



**Conway Medical Center
Community Needs Assessment
Horry County
December 2025**



Our Mission

Conway Medical Center will improve the overall health of our communities by being a leader in health care.

About Conway Medical Center

Conway Medical Center is a trusted leader in healthcare and has served the medical needs of Horry County and the surrounding communities for nearly a century. The roots of this nonprofit medical center run deep in Horry County. In the 1920s, a group of local physicians recognized the need for a hospital in the area, and an application for a charter for Conway Hospital was filed with the South Carolina Secretary of State on November 7, 1928. At the time, the hospital operated on Elm Street in the old Burroughs Hospital.

They soon outgrew that location. As demand grew, that location quickly became insufficient. Work began on constructing and furnishing a new building on 9th Avenue with accommodations for 31 patients in single rooms and multi-bed wards on three floors. An open house for the facility was held on May 30, 1930.

Then in 1982, Conway Hospital moved to its current location on Singleton Ridge Road. However, the growth did not stop. In 2001, the hospital expanded the Emergency Department, Obstetrical Department, and added a three-story medical office building. A new Patient Bed Tower opened in 2009, adding 71,000 square feet and 64 patient rooms including critical and surgical care.

Conway Medical Center has significantly expanded its footprint and clinical offerings in the past few years, particularly by adding new specialties and establishing integrated offsite facilities to improve community access to care. New service lines and locations include the addition of specific medical specialties such as Oncology, Rheumatology, dermatology, infectious diseases, orthopedics, and pain management, along with the introduction of advanced technologies like robotic surgery.

A key component of CMC's recent growth has been the development of integrated medical plazas, most notably at its Health Plaza South campus in Socastee and a planned facility at Highway 90 and 22, which combine 24/7 emergency departments, ambulatory surgery centers, and comprehensive imaging services in a unified "one-stop-shop" model. These expansions, supported by a strategic partnership with Novant Health, aim to meet the growing healthcare needs of Horry County and the surrounding region.

Today, Conway Medical Center has 222 inpatient beds and is one of the county's largest employers with more than 2,500 team members. We are excited about the growth that continues at Conway Medical Center as we work to improve the overall health of our communities by being a leader in healthcare.

Process and Methodology

Understanding the community’s health needs is important to the Conway Medical Center (CMC) mission. The process has two major elements illustrated below: 1) What do we know? This involved reviewing the secondary information available from a wide variety of sources to understand health needs and behaviors. This included reviewing local, state, and national healthcare and demographic variables. 2) What are we hearing? CMC wanted to gain understanding from the residents we serve. This was a critically important element in this process. We listened as residents shared their thoughts through surveys. Input was sought from public health leaders, physicians, business leaders, religious leaders, former patients, community advocacy groups, and community members.



Community Collaboration

Health Horry is supported by the Duke Endowment’s Healthy People Healthy Carolina’s (HPHC) Initiative. The purpose of HPHC is to help communities in North Carolina and South Carolina address chronic health issues such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Healthy Horry is proudly sponsored by Conway Medical Center and has collaborated with Horry County Community Collaborative (HC3) to find solutions that will have a lasting impact on the health of all Horry County citizens.

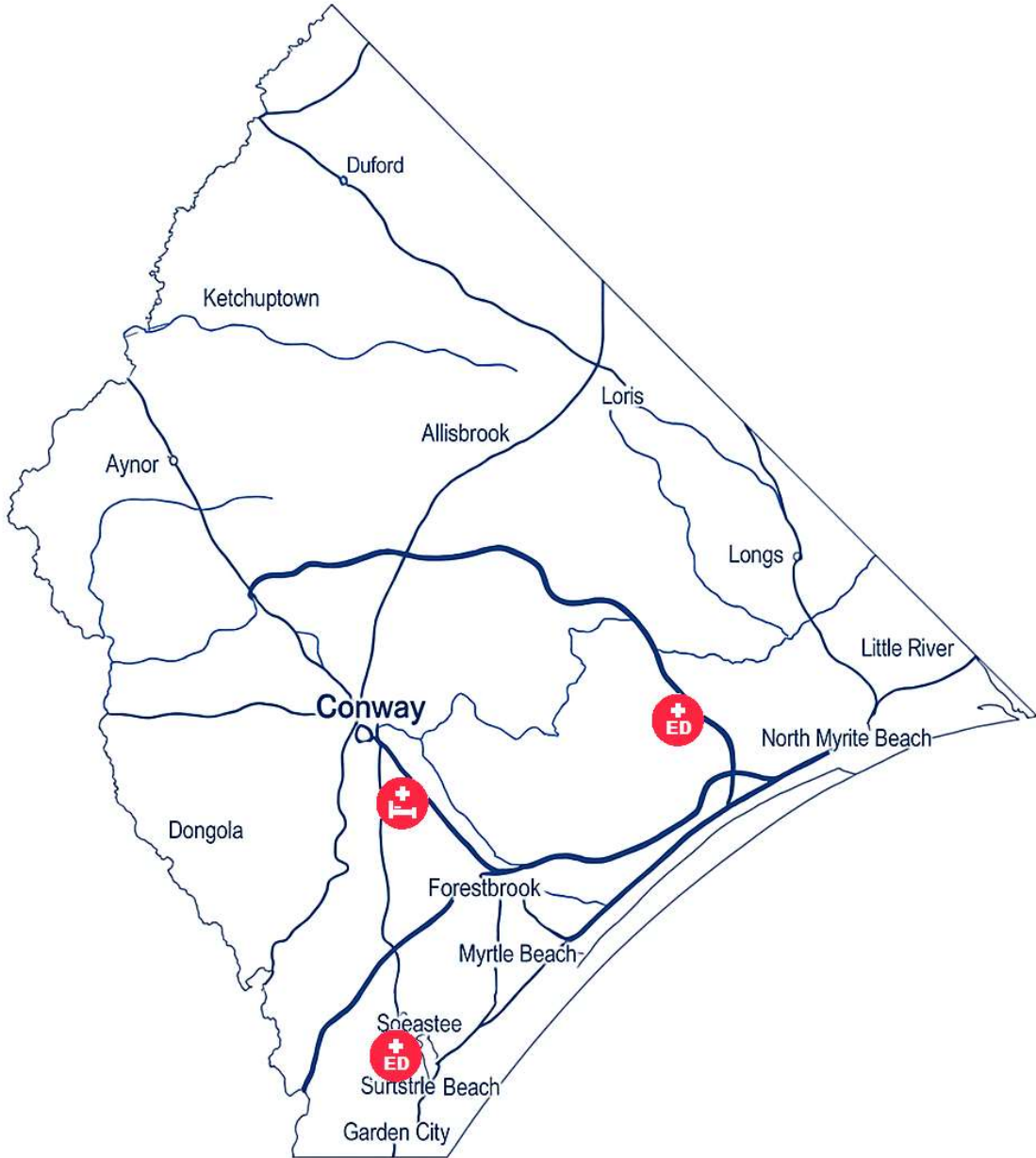
HPHC recognizes that health and well-being are created and sustained not just through individual and clinical efforts, but through the cooperation and support of the extended local community. Therefore, the cornerstone of HPHC is to create a coalition where workgroups pick specific areas of focus (healthy weight, diabetes, heart disease, etc.) and work to improve physical health and nutrition.

