



MetroHealth

Institute
for H.O.P.E.™

2020 Year in Review





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Dear Partners:

Over the last year, we've been inspired by our community's willingness to come together during this once-in-a-lifetime pandemic.

With the help of so many, the MetroHealth Institute for H.O.P.E.™ (Health, Opportunity, Partnership, Empowerment) connected our neighbors in need with food, safe housing, technology, job opportunities and much more – things we know are essential to a healthy life.

But our work is far from finished.

Research tells us that about 80% of a person's health depends on factors beyond medical care: where you live, what's going on around you, your socioeconomic status, your education level, your habits. These factors are often called the "social determinants of health."

Our own data tell us that too many of our neighbors continue to struggle with their everyday needs. And in many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic deepened the disparities the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ was designed to address.

As always, we will continue to confront these challenges through a collaborative and strategic lens – and, of course, with unrelenting hope. The stakes have never been greater.

Sincerely,
Susan Fuehrer
President, Institute for H.O.P.E.™

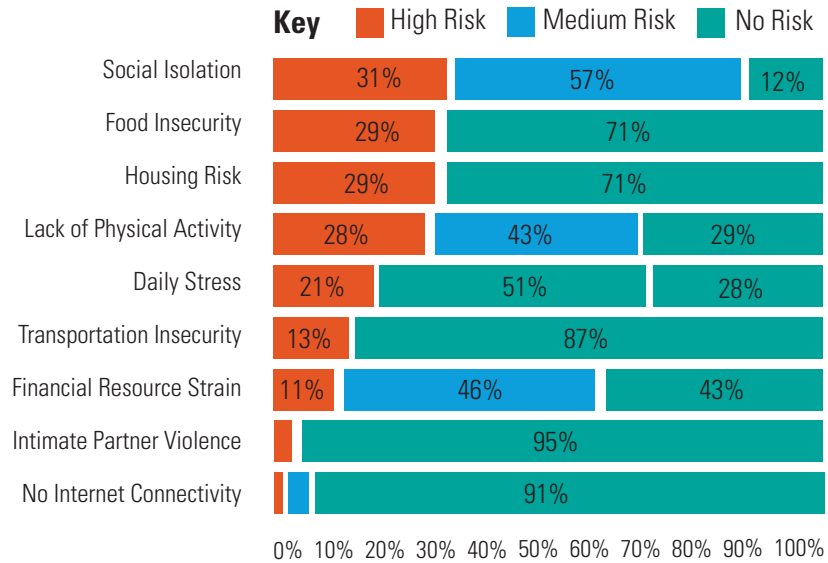
STARTING FROM THE DATA

By the end of 2020, MetroHealth had screened 31,210 patients for their health-related social needs – things like access to food, housing, transportation, job opportunities and the like. Screenings also include questions about stress, social isolation, and intimate partner violence.

Equipped with this data, the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ can tailor its own programming and elevate the work of its community partners that address the community’s most pressing needs.

Here is what we’ve found so far:

Screen Question



MAKING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

In June 2020, MetroHealth partnered with Unite Us, an innovative technology company, to build Unite Ohio – a coordinated network of health and social care providers. The Unite Ohio platform allows MetroHealth and its partners to seamlessly send and receive electronic referrals, address people’s health-related social needs and ultimately improve the health of the community.

For example, suppose a patient expresses a need for food. Through Unite Ohio, MetroHealth can send an electronic referral to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. Staff from the Food Bank then connects the individual with feeding programs in their area or helps them enroll in public benefits. Even better, if the Food Bank staff see the client needs additional services they are unable to provide, they can immediately use the Unite Ohio network to refer to another community partner to meet the need.

While Unite Ohio is a significant, multi-year investment by MetroHealth, it’s available to the participating organizations at no cost. As of April 2021, more than 72 community-based organizations have joined the Unite Ohio network. And, in January 2021, Cleveland Clinic joined the Unite Ohio network, creating more opportunity to connect individuals with the services they need.



