Information is regularly shared with the community through collaborative meetings and forums.

2011 Members of the Community Benefits Committee of the Board of Trustees

- Maureen Sylvia Armstrong, Chair
- Mary Crowley
- John F. Dator Sr.
- Marcine Fernandes
- Stuart I. Forman
- Peter C. Georgeopoulos
- Keith A. Hovan
- Dana Keyes Sr.
- Rev. David Lima
- Arlene McNamee
- M. Paula Raposa
- Jim Rattray
- David Weed, PsyD

SECTION III: Community Health Needs Assessment

Southcoast in 2009 completed a major Community Health Needs Assessment that covers the entire South Coast region. This assessment consisted of a retrospective review of Department of Public Health and other national and regional health and demographic data, along with interviews of key leaders in our communities and a series of three focus groups, including several that targeted underserved members in our communities. Southcoast first completed a comprehensive regional health needs assessment in 1998 and this assessment has been revised and updated regularly.

In 2011, we expanded our needs assessment through participation in a number of collaborative needs assessment projects. The Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness (CHNA 26) undertook a comprehensive regional health needs assessment that is based on our 2009 Community Health Needs Assessment. Working collaboratively with the CHNA, we enlarged our assessment to include an additional 20 key informant interviews and four additional focus groups that targeted at-risk local youth and elders. CHNA members, including several Southcoast staff, received special training to conduct the interviews, expanding both our capacity and the CHNA's capacity to engage in ongoing dialogue with our communities. Another advantage of this collaborative process is that we all share the results at monthly assessment subcommittee meetings and with the larger CHNA membership on frequent basis. This results in a more collaborative and strategic planning process that truly reflects the pressing needs of our local residents.

Our Community Benefits manager presented on our needs assessment activities at a number of regional forums including a statewide prevention conference by the Department of Public Health, a statewide conference for local Boards of Health, and a regional inter-CHNA conference.

Our needs assessment process has provided an excellent foundation for both community dialogue and targeted community benefits planning for Southcoast.

In 2011, our needs assessment data was shared with and utilized by:

- Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness (CHNA 26).
- Partners for a Healthier Community (CHNA25).
- Wareham Community Services Collaborative.
- Voices for a Health SouthCoast.
- Wareham Boys and Girls Club.
- New Bedford Health Department.
- New Bedford Housing Authority.
- Wareham Health Department.
- Wareham Public Schools' new Family Council project.
- YMCA Southcoast.

Our needs assessment is posted on the Southcoast website and community members are encouraged to engage in dialogue concerning the findings.

<www.southcoast.org/news/benefits/#needsassessment>

Highlights of our needs assessment include:

The South Coast has significant demographic issues that impact residents' health, particularly in the two major urban communities in the region, Fall River and New Bedford. Residents in these communities generally have lower incomes, a lower educational level and higher unemployment than both the state and the region.

Residents also have worse health indicators in a number of areas, particularly chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and asthma and maternal/child health issues including high rates of teen pregnancy. High rates of chronic disease are related to risk factors such as an extremely high rate of obesity and a high smoking rate.

The majority of key informant interviews and focus group participants expressed the opinion that health issues in the region are directly related to socio-economic issues and that health disparities exist among residents who experience poverty, lack of education and cultural differences.

A number of other factors also impact health on the South Coast.

Access to Care:

Access to health care is a major issue in our region. Several of our communities have suffered disproportionately with the economic downturn and unemployment in communities like Fall River and New Bedford is much higher than the rest of the state. (12.5 percent verses 8 percent for the state). This has resulted in a number of residents losing their health insurance.

Although access to primary care physicians has risen in recent years, due to significant recruitment of primary care physicians, data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Statewide Survey (BFRSS) indicates that fewer residents on the South Coast have health insurance than the state as a whole (11.6 percent verses 7.6 percent for the state). Also, a higher percentage of residents report they could not see a physician due to cost (10.5 percent verses 8 percent for the state).

Violence:

The overall crime rate in the South Coast was higher than the state, particularly for violent crimes such as rape, aggravated assault and burglary. Our major cities of Fall River and New Bedford report some of the highest violent crime rates in the state. New Bedford reports a rate of 1,302 violent offenses per 100,000 population — the second highest rate in the state. In fact, the city of New Bedford has the highest rate of gunshot/stabbing assaults in the state. Fall River reports a rate of 1,199 violent offenses and a rate of 80.3 gunshot/stabbing assaults. Also, the city of New Bedford has a much higher firearms-related death rate than the state (8.0 deaths per 100,000 population verses 3.2 deaths for the state as a whole).

Gunshot/Sharp Instrument Assaults Massachusetts 2008-2009

New Bedford	Springfield	Brockton	Chelsea	Holyoke	Fall River	Mass.
141.2	123.5	116.1	93.8	85.1	80.3	28.6

(Source: Injury Surveillance Program: Massachusetts Department of Health. Rate is per 100,000 population)

Substance Abuse:

The South Coast region has a higher admission rate for substance abuse than the rest of the state, particularly in our urban areas of Fall River and New Bedford. Fall River has one of the highest rates in Massachusetts.

Substance Abuse: Rate per 100,000 population

Fall River	New Bedford	Massachusetts
4,023	2,673	1,621

(Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health 2009)

The South Coast region also has a higher proportion of opioid-related ER visits and fatal overdoses than the state of Massachusetts as a whole. Specifically, the South Coast region reports a rate of 195.7 per 100,000 population for opioid-related emergency department visits, a rate significantly higher

than the state's (181.1 per 100,000 population). In terms of race and ethnicity, white non-Hispanic residents in the South Coast are more likely than those in the state overall to have an opioid-related ER visit.

Our region has a higher rate of smoking than the state — 22.8 percent of residents smoke verses 15.8 for Massachusetts as a whole. The city of New Bedford reports an even higher percentage at 28.4 percent. This results in high rates of lung and smoking-related cancers. Also, a high percentage of women smoke while pregnant, impacting the health of their infants.

Chronic Disease:

Residents on the South Coast report higher rates of a number of chronic diseases and also the risk factors that cause them, particularly in the cities of Fall River and New Bedford.

Percent of Residents Who Report Chronic Diseases

	Diabetes	Asthma	Heart disease	High blood pressure
Fall River	9.4	17.7	9	32.6
New Bedford	9.7	17.4	9.8	32.1
Massachusetts	6.5	14.8	7	25.6

Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health BFRSS survey 2009.

Risk Factors for Chronic Disease

	Overweight	Obese	Regular Physical Activity	5-plus Servings of Fruits/Vegetables
Fall River	64	22.9	50.4	24.4
New Bedford	63.7	25.1	52.4	26.3
Fall River (city)	66.4	31.4	48.4	24.1
New Bedford(city)	67.9	30.5	45.5	23.1
Massachusetts	56	19.8	52.8	29.3

SECTION IV: Community Benefits Plan

Community Benefits Plan:

Southcoast's Community Benefits Strategic Action Plan was first formulated in 1998 as a result of our extensive needs assessment and is updated annually. Our current plan is based on our most recent major needs assessment.

Our action plan has traditionally focused on three regional priority health issues.