Since Horry County already had an established community coalition, HC3, CMC knew partnering with HC3 matched the HPHC formation.

HC3 has involved leaders from a wide spectrum of community organizations in Horry County. The vision of HC3 is a future where all Horry County residents have a better quality of life. HC3 meets monthly to strengthen the collaboration, share resources, and make a lasting impact in Horry County.

Community Served

The definition for this assessment is Horry County in South Carolina. For the purpose of this assessment, we have used Horry County as the primary service area surrounding Conway Medical Center, and thus carries their closest proximate patient population.





Secondary Data – Census & Demographics

A clear understanding of the demographics of Horry County residents is essential for addressing community health needs effectively. Building upon the foundation established in the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), Conway Medical Center (CMC) continues to monitor demographic trends to ensure strategies remain relevant and impactful.

Population Growth and Aging

Horry County’s population is projected to reach 428,408 in 2025, reflecting a growth rate of 3.6% annually. The county is experiencing its largest growth among adults aged 65 and older, who now represent over 24% of the population, with an increase of nearly 20% since 2020. This trend underscores the need for expanded geriatric care, chronic disease management, and preventive health services.

Income and Poverty

The median household income in Horry County is \$64,623, slightly below the South Carolina state median of \$66,818. Despite income growth, 12.8% of residents live below the poverty line, and 21% of children experience poverty—higher than the national average. These economic disparities create barriers to healthcare access and affordability.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Horry County remains predominantly White (77.8%), with 11.8% Black or African American, 6.4% multiracial, and 5.9% Hispanic/Latino populations. Diversity is expected to increase modestly by 2030, driven by growth in Hispanic and multiracial populations. This shift highlights the importance of culturally competent care and multilingual health education resources.

Health Disparities

Socioeconomic and racial disparities persist in chronic disease prevalence and access to care. Black and Hispanic residents are disproportionately affected by conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, and often face greater financial and transportation barriers to healthcare.

Community Level Demographic

Aging coastal enclaves vs. younger interior nodes

Garden City, Little River, and North Myrtle Beach skew older (median age 60+), indicating higher demand for chronic disease management, senior care, and mobility/transit solutions; Conway and Carolina Forest skew younger, suggesting emphasis on maternal/child health, primary care access, and health literacy.

Economic stress is concentrated

Atlantic Beach and Loris show elevated poverty, while Aynor and North Myrtle Beach are comparatively better off implications for financial barriers/insurance outreach and navigation services.

Diversity patterns vary by locale

Conway shows a substantial Black population share; Carolina Forest and Socastee reflect growing multiracial diversity; coastal CDPs are predominantly White. Tailor culturally competent outreach and multilingual materials accordingly.

Commute times & access

Longer commutes in Aynor and Loris may indicate transportation barriers; Myrtle Beach shows shorter commutes, but still has notable poverty—different access strategies by locale will be needed.

Countywide trajectory

State/county projections and coastal demographic research indicate continued aging and gradual increases in racial/ethnic diversity, led by Hispanic and multiracial growth, particularly in coastal counties. While sub-county forecasts are limited, planning should anticipate modest diversification across Horry's communities by 2030.



Horry County, South Carolina

Median Age	49.3
65+	27%
% Female	52%
Median Household Income	\$68,988
Poverty	13%
Persons per Household	2.3
Marital Status	54% Married
High School Graduate or Higher	90.8%
Foreign Born Population	6.2%
Veteran Status	8.5%

Horry County, South Carolina County Ranking*

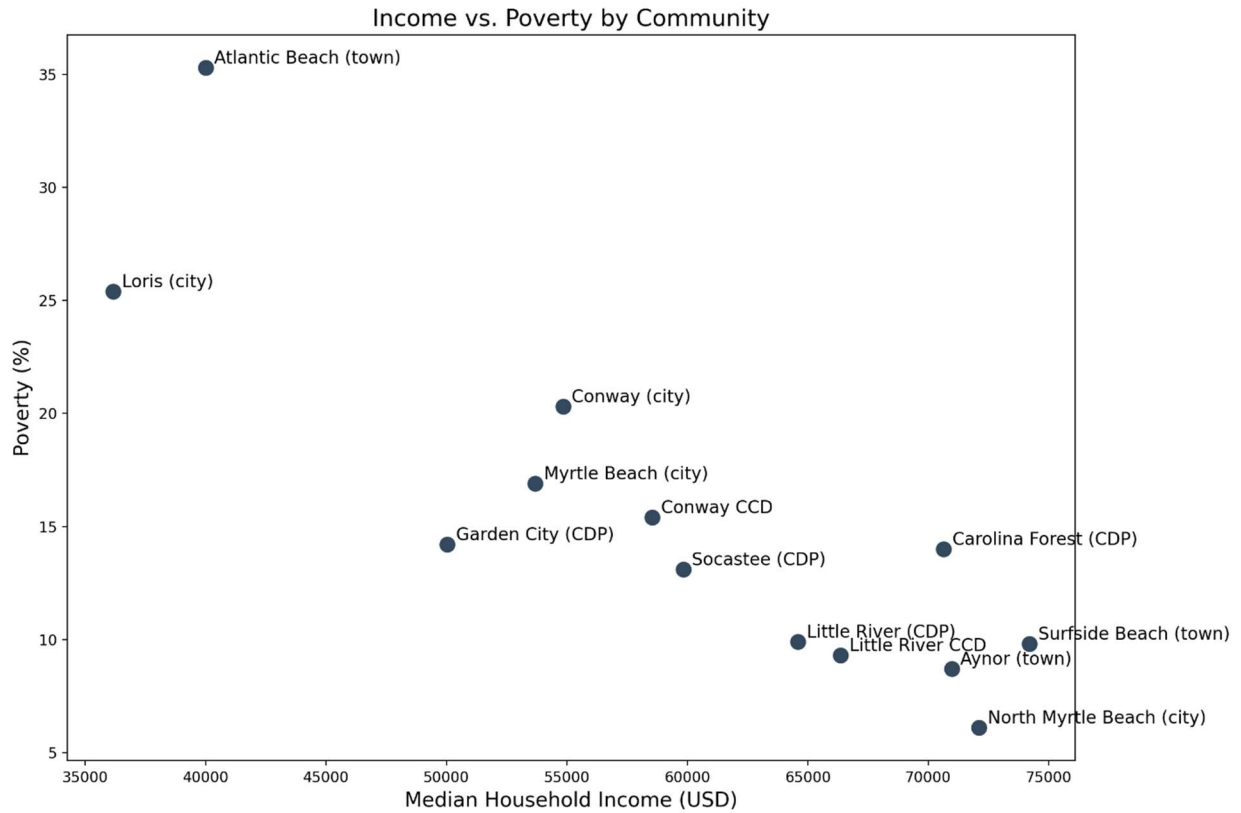
Diabetes	3 rd	
Adults Categorized as Obese	11 th	
Teen Live Births	13 th	
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	21 st	
Cerebrovascular Disease	22 nd	
Cancer	23 rd	
Alzheimer’s Disease	23 rd	
Heart Attack	34 th	
Delayed Seeing a Doctor Due to Cost	41 st	
Accidental Drug Overdose	46 th	

