Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan 2026



National Jewish Health®

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Letter from the President and CEO

November 14, 2026

Dear Community Member,

Thank you for your interest in community health. We appreciate your review of the many ways in which National Jewish Health serves those in need. In fact, we were originally founded in 1899 to care for indigent tuberculosis patients. More than 126 years later, National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation and home to excellence in multispecialty care. Dedicated to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of adults and children, we see patients regardless of ability to pay and provide millions of dollars in free care each year.

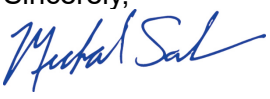
We treat patients from around Colorado and the nation who suffer from the most challenging respiratory, cardiac and immune conditions, including gastrointestinal, neurological, rheumatological and many other diseases. We are committed to caring for all patients on a first-come, first-served basis. Each year, we educate and care for up to 90 children with chronic diseases in our free K-8 school, Morgridge Academy, located on our main health campus in Denver. Throughout the organization, we conduct basic, translational and clinical research that brings new treatments to patients around the world. We have support groups to educate our patients, as well as community members, about disease diagnosis and management.

In addition to the comprehensive community health needs assessment completed in 2025, the hospital conducted its annual surveys with local consumers, community providers and National Jewish Health physicians and researchers in the spring of 2026.

Our focus this year continues to be centered on key areas where we believe we can make the greatest difference: increasing access to specialty care, supporting pediatric respiratory health needs, and expanding health education and literacy to empower patients, families and community providers with knowledge to prevent and manage disease. Our 2026 Community Health Implementation Plan provides insights into all of these areas.

Through shared purpose, deep compassion and rigorous innovation, we will continue to make meaningful strides toward meeting health needs and improving well-being throughout our region. We appreciate your interest and invite your feedback and guidance as we work together to meet the needs of our community.

Sincerely,



Michael Salem, MD
President and CEO

About National Jewish Health

National Jewish Health is a specialty hospital, providing research, education and patient care. Today, National Jewish Health is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders through providing excellence in multispecialty care. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive innovative, comprehensive and coordinated care.

Community benefits provided by National Jewish Health include patient care, community outreach, patient and physician education and extensive research. All patients, including Medicaid patients, are served on a first-come, first-served basis. National Jewish Health provided more than $14 million in charity care services that included uncompensated care for Medicaid patients.

Located in Denver, National Jewish Health is a tertiary specialty care hospital and national referral center with a variety of practice sites across Colorado. Here, doctors, caregivers and researchers work together to provide excellence in health care and are dedicated to continually improving programs and services through innovative research. Patient referrals come from around the nation, many with conditions that cannot be successfully treated anywhere else.

Physicians at National Jewish Health provide continuity of care for their patients when they require hospitalization through our close collaborations with a variety of hospitals in the Denver area. Our work includes tapping the expertise of our pulmonologists, cardiologists and critical care specialists to serve inpatients at these other hospitals. We carry out this collaborative approach both locally and nationally, to focus on ways to elevate care and further research.

National Jewish Health faculty and staff conduct extensive basic, translational and clinical research that informs local, national and international communities on a wide variety of respiratory, immune and related diseases, laying the groundwork for discovery and improvement of care. About $59 million in grant revenue is received annually, primarily from the federal government, especially the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The organization is in the top 6% of institutions in the country funded by the NIH (in absolute dollars). We invest another $20 million each year in research.

National Jewish Health also operates the Morgridge Academy on its Denver campus. This free K-8 school for students with chronic illnesses is the only school of its kind at a hospital. For most of these students, medical conditions have historically kept them from thriving in regular school programs. Here, they are able to thrive, achieve and learn to live with and manage their illnesses.

Health care education is a central element of the National Jewish Health mission.
From educating patients about how to better take care of themselves and manage their conditions, to faculty-led training for medical students and postgraduate fellows, and accredited seminars, webinars and hands-on workshops around the country for health care professionals, education is a primary focus and ultimately leads to better patient care.

Introduction

National Jewish Health is pleased to present its 2026 Implementation Plan.

This plan follows the development of the hospital's 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), which was adopted June 25, 2025, and further reported upon in our CHNA filed at the end of June 2026. The CHNA report can be accessed on the hospital's website.

Implementation Plan Purpose

The purpose of this implementation plan report is to identify the goals, objectives and strategies that National Jewish Health will work toward now through 2028 to address the health priorities identified in the most recent CHNA report.

