



# *Ministry in Action*

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2024



Ascension

*Rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer,  
we commit ourselves to serving all persons with  
special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable.*

*Our Catholic health ministry is dedicated to  
spiritually centered, holistic care which sustains and  
improves the health of individuals and communities.*

*We are advocates for a compassionate and  
just society through our actions and our words.*



**Ascension's Ministry in Action Report for Fiscal Year 2024 demonstrates  
our commitment to community health and lasting social impact.**

Data for this report was gathered from diverse sources, including patient services, financial assistance and community benefit initiatives conducted from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

The report highlights critical data metrics. In some cases the data is calculated by a third party and/or includes reasonable estimates. We remain committed to continually refining our approach to enhance our data collection and reporting practices so that we can ensure that our Mission, to foster health equity and improve the well-being of our communities, is both resilient and impactful.

## A letter from our CEO

Each word in Ascension's Mission statement carries great meaning. The first nine words, "rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer," capture our rich history and tradition. Ascension is recognized both locally and nationally for the healing presence we provide through clinical excellence.

Over the years, I have reflected on what it truly means to be a loving ministry. Jesus, through His examples, offers us a profound invitation — to be agents of love through each decision we make, every communication we share and each interaction we have. While every associate and partner within Ascension brings unique perspectives, we are united by our Mission, grounded in a tradition that allows us to grow together toward a future filled with hope.

**I am immensely proud to showcase through this report the significant impact Ascension has on the communities we serve. The title "Ministry in Action," reflects our active engagement and underscores our commitment to answering God's call by seeking out, listening to and caring for those who are poor, vulnerable and in need.**

Finally, I want to emphasize the conclusion of our Mission statement: "through our actions and our words." This report gives voice to how our loving ministry is actively at work, bringing Ascension's Mission to life each day.

**We demonstrate this through our commitment to delivering quality and safe health outcomes, enhancing the consumer experience, impacting communities and extending our reach beyond the walls of our facilities and supporting and investing in our associates.**



**Joseph Impicciche, JD, MHA**  
President and Chief Executive Officer, Ascension

# Ministry in Action

## ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

### About Ascension

4 Building on the legacy of our past and innovating new ways to bring our Mission to life as we serve our communities.



### Quality and Safety

11 Delivering quality care and safe outcomes that help to sustain and improve the health of individuals and entire communities.



### Consumer Experience

39 Elevating the consumer experience by putting the patient at the center of everything we do.



### Community Impact

57 Advocating for a compassionate and just society through both our actions and our words.



### Investing in Our Associates

89 Embracing a spiritually centered holistic approach to helping our associates flourish.



# ABOUT ASCENSION

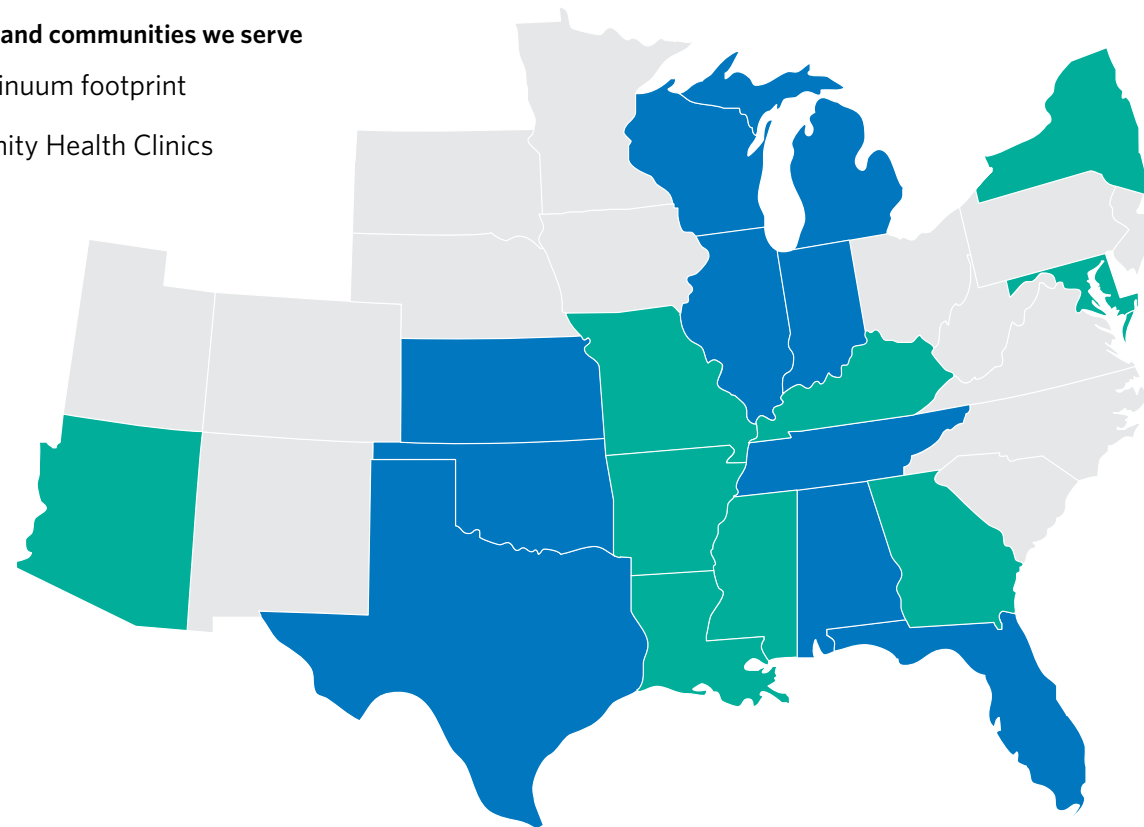
Ascension operates 136 hospitals, 39 senior living facilities and several community health ministries in 18 states and the District of Columbia, while providing a variety of clinical services, venture capital investing, investment management, biomedical engineering, facilities management, risk management and contracting through Ascension’s own group purchasing organization.

**\$28.6 BILLION**  
Total operating revenue

**\$2.1 BILLION**  
In care of persons living in poverty and other community benefit programs

Sites of care and communities we serve

- Full continuum footprint
- Community Health Clinics



The maps and lists in this section depict the depth and breadth of Ascension’s presence in the communities we are privileged to serve.

## COMMUNITY SITES OF CARE

- 1,400 Ascension employed clinician network locations
- 295 Physical therapy outpatient clinics (owned and partnered)
- 263 Imaging locations
- 76 Ambulatory surgery centers

## 2024 At a glance



**15.7M**

PHYSICIAN OFFICES  
AND CLINIC VISITS



**6.1M**

UNIQUE LIVES  
SERVED

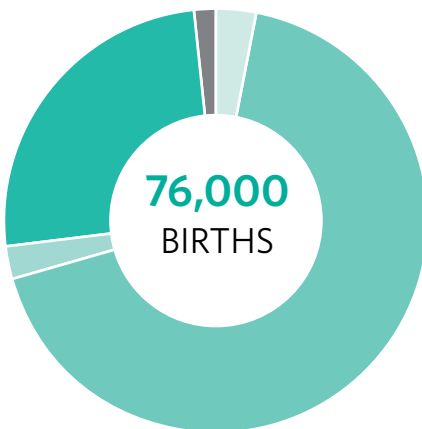


**263K**

OBSERVATION  
DAYS



**3.1M** EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS



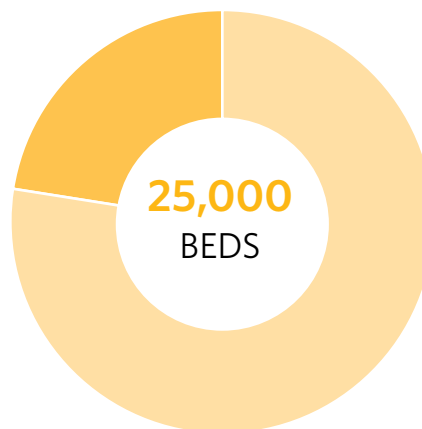
### Encounters

- 725K Discharges
- 1.6M Equivalent discharges
- 595K Surgery visits
- .6M Virtual provider office visits
- 331K Urgent care visits



### Clinicians and caregivers

- 37K Affiliated providers
- 6,800 Employed providers
- 48K Nurses



### Acute and post-acute care

- 136 Hospitals
- 39 Post-acute facilities





## Living our legacy

Compelled by faith, Ascension’s founders cherished a sacred vision of caring for individuals experiencing poverty and those whose social conditions placed them on the margins of society, no matter the cost to themselves. From roots in Europe dating back centuries, five religious orders journeyed in the name of charity to regions of the United States that would remain wild and inhospitable for many decades, animated by a single purpose: To serve those most in need, wherever they were needed.

From early beginnings on the East Coast, our founders gradually began to spread west and south as they tended migrant communities in desperate need of proper medical and spiritual care. While early settlers traveled in hopes of personal fortune, expansion and exploration, the Sisters and Brothers saw great need and responded accordingly, building what we know today as our education and housing and social services systems.

Equipped with few resources and often facing dire circumstances, these brave men and women set out to care for the vulnerable and forgotten, often at great peril to themselves. With resilience, creativity, fortitude and an unshakable faith in God, they brokered strong partnerships with people from all walks of life in rural and urban areas alike. Facing hunger, fierce elements, wild animals and more, they journeyed on, trusting day by day in the goodness of their work while innovatively multiplying their limited resources to astounding levels.

Their stories of resourcefulness, courage and compassion inspire us to honor their legacies and serve all persons, going where the need is greatest — today, tomorrow and into the future. It is this spirit of tenacity and unwavering commitment to the common good that we strive to emulate, never forgetting the sacrifices and profound faith of those who have served before us.

**Together, we are positioned to meet the evolving needs of the people and communities we are blessed to serve today, continuing a 2,000-year legacy and promise rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer to serve all persons, with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable.**



**Tom VanOsdol, MS, MA, MBA, FACHE**  
Executive Vice President and Chief Mission Integration Officer,  
Ascension

# STORIES FROM OUR HISTORY

*A glimpse into Ascension’s rich history and the stories that inform it*

1866

## THE ALEXIAN BROTHERS

Brother Bonaventure Thelen founded a hospital in a wood frame house in Chicago where, in his arms, he carried the hospital’s first patient on June 12, 1866. When the cholera epidemic hit Chicago, the Brothers earned a local reputation for compassion and professional expertise toward society’s most disadvantaged, extending to the modern era in their care for early HIV/AIDS patients, many of whom were rejected by prevailing cultural opinions of the time.

1903

## SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH OF CARONDELET

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet opened their first hospital in 1903 in Amsterdam, New York. Over the years, their sites of care spread to the Midwest, south to Georgia and west to Tucson, Los Angeles, Idaho and Pasco, Washington. Their legacy dates back centuries as the first Sisters came from France to the United States in 1836 in response to the bishop’s request for a religious group to open a school for the deaf on the outskirts of St. Louis.



1846

## DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY

When the Daughters arrived in Milwaukee in 1846, they encountered many critical health crises, such as typhoid, cholera and smallpox outbreaks. They opened St. John’s Infirmary in 1848 and compassionately tended to patients for whom no one else would care. Watching as dying immigrants were cast overboard so as not to infect the harbors, the Sisters felt strongly that this did not uphold the dignity of their fellow human beings and set up quarantine protocols to care for them safely.

1889

## SISTERS OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER

The Sisters arrived in Wichita in 1889 and took over management of St. Francis Hospital in response to the great need of its communities, building a vibrant health organization from very humble origins that continues today. At the cornerstone laying in 1957, the local Bishop said: “I consider the growth and development of St. Francis Hospital to be the greatest story in the history of Wichita. It is a Cinderella story, almost unbelievable. [It’s been achieved through] a group of dedicated women who work seven days a week and every week of the year.”

1917

## SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF NAZARETH

On September 19, 1917, the first patient was wheeled up the drive to the four-story brick structure of the Borgess hospital in Michigan. The Sisters promptly placed the hospital at the disposal of health officials during the influenza outbreak of 1918. Driven by the love of their “dear neighbor,” they kept the death toll in Kalamazoo relatively low, giving up their own beds and sleeping in closets, serving hundreds of suffering patients day and night.

## ASCENSION TODAY

In 1999, Ascension was formed and has continued to adapt to the changing needs of the times over the decades. Inspired by the example of those who came before us, we remain steadfast in our commitment to serving all persons, with special attention to those most vulnerable, while leading innovations in health and health equity in communities across the country.



A healthcare worker in a black uniform is assisting an elderly man with a cane on a staircase. The man is wearing a blue t-shirt and dark shorts. The healthcare worker is holding the man's arm and the cane. The background shows a staircase with wooden railings.

# Quality and Safety

## CHAPTER 1

### *Quality and Safety*

**11** | Delivering quality care and safe outcomes that help to sustain and improve the health of individuals and entire communities.

OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFE AND QUALITY CARE .....	14
OUR HEALING WITHOUT HARM JOURNEY .....	16
We've Got Your Back .....	18
Culture of Safety Survey .....	19
The Everyday Hero of Safety program .....	20
OUR BROAD REACH ADVANCES QUALITY CARE .....	21
Recognize and Rescue .....	22
A FOCUSED EFFORT ON PREVENTING AND MANAGING INFECTIONS .....	23
GUIDED BY GOALS TO REACH THE MOST VULNERABLE .....	26
TRANSFORMING EMERGENCY CARE DELIVERY STANDARDS .....	29
RESEARCHING SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY AND THE FUTURE .....	32
Ascension Clinical Research Institute (ACRI) .....	32





## Leader letter

When I think about my life and career, I notice a common thread, a singular calling: To make a difference in the world by helping others. One way I’ve strived to live out my calling is through my career as a physician and a health system leader. In my particular role, I recognize both the immense responsibility and the powerful capacity to improve the lives of those we serve.

This sense of purpose is reflected in the work we do every day. We support our patients not only holistically, working to address every potential need or challenge in their overall health journey, but in providing safe and quality clinical care. We view this commitment as an act of service and reverence to those who come to us in need, and no individual is to be left behind in receiving the best possible care, no matter their background or circumstances.

Despite our achievements, we’ve been modest in sharing our story. However, our work deserves recognition. In 2023-2024, our CMS star rating improved from 3.13 to 3.48, with eight hospitals earning five stars and 21 receiving four stars. The Dispensary of Hope, a program that arranges for the distribution of unused medications to those in need, distributes over 1.2 million prescriptions annually, reducing healthcare costs by \$3,161 per patient. **Over the past five years, Ascension delivered 1 in 50 U.S. babies (2% of all births in the United States) with a severe obstetric complication rate 13% below average, and 25% lower for Black/African American patients.**

These are not just statistics; they are stories of lives changed and saved. Our risk-adjusted hospital mortality rate is 12% lower than external peers. We serve extremely vulnerable populations — over 60% of our patients are covered by Medicare or Medicaid, and nearly 8% are self-pay or uninsured. By ensuring that those without means, who as a result might otherwise go without care, have access to safe, quality care and treatment, we are meeting a critical need in our communities.

I consider it one of the greatest blessings of my professional life to share in this sacred responsibility.



**Richard Fogel, MD, FACC, FHRS**  
Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer,  
Ascension



**Value of Reverence**  
Respect and compassion for  
the dignity and diversity of life

**Value of Wisdom**  
Integrating excellence  
and stewardship



# OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFE AND QUALITY CARE

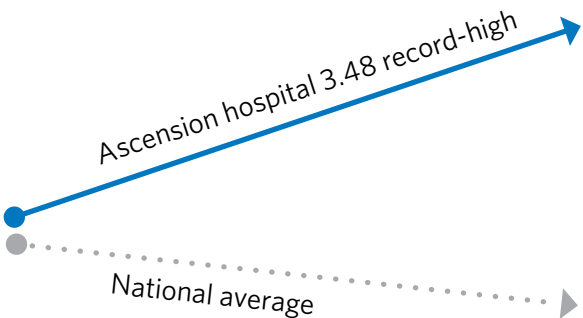
## Awards

### CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES

The 2024 national average Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) hospital star rating declined from 3.19 to 3.13.

**Ascension hospitals improved their star rating from 3.27 to a record-high 3.48.**

**8** Five-star ratings ★★★★★  
**21** Four-star ratings ★★★★☆



### LEAPFROG GROUP SAFETY RATING

**3.10 GPA**

29% improvement compared to 2019

**23 A's | 23 B's | 17 C's**

**Ascension spring 2024 grades**

4 more A's and 6 fewer C's compared to FY23



### INDUSTRY AWARDS

Recognition for quality care in these service lines

#### Orthopedics

**Ascension earned 5 types of awards**

- 29** Blue Distinction
- 3** Joint Replacement Excellence
- 2** America's 100 Best
- 1** Orthopedic Surgery Excellence
- 2** Gold distinction

#### Neurology

**9** hospitals earned **11** awards

- 5** Stroke care
- 3** Neurosciences
- 2** Cranial neurosurgery
- 1** America's 100 Best Hospitals™

## At a glance

**6.1M** **UNIQUE LIVES SERVED**

- **725,000** discharges
- **1.6 million** equivalent discharges

### ASCENSION EMPLOYED CLINICIAN NETWORK

Approximately 6,800 providers served

**15.7M** physician office and clinic visits annually Ascension-wide

Patient satisfaction stayed high and improved by almost 3 points between July 2023 and April 2024, with positive trends in 9 out of 10 markets

### SERVICE LINE STATISTICS



**2M+**

#### PATIENTS SCREENED

For behavioral health symptoms with 1,228 inpatient beds



**70**

#### CANCER CENTERS

Approximately 40,000 diagnoses annually, representing 2% of U.S. cancer cases



**7K**

#### OPEN HEART SURGERIES

Performed annually across 27 facilities



### MATERNITY

Ascension delivered 72,000-78,000 babies annually from 2019-2024, about 2% of all births in the U.S.

