

## **FirstHealth Montgomery Memorial Hospital**

### **2025-2028 Implementation Plan**

#### ***Organization Overview***

FirstHealth of the Carolinas (FirstHealth) is a private, non-profit [501(c)(3)], comprehensive health care delivery system serving a predominantly rural, fifteen county region in the mid-Carolinas. The system has a five-county primary service area in which four of its hospital campuses are located including the main campus at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital, FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital – Richmond Campus, FirstHealth Moore Regional – Hoke Campus and FirstHealth Montgomery Memorial Hospital (a critical access hospital) with a total of 546 licensed beds, 26 FirstHealth Family Care Centers, eight health and fitness centers and three dental clinics for underserved children.

#### ***Mission and Commitment to the Health of the Community***

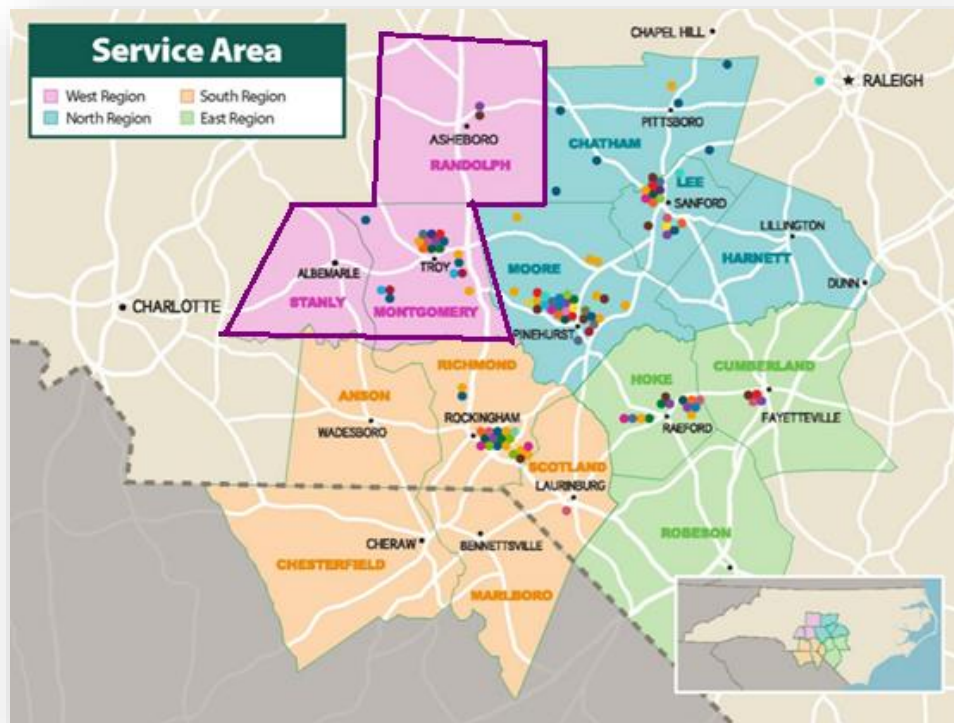
The health system is guided by its core purpose, “To care for people.” Demonstrated through a deep commitment to providing safe, high-quality, whole-person care to patients residing in the Sandhills region of North Carolina as well as South Carolina. As a community-based health network, FirstHealth employs strategies which support the core purpose. These strategies are made up of initiatives to increase patient safety and satisfaction, financial performance, alignment and growth, and Human Resources. The health system remains committed to creating a culture where all are welcome by launching the *FirstHealth for all initiative* with a focus on providing culturally competent care and creating an atmosphere of belonging for all staff, patients, and visitors.

FirstHealth of the Carolinas also demonstrates a commitment to the community through Community Benefit which is measured and tracked through the organization’s Community Health department. Over the past several years, the organization has exceeded Community Benefit Targets around community engagement through the provision of free health screenings for blood sugar and blood pressure as well as through community service hours logged by staff across the service region. This community-based approach also involves participating in partnerships and collaboration with other community serving agencies to meet the health and social care needs of community members.

