

Community Benefits Report to the Attorney General

FISCAL YEAR 2007



SOUTHCOAST
HOSPITALS GROUP

Charlton ■ St. Luke's ■ Tobey

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Community Benefits Report to the Attorney General Fiscal Year 2007



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, which includes Charlton Memorial Hospital, St. Luke's Hospital and Tobey Hospital, is committed to serving the health care needs of the South Coast region.

<www.southcoast.org/services/mission.html>

In recognition of Southcoast's commitment to improving the health status of the communities we serve, the Board of Trustees of Southcoast Hospitals Group has established a Community Benefits Committee to assist in the process of:

- 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.
- Providing educational resources to educate the community regarding health promotion and wellness. Educational initiatives shall incorporate recognition of the cultural aspects of accessing the health care system.
- 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.

The Southcoast Hospitals Group Community Benefit Mission Statement was approved and adopted by the Southcoast Hospitals Group Board of Trustees on September 11, 1996.

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.

Two advisory groups, comprised of community members and hospital staff, plan and carry out activities related to Southcoast's two major community benefits initiatives: Cardiovascular health and youth risk behaviors.

Management responsibility for the Community Benefits Program rests with Southcoast's Vice President of Marketing & Public Affairs.

A number of Southcoast staff at all levels participate regularly in our two community advisory groups. There are also regular updates and presentations on community benefits activities to management staff through Management Operations Councils at all three hospital sites. Presentations on community benefit activities are also periodically made to all levels of employees at Employee Forum sessions that are held quarterly at all three hospitals. Information is also presented through articles in our internal hospital publication, *Coastlines*, and in a community newsletter, *Your Health Matters*.

<www.southcoast.org/news/pubs.html>

SECTION III: Community Health Needs Assessment

Southcoast Hospitals Group commissioned a comprehensive needs assessment of the South Coast region by a nationally known health care research firm, Professional Research Consultants Inc. This firm has conducted similar studies throughout the country. The survey consisted of telephone interviews with more than 2,350 residents throughout the region, focus groups with a variety of community representatives and a review of data from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and other sources.

The survey examined health habits and risk factors, including modifiable health risks, disease prevention habits and access to health care. The resulting report also incorporated regional health morbidity and mortality statistics from various sources, such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and compared regional data to Healthy People 2000 goals.

The survey identified six key concerns in the South Coast region:

1. Cardiovascular Disease

- The death rate for cardiovascular disease in the South Coast (210.9 per 100,000 deaths) was considerably higher than both the state and national averages and much higher than the Healthy People 2000 goal of 100 per 100,000 deaths. In the cities of Fall River and New Bedford, the rates rose to 217.5 and 230.2 respectively. This may be impacted by the high percentage of residents with cardiac risk factors. For instance:
 - 28.9 percent have high blood pressure, the highest for any region in the state.
 - 36.5 percent have high cholesterol levels.
 - 57.8 percent are overweight, a 10 percent increase during the past decade.
 - 48.7 percent — almost half — reported no leisure time physical activity.
 - 20.4 percent were smokers, a decline in the past 10 years but still the second highest regional rate in the state. Residents in Fall River reported a smoking rate of 34.8 percent, which is double the rate of the Massachusetts as a whole.

Southcoast has been attempting to address these risk factors with concerted cardiac prevention programming.

2. Cancer Deaths

Although cancer death rates in our region were second only to heart disease, most of these rates were comparable to or even slightly lower than state and national averages. The exception is lung and

prostate cancer. The Southcoast has the highest rate of invasive lung cancer in the state (78.9 per 100,000 residents) and the second highest rate of invasive prostate cancer (202.5 per 100,000 residents).

Southcoast makes concerted efforts to provide free screenings for breast, prostate, colon and oral cancer. However, statistics suggest that residents may not be taking advantage of these free screenings, which are conducted throughout the region. For example, 55 percent reported having a screening colonoscopy, compared with 59 percent statewide, and 82 percent reported having an annual screening mammogram, which is the second lowest rate in the state.

3. Mental Health

South Coast residents reported problems with mental health issues at a rate slightly higher than the Massachusetts and national averages. This was particularly true of residents living at the poverty level. The population living below the poverty level (13.2 percent) was considerably higher than the state average of 9.3 percent. Per capita income was below the state level and the regional unemployment rate was 4 percent higher.

4. Family Planning, Prenatal Care & Child Development Services

The South Coast as region has a high rate of teen pregnancy (24 births per 1,000 women between the ages of 14 and 19) as compared with the state rate (22 births per 1,000) and the national rate of 21 births per 1,000. The cities of Fall River and New Bedford have even higher rates (45 and 60 births per 1,000 respectively) and these two communities are in the top 10 in the state. However, it should be noted that teen pregnancy rates have declined in those communities in the last 10 years.

In addition to teen pregnancy, there also is a higher rate of women not receiving prenatal care in the important first trimester — 14.6 percent versus 11 percent statewide. The infant mortality rate, at 6.4 percent, was also slightly higher than the state rate of 5.1 percent.

5. Access to Primary Medical Care

Some 11 percent of residents in the region reported lack of health insurance coverage — the third highest rate reported in the state. The rate was slightly higher in the cities of Fall River and New Bedford. There are also fewer primary care physicians per population in the South Coast region. This was true for all primary care specialties, including internal medicine, OB/GYN, pediatrics and family practice.