**Ascension has fewer severe birth complications compared to other hospitals**

Other hospitals

**13% Lower overall**

**25% Lower for Black/African Americans**

# OUR HEALING WITHOUT HARM JOURNEY

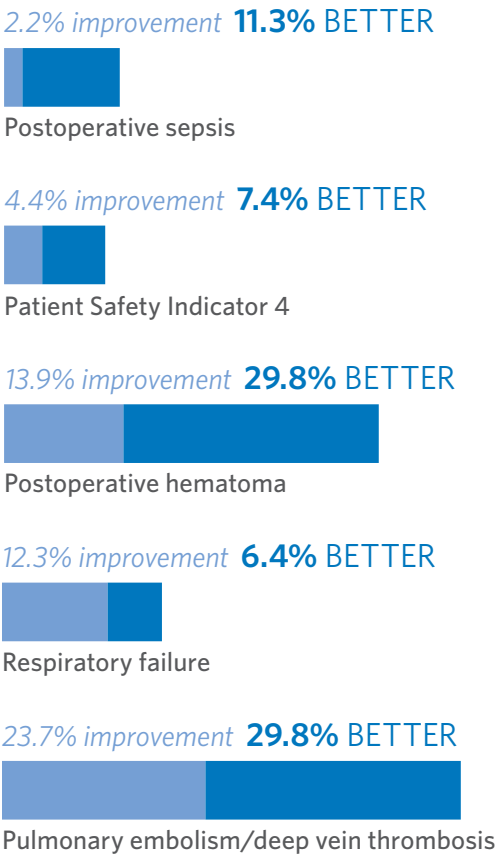
Our patients trust us during their most vulnerable moments because we are dedicated to our greatest collective promise: healing without harm. Through rigorous high-reliability practices, and a commitment to the safety of both our patients and associates, we’ve seen a notable reduction in harm and improvement in patient safety indicators.

Navigating today’s complex healthcare landscape demands resilience and the ability to adapt quickly. Success relies on high-reliability principles grounded in strong leadership, transparency, effective communication, education and ongoing learning.

Our dedication to thorough reporting has been a crucial safety measure, reflected in a 9% year-over-year improvement, enabling us to identify thousands of additional safety concerns and proactively address issues to significantly reduce harm across Ascension.

Ascension’s Patient Safety Indicator score is better than (below) the benchmark, meaning we have fewer safety complications compared to other hospitals.

14.7% **BELOW BENCHMARK**  
PATIENT SAFETY INDICATOR



## SPOTLIGHT: White House Healthcare Safety Forum

In September 2024, Ascension was one of 16 health systems invited to the White House Healthcare Safety Forum, a national event focused on improving patient and workforce safety. Dr. Richard Fogel, Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer, represented Ascension alongside leaders from government agencies, healthcare organizations and patient advocates to tackle critical challenges in patient safety.

Ascension’s inclusion in this conversation highlights our national leadership in reducing harm and eliminating health disparities in care delivery. During the forum, we reaffirmed our commitment to safety innovations that ensure patients receive the highest standard of care, no matter their background or circumstances.

As part of our ongoing efforts, we are implementing evidence-based practices and exploring new technologies to prevent harm, contributing to broader federal efforts to create safer, more equitable healthcare systems. Ascension’s dedication to these goals aligns with national priorities set by the Biden-Harris Administration and reinforces our mission to ensure every patient receives safe, quality care.

*Pictured: Richard Fogel, MD, FACC, FHRS, Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer, Ascension*

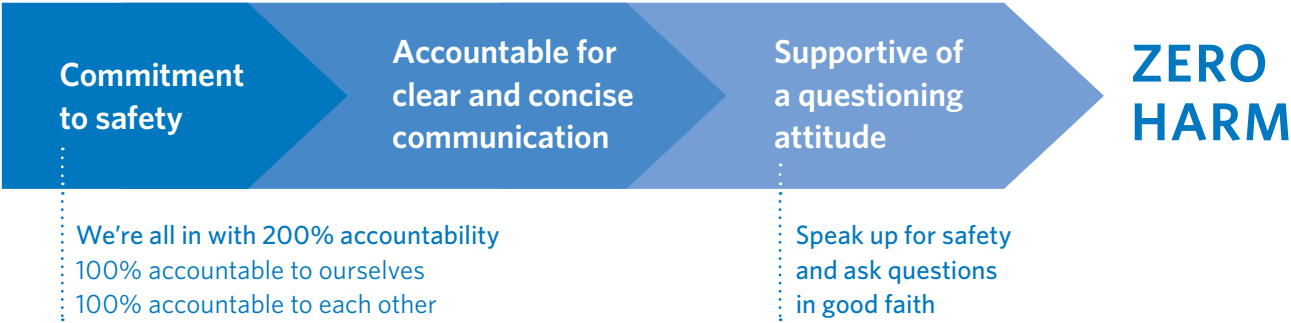




# We've Got Your Back

Ascension's groundbreaking "We've Got Your Back" campaign reaffirms our collective commitment to each other and to protecting workplace safety. The campaign empowers associates to speak up for safety, ensuring they are supported when raising concerns. Ascension prioritizes the well-being of each associate and fosters an appreciation for their diverse knowledge, skill sets and lived experiences. This diversity enriches the teams' perspective and information pool and ensures optimal patient care paths are chosen.

Our positive safety outcomes are a testament to the supportive community we've built, where each associate feels valued and safety is a top priority. Our three safety expectations are set to minimize safety events and guide us toward our goal of achieving zero harm.



# Implementing a culture of safety



## Culture of Safety Survey

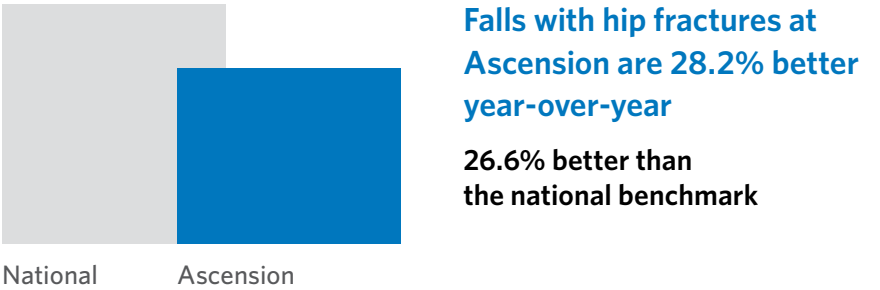
Ascension associates participated in our most recent biannual Culture of Safety Survey. This five-part survey series assesses our safety culture by examining the values, beliefs and norms that influence our associates' actions and behaviors. Last year's survey highlighted a need for more engagement with leadership. In response, our leaders have conducted over 3,200 Leadership Safety Rounds, allowing them to listen, respond and identify areas for improvement.

To further enhance our culture of safety, we have 288 Ascension-employed clinician network safety coaches, and 821 associates attended Ascension's 2nd Annual Safety Summit.



## A focus on falls

Throughout 2024, Ascension experienced a gradual decline in the rate of falls within our care settings. This achievement was driven by several key initiatives, including a comprehensive education program completed by our 48,000 Ascension nurses. As part of this effort, we also implemented a standardized system for classifying falls, which has improved reporting consistency, an essential element in helping to prevent more falls. In June 2023, we set a goal to reduce falls by 5% over one year; we exceeded this goal, in just one year. Additionally, falls with hip fractures (PSI 8) are 28.2% better year-over-year. This is 26.6% better than the national benchmark.



## Recognizing our everyday heroes

The Everyday Hero of Safety program, now in its second year, has been crucial in promoting a culture of safety at Ascension. Launched to recognize voluntary reports that lead to safety improvements, the program has recorded over 440 good catches, preventing potential harm to patients.

**These everyday heroes begin their workday like any other, but many return home having helped to prevent harm to our patients.**

Since its inception in 2022, nominations have surged from seven to 29 per month, totaling 440 nominations by June 2024. This initiative empowers colleagues to speak up for safety, reinforcing the message, “We’ve Got Your Back.”



WE’VE GOT YOUR BACK

**440** EVERYDAY HERO NOMINATIONS  
SINCE 2022

## OUR BROAD REACH ADVANCES QUALITY CARE

**Given our care for over seven million patients across our entire footprint annually, we have access to abundant experience, data and evidence-based research. Sharing best practices between sites and states has proven incredibly valuable. We feel a strong responsibility to streamline communication and information sharing across our diverse markets to ensure consistently safe and quality care.**

Our Patient Safety Organization plays a critical role in this effort, facilitating our “All Teach, All Learn” approach. In 2024, approximately 700 associates engaged in Safe Table and High-Reliability Engagements.

We distributed eight Patient Safety Alerts, 13 Patient Safety Advisories and 10 Safety Stories to ensure that critical safety information is widely shared and acted upon. **These efforts have led to remarkable improvements in patient outcomes, including a 24.7% sepsis mortality reduction and a 28.1% Black/African American mortality reduction.**



**23.6%**

**OVERALL MORTALITY REDUCTION**

*2023 compared to 2021*

**12% lower mortality relative to our  
peer comparator hospitals in 2023**





# Recognize and Rescue — a lifesaving initiative in the acute care setting

Recognize and Rescue is a multidisciplinary approach in the acute care setting, focused on identifying and optimizing best practices related to safety and quality across Ascension’s care footprint.

Through our Recognize and Rescue initiative, in just two years, we improved overall mortality raw rates by 35%, and risk-adjusted rate by 23.6%. These improvements have been seen across various racial groups, with notably positive outcomes for Black/African American patients.

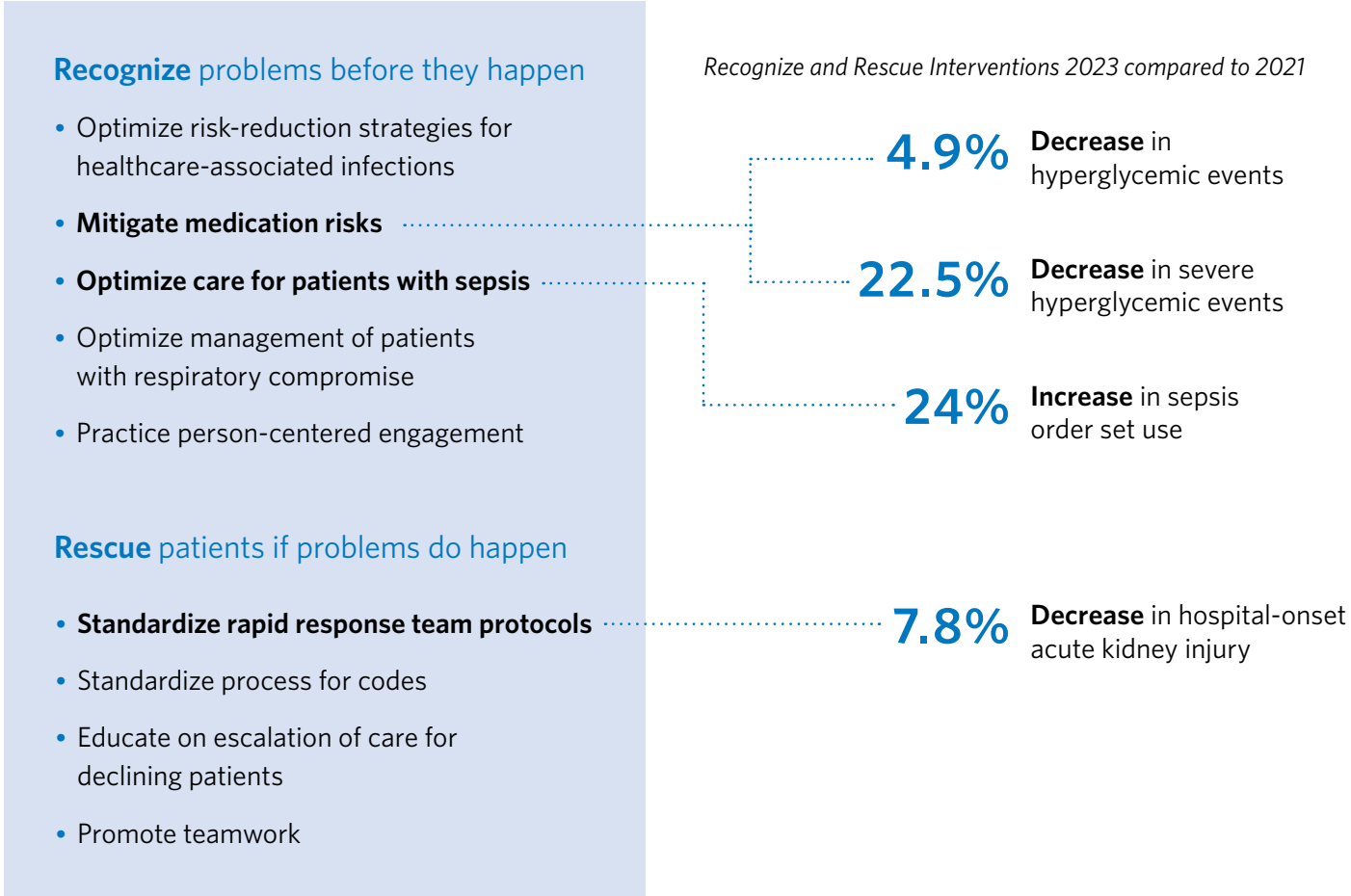
In 2021, Ascension set a goal to reduce risk-adjusted mortality in Ascension acute care facilities. With a focus on improving mortality rates and preventing avoidable adverse events, our strategy centered on mitigating risk for harm (Recognize) and promptly managing patient decompensation (Rescue). Clinical, nursing, pharmacy, analytics, quality, infection prevention, patient safety and other supporting disciplines regularly convene to support targeted improvement efforts. Running strong years later, the “Recognize and Rescue” effort provides us a foundation for standardizing best practices and processes and reducing variation in our care.

# A FOCUSED EFFORT ON PREVENTING AND MANAGING INFECTIONS

Through the implementation of standardized infectious disease protocols, Ascension has significantly reduced healthcare-associated infection rates and improved patient outcomes across our care settings. By advancing evidence-based practices, ensuring healthcare worker proficiency and fostering accountability, we have made measurable progress in combating infectious diseases.

Bloodstream infections (BSIs) are one of the most common infections in intensive care units (ICUs), affecting up to 15% of patients in their first month of care. These infections can be serious, with fatality rates ranging from 15%-20%, and even higher — up to 50% — in patients who experience organ failure. Worldwide, BSIs contribute to increased mortality in ICU patients, add to hospital stay lengths and significantly raise healthcare costs. Since launching our System-wide antimicrobial stewardship program in 2015, Ascension has become a national leader, recognized by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention in 2017.

Ascension outperformed our premier peer group in CY2023 by 16.2% in risk-adjusted mortality for infectious diseases  
And 7% better in CY2021





Preventing infections

Healthcare-associated infections are a significant concern, particularly in intensive care units where they can lead to serious complications like sepsis and septic shock. Vulnerable populations, including those with chronic diseases or compromised immune systems, are especially at risk. Ascension’s evidence-based strategies have effectively reduced these infections and improved patient outcomes.

From 2021 to 2023, our Infection Prevention teams, partnering with the clinical and nursing disciplines, achieved a substantial reduction in four publicly reported infections across Ascension. A supporting factor to this success was the focus on diagnostic stewardship, which enhanced the accuracy of infection identification and reduced unnecessary testing.

Ascension significantly reduced infections and performed better than the average hospital in the U.S. across these four key areas



Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infection (CLABSI)

30% BETTER

25% reduction 2021 compared to 2023

Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infection (CAUTI)

37% BETTER

31% reduction 2021 compared to 2023

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) Bacteremia

20% BETTER

25% reduction 2021 compared to 2023

Clostridioides difficile infection (C-diff)

25% BETTER

35% reduction 2021 compared to 2023

Other hospitals

Managing infections

In partnership with clinical teams across Ascension, the national antimicrobial stewardship team created evidence-based protocols to treat specific bloodstream infections that are associated with high morbidity and mortality. A standardized protocol for the treatment of Staphylococcus aureus, a highly concerning pathogen when it enters the bloodstream, was adopted across Ascension and resulted in a 20% decrease in deaths from S. aureus bloodstream infections by the end of 2023. In addition, we have seen improvement in other outcomes, such as a reduction in kidney injury.

Ascension’s program ensures correct antibiotic use, reduces side effects and healthcare costs and promotes teamwork and innovation in combating drug-resistant infections.

150+ INFECTION PREVENTIONISTS ENGAGED ACROSS ASCENSION EACH MONTH

SPOTLIGHT: ‘CAUTI Squad’ celebrates nine years

Ascension Saint Mary and Ascension Saint Elizabeth’s “CAUTI Squad” recently celebrated their ninth anniversary. Recognized nationally by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, this team focuses on proper urinary catheter use, diagnostic stewardship and testing. Co-chaired by Maria Evangeline Salazar, RN, CCRN, and Jessica Ramirez, RN, PCCN, they have significantly reduced catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs) and enhanced safety culture over the past eight years. Their ICU has been CAUTI-free for over 1,000 days, and they have helped develop a national protocol to be implemented this year.

CAUTIs cause patient harm. However, they are preventable. The “CAUTI Squad” exemplifies cross-departmental collaboration, improving education, meeting prevention goals and enhancing safety culture. Their work will benefit patient safety protocols nationwide. Congratulations to the “CAUTI Squad” for their dedication and impact on Ascension’s Culture of Safety.

Pictured: Ascension Saint Mary and Ascension Saint Elizabeth’s “CAUTI Squad”



# GUIDED BY GOALS TO REACH THE MOST VULNERABLE

Ascension sets ambitious goals to address health disparities, leveraging data-driven insights and collaborative efforts across its clinical and community impact teams. By identifying areas of greatest need, particularly among marginalized populations, we set measurable targets and develop action plans encompassing both clinical and social solutions. Going where the need is greatest is a commitment we’ve inherited from our founders, one that we continue to uphold with integrity in every community we serve today. Ascension’s transparent approach to goal-setting and progress-tracking underscores our responsibility as a large-scale healthcare provider to drive significant, long-term improvements in health outcomes and disparities nationwide.

