



2022 Annual Report

Southwest Washington
Accountable Community
of Health

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Letter from the Board of Trustees

Dear friends and supporters,

2022 was a year of change and growth for Southwest Washington Accountable Community of Health (SWACH). The past year saw expansions to our partnerships across the region, an increased commitment to workforce development, the implementation of innovative ideas to address the opioid epidemic, and other important projects.

Our HealthConnect, Equity and Collaborative Impact, Operations, and Communications departments created and sustained crucial programs in Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania counties. From addressing the social determinants of health to improving access to substance use disorder resources, and so much more, these programs have a significant impact on our community.

We are excited for the year ahead. 2023 ushers in the second Medicaid Transformation Project waiver, empowering SWACH to continue building partnerships and championing health equity for several years.

As we look toward the future of this work, I want to thank you for your support. The success we've seen is dependent on each of us doing what we can to make our communities stronger and healthier.

Robb Kimmes

Robb Kimmes
President, SWACH Board of Trustees



What is MTP

Washington State's Medicaid Transformation Project (MTP) is an innovative approach to reimagining the systems and infrastructure that provide meaningful care to community members across the state. SWACH relies on the Medicaid Transformation Project waiver to provide crucial funding that allows us to do transformative work like funding partners across our region for care coordination, opioid-use resources, chronic pain self-management, bi-direction integration, and more.

The initial MTP waiver, which has funded much of our work, ended on December 31, 2022. We are working with the state's Health Care Authority (HCA) and other Accountable Communities of Health on a second five-year waiver that would continue to fund our efforts in meaningful areas.

2022 Year in Review

2022 was a remarkable year at SWACH. We were able to accomplish important work in our community through our programs and partnerships. Throughout the year, we were able to advance important initiatives while sustaining responsive programming to allow us to meet unexpected needs throughout the community – including ongoing and evolving COVID-19 response and support.

SWACH's success spanned our work with CareConnect Washington, the sunsetting of the first Medicaid Transformation Project (MTP) waiver, measured success with the HealthConnect Hub, and innovative growth through our Equity and Collaborative Impact team.

CareConnect Washington

CareConnect Washington (CCWA) remains a vital program for supporting our community through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This partnership with the Department of Health has provided needed infrastructure and resources to ensure that individuals with COVID-19 can isolate and slow the spread of the virus.

More information about CCWA, including a highlight of how many people the program has helped, is available on [page 14](#).

Medicaid Transformation Project

2022 featured the end of the first Medicaid Transformation Project (MTP) waiver. In 2023, SWACH is excited to work with the additional eight Accountable Communities of Health (ACHs) across the state and the Health Care Authority (HCA) on the MTP waiver 2. Once approved, the new waiver will provide support, guidance, and resources for the next five years.

More information about MTP is available on [pages 7 and 8](#).



HealthConnect Hub

The HealthConnect Hub connects anyone in Southwest Washington to the care they need through a trusted, trained, highly skilled community-based workforce that provides one-on-one support to achieve their health goals. The HealthConnect Hub supports this community-based workforce and the network of agencies that employ them. Partner agencies and resources are aligned to support a common goal: to provide the right care to people across Southwest Washington when and how they need it.

Learn about current metrics gauging the success of the HealthConnect Hub on [pages 15 and 16](#).

Equity and Collaborative Impact

The Equity and Collaborative Impact (ECI) team continues to champion health equity through partnerships and innovative programming. Two key focuses of this work have been supporting a culturally responsive COVID-19 vaccine outreach and education project and making naloxone more accessible across Southwest Washington.

Through a partnership with Beacon Health Options, the ECI team successfully installed five naloxone vending machines across the region. These machines are a great example of how innovation can save lives in Southwest Washington. You can learn more about our efforts on [pages 9 and 10](#). 

The Future of SWACH

For 2023, we are centering four priorities. These will shape our efforts and resources for the upcoming year.



Priority 1: Work with and for communities most impacted



Priority 2: Collaborate, build trust, and prioritize community voice



Priority 3: Renewable, braided funding resources



Priority 4: Strengthen SWACH operations to be a long-lasting organization

From Our Executive Director



After two years of isolation due to the pandemic, 2022 allowed us to spend more time in community. While COVID-19 continues to impact our region, we've found ways to connect again, which has led to meaningful opportunities to grow and heal with our partners and friends across Southwest Washington.