- Reduction of the high rate of cardiovascular disease in our region, as well as other chronic diseases, such as diabetes and asthma.
- Reduction in the incidence of youth risk behaviors such as teen violence, high rates of teen pregnancy and substance abuse.
- Improving access to health care.

Additional areas of focus, as a result of our recent needs assessment, include:

- Expanding cancer screening and education, particularly since cancer is now the major cause of death in our region, surpassing heart disease.
- Addressing health disparities that exist in our region among certain racial, ethnic and demographic groups.
- Advocacy and program development that addresses "system change" both at our hospitals and in the community, that is designed to increase healthy lifestyle options and decrease risk factors such as a high rate of smoking.

We recognize that many chronic diseases and health problems that afflict area residents are related to significant risk factors such as obesity, sedentary lifestyles and high rates of smoking.

In collaboration with community partners, we have introduced a number of initiatives to address these risk factors. These programs focus not only on educational efforts, but also efforts to influence policy and environment changes that aim to make healthy lifestyle choices the easiest lifestyle choices for the majority of local residents. Residents in several of our cities, namely Fall River and New Bedford, often lack access to healthy nutrition such as fresh fruits and vegetables and safe and inexpensive exercise options. These communities also have extremely high rates of smoking.

Significant health disparities exist in our region, evident both in chronic disease rates and mortality and also in the risk factors that contribute to these problems.

Southcoast has assumed a leadership role in several regional coalitions to address these issues, including Voices for a Healthy SouthCoast, Mass in Motion and a Health Equity initiative in Greater Bedford. Our initiatives often target specific populations on the South Coast, such as ethnic and other minorities and low-income residents, under- or uninsured, those without access to care, those at risk for heart disease and "at risk" youth.

Programs that were part of our community benefits plan for this past year include:

- Health Access outreach.
- Health Advocates (intervention for substance abuse.)
- Cardiac Prevention and stroke outreach
- Smoking cessation and prevention.
- RAPPP (Responsible Attitudes Toward Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention).
- Maternal/Child health outreach.
- Southcoast Health Van.
- Health Equity Project.

- Voices for a Healthy SouthCoast.
- Cancer screenings and outreach.

Target Audiences:

- Middle and high school students in communities with high rates of teen pregnancy, youth violence and other youth risk behaviors. Parents and community members who work with teens.
- Smokers and those at risk for smoking, particularly youth. Other audiences include Southcoast inpatients and outpatients who smoke,
- Youth and adults who are at risk for heart disease, particularly ethnic populations and low-income populations, with a special focus on middle school students and workplace wellness initiatives. Our program targets communities on the South Coast where heart disease rates are higher than the rest of the region and also target businesses with high immigrant and lower income populations.
- Those in our community who experience health disparities due to ethnic, racial and economic factors. These include ethnic groups such as Portuguese, Hispanic, Brazilian, Mayan and Cambodian Khmer communities, African-American residents and the large percentage of residents in our region who are either at or near the poverty level in terms of income.

SECTION V: Community Benefits Programs

1. Program: Responsible Attitudes Toward Pregnancy Prevention and Parenting (RAPPP)

Target Audience:

Middle and high school students, particularly those in communities with high rates of teen pregnancy, youth violence and other youth risk behaviors. Parents and community members who work with teens.

Documented Health Need:

High rates of teen pregnancy, particularly in the communities of Fall River and New Bedford.

Other documented youth risk behaviors including high rates of violence and substance abuse.

Collaborations:

Greater New Bedford Vocational Technical High School, Fairhaven High School, Nativity Preparatory School, Norfolk Agricultural School, Old Colony Regional Vocational High School, Our Sisters School, New Bedford Global Charter School, Trinity and Whaling City Alternative High Schools, Friends Academy, Wareham High School, Bristol County Sheriff's Department, Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness (CHNA 26), Partners for a Healthier Community (CHNA 25), Boys and Girls Club, YMCA Southcoast, Girls Scouts of Southeastern Massachusetts.

2011 goals included:

- Expand RAPPP programs in area middle schools.
- Expand number of assets training programs at community agencies that work with youth.
- Expand RAPPP youth council and engage youth in educational projects.

Programs and Benchmarks:

Education:

The RAPPP program is a 14-hour abstinence-based, comprehensive education program targeted at high school youth. This year, the program served more than 1,532 junior and senior high school students at area schools, with expansion of the program into several middle schools including a school for at-risk girls in New Bedford and several alternative high schools in New Bedford.

Our program this year expanded to two new schools; Trinity Day Academy, a middle school in New Bedford, and Old Colony Regional Vocational High School.

Since its inception RAPPP and its related programs have served more than 84,000 young people, their parents and other community members through programming, education, youth development and mentoring.

During this past year, RAPPP programs reached more than 4184 people in the Greater Fall River, New Bedford and Wareham communities. The RAPPP program is totally funded through grants and by Southcoast Hospitals Group. The community is strongly represented in our RAPPP Program Steering Committee made up of business leaders, educators, private citizens and youth from the Greater New Bedford.

RAPPP also focuses on educating young men and fathers about parenting issues and pregnancy prevention through a variety of educational activities and events.

RAPPP participants, including peer leaders and youth council members, reflect the diversity of our region. RAPPP participants' ethnic, racial and social background information is obtained and results are tabulated and retained by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Community Outreach and training:

RAPPP staff has provided training for 150 community members as part of its "Healthy Youth Initiative." This program is based on a national model created by the nonprofit Search Institute, currently being implemented in high-risk communities across the country. Our local program aims to create a stronger community for our young adults by emphasizing positive developmental assets, which are experiences and qualities that have a positive influence on teen's development, including self-esteem, encouragement, decision making, conflict resolution and setting future goals. Our regional program focuses on reinforcing young people's assets consistently throughout all of the organizations that interact with the city's adolescents — this includes at home, schools, through municipal organizations and youth outreach workers.

In 2011, we conducted a special program for a diverse group of 20 community leaders in Wareham, which experienced a rash of youth violence. Members of the Police and School Departments, Boys and Girls Club, parents, youth leaders and other community members attended the two-day training.

Other community outreach included educating more than 300 people through an educational table for National Condom Day.

Each year, RAPPP staff conduct a conference and strategic planning session with its community Partners. This year we reached over 40 partners at a training on trauma informed care and issues affecting gay and lesbian teens.

RAPPP staff were also involved in a number of community coalitions including:

- The Greater New Bedford Health and Human Services Coalition.
- Healthy Families New Bedford Collaborative.
- Healthy Families Fall River Collaborative.
- The Children's Trust Fund Fathers & Families Network.

Beyond the local community, we continue to work as affiliates with the National Fatherhood Initiative.

Parenting programming:

RAPPP staff offers bi-monthly community trainings for new and expectant fathers. Much of our programming targets "at risk" parents through a partnership with the Bristol County House of Correction. Included in our fatherhood programming is:

- "Basic Training" for new dads (community based).
- "Basic Training" for incarcerated fathers, along with parenting workshops for these dads.
- "Basic Training for Young Dads" (teen new or expectant fathers aged 13 to 21).

In addition, fathers' support groups are run on a regular basis, both in the community and at the Bristol County House of Correction, which targets parents who are particularly at risk. RAPPP staff, reached over 1520 people — both dads and moms — at parenting workshops for incarcerated parents this past year.