## IMPACTFUL INSIGHTS

To inform our goal setting, Ascension employs a suite of tools to assess social determinants of health (SDOH), equity gaps and community health needs, collecting clinical data highlighting geographic variations and social risks. The data Ascension gathers on social risks and geographic variations is used to create personalized care plans. These plans connect patients to specific local resources, like food assistance and housing support, based on the unique needs identified. Ascension also releases market Health Equity Reports that deep-dive into key quality indicators, such as diabetes management and cancer screenings. [\(Read more about community impact in chapter 3\)](#)

## “All measures met” with diabetic care

Diabetes impacts 1 out of every 10 individuals in the United States, often accompanied by concurrent conditions such as high blood pressure and chronic kidney disease. In 2022, Ascension set out to enhance diabetes care by increasing a composite measure known as “Patients With All Measures Met” (including the following metrics: hemoglobin A1c testing and control, blood pressure management, kidney disease monitoring and use of statin therapy) by 4% compared to the 2021 baseline.

Despite the challenges posed in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ascension surpassed its target and realized a 4.8% relative improvement from baseline, leading to more than 8,500 Ascension patients fulfilling all diabetes care standards. This accomplishment marked the initial step in our ongoing endeavors to tackle significant disparities faced by individuals living with diabetes. Ascension remains dedicated to enhancing compliance with diabetic measures and implementing a more comprehensive approach to healthcare, with continued improvement in this measure year after year.

## Better with age — increasing Medicare annual wellness visits

Ascension aims to increase Medicare annual wellness visit (AWV) rates for patients 65 and older. During these visits, patients discuss their health history, advance care planning, screenings and health goals with their doctor.

Despite being a valuable and free benefit, many patients are overdue for their AWV, largely affecting underserved populations such as racial minorities, rural residents or those dually enrolled in Medicaid. Ascension aims to reach these groups of enrollees, providing invaluable preventive screenings and customized health plans before the onset or worsening of certain medical conditions. Furthermore, studies have estimated that completing an AWV is associated with up to a 5.7% reduction in healthcare spending during the year following the visit. By 2040, 1 in 5 Americans will be 65 or older, making these visits increasingly important.

APPROXIMATELY 80,000 ADDITIONAL SENIORS SERVED



23%

### IMPROVEMENT IN AWV COMPLETIONS

6,500 Advance care planning discussions during AWV visits



**23.7%** Improvement in AWV compliance among Black/African American patients

8,500 additional completions



**11.7%** Increase in colorectal cancer screenings in AWV completers

19,838 additional screenings



**14.8%** Increase in breast cancer screenings in AWV completers

13,324 additional screenings



### NUDGING TOWARDS BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES

To help achieve our Medicare annual wellness visit goal, we introduced the voluntary, evidence-based “nudge” campaigns using personalized messages via email and text, resulting in over 58,851 scheduled AWWs since 2023. By applying behavioral science and technology for patients that opt into this program, our nudge campaigns are proactively improving the health of seniors in communities across the nation. *(Read more about nudge campaigns in chapter 2)*

#### Looking ahead — setting out to increase screenings

Looking ahead, Ascension is using a voluntary nudge technology to boost cancer screenings among vulnerable populations, with a goal of increasing breast and colorectal cancer screening rates by 6% among high Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) groups by 2026. The SVI, developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, measures a community’s resilience based on factors such as socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity and housing conditions.

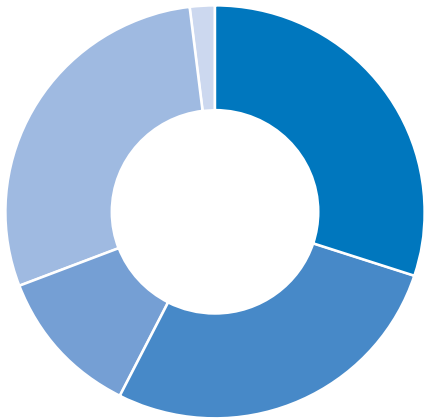


**This initiative focuses on patients aged 45-75 for colorectal screenings and women aged 50-74 for breast cancer screenings who have seen an Ascension-employed primary care provider at least twice in the past 24 months.**

Early trials showed promising results, with a 27% increase in breast cancer screenings and a 17% rise in flu vaccinations for patients who opt into this voluntary program, demonstrating the effectiveness of nudges in closing care gaps and reducing healthcare disparities.

## TRANSFORMING EMERGENCY CARE DELIVERY STANDARDS

### At a glance



3.1M

EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

- 28.89% Medicaid (672,439)
- 26.39% Medicare (614,128)
- 11.08% Self-pay (257,919)
- 27.84% Commercial (648,040)
- 1.73% Other (40,304)

2,200

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PROVIDERS



#### TOP 10 AILMENTS treated in the emergency department

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Other chest pain                  | 6. Viral infection, unspecified                                       |
| 2. Acute upper respiratory infection | 7. Nausea with vomiting   |
| 3. Urinary tract infection           | 8. Flu due to acute respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses |
| 4. Covid-19                          | 9. Headache, unspecified  |
| 5. Sepsis, unspecified organism      | 10. Pneumonia organism  |

120

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

12 FREE-STANDING  
5 PEDIATRIC



## Promoting primary care attachment

Ascension aims to enhance primary care attachment rates for uninsured individuals and those eligible for financial assistance or Medicaid from 2023 to 2025. The Community Impact Team is leading this three-year plan, utilizing the New York University Emergency Room Algorithm to identify opportunities for improving primary care access. The goal is to achieve a reduction in avoidable emergency department visits by 5% based on our 2022 benchmarks. This initiative emphasizes better access to primary care and community resources, improving individual health outcomes and reducing strain on emergency services. The initiative helps to ensure care is provided in the most appropriate settings, safeguarding access to necessary medical services while enhancing overall care quality and efficiency.

## Opioid stewardship

Ascension is addressing the opioid epidemic through rigorous stewardship practices, focusing on balancing effective pain management while reducing opioids administered during emergency visits and prescribed at discharge when possible. When an opioid is warranted, our aim is to effectively manage patient pain so as to mitigate the potential for patients to develop chemical dependencies. Over the past two years, the percentage of patients receiving an opioid prescription at discharge from an Ascension emergency department has decreased from 7.3% to 6.1%. Additionally, we've reduced the number of higher-risk opioid prescriptions, which are those given at stronger doses, from 0.35% to 0.27% of encounters.

**Committed to patient well-being, Ascension prioritizes effective pain management with non-opioid alternatives whenever possible, while ensuring pain treatment remains central to comprehensive patient care.**

Pain, whether acute or chronic, can deeply affect a person's physical, emotional and mental health, creating barriers to healing and recovery. For patients with serious, life-altering conditions, our approach includes access to dedicated palliative care teams who bring comfort through personalized, non-opioid pain management options. These specialized teams, including doctors, nurses, social workers and chaplains, focus on easing pain while addressing symptoms like anxiety, fatigue and depression, ensuring a holistic approach that respects each patient's journey. Through coordinated care, we help patients and families find relief and improve quality of life, regardless of the stage of illness.



## Decreasing door-to-provider wait time

**Ascension has enhanced the efficiency and quality of care across its emergency departments, making significant strides in reducing patient wait times to see a provider over the past three years. Initial 18-minute waits have been reduced to a median of just 11 minutes across all Ascension emergency departments.**

This achievement is a testament to our commitment to prompt and accessible care and positions us as a leader in emergency medical services. According to the Emergency Department Benchmarking Alliance, which surveys 2,200 emergency departments nationwide, Ascension's door-to-provider times consistently outperform median benchmarks for similarly sized facilities.

Our door-to-provider efforts have also profoundly impacted patient access and outcomes. By reducing wait times, Ascension has significantly decreased the percentage of patients leaving without being seen (LWBS), from 2.3% in the previous fiscal year to just 1.2% in the current fiscal year. The reduction in LWBS alone allowed us to care for 28,233 more patients from July 2023 to July 2024.



**35% REDUCTION IN WAIT TIME TO SEE A PROVIDER FROM 2023 TO 2024**

**Ascension performed 6 minutes less than the emergency department benchmark analysis median of 174 minutes**



**6% REDUCTION IN LENGTH OF STAY**

For emergency department discharges  
An average of 168 minutes for FY24 2024

# RESEARCHING SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY AND THE FUTURE

The Ascension Clinical Research Institute (ACRI) is committed to equitably advancing the health and wellness of the patients and communities we serve through discovery, continuous improvement and care transformation. Our researchers participate in clinical trials supported through the government and drug and device companies, as well as conduct independent research.

**Our national research program includes:**

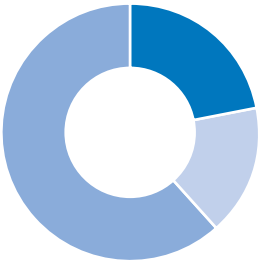
- A multi-site clinical trials coordination center
- A single, Ascension-wide Institutional Review Board
- Centralized research business and legal offices
- Therapeutic-area clinical research forums
- Research data analytics in collaboration with the Ascension Data Sciences Institute



Ascension's extensive network enables the Ascension Clinical Research Institute to support more than 3,000 active studies at any given time



3,136  
OPEN ACTIVE  
STUDIES



**RESEARCH TYPE**

- 16.6% Cardiovascular
- 22% Oncology
- 61.4% Other

**RESEARCH FUNDED**

3.1% GOVERNMENT	21.8% INDUSTRY
10.4% CO-OP/FOUNDATION	64.8% INSTITUTIONAL

## At a glance

Today, throughout 12 ministry markets

5,540+  
ADULTS AND CHILDREN  
ENROLLED IN  
CLINICAL TRIALS

1,120  
TOTAL OPEN  
CLINICAL TRIALS

Of those open clinical trials in 2024,  
**67.5%** DRUG TRIALS  
**32.5%** DEVICE TRIALS



687  
PUBLICATIONS FEATURED  
ASCENSION RESEARCH





# Streamlining clinical trial operations for efficiency and impact

Clinicians across Ascension are actively conducting hundreds of studies to explore new treatments and improve patient care. In October 2022, Ascension streamlined its research oversight by consolidating 14 separate boards into a single Institutional Review Board (IRB), which now includes regional panels and a dedicated office focused on consistency and efficiency in the review process.

Through a standardized IRB and Clinical Trials Management System, ACRI is optimizing research processes, billing and compliance standards. Integrating tasks such as ethics reviews, contract management and budgeting into a single system has facilitated a smoother and more consistent setup of trials. This structure promotes broader participation in research and enhances coordination across different sites, enabling doctors and researchers to share best practices and align their efforts.

With 11 network trials currently running across various disciplines, including cardiology, oncology and neuroscience, Ascension leverages its broad network to conduct life-changing research.

ACRI and Ascension Data Science Institute (ADSI) have partnered with the Oncology Service Line to develop a national research strategy specifically aimed at advancing cancer care.



*By aligning our research efforts, we have a tremendous opportunity to move the needle on cancer care across our System and even nationally, and, due to our size and expertise, this coordinated approach can make Ascension an attractive research partner for trials and large studies.*



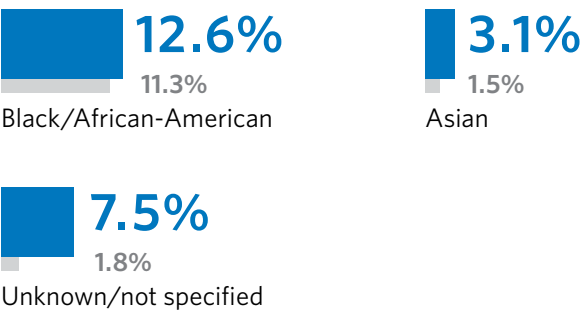
**Richard Fogel, MD, FACC, FHRS**  
Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer,  
Ascension

# Addressing long-standing gaps in clinical trial representation

Ascension’s commitment to diversity in clinical trials is pivotal in addressing historical gaps in healthcare knowledge. Our clinical trials closely reflect the demographics of our patient population — a significant achievement considering the well-documented national underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities in research studies. This success stems from our unified clinical trials management system, which provides insights into participant demographics.

Through this system, we pinpoint areas for improvement and identify measures to enhance diversity. For instance, by addressing logistical barriers and fostering trust within communities, we’ve seen increased participation from underrepresented groups. This inclusive approach to recruitment is crucial as it helps us understand treatment and medication effectiveness across diverse populations, contributing to more equitable healthcare outcomes.

Ascension identifies measures to increase participation from underrepresented groups among clinical trials participants



- Ascension patient population
- Clinical trials participants

Additionally, 67.8% of participants were White (non-Hispanic), compared to 60.5% of the Ascension patient population. Hispanic or Latino participants made up 6.1% of the trials, while they represent 5.7% of the patient population. Other groups accounted for 11.6% of trial participants, compared to 10.7% of the Ascension patient population.





**SPOTLIGHT: Representation in research**

Ascension’s efforts to enhance diversity in clinical trials have been exemplified by its work at Ascension DePaul Services in New Orleans. Recognizing the importance of representation in research, we have focused on engaging diverse populations effectively. Under the leadership of Frederick Masoudi, MD, Chief Science Officer, Ascension integrated a clinical trial at DePaul aimed at improving diabetes control through a cognitive behavioral therapy app.

The trial at DePaul was a major success, achieving exceptional enrollment rates within the predominantly ethnic minority community. The initiative advanced healthcare research and strengthened community trust in clinical trials, addressing historical barriers and fostering a supportive environment for research participation.

*The study at Ascension DePaul exemplifies how a clinician well-known and trusted within the community, paired with a research coordinator who identifies closely with individuals in that community, significantly contributes to participation. We recognize that trust is an issue we need to address directly, as mistrust is entirely justified given the historical context of research in underserved communities.*



**Frederick Masoudi, MD**  
Chief Science Officer, Ascension





# Consumer Experience



## CHAPTER 2

### Consumer Experience

39 | Elevating the consumer experience by putting the patient at the center of everything we do.

ASCENSION CONSUMER EXPERIENCE .....	42
BEFORE ENTERING OUR DOORS — PRE-CARE INNOVATIONS .....	44
Ascension One .....	45
WITHIN OUR WALLS — ON-SITE CONSUMER ENHANCEMENTS .....	48
Our Service Commitments.....	48
Wayfinding.....	51
Language services .....	52
WHEN YOU LEAVE — POST-CARE ADVANCEMENTS .....	53
Real-time listening.....	53





## Leader letter

My journey into healthcare is deeply personal, shaped by the experience of caring for loved ones as they navigated complex health journeys. This intimate exposure provided me with a unique, firsthand view of the American healthcare system and ignited a passion for transforming it into an experience more deeply centered on the patient and the family and friends who go on the journey with them. Coming from outside the healthcare industry, I aim to bring a fresh perspective and learnings from other industries, envisioning a future where we thoughtfully advance the experience so it is centered around the behaviors, attitudes and needs of those we serve, making healthcare less overwhelming for patients and their families.

Have you ever been cared for by a group of people, and known they really care for you? That’s how our Mission comes to life at Ascension. From our schedulers and clinicians to those who keep things running behind the scenes, we put the patient and their family and friends at the center of everything we do. Powered by our Value of Creativity: courageous innovation, we are driven to push beyond the boundaries of today to imagine how healthcare will serve you better tomorrow. Implementing bold approaches that prioritize human-centered, holistic care means going to where the needs are greatest and removing friction every step of the way.

**We view our commitment to the consumer experience as both a calling and an opportunity for continual growth. By thinking differently and transforming every touchpoint from pre-care to post-care into an opportunity to deliver exceptional experiences, we remain committed to meeting the evolving needs of our consumers.**

I chose Ascension because of the Ministry’s willingness to create transformative change and its dedication to making lasting personal connections with those we serve. Together, we will continue to innovate and refine our approach to ensure healthcare is as compassionate and effortless as possible.



**Carol Campbell**  
Senior Vice President and Chief Experience Officer,  
Ascension



**Value of Creativity**  
Courageous innovation

**Value of Reverence**  
Respect for the dignity  
and diversity of life



# ASCENSION CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

## Consumer-centered care

### Making every interaction count

We understand that healthcare experiences are deeply personal. We are called to care for the whole person and treat each human life that we have the honor to care for with the dignity, grace and compassion they deserve. Driven by this calling, we are reimagining our consumer experience by embracing a comprehensive, proactive and innovative approach.

Every interaction, across all touchpoints — human, physical and digital — is guided by a deep understanding of consumer behaviors, attitudes and needs.

By breaking free from the traditional models of “patient experience” and adopting a modernized approach aligned with evolving expectations, we aim to transform our experience — powered by our exceptional people.

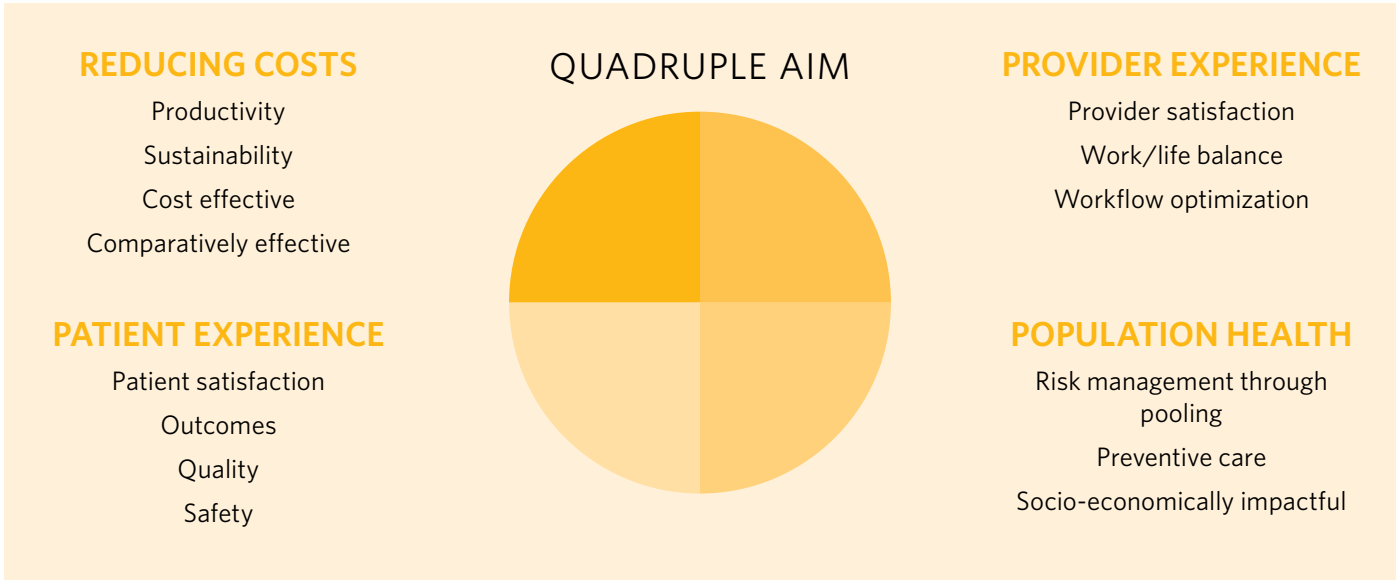


EXPERIENCE  
HUMAN | PHYSICAL | DIGITAL

## Consumer voice in decision-making

We place our consumers at the center of everything we do. A foundational change in our approach is using consumer feedback to guide how we shape their experience. By adopting best-in-class techniques from leading Fortune 100 companies, we’ve implemented a systematic way to stay connected — daily — to the voices of our patients. We rely on their input to guide decisions, both big and small, ensuring that we deliver experiences that serve them and eliminate the friction often associated with healthcare in the U.S.