2022 was pivotal for SWACH. It was the final year of the first Medicaid Transformation Project waiver, which demonstrated the power communities have in creating healthier, more equitable regions. The MTP waiver 2, like the previous one, will provide direction, funding, and context for much of the work we do as an organization.

We expanded the partnerships supported by the HealthConnect Hub in 2022. We added five new partnerships this year, increasing the hub's capacity to provide critical support in physical and mental health, as well as social services. We also increased our support for existing partners this year, which included funding for additional Community-Based Workers (CBWs). To date, there are more than 80 CBWs employed by our partner agencies.

SWACH also made important strides to expand our equity and collaborative impact work. Our Community Impact Projects grant provided \$2.5 million to 12 unique organizations and coalitions to develop and sustain projects and programs that address the social determinants of health through a racial equity lens.

We are grateful to our partners, community, and supporters who have helped us in this work. Your dedication to supporting our region is what makes these programs successful.

Nichole Peppers

Nichole Peppers
Executive Director, SWACH

MTP Waiver 1 Highlights

Innovating Transformations that Create Positive Change

- Establish five Narcan vending machines
- Provide funding/partnership to 10 organizations to form rural regions partnerships
- Implement HB1504 with partners to increase access to mental health services
- Create HealthConnect Hub

- Provide housing and food support during COVID-19 through CareConnect WA
- Fund Social Justice and Resiliency fund to promote equity in our community
- Coordinate efforts regionally for Integrated Care Assessment
- Connect first responders and providers to reduce dependency on EMS via CARES

Fostering Community Engagement and Voice

- Convene Clark County Opioid Taskforce
- Help community members from diagnosis to cure with Hep-C Cures
- Develop Chronic Disease Self-Management courses
- Provide professional development for Community-Based Workers (CBWs)

- Grow HealthConnect referral network continuously
- Establish braided funding and resources for regional needs
- Convene cohort of CBWs, including common principles and practices
- Invest \$24 million+ in partners

Building Trust with Compassion, Integrity, Transparency, and Accountability

- Form HealthConnect Advisory Committee
- Increase media coverage across Southwest Washington and Portland Metro Area
- Review and improve programs via ongoing evaluations from CORE
- Develop a responsive communications plan to add transparency to our efforts

- Develop a community-based workforce for culturally responsive COVID-19 vaccine access and education with a \$1 million HRSA grant
- Evaluate and implement restoration services support through Competency Restoration Program
- Build health improvement plans through Regional Health Improvement Plan Council

Medicaid Transformation Project 2

SWACH is proud to participate in the Medicaid Transformation Project (MTP) for over five years. The first waiver, which started in 2017, ended in 2022. The Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) are working to negotiate a second MTP waiver.

Update from the HCA regarding Waiver 2

The HCA began negotiating with Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) on MTP 2 in October. However, CMS did not finish negotiations by the end of the year. So, CMS approved a short extension – from January 1–June 30, 2023 – to the current MTP waiver period, which was scheduled to end on December 31, 2022.

This extension will allow the following:

- Current MTP programs to continue, and Apple Health enrollees can continue to have access to services without disruption of care.
- Time for CMS to continue to review Washington's MTP 2.0 application.
- Our state to continue to negotiate and work with CMS.

What's Next?

Through June 30, 2023, we will continue all current MTP activities and initiatives.

What's MTP?

MTP is an agreement between our state and CMS that allows us to develop innovative projects, activities, and services that improve Apple Health (Medicaid) using federal funds. MTP benefits those enrolled in Washington State's Medicaid program. HCA submitted an application to CMS in July 2022 to renew MTP for an additional 5 years under an 1115 waiver. Learn more at swach.link/mtp2.

Opioid Use Supports

Nationwide, the opioid epidemic continues to impact lives. Those effects are deeply felt in families and communities across Southwest Washington. Since our foundation as an organization, SWACH has been dedicated to providing resources, policies, and partnerships to help address this health concern.

Ending the Stigma

Unfortunately, active addiction is a very stigmatized topic in our society. The social stigma surrounding opioid use is a significant barrier to individuals seeking help. We understand that reversing the shame or guilt that individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) face is an essential step in connecting people to lifesaving resources.

SWACH is committed to building programming that helps address the stigma while ensuring that people have access to recovery resources when needed.

Doing the Work

Over the past six years, SWACH has developed an innovative response to addressing the opioid epidemic. Our efforts remove barriers and siloes that often exist between services and organizations, allowing us to provide holistic care for individuals experiencing active addiction.

