



A Vital Bridge with the Community

PeaceHealth Cottage Grove Community Medical Center

2025 Community Health Needs Assessment

Our report to the community

The importance of a Community Health Needs Assessment

Every three years, each PeaceHealth location conducts a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) as required by the 2010 Patient Care and Affordable Care Act. Tax-exempt hospitals like ours — as defined by IRS Section 501(r) — use the CHNA to report current community needs, statistics and activities. We are also expected to develop an Implementation Strategy outlining our plans to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

We see our CHNA report and Implementation Strategy as much more than a requirement or obligation. Through this narrative, we are presenting the story of our dedication and service to the community and people we serve. Beyond traditional medical services and care, we are committed to helping people in need.

Click to view previous editions of our [CHNA](#) and [Implementation Strategy](#).

What is our community needs assessment process?

We conducted a thorough review of publicly reported data from national, state, and local sources to assess our community's needs. We convened community stakeholders from multiple sectors to review the data and provide feedback on community-wide needs. Our data collection and analysis were completed in the fall of 2024.

Our key findings

Our assessment aligns with national trends and often indicates that the challenges and priorities being faced locally are part of broader, widespread issues.

Our assessment identified a critical call for improved health equity for the Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer plus (LGBTQ+) communities, those living in rural and remote areas and other vulnerable and at-risk members of our community.

Investment in housing availability and affordability for families was a key theme, as well as supporting housing access and options for our unhoused and medically fragile community members. Access to healthcare, getting care in a timely manner, wrap-around services for frequent healthcare utilizers and individuals in crisis and transportation for healthcare needs were highlighted. We further identified the need for access to mental health care and substance abuse treatment and prevention, noting a concerning trend of worsening mental health among Lane County residents, especially youth. The need for support services, including childcare and after-school programming, food security and access to healthy food, was noted.

Our assessment also acknowledged a decrease in the workforce and subsequent strain on filling crucial roles in our community. We hear these needs, and we are committed to leveraging our resources, funding, voices and partnership to address disparities and gaps to provide whole-person care in Lane County.

Who we are and what we believe in

PeaceHealth Cottage Grove Community Medical Center is a 14-bed, 40,000-square-foot critical access hospital and primary care clinic in southern Lane County, Oregon. Since 1998, we have served the rural communities of Cottage Grove, Creswell, Lorane, Dexter and Dorena in southern Lane County and Drain, Elkton, Oakland and Yoncalla in northern Douglas County, promoting a healing environment for the mind, body and spirit. To complement its offerings, clinics in Cottage Grove, Creswell and Dexter provide the community with access to skilled healthcare providers spanning various medical specialties.

We offer a comprehensive spectrum of care that includes nonsurgical inpatient hospital care, a highly utilized emergency department and outpatient ambulatory care. It's critical that PeaceHealth — as the region's major hospital system, including our medical groups and network of primary and specialty clinics — provides equal access to high-quality, appropriate, and integrated community care. With a focus on serving the needs of each patient, from hospital care to recovery, we are committed to patient safety, transparency and continuous improvement.

Since 1998, when PeaceHealth was invited to manage the community hospital, the Cottage Grove community has found ways to bond together and overcome the obstacles thrown their way. The community is resilient in the face of adversity. They came together — individuals and organizations — quickly and creatively and built a local rural healthcare system that supports the entire community and ensures the most vulnerable equal access. Rural communities bear a disproportionate brunt of the disparity in healthcare, especially when addressing acute needs like homelessness and mental health.



About PeaceHealth Cottage Grove Community Medical Center

5.4

Average daily census

14

Total licensed beds

3.3

Average length of stay (days)

266

Inpatient discharges

43,378

Outpatient clinic visits

13,678

ED visits

179

Caregivers

179

Physicians and clinicians

Source: PeaceHealth FY 2024

Building a network of care from the inside out

We recognize that change starts from within, believing that our caregivers can best focus on others when we put our focus on caring for them. This has been an essential element in preserving our 130-year legacy of community service and care. With 179 employees throughout the Cottage Grove Community Medical Center service area, PeaceHealth is one of the largest employers in the area. Our caregivers are a vital part of our community, and we recognize the weight and responsibility of caring for both our community and our caregivers.