Additionally, the health system has taken action to address the forecasted nationwide health professional shortage. Rural communities, such as those served by the health system, will be greatly affected. FirstHealth has engaged in partnerships with surrounding school systems and community colleges to create a pipeline of skilled individuals to ensure that the hospital is adequately staffed, further securing access to safe and high-quality care for years to come. Through the FirstFutures Program, students receive sponsorships to assist with the cost of their education or may participate in the apprenticeship program. Upon completion of their education they agree to work for the health system for two years.

## ***Region Served***

FirstHealth Montgomery Memorial Hospital is a critical access hospital located in Troy, North Carolina. The hospital has served the healthcare needs of the more than 26,000 residents of Montgomery County and the surrounding area since 1950. FirstHealth Montgomery Memorial provides emergency care services, acute care for both medical and surgical patients, outpatient surgical services, imaging, and other diagnostic services.



## ***Conducting the Community Health Needs Assessment Process***

### **Data Collection**

August 2024

The Community Health Services team began the process of planning for the Community Health Needs Assessment which involved coordinating efforts across the four counties which serve as locations for the FirstHealth hospital campuses. Conversations were held with the health system's partnering health departments in Montgomery, Moore, and Richmond counties, as each of these counties were also planning to their individual Community Health Assessments. The health system and the health departments agreed to decrease the burden to the respective communities by

working together. The health departments agreed to publish community surveys while the health system agreed to facilitate focus groups across each of the counties. The health departments shared their survey data with the health system, while the health system shared the feedback received during the focus groups with the health departments.

September-December 2024

During this time, FirstHealth developed the protocol, facilitation guide, and participant demographic data collection tool for the focus groups. The CHNA team applied for and received an exemption from the FirstHealth Institutional Review Board (IRB) making this process exempt from requiring IRB approval to proceed. The team also worked with the health system's Strategic Marketing department to develop marketing materials (Figure 1) that could be shared digitally across social media platforms as well as through email and text messaging.

**Figure 1.** Social media marketing images for focus groups.



January – March 2025

Focus groups were held across the county (Table 1) to gather feedback from community members and stakeholders regarding their perception around their health and the health of their community. Participants were asked to share feedback around ways they felt that their community supported them in reaching their optimal health status and what other resources they felt were needed.

April – June 2025

All focus groups concluded, and the data collected was analyzed and themes were identified. The data compiled during the analysis period was shared with partners as well as FirstHealth of the Carolinas' Administration.

**Table 1.** Focus groups held during data collection.

<b>Moore County Focus Groups:</b>
• Brutonville Community Center
• Montgomery County Department of Health- First Responder Focused
• Montgomery County Department of Health – Community Members
• Troy-Montgomery Senior Center

### **Themes Identified During CHNA Focus Group Data Analysis**

The four focus groups held across the county produced valuable feedback from 45 community members, providing insight into the perceived health and needs of the community. Focus group participants represented a variety of sectors such as the community-at-large, education, business, healthcare, social services, public health, and first responders. These focus groups allowed the health system to hear the stories behind the data collected in the health department surveys. The key focus group insights are outlined below.

- Top 3 concerns facing the community:
  - Safety and Substance Use
  - Environment (Homelessness/Affordable Housing/Beautification)
  - Access to Care
  
- Vision for a healthy community:
  - Community Involvement- including faith-based communities
  - Neat, clean surroundings (nice yards, streetlights, no abandoned buildings, or houses)
  - Safe to walk around
  - Everyone gets along
  - Access to health care and mental health services
  - Job opportunities/ opportunities to succeed
  - Parenting education/ enforcement of the family unit
  
- Common Themes:
  - Community safety
  - Perceived need for improved infrastructure – road paving, street signs, sidewalks
  - Access to affordable housing and housing resources
  - Need for more higher paying jobs
  - Increased access to healthy foods and grocery stores
  - Increased access to transportation
  - Increased access to affordable childcare options