This past year, Southcoast successfully worked to have the region declared a medically underserved area, making primary care and other recruited physicians eligible for special programs. Southcoast was able to recruit more than 30 new physicians to our area in FY2007, which is the highest number we have ever recruited to our staff.

6. Violence

The overall crime rate in the South Coast is higher than the state, particularly for crimes such as rape, aggravated assault and burglary. A higher percentage of South Coast residents report being the victim of violent crime within the five years prior to the survey.

Our initial survey results were presented to and analyzed by three community benefits advisory groups that consisted of close to 100 representatives from throughout the region. The groups included representation from health care providers, social service providers, educators, the faith community, law enforcement, government officials and consumers.

The groups decided to focus efforts on two areas: Cardiovascular disease and youth risk behaviors. Members felt that youth risk behaviors encompassed several health priorities identified by the needs assessment, including teen pregnancy, violence, mental health issues and drug and alcohol abuse.

The health needs assessment also included two sets of focus groups that were conducted to assimilate the opinions, culture and beliefs reflective of all segments of our community. General focus groups were held to present our survey results and obtain feedback from various segments of our communities in developing priorities.

Then targeted focus groups were held with representatives of the two identified priorities of cardiovascular disease and youth risk behaviors. Discussions were held with various stakeholders and “at-risk” populations, including cardiac patients, caregivers and youth groups, including groups of pregnant and parenting teens.

Southcoast’s Community Benefits Task Forces used information obtained from focus groups to further define the priority health issues and help develop subsequent strategic and action plans.

SECTION IV: Key Collaborations & Partnerships

In addition to wide inclusion on our health advisory committees, Southcoast staff collaborates extensively with a number of community groups, addressing such issues as health access, cardiovascular health and drug use among youth.

In developing and implementing the Community Benefit Strategic Action Plan, Southcoast collaborated with health care providers, social service providers, educators, the faith community, law enforcement, government officials and consumers.

Collaborative groups include:

- American Heart Association.
- Catholic Social Services.
- CFC Family Planning Organization.
- Domestic Violence Committee of the New Bedford Health and Human Services Coalition.
- Fall River Council on Aging.
- Fall River Diabetes Association.
- Fall River School Department.
- Greater Fall River Family Services Association.
- Greater New Bedford Community Health Center.
- Greater New Bedford COAST (Greater New Bedford CHNA 26).
- Greater New Bedford Health Access Committee.
- Greater New Bedford Prevention Partnership.
- Greater New Bedford Women’s Center.
- Greater New Bedford Youth on the Move.
- HealthFirst Family Care Center, Fall River.
- Martha Briggs Educational Club.
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Division of Prevention.
- Mended Hearts.
- NAACP.
- New Bedford Child & Family Services.
- New Bedford Council on Aging.
- New Bedford Historical Society.
- New Bedford Police Department.

- New Bedford School Department.
- PACE-Head Start.
- Partners for a Healthier Community (Greater Fall River CHNA 25).
- Portuguese Youth Cultural Organization.
- Positive Attitude Against Chemical Addiction (covering Greater New Bedford and Wareham).
- Regional Tobacco Control programs.
- SER-Jobs for Progress Inc.
- Stanley Street Treatment & Resource Center (SSTAR) / MediCall Program.
- United Way of Greater Fall River.
- United Way of Greater New Bedford.
- University of Massachusetts Extension Program.
- Wareham Community Services Collaborative.
- Wareham Council on Aging.
- Wareham School Department.
- Westerly Associates.
- Women of the Village.
- YMCA Southcoast (including Fall River, New Bedford, Wareham, Dartmouth and Mattapoisett).
- YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts.

SECTION V: Community Benefits Plan

Southcoast’s Community Benefits Strategic Action Plan, first formulated in 1998 as a result of our extensive needs assessment phase (see Section III), and updated annually, focuses on three regional priority health issues.

- Reduction of the high rate of cardiovascular disease in our region.
- Reduction in the incidence of youth risk behaviors such as teen violence and drug abuse.
- Improving access to health care.

Our initiatives focus on both the general population of the South Coast region and specific populations, such as ethnic and other minorities and low-income residents in our region, under- or uninsured, those without access to care, those at risk for heart disease and “at risk” youth.

A key strategic vision in all of our action plans is to collaborate and, whenever possible, build upon and strengthen existing community resources that are addressing these problems, rather than create parallel new programs. We have been able to accomplish this successfully in all areas.

1. Cardiovascular Health

Southcoast’s Cardiac Prevention Program provides individualized screening for risk factors, which includes a questionnaire and cholesterol screening. The program now has more than 8,000 individuals entered into its database for promoting its goals for primary and secondary prevention of heart disease.

The information is entered into a database, and a designated nurse and dietitian conduct tracking follow up. The prevention efforts focus on promoting education, lifestyle changes and risk factor modification. These efforts were coordinated in a number of different ways, working with the Southcoast Health Van, local churches, businesses and other organizations and outreach efforts with local schools. Efforts are made to target specific underserved and underinsured areas in the communities served by Southcoast.

<www.southcoast.org/heart/prevention.html>

2. Youth Risk Behaviors

The strategic vision of our Youth Risk Behaviors Committee has been to catalogue services and attempt to increase collaboration among the wide range of regional youth services providers. Representation on this committee includes individuals from school districts, human services providers and, very often, teens themselves.