"We are proud of the partnerships built with local government and community organizations, including South Lane School District, South Lane Mental Health and Community Health Clinics of Lane County, as we work together to tackle these pressing concerns and create a healthier, more equitable community."

*— Jason Hawkins, chief administrative officer,
Cottage Grove Community Medical Center*

We are committed to implementing change that is reflective of our core values: respect, stewardship, collaboration, and social justice. PeaceHealth's Mission Integrity and Cultural Fulfillment department supports caregivers by hosting Caregiver Resource Groups (CRGs). CRGs are voluntary, employee-led groups that serve as a resource for members who have shared cultural identities and/or life experiences. These groups create an inclusive environment to advocate for shared interests, build awareness among PeaceHealth Caregivers, engage in external community partnerships, enhance culturally responsive care, and build a culture of belonging at PeaceHealth.

The community we serve

The population growth in Cottage Grove was 9.2% between 2010-2020, while Lane County and the state of Oregon saw a population increase of 8.9% and 10.6%, respectively. Demographically, Cottage Grove residents identify as predominately White at over 78%. The Hispanic or Latino population makes up a significant portion of the population in both Lane County and Cottage Grove, 10.2% and 8.2% respectively. Those identifying with two or more racial groups make up 8.1% of the population in Cottage Grove and 6% in Lane County. These numbers indicate a diverse community with a strong representation of different racial and ethnic groups, contributing to the rich cultural tapestry of the region and reflecting the impact of this community on the local area.

A growing community... Cottage Grove, Oregon

11,095 Population

9.2% 2010-20 population growth

Population Research Center at Portland State University and US Census 2010-2020

Cottage Grove's race and ethnicity profile

78.8% White

8.2% Hispanic/Latino

8.1% Two or more races

3.7% Asian

1.0% American Indian/
Alaska Native

0.2% Black/African American

0.1% Pacific Islander/
Native Hawaiian

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2019-2023

Supporting health justice for all

Our Mission

We are committed to our Mission: We carry on the healing mission of Jesus Christ by promoting personal and community health, relieving pain and suffering, and treating each person in a loving and caring way. We are driven by our belief that good health, prevention and community well-being are fundamental rights. We support health justice for all and are especially called to be in service to the most vulnerable members of our community. And we believe that every person should receive safe and compassionate care — every time, every touch.

Poverty and the connection to health and wellbeing

Poverty and health are deeply interconnected and impact individuals and communities. According to the World Health Organization, people living in poverty have a decreased life expectancy and increased child mortality rates.

Poverty profoundly impacts the social drivers of health (SDOH) — the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These factors are responsible for a significant portion of health inequities within and between societies. Poverty shapes these drivers in ways that worsen health outcomes and increase vulnerability to disease.

Poverty's expansive grip

The poverty rate in Cottage Grove is 14.3%, while the rate in Lane County and the state of Oregon is 15.3% and 11.9%, respectively. To further expand the picture of poverty in our community, ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained Employed) is a term that aims to broaden the picture of poverty to include those just above the federal poverty level. These are individuals and families earning more than the federal poverty level, but less than the cost of living for the county and do not qualify for financial assistance. Fifty-one percent of households in Cottage Grove are below the ALICE threshold, according to 2022 data from the United Way, while this is the case for 47% of households in Lane County. This suggests a growing financial strain on households in these areas. The impact of this trend on the community is concerning, as it indicates a potential struggle for families to afford necessities, such as housing, food and healthcare.



	Cottage Grove	Lane County	Oregon
At or below the Federal Poverty Rate ¹	14.3%	15.3%	11.9%
Below ALICE threshold (ALICE + Poverty) ²	51%	47%	45%

PeaceHealth’s commitment to health equity

PeaceHealth has taken steps to increase awareness of social inequities and promote health justice among patients, caregivers and the greater healthcare community. With the goal of eliminating healthcare disparities, PeaceHealth aims to ensure that all communities receiving care at PeaceHealth are treated justly and respectfully, with equitable access to opportunities and resources and by transforming structures that perpetuate injustice. We partner with diverse organizations, communities, and sectors to address social, economic and environmental factors that impact health. These partnerships aim to improve health outcomes for underserved populations, reducing disparities and ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities for health.