Literacy:

Each year RAPPP staff distributes thousands of books to pre-school, elementary and middle school students as part of a project to promote literacy among under-served children and youth. A special audience for this literacy project are parents who are part of groups at the Bristol County House of Correction.

Family Resource Center:

RAPPP Family Education Youth Resource Center provides a lending library and resource for area parents, youth and professionals. The center offers information on all aspects of parenting, along with information on youth risk behaviors such as drug and alcohol use, smoking and reproductive health issues.

Youth Involvement:

The RAPPP program involves local youth in planning and delivering our programs and messages. Our youth involvement includes work by a RAPPP youth council and this past year formation of a youth media group. Our youth stage a series of weekly Teen Nights for six months, which reached over 125 teens on a regular basis with safe and fun recreational opportunities.

We also are the lead agency in organizing a community-wide teen night, June Jump-off, which reached over 300 middle and high school youth with messages about minimizing youth risk behaviors while coming together for a night of games and music.

Our youth media group created a series of four videos on topics that include peer pressure to have sexual relationships, the consequences of unprotected sex, violence issues in teen relationships and bullying including cyber-bullying. These films were integrated during 2011 in curricula in a number of local high schools and middle schools.

The RAPPP Program receives \$156,000 per year in a multi-year grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, along with grants from corporations and private donations to continue the work so desperately needed by the youth and parents of the South Coast area.

Southcoast is the major sponsor of a regional Youth Summit, which involves over 300 teens each year, and sponsors after school youth programs as part of youth services in the city of Fall River. Fall River this past year was designated as one of the nation's 100 Best Communities for Youth as a result of collaborative efforts of a number of partners. Southcoast is also a collaborative partner on a large grant the city received to provide a community-wide intervention program to reduce youth violence among proven risk teens.

2. Program: Smoking Cessation and Prevention

Target Audience:

Smokers and those at risk for smoking, particularly youth. Other audiences include Southcoast inpatients and outpatients who smoke.

Documented Health Need:

The Southcoast region has a smoking rate that is close to double the state average, particularly in the region's cities, Fall River and New Bedford and in the town of Wareham.

	Percent smokers	Pregnant smokers	Lung cancer mortality (per100,000 population)
Fall River	22.8%	19.9%	51.2
New Bedford	28.4%	17.3%	43.9
Wareham	22.1%	20.3%	70
Massachusetts	15.8%	7.4%	50.8

Source: Mass Department of Public Health Mass CHIP

Collaborations:

Seven Hills Behavioral Health Tobacco-Free Community Partnership, Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation Program, QuitWorks, New Bedford Board of Health, Wareham Board of Health, Fall River Health Department, Voices for a Healthy SouthCoast, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, BOLD Coalition.

Goals for 2011:

- Increase system referrals to statewide QuitWorks program. As part of our Quality Assurance program, Southcoast staff ask each patient admitted to the hospital if they smoke and if so, make a referral to the QuitWorks program. We are the largest hospital referral source to QuitWorks in the state.
- Reach youth with prevention messages through smoking prevention programs. Institute plan for a 100 percent smoke-free campus with a goal date of January 1, 2012 (this was achieved).
- Advocate for stronger smoking restrictions in cities and towns with high smoking rates, particularly in Fall River, New Bedford and Wareham.

Programs and Benchmarks:

QuitWorks:

Southcoast last year continued to be among the highest health care provider referrers to the state's QuitWorks program, referring 446 patients who are smokers.

In addition, this year Southcoast introduced a new program in our Emergency Departments that uses "brief negotiated interview" techniques to provide intervention and referrals for patients who may be at risk for any type of substance abuse, including QuitWorks referrals for smoking. This program last year referred 204 outpatients to QuitWorks.

Southcoast also collaborated with the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center's Wellness program to offer coordinated referrals to QuitWorks and cessation programs for residents who receive care at both the hospital and health center.

In response to the high rate of pregnant women who smoke in our region, our Family Education Department at St. Luke's and Charlton provides a smoking questionnaire to all participants in prenatal education programs and uses the results to develop smoking cessation education targeted at this

group. We also collaborate with the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center to refer smokers to pregnant women who reported they smoked were referred to QuitWorks.

Advocacy for Smoking Restrictions:

Southcoast staff played a leadership role in advocacy for the ban of cigarette sales in pharmacies in a number of local cities and towns. These collaborative campaigns were successful in Fall River, New Bedford and Wareham, where new regulations passed. Southcoast staff testified at public hearings and wrote letters of support. This campaign continues in 2012 in other South Coast towns.

In Fall River, youth from the BOLD coalition, which Southcoast is a part of, organized the advocacy for the smoking ban, wrote the proposed regulations and presented them to the Fall River City Council.

“Smoke-Free” campus:

All buildings at Southcoast have been totally tobacco-free for a number of years and two years ago, smoking was restricted on our grounds to one or two enclosed smoking huts on each of our hospital campuses.

In 2010, we set the goal of a 100 percent smoke-free campus by January 1, 2012. We spent more than six months preparing for this, expanding cessation tools and programs for employees and patients, developing signage for our campus and advocating for smoke-free environments in our communities. We have also worked with a number of community partners to plan for further smoking restrictions including advocacy for the creation of no-smoking buffers around health care institutions on the South Coast.

Tar Wars:

Tar Wars is a smoking prevention program targeted at middle school students and fifth graders at a number of local schools. Southcoast staff use graphic models to illustrate the effects of smoking on lungs and other organs and also engage the students in creating anti-smoking messages. In many cases, Tar Wars is the only smoking prevention education in our local school systems, since health classes have often been cut due to budget constraints in local cities and towns.

Working with Partners for Healthier Community, we expanded the Tar Wars program in Fall River schools, integrating it with education programs that include tobacco, nutrition and fitness.

We expanded Tar Wars in 2011 to middle schools in New Bedford, which has one of the highest smoking rates in the state.

BOLD Coalition

Southcoast also targets youth with smoking prevention and cessation messages through involvement in the BOLD Coalition, an organization that is part of Partners for a Healthier Community. (CHNA 25) The Mission of the BOLD Coalition is to prevent and reduce alcohol and drug abuse among youth by collaborating with the community to initiate policy change, raise awareness, modify social norms, educate youth and adults, and promote healthy activities.

BOLD this year had success on several policy initiatives including regulations to ban the sale of cigarettes in local pharmacies and regulations to limit advertising of cigarettes and other nicotine products that target youth.

Goals for 2012:

- Institute a smoke-free campus for all employees, patients and visitors,
- Advocate and educate our communities about the need for smoke-free buffers around public buildings and health care institutions.

- Expand Tar Wars to middle schools in Fall River
- Expand the QuitWorks program to Southcoast Physicians Group.

3. Program: Cardiac Prevention

Target Audience:

Youth and adults who are at risk for heart disease, including ethnic populations and low-income populations, with a particular focus on middle school students and workplace wellness initiatives. Our program targets cities where heart disease rates are higher than the rest of the region and also targets businesses with high immigrant and lower income populations, such as local manufacturing plants.

Documented Health Need:

High rate of cardiovascular disease. The Southcoast region reports a significantly higher percentage of heart disease than the state of Massachusetts as a whole.