## Supplemental Survey Data

### Health Department Survey Data

Survey results shared with the health system from the Montgomery County Department of Health, a key partner in ensuring the health of the county, provided further insight into the health behaviors that community members report engaging in. When asked about barriers to eating fruits and vegetables, 69% reported that they had no barriers and that they eat fruits and vegetables regularly. In contrast, 21% of respondents reported that price was a barrier to eating fruits and vegetables, while 4% stated that they did not know how to cook or prepare them. When considering engagement in physical activity, 40% of respondents reported that they engage in some type of physical activity for at least 30 minutes, three or more days of the week.

In regard to their physical health, respondents ranked the following medical conditions of most concern to themselves and their family members, cancer, obesity, diabetes, dementia, and mental health. Additionally, 51% of respondents stated that they sought medical care at a doctor's office within the county, while 21% reported that they typically travel outside of the county to seek medical care when they are sick. Of the 14% who seek medical care at an urgent care, they report that they obtain these services outside of the county. When asked to consider the past 12 months and whether there were times that medical care was needed but not received, 67% responded "no." Among the 33% who responded yes to not receiving medical when needed in the past 12 months, the top reasons for not receiving care were cost, fear, inconvenient hours, or some other reason.

Overwhelmingly, mental health status rated high among those who responded to the health department survey, with 76% of respondents rating their mental health as good or very good. Interestingly, with such a large proportion of respondents reporting high mental health status ratings and nearly 45% reporting that they do not feel they need to engage in mental health services, mental health remains a top concern that is reported by residents. Of those who reported receiving mental health services, they report that they travel outside of the county to receive them. The 38% of respondents who did not receive services when needed in the past 12 months, reported that they did not know where to go for help, they could not afford services, or felt afraid or embarrassed to ask for help.

### FirstHealth About Me Social Care Data

In further support of the findings of the focus groups and the health department Community Health Assessment survey data, the health system analyzed data collected surrounding patient social care needs during the past year. There were 87 referrals to the FirstHealth Center for Health and Social Care also referred to as the CARE Suite. There were 81 activities completed by the Health and Social Care Specialists. Among the most frequent concerns addressed were financial concerns, coordination of care – referrals to special care partner services (social services, aging services, etc.), and food access.

**Implementation Planning**

The FirstHealth Community Health Needs Assessment data was reviewed with the FirstHealth Board of Directors as well as with key FirstHealth leaders. Additionally, FirstHealth shared the community health needs assessment data with community focused collaborative groups referred to as the First-In-Health Task Forces, which includes representation from public health, school systems, school nursing, school-based health centers, town and county government, social services, food banks, housing authorities, community colleges, community members at-large, and other key stakeholders. These groups actively engaged in an open feedback process to identify priority health areas for focusing population health program initiatives and leveraging needed resources to pilot innovative solutions to improving community health. FirstHealth is dedicated to working together with these collaborators to ensure a coordinated approach to addressing the needs of the community.

**Health Priorities to Be Addressed**

<b>Safety &amp; Substance Use</b>			
Goal: Increase access to and awareness of substance use resources, while reducing the stigma associated with Substance Use Disorder.			
<b>Program/Intervention</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Lead Department(s)</b>	<b>Partners Involved</b>
FirstHealth Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure a safe and secure environment for all patients, visitors, and staff across all FirstHealth facilities</li> <li>• Respond to emergencies and assist with safety concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FirstHealth Public Safety</li> <li>• FirstHealth Company Police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Law Enforcement Agencies</li> </ul>
FirstHealth Peer Support Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase community awareness of and access to resources offered by the FH Peer Support Program through participation in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FirstHealth Community Health Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montgomery County Government</li> <li>• Montgomery County Department of Health</li> <li>• Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office</li> </ul>