Our work centers four focuses:

- Directing community action and involvement
- Convening conversations through leadership
- Providing Funding
- Centering and developing the community-based workforce

Examples of SWACH's Work to Address Opioid Use Disorder



Direct Community Action

- Hosted Annual Overdose Awareness Day
- Developed changing the conversation around opioids - events and videos
- Five Narcan vending machines in Southwest Washington
- Proposals for \$14.6 million to Clark County for opioid settlement funds



Convening and Leadership

- Workgroups in Clark and Klickitat counties
- Convene the Clark County Opioid Taskforce
- Support Opioid Treatment Networks in Clark and Klickitat counties
- Staff positions dedicated to supporting the intersect of care coordination and substance use disorder



Funding

- Funding support for Lifeline integrated MAT clinic and physical health
- Opioid Treatment Network funded through a grant with PeaceHealth, Klickitat Valley Health, SWACH, and Lifeline
- Funding and development of community paramedicine program (CARES) in Southwest Washington to support behavioral and physical health and social needs through EMS.



Supporting and Developing Community-Based Workforce

- HealthConnect Pathways partnerships expanded to include more organizations and CBWs
- Training provided to CBWs on overdose prevention and Narcan use

Partner Spotlight: Lifeline Connections

When it comes to making changes in public health, the road from an innovative idea to a sustainable program is lined with all sorts of challenges. From breaking down siloes between different partners to centering community need, reaching the end goal can be hard. The real community value is seeing that idea all the way through.

That's what makes our regional Opioid Treatment Network so amazing. It started as an innovative idea that has blossomed into a powerful program that literally saves lives.

As in many other sectors, there often exists a disconnect between physical health services and behavioral health services, which are designed to support individuals facing substance use disorder (SUD). One of the most successful tools for individuals with SUD is medically assisted treatment (MAT), which can be provided to someone when they are admitted to an emergency department setting. While it is incredibly helpful, it is also difficult to find.

SWACH is grateful to partner with PeaceHealth, Lifeline Connections, Klickitat Valley Health, and others as part

of the Opioid Treatment Network. Through this program, we have been able to add MAT access to two of the larger hospitals in Southwest Washington.

"What we are ending up with is a hospital that treats addiction aggressively tied into the resources and the community. We find our [gaps], and we bring in people to solve those – like Xchange Recovery," said Dr. John Hart, who has been leading MAT efforts at PeaceHealth since the beginning.

So, how does this program work? What really makes it unique? There are three important elements to the MAT program that are responsible in large part for its success: 1.) access to care in hospital environments, 2.) cross-sector collaboration, and 3.) a changing narrative around what SUD is and how we can combat it.

Access to Care in Hospital Environments

As mentioned earlier, a crucial part of the MAT program is providing care in emergency department settings.

This component of the program represents a major change in how we treat SUD.

Previously, someone who visited an emergency room for SUD would be given a referral for support. That put an extra burden on the individual seeking help and significantly decreased the likelihood that they would get the support they needed.

By bringing MAT options into hospitals, we can treat individuals for SUD while they are in emergency care. At PeaceHealth, a Lifeline employee holds regular office hours to support patients on-site.

It's a revolutionary idea – bringing care to the patient rather than expecting the patient to carry the burden on their own.

Cross-Sector Collaboration

Cross-sector support from existing opioid taskforces, like the Clark County Opioid Taskforce, is vital to the success of this program.

These groups create strategies to focus on harm reduction and preventing overdoses, which is greatly needed in our region.

"Once you find out what to do, you have an obligation to expand yourself way past your [own] hospital," said Dr. Hart.

"These partnerships allow us to connect patients to peers – individuals with relatable lived experiences and knowledge – at various parts of the recovery journey. Peer involvement continues to be an ongoing conversation, and we constantly are looking for ways to leverage these community members' lived experiences."

A Changing Narrative

Access to care and cross-sector collaboration are leading to a changing narrative. Organizations are dedicated to working together to create lasting change addressing SUD.

"In terms of a cultural shift, the stigma and othering of this work within the physical health sector has really shifted. Hospitals don't see this as something to hand off," said Eric McNair Scott, Director of Clinical and Community Linkages at SWACH. "It has to be an integrated, collaborative approach." 

Healthy Living Collaborative

In 2017, the Healthy Living Collaborative (HLC) transitioned to become one of the programs at SWACH. The partnership was designed to amplify HLC's work in creating health equity and championing community health workers (CHWs).