The committee completed a survey of more than 1,000 local teens in 1999 to determine opportunities for increasing communication about issues that concern teens. As a result, the committee sponsored a regional Youth Summit, with more than 150 teens attending, at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth in 2000. Teens again had the opportunity at the summit to give their visions about issues that concern them most.

All of this resulted in development of a **regional, free information teen phone line**, which serves the entire South Coast region. This effort is a true collaboration of regional agencies, with Southcoast building upon the efforts of two existing teen information lines that served just one of our communities. [See Section VI, Youth Risk Behaviors.] It is a good example of our strategic vision to enhance and expand existing local services whenever possible.

<www.southcoast.org/rapp>

3. Access To Health Care

Southcoast devotes considerable resources to improving access to primary health care in our region, providing **outreach services to both educate residents on the availability of no- and low-cost health insurance programs** — including the new Commonwealth Care and Commonwealth Choice plans offered under the Commonwealth Connector Authority — and whenever possible, help families enroll in these programs.

<www.southcoast.org/insurance/>

Another key initiative in improving health care access is use of our **Southcoast Health Van**, which travels on almost a daily basis throughout the region bringing health screenings, education and other services to residents who do not have ready access to health care.

<www.southcoast.org/van/>

The staff of the Southcoast Health Van is trained in assisting people to access regular primary health care through counseling about various health insurance programs and no- low-cost health services. Whenever possible, Southcoast Health Van staff follow up with patients to determine if they have been able to access other needed health services.

In addition to our outreach efforts, we actively participate in regional health access committees, including the **MediCall program** in Greater Fall River and the **Health Access Committee** of the Greater New Bedford Health & Human Services Coalition.

SECTION VI: Progress Report: Activity During Reporting Year

Major Programs & Initiatives

1. Cardiovascular Health

The **Cardiovascular Health Task Force (CVHTF)** was formed in response to the Community Benefit Strategic Action Plan. Past efforts included a resource guide focusing on prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease, a publicity campaign to promote a heart healthy lifestyle and advocacy of heart health.

The Cardiovascular Health Task Force's current focus is on the Cardiac Prevention Program, established in July 2002 with an emphasis on primary and secondary prevention of heart disease. Special focus is on the population identified in our community health needs assessment as being at higher risk for cardiovascular disease: The Portuguese population, elderly, low income and those with no post-secondary education.

This past year the CVHTF has focused with Maria Evora-Rosa and Ursula Crowell, RN, in promoting the **Stroke Heroes Act FAST program**, sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. This information and education has been added to our Cardiac Prevention education programs and has educated hundreds of area residents on stroke prevention and early treatment.

The task force has been working in collaboration with the American Heart Association and the Go Red campaign to educate women about the effect of heart disease on that specific population. We accomplish this through education and screenings at a regional "Go Red" luncheon for women each year and also at events with the Heart Association. Staff this year provided screenings and education to patrons at several local Macy's Department Stores as part of the AHA "Go Red" outreach efforts.

Cardiac Prevention Program

Southcoast's Cardiac Prevention Program has screened well over 8,000 individuals and entered them into its database. The program's goal is centered on primary and secondary prevention of heart disease.

In 2007, the program screened 3,706 individuals, almost double that screened in 2006. The program provides individualized screening for risk factors, which includes a questionnaire and cholesterol screening. The information is entered into a database, and a designated nurse and dietitian conduct tracking follow up. The prevention efforts focus on promoting education, lifestyle changes and risk factor modification. These efforts were coordinated in a number of different ways, working with the local churches, businesses, council on aging and other organizations and outreach efforts with local schools. Efforts are made to target specific underserved and underinsured areas in the communities served by Southcoast.

This year the program was expanded by providing cholesterol screening and education to three middle schools in Fall River (Kuss, Henry Lord and Talbot), Old Rochester Regional Junior High School in Mattapoisett, Dighton Rehoboth Regional Middle School and Keith Middle School in New Bedford. These efforts provided screening and education for hundreds of local schoolchildren. Students from Keith also had the opportunity to participate in an outreach day involving a mobile cardiac catheterization van from Medtronic. The students had the opportunity to tour the van, observe simulated catheterizations and again learn about the risk factors and prevention of heart disease.

The program at Keith Middle School, an inner city school in New Bedford, also expanded this year to include an after-school nutrition program that involved learning to cook healthy snacks and dinners. Surveys in New Bedford middle schools indicate that obesity and lack of physical exercise are much higher than state and national averages and this pilot program was designed to help address this.

Our 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.
- A full-time registered dietician who performs cholesterol and lipid screening as well as dietary instruction.

The primary prevention process provides individualized screening for risk factors, including completion of a nationally recognized questionnaire and administration of several free tests such as cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure screenings. The questionnaire is designed to gauge various risk factors for heart disease, such as family history, nutritional habits and lifestyle habits, including lack of regular exercise. The questionnaire also provides the individual's predicted future cardiac risk based on Framingham Heart Study factors. There is also an educational component, as participants receive the results of their questionnaire and tests, along with suggestions and individual education on how to develop healthier lifestyle habits.

Test and questionnaire results for each participant are entered into a database, and participants are tracked six months after their initial testing.

To date, a total of 8,000 individuals have been screened and entered into our database in initial encounters. The average age of those screened was 45.