Heart Disease data	Greater Fall River	Greater New Bedford	Massachusetts
Incidence (hospitalizations)	478	511	419
Mortality rate	130	142	109
Heart Attack (MI)	226	230	194
<i>By ethnicity:</i>			
White	131.8	136.9	111.9
African-American	(Note: Numbers too	427.9	114
Hispanic	small for comparison)	113.2	56.8

Note: Geographic areas are based on CHNA regions — Partners for a Healthier Community for Greater Fall River and Greater New Bedford Alliance for Health and Wellness for New Bedford. These areas encompass the entire primary Southcoast geographic region.

Note: Rates are estimated by 100,000 population. Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health, MassCHIP.

Behavioral risk factor data from the state indicate that both CHNA regions have higher than normal risk factors including rates of smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Goals for 2011:

- Increase screenings by 10 percent.
- Expand screenings to “at-risk” populations through collaboration with local church and other groups that serve homeless and low-income residents.
- Participate in school wellness councils to advocate for wellness policies that emphasize healthy foods and exercise opportunities.
- Continue to play leadership role in policy and environment coalitions.

Collaborations:

American Heart Association, Fall River School Department, New Bedford School Department, Wareham School Department, Old Rochester Regional School District, Dighton Rehoboth Regional School District, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, YWCA, Joseph Abboud Manufacturing, Duro Finishing, Councils on Aging, Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community, Voices for a Healthy SouthCoast, Mass in Motion (Fall River and New Bedford), Mercy Meals and More, Fall River Housing Authority, Wareham Boys and Girls Club, Partners for a Heart Healthy and Stroke Free Massachusetts.

Program and Results:

Cardiac Screenings and Education:

This year the Cardiac Prevention Program (CPP) provided screenings for 7,035 individuals — a 23 percent increase over last year — and our team performed more than 13,000 procedures. This year, the team included body mass index screenings for all adults who were screened and incorporated this information into the personal report that each patient receives. We provided BMI screenings for 1580

individuals during 2011 and the majority of these were not at goal. For example, 68 percent of workers at a local manufacturing plant were either overweight or obese. Work in area middle schools this year involved screening of 4,243 students, a 50 percent increase over the previous year. The team also expanded the reach of “Tar Wars,” a smoking prevention program that targets middle school students, adding middle schools in New Bedford.

Our Cardiac Prevention program is staffed with a comprehensive health team that includes a full-time registered nurse trained in risk factor assessments including lipids, tobacco abuse, hypertension, diabetes, stress, obesity and obtaining family history, and a full-time registered dietician who performs cholesterol and lipid screening as well as dietary instruction. Screenings include blood pressure and blood sugar, cholesterol and BMI. In addition to screenings, the program includes an educational component. Screenings and education are repeated with the same audiences at six-month intervals. The program also has several long-term audiences, mainly at local manufacturers, and many of these residents have been followed over a number of years. All screening data is entered into a comprehensive database for future reference.

We established some alarming numbers in several of our “at risk” schools, including 41 percent of students at a New Bedford middle school with elevated cholesterol levels and close to 20 percent at other New Bedford middle schools with elevated cholesterol. This compared with just 2 percent of students screened at one of our regional, suburban middle schools. Our database, which we hope to analyze more comprehensively in 2012, offers the opportunity for comparison studies of heart risk factors among students in suburban, middle-income schools, and urban, low-income schools.

We targeted many at-risk youth through after school programs at the YMCA in New Bedford, the Fall River Kids Day and the Boys and Girls Club in Wareham. Education included the Food Guide Pyramid, how to read nutrition facts labels and the need for 60 minutes of physical activity daily. Our dietitian worked with students at a New Bedford elementary school to start a community garden at the school, offering the opportunity for hands-on learning about the importance of fresh vegetables.

Our program continues to screen the underserved and immigrant population through workplace wellness initiatives such as one at Joseph Aboud Manufacturing in New Bedford. This textile plant has a primary female immigrant Portuguese, Spanish and Khmer workforce. We also serve Duro Finishing in Fall River, with a primary male immigrant Portuguese workforce, and Ashley Park Senior Center frequented by retired immigrant Portuguese men.

Below are tables of a study done on a population at a local manufacturer that demonstrates the positive effects of screenings and education provided by the Cardiac Prevention Program. The data represent the average of a cohort of men and women at their initial screening and months later after education about cardiac risk factors.

Blood Pressure	Systolic Initial	Diastolic	Current Systolic	Current Diastolic
Female	126	78	119	74
Male	134	80	125	78

Cholesterol	Initial	Current
Female	205	188
Male	212	192

We continue to provide services to low income and reduced income housing such as public housing complexes in Fall River, Village Court in Mattapoisett and other assisted living facilities in the communities.

Policy Initiatives:

Our Cardiac Prevention Program actively participates in methods to achieve policy changes that will positively impact the living environment on the South Coast with a focus on promoting more active lifestyles, better nutrition and smoking cessation.

We play a large role in a number of initiatives including:

Health City Fall River, which is an effort to promote systemic changes in the city that focus on improving health and promoting wellness. This year, we provided all screenings health risk assessments and extensive education to more than 600 participants in the Fall River Fitness Challenge, an annual city-wide event that enrolls residents in a four-month weight loss and exercise program. Organizers have demonstrated that over the past four years, participants have lost four tons of weight. We also worked with the American Heart Association to help establish mapped walking routes throughout Fall River.

Also, our Cardiac Prevention Team Leader is the co-coach for the regional coalition, Voices for a Healthy Southcoast.

We also have taken a statewide, leadership role in The Partnership for a Heart-Healthy Stroke-Free Massachusetts. This is a statewide coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to promoting optimal health by preventing and reducing heart disease and stroke, responding rapidly when heart attack or stroke occurs and improving health care systems in Massachusetts.

Working with both Mass in Motion Fall River and New Bedford and Voices, our Cardiac Prevention team is assisting in the development of school wellness programs, safe routes to school and school and community gardens in the greater New Bedford, Fall River and Wareham areas. Both members of our Cardiac Prevention team sit on school wellness councils in Fall River, New Bedford, Dighton Rehoboth and also Old Rochester Regional School District.

Goals for 2012:

- Expand program in area middle schools, targeting additional schools in the high risk community of Fall River.
- Expand programming to pilot programs in mixed-aged, public housing in New Bedford working through the New Bedford Housing Authority.
- Create reports utilizing updated Cardiac Prevention database.
- Continue involvement in “systemic” regional efforts on minimizing heart disease risk factors through involvement in regional coalitions such as Voices for a Healthy SouthCoast, Mass in Motion Fall River and New Bedford and Partners for a Heart Healthy and Stroke Free Massachusetts.

Stroke Outreach

Stroke is a leading cause of death and disability in cities and towns on the South Coast and research showed that patients were waiting a number of hours after the onset of symptoms, which often eliminated treatment options such as administration of the clot-busting drug, TPA. The Southcoast Stroke Outreach team consists of nurses, outreach workers and marketing and community relations staff. In 2011, the team took part in more than 200 health education events in the community, including Southcoast Health Van visits to malls, shopping centers and other community settings, health fairs and events at local churches and other civic organizations. Other education included screenings for Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) and other vascular diseases.

Education is also provided regularly to local Emergency Medical Services groups.