PeaceHealth’s health equity partner

Be Your Best’s mission is to foster collaborative community work that supports the health and well-being of southern Lane and north Douglas County residents. [Be Your Best](#) was started in 2013 to address the community health priorities in south Lane County, identify current gaps in and barriers to health equity and find ways to collaborate on existing and new projects that facilitate sustainable improvements and lead to systems change.

Be Your Best provides a platform for organizations and individuals to connect and collaborate on projects and programs that improve the health and well-being of South Lane residents, emphasizing accessibility, equity and effective outreach for maximum impact. In 2023 and 2024, focus areas were housing and homelessness, childcare and youth services, economic development, food security, healthcare, neighborhood and built environment. PeaceHealth is proud to work with Be Your Best to ensure alignment with the most pressing issues for the residents of southern Lane County.



¹ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2019-2023

² United Way, 2022

Our community health pillars

We are determined to help create a healthy community beyond the walls of our medical centers and clinics. Our four pillars inform the purpose of community health. Across these pillars is the awareness of our solemn responsibility to protect the most vulnerable and underserved people in our communities while promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in everything we do. These four pillars include:

- **HOME:** Improve access to service-enriched housing,
- **HOPE:** Increase education and access to treatment and prevention of dependence,
- **CARE:** Expand knowledge, access and engagement with community caregivers, and
- **NOURISH:** Address food insecurities to enhance family and child well-being.



Home



Hope



Care



Nourish

Bridging the gap in our community

Our priority is to provide the overall best care possible to our entire community. To do this, we need to provide an equitable system of support that recognizes needs, focuses on overcoming barriers and builds resiliency for key community segments, including:

- Youth, seniors, BIPOC communities, and those who identify as LGBTQ+,
- Low-income families,
- People experiencing mental health needs,
- People experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness,
- People with disabilities, and
- People living in rural areas.

“The Community Health Needs Assessment process serves as a conversation starter that leads to an understanding of our communities that statistics cannot create alone. At PeaceHealth, we find value and joy in building the relationships that make those conversations never-ending.”

– Liz Dunne, PeaceHealth President and CEO

Recognizing inequities and elevating partnerships

We are stronger when we work together; this is why community-based partnerships like the ones described in this CHNA report are crucial to our community’s success. They enable all of us to address social drivers of health and improve care and access — regardless of where individuals are in their health journey.

Collaboration amongst our community organizations to care for our community members’ highest needs is imperative. Cottage Grove Community Medical Center has

directed its community benefit cash donations to those organizations working tirelessly in the community. [South Lane School District](#), [Family Relief Nursery](#), [Cottage Grove Community Sharing](#), [South Lane Mental Health](#), [Looking Glass Community Services](#), [15th Night](#), [Be Your Best](#), [Friends of Cottage Grove Library](#), [Carry it Forward](#), [South Valley Athletics](#) and [South Lane Community Health Center](#) have partnered with PeaceHealth through community benefit donations to sustain our community in the areas of community health we prioritize most highly: hope, home, nourish and care.

Community benefit contributions in southern Lane County

PeaceHealth has a long history of support in the communities we serve. In 1998, when PeaceHealth took over management of the bankrupt hospital in Cottage Grove, a local grassroots effort was undertaken to fund the construction of a comprehensive new medical facility. In 2003, the new 40,000-square-foot, \$12.7M Cottage Grove Hospital and Clinics building opened. The legacy of growth and service to the community has continued. Guided by a commitment to compassionate care and equitable access, we have prioritized investments in programs, services and partnerships that address critical health needs and foster a healthier, more resilient community. Our rural community is blessed with a strong network of nonprofit organizations delivering programs designed to improve physical and mental health and increase access to care. PeaceHealth is proud to support these partnerships and contribute to the overall well-being of the community.