Participants were reached through churches (including the Khmer Buddhist Temple and Santo Christo Church, St. John's and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church); the Immigrant's Assistance Center; Council on Aging in the elderly in the greater New Bedford/Fall River Wareham areas, and low-income housing. We have also screened and worked with the Fall River Police Department, the Fall River Visiting Nurses Association and assisted living centers in our communities. We also provide screening and education at local businesses, including Alberox Manufacturing, Joseph Aboud Clothing, Gold Medal Bakery, Macy's Department Stores and Five Star Manufacturing.

Our program's database has allowed us to document program impact through tracking participants risk factors on their initial and subsequent encounters. Overall data indicates that there is an average 9.42 percent improvement in the population re-screened for the measure of cholesterol level below 200.

<www.southcoast.org/heart/prevention.html>

2. Youth Risk Behaviors

Southcoast provides a variety of programs and services aimed at preschool through high school-aged children to promote healthy behaviors and risk reduction. Historically high rates of teen pregnancy and other risk behaviors — such as smoking, drinking and relationship and gang violence — caused Southcoast to focus on efforts to reduce youth risk behaviors. As a result of the Community Benefit Strategic Action Plan, the **Youth Risk Behaviors Task Force (YRBTF)** was formed and identified three objectives: Youth programming, shared information among both area youth and those who provide youth services and communication of a positive message about the vast majority of youth in our communities who are making positive choices.

The YRBTF synthesized information from a variety of area teens. Information compiled from a Southcoast sponsored survey of over 1,000 middle and high school students across the greater Fall River, New Bedford and Wareham region showed what kind of health and related information teens need and where they go to find it. More than 150 teens also spoke out at a Southcoast-sponsored Youth Summit about the types of resources they would like to see in the region. With their input, the

YRBTF developed the concept of TEEN LINK, a toll-free regional information telephone line that was in effect from 2000 to 2007.

Collaborative Programs

The Youth Risk Behaviors Task Force this year continued to support efforts in our communities designed to reduce youth risk behaviors.

Youth Summits, which Southcoast first sponsored in 2000, continued in New Bedford and Fall River with more than 300 local students attending events in each community. These forums are very successful in sharing information about combating risk factors such as violence and drug abuse, teen pregnancy and other pressing issues. The summits are also an opportunity to reinforce local youth who are making positive choices in their lives. All of these are goals developed by our YRBTF. The youth summits are supported by Southcoast with staff and financial resources.

In an ongoing effort to partner with other youth services providers, Southcoast provides financial support to **Junior Achievement** to help develop an after-school collaboration in the Wareham area for adolescents to spend time as managers of their own student company. The Wareham area does not have as many after school opportunities for this at-risk age group and this program is intended to offer an option for youth. In addition, a number of Southcoast staff and leadership participate in Junior Achievement programs throughout the region.

The Youth Risk Behaviors Committee also supported other youth initiatives in the community, including **drug prevention and anti-violence efforts** in New Bedford and a **mentoring program** that is conducted in New Bedford middle schools.

Southcoast also supported development of a **video produced by students in Fall River**, which depicted youth who had overcome adversity in a number of ways including making choices against drugs and gang violence and making healthy lifestyle choices in exercise and nutrition.

Responsible Attitudes toward Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention (RAPPP)/ Males are Part of the Puzzle (MAPP)

Southcoast's **Responsible Attitudes toward Pregnancy, Parenting & Prevention (RAPPP)** program is in its 11th year. Created in response to the region's teen pregnancy and birth rates, RAPPP's goals include:

- Providing adolescents with important education by presenting objective, accurate and up-to-date information.
- Facilitating discussion on issues of reproductive health and sexuality.
- Engaging youth in creating and fostering positive attitudinal and behavioral changes through peer leadership and civic involvement.
- Promoting parent/child dialogue on these issues.

Since its inception, RAPPP and its related programs have served more than 63,000 young people, their parents and other community members through programming, education, youth development and mentoring.

Males are Part of the Puzzle (MAPP) 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 MAPP youth representatives — 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.

All RAPPP activities, classroom learning, staff, faculty and peer leader training, community outreach, health fairs, speaking engagements and conferences are offered at no cost to participating schools and community groups. The RAPPP program is totally funded through grants and by Southcoast Hospitals Group.

RAPPP in the Classroom

The RAPPP program is a 14-hour abstinence-based, comprehensive education program targeted at high school youth.

This year, the program served over 1,000 junior and senior high school students at area schools, including Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School, Fairhaven High School, Wareham High School, Friends Academy and Nativity Preparatory School in New Bedford. The RAPPP Program also provided instruction in the Adults & Children Together Against Violence (ACT) Program, to students at Dartmouth High School childcare classes, Greater New Bedford Voc-Technical High School childcare classes as well as Horizons Group Home.

RAPPP also held several after-school camps and school vacation camps utilizing U.S. the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)-approved Making Proud Choices curriculum, including participation in the New Bedford Mayor's Invest In Kids program. Youth development activities included youth trips to Boston Museum of Science, Duck Tours, Pawtucket Red Sox games, movie days and bowling where teens would gather and discuss issues related to teen pregnancy and prevention.

