



Annual Community Benefit Report

Fiscal Year 2022



Executive Summary



There is a note that hangs on a wall in my office that says, “Thanks to Arkansas Children’s, families in Arkansas can gather around a table tonight and eat a wholesome meal.” I’ve posted it because it helps me stay centered on two things. First, when children have their basic needs met, they are healthier. Second, there is a critical role that partnerships play in advancing the health and safety of our state’s children.

When people think about Arkansas Children’s, they likely think about the nationally ranked pediatric care we provide, and the thousands upon thousands of children that we treat annually in order to make them better today and healthier tomorrow. Yet we know that there is more impacting the foundation of good health for children than what happens within the walls of our hospitals and clinics. We are committed to influencing the whole health of a child, including in communities where children live, learn, and play. We exercise this broader impact through our community benefit work, like that which is referenced in that note on my wall.

Arkansas Children’s has a long history of community benefit work, and we are pleased that fiscal year (FY) 2022 demonstrated our largest community investment to-date, with a combined total of \$104,747,763 between our two hospitals. This investment included ensuring children received health care, regardless of their family’s ability to pay; educating health professionals to increase access to high-quality care; researching new and innovative healthcare tools and techniques; working to address child health needs like access to immunizations, food security and mental health resources; reducing risks that contribute to infant mortality, and more; as well as cash and in-kind contributions to other non-profit community partners who help move our mission forward.

Additionally, during FY22, Arkansas Children’s Hospital and Arkansas Children’s Northwest both completed their 2022 Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) through a redesigned process, which allowed for primary and secondary data collection, analysis, and deep listening with community leaders, parents, teachers, and healthcare and public health providers, to gain the best understanding of the health needs facing children in the community we serve.

Thank you to the many partners who have worked beside us to make the children of Arkansas better today and healthier tomorrow.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marisha DiCarlo".

Marisha DiCarlo, PhD, MPH
Vice President of Community Engagement, Advocacy and Health





About Arkansas Children's

Children are at the center of everything we do.

Arkansas Children's is the only hospital system in the state solely dedicated to caring for children, which allows our organization to uniquely shape the landscape of pediatric care in Arkansas. We are driven by four core values: safety, teamwork, compassion, and excellence. These values inform every decision and every action, from the aggressive pursuit of zero hospital infections to treating each family with dignity, kindness, and concern. These core values fundamentally guide our work at Arkansas Children's.

For more than a century, we have continuously evolved to meet the unique needs of the children of Arkansas and beyond. Today, we are more than just a hospital treating sick kids – our system includes two hospitals, a pediatric research institute, a foundation, clinics, education and outreach, all with an unyielding commitment to making children better today and healthier tomorrow.

Mission

We champion children by making them better today and healthier tomorrow.

Vision

Our Promise:
Unprecedented child health.
Defined and delivered.



HOSPITALS • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION

What is Community Benefit?

Community benefit is any program or service that responds to a demonstrated health/related community need and seeks to achieve at least one of the following:

- Improve access to healthcare
- Enhance the health of the community
- Advance medical health or knowledge
- Relieve or reduce the burden of government or other community health efforts

Arkansas Children's has a legacy of supporting community benefit work to ensure that children, youth and their families can plug into healthy communities. In all we do, our focus is working to meet the needs of children and their families to restore children to health, avoid preventable injuries and promote good health practices. Our community benefit strategy involves a multi-faceted approach to use our time, talent, and resources to improve the lives of children and their families.

This report covers audited financial numbers for FY 2022 as reported on Schedule H of the IRS Form 990, addresses health needs identified during the 2019 Arkansas Children's Northwest (ACNW) CHNA, and addresses activities outlined in the ACNW 2020-2022 Implementation Strategy.

In FY22 – Arkansas Children's Northwest invested

\$16,302,978

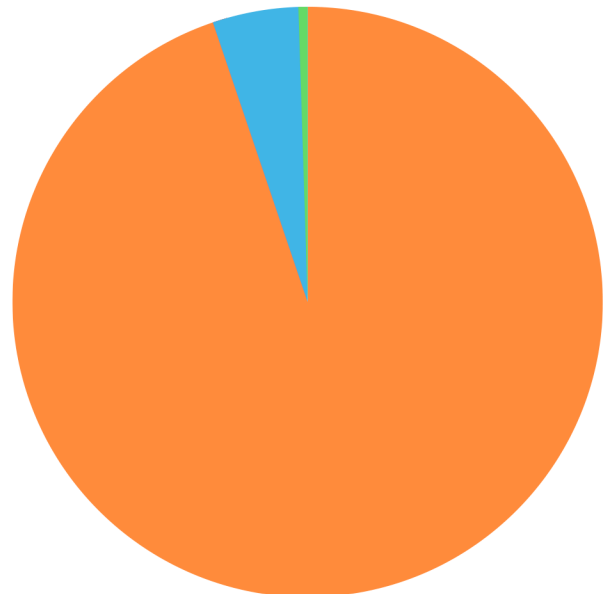
in Community Benefit work.