Developing Strategic Implementation Plans

The National Jewish Health 2026 Implementation Plan includes strategies that are designed to make a difference in the priority health needs identified while addressing social determinants of health that have a major impact on people's health and quality of life. This implementation plan is developed to leverage hospital and community resources, and to collaborate with community partners. A series of virtual meetings were conducted to identify goals, objectives and strategies documented in this plan that will guide health improvements by National Jewish Health over the next three years.

Findings From 2026 Community Survey

To help understand the health needs within the local community, the hospital annually conducts surveys with local consumers, community providers and National Jewish Health physicians and researchers. In addition, the organization also meets with community members and collaborates on a variety of projects.

Our 2026 community survey identified diabetes, chronic illness and air pollution as top health priorities. Community members asked for more education, ways to address indoor air quality as a social determinant of health, and opportunities for greater support for nutrition, depression and anxiety. Community physicians reported that asthma, COPD, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and tobacco use place the greatest burden on patients, while barriers to care include appointment wait times, housing and basic needs challenges, chronic disease management, health care and medication costs, limited urgent care access, CPAP access, low health literacy and the need for more resources for complex and non-English-speaking patients.

The institution utilizes a variety of programs to increase access to multispecialty care, educate consumers and providers and support pediatric respiratory health. These programs also focus on health behaviors, risk, social determinants of health and medical research for improvements in care and new treatments.

Findings from the 2025 CHNA

During 2025, National Jewish Health conducted a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that was approved by the National Jewish Health Board of Directors June 25, 2025. The next CHNA will be in completed in 2028.

Community Definition. The National Jewish Health community is geographically defined as Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Douglas and Jefferson counties in Colorado, where about 75% of our patients reside. As a multispecialty care hospital with national leadership in respiratory health and related specialties, we have further defined our community as those who have or are at risk for respiratory or related diseases, particularly those who reside in the above-named counties. Ultimately, patients needing our specialized services come from across Colorado, the United States and from around the world.

Assessing Health Needs. To assess the health needs of our community, we examined a wide variety of published health data with a special eye on the social determinants of health. We also conducted community benefit meetings in 2024, 2025 and 2026 (the most recent 2026 meeting recording can be found here), annual surveys were sent to multiple community health providers and input was gathered from National Jewish Health community health experts.

Identified Health Needs. Following input and analysis from various published and human sources, we identified key community health needs that could benefit from our specialized expertise. We have divided them into two categories: respiratory health and social and behavioral health. Within those two categories, the identified community health needs are:

- **Respiratory Health**
  - Asthma & COPD — Asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are the most common and burdensome respiratory diseases in the community.
  - Sleep Apnea — Public health data shows that insufficient sleep affects thousands in our community, while community physicians commented that sleep apnea is a common and burdensome respiratory disease among their patients.

- **Social and Behavioral Health**
  - Tobacco Use
  - Education
  - Access to Specialty Care
  - Air Quality

Air quality, limited access to specialty health care, inadequate patient and provider education and tobacco use, all contribute to poor respiratory health in Colorado. Additionally, tobacco use, air quality, access to specialty care, education and health care costs were identified by community physicians as the highest needs for their patients.

Selected Areas of Focus

Guided by both identified local priorities and the strengths of National Jewish Health, the following areas will be the primary focus of the National Jewish Health Community Health Implementation Plan to improve community health.

Pediatric Respiratory Health
Public health rates of asthma emergency room visits and hospitalizations among children living in the National Jewish Health community, along with universal mention of asthma, food allergy and eczema among pediatric community health providers, indicates that these areas continue to be a large, ongoing community health need. National Jewish Health has added pediatric pulmonary physicians to increase patient appointment availability and increase our extensive pulmonary expertise in treating children with acute, chronic and complicated respiratory conditions.

Education
Provider and consumer surveys noted that both health care providers and patients could benefit significantly from better understanding respiratory health and ways to protect it, including educating physicians about how specialty care can help them care for difficult respiratory cases and educating patients about managing their diseases, protecting their lung health and finding specialists and other helpful resources.