**South Carolina has 46 Counties*



2025 Community Health Needs Assessment

Community	Type	Population	Median Age	Median Household Income	Poverty Rate	Daily Commute	% White	% Black
Conway (city)	City	26,082	34.3	54,841	20.3	22.4	61%	29%
Myrtle Beach (city)	City	37,214	47	53,679	16.9	18.5	68%	14%
North Myrtle Beach (city)	City	19,343	60.8	72,111	6.1	22.5	88%	2%
Surfside Beach (town)	Town	4,217	55.4	74,202	9.8	20.2	92%	2%
Aynor (town)	Town	1,077	38.3	70,972	8.7	37.6	85%	12%
Loris (city)	City	2,570	49.8	36,158	25.4	34	56%	36%
Atlantic Beach (town)	Town	283	42.2	40,000	35.3	20.6	18%	65%
Carolina Forest (CDP)	CDP	26,373	37.6	70,647	14	22	75%	9%
Socastee (CDP)	CDP	24,629	43.3	59,826	13.1	20.8	69%	6%
Little River (CDP)	CDP	10,457	61.8	64,590	9.9	27	89%	4%
Garden City (CDP)	CDP	10,820	61.2	50,027	14.2	22.1	95%	1%
Conway CCD	CCD	51,181	43.7	58,545	15.4	27.4	67%	21%
Little River CCD	CCD	44,248	59.8	66,360	9.3	23.2	81%	9%



Secondary Data – Healthy People 2030

To effectively communicate the community’s needs and align them with government priorities, the Healthy People 2030 framework was chosen to guide both secondary data collection and community engagement. This nationally recognized and government-endorsed framework provides a structured approach for identifying and addressing public health challenges.

Healthy People 2030 includes 355 core measurable objectives, which were organized by topic to support focused analysis and discussion throughout the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) process. Five key social determinates of health—Economic Stability, Education Access & Quality, Health Care Access & Quality, Neighborhood & Built Environment, and Social & Community Context—served as the foundation for research and dialogue, helping to ensure that identified needs are both evidence-based and aligned with broader public health goals.

Health People 2023



Health Conditions

Health Conditions are the prevalent chronic and acute conditions that affect the health of the citizens of the United States. Improvement and achievement of the Healthy People 2030 goals for these conditions will result in the better health of people living with cancer, chronic and mental conditions, infectious diseases, as well as improvement of sexual and reproductive health. The following table displays the Healthy People 2030 measurable objectives that fall under the health conditions topic.

Healthy People 2030 Objectives

➤ Addiction ^[2]	➤ Heart Disease
➤ Arthritis	➤ Infectious Disease
➤ Blood Disorders	➤ Mental Health and Mental Disorders ^[2]
➤ Cancer	➤ Oral Conditions
➤ Chronic Kidney Disease	➤ Osteoporosis
➤ Chronic Pain	➤ Overweight and Obesity ^{[1][2]}
➤ Dementias	➤ Pregnancy and Childbirth
➤ Diabetes ^{[1][2]}	➤ Respiratory Disease
➤ Foodborne Illness	➤ Sensory or Communication Disorders
➤ Health Care – Associated Infections	➤ Sexually Transmitted Infections

[1] Areas pertaining to the feedback from listening sessions held to inform the Horry County Community Collaborative’s action plan; [2] Areas identified in 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment.

Metric	South Carolina	Horry County
Adult with High Cholesterol	37.7%	41.6%
Adult with High Blood Pressure	38.5%	40.3%
Coronary Heart Disease per 100,000 population	83.7	89.1
Adults with Multiple Chronic Conditions	36.2%	40.9%
Adults with Diabetes	13.3%	15.4%
Adults with Depression	20.0%	21.7%

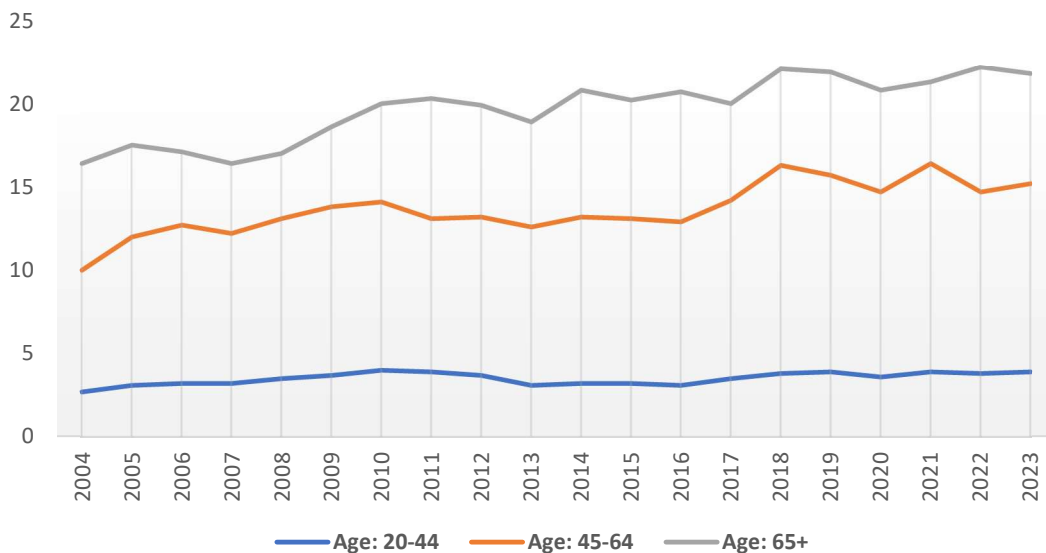
Addiction

Healthy People 2030 emphasizes preventing substance use disorders and ensuring access to treatment for those affected. Strategies include promoting non-opioid pain management and implementing interventions to support individuals with these disorders. In South Carolina, drug overdose deaths rose from 1,131 in 2019 to 2,296 in 2022, with opioids and fentanyl driving much of the increase. Horry County alone reported 272 overdose deaths in 2022, including 188 involving fentanyl. The county’s population is approximately 397,000, with a median age of 49.3 and a poverty rate of 13%, factors that can influence health outcomes. Statewide, an estimated 162,000 residents misused opioids in the past year, highlighting the urgent need for prevention and treatment efforts.

Diabetes

Healthy People 2030 aims to reduce the burden of diabetes by lowering cases, complications, and deaths. As of 2023, an estimated 38.4 million people in the United States—about 11.6% of the population—have diabetes, and prevalence among adults has risen to 15.8% in recent years. In South Carolina, approximately 558,570 adults (13.5%) have diagnosed diabetes, and another 123,000 are likely undiagnosed. Horry County mirrors this trend, with diabetes prevalence among adults ranging between 12% and 14% from 2019 to 2022. While some local reports suggest slight improvements in diabetes management, overall prevalence remains high, underscoring the need for prevention strategies and better access to care.

