

AdventHealth Wauchula

2026 – 2028 Community Health Plan



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Acknowledgements

This community health plan was prepared by Amberhope Montero with contributions from members of AdventHealth Wauchula's Collaborative both representing health leaders in the community and Wauchula leaders.

We are especially grateful for the internal and external partners who helped guide the development of the community health plan which will enable our teams to continue fulfilling our mission of Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ.

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Adventist Health System/Sunbelt, Inc. d/b/a AdventHealth Wauchula will be referred to in this document as AdventHealth Wauchula or the “Hospital”.

Community Health Needs Assessment Process

AdventHealth Wauchula in Wauchula, Florida, conducted a community health needs assessment from October 2024 to February 2025. The assessment identified the health-related needs of the community, including low-income, minority and other underserved populations. The priorities were defined in alignment with Healthy People 2030, the national initiative aimed at improving the health and well-being of people in the United States.

To ensure broad community input, AdventHealth Wauchula participated in a Collaborative, All4HealthFL, to help guide the Hospital through the assessment process. The Collaborative included representation from the Hospital, public health experts and the broad community. This included intentional representation from low-income, minority and other underserved populations.

The Collaborative met seven times in 2024-2025. The members reviewed the primary and secondary data, helped define the priorities to be addressed and helped develop the Community Health Plan (CHP) to address those priorities. Learn more about Healthy People 2030 at health.gov/healthypeople.

Community Health Plan Process

The Community Health Plan (CHP), or implementation strategy, is the Hospital’s action plan to address the priorities identified from the CHNA.

AdventHealth Lake Placid, AdventHealth Sebring, and AdventHealth Wauchula have adopted a joint CHP. This strategy is based on a shared CHNA, common service area, community partnerships, and collaborative leadership. All three facilities will jointly implement and achieve the strategies outlined in the plan.

The plan was developed by the Collaborative, and input was received from stakeholders across sectors, including public health, faith-based, business and those individuals directly impacted.

The CHP outlines targeted interventions and measurable outcomes for each priority. It includes resources the Hospital will commit and notes any planned collaborations between the Hospital and other community organizations and hospitals.

The defined goals and activities were carefully crafted, considering evidence-based resources and sought to align with AdventHealth’s organizational and strategic plans. AdventHealth Wauchula is committed to addressing the needs of the community, especially the most vulnerable populations, to bring wholeness to our communities.

Executive Summary

Priorities Addressed

The priorities addressed include:

1. Mental Health
2. Nutrition and Healthy Eating
3. Health Care Access and Quality

See page 10 for the defined strategies and next steps for each priority selected to be addressed.

Priorities Not Addressed

The priorities not addressed include:

1. Cancer
2. Heart Disease and Stroke
3. Economic Stability
4. Neighborhood and Built Environment

See page 22 for an explanation of why the Hospital is not addressing these issues.



The Community Health Plan is a three-year strategic plan and may be updated during implementation based on changing community needs and priorities. AdventHealth recognizes community health is not static and high-priority needs can arise or existing needs can become less pressing. The Hospital may pivot and refocus efforts and resources to best serve the community.



Executive Summary

Board Approval

On February 19, 2026, the AdventHealth Wauchula Board approved the Community Health Plan goals, activities and next steps. A link to the 2026-2028 Community Health Plan was posted on the Hospital's website on May 15, 2026.

Ongoing Evaluation

AdventHealth Wauchula's fiscal year is January 1 – December 31. For 2026, the Community Health Plan will be deployed beginning February 19, 2026, and evaluated at the end of the calendar year. In 2027 and beyond, the CHP will be evaluated annually for the 12-month period beginning January 1 and ending December 31. Evaluation results will be attached to the Hospital's IRS Form 990, Schedule H. The collective monitoring and reporting will ensure the plan remains relevant and effective.

For More Information

Learn more about the Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Plan for AdventHealth Wauchula.

adventhealth.com/community-health-needs-assessments.