Access to Specialty Care
Local high rates of emergency care and hospitalizations for asthma and COPD, poor air quality, an aging population and availability to specialized care among Medicare and Medicaid populations indicate that patients in our community need better access to National Jewish Health respiratory knowledge and expertise. We ensure that all patients have access to care by scheduling appointments on a first-come, first-served basis, regardless of ability to pay. National Jewish Health has also addressed access to multispecialty care by adding faculty clinicians in high need specialties, including rheumatology, neurology and pediatric pulmonology.

Health Needs Not Addressed
All of the identified significant health needs are important to National Jewish Health. However, the institution must focus its leadership, time and resources on the selected needs in order to make a difference in the community's health. The selected needs were ones to which National Jewish Health brings unique and extraordinary expertise and capabilities not widely available in the community. Limitations of funding, staff and expertise at the hospital were considered barriers to effectively addressing the unselected needs. Unselected needs were also ones that could be addressed by other organizations.

Implementation Strategy

Pediatric Respiratory Health

Goal: Serve more children with asthma and respiratory diseases.

Objectives

- **Improve access through telehealth.** We are evaluating the possibility of extending telehealth availability to engage with pediatric patients across the Denver metro area, Colorado and Wyoming. This will allow more patients convenient access to our pediatric respiratory experts.

- **Grow availability through faculty and staff.** We have increased the number of pediatric pulmonary clinic appointments to provide more access to specialty care. We will continue to monitor the community's needs and add other clinic offerings and physicians when appropriate.

- **Partner with HCA HealthONE Rocky Mountain Children's at Presbyterian St. Luke's (RMHC).** Our pediatric physicians leverage our services and expertise to provide expanded pediatric pulmonary care for RMHC patients, including post neonatal intensive care unit patients, to reach more children in need.

- **Lead community projects to improve lung health.** We have expanded efforts to build capacity and partnerships among patients, families, schools, public health and health care providers in Colorado's San Luis Valley, Lower Arkansas Valley and are expanding into Weld and Morgan counties, the Pikes Peak area and the communities of Delta, Mesa and Montrose in Colorado.

- **Lead community advisory boards.** Continue to lead community advisory boards around Colorado to identify community pediatric health problems, issues, priorities and resources.

- **Offer lung function testing at health fairs in rural areas.**

Measurement

- Track numbers of patient and geographic expansion within target areas.

Goal: Provide better care for children with asthma.

Objectives

- **Clinical trials of new medications.** National Jewish Health consistently conducts clinical trials of experimental medications for pediatric asthma patients, many of which lead to approvals for new medication treatments for pediatric asthma. This practice will continue in the coming years.

- **Training providers.** The National Jewish Health *for Kids* **Asthma Toolkit Bootcamp** program has trained more than 500 general practitioners in Colorado to better diagnose and manage pediatric and adult asthma in communities that are under-resourced. The program has been taken to La Plata, Chaffee, Custer, Fremont, Huerfano, Las Animas, Lake, Park, Pueblo, Teller and El Paso Counties in Colorado, as well as provided in the Denver area. Additionally, we extended the program and provider education to the Navajo Nation, Southern Ute Nation, and the Apache Nation in Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona. We also offer this training to additional clinics in the Navajo Nation and at select clinics in the Tahono O'odham Nation.

- **Asthma action plan.** The hospital will ensure that pediatric patients have an asthma action plan to use at home. An action plan provides a personalized, written guide for managing asthma by outlining daily treatment, how to recognize and respond to worsening symptoms or attacks and when to seek emergency medical help. Action plans are proven effective in helping control asthma, preventing asthma attacks and managing asthma attacks safely when they do occur. Asthma action plans are also part of our Hospital Transformation Project.

- **Offer enrollment in Morgridge Academy.** National Jewish Health operates a free, K-8 school for up to 90 chronically ill children on the organization's main campus in Denver. The school provides medical care for asthma and other conditions throughout the school day and teaches students and families how to manage their diseases at home. Most of the students have fallen behind in their regular schools due to health-related absences. Full-time registered nurses on staff provide medical attention, which helps reduce health absences. Many of the students are from families with limited resources and benefit from the school's support. Through an active information campaign and outreach efforts, we will work to increase the number of students served by the school to help more children with respiratory and other chronic diseases.

Measurement

- Track research studies and published findings. Document grants and research.
- Document pediatric asthma action plans.
- Document reach of Morgridge Academy enrollment campaign and student count.

Education

Goal: Educate patients and their families on how to manage asthma and other respiratory diseases.