The Stroke Outreach team developed several educational materials based on the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's FAST campaign, which is designed to help people recognize the signs and symptoms of stroke and act FAST. Materials include a refrigerator magnet with the signs and symptoms and a wallet card that allows residents to record and track their blood pressure. These materials were translated into both Portuguese and Spanish. To date, during the past several years, more than 10,000 cards and magnets have been distributed.

We also conduct monthly stroke support groups for the public at the Heritage Assisted Living Center in North Dartmouth.

The South Coast has a significant African-American and Cape Verdean population who suffer from stroke at a rate higher than the rest of the population. This past year, we targeted members of the African-American Community through community events, such as a gospel festival and Cape Verdean festival.

Goals for 2012:

Create a regional task force with leaders of the African American community to address health disparities among African-American residents, particularly in New Bedford and Wareham.

4. Program: Health Disparities

Target Audience:

Those in our community who experience health disparities due to ethnic, racial and economic factors. These include ethnic groups such as Portuguese, Hispanic, Brazilian and Mayan and Cambodian Khmer communities, African-American residents and the large percentage of residents in our region who are either at or near the poverty level in terms of income.

Documented Health Need:

Socio-economic factors:

Health status indicators demonstrate a number of significant health disparities in our region:

Disease risk factors:

- Hispanic residents are significantly more likely than white non-Hispanic to be obese (27.0 percent v. 22.9 percent), a finding comparable to the state overall (27.4 percent v. 19.9 percent).
- Both black non-Hispanic and Hispanic residents have higher hypertension hospital discharge rates than white non-Hispanic residents (160.9 and 88.3, respectively v. 31.2 per 100,000 population).
- Hispanic residents are less likely than white non-Hispanic residents in the region to have had a clinical breast exam in the past two years (68.6 percent v. 87.1 percent), proportions similar to those of the state as a whole (78.4 percent v. 87.9 percent).

Chronic disease rates:

- Black non-Hispanic residents and Hispanic residents have a higher diabetes mortality rate than white non-Hispanic residents in the region (38.7 and 21.4, respectively v. 17.6 per 100,000 population).
- Both white non-Hispanic and black non-Hispanic report higher heart disease death rates than for these populations statewide (194.1 v. 184.7, and 286.3 v. 209.4 per 100,000 population, respectively).
- Hispanic residents report a higher teen birth rate than others (66.4 v. 17.9 per 100,000 population white non-Hispanic, 33.8 black non-Hispanic, and 27.1 Asian non-Hispanic), though this rate is lower than Hispanic residents statewide (66.4 v. 73.2 in Massachusetts).
- Focus Groups of Hispanic and Portuguese residents revealed a number of concerns about health disparities and how they affect residents' abilities to access needed health services.

Economic and other disparities:

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 13.1 percent of families in New Bedford and 12.8 percent of families in Fall River are below the poverty level, compared with 9.3 percent of families in the U.S. Respondents believe community residents' financial insecurity contributes to a host of health problems, as well posing a major barrier to obtaining needed health services and achieving better health. Many respondents in our focus group research believe that financial insecurity is the underlying cause behind the poor diet and exercise, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, and stress, which constitute the community's major perceived health problems. They also believe a lack of financial resources is the primary barrier to accessing needed health services.

This is borne out by BFRSS data that shows that more residents in our region are unable to see a physician due to cost (12 percent for the South Coast region versus 8 percent for the state as a whole).

There are also perceived language barriers to care. Many of our focus group participants believed that local hospitals do not have enough interpreters, which results in very long waits for care and rushed appointments. As one key informant explained, "That's still a big problem, having enough available

translators and interpreters in providers' offices. ... They are rushing from patient to patient, and adding that layer, of language, [having to] coordinate getting someone into the appointment and then translating both ways. It just adds another layer of fear or mistrust of the health system.”

Collaborations:

Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, Health First Family Health Center, Immigrants Assistance Center, Catholic Social Services, SER Jobs for Progress, Partners for a Healthier Community, Health Access Collaborative, Roosevelt Middle School in New Bedford, New Bedford Boys and Girls Club, Mercy Meals and More, Wareham Homeless Coalition and the New Bedford Health Department.

Goals for 2011:

- Increase outreach by the Southcoast Interpreter Services Department.
- Play leadership role in the Health Equity Initiative of CHNA 26 (Greater New Bedford Allies for Health and Wellness), which is funded in part with Southcoast community benefits funds.
- Work with regional Health Access Collaborative to expand resources for cultural training.
- Conduct additional focus groups with Hispanic and Portuguese residents.

Programs and Benchmarks:

Interpreter Services:

The South Coast is a very diverse region, with residents representing a number of languages and cultures. As an illustration of this, our Emergency Departments at our three hospitals annually have requests for over 15,000 interpreter encounters in 25 different languages. Our Emergency Departments, which serve some 200,000 patients each year, are often the only health care option for the many undocumented immigrants in our region. Even within languages such as Spanish and Portuguese, which are the predominant second languages in our region, there are many subcultures representing highly different dialects and customs.

Health Access Collaborative:

Southcoast Hospitals Group is a founding member and contributor to Health Access Collaborative, a greater Fall River/New Bedford Collaborative to achieve cultural competency within and among health care member organizations and for the clients they serve. Specific goals include cultural competency training, interpreter training, and development of monitoring procedures for interpreter services and cultural competency for member organizations.

The group regularly creates and presents a range of training materials for local medical interpreters. The collaborative has also adopted a Cultural Competency Plan for its members.

Southcoast took a leadership role with Health Access Collaborative when the organization named Jim Rattray, Vice President of Marketing & Public Affairs at Southcoast Health System, as Chair of its Board of Directors.

healthaccesscollaborative.org/

Health Equity Project

This project is a joint effort of Southcoast, the Greater New Bedford Allies for Health & Wellness (CHNA 26) and the regional office of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Major funding includes five-year, \$375,000 funding from Southcoast that is part of DON community linkage funds. The initiative is designed to address health inequities in the Greater New Bedford region, including access to health care, health literacy, disease prevention and chronic disease management and social justice issues, through expansion of the health outreach worker model. The initiative is primarily

designed to address cancer disparities although programs may expand to address other health disparities as well.

In addition to funding this project, Southcoast plays a leadership role in helping to develop and shape the initiative through participation in a regional Health Equity Committee that is part of the CHNA and in a regional needs assessment project.

This past year, the Health Equity Committee examined community outreach worker models used in Massachusetts and elsewhere, including models used by Partners in Healthcare, based at Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston. The committee also increased awareness of the initiative through a major public launch of the program this past fall, which was widely publicized in local media. The committee worked throughout the fall to develop a pilot RFP project for two health equity grants and the RFP will be released early in 2012. The Southcoast Community Benefits Manager co-chairs the Health Equity Committee and also is part of the RFP and grant review committee.

www.southcoast.org/news/releases/2011/100511.html

Goals for 2012:

- Release RFP for Health Equity Project early in 2012 and award pilot grants by spring 2012.
- Organize a regional Health Equity summit in late spring to increase awareness about health equity issues on the South Coast.
- Work with Greater New Bedford Allies to create community dialogues based on needs assessment project.