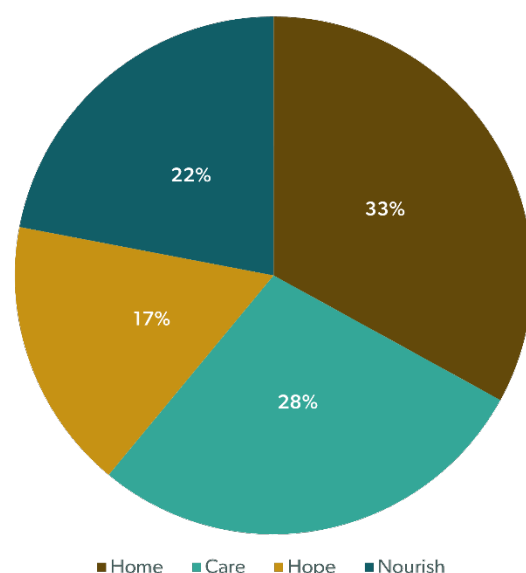
In 2024, PeaceHealth contributed over \$1.2M in community benefit cash donations to our community partner organizations in Lane County, many of whose stories are told in the pages of this report. To assist our nonprofit community partners in maintaining sustainable operations in suitable facilities, PeaceHealth contributed an additional \$600,000 of in-kind, no-cost and low-cost property leases for clinical and administrative spaces in the community.

As the largest employer and healthcare system in the region, we are committed to healthcare workforce development programs and creating pathways to healthcare careers for underserved communities. This commitment drove an additional \$810K in cash investments to nursing and career technical education programs in Lane County.

Looking Ahead

While we are proud of our community benefit investments and partnerships, we recognize that much work remains. Rising healthcare costs, health inequities and the increasing need for behavioral health and substance abuse treatment in Lane County require sustained effort and innovation. As we expand our community benefit partnerships, we remain diligent in ensuring that our community benefits extend to those who need it most.

PeaceHealth community benefit cash contributions in southern Lane County (FY 2024)





Community priority: Building a healthcare workforce locally

Community need

Critical shortages of healthcare workers are especially acute in rural communities. The opportunity to obtain certifications in technical healthcare roles and transferrable credits to nursing and other key healthcare roles while still in high school encourages students to stay in the communities they grew up in and call home.

Career and technical education at South Lane School District

South Lane School District's Career and Technical Education programs bridge student strengths, passions and interests with the current skills and knowledge necessary to enter high-wage, high-demand careers reflective of the global marketplace.

CTE programs ensure that all students successfully and creatively engage with technologies, communities, environments and workplaces. Programs provide opportunities for students to develop a set of skills that include collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, workplace skills and expectations, and industry-specific expectations. Students will develop these authentic skills through academic and hands-on learning opportunities and simulations.



"While placing students in internships and job shadows can be complicated in the healthcare field, it is so important to have partners like we do in Cottage Grove that understand how vital these experiences are for our students. We are so appreciative of the partnerships that we have cultivated together in our community."

— Brian McCasline, South Lane School District Superintendent

Career and Technical Education (CTE) in South Lane School District provides an important trajectory to success for high school students in a multitude of career paths — exploring and implementing new opportunities in healthcare careers in partnership with [Lane Community College](#), PeaceHealth Cottage Grove Community Medical Center and the newly opened South Lane Community Health Center. CTE programs of study include a wide variety of disciplines that provide hands-on learning and experience where students can acquire skills that are transferable to a multitude of future pathways in administrative and clinical healthcare careers.

Cottage Grove Community Medical Center values the opportunity to support South Lane School District and the youth of Cottage Grove and surrounding communities through this and several other partnered programs that address early learning, after-school programs and childcare, prevention of youth homelessness and social justice.

PeaceHealth's investment

PeaceHealth Cottage Grove Community Medical Center's Community Collaboration Committee generously donated \$10,000 in community benefit funding to support Career and Technical Education in South Lane School District.

Key benefits of CTE programs

- 95%** CTE students graduate high school — 10% higher than other students
- \$10,000** more per year earned by people with CTE-field associate degrees than other associate degrees
- 4.5%** increase in CTE participants since 2020
(source: Oregon Department of Education)



Community priority: Improve access to mental health services

Community need

Recent data show that the United States is in a mental health crisis experienced by people of all ages. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), one in five adults in the US experience mental illness each year. This trend was observed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic but has been worsened by pandemic-related factors. Many adults in the US reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depression, with approximately one in five reporting these symptoms in 2023. Nationwide, 5.8 million emergency department visits occurred in 2021, with mental, behavioral, and neurodevelopmental disorders as the primary diagnosis.³ The need for crisis response services remains abundantly clear.