Objectives

- **Health content.** National Jewish Health keeps a robust library of health content, overseen and authored by experts at National Jewish Health, both in print and online. The educational material ranges from targeted patient-facing education on conditions, tests, and medications used to support direct patient care, to larger Understanding booklets on key health conditions, dozens of instructional videos on topics such as inhaler technique and “What is COPD?” We will continue to support and update our consumer-facing health content, with special focus on increasing our library of educational videos. Our free school program, Clean Air Projects, offers lesson plans and online resources to help students, teachers and families better understand air pollution and ways to protect respiratory health. This program is available for elementary, middle and high schools in the Denver area and throughout Colorado. We continue to explore innovative and effective ways to help patients find educational content.

- **Educating Morgridge Academy Families**. Full-time registered nurses help students during the school day with medication and health problem-solving. These nurses also work with each student's family to teach them how to better manage health conditions at home. Families learn about their child's condition, why the medication is important and how to take it, what to do when exacerbations occur and when to see the doctor. Helping students and families keep health conditions well managed reduces school absences and improves academic performance.

- **Patient education and support groups.** National Jewish Health will continue to focus on providing one-on-one patient education and support of patients with chronic illnesses and will strive to expand access to patient education and support groups.

- **Suicide and depression screening.** National Jewish Health is committed to improving the care we provide to patients who are experiencing suicidal ideation. Educating patients about suicide and depression facilitates early detection, promotes effective treatment and helps reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness. As part of our Hospital Transformation Project, all inpatients over the age of 12 are screened for symptoms of depression and suicidal ideation at the time of admission. We participate in the Hospital Quality Improvement Program and we follow the Zero Suicide program.

Measurement

- Document number of Morgridge Academy families.
- Document new and updated health content.

Goal: Educate health care professionals

Objectives

- **Physician training.** National Jewish Health provides active training programs for medical students, interns, residents and postgraduate fellows in allergy, immunology, environmental and occupation health sciences, pulmonology, pediatrics and more. At any given time, about 70 residents and fellows are receiving training at National Jewish Health for future careers in medicine.

- **Continuing medical education.** The Office of Professional Education regularly develops online and live education seminars and series at which our expert physicians educate health professionals on current topics concerning the diseases we treat, clinical strategies for severe asthma, the safety and efficacy of inhaled corticosteroids in asthma, managing airway diseases and current best practices in care of patients with interstitial lung disease. The Office will also expand online continuing medical education courses on asthma, cardiology, COPD, cystic fibrosis, cancer and other areas of expertise.

- **Community outreach.** These programs have so far trained more than 500 physicians in 170 primary care practices that serve medically underserved populations in eastern Colorado, southern Colorado and the Denver metro area and the Navajo Nation in Arizona.

- **Conference presentations.** National Jewish Health faculty educate their peers about the care of patients at dozens of medical and scientific conferences throughout the year.

- **Outreach to community providers through Hospital Transformation Project (HTP).** We will continue to reach community providers in underserved clinics to discuss how access to specialty care can help their patients.

Measurement

- Assess how many providers reached and programs held within these areas.
- Document live and online CME programs.
- Document outreach to community providers.

Access to Specialty Care

Goal: Expand capacity to see patients.

Objectives

- **Immediate care.** The Immediate Care Clinic is a full-service clinic that provides access to urgently needed care for thousands of adults and children in the Denver area who have experienced unexpected illnesses and minor injuries. Last year, more than 1,600 community members were served. We will continue to offer and expand services as needed.

- **Faculty and staff growth.** In 2026, we added physicians and advanced practice providers in cardiology, neurology, pulmonology, radiology, rheumatology and sleep medicine to provide the community with more access to specialty care. We continue to monitor community needs and add specialists when appropriate.

- **More locations.** We will continue to collaborate with other health care institutions to deliver National Jewish Health expertise at more locations across Colorado.

- **Chronic Care Management**. The National Jewish Health Chronic Care Management™ program expands access to multispecialty care for adults with complex chronic conditions. Connected devices and real-time monitoring help care teams identify concerns early, adjust treatment and support patients at home. More than 1,200 patients are now enrolled.

- **Access through our patient portal.** Patients are able to schedule clinic and telehealth appointments through their Epic MyChart® accounts. This is a significant community benefit for Colorado rural, disadvantaged and disabled patients. We will continually find ways to enhance the patient portal and virtual visit experience.