SUPPORTING NEIGHBORS IN NEED

When COVID-19 surfaced in Ohio, many patients – especially those in quarantine – needed help securing necessities like food, personal hygiene items and cleaning products. With the support of generous donors, the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ quickly stood up a system to deliver these basic goods at no cost to patients.

Over the coming months, the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ distributed more than 145,000 pounds of fresh produce and shelf-stable food with the support of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland, and others. At Thanksgiving, MetroHealth partnered with the Food Bank to distribute more than 3,000 turkeys.

Hundreds of care packages and hygiene kits also made their way to those at high risk for COVID-19, including those living with HIV, individuals experiencing homelessness, new mothers supported by First Year Cleveland and more.

ADDRESSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Digital connectivity plays a major role in an individual’s ability to succeed. A reliable internet connection is crucial to access social service resources, health care portals, online coursework and job applications.

Through a partnership with Digital C and Dollar Bank, the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ helped connect more than 300 households in underserved areas around MetroHealth’s main campus with subsidized internet access.

MetroHealth also led more than 200 one-on-one digital literacy training sessions with residents of the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority’s Scranton Castle senior apartment complex off West 25th Street at 2000 Castle Ave.





SPREADING HOPE, ONE CALL AT A TIME

A casual phone call can do more than lift people’s spirits. It can improve their health, too. That’s the reason for Calls for HOPE, an innovative program through the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ designed to combat the intense social isolation experienced by many of our patients, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to limit in-person interactions.

The program – made possible with support from Cigna and Baldwin Wallace University’s Jacket Philanthropy Program – pairs trained MetroHealth volunteers with patients for weekly chats over the phone. Think small talk with a purpose – an opportunity for human connection that otherwise wouldn’t be available.

CARING FOR CLEVELAND’S KIDS



The pandemic deepened the disparities the MetroHealth School Health Program was designed to overcome. By bringing health care providers directly to schools, children who might otherwise have difficulty connecting with a health care professional could get the care they needed: chronic disease management, immunizations, mental health care and more.

But with widespread building closures due to the pandemic, much of that care shifted to telehealth. Eventually, in-person visits resumed. The mobile-unit team returned to several Cleveland Metropolitan School District buildings – even though students were largely still learning remotely.

It was an important step back to normalcy, as routine pediatric visits plummeted more than 60% amid the pandemic. During the summer, the School Health Program even hosted a back-to-school clinic in Cleveland’s Slavic Village neighborhood to ensure students received the care – and immunizations, in particular – they needed.

BUILDING A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

MetroHealth’s Center for Health Resilience – now housed within the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ – took on a critical role during the pandemic given the steady climb in domestic violence, child abuse and other crimes as people went into lockdown.

The center’s Trauma Recovery Services continued to operate throughout the COVID-19 crisis. In 2020, the team provided 241 counseling sessions and referred 687 individuals to community partners. In all, the center served 2,127 clients last year – 1,364 of whom were victims of crime.

In 2020, Trauma Recovery Services also received more than \$900,000 as part of the Ohio Attorney General’s allocation of grants that support victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and other trauma. The funds are being used to maintain Trauma Recovery Services’ work, which provides victims of trauma with counseling, peer support and mentorship programs, care coordination, financial help and other resources.



LOOKING FORWARD



In the coming year, the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ will expand its work, deepen its relationships with community partners and evaluate its impact through initiatives such as:

- Expanding the Food As Medicine Program to the Ohio City Health Center to better serve the patients of that site, as well as the children and families of Urban Community School.
- Participating in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s Say Yes program at the John Adams College & Career Academy and the Mary M. Bethune School.
- Participating in the HealthBegins Social Drivers Learning and Action Collaborative, using collaborative multi-disciplinary action teams and evidenced-based quality improvement methods to address “upstream” social determinants of health such as housing quality and stability, and voting behavior among vulnerable populations.
- Engaging in robust research and evaluation of its work, in order to identify and expand what is successful and to contribute to the scholarly and popular knowledge base through presentations and publications.