South Lane Mental Health

South Lane Mental Health (SLMH) is a non-profit community mental health agency dedicated to providing superb mental health services to the residents of southern Lane County. SLMH came out of the compassion and creativity of the Cottage Grove community and strives to reflect that same compassion and creativity in each program we offer. In 1987, a group of Cottage Grove neighbors came together to find housing and mental health services for a community member experiencing severe and persistent mental illness so she would not have to leave her home to access good care. One year later, SLMH was created as an adult foster home for individuals living with severe and persistent mental illness. SLMH Health started with one community member in need and now serves over 1,000 clients each year. Clients come to SLMH with economic scarcity, trauma, conflict in relationships, anxiety, depression, suicidality, self-harm and psychosis. They are matched with providers who can meet them “where they are” and work with them on accomplishing their treatment goals.

SLMH’s mission is to restore hope and renew lives through supportive and empathetic mental health services. South Lane Mental Health is constantly developing programs to reflect the needs of the Cottage Grove community. Trauma impacts almost 100% of SLMH clients; it wears many masks and impacts clients differently, but living with trauma is an all-too-common reality.

Through PeaceHealth support, SLMH has trained seven therapists in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, as well as expanded their Neurofeedback Program by training two new neurofeedback clinicians. EMDR is a structured form of psychotherapy used to help patients with PTSD resolve upsetting

Mental health needs in western Lane County

- 90** people for every mental health provider available, vs. 150 in Oregon and 320 nationally (source: 2023 county health rankings)
- 12th** Oregon’s national rank for youth suicide (source: 2022 county health rankings)
- 14.2** Oregon’s youth suicide rate per 100,000 vs. 10 nationally (source: 2022 county health rankings)
- 10th** leading cause of death in Oregon (source: CDC)



South Lane Mental health by the numbers

- 1,936** clients served in 2024
- 1,878** clients served in 2023
- 3%** year-over-year growth

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

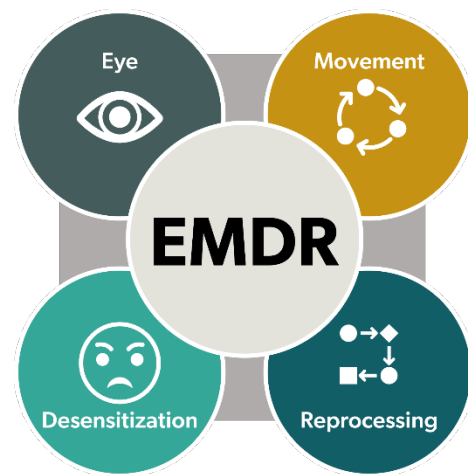
memories. EMDR involves accessing traumatic memories through brief doses while the client focuses on something else with their eyes. After EMDR treatment, the client's distress will dissipate, negative feelings are reformulated and physiological responses lessen.

Neurofeedback is a type of biofeedback that helps you harmonize your brain waves naturally (without medications). During neurofeedback sessions, your brain "learns" how to bring abnormally fast or slow waves into the normal range. This teaches self-control of brain functions by measuring brain waves and providing a feedback signal. This highly effective form of therapy involves simply relaxing and watching a video or movie while your therapist monitors your brain waves.

Both EMDR and neurofeedback are hugely successful interventions when working with clients who are living with trauma. Clients report reductions in flashbacks and nightmares, better emotional regulation and self-esteem and more satisfaction in their relationships. SLMH has been able to serve over 70 clients with these additional services and expects the number to grow.

PeaceHealth investment in SLMH

Through support from the CGCMC Community Collaboration Committee, PeaceHealth donated \$10,000 to SLMH for EMDR training and \$10,000 for community-based mental health Services. PeaceHealth is proud to support SLMH and the incredibly important services offered to the community.



"The only thing I remotely can enjoy getting myself out of the house is to come here — my 'safe place.' Thank you, for keeping me going."
— SLMH client

Partnering to expand critical behavioral health services in Lane County

Lane County Health and Human Services and PeaceHealth have built a strategic partnership with the goal of building a co-located behavioral health campus. The campus will be home to PeaceHealth's new behavioral health hospital, and the adjacent Lane County will construct the [Lane Stabilization Center \(LSC\)](#).

By entering an exciting innovation of private-public partnerships, the two facilities will provide a convenient and centrally located collection of behavioral health resources for the community.