Uncompensated Care 94.8%

Community Health Improvement 4.7%

Cash & In-Kind Contributions 0.5%





Community Health Needs Assessment

To advance the mission of making children better today and healthier tomorrow, we must first assess what the children of Arkansas need. To accomplish this, Arkansas Children's conducts a CHNA, and then establishes an Implementation Strategy to address the identified needs, triennially. During FY22, Arkansas Children's Northwest conducted their most recent CHNA, which identified the below prioritized health needs for children in a 15-county area of Northwest Arkansas. These 15 counties are: Baxter, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Crawford, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Madison, Marion, Newton, Pope, Scott, Sebastian, and Washington.

Our CHNA process of primary and secondary data collection, analysis, and prioritization, allowed us to engage in robust community listening which informed the ranking of these needs. The four major assessment components included:

- Twenty-two focus groups with parents and caregivers of children, educators, community leaders, and medical providers.
- Forty-one key informant interviews with child health thought leaders and subject matter experts.
- A digital survey of 201 parents in Northwest Arkansas, statistically significant for the 15-county area.
- Comprehensive review of child-specific data from local, state, and national sources.

The identified child health needs were prioritized using a scoring process developed for this assessment. Each health need identified through research and stakeholder input was analyzed based on quantitative factors of scope, severity, community priorities, and health disparities.

In addition, qualitative factors included: how health issues connected to the Arkansas Children's Strategic Plan, ACNW's ability to impact the need, and the ability to measure success. A more detailed examination of the methodology used to complete this assessment, as well as both primary and secondary data that were reviewed to identify current children's health needs in Arkansas, can be found by accessing the 2022 ACNW CHNA located at archildren.org/chna.



Uncompensated Care

\$15,462,781

spent supporting qualifying families' health care needs.

At Arkansas Children's, we are committed to providing safe, high quality, affordable health care, and we recognize the financial burden that medical bills may cause. Providing financial assistance and uncompensated care ensures that families can meet their own basic needs while helping their children access necessary health care.

To support this effort, application forms for financial assistance are available at all registration areas, or can be found on MyChart, on the back of patient bills, or on our website. ACNW also has an established team of financial counselors whose goal is to provide all families with guidance and support to establish a healthcare payer source. Financial counselors meet with patient families who have high balances and deductibles, as well as screen all patients that identify as uninsured for Medicaid. Financial counseling is offered by both Spanish and Marshallese-speaking staff, in addition to English, to best serve the Northwest Arkansas community.

In FY22 – financial counselors at Arkansas Children's Northwest processed

1,325

applications for Medicaid, the Financial Assistance Program, TEFRA, and SNAP.





Community Health Improvement Programs

\$760,597

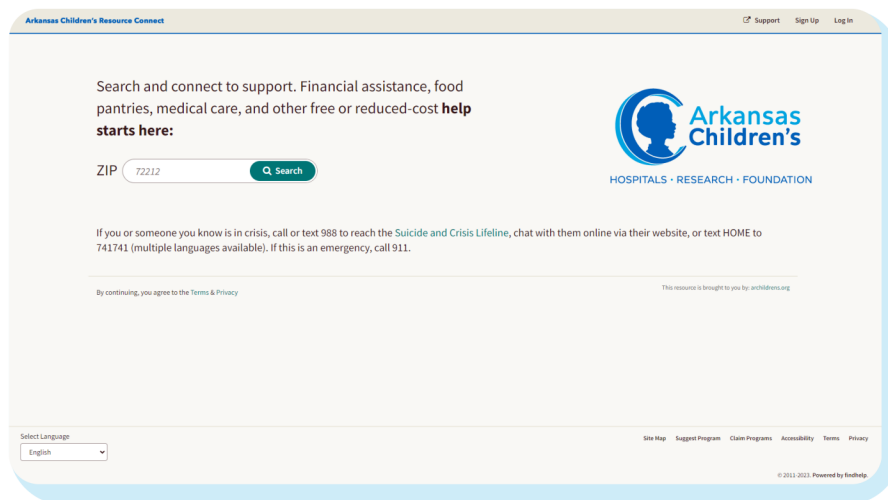
spent improving the health needs of children and their families.