RAPPP participated in a study conducted by nursing students at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth that analyzed the impact of the classroom program on the knowledge and attitudes of middle school students toward sexual behaviors. Nursing students interviewed middle school students before and after they attended the RAPPP program as part of the health curriculum at their schools. Some key findings in the post-program survey included:

- 43 percent more students stated that sexual abstinence is the only sure way to prevent unwanted pregnancies.
- 24 percent more students agreed that it is best for young teens to postpone and/or wait to have sex until they are at least 18 years old.
- 33 percent more students agreed that teens should have equal rights and responsibilities for love and sexual relationships.
- 20 percent more students said they would not let themselves be influenced by peer or partner pressure to engage in sexual activities.
- 20 percent more students said they use or plan to use birth control to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

RAPPP Community Events

Professional trainings were held in the community on several occasions utilizing the ACT curriculum. The RAPPP Program has the distinction of having the only staff trained by the American Psychological Association to deliver this program in Massachusetts. The target audience is parents, caretakers and individuals responsible for the care of children from birth to age eight. RAPPP staff train participants to be aware of the devastation caused by children's exposure to violence. This past year, RAPPP held trainings for South Coast area social workers and nurses, including staff at Southcoast Hospitals Group, Catholic Social Services and Healthy Families of Fall River and New Bedford.

RAPPP staff continues to be actively involved in networking opportunities and community educational presentations at Salve Regina University, the New England Fathering Conference, Catholic Charities Conference and the New Bedford Youth Summit as well as many other programs. Staff also presented a workshop on its Fatherhood Training programs for Incarcerated Fathers at the

seventh annual Arizona Fathers and Families Network Conference in February 2007. RAPPP staff also serves on several community councils including:

- The Greater New Bedford Health and Human Services Coalition.
- Healthy Families New Bedford Collaborative.
- Healthy Families Fall River Collaborative.
- Southcoast Hospitals Group Youth Risk Behaviors Task Force.
- The Children's Trust Fund Fathers & Families Network.

RAPPP established and conducted its own Youth Risk Assessment and Implementation Task Force as part of a DPH grant and participated in the New Bedford ACTS coalition. 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. Beyond the local community, we continue to work as affiliates with the National Fatherhood Initiative.

We conduct educational parents nights two to three times annually. Our most recent event focused on "Media Violence and Hip Hop Culture," featuring filmmaker Bryon Hurt, who has researched and produced a feature-length film exploring the impact of media violence on adolescents in our society, with special emphasis on hip-hop music.

The RAPPP Program and its peer liaison program were also present at several outreach booths to the community at conferences and other public venues. Topics featured in these outreach efforts included condom use, sexually transmitted infections, national teen pregnancy prevention month, prostate cancer awareness, violence prevention, AIDS awareness and National Men's Health Week.

This year a RAPPP Youth Council was formed with funding help from the Massachusetts Service Alliance. This Youth Council was composed of 14 adolescent males and females ranging in age from 13 to 19 from six area schools. The focus of this youth group was to learn a civic engagement curriculum, implement six community service projects, fund local community mini grant projects that serve youth in New Bedford, and implement monthly community "Teen Nights" as a safe alternative to hanging in the streets.

Commitment to Literacy

The RAPPP Program has distributed more than 3,000 books to children in the South Coast region at the YMCA/Camp Douglas, New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School child care class, Peace Works New Bedford and to expectant and new fathers and mothers as part of our commitment to literacy and life-long learning. This is accomplished in cooperation with the National Book Bank of America.

MAPP programming

RAPPP staff offers bi-monthly community trainings for new and expectant fathers. Included in this 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 and 1,100 fathers have benefited from these services. RAPPP has also implemented "Fathers Rounds" at the St. Luke's Hospital's Family Centered Unit (maternity) as a way to welcome new dads, provide information and education and offer support twice weekly at a "coffee hour" on the unit. Fathers receive children's books, information and a small gift for attending.

Annual Male Conference

This was RAPPP's 10th year presenting an annual Male Awareness Conference to constituent schools and programs within the RAPPP program family. The conference offered a broad range of topics

specifically for young men aged 13 to 17 years, including education, responsibility, empowerment and positive community involvement. To date approximately more than 1,900 young men have attended this annual event as well as teachers and other mentors.

Heart of Fatherhood Essay Contest and Awards

The “Heart of Fatherhood” award is presented to individuals that exemplify family values and serve as role models at home and in their communities. The honorary Father of the Year Award this past year was New England Patriots star Tedy Bruschi. Bruschi was honored along with Father’s Day essay contest winners at an awards dinner in the fall. The objective of the award and essay contest is to recognize fathers, stepfathers or father-like role models who go above and beyond the call of duty every day in the communities that make up South Coast.

Motherhood Programming

Parenting Workshops for Moms (incarcerated mothers) and mothers’ support groups are run on a regular basis at the Bristol County House of Correction.

Family Resource Center

RAPPP Family Education Youth Resource Center opened in February 2006 as 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.

RAPPP Peer Liaisons

RAPPP Peer Liaisons include youth who are highly trained to offer information and advice on topics that include reproductive health, communication and decision-making. There are currently five trained RAPPP Peer Liaisons — three boys and two girls — who act as a resource to their peers in social circles and at school, at the RAPPP Resource Center and as co-educators in junior high school programming. Additionally, these Peer Liaisons take part in community outreach, youth development activities, and play a crucial role on the RAPPP Steering Committee. Some of the activities conducted by the Peer Liaisons include:

- RAPPPtv, a cable access show targeting youth in the South Coast area, that is designed, researched, videotaped and produced entirely by RAPPP Peer Liaisons. RAPPPtv airs every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. on NBTV95.
- RAPPP Youth Council, which is funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Service Alliance. RAPPP Peer Liaisons lead a group of 15 youth from the Greater New Bedford area that have been commissioned to assess community needs, perform community service and fund 10 to 15 mini grants ranging in size from \$500 to \$1,500.