About AdventHealth

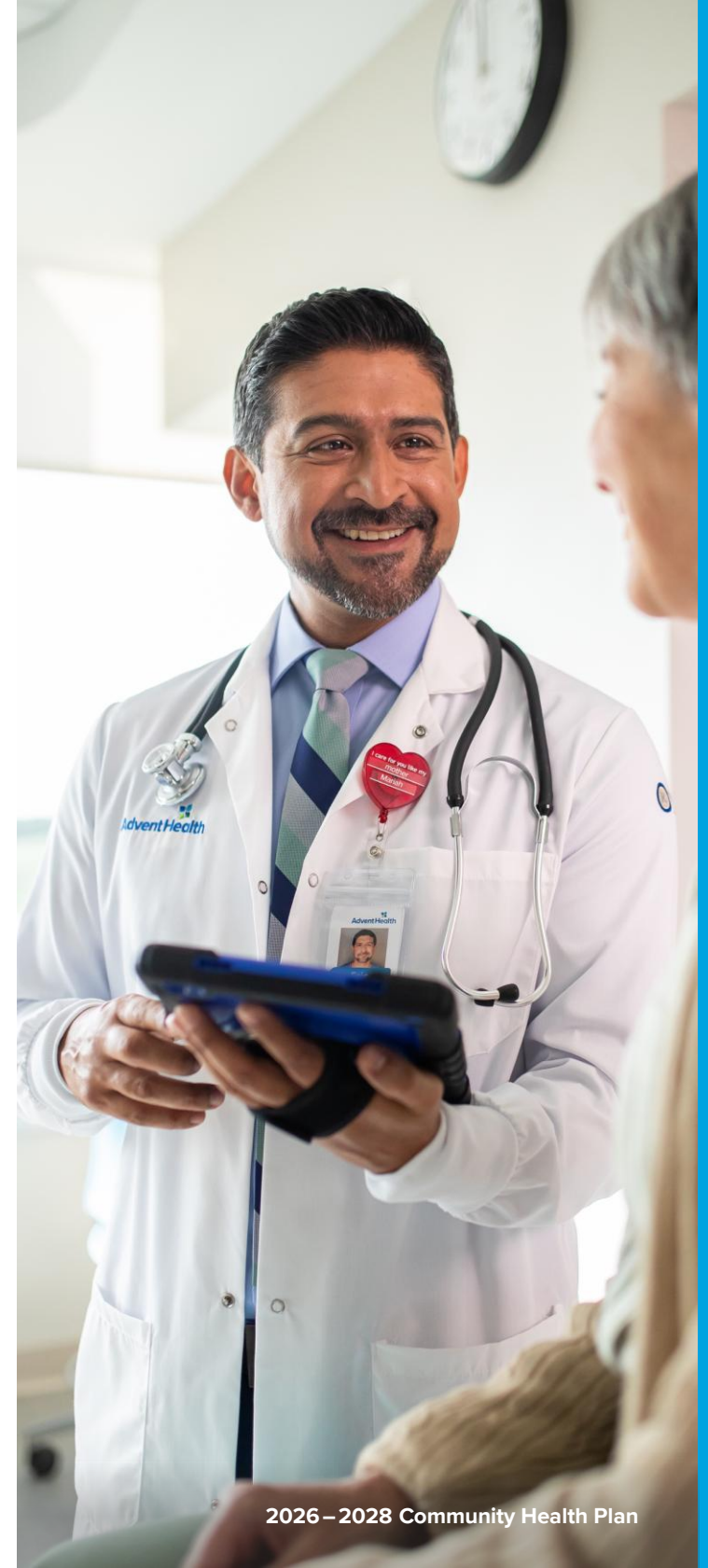


About AdventHealth

AdventHealth Wauchula is part of AdventHealth. With a sacred mission of Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ, AdventHealth strives to heal and restore the body, mind and spirit through our connected system of care. More than 100,000 talented and compassionate team members serve over 8 million patients annually. From physician practices, hospitals and outpatient clinics to skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies and hospice centers, AdventHealth provides individualized, whole-person care at more than 50 hospital campuses and hundreds of care sites throughout nine states. Committed to your care today and tomorrow, AdventHealth is investing in new technologies, research and the brightest minds to redefine wellness, advance medicine and create healthier communities.

In a 2020 study by Stanford University, physicians and researchers from AdventHealth were featured in the ranking of the world's top 2% of scientists. These critical thinkers are shaping the future of health care. Amwell, a national telehealth leader, named AdventHealth the winner of its Innovation Integration Award. This telemedicine accreditation recognizes organizations that have identified connection points within digital health care to improve clinical outcomes and user experiences. AdventHealth was recognized for its innovative digital front door strategy, which is making it possible for patients to seamlessly navigate their health care journey. From checking health documentation and paying bills to conducting a virtual urgent care visit with a provider, we're making health care easier — creating pathways to wholistic care no matter where your health journey starts.