Diagnosed Diabetes; Age; Adults Aged 20+ Years; Percentage; Horry County (FIPS:45051); South Carolina



Overweight and Obesity

Healthy People 2030 emphasizes promoting healthy eating and physical activity to help individuals achieve and maintain a healthy weight. In Horry County, the adult obesity rate was 34.7% in 2022, reflecting an upward trend over recent years. Statewide, South Carolina reported an adult obesity rate of 36.0% in 2023, placing it among the states with the highest prevalence of obesity. These figures highlight the need for targeted interventions in Horry County to address obesity-related health risks and align with Healthy People 2030 objectives, which aim to reduce obesity and improve nutrition and physical activity across all populations.

Mental Health and Mental Disorders

Healthy People 2030 emphasizes improving mental health through prevention, screening, assessment, and treatment of mental disorders and behavioral conditions. About half of all people in the United States will experience a mental health disorder during their lifetime. In Horry County, residents report an average of 4.8 mentally unhealthy days per month, which is slightly higher than the South Carolina state average of 4.7 days. This increase reflects ongoing challenges in mental health and access to care. Additionally, Horry County faces a shortage of mental health providers, with approximately 585 residents per provider, compared to better ratios in other parts of the state. These trends underscore the importance of local strategies aligned with Healthy People 2030 objectives to expand mental health resources and reduce the burden of mental illness.

Health Behaviors

Health Behaviors are the behaviors that influence the health of individuals related to family and personal health, healthcare prevention, substance abuse, violence, as well as other health behaviors such as emergency preparedness and safe food handling. The following table displays the Healthy People 2030 measurable objectives that fall under the health conditions topic.

Healthy People 2030 Objectives

- Child and Adolescent Development
- Drug and Alcohol Use
- Emergency Preparedness
- Family Planning
- Healthy Communication^{[1][2]}
- Injury Prevention
- Nutrition and Healthy Eating^{[1][2]}
- Physical Activity^{[1][2]}
- Preventative Care^{[1][2]}
- Safe Food Handling
- Sleep
- Tobacco Use^[2]
- Vaccination
- Violence Prevention

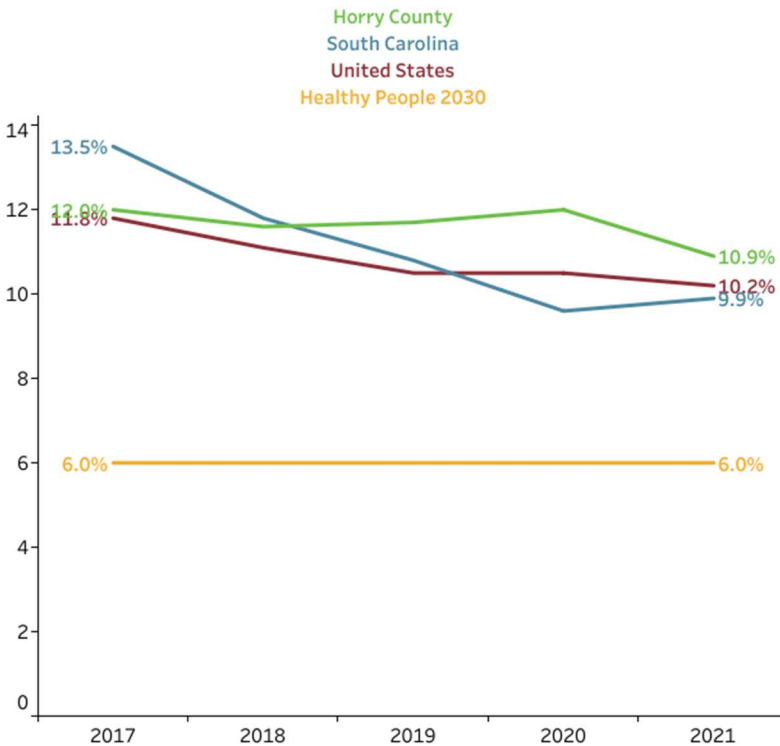
[1] Areas pertaining to the feedback from listening sessions held to inform the Horry County Community Collaborative’s action plan; [2] Areas identified in 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment.

Metric	South Carolina	Horry County
Flu Vaccine (65+)	64.4%	65.8%
Pneumonia Vaccine (65+)	72.4%	75.6%
Current Smokers	16.8%	19.4%
Binge Drinking	15.3%	14.3%
Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 population	28.8	54.4
Cervical Cancer Screening (21-65)	80.6%	78.7%
Female Breast Cancer Screenings (50-74)	77.5%	76.7%
Prostate Cancer Screening (40+)	41.7%	46.2%
Injury Deaths per 100,000 population	117.9	142.6
Suicide Deaths per 100,000 population	15.8	16.8
Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 population	28.8	54.4
Firearm Related Deaths per 100,000 population	19.9	18.6

Nutrition and Health Eating

Healthy People 2030 emphasizes improving nutrition and reducing food insecurity by helping people access healthy foods to lower their risk of chronic disease. In South Carolina, 14.1% of the population was food insecure in 2023, an increase from previous years. Horry County’s overall food insecurity rate was approximately 11% in 2023, which is lower than the state average but still represents thousands of residents lacking consistent access to nutritious food. Among children in Horry County, food insecurity is even more pronounced, with 17.6% of children affected. These figures highlight the need for targeted interventions to improve food access and align with Healthy People 2030 objectives, which aim to reduce household food insecurity and promote healthy eating habits.

Food Insecurity Rate in Horry County by Year
Percent

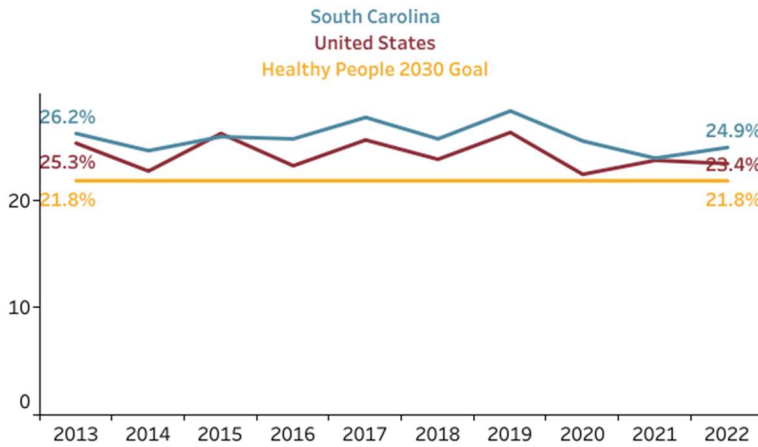


As of 2021, 10.9% of Horry County had was classified as having food insecurity; defined as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Horry County is 1% higher than the Overall South Carolina rate and .7% higher than the National Average. Health People 2030 is targeting 6%.