Our dedicated listening approach enhances our ability to deliver on the Quadruple Aim, a framework focused on improving patient outcomes, enhancing the consumer experience, reducing costs and supporting the well-being of healthcare providers.



## Leveraging expertise from healthcare and beyond

We’ve brought together skilled professionals from both inside and outside healthcare, blending their expertise with input from patients and associates to enhance how we care for consumers. The words “hospital” and “hospitality” share the Latin root *hospes*, which means “host” or “guest” and reflects the idea of providing care and shelter, and “loving the stranger.” In this spirit, Ascension draws on practices from a range of industries, including hospitality, tech, aviation and consumer products, to reimagine healthcare delivery. This creates a more intuitive, personalized experience that is connected, efficient and responsive to individual needs.

# BEFORE ENTERING OUR DOORS — PRE-CARE ADVANCEMENTS

Ascension is enhancing the pre-care experience with new digital tools and services that make finding and scheduling care easier for patients and their families.

The updated ascension.org website and the new Ascension One app are at the forefront of this effort, providing convenient access to care through user-friendly platforms. Consumers can now easily search for and schedule appointments, view clinician ratings and manage their healthcare needs — all from the convenience of their device.

## Reimagined Ascension website



1M+  
USERS PER MONTH

Engaging with the Find Care experience since its launch

We've made it easier for patients and their families to find and book care with enhanced digital tools and expanded chat support.

The new Find Care feature on ascension.org, co-created with consumers, clinicians and operators, is available across all Ascension markets. With its user-friendly search tools, Find Care simplifies the pre-care process for our patients, making it easier to find providers and schedule appointments.



As part of our ongoing efforts to improve patient access, Ascension has recently rolled out updates to the Find Care tool

**More self-scheduling options:** Expanding the range of services that patients can schedule directly through the platform, providing greater flexibility and convenience.

**Insurance coverage:** Searching by type of insurance accepted, making it easier for patients to choose a provider that fits their coverage.

**Clinician ratings:** Giving patients the ability to view clinician ratings.

## Introducing Ascension One

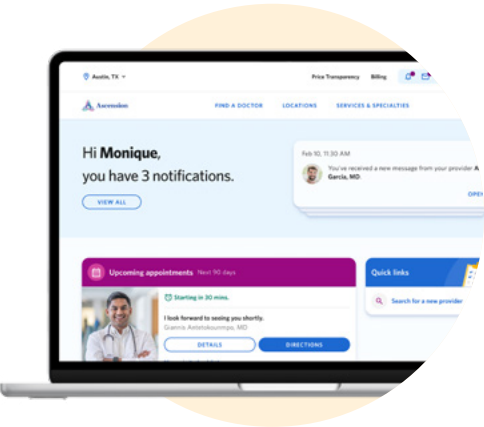
Ascension One is an all-in-one app and online experience designed to help patients efficiently manage their health. Whether scheduling appointments, viewing medical records or communicating with care teams, the app brings everything together in one place. In a healthcare landscape that's often fragmented, Ascension One offers a streamlined experience that makes it easier for patients to stay on top of their health.

In just the four months since its launch in Pensacola, Jacksonville, Austin and Nashville, Ascension One gained over 50,000 users. These results highlight the growing need for convenient healthcare solutions, and Ascension One is already making a noticeable impact by simplifying how patients manage their care.

### INTRODUCING ASCENSION ONE

Simplifying our fragmented digital portfolio to drive growth

- 38 PATIENT PORTALS
- 11 PAYMENT PORTALS
- 4 TELEHEALTH PLATFORMS
- 3 SCHEDULING SOLUTIONS



We are thrilled by the stronger-than-anticipated response to Ascension One. We are now serving over 50,000 consumers since its release; this demonstrates the platform's value and how we're addressing the evolving needs of consumers, patients and associates by offering care through their preferred channels.

**Raj Mohan**  
Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing and Digital Experience Officer, Ascension

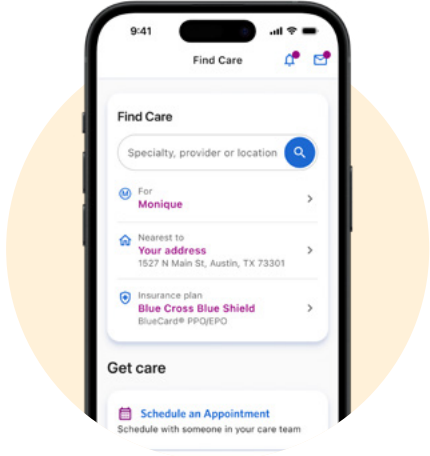


24/7 Call center scheduling support

To better meet patient needs and ensure care is always accessible, Ascension has introduced 24/7 call center scheduling support in select markets, expanding appointment booking assistance. This after-hours service allows patients the flexibility to reach someone regarding their schedule needs at any time, day or night, without being limited by traditional business hours.



**TESTIMONIAL:** *Appreciate the scheduling process and the telephone availability (not an endless series of prompts).*



Chat for scheduling

Ascension is making care more convenient by offering a voluntary web-based chat option, a growing preference among patients, which also enhances the scheduling experience for our associates. By offering this highly convenient channel, we ensure patients can reach us whenever they need to. For our associates, offering chat reduces call volume and allows them to handle multiple inquiries more efficiently. Available on our website and the Ascension One app, chat is available to schedule appointments and access support seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT, offering quick assistance and a seamless, accessible experience.



**TESTIMONIAL:** *Scheduling staff patiently worked with me to schedule me in spite of my time constraints due to upcoming travel.*

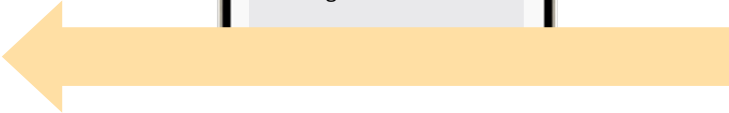
Keeping your health on track with nudge campaigns

Creating a better consumer experience means more than just delivering exceptional care — it’s about ensuring the proper care happens at the right time. To achieve this, Ascension has introduced its voluntary “nudge” campaigns. These evidence-based strategies, rolled out across our footprint in 2023, use personalized messages via email and text to gently remind patients to set follow-up appointments, take their medications, schedule annual wellness visits and complete screenings.



1,350+ PRIMARY CARE PRACTICES  
Using nudge campaigns across all markets

50k SCHEDULED ANNUAL WELLNESS VISITS (AWVS)  
As a result of the nudge campaigns



# WITHIN OUR WALLS — ON-SITE CONSUMER ENHANCEMENT

In addition to enhancing the pre-care experience, we are also dedicated to making sure that once patients and their families arrive, their time within our walls is marked by care, comfort and support. From the moment they enter, we focus on providing a thoughtful and reassuring experience throughout their visit.

To achieve this, we are focused on creating calming spaces, reducing wait times and offering language services to meet the diverse needs of our communities. As we continue to innovate, we are also making it easier for consumers to navigate our facilities, ensuring every part of their visit is easily accessible.

## Our service commitments

We foster a culture of service excellence that is guided by our Service Commitments — a foundational service promise to extend kindness, listen and work together. These commitments are upheld by everyone who interacts with our patients and their loved ones — not just clinical staff. By enabling our teams to consistently deliver authentic, genuine experiences, we build relationships that benefit our patients, associates and the entire organization. A strong culture is essential to delivering great experiences because it ensures that every interaction, no matter the role, is rooted in shared values, creating a cohesive environment where patients feel truly respected and cared for.

### Our three Service Commitments

#### EXTEND KINDNESS | LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND | SERVE TOGETHER

Our commitment to exceptional service is deeply rooted in empowering our associates, who are the driving force behind our experience, influencing roughly 70% of our Net Promoter Score (NPS)—a key metric that measures customer loyalty and satisfaction by asking patients how likely they are to recommend our services to others.



## Reducing and communicating wait times

To improve patient satisfaction, we've taken a proactive approach to keeping patients informed about wait times throughout their visit. While our actual wait times continue to decrease — initial 18-minute waits have been reduced to a median of just 11 minutes across all Ascension emergency departments — the perception of wait time was still an opportunity for growth. We have pivoted our approach and now provide regular updates throughout the visit, keeping patients informed and reassured.

Regular updates to keep consumers informed creates a calmer, more trusting environment where patients feel valued and respected. Additionally, we've enhanced the arrival experience by training associates on the importance of first impressions, providing them with practical tips to ensure patients feel welcomed and reassured from the moment they arrive.



11  
MINUTES

Average wait time across  
all Ascension emergency  
departments

*Reduced from initial 18-minute wait*

By keeping patients informed regularly, we saw a significant increase in satisfaction, which led us to expand this practice to other care settings. This approach improves the consumer experience and reduces anxiety, which often stems from uncertainty or a need for information.

This work started in our emergency departments with a focus on wait times and communication. Keeping patients informed creates a calmer environment which is better for patient care and can help ease the workload for nurses. Clear and transparent communication has resulted in higher Net Promoter Scores (NPS) and a better experience for both patients and staff.



**TESTIMONIAL:** *Everything was professional and truly perfect. Going to the ER can be a little intimidating, but I quickly felt at ease with each step in the process and enjoyed the level of care provided.*





## Creating calming spaces

**We are committed to creating clean, calming spaces that reflect our high standards of care.**

Later this year, we will introduce new emergency department waiting room standards and enhanced cleaning protocols, ensuring a consistent environment across all facilities. These efforts are reinforced by our Care Ready training, which empowers associates to understand and deliver the ideal care experience. Together, these initiatives create healing spaces that promote patient recovery and satisfaction.



*Drawing from over two decades in hospitality, I've always believed that a well-designed space can have a profound impact on how people feel and interact. In healthcare, this translates to creating environments in our emergency departments that provide warmth and comfort and also deliver exceptional functionality for our associates.*

*By collaborating with top design and environmental experts, we've introduced elements that ensure our patients and their families experience tranquility from the moment they walk in. These efforts go beyond aesthetics; they are crucial to delivering the kind of service that builds trust and satisfaction and play a key role in calming our consumers during times that are typically stressful. Every detail matters.*



**Adam Galea**  
Director, Consumer Experience - Physical Environments, Ascension

## Looking ahead: A focus on wayfinding

We are setting out to create a seamless wayfinding experience for every patient, visitor and associate, built on our foundational experience elements: Human, Physical and Digital. By equipping associates with tools and resources, we will empower them to provide personalized, supportive guidance. Our aim is for Ascension spaces to be thoughtfully and intentionally designed for intuitive navigation, using clear signage and maps and strategic color coding, numbering and landmarks that simplify orientation.

**Complementing these physical elements, we will provide intuitive digital tools that offer essential information before and during visits. This evolution in wayfinding will benefit patients, their families and our associates alike, transforming the healthcare experience into one that supports better care, clearer communication and an atmosphere of ease and confidence.**



Dell Children's Medical Center  
4th Bed Tower, Austin, Texas

*Wayfinding isn't just about directions; it's about building trust by creating a consistent experience where people feel supported and confident as they navigate our healthcare system. By combining signs, landmarks and maps with thoughtful design and branding, our role is to ensure our spaces feel welcoming and easy to navigate. Consistency in these elements enhances the overall experience and reinforces who we are as an organization.*



**Samantha Rejc**  
Manager, Consumer Experience - Wayfinding, Ascension

Language services

Ascension’s interpreters, translators and partners are vital to fulfilling our mission by ensuring that patients from diverse linguistic backgrounds receive the care they deserve. Acknowledging the critical role language plays in healthcare access, we have significantly expanded our language services, breaking down barriers and empowering more patients to navigate their care with confidence and clarity.

Ascension’s language services also support communication for our deaf and hard-of-hearing communities, representing our fifth most requested language group. Additionally, Ascension offers guidance and tools for serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including information accessibility, staff training and adaptive equipment and technology.

1.6 MILLION  
ENCOUNTERS

182 LANGUAGES  
TRANSLATED

650,000  
PATIENTS

By Ascension’s interpreters and translators in 2024

In 2024 we expanded our language services by adding 4,000 new patient access points.



Our dedication to meeting patients’ needs is evident in the experiences of our Spanish-speaking patients.



Spanish-speaking patients reported higher Net Promoter Scores  
Compared to English-speaking patients in 2024

WHEN YOU LEAVE —  
POST-CARE ADVANCEMENTS

Exceptional care doesn’t end when patients leave our facilities. We are committed to ensuring the post-care phase is just as comprehensive as the care provided onsite. With real-time Net Promoter Score tracking, patients can provide immediate feedback, allowing us to promptly address concerns, make improvements and acknowledge positive experiences. Our focus on real-time recovery and ongoing communication ensures patients feel valued and supported after their visit.

Real-time listening

We’ve made real-time Net Promoter Score (NPS) listening and responsive actions a priority across all Ascension care sites to ensure we’re continuously improving the consumer experience.

After each visit, patients receive a survey to share feedback on everything from scheduling to discharge. This input is available through an online dashboard, providing associates immediate access to positive feedback and giving leaders actionable insights for recognition, coaching, performance enhancements and quick problem-solving.

Over the past year, this process has helped us consistently raise our NPS, leading to better care and growth in inpatient and outpatient services. Ascension’s NPS now rivals top consumer brands like Disney and Delta Air Lines, reflecting our commitment to exceptional service.

REAL-TIME  
LISTENING  
PLATFORM

10 ASCENSION MARKETS  
6 CARE SETTINGS  
2,600 LOCATIONS



**TESTIMONIAL:** Clinician Reflections on Real-Time Feedback  
*Receiving glowing reviews and heartfelt letters from my patients is incredibly rewarding. This immediate feedback reaffirms my commitment to care and strengthens my connection with them. Seeing the impact of my work firsthand reignites my purpose and inspires me to keep delivering exceptional care.*



### Service recovery

We've made real-time Net Promoter Score (NPS) listening and responsive actions a priority across all Ascension care sites to ensure we're continuously improving the consumer experience. After each visit, patients receive a survey to share feedback on everything from scheduling to discharge. This input is available through an online dashboard, providing associates immediate access to positive feedback and giving leaders actionable insights for recognition, coaching, performance enhancements and quick problem-solving. Over the past year, this process has helped us consistently raise our NPS, leading to better care and growth in inpatient and outpatient services. Ascension's NPS now rivals top consumer brands like Disney and Delta Air Lines, reflecting our commitment to exceptional service.

### Real-time recovery

Traditional feedback systems delay our ability to respond to consumer needs. Real-time NPS provides instant feedback, allowing us to continuously monitor and improve satisfaction. This approach enables immediate adjustments to the care experience and quick recovery when needed.

If a patient submits a survey with an NPS of 6 or below, our platform automatically generates a service ticket and assigns it to the appropriate leader. All relevant information is gathered in one place, allowing the leader to contact the patient by phone or email without delay. This system ensures we address concerns promptly, showing our dedication to excellence and building patient loyalty. We aim to provide the best possible experience, and when we miss the mark, we want to be known for recovering quickly and effectively. Transparency across all levels of our organization ensures that every team member is accountable and motivated to deliver exceptional service.



### ASCENSION CONSISTENTLY RAISED NET PROMOTER SCORE

Rivalling top consumer brands like Disney and Delta Air Lines, reflecting our commitment to exceptional service

## The billing experience

Receiving multiple medical bills can be confusing and stressful, especially when they're unexpected. Ascension is simplifying this by consolidating charges into a single, easy-to-understand statement. This simplification makes billing more transparent and reduces stress for patients and their families.



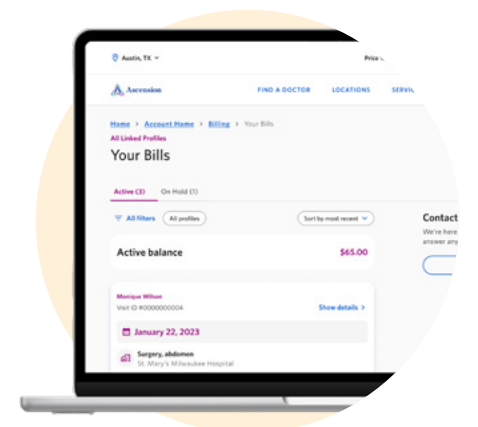
Teams across Ascension have worked together to streamline billing statements into one standardized format.

This makes service charges clear and provides straightforward instructions on payment options and timelines.



ONE CLEAR  
BILLING  
STATEMENT

Along with the consolidated billing statement, Ascension is improving the experience by allowing you to view your balance, pay your bill, check insurance coverage, set up payment plans and access financial assistance through the Ascension One app or online at [ascension.org](https://ascension.org). Managing healthcare expenses is now easier with convenient payment options, including Apple Pay, to make handling medical bills as seamless as possible.