"Being able to work with the CHW teams, the partners for the HLC as a whole, the HLC partners, and the community as a whole was beneficial to the work I do," said Dominique Horn, SWACH Equity and Collaborative Impact Program Specialist. "The ability to have connections and collaboration with the community was impactful."

HLC ended in 2020 as a distinct program; this was a difficult decision, and HLC's priorities continue through other programs at SWACH. Our HealthConnect Hub and Equity and Collaborative Impact teams uphold the work originated by HLC, particularly related to health equity across Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania counties.

As an organization, we also continue to advocate for the development and support of our local community-based workforce.

This workforce was essential to the work completed by HLC and remains crucial to the work we do today.

For many who were involved in the program, HLC fostered a sense of community in creating health equity.

"The HLC was a program of agencies meeting the community where they were," said Brandi Williams, SWACH Community Based Workforce Specialist. Williams said the HLC's unique approach "pulled from individuals who have lived experience" with those they work with.

That innovative impact remains a primary goal of SWACH's programs - to make it easy for individuals to access the care and resources they need through the support of individuals who understand their background and experiences.

We are grateful to everyone who made HLC such a strong, vibrant part of our community. Your work is deeply appreciated.



COVID-19 Response in 2022

Throughout 2022, we continued to see the impacts of COVID-19 in our community. While we've learned a lot about the virus in the three years, the occasional surge and lingering case totals are still affecting people across Southwest Washington. SWACH continued valuable partnerships throughout 2022 to ensure people in our region have the support they need.

Programs Addressing COVID-19

SWACH participated in and led multiple approaches to support our community through the pandemic. CareConnect Washington (CCWA) provides mortgage or rent assistance, groceries, and additional financial support to households with positive COVID-19 cases.

SWACH continued our COVID-19 vaccine outreach work funded by Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). With additional support from Molina Healthcare and Amerigroup, we continued to reach out to BIPOC, unhoused, and other medically underrepresented populations to provide information and access to current vaccine options.

Highlights of Our Efforts



Housing assistance provided over **\$1.1 million**, helping **945** households



Grocery assistance provided over **\$375,000**, helping **1,300** households



1,057 vaccine doses administered as a result of SWACH Grant



73,081 community members reached through vaccine outreach efforts 

The Strength of the HealthConnect Hub

SWACH regularly works with the Center for Outcomes Research and Education (CORE) to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs and efforts. Working together, we recently concluded a deep review of the HealthConnect Hub and, more specifically, HealthConnect Pathways.

Understanding the HealthConnect Hub and Pathways

The HealthConnect Hub is a SWACH program designed to serve as a care coordination platform in Southwest Washington. The hub connects community members to resources ranging from physical health, behavioral health, and social services through an advanced network of referrals. HealthConnect also helps participants navigate fragmented or siloed systems.

Pathways are the specific needs for resources a participant has. Each participant may need multiple pathways opened by Community-Based Workers to access support for overlapping needs or conditions.

HealthConnect Hub and Pathways have profoundly impacted the communities they serve. For many participants, this system has improved the following:

- Health and health access
- Mental/behavioral health
- Access to other social services
- Empowerment
- Navigating the effects of COVID-19



“Before I was just really anxious about a lot of stuff; I’m worried about a lot of things. Through working with both of them [CHWs], it’s put me at ease. Because, like I said, I know there’s help out there.”

– HealthConnect Pathways Participant

Long-term Impact of the HealthConnect Hub Pathways Program

76%

Of participants identified a housing need during enrollment.

76%

Of participants had at least one physical or behavioral health condition.

Average pathways opened per person, per county

7

Clark
County

33

Klickitat
County

30

Skamania
County

Important findings about the hub

A positive impact of the HealthConnect Hub has been increasing the use of outpatient care for individuals enrolled in HealthConnect Pathways compared to those who were just referred.

Usage of mental health care increased by 9.9%, specialty care by 5.8%, and primary care by 5.1%.

Another key finding is centered around emergency department visits. HealthConnect Pathways participants visit the emergency department less over time than those who were referred but never enrolled, decreasing from 4.5 visits on average to 3.6. Referrals increased from 3.8 emergency department visits per person to 4 visits over that same time frame. People who were referred, but never enrolled to receive Pathways support, increased their use of emergency services during that same time.

HealthConnect continues to add value to our community, especially to marginalized and underrepresented populations. As we strive to create health equity across our region, this innovative hub leads people to access the care they need.