In partnership with [LifePoint Health](#), the new Behavioral Health Unit will be a standalone inpatient behavioral health hospital close by PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at Riverbend. The 96-bed facility will nearly triple PeaceHealth's current inpatient behavioral health capacity and intensive outpatient programs will also be offered at the new location. Lane County Health and Human Services is partnering with [Connections Health Solutions](#) to open the Lane Stabilization Center, which will provide immediate access to behavioral health care and treatment for youth and adults. The center will offer rapid, intensive treatment that prioritizes compassionate and personalized care, filling a critical gap in our community's behavioral health system.

"Our inpatient behavioral health hospital and the county's stabilization center will fill a critical need in our community with full, wrap-around care at a time when individuals need it the most," said Alicia Beymer, chief administrative officer, PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend. "Not only will both facilities vastly expand our resources, but thanks to this innovative public/private partnership, we will be better equipped to more efficiently connect people with the best care for their needs and have an even greater positive impact in our community."





Community priority: Expand access & engagement with community caregivers

Community need

Support services for families in need are vital to fostering stability, resilience and opportunities for growth. By offering tailored resources and compassionate assistance, support programs empower families to overcome obstacles and build a stronger foundation for their future. They also strengthen communities by enhancing social equity and creating an environment where all families can thrive.

Family Relief Nursery

Family Relief Nursery (FRN) seeks to keep children safe through support and early intervention, strengthening families so all children thrive. The program aims to minimize child abuse and neglect by providing support, care, and instruction to families in our community. Since its founding in 1994, the organization has served over 3,000 families. FRN's model provides wraparound support to families without many of the advantages that most parents take for granted. They seek to meet families where they are and help guide them to a successful future.

FRN offers therapeutic early childhood education designed for all children, regardless of past trauma, current delays, or future enhanced needs. These classes provide transportation to and from each family's home to eliminate any barriers to attendance. They also know the importance of respite services, which FRN proudly provides to all families in our program. Parents can rest and recuperate from the challenges of their day while knowing that their children are safe and receiving high-quality care. The team provides home visiting services, through which families can receive 1-on-1 assistance and coaching from our child development experts. This adds crucial support for parents in an environment where they are comfortable. Their parenting classes help parents build a supportive community and build a toolset within themselves to tackle the challenges of parenting.

For those seeking immediate supplies, FRN operates a clothing closet, food bank and diaper bank so that all families — not just those enrolled in its services — can come and receive the resources they need to be successful parents.



Family Relief Nursery

Family Relief Nursery by the numbers

\$2,500	monthly in diapers
200	families receiving diapers monthly
76	children in therapeutic classrooms
52	families in outreach program
4	bilingual parenting classes each year



"The people here know us, and they see the dedication of our staff, who go above and beyond to support local children and ensure families have the care and resources they need. While our outcomes are strong on paper, the real success is visible in the everyday connections we make and the lasting impact we have on our neighbors."

– Kyle Riege, Family Relief Nursery

PeaceHealth investment

Through support from the CGCMC Community Collaboration Committee, PeaceHealth donated \$7,000 in 2024 for Family Relief Nursery's diaper relief program and \$5,000 in 2022 for their home visiting program. PeaceHealth is proud to support Family Relief Nursery's mission to strengthen families so all children can thrive.

South Lane Community Health Center

It took a decade of planning, community collaboration and fundraising for the South Lane Community Health Center to open in Fall of 2024. Housed in Lane Community College's Cottage Grove Center and operated by the [Community Health Centers of Lane County](#) (CHCLC), a division of Lane County Health & Human Services, South Lane Clinic was made possible by a strategic partnership between Lane County, Lane Community College, PeaceHealth, South Lane School District, Be Your Best and South Lane Mental Health. The clinic offers medical, dental, and integrated behavioral health care to residents of Cottage Grove. It will provide training for local students interested in health care careers through a career technical education program administered by Lane Community College and in partnership with South Lane School District, Lane County and PeaceHealth.



