

Mass General Brigham Invests \$50 million in Community and Mental Health

Initiative Focuses on Increasing Access for Patients and Builds on Existing \$175M Annual Community Health Investments

Mass General Brigham today announced a \$50 million investment in a new, comprehensive community and mental health strategy to improve the health of the communities it serves. In partnership with 20 community-based organizations*, the initiative targets programs to improve mental healthcare capacity, workforce development, chronic disease management, as well as nutrition security and equity.

“The pandemic shined a light on long-standing barriers and inequities in healthcare. At the same time, the mental health system across Massachusetts reached a breaking point with dramatically increased need for care and limited capacity,” said **Anne Klibanski, MD, Mass General Brigham President and CEO**. “This new community health strategy will address mental health, chronic disease, and food and nutrition insecurity by working with Massachusetts community health centers and organizations to significantly increase our services in communities with the greatest needs.”

Increasing Capacity and Building the Pipeline of Workers to Address the Mental Health Crisis

The pandemic exacerbated the number of individuals needing mental health support. Emergency departments are overwhelmed by the number of individuals seeking psychiatric care, and many patients are experiencing unacceptable delays in receiving treatment. Mass General Brigham is partnering with community-based agencies and schools of higher education across Massachusetts including Bridgewater State University, William James College, UMass Boston, Salem State University, Quincy College, and Boston College to create scholarship and loan repayment programs, fellowships, stipends, and salary supplements for those in the mental health field. The programs will help increase the pipeline of new mental health staff in Massachusetts over the next several years and build the capacity and expertise of the licensed and unlicensed mental health and addiction workforce, recovery coaches, and mental health specialists.

“We are extremely grateful to Mass General Brigham for this five-year funding commitment to expand mental health and substance use disorder services in communities of color. Identifying and meeting this critical need is a great example of what happens when you use an equity lens,” said **Michael Curry, president and CEO of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers**. “Community-based health centers are the perfect partners to help address how these issues relate to the lingering trauma of systemic racism, reduced access to healthcare and social services, and the recent devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Mass General Brigham is also partnering with the Massachusetts Association of Mental Health to immediately develop and implement programs to increase pediatric urgent services. In addition, we will partner with the Corey Johnson Program for Post-Traumatic Healing to provide trauma-focused mental health support, specifically in the Roxbury community.

“Through this new and innovative partnership, we will scale up our workforce development programs and join a consortium of mental health organizations that are committed to addressing the workforce shortage. To meet the current needs, William James College will offer scholarships and stipends to recruit and train graduate students who are underrepresented in the field as well as provide mentorship, supervision, and leadership training to providers who practice in underserved communities,” **Gemima St. Louis, PhD, Associate Vice President for Workforce Initiatives & Specialty Training, William James College**.

Chronic Disease Management

Through this initiative, Mass General Brigham will focus on reducing chronic disease, improving heart health, and addressing substance use disorders that lower life expectancy and disproportionately impact racial and ethnic minority populations.

“Beginning this year, we will start to build new capabilities to increase chronic disease management and promote nutrition security and equity in our Community Health Centers and Primary Care practices in Revere and Mission Hill,” said **Elsie Taveras, MD, MPH, Chief Community Health Equity Officer for Mass General Brigham**.

Mass General Brigham will also expand its successful mobile health initiative, launched during the pandemic, to bring care to patients who have difficulty accessing a hospital or a community health center and address emerging needs. The mobile health program will continue to provide COVID testing and vaccinations as well as expand to include:

- Screening and management of hypertension
- Substance use disorder treatment and harm reduction
- Community outreach, engagement, and linkages to social support services
- Social risk factor mitigation such as the distribution of care kits and home health monitoring equipment

The mobile program will immediately focus on Lynn, Chelsea, Revere, Everett, and Greater Boston including Charlestown, Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, and Jamaica Plain. **Taveras** said, “We are focusing on communities with some of the highest rates of cardiometabolic disease and substance use disorders in Massachusetts.”

Food and Nutrition Security, Equity, and Access

According to the Greater Boston Food Bank, food insecurity across Massachusetts increased by 55% from 2019 to 2020. In fact, 37% of Mass General Brigham patients in its MassHealth/Medicaid ACO report experiencing food insecurity. The connection between food security and nutrition-related chronic diseases is the reason Mass General Brigham will partner with community-based organizations to increase access to fresh, healthy food and expand the presence of teaching kitchens to provide experiential learning opportunities and improve nutrition for people with, or at risk for, cardiometabolic disease and substance use disorders in the Blue Hill Avenue Corridor, Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, Chelsea, Revere, Everett, and Lynn.

Mass General Brigham will build on existing partnerships and add capacity where needed with other funders, hunger relief agencies, faith-based organizations, and government agencies. Partners include:

- [Community Servings](#)
- [About Fresh](#)
- [La Colaborativa](#)
- [GreenRoots](#)
- [Lynn Food Security Task Force, including the Lynn Community Health Center](#)
- [My Brother’s Table](#)
- [Greater Lynn Senior Services](#)

“Our investment strategy and intended impact would not be possible without the strong partnerships we have with community-based organizations,” noted **Taveras**. “Throughout the pandemic we worked together to make the greatest

impact we could for the communities we serve. By significantly increasing our efforts we can continue to help address the challenges and barriers that many people in the communities we serve are facing.”

***The following 20 community organizations and schools of higher education are partners with Mass General Brigham:**

1. [Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers](#)
2. [Massachusetts Association of Mental Health](#)
3. [RIZE Massachusetts](#)
4. [Bridgewater State University School of Social Work](#)
5. [William James College](#)
6. [UMass Boston School of Nursing](#)
7. [Boston College School of Social Work](#)
8. [Roxbury Presbyterian Church - Corey Johnson Program](#)
9. [Community Servings](#)
10. [About Fresh](#)
11. [La Colaborativa](#)
12. [GreenRoots](#)
13. [Lynn Community Health Center](#)
14. [My Brother’s Table](#)
15. [Greater Lynn Senior Services](#)
16. [MGH Institute of Health Professions](#)
17. [Quincy College School of Nursing](#)
18. [Salem State School of Social Work](#)
19. [Bunker Hill Community College](#)
20. [North Shore Community Health](#)

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About Mass General Brigham

Mass General Brigham is an integrated academic healthcare system, uniting great minds in medicine to make life-changing impact for patients in our communities and people around the world. Mass General Brigham connects a full continuum of care across a system of academic medical centers, community and specialty hospitals, a health insurance plan, physician networks, community health centers, home care, and long-term care services. Mass General Brigham is a non-profit organization that is committed to patient care, research, teaching, and service to the community. In addition, Mass General Brigham is one of the nation’s leading biomedical research organizations and a principal teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. For more information, please visit massgeneralbrigham.org.