Food Security and Child Obesity

The first component of the 2020-2022 ACNW Implementation Strategy is to address food security and child obesity. These are interconnected needs and progress is needed in both areas for either to improve.

Arkansas Children's follows best practice to improve the food security of children and their families. This process begins with a screening to determine any social conditions that impact health, often referred to as social determinants, and specifically looks for food security needs at the individual and family level. Patients are screened annually, if they are a new patient, and if they screened vulnerable at a recent visit.

Staff are able to make referrals through Arkansas Children's Resource Connect to connect families to the resources identified during screening, often to food banks or pantries. Families in need are also given immediate resources, such as a grocery box for food that day, and assisted in applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or other public benefit programs.



Food Security and Child Obesity

Our local food bank and pantry partners are vital to the success of our food security work, both through our sites of service and in community. Through these collaborations, we are able to provide the grocery boxes to patient families with immediate needs and are also able to support families where they live, learn and play through cash and in-kind contributions to support emergency food distribution in communities.

To further address these needs at a community level, Arkansas Children's health educators utilized the Cooking Matters curriculum, providing families and their children with specific skills to cook healthy, low-cost meals. ACH supported Cooking Matters programs including six-session Cooking Matters courses, Cooking Matters at the Store, and 'Pop-up Cooking Matters', an interactive curriculum for high school students to learn about nutrition, reading nutrition labels, and shopping on a budget.

Highlights



62

Pop-up Cooking Matters Classes



1,447

student participants



Access to Quality Care

Access to Quality Care has been a long-standing health need for the children of Arkansas, with barriers ranging from transportation to language. Northwest Arkansas has a diverse population with many children and families speaking Spanish or Marshallese as their primary language. To ensure all patients are served in a culturally sensitive manner, during FY22, ACNW employed 12 interpreters (seven full-time and five part-time) and continually works to evolve and customize interpreter services, both in person and virtually, in order to ensure coverage and better serve our communities.





Access to Quality Care

School Nurse Support

Nearly one-third of children arrive at school with complex and interrelated medical and social issues that impact learning, and school nurses are not consistently prepared to deal with these issues. In order to support these vital school nurses, Arkansas Children's offers a variety of educational opportunities and support through the School Nurse Academy, a school nurse resource webpage, and virtual broadcasts.

The School Nurse Academy is a partnership between Arkansas Children's, the Arkansas Department of Education, and the Arkansas Department of Health. Through the School Nurse Academy in FY22, school nurses were able to receive virtual asynchronous Asthma training, in a course called "Tackling Asthma", and were also able to receive in-person training on poverty, through a course called "What's Poverty Got to Do with It? Children and Families in Crisis." This in-person poverty training was held in different regions of the state and reached a total of 144 school nurses, representing 72 school districts.

To additionally support the incredible work that school nurses do, in August of 2021, Arkansas Children's added a School Nurse Educational Resources webpage to their website. This webpage makes available a variety of health resources to keep school nurses informed, successful, and confident in their work to care for students. One resource available on the webpage is a virtual broadcast. In FY22, five broadcasts reached 168 participants in 47 counties and covered the following topics: Stop the Bleed, Childhood Cancer, Talking to Students about Death, and Asthma.

Highlights



144

nurses attended
poverty training



168

virtual
broadcast
participants



Child Injury and Parenting Supports

The third component of the 2020-2022 ACNW Implementation Strategy is Child Injury and Parenting Supports. Although Arkansas has made improvements in child injury, the state still ranks negatively compared to national averages in many child injury categories. During the 2022 Fiscal Year, Arkansas Children's continued programming around the issues of motor vehicle safety, safe sleep and infant mortality, and burn/fire prevention.

Motor Vehicle Safety

Motor vehicle safety efforts consist of child passenger and teen driving safety programming. In order to better reach children where they are, Arkansas Children's often take these programs on the road. Eight child passenger safety certification courses were held in FY22, which trained 103 professionals around the state to properly install car seats. Families also have access to child passenger safety education at 26 satellite sites across Arkansas, and teen drivers are driving safer due to the education they received in their schools and communities.