# Community Impact



## Community Impact

57 | Advocating for a compassionate and just society through both our actions and our words.

OUR IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE..... 60

DATA MATTERS..... 62

    Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs)..... 62

ENHANCING ACCESS TO CARE AND SUPPORT ..... 64

    Neighborhood Resource ..... 66

AFFORDABLE CARE ..... 67

    Ascension Medication Affordability Program..... 67

    Dispensary of Hope..... 68

    340B Drug Pricing Program..... 69

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY ..... 71

SUPPORTING MOTHERS AND BABIES ..... 72

    Maternal Health Social System Initiative..... 73

COMMUNITY HEALTH MINISTRIES..... 75

THE ASCENSION FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH EQUITY .....84





## Leader letter

Periodically, it’s essential to step back and reflect on the work we do. We should ask ourselves:

- Why does my heart find purpose in this work?
- Or perhaps more poignantly, why does this work resonate so deeply within me?

A powerful memory comes to mind. During one of our #GOALS events in New Orleans — an initiative born from our partnership with the Ascension Foundation for Health Equity — a young girl approached me, wide-eyed, and asked if I was a real doctor. She had never seen a doctor who looked like me before. In that moment, I saw a spark in her eyes — a glimpse of hope and possibility. It was a reminder of the profound impact we have in shaping the future of healthcare, inspiring the next generation to serve our communities and advocate for a more just and equitable health system.

**I’m proud to affirm that my vision for the future of healthcare aligns seamlessly with Ascension’s current path and deeply rooted Mission. We are far more than a healthcare system; we are catalysts for change — local leaders who listen, engage with and invest in our communities and with partners to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be their best.**

We work to ensure that essential resources foster holistic healing. We champion health equity and social justice, working to help break down systemic barriers to care. These efforts transform and improve the lives of individuals and entire communities through initiatives designed to promote lasting, meaningful access to quality, cost-effective, personalized care and reduce disparities. We achieve this through listening. One of the most extraordinary acts of service we can offer is our attention — by genuinely noticing and responding. Attending to the social, spiritual and medical needs of others and acting upon this awareness is central to our Mission. This chapter details how our care transcends the walls of our hospitals as we venture into communities, addressing the challenges faced by those who are most vulnerable and often feel left behind.



**Stacy Garrett-Ray, MD, MPH, MBA**  
Senior Vice President and Chief Community Impact Officer,  
Ascension



**Value of Creativity**  
Courageous innovation

**Value of Service of the Poor**  
Generosity of spirit, especially  
for persons most in need

# OUR IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

## At a glance

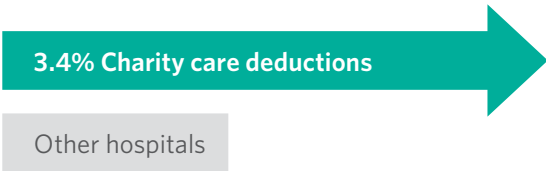


**\$2.1B**  
**CARE OF THE POOR AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT**

That is four times what we would have paid in taxes as a for-profit company.

*By reinvesting in our communities, we are working to build a healthier future for everyone, especially the most vulnerable.*

Ascension's charity care deductions, as a percentage of total gross patient revenue, has averaged roughly 3.4% over the past three years, which well exceeds the median across hospitals which were recently reported as 1.4% to 1.6% amongst other non profit systems.



### Ascension payor mix

- 46.3% Medicare
- 14.7% Medicaid
- 31.2% Commercial
- 7.8% Self-pay/other

**2,500+**

**High-risk mothers supported by maternal health navigators**

Through appointment accessibility, prenatal-specific health education, breastfeeding support and new mother resources, etc. The program has seen 90% of mothers complete all eight recommended prenatal appointments and increased full-term birth rates.

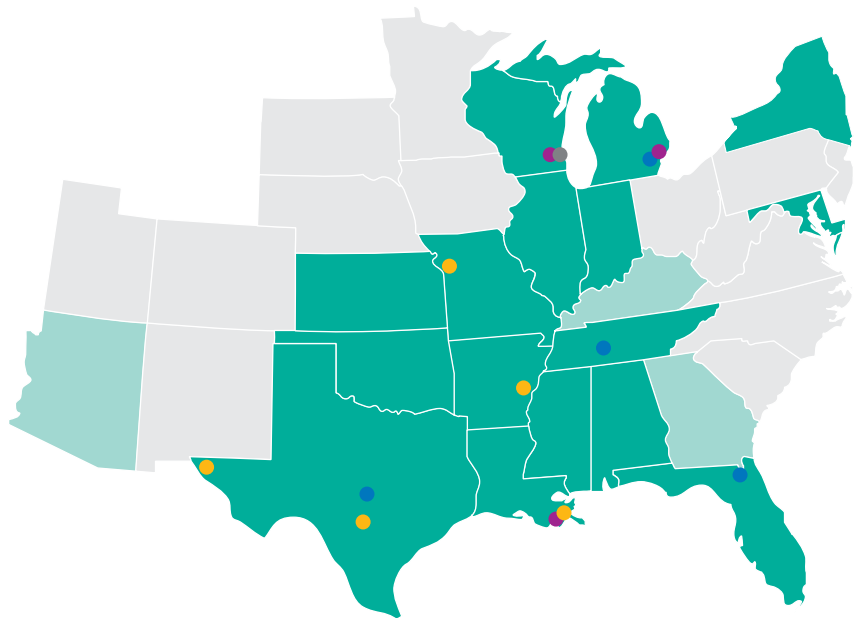
**3.5M+**

**Social determinants of health screenings**

Using a standardized screening tool, our providers collected social determinants of health (SDOH) screenings with questions, which are optional for our patients, covering topics such as loneliness, violence, food insecurity, housing, education and financial issues to help inform our targeted responses and solutions.

## Community impact footprint

The map and information in this section depict the depth and breadth of Ascension's presence to provide resources that create sustainable social and environmental impact in the communities we are privileged to serve.



- Full Maternal Health Social System Initiatives in five locations and positive outcomes in all markets
- Five Community Health Ministries
- Housing initiatives
- Produce markets began in Milwaukee and expanded across Ascension
- Neighborhood Resource available in all locations — and beyond

**300K+**

**PATIENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS SUPPORTED**

*Since Neighborhood Resource launched in 2021 to connects community members to local support services*

**80K**

**People served through food-related initiatives**





Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs)

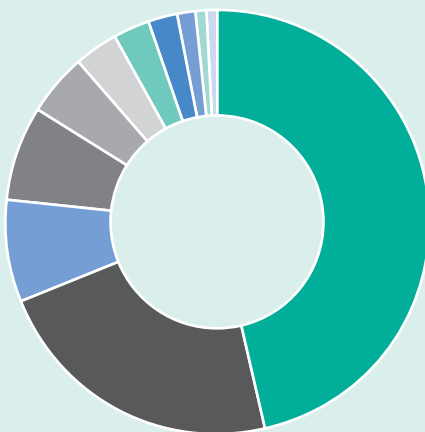
As one of the largest healthcare systems in the country, we have both the capacity and the responsibility to use our data and insights to help address health disparities and improve outcomes for communities we serve. Our vast reach allows us to interact with millions of patients across diverse populations, giving us a unique vantage point to understand underlying social, economic and environmental factors that impact health.



By leveraging tools such as the CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index and Index of Disparity, in addition to our own Ascension Social Risk Index, we analyze data related to race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity and other key social determinants of health (SDOH). This mapping highlights where barriers to care may be most prevalent, empowering us to develop strategies to address at-risk populations that need focused support.

Our CHNAs, conducted in partnership with local organizations, offer additional insights to guide our work. The result is a data-driven approach that allows us to create actionable health equity reports and dashboards, helping to ensure resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact.

Every three years, in compliance with federal requirements, Ascension hospitals conduct CHNAs to evaluate the health of our communities. Developed with local health partners and stakeholders, we seek input from those representing community interests.



In 2022, Ascension completed 104 Community Health Needs Assessments to better understand each community’s unique health concerns.

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| ● 307 Access to care                       | ● 18 Maternal, infant, child health |
| ● 149 Mental and behavioral health         | ● 15 Housing and transit (SDOH)     |
| ● 51 Food security (SDOH)                  | ● 8 Education (SDOH)                |
| ● 47 Alcohol and drug use                  | ● 6 Diet and exercise               |
| ● 31 Chronic disease prevention/management | ● 5 Community safety (SDOH)         |
| ● 23 Health equity                         |                                     |

3.5 million screenings and expanding

Advancing health equity begins by listening and understanding the needs of the people and populations we serve. Drawing on best practices from multiple sources, Ascension created a social determinants of health (SDOH) assessment survey designed to uncover the nonclinical factors that can influence health outcomes.

Since 2020, Ascension providers have asked their patients to voluntarily respond to a standard set of questions that cover topics such as loneliness, violence, food insecurity, housing, education and financial issues.

Alongside 3.5 million screenings, we’ve conducted over 700,000 reassessments. A reassessment is a follow-up evaluation done after the initial screening to see if there have been any changes in the patient’s situation or needs. Reassessments help ensure that care remains relevant and addresses ongoing or new challenges.

**Since January 2024, more than 916,000 patients have been screened for SDOH. 3.5 million screenings have been conducted since 2020.**

40%

HEALTH OUTCOMES  
INFLUENCED BY  
SOCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC FACTORS

Education, job, status, family/  
social support, income and  
community safety

EXPLORING EQUITABLE INTERACTIONS

To improve our associates’ competency in serving persons experiencing poverty, Ascension launched the “ABIDE (Appreciation, Belongingness, Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity) in Action: Exploring Equitable Interactions in Healthcare” curriculum in September 2023. Built on our deep commitment to respecting the dignity and diversity of every individual, the course equips participants with practical tools to apply ABIDE principles and understand the science of biases, fostering more equitable and inclusive care. In less than a year since its launch, nearly 7,000 associates have completed the module.

Furthermore, we are developing a cultural competency and humility training set to launch in 2025, designed to further enhance our associates’ ability to deliver culturally responsive care and help address the diverse needs of the communities we serve. *(Read more about investing in our associates in chapter 4)*

# ENHANCING ACCESS TO CARE AND SUPPORT

Access to healthcare and essential services remains a significant challenge for millions across the U.S. Factors such as high costs, lack of insurance coverage, geographic barriers and social determinants of health (SDOH) — like hunger, housing instability and limited access to support — make these challenges even more severe, especially for underserved populations.

These barriers may prevent individuals from receiving the care and resources they need, that can lead to poorer health outcomes and widening health disparities. With the rise in chronic diseases and growing inequities, the need to address both healthcare access and the social factors influencing well-being is more urgent than ever.

To address these urgent needs, we are taking bold steps to close these gaps. Across the country, Ascension has launched innovative programs tailored to the specific needs of each community, helping to tackle barriers head-on. Our Mission calls us to serve those most in need, and we continue to act as a trusted partner, endeavoring to ensure everyone has access to the care and support they deserve.

## Our commitment to end hunger

Ascension has joined the White House’s Commitment to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities by 2030. Our efforts will focus on identifying, engaging and addressing SDOH that impact health equity, particularly in high-poverty and vulnerable communities. To support this, we are expanding access to fresh, affordable produce by establishing hospital-based produce markets at all of our own hospital care sites with existing food retail locations. Additionally, we are implementing a food choice system to raise awareness of healthier options and promote better nutrition across the communities we serve.



**\$1.2M** **FOOD INVESTMENT**

Ascension has invested in food and food-related initiatives, benefiting 80,000 unique individuals, including associates, across 11 states.



**~30K+**  
**FOOD RESOURCES**

Provided to an estimated 9,500 individuals from April-May 2022

### Successful strategies in Wisconsin

In 2023, 1 in 4 Milwaukee County residents reported experiencing food insecurity. In response, Ascension, in partnership with TouchPoint Support Services — our provider of food and nutrition services, environmental services and patient transportation — set out to make a meaningful impact for both our communities and associates.



**TESTIMONIAL:** *Getting this box of food reminded me that I can take care of myself by nourishing my body with healthy foods. Cooking with new ingredients has given me a spark to try new recipes.*



### Viewing food as medicine in Florida

At Ascension Sacred Heart in Florida, the community outreach team identified a patient who had stopped taking essential medications due to cost, and lacked access to nutritious food. The team enrolled him in Ascension Sacred Heart’s Food as Medicine Program, which provides fresh fruits, vegetables and healthy pantry staples. This initiative helps patients achieve their health goals by addressing both medical and nutritional needs.



# Neighborhood Resource: A tool for community support

Ascension proudly offers Neighborhood Resource, a free and easy-to-use website designed to connect individuals in need with local community organizations providing free and reduced-cost services. By simply entering a ZIP code, users can access a comprehensive database of vital services available close to home. Patients can access the platform while in our care — and at any time during pre-and post-care — from any electronic device.

## Neighborhood Resources helps users find a wide range of services

**Housing assistance:** Access to shelters, low-income housing options and rent assistance programs

**Food support:** Locations of food pantries, meal programs and nutrition assistance

**Health services:** Information on free or low-cost medical clinics, mental health services and substance abuse programs

**Employment assistance:** Job training programs, employment services and financial education resources

**Legal aid:** Access to legal services, including help with housing issues, immigration and family law

**Child and family services:** Childcare options, parenting programs and educational resources



Since its launch in 2021, Neighborhood Resource has 300,000 patients and community members utilizing the service.

The initiative is set for exponential growth, with projections aiming for one million searches by 2030.



Scan the QR code to find a Neighborhood Resource near you.

# AFFORDABLE CARE

## Ascension Medication Affordability Program

Affordable medication remains one of the most pressing healthcare challenges in the U.S., requiring a combination of policy reform, industry regulation and innovative solutions to improve access for all. Vulnerable populations — including low-income individuals, the elderly and people with disabilities — are disproportionately affected by high medication costs.

Our caregivers witness firsthand how patients are often forced to skip doses or forgo medications entirely to cut costs, which only deepens health disparities and worsens their overall well-being. Through internal initiatives and strategic partnerships, we are ensuring that patients receive the medications they need at an affordable price, helping to close gaps in care and improve health outcomes across our footprint.

## Ascension's Medication Affordability Program impact

- 10,883** Prior authorizations  
Submitted to ensure patients could access necessary prescriptions
- 20,636** Financial assistance applications  
Processed to support patients in need
- \$3.5m+** Out-of-pocket costs saved  
For patients using the Ascension Rx Prescription Assistance Card



**\$222M** FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SECURED

Through Ascension's Medication Affordability Program to help patients afford their medications

**9,884** UNIQUE PATIENTS  
**11** STATES

# Dispensary of Hope

The Dispensary of Hope, a national nonprofit and Ascension subsidiary, plays a pivotal role in extending medication access to underserved communities across the U.S. Supported by donations from pharmaceutical manufacturers, Dispensary of Hope arranges for the distribution of essential medications to over 200 partner sites and Ascension Rx pharmacies, dispensing more than 3,000 prescriptions daily for eligible low-income, uninsured patients. Meeting top industry standards — certified by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, MedSurplus Alliance and the Healthcare Distribution Alliance — it strictly adheres to the Drug Supply Chain Security Act, ensuring safe and reliable distribution.



Dispensary of Hope enables thousands of uninsured and low-income individuals to manage their health conditions effectively, reducing healthcare costs to support healthier communities and empower patients to lead fuller, more stable lives.

Over the last decade, the network’s reach has dramatically grown, from 104,000 prescriptions in 2014 to over 1.2 million in 2024, now encompassing 265 dispensing sites nationwide. In fiscal year 2024, Dispensary of Hope’s impact reached across 31 Ascension sites.



# The 340B Drug Pricing Program

The 340B Drug Pricing Program enables eligible healthcare organizations to purchase outpatient drugs at significantly reduced prices for qualifying entities, including those that qualify as “disproportionate share hospitals,” by treating a large number of low-income patients, community health centers and children’s hospitals. By reducing wholesale prices for qualifying entities, the program improves access to affordable medications and allows Ascension to reinvest savings into critical services like patient education, preventive care, chronic disease management and mental health services, ultimately addressing broader community health needs.

The savings and benefits specific to community pharmacies participating in the 340B Program grew by 28%, indicating a significant increase in the value generated through discounted drugs at community pharmacies. This figure reflects better access to affordable medications for local patients.



54 HOSPITALS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH MINISTRIES PARTICIPATED IN THE 340B PROGRAM

- 16 are critical access hospitals
- 28 are disproportionate share hospitals
- The remaining serve as critical access points to our communities including sole community hospitals, children’s hospitals and rural referral centers



  
**\$10.5M**  
COST SAVINGS  
IN MEDICATION

**3M+**  
DOSES DISTRIBUTED

**95,348**  
30-DAY FILLS  
Supporting 8,680 patients through  
32,866 patient encounters




# Ensuring Medicaid coverage

## Our response to the end of continuous enrollment

Ascension spearheaded an awareness campaign to help Medicaid patients retain their healthcare coverage after the end of continuous enrollment policies in April 2023. The discontinuation of these policies put up to 25-million enrollees nationwide at risk of losing their coverage. Recognizing the critical importance of connecting patients with the information and necessary resources to re-enroll and maintain their Medicaid coverage, Ascension took decisive action.


330K+ PATIENTS WERE DIRECTLY REACHED



- 236,434 Emails and texts
- 36,205 Auto-dialer calls
- 58,245 Emails specific to Ascension Medical Group

Between April 2023 and April 2024, Ascension helped over 57,000 self-pay and uninsured patients secure Medicaid coverage

4,431 PEOPLE HELPED EACH MONTH ON AVERAGE



Our aim is to give every patient a pathway to wellness and the dignity of accessible, comprehensive healthcare.

While there is still work to be done, Ascension’s initiatives have shown positive trends in Medicaid enrollment across many of its ministries, demonstrating the impact of our proactive efforts in furtherance of our Mission to support the poor and vulnerable, including patients navigate access to available benefit coverages and understand important policy and coverage.