5. Program: Maternal Child Health outreach

Target Audience:

Families, including pregnant women, fathers, siblings and new parents, particularly teen mothers and mothers who smoke.

Documented Health Need:

Our programs address:

- The high rate of smoking among pregnant women in our region (19.9 percent, 17.3 percent and 20.3 percent respectively in our largest communities of Fall River, New Bedford and Wareham as compared to 7.4 percent in Massachusetts overall).
- Low birth weight and low breastfeeding rates. The low birth weight rate (less than 2,500 grams) is 9.4 percent in Fall River and 11.1 percent in New Bedford compared to 7.8 percent for the state. Fall River and New Bedford are two of the three Massachusetts communities with the lowest proportions of breastfeeding mothers (44.7 percent and 54.5 percent as compared to 79.3 percent statewide).
- High rates of teen pregnancy.

Collaborations:

Greater New Bedford Alliance for Health and Wellness, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, Boston Medical Center HealthNet (health insurance company).

Goals for 2011:

- Survey pregnant women and new mothers who deliver at St. Luke's Hospital in efforts to develop smoking cessation initiatives that target this audience. Goal is to survey 100 women and refer smoking moms to appropriate resources including QuitWorks and a new program at the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center.
- Develop new education and services targeting breastfeeding.
- Develop outreach and education targeting pregnant teens in major local schools.

Program and Results:

Smoking Survey

We created a new partnership with the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center to refer pregnant moms who smoke to a new smoking cessation program at the health center. We work with the Wellness Director at the Health Center to distribute information about this specialized program and to refer our clients who smoke.

Breastfeeding Initiative

We partnered with BMC HealthNet, the largest provider of health insurance to MassHealth and Commonwealth Care residents in our region of childbearing age, to expand childbirth education enrollment among BMC HealthNet enrollees. We also introduced a more extensive component on breastfeeding, with certified lactation consultants on staff at our hospital. Mothers who take these classes are more prepared to breastfeed following delivery and can again receive support in the hospital from our lactation consultants.

Teen pregnancy:

We continue to work with school departments in Fall River and New Bedford to provide perinatal education to pregnant teens at local high schools. Our certified childbirth educators conduct programs at Durfee High School in Fall River, Diman Regional Vocational School in Fall River, an alternative high school in New Bedford and the Healthy Families outreach program in New Bedford. Teen mothers, especially in New Bedford, report inadequate prenatal care rates so pregnancy education is important for this group.

Goals for 2012:

- Develop smoking cessation education and outreach targeting pregnant mothers in both childbirth education programs and on the maternity units.
- Expand prenatal education outreach in New Bedford schools.
- Strengthen partnership with the Maternal Child Health programs at Greater New Bedford Community Health Center and Health First Family Health Center to target pregnant women who smoke. These centers coordinate prenatal care to many at-risk women in our region.

6. Program: Health Access Outreach/Patient Financial Services

Target Audience:

Residents who lack health insurance or may need to renew public insurance plans. Residents who have lost their employment and as a result, their health insurance.

Documented Health Need:

Due to extremely high unemployment rates in the South Coast region (New Bedford has one of the highest rates in the state at 12 percent and Fall River is close behind at 11 percent), we have experienced high numbers of residents who have lost their health insurance or lack insurance.

Contributing to this is the lack of awareness among residents who have state-subsidized health insurance for the first time and needed to complete renewal papers. As a result, many local residents lost health insurance and were not aware of this.

As a result, the South Coast has a higher rate of uninsured residents than the state as a whole (11.6 percent for our region v. 7.6 percent for the state).

Collaborations:

Councils on Aging (for senior health insurance assistance), Boston Medical Center HealthNet, Neighborhood Health Plan, PACE, Citizens for Citizens, Healthcare for All, St. Anthony of Padua Soup Kitchen, New Bedford, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, Wareham Social Services Department, Stanley Street (SSTAR) and Partners for a Healthier Community.

Program and Results:

Patient Financial Services processed in 2011:

- 3,021 Virtual Gateway applications.
- 3,866 manual MassHealth applications, an 8 percent increase over last year. A number of these reflect individuals and families who lost their health insurance because they were not aware they needed to reapply each year.
- 56 disability applications processed.
- 85 long-term care applications and 862 agency applications (BMSP). These are applications by unemployed residents who have lost their health insurance. Although this number declined slightly over previous years, it still is about 50 percent higher than normal, due to a high unemployment rate in our region.
- To help address the educational need for families who need to renew their insurance each year, our staff made **709** redetermination calls in an effort to ensure continued MassHealth managed care enrollment.
- Also, **2,487** Senior Whole Health informational letters were mailed to potentially qualifying patients for seniors who may benefit from this managed care option for low income seniors. As a result, **94** patients increased enrollment.

In addition our staff conducted a number community outreach events targeting the uninsured, including a town-wide, health insurance sign-up day in collaboration with the town of Wareham Social Services Department, several family outreach programs at elementary schools in Fall River and outreach at the St. Anthony of Padua soup kitchen in New Bedford, which services thousands of Greater New Bedford residents. Our staff also conducted a school supply drive to benefit St. Anthony de Padua's efforts that serve the neediest in our community.

Our staff was recognized last spring by Health Care for All for our participation in the Statewide Enrollment Challenge. Our intensive efforts during May, 2011 resulted in 163 newly enrolled children who were previously uninsured, earning us second place in the challenge. Our staff was

formally recognized by Gov. Deval Patrick, Sen. Mark Montigny and the U.S. Center for Medicare & Medicaid.

Goals for 2012:

- Work with Health Care for All to expand our systems for alerting residents about re-enrollment. We began this process in 2011.
- Continue to outreach to homeless populations through community agencies, such as St. Anthony of Padua Church.
- Expand outreach to programs at the New Bedford Housing Authority. New Bedford has the highest rate of uninsured residents in our region (17.9 percent v. 11.6 percent for our region and 8 percent for the state as a whole).

7. Program: Health Advocates: Substance Abuse Intervention

Target Audience:

Emergency Department patients who abuse, or are at risk for abusing drugs, alcohol tobacco or other substances.

Documented Health Need:

The South Coast region has a higher rate of admissions than the state overall with regard to substance abuse treatment programs. Our Emergency Departments (ED) are some of the busiest in the state, with volumes approaching 200,000 patients annually at our three EDs combined.

Substance abuse admissions	Southcoast	State
Fall River (CHNA 25)	4,023	1,621
New Bedford (CHNA 26)	2,673	1,621

Note: Rate is per 100,000 population. Source: MassCHIP.

The South Coast region has a higher proportion of opioid-related ER visits and fatal overdoses than the state of Massachusetts as a whole. Specifically, the South Coast region reports a rate of 195.7 for opioid-related emergency department visits, a rate significantly higher than the state's (181.1). In terms of race and ethnicity, white non-Hispanic residents in the South Coast are more likely than those in the state overall to have an opioid-related ER visit (200.6 v. 186.8 in state overall).

The South Coast region also reports a higher rate of opioid-related fatal overdoses than the state as a whole (10.1 v. 8.1).

Collaborations:

Fall River Health Department, Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction (PAACA), Stanley Street Treatment and Resources (SSTAR) Health Center, BOLD Coalition, Interchurch Council, Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, High Point Addiction and Treatment Center, AdCare, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth.