The RAPPP Program has enjoyed its most successful fundraising year yet, receiving \$150,000 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.

This year a new initiative was launched based on a grant from the Massachusetts Service Alliance, which was used to implement an intergenerational project between youth and area senior citizens. Many activities and field trips were implemented pairing youth and seniors which included an Easter Tea, Fun Fest BBQ, Pawtucket Red Sox outings, Luncheon Cruise in Boston, and most recently a “Wreath Decorating Party” at an area senior center, where seniors and youth created live wreaths, enjoyed Christmas treats and music and a visit from Santa. The direction of the project is driven by a task force made up of senior citizens, senior-serving organizations, youth organizations and RAPPP Youth Council members.

<www.southcoast.org/rapp/>

Tar Wars

Our region has an extremely high rate of lung cancer, with the town of Wareham having the highest rate of lung cancer in the state. Smoking rates are also extremely high. The South Coast has the second highest rate of smoking of any region in the Massachusetts, with more than 22 percent of the population reporting that they smoke. In our cities of Fall River and New Bedford, the rates are 35 and 26 percent respectively. Clearly, smoking prevention and cessation efforts are key to the health of residents living on the South Coast.

Each year, Southcoast staff participates in a nationally modeled anti-smoking education program, “Tar Wars,” aimed at elementary school children in the region. Southcoast staff has educated more than 2,000 fourth and fifth graders in cooperation with the Fall River and Wareham school departments. This upcoming year, the program will add a middle school in New Bedford.

Southcoast staff use models, obtained with funds from a local grant, that graphically demonstrate the dangers of smoking and engage the students in designing anti-smoking messages. The program aims to encourage students to share this knowledge with other family members and peers, thus spreading the anti-smoking message.

3. Access to Health Care

Access to health care, as documented by the Community Needs Assessment, is a concern in the South Coast region. Southcoast Hospitals Group has a long-standing commitment to improving the access through services such as free care and insurance eligibility outreach, the Southcoast Health Van, support to the local community health centers and contributions to the MediCall program.

Uncompensated Care & Insurance Eligibility Outreach:

Lack of health insurance is a major problem in our area, with an estimated 11 percent of the population without health insurance.

Southcoast’s Patient Financial Services Department accomplished increased outreach efforts in FY2007 in an attempt to connect residents with health insurance, particularly through the new efforts in Massachusetts to link every resident with a health plan.

In conjunction with the new Commonwealth Care and Commonwealth Choice programs in Massachusetts, our Patient Financial Services Department hosted a number of open enrollment days at our Charlton, St. Luke’s and Tobey Hospital sites. We also participated in open insurance enrollments in partnership with the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, BMC HealthNet and Neighborhood Health insurance plans as well as an open enrollment hosted by Massachusetts State Sen. Mark C.W. Montigny. Southcoast joined with the Massachusetts Hospital Association to host a briefing breakfast for business owners, which was the largest attended in the state.

Staff also presented information at forums in Swansea, Wareham and on radio shows on local stations included one targeting the Portuguese and Spanish immigrant populations. Staff participated in a job fair at Bristol Community College in Fall River to provide information and outreach to workers who were displaced by the closing of a large manufacturing plant in Fall River. Other collaborative efforts included ongoing education to members of the New Bedford and Fall River community health network areas (CHNAs).

A total of 13,448 customers were personally contacted by our staff with information about the Commonwealth Care and Commonwealth Choice programs.

We will continue to work with the Commonwealth Connector Authority to provide outreach for residents who need health insurance. We also plan to coordinate with local Wal-Mart stores in our communities to provide open enrollment sessions on-site for Wal-Mart employees.

In addition to our outreach efforts, Southcoast's Patient Financial Services Department in 2007 assisted in the completion of:

- 3,595 Virtual Gateway applications.
- 13 manual Free Care applications.
- MassHealth application (double the number from last year).
- 194 agency applications.
- 50 referrals for Social Security and Social Security Disability Insurance.
- 167 long-term care applications.
- 24 applications for disability insurance.

Patient Financial Services staff contacted 410 patients to offer assistance in required filings to avoid termination of benefits for MassHealth and funds from the Uncompensated Care Pool.

Community Health Center

Southcoast provides financial support to the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center (GNBCHC), which provides comprehensive primary medical and dental care services, focused on the medically underserved. GNBCHC's primary service area has been determined by the U.S. Public Health Service to be "medically underserved" and represents high ethnic concentrations of Hispanic, Black, Portuguese, Cape Verde and Mayan populations. This area also has high rates of unemployment and poverty. GNBCHC annually registers more than 70,000 visits, representing more than 20,000 patients. The center's much-needed dental service continues to grow, with treatments approaching 5,000 patients. The need for this community health center has never been greater.

<www.gnbchc.org>

Southcoast provides financial support to HealthFirst Family Care Center Inc. in Fall River. HealthFirst provides primary adult and pediatric medical and dental care to some 10,000 patients per year and is a safety net for low-income families. Southcoast's financial support extends to HealthFirst's Patient Assistance Program, which includes the provision of prescription drugs.

<healthfirstfr.org>

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. Southcoast provides staff and financial support to Health Access Collaborative. This has been a tremendously successful effort, which will continue to expand across the region.