Infant Mortality

Infant mortality and safe sleep programming are commingled, as unsafe sleep practices account for nearly half of Arkansas' infant deaths. Arkansas Children's lead the Safety Baby Shower program across the state to address this. Classes are taught by Arkansas Children's team members, as well as offered in a train-the-trainer model to equip community members in leading their own classes. During FY22, 48 Safety Baby Shower classes were held, reaching a total of 190 participants across 49 Arkansas counties. Additionally, 116 community members were trained as well.



Babysitting 101

Arkansas Children's continues to offer Babysitting 101 classes. Utilizing the Safe Sitter curriculum during this course, students receive training in safety skills, child care skills, first aid and rescue skills, and life and business skills. During FY22, two classes were offered at ACNW, one virtual and one in-person, which yielded a total of 14 certified babysitters in the Northwest Arkansas region.





Immunizations


Arkansas Children’s is focused on increasing the number of children that receive all needed childhood vaccines, in order to protect their health, as well as the health of their broader community. This work will be ongoing as a statewide immunization strategy is a key component of the 2020-2025 Arkansas Children’s Strategic Plan and immunizations were identified as a Primary Priority Health Need during the most recent CHNA.


"Let's Talk About It" Campaign

This campaign was designed to encourage parents with children eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, as well as those not eligible yet, to engage in dialogue with Arkansas Children's and its providers, empowering individuals to make informed decisions regarding COVID-19 vaccination.

In the initial three-month flight of the campaign, more than 180 million impressions were generated across traditional and digital channels, serving the primary goal of generating awareness. The community engaged with the digital content at a remarkable level, generating a 300% increase in calls to Arkansas Children’s and a 44% increase in social media reach on Facebook and Instagram.

Highlights

180 million impressions 

300% increase in call volume 

Natural Wonders Partnership Council

The Natural Wonders Partnership Council is a diverse coalition of child health organizations who work together to improve child health and is driven by the Arkansas Children's CHNA. The council consists of five workgroups, with one focused on childhood immunization efforts. This Childhood Immunization workgroup has set out to better understand which school-based health centers in the state need assistance in signing up for the federal Vaccine for Children (VFC) program or need resources to immunize more children. The goal of the workgroup is for 90% of all school-based health centers to offer all ACIP recommended vaccines. To-date, five school-based health centers have received resources to increase the capacity for vaccinating children.

Reproductive Health

The fifth component of the ACNW 2020-2022 Implementation Strategy was focused on reproductive health education. Arkansas experiences the highest teen birth rates in the United States, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2023 Kids Count Data Book reported the rate as 27 teen births per 1,000 births.

For the third school year, Arkansas Children's partnered with schools across the state to implement the Love Notes curriculum, an evidence-based comprehensive healthy relationships program, designed to reduce teen pregnancy. The program has experienced a great increase in partners, from two schools in FY20 to 23 schools and 730 students in FY22.

To evaluate the impact of the program, each participating student is asked to complete a pretest and a posttest survey, which includes a variety of Likert scale questions designed to gauge student's opinions and behavior change related to healthy relationships. Evaluation of FY22 posttest results showed great results, with a 57% increase in students who understand sexual consent is impossible when under the influence of drugs or alcohol, a 31% increase in students who report having a plan for sexual activity, either to be abstinent or to pace sexual involvement, and a 27% increase in students who report having the ability to recognize warning signs of an unhealthy relationship and knowing how to respond.

Highlights



Yearly Growth

FY20: 2 partnered schools
FY21: 4 partnered schools

FY22: 23 partnered schools

Posttest Results

72%

of students reported having a plan for their own sexual activity, either to be abstinent or to pace involvement (a 31% increase from pretest.)

67%

of students reported having the ability to recognize warning signs of an unhealthy relationship and knowing how to respond (a 27% increase from pretest.)



relationships

today are like

a balancing act,

it takes an equal amount of love and

COMPROMISE

Drawing from a Love Notes participant



Oral Health

Oral health is another long-standing, interconnected need of Arkansas children. Although great progress has been made in this area, access challenges and a lack of pediatric dental providers persist. Arkansas Children's has responded to this need through the efforts of the Arkansas Children's Dental Outreach Program, which includes the school-based Dental Sealant Program and mobile dental clinics, designed to reach children in all corners of the state through five regional hubs.