Goals for 2011:

- Expand referrals for a substance abuse intervention program based in our three Southcoast Emergency Departments to provide counseling and referrals for patients who present with substance abuse-related issues. Counseling is based on “brief negotiated interview” techniques pioneered by Edward Bernstein, MD, of Boston University School of Medicine.
- Serve as a community resource for substance abuse referral and treatment issues.

Program and Benchmarks:

Our program is based on a nationwide intervention program, which studies have shown to be effective in inducing patients to seek help for substance abuse issues. Emergency Department (ED) Staff receive training in how to interview ED patients about their substance use and talking with them about how to reduce harmful patterns and provide referrals for substance abuse treatment. Referrals include treatment for drug or alcohol abuse or smoking. Our staff also has follow-up phone conversations with patients who have received referrals.

In 2011 our program was well utilized in all three of our Emergency Departments and staff also provided extensive community outreach. We expanded the program from three to five health advocate staff and partnered with SSTAR to provided screenings in our Emergency Department at

Charlton in Fall River, in association with Project Assist. This is part of a large grant that SSTAR received to provide screenings and interventions for families who may be at risk for substance abuse.

Our team also presented a number of community programs on substance abuse issues to local schools and police departments. We also served as a resource for the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's student health office and we were regular participants in a monthly Massachusetts Department of Child & Family Services Substance Abuse Task Force. Services provided through this task force included screening and referral intervention for DCF clients.

In 2011, we **more than tripled** the number of interventions. Our health advocates:

- Assessed 3,657 patients.
- Conducted 1,497 brief negotiated interviews.
- Made 193 inpatient referrals and 204 outpatient referrals for substance abuse treatment.
- Made 204 referrals to QuitWorks for smoking cessation.
- Helped facilitate 185 referrals for patients who lacked a primary care physician.

Many of these patients are frequent visitors to our Emergency Departments, with some visiting over 10 times in the past year and several visiting over 30 times. With intervention by the Health Advocates, care for these patients was better coordinated, including referral to appropriate treatment facilities and community-based programs and follow-up.

This program is funded by Southcoast and also receives grant support from community partners, including PAACA, SSTAR and the City of Fall River.

Goals for 2012:

- Expand numbers of patients served with our Emergency Department programs by 10%
- Participate in five community provider education programs on substance abuse in our communities.
- Work with the Department of Children and Families on training and outreach to “high risk” parents.
- Develop a metric analysis for our program that helps demonstrate evidence-based effectiveness of our screenings and referral program.

8. Program: Voices for a Healthy SouthCoast

Voices for a Healthy SouthCoast is a regional coalition whose mission is to build and support healthy lifestyles in South Coast communities. The coalition aims to achieve this by working together and advocating for policy, practice and environmental change in order to sustain vibrant communities that are conducive to healthy living.

Southcoast Hospitals is the major partner in this effort with YMCA Southcoast.

<www.voicesforahealthysouthcoast.org>

Target Audience:

South Coast residents who have high rates of obesity or smoke and have low rates of exercise — particularly at-risk populations of schoolchildren and low-income residents in the cities of Fall River and New Bedford — where data show these risk factors to be higher than the region as a whole.

Documented Health Need (Data for CHNA 25 and CHNA 26):

	Overweight	Obese	Regular exercise	Fruits and vegetables	Smoking
Fall River	62%	25%	47%	22%	26.5%
New Bedford	61%	23%	49%	24%	22%
Massachusetts	55%	19%	52%	29%	18%

Collaborations:

YMCA Southcoast, Acushnet Company, American Heart Association, Catholic Social Services, Healthy Cities Fall River, Hunger Commission of Southeastern Massachusetts, National Park Service, City of New Bedford Office of Planning, City of New Bedford Health Department, Seven Hills Behavioral Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Immigrants Assistance Center, Southcoast Regional Pathways Coalition, New Bedford Economic Development and Planning Authority.

Goals for 2011:

- Expand CHART team and recruit members for regional coalition representing key constituents, including city and town officials, regional planning agencies, schools, health and human services agencies.
- Expand awareness of Voices through development of a Website, branding identity and organization of a regional forum on health and wellness.
- Establish task forces to address key issues such as school wellness policies, nutrition and physical activity, including increasing local infrastructures for biking and walking. Our task forces are designed to make our coalition sustainable beyond initial grant funding.

Program and benchmarks:

Voices major goal is to help enact environmental and policy change that helps promote healthy lifestyles and disease prevention in a sustainable way. During the past year, the coalition engaged in a number of activities in advocacy for this goal and also to increase awareness of its mission.

Advocacy:

- Voices members attended and presented at the kickoff for the “Act FRESH” program sponsored by the Massachusetts Public Health Council and also serve as active members of the steering committee for this statewide campaign.

- Voices actively advocated through local Boards of Health and other regulating bodies for new smoking regulations in cities and towns on the South Coast and also for municipal support for new bicycle paths.
- Several Southcoast staff, who are also part of Voices, actively participate in a number of school wellness councils.

Awareness:

- Participated in a regional “Linking the Southcoast” bike ride to highlight connecting community bike paths.
- Helped form and actively participate in a regional community bike and walking pathways committee that now meets monthly.

Coalition Building:

- Conducted and presented results of a “Residential Health and Well-Being Opinion Survey” through University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research.
- Developed working groups/task forces to address key issues including school nutrition and wellness policies, regional bike and walking routes and policy/regulation for smoking. Developed a working cancer prevention coalition for the South Coast which met regularly over the past year to set a three-year action agenda that focuses on further restriction of tobacco products and the expansion of opportunities for exercise and more healthful food choices.

Goals for 2012:

- Present to Boards of Health and Planning Boards in 17 area towns and advocate adoption of a wellness-focused resolution that promotes “complete streets” that promote walking and biking, creation of walking routes, community gardens and strong anti-smoking regulations.
- Further work of Voices task forces including establishment of school wellness policies in Fall River and New Bedford. Wellness policies will include healthy food options in school cafeterias.
- Continue work of Cancer Prevention Coalition by tackling the action plan for the upcoming year, with a focus on expanding the cigarette sale ban in local pharmacies and introducing health care institution buffer regulations in our local cities and towns.
- Continue to increase awareness of local bike path development and connection, including work with local physician groups to promote wellness messages to patients including development and use of a “wellness prescription pad” and distribution of exercise and healthy food options in the community.

9. Program: Southcoast Health Van

Target Audience:

South Coast residents who lack access to regular primary and preventive health care, particularly populations who have language, income or geographic barriers to accessing care.

Documented Health Need:

Lack of access to regular primary and preventive health care.

Collaborations:

The ESL Program (English as a Second Language) in New Bedford and Taunton, which serves a diverse group of immigrants, Adult Learning Programs on the South Coast and the Immigrant Assistance Center in New Bedford, YWCA Women's Health Program and the local YMCA of New Bedford and Middleboro, The Cambodian Center in Fall River, PYCO (Portuguese Youth Center Organization), Bristol Elder Services, and local colleges. Also, Diman Vocational High School in Fall River, Somerset High School, Westport High School, Old Colony High School in Rochester, Wareham High School including the alternative high school, and Apponoquet High School in Lakeville.