Physical Activity

Healthy People 2030 prioritizes increasing physical activity to improve overall health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. One key objective is to decrease the percentage of adults who report no leisure-time physical activity, as inactivity is linked to obesity, cardiovascular disease, and other health concerns. In Horry County, approximately 27% of adults reported no leisure-time physical activity in 2023, which is slightly higher than the South Carolina state average of 26%. These figures highlight the need for community-based programs and resources that encourage active lifestyles and align with Healthy People 2030 goals to promote regular physical activity among all populations.

No Leisure Physical Activity in last 30 days by State, National, and/or Healthy People 2030 Objective
Percent



As of 2022, 24.9% of South Carolina Residents reported having no leisure-time physical activity. This is 3.1% higher than the Health People 2030 target of 21.8%. South Carolina average is 1.5% higher than the National average of 23.4%.

Adult Smoking

Healthy People 2030 aims to reduce illness and death related to tobacco use by preventing initiation and supporting cessation efforts. Tobacco use remains a leading cause of respiratory diseases, cancers, and cardiovascular conditions. In South Carolina, the percentage of adults who smoke declined to 12.1% in 2023, continuing a downward trend statewide. However, Horry County reported a current adult smoking rate of approximately 19% in 2023, which is significantly higher than the state average and reflects an increase compared to previous years. These figures underscore the need for targeted tobacco control programs and cessation resources in Horry County to align with Healthy People 2030 objectives, which seek to reduce adult cigarette smoking to 6.1% nationally by 2030.

Setting and Systems

Setting and Systems provide insights into the infrastructure that influences the health outcomes and behaviors of populations. The availability of healthcare resources outside of the traditional healthcare settings play a vital role in the overall health of individuals. The following table displays the Healthy People 2030 measurable objectives that fall under the health conditions topic.

Healthy People 2030 Objectives

- Community
- Environmental Health
- Global Health
- Health Care^{[1][2]}
- Health Insurance^[2]
- Health IT
- Health Policy
- Hospital and Emergency Services^[2]
- Housing and Homes^[2]
- Public Health Infrastructure
- Schools
- Transportation^[1]
- Workplace

[1] Areas pertaining to the feedback from listening sessions held to inform the Horry County Community Collaborative’s action plan; [2] Areas identified in 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment.

Metric	South Carolina	Horry County
Adequate Prenatal Care	77.2%	75.7%
Health Insurance (Insured Adults; 18-64)	85.1%	79.9%
No Leisure Physical Activity in last 30 Days	25.5%	27.1%
Food Insecurity	9.9%	10.9%
Delayed Medical Care	13.6%	14.8%
Potential Avoidable Hospitalization (per 100,000 population)	4,071	5,130
Potential Avoidable Emergency Room Visit (per 100,000 population)	3,132	4,062
Transportation – No Vehicle Available	5.7%	4.3%

Community

Healthy People 2030 aims to reduce illness and death related to tobacco use by preventing initiation and supporting cessation efforts. Tobacco use remains a leading cause of respiratory diseases, cancers, and cardiovascular conditions. In South Carolina, the percentage of adults who smoke declined to 12.1% in 2023, continuing a downward trend statewide. However, Horry County reported a current adult smoking rate of approximately 19% in 2023, which is significantly higher than the state average and reflects an increase compared to previous years. These figures underscore the need for targeted tobacco control programs and cessation resources in Horry County to align with Healthy People 2030 objectives, which seek to reduce adult cigarette smoking to 6.1% nationally by 2030.

Health Care

Healthy People 2030 aims to improve health care quality and ensure that all individuals have access to the services they need. Access to primary care is a critical component of this goal. In Horry County, the ratio of population to primary care physicians improved from 2,190:1 in 2019 to approximately 1,870:1 in 2023, indicating better availability of providers. Statewide, South Carolina's ratio remained relatively stable, averaging around 2,030:1 during the same period. While progress has been made locally, Horry County still faces challenges in meeting Healthy People 2030 objectives, which emphasize equitable access to timely, high-quality health care services.

Health Insurance

Healthy People 2030 emphasizes improving health by increasing medical, dental, and prescription drug insurance coverage to ensure people receive the care they need. In the United States, about 27.1 million people were uninsured in 2024, and individuals without coverage are less likely to access preventive services and medications. In South Carolina, the uninsured rate for all ages was 9.1% in 2023, remaining higher than the national average of 7.9%. Horry County reported an uninsured rate of approximately 12% in 2023, which is significantly higher than the state average and reflects an increase compared to previous years. These figures highlight the need for targeted strategies in Horry County to expand insurance coverage and align with Healthy People 2030 objectives, which aim to reduce the number of uninsured individuals nationwide.



Social Determinates of Health

Social Determinants of Health describe the socioeconomic factors that play a role in the

level of health people can achieve. This section looks at aspects outside of healthcare such as economic stability, education, and violence in the community. The following table displays the Healthy People 2030 measurable objectives that fall under the health conditions topic.

Healthy People 2030 Objectives

- Economic Stability
- Education Access & Quality^[2]
- Health Care Access and Quality
- Neighborhood & Built Environment^{[1][2]}
- Social & Community Context^[1]

[1] Areas pertaining to the feedback from listening sessions held to inform the Horry County Community Collaborative’s action plan; [2] Areas identified in 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment.

Metric	South Carolina	Horry County
Living Below Poverty Level	14.4%	13.1%
Internet Access and Availability (without)	14.8%	10.0%
Speak Language other than English	7.6%	7.9%

Education Access and Quality

Healthy People 2030 emphasizes providing high-quality educational opportunities for children and adolescents, recognizing that higher levels of education are linked to better health and longer life expectancy. In Horry County, 91.5% of adults age 25 and older have completed high school, which is slightly higher than the South Carolina state average of 89.6% as of 2023. This reflects a modest improvement from previous years and underscores the importance of continued efforts to enhance educational attainment as part of broader health equity initiatives.

Neighborhood and Built Environment

Healthy People 2030 emphasizes improving health and safety in the places where people live, work, learn, and play. Violent crime is a key indicator of community safety. In South Carolina, the violent crime rate was 437 offenses per 100,000 people in 2024, which remains higher than the national average of 359 offenses per 100,000. Horry County reported a violent crime rate of approximately 4.1 incidents per 1,000 residents (or 410 per 100,000) in 2023, placing it slightly above the national average and indicating ongoing safety challenges. These figures highlight the importance of local strategies aligned with Healthy People 2030 objectives to reduce violent crime and promote safer community environments.

Population

Populations define the populations and demographics that align with other Healthy People 2030 objectives. The population information looks at age groups, gender, race and ethnicity, and disability status. Health and wellness metrics are also identified related to specific populations. The following table displays the Healthy People 2030 measurable objectives that fall under the health conditions topic.

Healthy People 2030 Objectives

- Adolescents
- Children
- Infants
- LGBT
- Men
- Older Adults^[2]
- Parents or Caregivers
- People with Disabilities
- Women
- Workforce^[2]

[1] Areas pertaining to the feedback from listening sessions held to inform the Horry County Community Collaborative's action plan; [2] Areas identified in 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment.