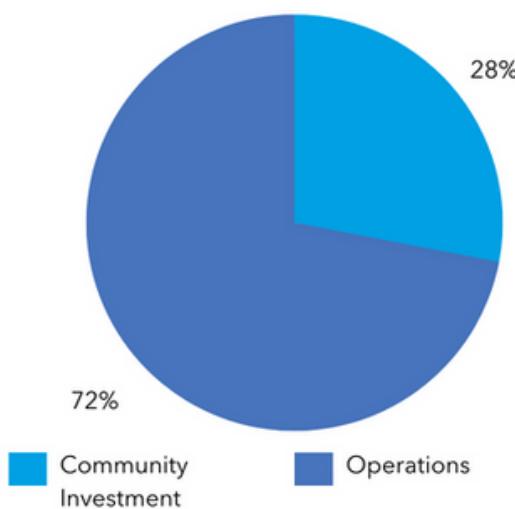
These statistics come from evaluations done by CORE. Learn more at southwestach.org/healthconnect-hub.



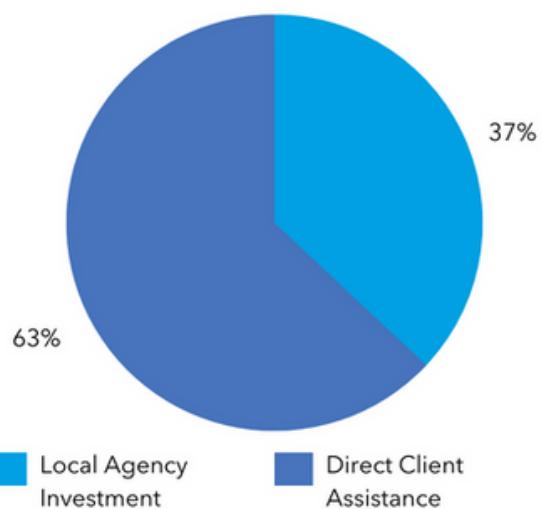
Financial Information

In 2022, SWACH remained dedicated to supporting our partners, the community-based workforce, and the community. To support transparency, we are reporting our 2022 actuals, CareConnect WA investments, and additional investment areas. These figures are unaudited and will not be audited until later in 2023.

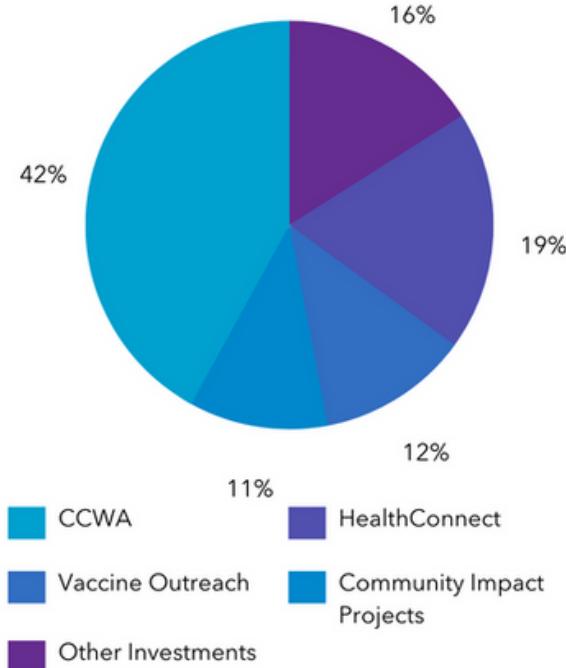
2022 Actuals



CareConnect WA



Areas of Investment



Connect with Us

At SWACH, collaboration is a fundamental element of the work we do. We strongly believe that coordination across agencies and sectors fuels systems change that allows communities to achieve “whole-person wellness.” Connect with us to learn more about how to partner with SWACH in this important work.

Meet Our Team

Our team is made up of dedicated, equity-focused staff who are committed to making a difference in Southwest Washington. Get to know our team, and how to contact us, at southwestach.org/our-team/.

Follow Us on Social Media

Stay up-to-date on the latest news and updates from SWACH. Follow us on our social media platforms for important information. You can access all of our social platforms at swach.link/bio or by searching our handles on each site.



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Learn more about our organization by visiting our website, southwestach.org. Have questions about this report or our work? Contact us at communications@southwestach.org.

Acknowledgments

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SWACH's COVID-19 Work

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Our COVID-19 vaccine outreach is also made possible through Amerigroup and Molina Healthcare contributions. We are grateful for their sponsorship of this important work.





SWACH

2022

Creating lasting changes and a healthier future – for everyone in Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania counties.

Southwestach.org