Goals for 2011:

Increase targeted outreach including adding feeding program sites that serve area homeless residents, who often lack access to health care.

Program and Benchmarks:

The Southcoast Health Van continued to play a major role in health outreach in our region, Some 2,578 residents visited the van this past year, benefiting from more than 7,500 health screenings.

<www.southcoast.org/van/>

The Southcoast Health Van is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and provides free health screenings and education in a number of highly visible and accessible sites though the region offering services including blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol, colorectal and vision screening, bone density screenings, pregnancy testing and extensive health education. We also make regular referrals for primary care and for residents who lack health insurance.

Our data shows that 14 percent of those screened had abnormal blood pressure and 20 percent had abnormal cholesterol levels. Our van staff provides extensive education on these risk factors along with referrals for ongoing primary care services.

The van's blood collection services help assure an adequate regional blood supply. The van also offers a range of cancer screenings and education on cancer prevention, including distribution of colorectal cancer screening kits. There is a low rate of recommended colorectal screening in our region, due to cultural and health access barriers. Kits distributed on the van are processed free of charge at the Southcoast Hospitals lab and provide a basic level of screening that is accessible to all residents.

The Southcoast Health Van also distributes Stroke Awareness kits, in conjunction with the FAST campaign by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. This campaign is designed to help residents recognize the signs and symptoms of stroke and act FAST in obtaining treatment. The van targeted African-American residents, who have a high incidence of stroke, at several community events, including a Gospel Festival and a regional Cape Verdean festival in Wareham. We also did outreach with the Cape Verdean Veterans Association in New Bedford. In addition to English, materials are also distributed in Portuguese and Spanish.

Reaching the Underserved:

The Southcoast Health Van serves an ethnically diverse population including Portuguese, Brazilian, Hispanic, Mayan Quechee and Cambodian immigrants. Health Van staff also work closely with cultural organizations, churches and other community groups such as soup kitchens, to conduct outreach to diverse populations in order to develop culturally sensitive programs. During the past year we made regular visits to local food programs for homeless residents in Fall River, New Bedford and Wareham. Often, the health van is the only health prevention related encounter for these residents.

Other initiatives on the van include the ESL Program (English as a Second Language) in New Bedford and Taunton, which serves a diverse group of immigrants, a population with significant risk factors for a variety of diseases as well as educational, cultural and other barriers that limit access to routine primary health care. Van staff also collaborates with the Adult Learning Programs and the Immigrant Assistance Center in New Bedford. Health Van staff has also worked in collaboration with the YWCA Women's Health Program and the local YMCA of New Bedford and Middleboro. In Fall River, the Health Van works in conjunction with the Cambodian Center, PYCO (Portuguese Youth Center Organization), Bristol Elder Services, and local colleges. During the past year the Van also worked with the Fall River, New Bedford, and Wareham Business Associations to target business communities in the South Coast. The Van also works closely with Catholic Social Services on outreach efforts.

The van also participated in the Healthy Cities Fall River initiative, providing screenings and education as part of the annual Fall River Fitness Challenge.

The Southcoast Health Van offers a Teen Program at several high schools in the South Coast region, providing adolescents with a range of health screenings and health information. Local family planning agencies work with van staff to provide counseling on sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and pregnancy prevention and confidential pregnancy testing. This information and education to teens has resulted in improved follow up rates and reduced rates of repeat pregnancy tests. Southcoast Health Van staff work with teachers to reach students with health educational material and health screenings.

Goals for 2012:

- Continue efforts to target residents most at need including additional visits to homeless shelters and food programs.
- Establish an ongoing program with the New Bedford Housing Authority to provide monthly screenings and education at three mixed housing complexes.

10. Program: Cancer Outreach

Target audience:

General public and particularly racial, ethnic and other groups who are at higher risk for certain type of cancer or who get cancer at a rate higher than the rest of the population.

Documented Health Need:

Cancer Incidence

Cancer	Fall River (CHNA 25)	New Bedford (CHNA 26)	Massachusetts
Lung	101.6	94.8	83.4
Colon	64.4	61.4	60.3
Prostate	143.9	173.2	165.1
Breast	112.3	117.6	132.3

Note: Rate is per 100,000 population.

Lung and colon cancer rates are for males. Rates for females are below or at the state average.

Collaborations:

American Cancer Society, Fall River Health Department, Partners for a Healthier Community, New Bedford Board of Health, Wareham Board of Health, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, Health First Family Health Center, Inter-Church Council, Fisherman's Cooperative, New Bedford, O'Jornal, Radio Voice of the Immigrant (WHTB).

Goals for 2011:

- Expand outreach and screenings to Portuguese and Hispanic communities.
- Create partnerships with local health centers for cancer outreach.

Programs and Benchmarks:

Oral Cancer:

Provided oral cancer education to over 200 enrollees at the Greater New Bedford English as a Second Language (ESL) program and provided free oral cancer screenings to 75 people.

Breast Cancer:

Provided breast cancer education to over 225 women at a women's health event.

Lung Cancer:

Provide extensive information and programming on smoking cessation and prevention.

Goals for 2012:

- Expand screenings for skin cancer.
- Increase distribution of colorectal screening kits in targeted areas including community health centers and ethnic health fairs.
- Conduct a survivorship event focusing on issues faced by cancer survivors.

SECTION VI: Expenditures During the Reporting Year

In 2011, Southcoast contributed \$11,790,599 in community benefit and community service programs that reached the disadvantaged, underserved and those at-risk, bringing them services they otherwise would not have been able to access. Our major initiatives concerning health access, cardiovascular disease and youth risk behavior all had significant impact, with growing programs that reached large numbers of Southcoast residents.

Program Type	Estimated Total Expenditures for FY2011	Approved Program Budget for FY2012
Community Benefits Programs	Direct Expenses \$4,581,736	\$5,000,000
	Associated Expenses \$0	\$0
	Determination of Need Expenditures \$112,573	\$112,663
	Employee Volunteerism \$32,000	\$35,000
	Other Leveraged Resources \$572,705	\$800,000
Community Service Programs	Direct Expenses \$15,000	\$0
	Associated Expenses \$0	\$0
	Determination of Need Expenditures \$0	\$0
	Employee Volunteerism \$0	\$0
	Other Leveraged Resources \$0	\$0
Net Charity Care*	\$6,451,585	\$6,500,000
Corporate Sponsorships	\$40,000	\$30,000
	Total Expenditures \$11,790,599	\$13,000,000
Total Patient Care-Related Expenses for FY2011		\$614,701,529

SECTION VII: Contact Information

Jim Rattray
Vice President of Marketing & Public Affairs
Southcoast Hospitals Group
363 Highland Avenue
Fall River, MA 02720
508-961-5899
E-mail: rattrayj@southcoast.org

Kerry Mello
Community Benefits Manager
Southcoast Hospitals Group
363 Highland Avenue
Fall River, MA 02720
508-961-5273
E-mail: mellok@southcoast.org

Public Access to This Report

This report, along with those of other not-for-profit hospitals in Massachusetts, is available online from the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General.

<www.mass.gov/ago/>

Southcoast also makes its annual Community Benefits Report available on its own Website, along with an archive of reports from prior years.

<www.southcoast.org/communitybenefits/>