Metric	South Carolina	Horry County
Adequate Prenatal Care	77.2%	75.7%
Infant Mortality per 1,000 Births	6.9	6.1
Population with a Disability	14.3%	18.1%
Unemployed	3.2%	3.9%
Population (65+)	18.3%	25.2%
% Female Population	51.5%	51.2%

Older Adults

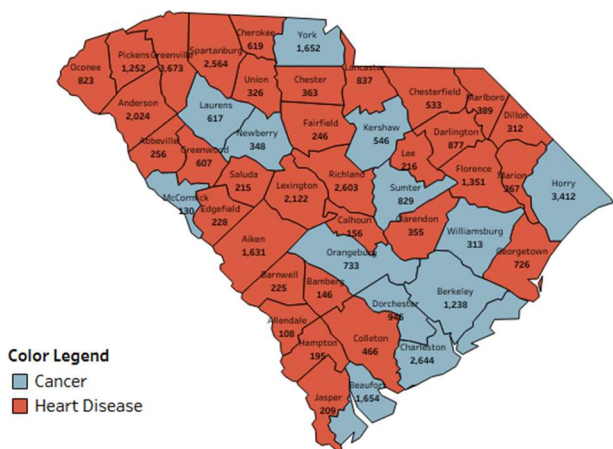
Healthy People 2030 focuses on reducing health problems and improving quality of life for older adults, a population segment experiencing rapid growth nationwide. In Horry County, the 65+ age group is projected to grow by approximately 20% between 2023 and 2028, reflecting one of the highest growth rates in South Carolina. Statewide, South Carolina’s older adult population is also increasing, with projections showing continued growth through 2030 as the median age rises from 40 to 42. These trends underscore the importance of local strategies aligned with Healthy People 2030 objectives to address chronic disease prevention, fall-related injuries, and access to preventive care for older adults.

Workforce

Healthy People 2030 focuses on promoting the health, well-being, education, and training of the workforce, including the public health and health care workforce. Workforce stability is essential for economic and community health. In South Carolina, the unemployment rate averaged 3.0% in 2023, reflecting recovery from pandemic-related disruptions. In contrast, Horry County’s unemployment rate was approximately 4.8% in mid-2024 and 5.3% by August 2025, remaining above the state average. While these figures are lower than the peak rates seen in 2020, they indicate that Horry County continues to face workforce challenges that require targeted strategies aligned with Healthy People 2030 objectives to strengthen employment opportunities and workforce health.

Leading Cause of Death (65+)

Leading Causes of Death Among Adults Aged 65+ by County, 2017-2021
Number



Horry County’s leading cause of death in adults 65+ is cancer, followed by Heart disease, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease and Alzheimer’s disease. Heart Diseases is the leading cause overall in South Carolina.

County Ranking

In addition to reviewing health data for Horry County, overall county health rankings were analyzed using the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program. This initiative, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, compiles measures from diverse sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the National Center for Health Statistics, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, and other units within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These rankings provide a comprehensive view of how counties perform relative to one another within the state, offering valuable insights for identifying health disparities and prioritizing interventions.

Health Outcomes

Healthy People 2030 focuses on health outcomes as a measure of how healthy a county is, considering factors that impact both length and quality of life. These measures include physical and mental well-being indicators such as life expectancy, chronic disease prevalence, and overall health status. In South Carolina, counties are ranked from #1 (healthiest) to #46 (least healthy) based on these outcomes. For 2025, Horry County ranks between 25th and 30th out of 46 counties for health outcomes, placing it in the middle-to-lower range statewide. While Horry County scores better on health factors like access to care and community resources, its actual health outcomes lag, reflecting challenges such as chronic disease rates and disparities in care.

The drop in Horry County's health ranking from 18th in 2023 to a mid-range position in 2025 is influenced by several factors. First, the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program revised its methodology in 2025, adding new measures such as park access, social support, climate impacts, and functional limitations, while also changing how rankings are displayed. These updates make direct year-to-year comparisons less reliable and account for part of the shift. Second, statewide health challenges—including higher infant mortality, low birth weight, and limited childcare access—altered the relative performance of counties, meaning those that did not improve faster than peers moved down in rank. Finally, local indicators contributed to the change: Horry County continues to face higher uninsured rates, limited primary care availability, and elevated physical inactivity. New measures like loneliness and park access also affected coastal, rapidly growing areas differently than other regions, further influencing the county's position.

Community Input Findings

The listening sessions are part of a five-year effort under the Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas program. The goal is to improve health outcomes across Horry County by addressing two critical areas:

Healthy Eating: Increasing access to affordable, nutritious food.

Active Living: Expanding opportunities for safe physical activity.

The sessions were designed to hear directly from residents about:

- What resources currently exist.
- What barriers prevent healthy behaviors.
- Community-driven ideas for solutions.

Insights gathered will inform the Horry County Community Collaborative's (HC3) action plan, ensuring strategies are community-led and responsive to local needs. HC3 is a coalition of local organization, service providers, and community members working together and act as local backbone for implementing evidence-based strategies and fostering partnerships that make healthy living easier for all residents. The mission of HC3 is to:

- Coordinate efforts among health, education, and community organizations.
- Leverage resources to reduce chronic disease risk factors.
- Promote equity by addressing social determinants of health like transportation, cost, and access.

Common Themes Across All Communities

Food Access Challenges:

- All communities reported limited healthy food retail options and reliance on distant grocery stores.
- Transportation barriers are universal - lack of public transit and unsafe walking conditions make accessing food and recreation difficult.
- Seasonal farmers' markets and roadside stands exist but are inconsistent and often under-promoted.
- Food pantries are present in some areas but face funding cuts, limited hours, and gaps in awareness.
- Residents expressed a need for nutrition education and cooking demonstrations to reduce food waste and improve healthy eating habits.

Physical Activity Barriers:

- Infrastructure gaps—no sidewalks, bike lanes, or safe walking paths in most communities.
- Recreation centers exist but often require fees or have programming misaligned with community needs (e.g., pickleball dominating Bucksport).
- Safety concerns (busy highways in Conway, crime and traffic in Myrtle Beach) limit outdoor activity.
- Loss of youth programs and limited ADA-accessible spaces were noted in multiple sessions.

Social & Policy Factors:

- Cost remains a barrier for both food and recreation.
- Communication gaps—residents often unaware of available resources.
- Policy restrictions in Myrtle Beach prevent mobile food distribution and outdoor emergency food options.

Key Recommendations

- **Expand Food Access**
 - Mobile food distribution, FoodShare hubs, community gardens, and co-ops with local farmers. Increase pantry hours and delivery options for seniors and homebound residents.
- **Enhance Education and Awareness**
 - Cooking demonstrations, nutrition classes, and communication campaigns via social media and local networks.
- **Improve Physical Activity Infrastructure**
 - Sidewalks, bike lanes, safe crossings, and ADA-accessible spaces.
 - Restore youth programs and create community-led fitness initiatives.
- **Address Policy & Cost Barriers**
 - Advocate for municipal policy changes (Myrtle Beach), reduce recreation fees, and explore insurance partnerships for gym memberships.