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

As a large healthcare system, Ascension has the opportunity to drive lasting environmental change through our governance, resources and infrastructure. We focus on improving climate resilience by engaging with communities and advocating for policies that support those we serve.

Additionally, we screen for social factors that impact health, using this data to reduce preventable issues like asthma-related emergency department visits. We’ve also undertaken significant efforts to remove desflurane, a harmful greenhouse gas, from our formulary, ensuring safer clinical care while advancing environmental sustainability.



Ascension Seton, Austin, Texas, uses renewable energy sources

From 2021-2023 Ascension reduced greenhouse gas emissions from acute care facilities by 9.4% and reduced municipal solid waste sent to landfills by 5.34%.

## 2030

We strive to reduce carbon emissions by 50% and reduce 50% of nonhazardous waste from all managed facilities.

## 2040

We strive to achieve net zero carbon emissions and zero waste across all sites of care.

## Desflurane removal

In February 2024, Ascension removed desflurane, an inhaled anesthetic and greenhouse gas, from our approved medication list and has switched to using sevoflurane as the preferred inhaled anesthetic, which has a lower environmental footprint. While patients metabolize only a small portion of the anesthetics they inhale, the remainder is captured upon exhalation and vented into the atmosphere. Waste anesthetic gas emissions like these can account for 51% of an operating room’s greenhouse gas emissions and 5% of a site’s overall greenhouse gas footprint.

## Food waste digesters

At many Ascension hospitals, food waste is disposed of with other municipal solid waste (MSW), accounting for up to 15% of the total MSW sent to landfills. To lower emissions from existing landfills, Ascension has installed food waste digesters across our hospitals. **To date, these machines have digested approximately 390 tons of food waste.**



10M

MILES OF DRIVING EMISSIONS AVOIDED ANNUALLY

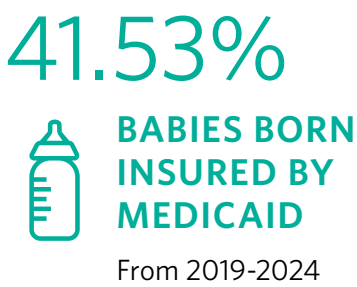
As a result of our change to sevoflurane

# SUPPORTING MOTHERS AND BABIES

Maternal health in America faces severe challenges, including a maternal mortality rate three times higher than other wealthy nations. Statistically, data related to black women tells us they are over three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes, with leading factors including mental health issues, excessive bleeding and cardiac problems. Many deaths can be avoided with enhanced access to appropriate interventions.

As advocates for a compassionate and just society, we are committed to addressing these stark inequities by combining clinical excellence with a personalized, community-focused approach to maternal healthcare. This blend of high-quality care and social support has resulted in maternal health outcomes that improve year-over-year and exceed national averages.

## ASCENSION'S MATERNAL HEALTH SOCIAL SYSTEM INITIATIVE OUTCOMES

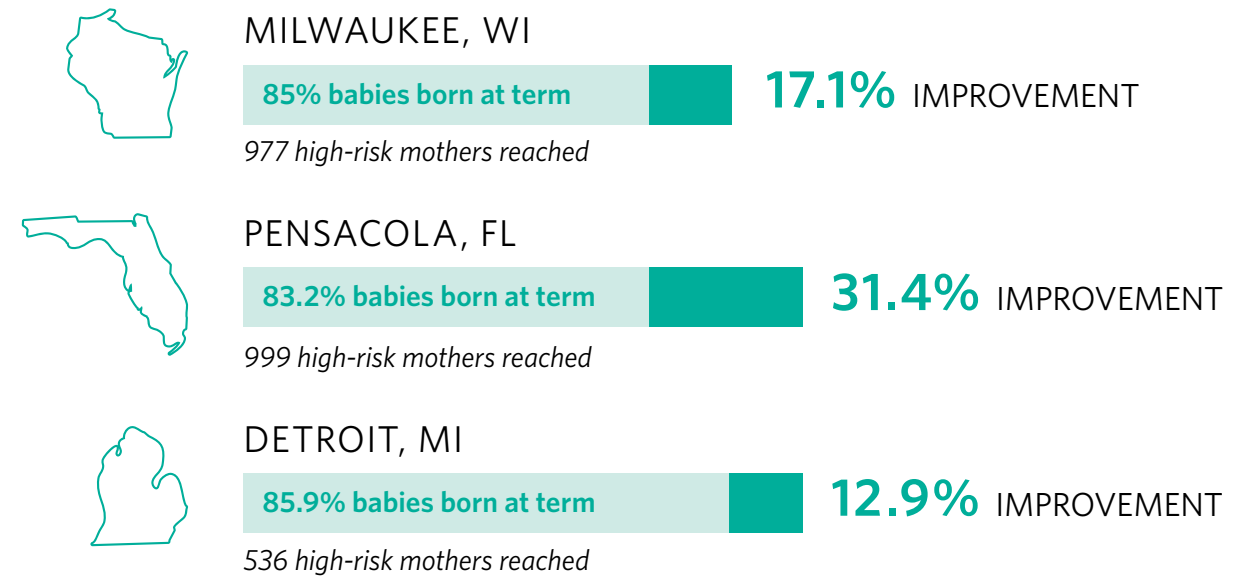


- ↑ Increase in prenatal and postpartum visit completion rates
- ↑ Increase in infants born full term
- ↑ Increase in healthy birth weight
- ↓ Decrease in missed appointments
- ↓ Decrease in neonatal ICU days



## Maternal Health Social System Initiative

Ascension's Maternal Health Social System Initiative (MHSSI) aims to improve maternal health outcomes by addressing mainly the nonclinical needs of women with high-risk pregnancies. The initiative embeds maternal health navigators in various ministries to help vulnerable mothers overcome barriers to prenatal care, improving overall health outcomes.



These navigators provide essential support, such as transportation, housing and childcare, while fostering a supportive, nonjudgmental environment that encourages mothers to seek care and stay engaged throughout their pregnancy. They also work closely with care teams to educate, raise awareness and alleviate social barriers that may affect access to care. Recent expansions: Launched in Nashville, TN (January 2024) and Austin, TX (Summer 2024).

### Q & A with a maternal health navigator

#### What are common barriers preventing mothers from attending prenatal appointments?

Transportation, childcare, food, housing and education are common barriers. Additionally, feelings of embarrassment and judgment, especially for young mothers, prevent attendance and seeking help. As a maternal health navigator, I create a nonjudgmental and supportive environment to build trust and comfort for asking questions and expressing concerns.

#### How do you support patients as a maternal health navigator?

I introduce myself and explain my role as a resource throughout their pregnancy. I help with immediate needs like healthy meals, transportation, housing and counseling. I communicate mainly via text, which patients prefer, ensuring no one misses appointments due to communication barriers. I also collaborate with care teams, providing insights into social barriers and staying involved in the patient's care journey.



### SPOTLIGHT: Milwaukee PopSpot

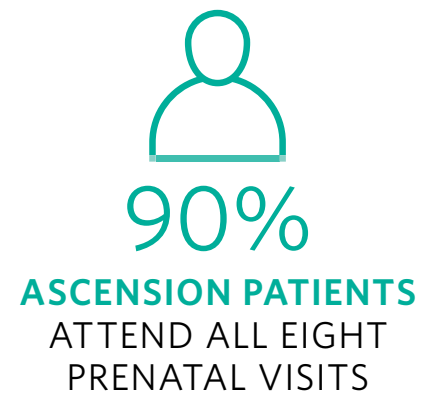
Recognizing the lack of childcare as a primary barrier keeping women from attending their eight prenatal appointments, Ascension St. Joseph Hospital teamed up with the city of Milwaukee to create a children's waiting area named "PopSpot." This renovated space provides supervised childcare by nursing students, enabling parents to attend medical appointments without childcare obstacles.

*Pictured: Nursing student Molly Meihak with Ayden Lott while his mom is at a doctor's appointment at Ascension St. Joseph in Milwaukee.*



### Prenatal visits

Prenatal visits are essential for establishing a physician relationship, managing social challenges and addressing health conditions arising from pregnancy. Data reveals that increased prenatal visits lead to improved outcomes for mothers and babies, including healthier birth weight and decreased likelihood of infant death. Ascension focuses on understanding and addressing barriers to maternal health, improving prenatal appointment attendance one community at a time. Notably, 90% of Ascension patients across all demographics receive a minimum of eight prenatal care visits, meeting a nationally recognized benchmark and driving improved patient outcomes.



## COMMUNITY HEALTH MINISTRIES

Responding to unmet needs, the Daughters of Charity, one of Ascension's historic founding sponsors, originally established five Community Health Ministries (CHM) in different states, each positioned to serve their community's most vulnerable populations. Many of the people served by our CHMs live below the poverty line or face socio-economic challenges. Regardless of their ability to pay, these facilities ensure access to quality healthcare and essential social services for all.

Our CHMs act as anchors of hope and reliability for their communities. They are designed to be a constant, ever-ready presence whenever help is needed. Each CHM prides itself on intimately knowing its community as would a neighbor, and each unique center is catered to the needs of its area, seeking out root causes of population vulnerability and attempting to address those core issues.

**As expressions of our Mission and Value of Dedication: Affirming the hope and joy of our ministry, both those served by and those serving in the CHMs represent the importance of these community treasures that ultimately improve lives and health outcomes.**



*We hear stories all the time of individuals in the community we serve and how they've heard 'no' their whole lives. We need to be the ones who can say 'yes'.*

**Community Health Navigator**  
Seton Center in Kansas City

At a glance

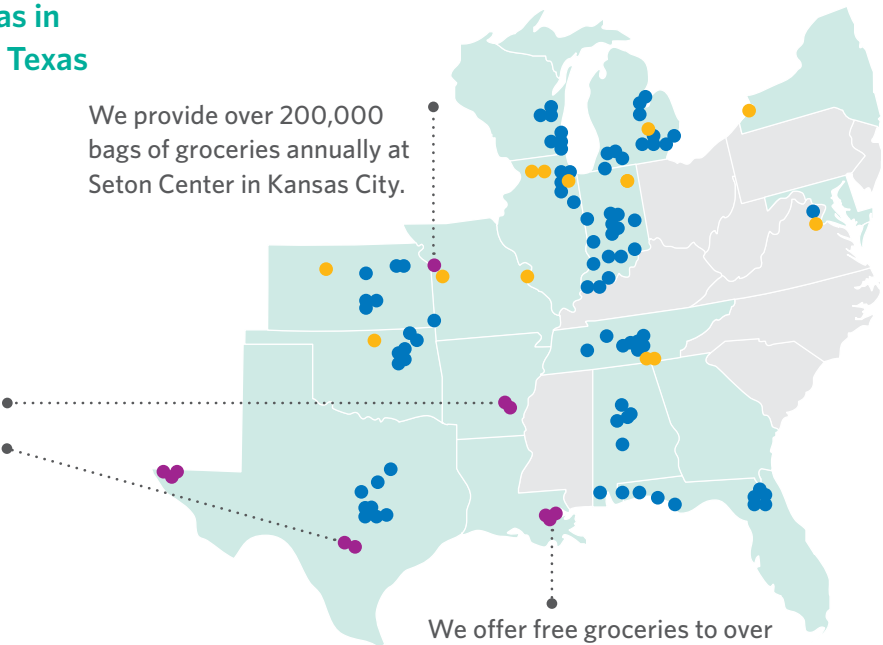
Our CHMs serve high-poverty areas in Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri and Texas

- Hospitals
- Community Health Ministries
- Ascension Living

We distribute food boxes, formula and diapers in San Antonio, while also partnering with food banks in rural areas like Southeast Arkansas.

We provide over 200,000 bags of groceries annually at Seton Center in Kansas City.

We offer free groceries to over 700 families a month at drive-thru pantries in New Orleans.



CHMs offer health insurance navigators, community health navigators or similar roles, connecting clients in need to resources in their own communities. These navigators serve as guides and advocates for clients in their unique situations.



- 15 Primary care clinics
- 6 Dental clinics
- 15 Social services
- 2 Food pantries
- 2 Thrift stores
- 3 Wellness centers
- 2 Early childhood development centers
- 2 Nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- 24 School-based services

DePaul Community Health Center

New Orleans, Louisiana

Recent statistics show that New Orleans has an overall poverty rate of 23% and an unusually high Black poverty rate of 30% (more than double the national rate). Living in poverty contributes to numerous challenges for residents including poorer health outcomes driven by factors like limited access to quality healthcare and nutrition.

The DePaul Community Health Center New Orleans (DCHC) is committed to providing high-quality, comprehensive healthcare to all members of the community, regardless of their ability to pay.



DCHC offers high-quality, affordable healthcare for children, adolescents, adults and seniors in 11 community health center sites throughout greater New Orleans, and even offers healthcare and mental health services on-site at 23 public and parochial schools. In total, DCHC treats over 50,000 clients in the New Orleans area, with over 95% of whom fall below 200% of the federal poverty level.

50K+  
TREATED IN THE NEW ORLEANS AREA

over 95%  
FALL BELOW 200% POVERTY LEVEL

SPOTLIGHT: The MOM Power program

The MOM Power program supports at-risk pregnant women and new mothers with mental health care, parenting education and essential resources to improve outcomes. A young mother-to-be was enrolled in the program due to her risk clinical profile and she began having her baby prematurely. The Community Health Navigator (CHN) visited her in the hospital and learned how anxious she was to be giving birth so soon. She was worried about bringing the baby home because she didn't have a crib and the other basic necessities. The CHN leveraged her network to provide for the woman's critical needs so the family could relax, knowing their needs were met even before the young mother left the hospital.







#### Updated facilities: Algiers, Central City and Harvey

In 2023 and 2024, DCHC New Orleans celebrated the relocation of three locations in Algiers, Central City and Harvey, offering expanded services such as primary care, preventive care, behavioral health services and pharmacies for both adults and children. These centers extend the reach of our CHMs, serving greater numbers of individuals in need and improving health outcomes in new communities across greater New Orleans.

Services include **primary and preventive health care, pediatrics, dental, optometry, chronic disease management, podiatry, prenatal care, behavioral health, Women, Infants & Children (WIC) services and on-site laboratories and pharmacies.** DCHC New Orleans also employs a team of full-time community health navigators (CHNs) who work with various community partners to assist underserved individuals and families who struggle to overcome different social determinants of health (SDOH).



## Seton Center

### Kansas City, Missouri

Seton Center is a thriving, robust example of how our CHMs are central to the life of its community. Located in the heart of Kansas City, Seton Center served nearly 5,000 clients in 2023. Of those, 84% were Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), 57% were women and 33% were children and youth.

**Seton provides dignified care, offering support when budgets are tight, health is a concern or individuals need guidance through overwhelming challenges.**

Dedicated to breaking cycles of poverty, Seton offers many invaluable services, such as its **dental clinic, food pantry, community garden, school supply events, thrift store and clothing room, diapers, personal hygiene product donations** and more. 350 volunteers serve at the Seton Center on a very regular basis, with volunteerism being at the heart of Seton Center and driving much of its service to the community.

**5,000**  
TREATED IN THE KANSAS CITY AREA

**350**  
VOLUNTEERS REGULARLY SERVE



**TESTIMONIAL:** *Tyler first visited Seton Center's dental clinic in September 2022, seeking help to improve his oral health while in recovery from substance use disorder. He received fillings, extractions and a partial denture, completed by January 2023. With the support of a local church and the Kansas City Medicine Cabinet, Tyler remained committed to his treatment, attending all appointments despite facing transportation challenges. Since then, Tyler's life has transformed. He got married and secured a culinary job with a promotion in sight. After describing himself as "not a good person" earlier in the year, today Tyler takes pride in his smile and his journey to recovery.*



# Centro San Vicente

## El Paso, Texas

Centro San Vicente offers quality, comprehensive healthcare and human services tailored to the needs of the community, rooted in respect, kindness and dignity. The health and well-being of patients and community alike are promoted through direct services, training, education, outreach and advocacy.

Centro San Vicente is committed to clients' physical, emotional and spiritual well-being and will not turn a client away, regardless of their income or ability to pay.

Centro San Vicente offers a wide range of healthcare services, including dental services, behavioral health services, LGBTQ-friendly primary healthcare services, radiology, pharmacy services, lab testing and more.



# Ascension DePaul Services

## San Antonio, Texas

Serving primarily rural communities outside of San Antonio, Ascension DePaul Services San Antonio (ADSSA) serves clients living in working households, often with low-income jobs with little to no benefits, leading to difficulty in affording health services.

ADSSA establishes and maintains neighborhood-based programs to increase accessibility to primary healthcare and human services for those in need.

These programs have a strong holistic orientation and consider participation and empowerment as an integral dimension of the delivery service. ADSSA offers many services, such as **two early childhood development centers, counseling/behavioral health programs, senior programs, a wellness center, food pantry, dental clinic, primary care clinic** and more.

**TESTIMONIAL:** *Ascension De Paul services has helped my family by providing great childcare. Its not just taking care of my kids, but the care and education they get from all the teachers here is beyond words. Very blessed to have found Ascension De Paul.*





**SPOTLIGHT: Ascension Depaul Center offers RAYS of hope**

Started in 2018 and significantly expanded in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the RAYS program at ADSSA provides material assistance, counseling, classes and guidance for Medicaid-eligible families with children under 36 months of age. It also supports mothers during pregnancy, aiming to help parents overcome barriers to prenatal and infant care.

Operated through a grant from the Texas Pregnancy Care Network, community collaborations, donations and contributions from participants, the program includes a point system where parents earn points by attending classes, volunteering and making in-kind donations to the RAYS baby boutique and family clothing closet, which can then be redeemed for material assistance items such as diapers, formula and more.



*This help is a blessing. We have seven kids and we stress every year on how we are going to manage. Dad works hard to provide for us and our money doesn't go as far as it used to. This help relieves a lot of stress for us. Thank you for helping my family.*



**Hernandez family**  
Client, Ascension Depaul Services San Antonio

DePaul Community Health Center

Gould and Dumas, Arkansas

DePaul Community Health Centers in Gould and Dumas, Arkansas, serve extremely rural communities that are increasingly shrinking in population size and employment opportunities. Many individuals only have access to health and human services through the presence of Ascension DePaul Services, due to lack of transportation and other resources.