<www.healthaccesscollaborative.org>

Southcoast Health Van

The Southcoast Health Van continued to see its services utilized by the community in 2007. The van provided more than 4,000 residents with health screenings and health education in 2007. Another 3,984 residents sought to donate blood through the van and associated community blood drives, resulting in 3,065 pints of blood collected. All blood collected on the Southcoast Health Van and through community blood drives is used to treat local patients.

<www.southcoast.org/van/>

The service began in 1993 with the purpose of providing free health screenings, education and some clinical services to a broad-based population. The van's goal is to improve the health status of residents, particularly those without access to regular ongoing health care. The intent of this service is to break down access barriers to health care.

Outreach through the van was expanded in 2005 with the purchase of new van. Operations of the van — including staff, supplies and maintenance — are supported annually by Southcoast Hospitals Group.

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. Services provided include blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol, colorectal and bone density screenings, pregnancy testing and extensive health education. Tetanus diphtheria (Td), pneumococcal vaccine and flu vaccine are offered as are a range of cancer screenings and education on cancer prevention. The van also serves as a blood donor center to assure regional blood supplies.

The Southcoast Health Van serves an ethnically diverse population, including Portuguese, Brazilian, Hispanic and Cambodian immigrants. 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.

In FY2007 the Van staff provided additional information about no- and low-cost insurance programs to eligible residents.

Other initiatives 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. Southcoast Health 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 local YMCAs.

In Fall River, the Southcoast Health Van works in conjunction with the Cambodian Center, Bristol Elder Services, and the 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 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. The van currently visits area high schools, including Diman Vocational High School in Fall River, Westport High School, Old Colony High School in Rochester, Wareham High School and Apponoquet High School in Lakeville.

In addition to outreach, the van continues to promote referral and follow up for regular primary health care services by networking with other service providers and disseminating information to patients. Staff also helps patients negotiate referrals for health care, family planning and health insurance options. Patient satisfaction survey results indicated that this health information provided was useful and helpful.

The Southcoast-sponsored Community Health Needs Assessment, as well as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Behavioral Risk Factors Survey data, show area rates at or better than the state average for cholesterol testing and blood pressure screening. The Southcoast Health Van's outreach services have contributed to these positive-screening rates.

All Southcoast Health Van services are free of charge and fully supported by Southcoast Hospitals Group.

The Southcoast Health Van is offered to the community with the assistance these local businesses, who provided assistance in purchasing the new van in 2005: Fall River Five Cents Savings Bank, Citizens-Union Savings Bank, St. Anne's Credit Union, Fall River Ford, Citadel Communications/WBSM & FUN 107, BankNewport, Bank of Fall River, Charlton Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, Karam Financial, Grimshaw, Gudewicz Charitable Foundation, NBC 10 WJAR-TV, Venus De Milo, The Feitelberg Company, Shields MRI, Dorothy Cox Chocolates, Rodgers Family Foundation, Southcoast Health System Volunteers, St. Luke's Hospital Auxiliary, Tobey Hospital Guild and Trio Liquors.

MediCall Program

Southcoast continues to provide support to the MediCall program. MediCall's primary focus and unique mission is to link individuals who are unable to pay for health care with physicians in the community who are willing to provide free care for our underserved population.

The MediCall Program continues to provide medical access to the underserved population in the greater Fall River area, who are unable to arrange health care appointments due to reasons such as lack of health insurance, financial hardship, language barrier, transportation difficulty or difficulty in making appointments. Staff evaluates patients based on financial eligibility criteria and coordinates referrals to 110 local physicians who have volunteered to accept free care patients in their offices.

Highlights of the past year include:

- 2,228 face-to-face encounters assisting clients with their medical needs.
- 2,122 prescriptions were provided to clients through the additional prescription counseling program.
- Outreach efforts through social service agencies and community events were provided to 1,014 individuals.
- Health care was arranged for 1,450 individuals, with 155 individuals provided ongoing free care through the volunteer physicians in the MediCall Program.

Interpreter Services

Southcoast Hospitals Group offers comprehensive interpreting services for a wide range of populations, with Portuguese, Spanish and Khmer being the prevalent languages serviced. Interpreters assist with verbal interpretations for patients and their families who receive inpatient and outpatient care. The interpreters also provide written translations of documents and educational materials for patients and their families.

In 2007, Southcoast interpreters provided 23,312 encounters, which is a 23 percent increase from the previous year. This translates into 11,637 hours of interpreting services, a 14 percent increase from the previous year. The predominant language encounters include:

- 9,896 encounters for Portuguese-speaking patients, a 17 percent increase from 2006.
- 12,665 encounters with Spanish-speaking patients, a 26 percent increase from 2006.

<www.southcoast.org/portuguese/>

<www.southcoast.org/spanish/>

<www.southcoast.org/khmer/>

Wellness, Education & Prevention Screenings

Southcoast Hospitals Group has a long-standing tradition of community education, prevention and screening activities. Thousands of area residents are reached by these free services every year.

Colon Cancer

Colon cancer is a significant health problem in our region. A study by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health revealed a low rate of residents (just 55 percent) underwent a screening colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy in the past year. There are significant health disparities with colon cancer in our region, with African-Americans and ethnic groups, such as Portuguese and Hispanic residents, reporting a higher incidence of colon cancer than the rest of the population.

Southcoast addresses colon cancer screening with an educational packet and stool test kit for occult blood, distributed to every resident who is screened on the Southcoast Health Van. Southcoast processes these occult blood tests for free for those residents who send them in, and provides follow-up and referrals for those with positive results.