	<p>events across the county</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue engaging in partnerships with other organizations in the community who offer resources for individuals with substance use disorder</li> <li>• Provide education around stigma reduction</li> <li>• Act as a linkage source for individuals and community members in need of recover resources and support</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FirstHealth EMS</li> <li>• Montgomery County Opioid Action Coalition</li> </ul>
<p>FirstHealth ED Peer Support Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the Emergency Department based peer support program</li> <li>• Continue to provide timely follow up for patients seen in the ED for overdose or referred for substance use disorder to connect them to treatment and recovery support services</li> <li>• Provide continuous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FirstHealth Community Health Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent Emergency Room Physician Trust</li> </ul>

	<p>education to ED staff and providers on resources available through ED peer support program to increase engagement</p>		
<p>Sandhills Opioid Response Consortium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to lead the consortium and engage partners from across the region to form a collaborative and coordinated response to the need for substance use resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FirstHealth Community Health Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trillium</li> <li>EMS and Law Enforcement</li> <li>Social Services</li> <li>Health Department</li> </ul>
<p>FirstHealth Behavioral Health Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to provide Inpatient and outpatient services for individuals with substance use disorder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FirstHealth Behavioral Health Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FirstHealth Community Health Services</li> </ul>

**Built Environment**

Goal: Access to affordable housing resources and safe access to opportunities for physical activity.

<b><i>Intervention</i></b>	<b><i>Strategy</i></b>	<b><i>Lead Department(s)</i></b>	<b><i>Partners Involved</i></b>
FirstHealth Center for Health and Social Care (CARE Suite)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to establish a variety of partnerships across the communities served to meet Social Care Needs</li><li>• Seek to leverage additional funding from diverse sources to aid in the provision of housing resources in Montgomery County</li><li>• Increase community awareness of services provided through the CARE Suite and associated partners</li><li>• Provide community members with assistance enrolling in services, as needed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FirstHealth Community Health Services</li><li>• Foundation of FirstHealth</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Montgomery County Department of Social Services</li><li>• Montgomery County</li><li>• Trillium</li></ul>
About Me Social Determinants of Health Screening tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to screen patients across care settings to identify individuals with urgent social care needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FirstHealth Physician Group</li><li>• FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital</li></ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize data collected through the About Me tool to inform the work of the CARE Suite staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FirstHealth Community Health Services</li> </ul>	
First-In-Health Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue collaborative efforts to improve health outcomes in Montgomery County</li> <li>Develop innovative initiatives to address the identified health priorities</li> <li>Provide feedback on outcomes of initiatives and provide input for future health assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FirstHealth Community Health</li> <li>FirstHealth Montgomery Memorial Hospital</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Health</li> <li>Social Services</li> <li>Trillium</li> <li>Montgomery County Schools</li> <li>Partnership for Children</li> <li>NC State Cooperative Extension</li> <li>First Responders</li> </ul>

**Access to Care**

Goal: Improve access to services that support physical and mental health and well-being.

<b><i>Intervention</i></b>	<b><i>Strategy</i></b>	<b><i>Lead Department(s)</i></b>	<b><i>Partners Involved</i></b>
FirstHealth Behavioral Health Collaborative Care Management Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to offer support to individuals referred to the program in collaboration with their Primary Care Provider.</li> <li>• Continue to provide support to referred individuals surrounding adherence to prescribed treatment plans, management of medications, or referral to elevated level of care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FirstHealth Physician Group</li> <li>• FirstHealth Chronic Care Management</li> <li>• FirstHealth School Based Health Centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Carolina Department of the Health and Human Services</li> <li>• Journey Counseling</li> <li>• Array Behavioral Care</li> </ul>
FirstHealth Community Health - Zentangle®	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue engaging local entities and raising awareness of the mental health benefits of the Zentangle® Program which demonstrates mindfulness through art</li> <li>• Broaden the reach of the program across the county through community outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FirstHealth Community Health Services</li> </ul>	
Collaborations with Local Behavioral Health Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referrals provided to local agencies based on the needs of individual patients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FirstHealth Behavioral Health Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Behavioral Health Providers</li> <li>• Trillium</li> </ul>