As a faith-based organization, DePaul Community Health Centers is dedicated to upholding Christian values in their services as they provide quality, holistic care to the residents of Lincoln County, Desha County and others in the Arkansas Delta, one of the poorest regions in the U.S.

DePaul Community Health Centers offers **two medical clinics** in Gould and Dumas, as well as a **dental clinic and wellness center** in Gould. The center also offers **pharmacy assistance** through reduced or discounted prices and **Hispanic medical interpretation services**.



# THE ASCENSION FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH EQUITY



The Ascension Foundation for Health Equity was established in 2021 to address the root causes of health disparities in the U.S. It focuses on two areas of profound and unmet need: supporting postpartum mothers and diversifying the healthcare pipeline. The Foundation collaborates with community-based organizations whose programs fuel generational change, pursuing a more enduring and just future of health for all.

A national philanthropic organization, the Foundation was launched with seed funding from Ascension and now raises funds from donors and awards grants to nonprofits that have demonstrated impact with a focus on systemic change. In its response to high-need areas of national importance, the Foundation extends Ascension's reach and underscores its commitment to addressing health equity on a national scale — vital work that distinguishes Ascension from other health systems.



*As a leading Catholic health system, we are particularly called to make meaningful changes that address the root causes of health disparities. The Ascension Foundation for Health Equity gives us a new way to support programs to address these pressing needs.*

Joseph Impicciche, JD, MHA  
President and Chief Executive Officer, Ascension

Extensive research, rigorous analysis and thoughtful discernment about where Ascension could have the most meaningful impact led the Foundation to two pressing national issues.

**Helping build a healthcare pipeline that reflects the diversity of our country to increase commonality between patients and physicians.** Through scholarships and educational programs, the Foundation inspires and supports diverse students to pursue healthcare careers and lowers the hurdles between elementary school dreams and medical board exams. Health outcomes are improved when patients and physicians relate to one another, yet diversity among physicians in the U.S. lags behind.

**Stemming the maternal mortality crisis in our country.** With grants to nonprofits that provide essential support and fundamental needs for mothers of newborns, the Foundation is committed to reaching further into communities to support the critical first postpartum year when both mother and infant are most vulnerable.

## Inspiring future health professionals today

#GOALS (Go Out and Love Science) is one of the Foundation's signature activities, designed to encourage diverse middle school students to consider a future in healthcare. Through hands-on activities — like taking blood pressure, learning CPR, reading X-rays, applying splints and tying sutures — and personal interaction with relatable medical, dental and other health sciences students and professionals, the middle school participants gain visibility into STEM careers and are encouraged to see what might be possible in the future if they study science today.

In 2024, the Foundation partnered with researchers at Notre Dame University and Meharry Medical College to devise a longevity study for #GOALS that will help refine and sharpen the effectiveness of the event and related activities as the program expands to reach more students in new locations.

Since its inception in fall 2022, #GOALS events in Nashville, New Orleans and Detroit have engaged nearly 2,000 middle school students. Participants consistently report more interest in a healthcare career after experiencing #GOALS.

### Student feedback after #GOALS

#### MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE

October 2022

The number of students who answered "Yes" to "I see myself going to college" went up and the number who answered "No" went down compared to the same question to the same students at the start of the day

*I see myself going to college*

YES	55%	NO	3%
	Up from 41%		Down from 13%



69%

MORE INTERESTED IN A  
CAREER IN HEALTHCARE

#### MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE

October 2023

2-day event, with 6th, 7th and 8th graders  
from a single school in Nashville, TN



# Maternity’s most dangerous time

The Foundation also supports organizations that focus on mothers and children in the year after childbirth. It’s a period that has been called “Maternity’s Most Dangerous Time,” when more than half of often preventable maternal deaths take place. In the U.S., the rate of maternal mortality more than doubled over the past two decades, with painful disparities across races. Today, Black women are three times more likely to die than white women from pregnancy-related causes.

**In 2024, the Foundation awarded its first “catalyst” grants to 13 nonprofits that provide vital, nonclinical support for mothers and infants, including emergency shelter, diapers and period products, mental health support, addiction recovery services, parenting education, job training, transitional housing and more.**

**Some of the grantee organizations include:**

**THE ALABAMA PRISON BIRTH PROJECT**

*Wetumpka, AL*  
To provide education, birth support and family resources for incarcerated women so they can stay connected to their children.

**THE O’CONNOR HOUSE**

*Indianapolis, IN*  
To expand their residential program for pregnant homeless teens by adding counseling and additional alumni programming.

**TRAININGGROUNDS WE PLAY CENTER**

*New Orleans, LA*  
To pilot a parenting education program with nine social service organizations that will help new parents develop healthy habits and find community support.

**THE MILWAUKEE DIAPER MISSION**

*Milwaukee, WI*  
To begin purchasing diapers and menstrual supplies that will supplement those that are donated, so they can continue to meet the growing need of vulnerable families in Milwaukee.

**J.A.M.E.S. INC.**

*Tulsa, Oklahoma*  
Leads expecting and parent adolescents to self-sufficiency, changing the social and economic future of generations of vulnerable families.







# Investing in Our Associates

## CHAPTER 4

### *Investing in Our Associates*

89 | Embracing a spiritually centered holistic approach to helping our associates flourish.

OUR COMMITMENT TO INVEST IN OUR ASSOCIATES .....	92
ATTRACT AND PREPARE.....	96
APPRECIATE AND INCLUDE .....	98
ABIDE framework .....	98
Service Commitments Champions program .....	100
TEACH AND GROW .....	103
The Ascension Center For Career Advancement.....	103
Vocare education program.....	106
Ascension Learning and Leader Institute .....	107
Ministry Formation.....	108
ENCOURAGE DEPARTING ASSOCIATES.....	110





## Leader letter

To be an associate at Ascension is to be so much more than just a number or a name on an ID badge. Our people are the beating heart of what we do. Each and every one of our doctors, nurses, care professionals and associates are united by a personal dedication to serve and a genuine passion to see medicine and healthcare as a calling rather than a business.

In recent years, healthcare workers across the country have been overworked, burnt out and leaving their profession at an increasing rate, a burden that has been felt by both health systems and the communities they care for. Because we view our workforce as our greatest, most precious resource, we are committed to supporting our people today, preparing them for tomorrow and building an employment pipeline for the future. It is our aim to prioritize the growth, resiliency and well-being of our caregivers and associates through programs that support mental and physical wellness, enhance professional satisfaction and offer continued opportunities for job growth and career development.

We take great pride in our associates choosing to invest their time and talents with us, and we recognize the value that each associate brings to the table of the work that we do for our patients and our communities. We desire to invest holistically in our employees, offering them resources and opportunities that will lead to a more fulfilled life.

I am honored to share with you our approach to supporting an associate journey where every step on the employment pipeline is a crucial part of workforce development and a daily practice of our Mission, including attracting, preparing, appreciating, including, teaching, growing and encouraging our associates. We are investing holistically in our associates’ minds, bodies and spirits so they can do the same for our patients.

**It is a privilege and a blessing to witness the unparalleled support and growth of each and every associate at Ascension.**



**Michelle Kohler, PhD**  
Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer,  
Ascension



**Value of Dedication**  
Affirming the hope and  
joy of our ministry

**Value of Integrity**  
Inspiring trust through  
personal leadership

OUR COMMITMENT TO  
INVEST IN OUR ASSOCIATES

Employer awards, recognitions and partnerships

THE  
**BEST**

Company Compensation  
Company Work-Life Balance  
CEOs for Women  
Career Growth  
Human Resources Team

2023 Comparably recognitions  
(workplace review platform)



**150+**  
TOP PLACES TO WORK  
IN HEALTHCARE

Becker's Healthcare 2024 list





**Gold level Military Friendly®**  
*Designation by Military Friendly Employers*

**Military Spouse Employment Partner**  
*Since 2022, Ascension is a proud partner of the U.S. Department of Defense's military spouse career opportunities initiative*

*In partnership with DirectEmployers Association, Ascension jobs are posted to 40+ diversity and job sites, in addition to military/veteran network sites*

At a glance



**48,000**  
NURSES

**13,720** NURSING  
SUPPORT STAFF

**6,800** EMPLOYED PROVIDERS

**2,075** RESIDENT PHYSICIANS  
3,018 residents in all positions

**137** FELLOWS



**Ascension  
employs more  
than 131,000  
associates**



# The associate journey

Ascension is more than hospitals, emergency departments and clinics.  
We are centers of hope, health and compassion, made possible by the doctors,  
nurses, care professionals and associates who contribute to our work.

Our team members are part of a larger community committed to a collective purpose and Mission, a key differentiator in our organizational culture. We are committed to advancing our associates' journeys through every interaction with their role responsibilities, work environment and leaders.

## Together, we are creating an associate experience that

- **Connects** personal values to Ascension's Mission of serving those most in need.
- **Delivers** team structures that foster success and a sense of belonging.
- **Appreciates** associates by providing tools for success and integrating their feedback to drive improvement.



# Supporting the associate journey

## ATTRACT

- Connecting an associate's personal values to our Mission
- Affirm an associate's decision to join Ascension

## PREPARE

- Deliver the information, equipment, access, systems, experiences and tools an associate needs to succeed

## APPRECIATE

- Recognize and reward an associate's performance
- Support an associate's wellbeing through culture and resources

## INCLUDE

- Ask associates for feedback and show them that they've been heard
- Connect associates with their leader and team

## TEACH

- Communicate what is expected of associates
- Show an associate how we do things

## GROW

- Acknowledge an associate's strengths and ambitions
- Offer development opportunities

## ENCOURAGE

- Give associates a positive last impression
- Welcome associate's back in the future



# ATTRACT AND PREPARE

Every career path is different, as is the experience each associate brings to their journey with Ascension. Across the United States, the healthcare sector is facing a growing shortage of workers. In the face of these challenges, we are committed to attracting and preparing top talent by offering robust support and resources starting from the hiring process. We align new hires’ values with our own and equip them with the tools they need to succeed.

Both new hires and current associates benefit from a wide range of growth and mobility opportunities across our national network of hospitals, clinics, Ascension Living facilities and communities. As associates explore diverse career paths, we actively support their growth, guiding them toward new roles and specialties across our continuum of care, where they can make a meaningful impact and advance their careers — helping us meet the evolving demands of healthcare.

By engaging associates in cross-functional collaboration with teams across Ascension’s service lines and care settings, we create a collaborative foundation that strengthens their skills, promotes patient-centered care and enables us to meet healthcare’s evolving demands together.

## Identifying talent

We look to help internal and external candidates embark on their career journeys with confidence, allowing them to bring their true, authentic selves to work every day. We are passionate about recruiting talent who are searching for a workplace where innovation, collaboration and continuing education are part of the daily experience.

This year, we conducted an internal analysis of our recruitment process and technology, identifying opportunities to enhance candidate and hiring leader experiences. As a result, we launched a 24/7 interview tool, allowing candidates to respond to pre-screening questions at their convenience, and enhanced our career site technology, attracting over 5.3 million unique visitors in FY24, a 14.2% increase from the previous year.

  
**56,648**  
VACANCIES FILLED  
66% external candidates and  
34% internal candidates

**8,455**  
PROMOTIONS  
6.62% promotion events rate

**17,172**  
INTERNAL PLACEMENTS  
Including lateral and promotional career  
moves among our associates



## Onboarding experience

### Culture, Connection and Clarification

Over the past year, Ascension completed a comprehensive review of the onboarding experience, incorporating internal insights and external data to shape our improvement strategy. As part of our commitment to preparing associates for success, we identified three essential elements for a positive onboarding experience: Culture, Connection and Clarification.

To strengthen Culture, we’ve introduced a Day 1 Framework that immerses new associates in Ascension’s Mission and Values, with a focus on connecting their personal values to our work through our “One Community for One Mission” overview.

Each new associate is paired with a new associate navigator, a dedicated guide who assists with pre-boarding tasks like completing paperwork and license verification, ensuring a smooth transition and building Connection from the start.

In terms of Clarification, we are streamlining pre-boarding processes and introducing new tools and resources to ensure associates have clear guidance on their roles, responsibilities and career pathways. Our efforts also encompass reducing duplication and simplifying forms to create a smoother onboarding journey that enhances efficiency and allows new associates to enter our organization with ease. By focusing on clarity, we help associates feel prepared, valued and connected from day one.





# APPRECIATE AND INCLUDE

We are committed to creating a workplace where every associate feels appreciated and included, knowing their contributions are valued. By fostering an environment of respect, recognition and belonging, we strengthen our workforce and enhance the care we provide to the communities we serve. Through ongoing efforts to listen to our associates, celebrate their achievements and embrace diverse perspectives, we ensure that each team member feels supported and empowered every day.

## Ascension ABIDE framework

**ABIDE — Appreciation, Belongingness, Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity — is our foundational framework, shaping every aspect of our work. It's designed to cultivate a truly inclusive environment where associates, patients and communities feel valued and supported.**



### SPOTLIGHT: My ABIDE story

I graduated from the University of Kansas School of Medicine in 1999 and completed my family medicine residency at Via Christi in 2002. After residency, I joined the Air Force and was stationed at McConnell Air Force Base.

Near the end of my third year, our unit commander informed us that one of the three family physicians would need to deploy within six months. Despite having a 6-month-old daughter, I volunteered, feeling a strong calling to serve.

Before deployment, a nurse colleague advised me that my children might not recognize me upon my return, so I recorded myself reading bedtime stories for them. I left for Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, in January 2006, where I worked in a small facility treating everything from minor ailments to battle wounds.

While I was deployed, my husband received incredible community support, which was a blessing for us both. My advice for those interacting with service members is to offer support in any form — whether through visits, meals or prayers. Military families need and appreciate these gestures.

*Pictured: Sheryl Beard, MD, FAAFP, Chief Medical Officer, Ascension Via Christi*



**ABIDE guides us in identifying and improving practices to better serve marginalized and vulnerable populations, including those who work alongside us. Inclusion, to us, means more than just welcoming differences. It's about actively creating opportunities for every individual to thrive.**

To enhance this approach, we developed “Listen, Pray, Learn, Act,” a strategy that empowers associates by providing safe spaces to share their experiences and insights. By embracing these voices, we ensure our organization evolves to meet the needs of all, fostering a culture where every associate can grow and flourish. Their individual ABIDE stories continue to inspire and strengthen our commitment to this vital work.

### ABIDE and the Ascension Associate Experience Survey

As we evolve, we invite associates to guide decisions for progress and success in living our Mission and Values. Their feedback on our ABIDE hallmarks (Appreciation, Belongingness, Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity) helps leaders set key actions and priorities for the year ahead.



**72%**  
Ascension associates  
made their voices heard  
9% increase from 2023

**68%**  
Respondents rated Ascension  
with overall favorability  
2% increase



**Survey results**  
Percent of respondents favorable to the ABIDE hallmarks

<b>65% Appreciation</b> 2.5% increase	<b>68.9% Diversity</b> 1.7% increase
<b>71.8% Belongingness</b> 1.4% increase	<b>66.9% Equity</b> 2.5% increase
<b>68.8% Inclusivity</b> 2.4% increase	

# Our Service Commitments

Ascension embraces our Service Commitments, three simple and memorable shared behavioral standards that guide our interactions with each other and those we serve. These commitments are just one of the many ways that we express our Mission.

## Our three Service Commitments

EXTEND KINDNESS | LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND | SERVE TOGETHER

Our three Service Commitments are clear and memorable standards that guide how we care for each other and those we serve. These commitments come to life every day as our associates provide care for patients and support their fellow team members. We ensure that every associate understands the importance of these principles and how they shape the work we do.

New team members are introduced to our Service Commitments during their initial onboarding and orientation activities, while leaders receive additional tools and resources to model and promote these behaviors. Recently, 500 leaders completed sessions designed to help them create their own Service Commitment stories, offering real-life examples of these principles in action and inspiring others to embrace and embody them.

In 2024, we launched the Service Commitments Champions program. Leaders and associates can nominate colleagues quarterly for exemplifying our Service Commitments. This year, 149 selected champions were celebrated locally and across Ascension.

## SPOTLIGHT: Service Commitments Champion

Kelsi is a shining example of what Service of the Poor signifies. Kelsi was working in the emergency department and heard the nursing staff talking about a homeless patient in need of shoes. Kelsi asked what size shoes the patient wore and found out that the patient in need wore the same shoe size as Kelsi. After her shift was over, Kelsi cleaned up her shoes, went back to the ED and gave them to the patient, who was so thankful. Kelsi's actions are truly aligned with our Service Commitments, and demonstrate a true commitment to taking care of the needs of our patients who are less fortunate.

# Associate well-being as a priority

To deliver great experiences and excellent patient care, we understand the importance of first caring for our associates.

By listening to their needs and providing the resources necessary to help care for themselves and their patients, we ensure they can bring their best selves to work daily. When our associates feel supported — personally and professionally — they are more engaged and motivated, leading to better patient outcomes, improved morale and a stronger, more resilient team. This focus on well-being helps reduce burnout, increase job satisfaction and strengthen long-term retention.



## myCare

More than 8,000 associates use myCare, Ascension's internal well-being site, each month to access tools, videos and live support focused on six key well-being categories: relational, occupational, financial, mental, spiritual and physical.

## Well-being sessions

Associates can participate in live and recorded educational well-being sessions on topics such as healthy eating, ergonomics, behavior change, stress management, fitness and meditation, designed to instill healthy habits.

## Spiritual direction

We provide virtual spiritual care by partnering associates with a licensed spiritual director to address spiritual and emotional needs, offering confidential support to navigate burnout, discern vocations and handle life transitions.

## Provider Associate Care Team

The Provider Associate Care Team connects associates experiencing distress from work-related events with trained volunteer peer supporters, offering a safe and confidential space to share emotions and concerns.