This year, Southcoast teamed with the American Cancer Society in an educational effort targeting ethnic groups in our community. Our efforts included articles on colon cancer and the importance of screenings, that were published in local ethnic newspapers, *El Latino* and *O'Jornal*, and presentations on local radio stations that target the Portuguese and Hispanic populations. Articles ran in the publications on a monthly basis for six months and the newspaper then published a collection of the articles, which we not use as an educational tool in the community.

Skin Cancer

Southcoast conducts annual skin cancer screenings each year. This year, 106 residents were screened at our Fall River site in June, with 39 referred for further treatment, and 90 were screened at The Oncology Center in North Dartmouth in the fall. Local dermatologists volunteer their time for these free screening clinics every year.

Prostate Screenings

Free prostate screenings were conducted in the Greater New Bedford and Fall River communities during the past year. Screenings in New Bedford were conducted in collaboration with the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center and the New Bedford Mayor's Crusade for Cancer. Southcoast urologists donate their services for the screenings.

A total of 26 men were screened in Fall River and 69 men were screened at the New Bedford event. Outreach materials for both events were designed in a culturally sensitive manner to appeal to at-risk populations including African-American men and Portuguese and Hispanic immigrants.

As part of the New Bedford Mayor's Crusade Against Cancer, Southcoast staff took part in a series of educational programs on prostate cancer that targeted New Bedford municipal workers, particularly those who worked for the municipal maintenance department.

This program was attended by 75 men.

Head/Neck Screenings

Southcoast Hospitals Group and Northeast Ear Nose & Throat Surgeons provided free head and neck cancer screenings to 75 individuals on the Southcoast Health Van in April. The screening was held in cooperation with the Yul Brynner Head & Neck Cancer Foundation Inc. in honor of "Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Week." Oral cancer is a major health problem in the United States. Head and neck cancers are more common in men and in people over age 50. It is estimated that some 45,000 men and women in this country developed head and neck cancers in 2004. Black males have the highest

incidence of head and neck cancers, with a survival rate over five years at 33 percent versus 55 percent for whites. To learn more about head and neck cancer visit <www.headandneck.org>.

Women's Health

Southcoast is the recipient of a Department of Public Health Women's Health Initiative grant for a Breast and Cervical Cancer Initiative. This grant attempts to screen and identify cancers in an uninsured population without access to care. In cooperation with the New Bedford YWCA, this initiative targets racial, cultural and ethnic minorities and the under- and uninsured.

Each year, Southcoast screens an average of more than 650 women, providing more than 600 mammograms and more than 500 pap smears.

Information on the breast and cervical cancer initiative is distributed in three languages — English, Portuguese and Spanish — through a Breast Health/Women's Health kit. We have distributed well over 5,000 of these kits over the past several years.

This past year, with the New Bedford Mayor's Crusade for Cancer, Southcoast staff educated female workers for the City of New Bedford about the importance of mammography and cervical cancer screenings.

Health Fairs

Southcoast again participated in numerous health fairs across the region, including a Portuguese Health Fair, a Senior Citizen Health Fair, a Women's' Health Fair and health fairs onsite at local industries.

SECTION VII: Expenditures During the Reporting Year

In 2007, Southcoast contributed \$10,245,125 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 staff contributed 29,272 hours and 456 volunteer hours in community benefit-related initiatives that reached 60,990 people in our region. 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.

In addition to community benefit expenditures, Medicaid currently pays Southcoast Hospitals Group \$5,395,617 less per year than the actual cost of the services provided to Medicaid beneficiaries. Southcoast plays a critical role in providing care to a substantial Medicaid population and is the largest community hospital provider of Medicaid services in the Commonwealth.

Southcoast's community benefit and community service programs and Southcoast's subsidization of unfunded Medicaid care totaled \$15,640,742 in 2007. Southcoast's total charity care cost was \$17.7 million in 2007.

Estimated total expenditures for 2007 are included in the following table:

Program Type	Estimated Total Expenditures for FY2007	Approved Program Budget for FY2008	
Community Benefits Programs	Direct Expenses	\$4,296,187	Not specified
	Associated Expenses	Not Specified	
	Determination of Need Expenditures	\$202,622	
	Employee Volunteerism	\$84,738	
	Other Leveraged Resources	\$1,040,210	
Community Service Programs	Direct Expenses	\$1,051,349	
	Associated Expenses	Not Specified	
	Determination of Need Expenditures	\$0	
	Employee Volunteerism	\$0	
	Other Leveraged Resources	\$288,971	
Net Charity Care		\$2,979,085	
Corporate Sponsorships		\$14,200	
	Total Expenditures	\$9,957,362	
Total Patient Care-Related Expenses for FY2007			\$511,477,178
<p>Comments: In addition to the \$9,957,362 in community benefits and community service, Southcoast Hospitals was under-funded by the Medicaid program in the amount of \$5,395,617, bringing Southcoast's total community contribution to \$15,352,979 in 2007. Also note that Southcoast's total charity care cost was \$17.7 million in 2007.</p>			

SECTION VIII: Contact Information

Jim Rattray
 Vice President of Marketing & Public Affairs
 Southcoast Hospitals Group
 363 Highland Avenue
 Fall River, MA 02720
 508-679-5899
 E-mail: rattrayj@southcoast.org