Prioritize 2025 Community Health Needs

The CMC team identified 5 key community health needs that will form the foundation of the implementation strategy. These priorities were determined through analysis of secondary quantitative data, community input, the needs evaluation process, and the prioritization results. The following needs have been selected for implementation.

1 - Mental / Behavior Health

As part of our Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and in compliance with IRS requirements for 501(c)(3) entities, Conway Medical Center is committed to addressing behavioral health needs within our community. Behavioral health has been identified as a priority area, and our organization has implemented multiple operational activities to improve access to screening, assessment, and treatment resources. This document outlines two distinct initiatives that address behavioral health needs.

Initiative 1: Depression Screening in Physician Offices

Current Assessment Activity

One of our primary operational activities occurs within our physician offices, where we conduct routine depression screenings for patients. This evidence-based tool allows us to identify individuals who may be experiencing symptoms of depression and require further evaluation.

Screening Process

- **PHQ-9 Administration:** Upon a positive PHQ-2 screening, patients are screened using the PHQ-9 questionnaire during visits in our physician offices.
- **Score Evaluation:** Based on the PHQ-9 score:
 - **Mild to Moderate Depression:** Patients receive education and monitoring.
 - **Moderate to Severe Depression:** A comprehensive behavioral health assessment is performed by clinical staff.

Follow-Up and Care Coordination

For patients requiring additional support:

- **Referral to Specialists:** Patients are connected to behavioral health specialists within our network or community.
- **Community Resources:** Community Resource Guide available and is given as part of this screening as well as noted information from the WellRx screening on community needs



Community Partnerships

For uninsured patients, Conway Medical Center partners with **Horry Access**, a community organization dedicated to helping individuals find behavioral health professionals and resources. This partnership ensures that financial barriers do not prevent patients from receiving necessary care.

Current Plan and Impact

This operational activity directly addresses the behavioral health component of our CHNA by:

- Increasing early identification of depression through standardized screening.
- Facilitating timely access to behavioral health assessments and treatment.
- Reducing disparities in care for uninsured patients through community partnerships.

Metrics and Tracking

We monitor:

- Number of PHQ-9 screenings completed.
- Number of comprehensive assessments performed.
- Referrals made to specialists and community resources.

Future Enhancements

Conway Medical Center plans to:

- Expand PHQ-9 screening to additional care settings.
- Implement follow-up protocols to ensure continuity of care.
- Strengthen partnerships with community organizations to broaden resource availability.

[Initiative 2: Postpartum Social Determinants of Health \(SDOH\) Screening](#)

Current Assessment Activity

This operational workflow is conducted by a nurse for mothers upon admission, and/or who have delivered babies at our hospital. The navigator performs a comprehensive SDOH screening to identify factors that may influence behavioral health and overall recovery.

Screening Process

- **SDOH Screening:** Patients are assessed for social determinants that may affect health outcomes, including:
 - Food insecurity
 - Housing instability
 - Transportation barriers
 - Financial stress
 - Lack of social support
 - Access to childcare



- **Behavioral Health Indicators:** The screening also evaluates behavioral health risks including utilizing such tools as the Edinburgh Postnatal Scale. We measure:
 - Postpartum depression
 - Anxiety disorders
 - Substance use concerns
 - Stress related to caregiving responsibilities

Follow-Up and Care Coordination

For patients identified with SDOH or behavioral health needs, we provide a wide range of support pathways. One such resource is MUSC Health’s - “Mom’s IMPACT” telehealth service for pregnant and up to 12-month postpartum patients with mental health and substance use concerns. In addition, we provide the following services assistance:

- **Referral to Specialists:** Patients are connected to behavioral health professionals for counseling and treatment.
- **Community Resources:** We link patients to local programs addressing food insecurity, housing assistance, transportation, and financial support.
- **Support Services:** Education and emotional support resources are provided to reduce isolation and improve coping strategies.

Community Partnerships

For uninsured or underinsured patients, Conway Medical Center collaborates with **Horry Access** and other community organizations to ensure access to behavioral health services and social support programs. These partnerships help mitigate barriers to care and improve maternal health outcomes.

Current Plan and Impact

This workflow addresses the behavioral health component of our CHNA by:

- Identifying postpartum women at risk for behavioral health issues through SDOH screening.
- Providing timely interventions and referrals to appropriate resources.
- Reducing disparities in care for vulnerable populations.

Metrics and Tracking

We monitor:

- Number of postpartum SDOH screenings completed.
- Behavioral health referrals initiated.
- Utilization of community resources by postpartum patients.

Future Enhancements

Conway Medical Center plans to:

- Expand SDOH screening to additional maternal care settings.
- Implement standardized follow-up protocols for postpartum behavioral health needs.



- Strengthen partnerships with community organizations to broaden resource availability for mothers and families.
 - This combined approach demonstrates our commitment to improving behavioral health outcomes across multiple patient populations and fulfilling our obligations under the CHNA framework.

Existing Community Investments and Capacity

Conway Medical Center has prioritized improving access to mental health and substance use disorder services through sustained community partnerships and grant-funded initiatives targeting populations with the greatest unmet need. In addition to internal screening, referral, and care coordination efforts, CMC has leveraged philanthropic funding to support community-based organizations that expand behavioral health access for uninsured, underinsured, low-income, rural, and otherwise vulnerable residents of Horry County.

In 2024, Conway Medical Center received a grant from The Duke Endowment to support the expansion of the *Breaking Barriers of Mental Health* program operated by United Way of Horry County. This program provides free, outpatient mental health and substance use disorder counseling through embedded clinicians located within community settings that serve populations with limited access to care. Services are delivered to individuals experiencing multiple barriers, including lack of insurance, financial hardship, housing instability, and transportation challenges. CMC supports this initiative by facilitating referral pathways and aligning patients and community members with available behavioral health resources.

In addition to this recent award, Conway Medical Center has received multiple grants from The Duke Endowment since approximately 2017 in support of Access Health Horry, a community-based initiative designed to improve access to care for uninsured and underserved individuals in Horry County and surrounding areas. Grant funds awarded to CMC for this purpose have been fully passed through to Access Health Horry to support direct community services, with no administrative fees or indirect benefits retained by the hospital. Through these grants, Access Health Horry has supported access to coordinated care, including behavioral health and mental health referral services, for individuals facing significant financial, insurance, and systemic barriers.

Collectively, these grant-supported partnerships demonstrate that mental and behavioral health access has been a sustained area of investment and focus within the community. These efforts directly align with data and community input identified in this Community Health Needs Assessment, which highlight increasing demand for mental health services, elevated substance use risks, persistent insurance and affordability barriers, and limited availability of providers for vulnerable populations. The continuation and expansion of these partnerships support the prioritization of Mental / Behavioral Health as a key community health need for 2025.



2 - Financial Barriers / Insurance

Financial barriers and lack of insurance remain significant obstacles to accessing healthcare for many residents of Horry County. Individuals with low or fixed incomes, limited insurance coverage, or no insurance often delay or forego care due to cost, leading to poorer health outcomes and increased reliance on emergency services.