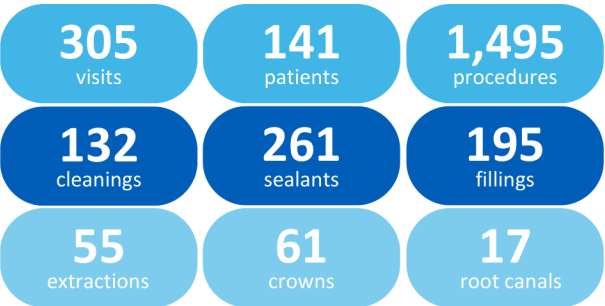
Spotlight:

"He was seven, weighed only 28 pounds, and couldn't eat a normal diet because his teeth were in such bad shape. We worked on and repaired 21 of his 24 teeth, and we saved three permanent molars that would have been extracted anywhere else. We saw him four months later at a follow up appointment, and he had actually gained almost 10 pounds because he could finally eat quality food. He left our truck a happier and more confident little boy. That is why I love what we do here. We not only impact a child's oral health, we increase their confidence and improve their overall health."

- A mobile dental team member

Mobile Dental Clinics

Through the work of the mobile dental clinics, 141 patients were served across 305 visits in the ACNW region. The clinics provided a total of 1,495 procedures, including a variety of preventative work, as well as restorative work, ensuring that children were able to receive care where they live, learn and play.



Dental Sealant Program

During FY22, the Arkansas Children's Dental Sealant Program continued to be unable to place sealants due to COVID restrictions. Instead, the program offered oral health screenings and fluoride applications. Specifically, in the ACNW service area (Benton, Washington, and Carroll counties), 2,698 children were screened and given fluoride applications, and 33% of these children were identified as having obvious decay. Notes were sent home with these students to inform their parents that they need to seek dental care. The program received positive feedback from school nurses, who said this process helped affirm the importance of dental care to parents, as well as motivating parents to get the needed dental care for their children.



Social Issues

Environmental and socioeconomic needs identified in the 2019 CHNA such as poverty, housing, lack of transportation, education, and discrimination were bundled in a Social Issues focus area for the 2020-2022 Implementation Strategy.

Arkansas Children's Resource Connect

Part of the statewide work to address the social issues of families comes from utilizing the closed-loop referral system, Arkansas Children's Resource Connect, powered by findhelp. This program was launched in April 2021 for use by patients, families, and staff across the system. During FY22, 11,658 searches occurred, most commonly for food pantries, help to pay for utilities, and help to pay for housing. Also, a total of 349 referrals took place, with 91 closed loop referrals, which are those where it is confirmed that the individual or family received help. This digital system is greatly helping Arkansas Children's team members refer families to resources for meeting basic needs and help with other social resources.

Highlights

11,658

resources
searched

349

referrals placed

Highlights

147

legal cases closed

\$137,878

financial benefits
recovered or unwarranted
costs avoided

Medical Legal Partnership

The Arkansas Children's Medical Legal Partnership is one of the referrals possible within Arkansas Children's Resource Connect. These Legal Aid attorneys help eligible families with health-harming legal needs. From July 2021 through June 2022, the attorneys closed 147 cases, ranging from brief legal advice and/or services to extended representation. The most frequent types of cases were to support family stability including child custody, divorce, addressing domestic violence, housing and renting conditions, or adult guardianship issues for those needing additional guardianship support past their 18th birthday.



Cash and In-Kind Contributions

\$79,600

spent improving the health needs of children and their families.

At Arkansas Children's we understand that we cannot do the work of improving child health alone, therefore, cash and in-kind contributions are made to support other non-profits who share our mission and vision.

Contributions to Support Food Security

A variety of nonprofit food banks and food pantries around the state received a total of \$120,000 to help strengthen the food security of families and their children. Organizations supported include food banks serving large regions of the state, like the Arkansas Food Bank, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank, Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas, River Valley Regional Food Bank, and Food Bank of North Central Arkansas, as well as smaller organizations like Compassion NWA, El Zocalo Immigrant Resource Center, Neighbor-to-Neighbor of Jefferson County, and Helping Hand of Greater Little Rock.

Another financial contribution was made to Apple Seeds Inc., a Northwest Arkansas non-profit whose mission is to create programs that educate and excite young students about healthy food while increasing their access to those healthy foods. This financial contribution was given to support the evaluation and growth of the evidence base for their Growing My Plate program, which taught 35 new sites about gardening and nutrition in the classroom in FY22.

Additional Contribution Highlights

Arkansas Children's Northwest also financially supports other organizations that seek to address the needs of children and families, including the Northwest Arkansas Council - Health Care Transformation Division, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, Cast for Kids, Children's Safety Center, Down Syndrome Connection of NWA, IYES Foundation, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Miracle League, and United Cerebral Palsy NWA.