The long journey to opening the much-needed clinic was driven by longstanding gaps in care in the community. South Lane community was designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area for primary and dental care. It was one of the top two Oregon areas with the highest level of need. This dynamic placed undue stress on the Cottage Grove Community Medical Center emergency department, where unmet dental needs in the community drove the highest rate of oral health-related emergency department visits in the county and the second highest in the state. Particularly underserved was the need for intensive pediatric dental procedures and services for

individuals with Oregon Health Plan. This gap in care was impacting the most vulnerable in the community – about 14% of Cottage Grove residents and almost 50% of local families with children under 5 lived below the federal poverty level (FPL). Among Federally Qualified Health Center patients, 75% had family incomes below the federal poverty level, 40% were children under age 18 and 7% were age 65 or older.⁴

South Lane Community Health Center is a federally qualified health center (FQHC) that serves all people regardless of race, gender, age, preferred language, sexual orientation, housing, citizenship, insurance status, or ability to pay. Programs and Services. Healthy people are the foundation of healthy communities, and South Lane Community Health Center focuses on integrated care that values the whole person and serves the whole family. The community partnerships will sustain the most promising healthcare career pathways and develop the clinic as a real-world learning and training site for local high school and college students interested in healthcare careers.

PeaceHealth investment

PeaceHealth Cottage Grove Community Medical Center is proud to have helped move this important community initiative forward with a \$300,000 community benefit grant and continued partnerships that will shape and sustain the community health center in the years to come.



⁴ South Lane Community Health Center – Career and Technical Education Project: 09-03-2020)



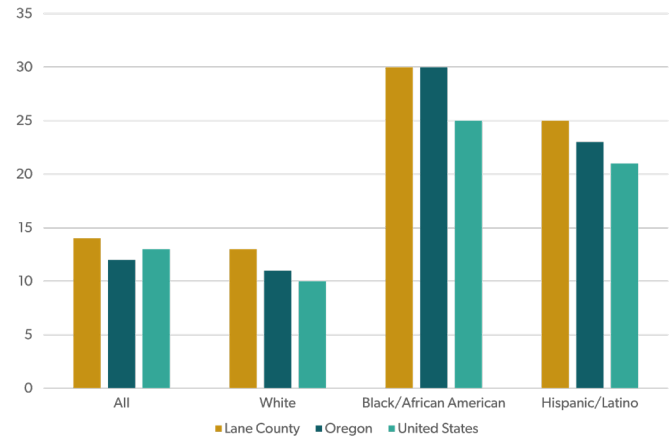
Community priority: Address food insecurity

Community need

Food insecurity, defined as limited or uncertain access to adequate food, is a pressing issue that affects communities across the United States. Food insecurity increases the risk for multiple chronic health conditions such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease and mental health disorders,⁵ and places a burden on the healthcare system due to longer hospital stays and higher readmission rates for adults in food-insecure households. Lane County's food insecurity rate of 14.6% exceeds that of the state and national level at 13.1% and 13.5%, respectively,⁶ stressing the importance of targeted programs aimed at reducing food insecurity in our communities.

In Lane County, the data reveals disparities in food insecurity rates among different racial and ethnic groups. Black and Hispanic/Latino populations experience significantly higher levels of food insecurity compared to the overall population and white individuals. The impact of these disparities on the affected communities is substantial, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address food insecurity among marginalized groups.

Food insecurity by race/ethnicity, 2022
Lane County and comparison



Food insecurity and health

- Increased risk for multiple chronic health conditions such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and mental health disorders.⁷
- Burden on the health care system and increased costs. Longer hospital stays and higher readmission rates for adults in food-insecure households.⁸
- Increased risk for adverse health outcomes and health disparities.⁹

Food For Lane County survey of visitors

48% of respondents with children reported sometimes or often cut the size of their children's meals or had to skip meals because there was not enough money to buy food.

68% of respondents said they had been hungry and could not eat because they did not have enough money for food.

⁵ National Institute on Minority Health and health disparities, 2024

⁶ Map the Meal Gap 2022, Feeding America

⁷ National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, 2024

⁸ Men F, Gundersen C, Urquia ML, et al. Food insecurity is associated with higher healthcare use and costs among Canadian adults. *Health Affairs*. 2020;39(8):1377-85

⁹ Healthy People 2023

Veggie Rx at the South Valley Farmers Market

Veggie Rx is a produce prescription program used as a medical treatment or preventative service for patients. Patients are eligible due to a diet-related health risk or condition, food insecurity or other documented challenges accessing nutritious foods and are referred by a healthcare provider or health insurance plan.

Clinicians write a “prescription” for fresh fruits and vegetables for those patients with diet-related health challenges and food insecurities. Typically, healthcare providers prescribe prescriptions to patients who redeem them at farmers’ markets. Veggie Rx programs are designed to improve healthcare outcomes, optimize medical spending and increase patient engagement and satisfaction. Patients enrolled in Veggie Rx programs report behavioral, mental and physical health improvements, while the local economy and small farms benefit from produce sales.

The [South Valley Farmers Market](#) began implementing the Veggie Rx program during the 2024 growing season and served 17 families. It is held on Saturdays from May to October and provides southern Willamette Valley with access to farm-fresh produce. Veggie Rx is an effective way to incorporate more fresh fruits and vegetables into patients’ diets. Many participants initially reported that they did not have enough food from week to week, and most did not attend the market before receiving Veggie Rx. By attending the market, patrons can also access other food equity programs: *Bucka Bucka Bucks* offers \$10 to spend on eggs for each household under 300% of the federal poverty level, and *Double Up Food Bucks* is a \$20 supplemental nutritional assistance program (SNAP) match if participants receive EBT benefits.



"Veggie Rx really helped to balance out my diet. I didn't eat veg or fruit until this program started. I hope we have it next year. This program is amazing! I ate fresh fruits and vegetables all week!"

"I couldn't believe it; I have never eaten so well."

– Veggie Rx participants

Children attending the market can also receive additional currency through the *Sprouts at the Market* children's program. Sprouts offers bilingual storytime, produce tastings and crafts at each market. Children who attend receive \$10 to spend at the market as well as an additional \$5 token for fresh produce if they are 12 years or under. There are no income limits for this program.

PeaceHealth investment

PeaceHealth's Cottage Grove Community Medical Center Community Collaboration Committee donated \$3,500 to pilot the Veggie Rx program at the South Valley Farmers Market in Cottage Grove.

Veggie Rx 2024 pilot by the numbers

17	participants
24	markets
\$1,660	amount participants "spent" at the markets

Coast Fork Farm Stand & Twinberry Commons: Public market, community hub & small business incubator

Coast Fork Farm Stand is a farm stand with plans for much more. The Farm Stand features local, organic, fair-trade and healthy produce and foods and has become an integral part of the Cottage Grove community over the last decade.

Twinberry Commons is an umbrella nonprofit organization working on developing a community space that meets the needs of the local community for information about access to healthy, fresh, sustainably grown and produced foods; learning new skills and gaining knowledge through community based educational gatherings, events, and workshops; assisting with the transition of the Cottage Grove community's local Farm Stand into a food co-op to ensure its long term survival; and creating the foundation for our Commons — a public space where locals and visitors can gather knowledge and develop common ground.

Coast Fork Farm Stand is a farm stand with plans for much more. The Farm Stand features local, organic, fair-trade and healthy produce and foods and has, over the last decade, become an integral part of the Cottage Grove community.

The Board of Twinberry Commons and the farm stand owners have introduced a Public Market with a vision to partner with public, private and nonprofit stakeholders to realize a community-oriented project targeting food security and public health. By supporting and safeguarding local farmers and food producers, small businesses and emergency preparedness services, the Public Market encourages neighborhood economics and integrates indigenous and minority groups into the business community.



The Public Market creates space for a bustling, year-round vendor market of owner-operated businesses that produce food, beverages, artisan products, music, fresh produce, crafts and more for locals and visitors. It's not only a public market where purchases are made but a local gathering space where community members of all ages, interests, backgrounds and cultures can meet, network and find common ground to create new relationships, ideas and collaborations. The Public Market aims to serve as an incubator space where small businesses develop and job creation coexists for the good of the community.



Final thoughts

At PeaceHealth, we recognize that the journey to health and well-being is constant. Driven by our belief that good health, prevention and community well-being are fundamental rights, we are humbled and honored to serve and learn from our communities. Our Community Health Needs Assessment process holds us accountable for listening and learning from our communities and informs the development of our Community Health Improvement Plan. The needs are forever evolving — and so are we. We pledge to continue our collaborative work in the community and invite you to join us in our pursuit of health justice for all.