## Socially just benefits approach

Designed with fairness and inclusivity in mind, this approach offers comprehensive coverage that addresses associates' physical, mental and financial well-being. The Health Benefits Subsidy provides financial waivers to eligible associates, covering costs for medical, pharmacy, dental, vision plans and more, ensuring that care remains affordable and accessible to all, regardless of their financial situation or life circumstances.

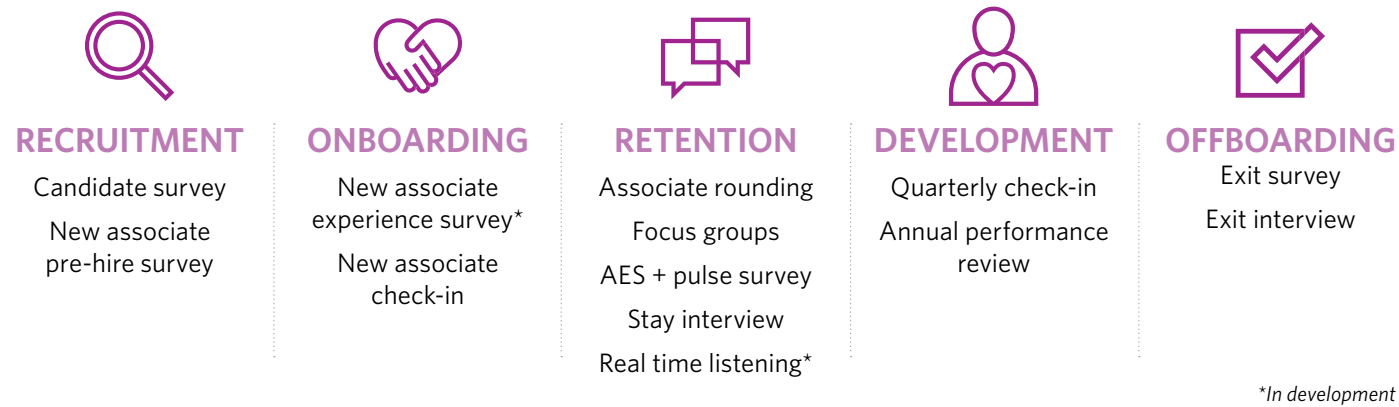




# Continuously listening to our associates

Ascension’s inclusive culture is attributed to the insights and contributions of our associates, whose voices drive improvements throughout the organization. By actively seeking and acting on their feedback, we ensure that every associate has the opportunity to influence positive changes across our hospitals, emergency departments, clinics and care facilities. When associates feel heard and see their input lead to change, engagement rises, and so do operational and clinical outcomes.

This year, we introduced our Continuous Listening Strategy, which integrates consumer and associate experience data to enhance performance and results.



# TEACH AND GROW

A career at Ascension is more than just a job — it’s a gateway to advancement and economic mobility for both current and prospective associates. Navigating career growth in healthcare can be overwhelming, with paths that may seem endless and unclear. That’s why we offer internal mobility counseling, career path mapping, debt-free educational opportunities and spiritual growth initiatives. We strive to be more than an employer; we are a partner in helping associates thrive personally and professionally, guiding them toward success and fulfillment that may have once felt out of reach.

## The Ascension Center For Career Advancement

The Center for Career Advancement offers career services, training and educational programs designed to develop a skilled workforce within the communities we serve, with a focus on reaching and empowering marginalized groups.

The Center works to fill critical and in-demand roles by introducing more people to healthcare employment opportunities while also providing chances for our associates to develop careers internally. Through strategic community relationships, we open our doors to students and community members to learn about healthcare careers at Ascension. Our “people-first” approach to career development includes efforts like short-term training programs, facility tours, job shadowing days, associate support, mentorship programs and high school summer camps.

### The Center strategically focuses on three primary areas:

**Internal mobility:** Nurturing the internal growth of our workforce through career advising and coaching, career pathing, providing upskilling and reskilling opportunities.

**Workforce development:** Our workforce development managers are placed in each of our markets to identify and address the talent needs through targeted programs.

**Internal education (Vocare):** Vocare initiatives offer select programs by providing debt-free educational opportunities to enhance the skills of our associates, empowering them to increase their earning potential and advance through promotion opportunities within the organization.



## Internal mobility

**We want to ensure our associates have a clear understanding of the many possibilities within their career journeys. More importantly, we aim to equip them with the knowledge to confidently map those journeys, making the pathways to education and economic success more accessible.**

To simplify the process of choosing a career path or growth opportunity, we conducted an in-depth assessment of workforce development programs across our markets. This resulted in approximately 100 career paths for internal associates. These pathways are designed to provide clear, accessible routes for growth and development, helping associates navigate opportunities as they advance at Ascension.

### CAREER PATHWAYS

**We identified ~100 career paths for our associates:**

**Clinical career paths:** Clinical care, nursing, pharmacy services, clinical and patient support services, patient administrative services and providers.

**Non-clinical career paths:** Administrative services, business operations, business strategy development, charitable and community services, finance, human resources, information technology, marketing and communications, revenue cycle, supply chain and risk, quality and safety.



To ensure our associates have all the information they need about potential career paths, we used the information from our assessment to develop a visual mapping tool that highlights common career progression routes. The tool outlines advancement opportunities and provides key details such as role overviews, typical responsibilities and necessary credentials or education. It also helps associates identify transferable skills and areas where additional development, certifications or experience may be required.

  
**1,200**  
**CAREER ADVISORY**  
**CONVERSATIONS**

### CAREER ADVISORY SERVICES

Ascension offers career advisory conversations to help associates explore their career options and create personalized development plans. These one-on-one discussions provide guidance on advancing within the organization, helping associates align their goals with available opportunities. **Career advisory conversations helped keep 92.5% of those associates in a role at Ascension as of May 2024.**

## Workforce development

The healthcare landscape is constantly evolving, driven by advancements in technology, shifts in patient demographics and new care models. As a result, Ascension is continuously assessing both current and future workforce needs and addressing potential gaps. This proactive approach allows us to adapt to emerging trends, such as the increasing demand for specialized care, the integration of digital health tools and the need for culturally competent care.

Our workforce development efforts are essential to meeting the healthcare demands of our communities. One of the ways we do this is by building strong relationships with students through academic affiliation agreements across all our markets. We are implementing intentional, focused efforts to prepare future healthcare professionals and build a workforce that mirrors the diversity of our communities. This inclusive approach brings diverse perspectives to patient care, ultimately enhancing the quality of interactions and outcomes for those we serve.

**Our workforce development managers are placed in each of our markets to identify and address the talent needs through targeted programs. 700 students participate as part of existing talent pipeline programs.**

### SPOTLIGHT: Work-based learning: healthcare career pathways

The Ascension Saint Thomas Work-Based Learning program offers high school seniors the opportunity to earn class credit, gain hands-on clinical skills and explore future careers in healthcare. The goal of the year-long pilot program is to build positive relationships with K-12 school systems, increase early career talent exposure to diverse healthcare roles and create a talent pipeline for entry-level positions in high-demand areas. Fifty-two students from across five school districts work at Ascension Saint Thomas facilities, performing tasks such as patient transfers, specimen transport, basic patient care under supervision and career shadowing. They are paid hourly and earn academic credit, preparing them for higher education or immediate employment within Ascension Saint Thomas.

- **100 students participated in the July 2024 cohort, up from 28 in 2022**
- **43 program graduates**



*Pictured: Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford Hospital, Murfreesboro, TN*



## Vocare education program

We understand that a career is not just a series of jobs but a journey of continuous learning, making it essential to support our associates' growth and economic success.

In 2023, we launched Vocare, a debt-free workforce education program designed to help entry-level associates gain certifications and training to transition into healthcare roles.

Derived from the Latin word for 'to call,' Vocare is about more than just education — it empowers individuals to pursue their passion and calling in healthcare. Clinical pathways include surgical technology, pharmacy technician and medical assistant. With tuition paid directly to academic institutions, associates incur no out-of-pocket costs.

24 ASSOCIATES  
COMPLETED VOCARE  
12 have transitioned into a certified role



**TESTIMONIAL:** *Being in the Vocare Education Program has been great, it's given me a lot of resources that I wouldn't have had otherwise. The program has allowed me to complete live in-action, hands-on training which gave me insight on the job that was ahead of me. My preceptors were there to support me whether it was day or night. If I had any questions at any time, I was able to get all the correct answers and support. The preceptors made sure that mentally we were ready for whatever was coming ahead in our day.*



## Ascension Learning and Leader Institute

Ascension's Learning and Leader Institute helps our associates and leaders grow through targeted education and training programs. By offering a mix of hands-on learning and practical experience, the institute supports both personal and professional development.

We take a strategic approach to building our talent pipeline, starting with onboarding to introduce new team members to our Mission and core leadership skills. As they grow, we help them build the core skills needed for their specific roles, and for those ready for their next step, we offer fellowship and rotational programs to accelerate their career progression. This ensures our team of leaders is always learning, growing and ready to meet the needs of our patients and associates.

### Learning and Leader Institute Programs

**Ascension Leader Orientation:** Equips new leaders with the skills, knowledge and mindset to succeed at Ascension. Whether new to leadership at Ascension or leading for the first time, this orientation guides them through challenges, expectations and opportunities.

9,686 leaders have completed the orientation  
Since the program launched in 2020

**Management Development Series:** Builds foundational leadership skills for frontline managers, focusing on engaging and retaining talent, leading change and delivering results.

1,886 leaders have completed the series  
Since the program launched in 2021

**Ascension Leadership Academy:** A one-year program for high-potential executives to lead transformational change and cultivate talent. Includes four in-person residencies, immersive experiences, team-based projects and coaching in executive leadership, health and well-being.

114 leaders have graduated from the program  
Since the academy launched in 2012





# Ministry Formation

As a ministry of the Church, Ascension takes a special approach to whole-person development in the work we call Ministry Formation. Rooted in the fundamental belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God, Ministry Formation at Ascension engages participants in exploring how their sense of purpose connects to Ascension’s Mission and ministry identity.

**Ministry Formation builds communities of associates, clinicians and leaders who are inspired by their own values and guided by Ascension’s Mission as a Catholic ministry. It encourages participants to reflect on their purpose and values within a supportive community during their time at Ascension.**

Through a dynamic portfolio of programs, resources and services, Formation fosters environments where participants can fully realize their potential and understand how their unique contributions make a meaningful impact. Using proven models and practices, Ministry Formation engages associates, develops leaders and nurtures a vibrant culture of ministry across Ascension.



## Formation programs

**Welcome to Ascension:** One Community for One Mission — An orientation course provided to all new associates, clinicians and leaders, this session explores our Mission, Values and history and their connection to individual purpose.

**Clinician Formation:** Our programs support the thousands of clinicians at Ascension by integrating Clinician Formation directly into their practice. For example, it is part of onboarding, residency, development and well-being efforts for nurses and physicians. Ongoing team-based experiences, celebrations like Nurses Week and reflective sessions foster connection, resilience and holistic care for clinicians as they serve patients.

**Roots of Ministry Leadership:** Launched in 2019, this program helps core leaders connect their skills with ministry leadership competencies through shared curriculum and experiences aligned with Catholic Identity and Ascension’s Values. Topics include human dignity, caring for the whole person and supporting the poor and vulnerable. Since 2022, the program has graduated 763 participants from 37 cohorts.

**Foundations of Ministry Leadership:** The Foundations program links ministry identity, Mission and leadership competencies for core leaders, using experiential learning, small groups and reflection to promote healthy leadership. A recent study shows graduates are 10.5 times more likely to stay with Ascension after two years than non-participants.

**Executive Ministry Leadership Formation (EML):** For over 20 years, the EML program has equipped leaders with executive competencies, self-awareness, theological understanding and spiritual growth through curricula and retreats. Graduates are prepared to steward Ascension as a ministry in a rapidly changing healthcare landscape. Teams led by EML graduates report, on average, a 16% higher likelihood to recommend Ascension through Employer Net Promoter Scores (eNPS) than those led by non-graduates.

Associates are 2.1 times more likely to stay after six months after completing the One Community for One Mission course within 90 days



65 cohorts and 1,677 leaders have completed the Foundations of Ministry Leadership program since 2009





# ENCOURAGE DEPARTING ASSOCIATES: THE ASCENSION EXIT EXPERIENCE

Our associates are drawn to us by our shared purpose, and we gladly welcome former team members who are aligned with our Mission and eager to make a meaningful impact to consider employment with us again if the opportunity arises. We recognize that the years of experience carried by our current and former nurses, physicians and other frontline caregivers are a great asset, so we know returning members of the Ascension family bring with them irreplaceable value.

Our Mission remains unchanged, and our workplace is constantly improving, so we encourage departing associates to look back positively on their time serving at Ascension, and consider ways to return to be a part of our work in the future.

## Our exit interview strategy

We place great importance on maintaining relationships with members of the Ascension family who move on to roles outside our organization. Our exit interview strategy plays a vital role in assessing their overall experience, helping us identify ways to improve retention and engagement among current associates while keeping the door open for former team members to return.



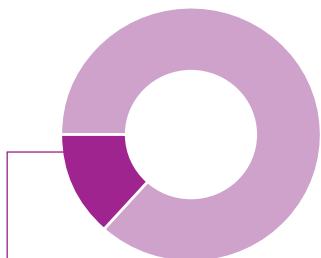
In 2023, we sent out 5,000 surveys to connect with former employees from departments that typically have the highest turnover in our industry, including nursing, imaging and surgery. From the results, we identified areas of success, opportunities for growth and strategies for further improving our employee experience.

- **Job enjoyment:** An impressive 80% of associates liked the type of work they did. This high level of job satisfaction suggests that many former associates have fond memories of their time at Ascension and may be inclined to return for similar roles.
- **Commitment to safety:** 72% of respondents felt their coworkers took the proper steps to ensure patient safety. This reflects a strong culture of teamwork and dedication to patient care, a compelling reason for former associates to consider returning.
- **Supportive reporting environment:** 70% of associates felt comfortable reporting medical errors or concerns without fearing consequences. This transparency and focus on safety create a positive work environment that former associates might seek out again.
- **Respectful management:** With 70% of employees agreeing that their managers treated them with respect, it's clear that positive manager-employee relationships are a cornerstone of our organizational culture.
- **Clear communication of benefits:** 67% of respondents felt that their benefits were clearly communicated, ensuring they understood the value of what was provided to them.

54% EXPRESSED THEY WOULD  
CONSIDER RETURNING

Over half of Ascension associates had a positive enough experience to consider returning in the future

We believe that once you become an associate, you are always part of our community. Our exit interview strategy is one way we demonstrate this commitment, ensuring that every associate feels valued and supported, both during their time here and beyond.



13.4% of overall offers  
accepted were from rehires  
8.2% increase from the year before  
  
In the nursing job family, rehires  
accounted for 17.6% of offers

# REFERENCES

Kenzaka, T., & Kosami, S. (2020). Bloodstream infection in the ICU. *Acute Medicine & Surgery*, 7(4), e532. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ams2.532>

(2024). A Report Card: Diabetes in the United States Infographic. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/communication-resources/diabetes-statistics.html>

Cuenca, A., Kapsner, S. (2019). Medicare Wellness Visits: Reassessing Their Value to Your Patients and Practice. Retrieved from <https://www.aafp.org/pubs/fpm/issues/2019/0300/p25.html>

Beckman, A., Becerra, A., Marcus, A., DuBard, C., Lynch, K., Maxson, E., Mostashari, F., King, J. (2019). Medicare Annual Wellness Visit association with healthcare quality and costs. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30875175/>

Rothenberg, E. (2023). More than half of older Americans will need long-term term care. Many can’t afford the rising cost. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/16/business/aging-population-insurance-costs/index.html>

(2024). As Medicaid Unwinding Concludes in Most States, KFF Finds 25 Million Lost Medicaid Coverage but Enrollment is 10 Million Higher Than Pre-Pandemic Levels. Retrieved from <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/press-release/as-medicaid-unwinding-concludes-in-most-states-kff-finds-25-million-lost-medicaid-coverage-but-enrollment-is-10-million-higher-than-pre-pandemic-levels/>

(2021). Healing patients and planet with 1 cost-saving anesthesia adjustment. Retrieved from <https://us.noharm.org/news/healing-patients-and-planet-1-cost-saving-anesthesia-adjustment>

Njoku, A., Evans, M., Nimo-Sefah, L., & Bailey, J. (2023). Listen to the Whispers Before They Become Screams: Addressing Black Maternal Morbidity and Mortality in the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9914526/>

Trost, S., Beauregard, J., Chandra, G., Njie, F., Berry, J., Harvey, A., & Goodman, D. (2022). Pregnancy-Related Deaths: Data from Maternal Mortality Review Committees in 36 U.S. States, 2017– 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/maternal-mortality/php/data-research/mmrc-2017-2019.html>

(2022). Severe Obstetric Complications Electronic Clinical Quality Measure (eCQM) Methodology Report. Retrieved from [https://ecqi.healthit.gov/sites/default/files/SevereObstetricComplications%20eCQM\\_Methodology%20Report%20-%20Dec%202022.pdf](https://ecqi.healthit.gov/sites/default/files/SevereObstetricComplications%20eCQM_Methodology%20Report%20-%20Dec%202022.pdf)

Novoa, C. (2020). Ensuring Healthy Births Through Prenatal Support. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/ensuring-healthy-births-prenatal-support/>

Collins, R. (2024). Losing faith: Verite survey reveals structural causes of hopelessness in New Orleans. Retrieved from <https://lailluminator.com/2024/06/11/survey-new-orleans/>

Rabin, R. C. (2023). Maternity’s most dangerous time: After new mothers come home. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/28/health/pregnancy-childbirth-deaths.html>

Ungar, L. (2023). U.S. maternal deaths more than doubled over 20 years. Here’s who fared the worst. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/u-s-maternal-deaths-more-than-doubled-over-20-years-heres-who-fared-the-worst>

(2024). Working Together to Reduce Black Maternal Mortality. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/womens-health/features/maternal-mortality.html>





# Ascension

[ascension.org](https://ascension.org)