Conway Medical Center maintains a comprehensive Financial Assistance Program designed to reduce cost-related barriers by providing free or discounted medically necessary care to eligible uninsured and underinsured patients. The program includes plain-language materials, multilingual resources, and financial counseling to assist patients in understanding eligibility requirements and application processes.

In addition, Conway Medical Center, through the CMC Foundation, supports community outreach initiatives such as HealthReach, which provide free screenings, preventive services, and health education to uninsured and indigent populations. These efforts are intended to reduce reliance on emergency departments for routine care and address affordability-related access challenges.

Despite the availability of these resources, community input and secondary data continue to highlight persistent gaps related to insurance coverage, awareness of assistance programs, documentation requirements, and broader cost-of-living pressures. These challenges support the continued prioritization of Financial Barriers / Insurance as a key community health need.

3 - Access to Healthcare

Expanding access points to healthcare is essential for improving the quality of life for Horry County residents. Resources provided by Conway Medical Center and the broader community significantly influence population health outcomes, and increasing availability strengthens the social and physical environments that support overall well-being. Key strategies for Horry County include advancing health education, improving provider accessibility, and enhancing insurance literacy.

To address access gaps identified through secondary data analysis and community input, Conway Medical Center has invested in expanding emergency care infrastructure in high-growth and historically underserved areas. In 2025, Conway Medical Center broke ground on a new free-standing emergency department at its Health Plaza South campus in Socastee, designed to provide 24/7 emergency services integrated with outpatient, imaging, and ambulatory surgery services. This facility will improve timely access for residents of southern Horry County who have experienced long travel times, limited nearby emergency services, and overcrowding at regional emergency departments. The Socastee free-standing emergency department is anticipated to open in late 2026 and represents a significant investment in a rapidly growing area.

In addition, Conway Medical Center has announced plans to construct a second free-standing emergency department at the intersection of Highway 90 and Highway 22, a major growth corridor experiencing increased residential development and healthcare demand. This facility is expected to operate 24/7, serve approximately 17,000 patients annually, and open in 2026 as the first phase of a multi-stage campus development, expanding emergency and acute care access for inland and northern areas of the county.

Together, these emergency access expansions enhance geographic coverage, reduce transportation barriers, and increase system capacity across Horry County. These investments support the prioritization of Access to Healthcare by addressing infrastructure limitations, improving timely emergency services, and aligning capacity with population growth and community needs.

Expanded access to specialty services—including pulmonary and sleep medicine, cardiovascular services, orthopedics, and on-site specialty pharmacy services—further supports Healthy People 2030 goals by improving equitable access to high-quality, patient-centered care for individuals with chronic and complex conditions. Alignment with Healthy People 2030 objectives supports national and state priorities to reduce disparities, improve care delivery, and ensure healthcare access keeps pace with community growth.

4 - Chronic Disease

Chronic disease remains a top health priority in Horry County due to its high prevalence and substantial impact on morbidity, mortality, and quality of life. Conditions such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes, depression, heart disease, cancer, and urologic disorders place sustained demands on individuals and the healthcare system. Contributing factors—including limited access to healthy foods, physical inactivity, mental health challenges, and other social determinants of health—have contributed to earlier onset and progression of chronic disease, particularly among an aging population.

In response, Conway Medical Center has invested in advanced clinical technologies and specialty services to support earlier diagnosis, reduce disease progression, and expand access to complex chronic care locally. These efforts align with the chronic disease priorities established by the State of South Carolina and are intended to maximize impact while optimizing available resources.

Conway Medical Center has introduced Ion robotic bronchoscopy technology to enable earlier and more precise diagnosis of lung cancer, supporting access to advanced diagnostic care locally and reducing the need for patients to travel outside the region. Earlier detection is critical to improving outcomes for individuals with chronic and progressive pulmonary disease.

To address advanced cardiovascular and vascular disease, Conway Medical Center has expanded local access to complex limb salvage procedures, including the first complex limb salvage bypass surgery performed in the community. Peripheral arterial disease and diabetes-related vascular complications are common among residents with multiple chronic conditions, and timely access to advanced vascular care helps reduce avoidable amputations and long-term disability.

In addition, Conway Medical Center now offers Aquablation therapy for the treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), a common chronic condition affecting older adult men. This minimally invasive therapy improves quality of life while reducing complications associated with traditional surgical approaches, supporting care for a growing older adult population.

Collectively, these investments strengthen local capacity to diagnose and manage chronic disease, support earlier intervention, and reduce the need for residents to seek complex care outside the community. These efforts align with data and community input identified through this Community Health Needs Assessment and reinforce Chronic Disease as a priority driven by high prevalence, aging demographics, and the need for accessible specialty care.



5 – Health Education

Health education and health literacy play a critical role in preventive care utilization, chronic disease management, and individuals' ability to navigate the healthcare system effectively. Limited understanding of health information, available resources, and preventive practices continues to affect health outcomes for many residents.

Conway Medical Center provides a broad range of community education programs focused on chronic disease prevention, maternal and child health, tobacco cessation, nutrition, physical activity, and self-management of long-term conditions. These programs are delivered through hospital-based classes, community outreach events, and partnerships with local organizations and schools.

Through initiatives such as HealthReach and the Community, Outreach, Research, and Education (CORE) Center, Conway Medical Center delivers education, screenings, and individualized health assessments to underserved populations, emphasizing early detection, lifestyle modification, and disease prevention. These efforts are complemented by academic and community partnerships that support health literacy and workforce development across Horry County.

Despite these efforts, community feedback and data analysis indicate a continued need to expand outreach, improve awareness of available resources, and tailor communication strategies to meet the needs of diverse populations. These findings reinforce Health Education and Health Literacy as a priority community health need.

Implementation Strategy Development

Conway Medical Center’s Community Needs Assessment Steering Committee will lead the development of implementation strategies for each health priority identified in this assessment. These strategies will be executed in collaboration with community partners and subject matter experts over the next three years, building upon and expanding the foundation established in the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA).

Collaborative Approach: Partner with local organizations to address health priorities.

Community Engagement: Build support and participation for evidence-based strategies.

Measurable Goals: Set clear, quantifiable objectives aligned with national health targets.

Detailed Work Plans: Define actionable steps, timelines, and responsibilities.

Coordination and Communication: Align efforts and maintain transparency through updates.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Track progress using enhanced CHNA-based frameworks.

As the mission of Conway Medical Center, the Community Health Needs Assessment will serve as a pillar of our strategic plans and a guide in fulfilling our overall goal of improving the overall health of our communities by being a leader in health care.

The 2025 Community Health Needs Assessments, and previously published CHNA are publicly available on our website [<https://www.conwaymedicalcenter.com/about/community-health-needs-assessment/>]. The 2025 CHNA has been reviewed and approved by the CMC Board, Executive Leadership and Relevant Committees. Implementation Strategy will be produced separately.

Appendix A – Data Sources

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