- **Health Screenings.** We provide free and confidential health screenings for former U.S. Department of Energy workers, pre-1993 uranium industry workers and active and former miners. Additionally, we have enhanced state-of-the-art MRI and CT imaging equipment with the addition of highly trained radiologists to enable us to better serve the high demand for imaging services.

- **Participate in community events**. The hospital annually participates in the National Lung Cancer Screening Day, a special Saturday screening event for people at high risk for lung cancer. We also lead and participate in the Denver Walk-With-A-Doc program, offering monthly walks combined with a health-related educational talk by one of our physicians.

Measurement

- We will monitor community use of our Immediate Care Center**.**
- We will count patients utilizing the chronic care management program.
- We will develop measures as we identify other new programs.

Goal: Make it easier for outside health care providers to work with National Jewish Health and to refer patients.

Objectives

- **Increase access for physician-to-physician consultations.** Through our Physician Line and online web forms, we offer informal peer-to-peer consults.

- **Educating Low-Income Clinics.** We've identified 103 low-income clinics in Colorado and 29 in the Denver metro area. Our team regularly visits clinics in person and virtually to educate clinic physicians, nurses and staff about programs and services offered at National Jewish Health and explain the hospital's financial assistance services.

- **Operational and technological improvements.** After changing our electronic health record to Epic® in 2023, we have continued to improve and streamline referral physician access to patient records and physician consultations.

    - Enabled Epic's Care Everywhere® function, which allows other health care facilities that are using the Epic system to directly access National Jewish Health patient records, improving communication and care continuity across Colorado and beyond. Most Colorado health care systems are on the Epic platform.
    - Enabled Epic HealthLink® as a way for referral physicians who are not using Epic to access patient records through our Epic Community Health Partner platform.
    - Connected National Jewish Health to the Colorado Regional Health Information Organization (CORHIO) as another provider access avenue for viewing patient records from within the state of Colorado.
    - Updated our Epic electronic health record to improve communication and collaboration on patient care with providers.
    - We will continue to investigate ways to update our information systems to facilitate more effective communication and interaction with patients and providers.

Measurement

- Document visits to low-income clinics.
- Monitor MyChart use and benefits to patients.

Additional National Jewish Health Services Provided to the Community

Free lung testing. National Jewish Health staff participates in free community outreach events in and around Colorado to provide free lung screenings to help detect lung disease that needs medical attention and to provide educational materials. We will investigate how to expand outreach efforts or develop new offerings.

Tobacco cessation. National Jewish Health currently operates the nation's largest tobacco-cessation QuitLine programs, currently offered in 23 states, including Colorado. Our "Health Initiatives" department manages these QuitLines and works to develop tobacco-cessation protocols for especially impacted populations with a wide array of educational materials. Targeted programs for groups such as American Indians and the LGBTQ+ community have been successful. In 2026 we launched a phone app to provide another access point to care.

Addressing the vaping epidemic. We have researched and developed MyLife MyQuit, a free QuitLine tailored specifically for teens who want to quit e-cigarettes and other vape devices. It is offered in 26 states including Colorado. Our ongoing research into the biological and behavioral aspects of e-cigarette use so far reported negative impacts of e-cigarette vapor on the immune system and that e-cigarette use among tobacco smokers does not promote reduction of tobacco use for most smokers.

Clinical and Translational Research Center. Funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Center provides an infrastructure for community-based research in collaboration with University of Colorado.

Lung Line. A free information service for health care consumers provided by National Jewish Health, Lung Line is staffed by registered nurses, who have years of clinical experience. They provide educational information on lung, allergic and immune diseases to those who call, email or contact National Jewish Health through our website or other websites. Since Lung Line began in 1983, the staff have provided millions of answers to questions by phone and email.

The Miners Clinic at National Jewish Health. This program provides free health screenings, education and multispecialty care to active and former miners and workers facing risks from occupational exposures. Through two specialized clinics, the program identifies health problems, connects miners with care and provides counseling on accessing available benefits. The Black Lung Clinic, established in 2002, serves coal, metal/non-metal and aggregate miners. The Radiation Exposure Screening and Education Clinic, launched in 2009, supports pre-1993 uranium industry workers with exposure-related illnesses under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA).