

# Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan

**MED**RVA Healthcare

(Richmond Eye & Ear Healthcare Alliance)  
2023



## Introduction

MEDRVA Healthcare, operating as an alias of Richmond Eye & Ear Health Care Alliance (REEHA), has compiled a 2023 Community Needs Health Assessment highlighting the healthcare necessities of Virginians in its operational region.

The findings from the CHNA will assist MEDRVA in planning and prioritizing future activities including, allocating resources, providing eye screenings to pre-k school-aged children, low vision services, and donating its surgery center and procedure rooms, when appropriate, for surgeries, and imaging center services. The assessment will be used as a resource for organizational officials, staff and others to plan initiatives to improve the health of our region and underserved communities.

The following is a report on MEDARVA's findings and implementation plans.

## Community Health Concerns

Being a mix of both urban and rural areas has implications for health status and healthcare services. This section of the Needs Assessment addresses some of the challenges of serving this type of area with varying demographics and needs and offers some important planning considerations to address health needs.

## Community Service Gaps

This section examines general health status in our service area, which has the poorest health outcomes. After comparing general health status across the region, this section highlights six basic health needs/community service gaps including: Access to Primary Care Services, Vision Care, Transportation Barriers, Specialty Care Access, Health Education and Outreach, and Support for the Elderly and Homebound.

Health behaviors were addressed in the health status and needs section, because of the role they play in health outcomes. COVID-19 was also addressed in this section because of the importance of its immediate impact upon health status and its implications on health disparities.

## Ideas and Suggestions for Improvement

Affordability and accessibility in healthcare are of paramount concern. MEDRVA has the potential to significantly impact the Richmond community by strengthening its collaborations with local NGOs like Access Now, Powhatan Free Clinic, and others, to provide surgeries at reduced rates for those economically challenged. By diversifying the range of surgeries offered, particularly in areas underserved by local hospitals, and considering the use of new and innovative technologies, MEDRVA can cater to a broader audience, including those in remote areas or with transportation issues. Moreover, MEDRVA should continue its efforts in transparent pricing, and the offering of Pre-K vision screenings (expected to start in 2024), can promote early detection and intervention, which could decrease the need for invasive procedures.

Addressing community service gaps, particularly in vision care for the pre-k population and dental care, is crucial. MEDRVA can extend its reach by partnering with likeminded community organizations. Collaborations with local transportation services, currently being considered for low vision patients, can further enhance accessibility, ensuring patients have smooth journeys to their healthcare destinations.

Lastly, to address broader community health concerns and service gaps, MEDRVA can champion non-profit health institutions through grant advocacy and volunteer programs. By consistently supporting Medicaid, MEDRVA can also ensure that the economically challenged community members receive essential care. The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the importance of adaptability and preparedness. As the healthcare landscape evolves, MEDRVA, with its innovative approach, can play a pivotal role in shaping Richmond's healthcare future.

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## **How MEDRVA Can Address Richmond's Health Needs Concerns and Service Gaps**

The Greater Richmond Metropolitan Area stands as a testament to diversity and evolving healthcare needs. While the community thrives in many aspects, there exist pronounced health concerns and service gaps that require attention. As pivotal players in the healthcare landscape, MEDRVA's with its independent surgery centers, imaging center, low vision program, pre-K screening efforts, and more, possess both the flexibility and the specialized focus needed to address these challenges. The following ideas show strategic steps our organization can adopt to effect meaningful change.

### **1. A Surgery Center Perspective to Addressing Community Health Concerns**

Affordability remains a key concern in healthcare. Our organization has and can continue to make a significant impact by partnering with local NGOs, such as Access Now, Powhatan Free Clinic, Goochland Free Clinic, Crossover Ministry, Health Brigade and more, as well as, businesses, and philanthropic entities to offer surgical procedures at subsidized rates for the economically disadvantaged. Additionally, our offering of a transparent pricing model, devoid of hidden charges, can reassure patients and make their healthcare journey predictable and less daunting. MEDRVA was the first in the Richmond region to make its prices available on its website.

The availability of specialized care is another crucial area of intervention. By diversifying the range of surgeries offered, especially in domains underserved by local hospitals, our surgery

centers can cater to a broader section of the community.

Considering the prevalent health challenges in our service area, regular community health screening events can make a world of difference. Early detection often translates to timely intervention, potentially reducing the need for invasive surgical procedures. Furthermore, educational workshops focusing on prevalent health issues can empower the community, making them aware of surgical solutions and the importance of post-operative care.

Non-profit health institutions play a foundational role in the community. By establishing collaborative partnerships with these entities, like the relationships MEDRVA has established with Access Now, Powhatan Free Clinic, Goochland Free Clinic, Crossover Ministry, Health Brigade, and others, our surgery centers can offer services at reduced rates or even for free on designated days, thereby reaching those who are often sidelined due to financial constraints. Additionally, fostering a culture where surgeons and medical staff volunteer their expertise at community health events can strengthen the bond between the center and the community it serves.

Medicaid remains a lifeline for many. MEDRVA's surgery centers, by actively collaborating with Medicaid, can offer certain procedures at more accessible rates, ensuring even the underserved have a chance at quality surgical care. Initiatives to raise funds through the MEDRVA Foundation, be it through charitable events or collaborations, can also underpin surgeries for those who are economically challenged.

## 2. A Surgery Center Perspective to Addressing Community Service Gaps

With the stark vision issues brought to light by our previous work with the pre-k population and the work of Conexus in our community, MEDRVA can make a marked difference by hosting pre-k eye screenings and partnering with Conexus to offer glasses to those children needing them. Offering these screenings for free and partnering with others throughout the Richmond community, can address a significant service gap.

Accessibility goes beyond medical services. Additionally, by allying with local transportation services, centers can ensure patients have information to help them identify discounted ride options, making their surgical care journey smooth from start to finish.

The gap in dental care in Richmond is palpable. If infrastructure, economics and expertise allow, MEDRVA's surgery centers and medical staff can further offer surgical dental procedures, addressing both primary and complex oral health needs.

Another topic identified as a need focuses on Richmond's aging population<sup>CC</sup>, which brings with it unique healthcare needs. By tailoring surgical procedures and post-operative regimes specifically for the elderly, MEDRVA can ensure these section of our community receives care

that's both effective and sensitive to their specific requirements.

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## **Additional Recommendations for Addressing the Greater Richmond Metropolitan Area's Health Concerns and Service Gaps**

### **1. Addressing Community Health Concerns**

First and foremost, our organization's other entities such as the MEDRVA Low Vision Center, pre-k screening, and our Foundation's additional initiatives, such as funding medical equipment and in some cases staff at area free clinics, allows us to continue to support our community's health needs in a large variety of additional strategies and services.

The challenge of specialized care availability is not to be overshadowed. One can imagine a fleet of mobile medical units, charting courses to the farthest reaches of the Richmond region. Parallel to this, the establishment of public health workshops can illuminate primary care providers with specialized care techniques, erasing the boundary that often exists between generalists and specialists and paving the way for timely interventions.

At intervals, the region should play host to community health fairs, turning into arenas for screenings of conditions like hypertension, diabetes, and depression that cast long shadows. MEDRVA can also participate in these health fairs by offering vision and hearing screenings for pre-k children. Alongside these fairs, the air should be filled with health education campaigns, emphasizing the value of regular check-ups and the power of early diagnosis. The intent? To sow the seeds for a proactive, health-conscious community.

The story of non-profit health institutions is one of unwavering dedication to the marginalized. To ensure they continue their noble mission, it's imperative they stand on solid financial ground. Championing their cause through advocacy for grants – be it local, state, or federal – can provide them with the means to broaden their horizons. Since 2020, the MEDRVA Foundation has donated more than \$3 million to health clinics, community organizations such as the Children's Museum of Richmond, Richmond Performing Arts, the salaries of health professionals at several community free clinics, and other organizations and initiatives throughout our community. Charity care was also provided through the MEDRVA Low Vision Center at Stony Point. MEDRVA (Richmond Eye & Ear Health Care Alliance), will continue to make donations in 2024 and beyond. Furthermore, by igniting community health volunteer programs, the expertise of medical students, such as those we partnership through our relationships with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and the wisdom of retired healthcare professionals can be harnessed, enriching the healthcare tapestry.

And as the narrative unfolds, the spotlight should also shine on the consistent support for Medicaid and philanthropic health initiatives. By demystifying Medicaid's benefits and streamlining its enrollment process, a greater fraction of the populace can be sheltered under its wings. Concurrently, a call to action for local businesses to join MEDRVA to allocate portions of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) endeavors towards health initiatives can ensure a ceaseless flow of resources and backing.

## 2. Addressing Community Service Gaps

Richmond's challenges, with its many faces, demand solutions that are both expansive and malleable. A renewed focus on primary care access and mental health can set the stage for bridging healthcare divides. Special attention to children's vision, taking cues from Conexus's data, is the key to preemptive action and staving off future complications. The hurdles of transportation, the need for enhanced dental care, and the quest for widespread specialty care also vie for attention. Moreover, health education and outreach efforts must cast a wider net, ensuring no resident remains untouched. And as the pages turn and Richmond's senior population swells<sup>CC</sup>, there's a clarion call to design services that resonate with their unique needs, ensuring their later years are painted in hues of health and contentment.

## Summary

MEDRVA works hard to fulfill its Mission: To restore and enrich lives through health research, technology, education, surgery, and facilitating the availability of health care. As demonstrated in this report, MEDARVA has identified areas of concern for the next three years and outlined a plan to address them.