AdventHealth is also an award-winning workplace aiming to promote personal, professional and spiritual growth with its team culture. Recognized by Becker's Hospital Review on its "150 Top Places to Work in Healthcare" several years in a row, this recognition is given annually to health care organizations that promote workplace diversity, employee engagement and professional growth. In 2024, the organization was named by Newsweek as one of the Greatest Workplaces for Diversity and a Most Trustworthy Company in America.



About AdventHealth Wauchula

AdventHealth Wauchula is a 25-bed full-service hospital that was built in 1968. In 1994, the facility was acquired by AdventHealth and went on to build their current location in 2017. The hospital contains the only ER in Hardee County. AdventHealth Wauchula offers many inpatient and outpatient services, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy, a transitional care unit, medical surgical swing unit, and the only mammography unit in Hardee County, the Linda Adler Mammography Center. In 2019, AdventHealth Wauchula opened a Wellness Center to better meet the health needs of Hardee County. The hospital has been recognized as a Top Rural Hospital by The Leapfrog Group and best hospital for patient safety.



Priorities Addressed



Health Care Access and Quality

Health Care Access and Quality ranked third in the prioritization of community health needs in Hardee County. Health care provider shortages are significant: primary care (51 per 100,000 vs. 261.2 statewide), dental (50 vs. 61.5), and mental health (19 vs. 133.2). Additionally, 27.4% of Hardee County adults ages 19–64 lack health insurance, compared to 17.5% statewide. Prioritizing access to health care enables the hospital to align resources and develop targeted strategies to improve access to quality health care for Hardee County residents.

Goal

Improve access to high-quality health care services for uninsured and underinsured populations in Highlands and Hardee County.

Activity

Provide free health screenings and health education programs for community members.

Output

- Number of community health events
- Number of community members impacted
- Number of team member hours donated

Outcome

By December 31, 2028, provide health screenings and health education for 2,500 community members in Highlands and Hardee County.

Hospital Contributions

- In-kind donation of supplies
- Donation of team member time

Community Partnership

- American Heart Association
- Senior Connection Center
- Champion for Children
- Neuro Challenge Foundation for Parkinson's

Health Care Access and Quality

Goal

Improve access to high-quality health care services for uninsured and underinsured populations in Highlands and Hardee County.

Activity

Support local community organizations working to improve and expand access to health care services.

Output

- Number of individuals impacted
- Number of organizations supported
- Amount of funding

Outcome

By December 31, 2028, provide support to at least four organizations annually assisting uninsured and underinsured community members with access to health care services.

Hospital Contributions

- Cash donations
- In-kind space donations
- Donation of team member time
- Marketing and referrals

Community Partnership

- Champion for Children Foundation
- Neuro Challenge Foundation for Parkinson's
- United Way of Central Florida
- Samaritan's Touch Care Center

Health Care Access and Quality

Goal

Improve access to high-quality health care services for uninsured and underinsured populations in Highlands and Hardee County.

Activity

Implement the annual Day of Wholeness to improve access to health services and education in Highlands and Hardee County.

Output

- Number of people served
- Number of team member hours donated
- Amount of funding

Outcome

By December 31, 2028, provide access to health services and education for 1,500 community members during the annual Day of Wholeness.

Hospital Contributions

- Cash donations
- Donation of team member time

Community Partnership

- Pioneer Medical Group
- South Florida State College



Health Care Access and Quality

Goal

Improve access to high-quality health care services for uninsured and underinsured populations in Highlands and Hardee County.

Activity

Provide ongoing community support groups for cancer, diabetes, and heart failure.

Output

- Number of people served
- Number of team member hours donated

Outcome

By December 31, 2028, serve at least 450 participants through community support groups for cancer, diabetes, and heart failure.

Hospital Contributions

- Donation of team member time

Community Partnership

- Local health care providers as guest speakers



Mental Health

In the Hospital's community, 21% of residents report poor mental health. Survey results show 29.4% of respondents have been diagnosed with depression or anxiety, and 2.9% reported frequent thoughts of self-harm in the past year. Additionally, 33.3% of respondents ranked mental health as the most pressing health issue. With growing national awareness on the issue, prioritizing mental health allows the hospital to align with local, state, and federal efforts, leveraging resources and local partnerships to make a meaningful impact.

Goal

Reduce the impact of mental health and substance use disorders on the Highlands and Hardee County communities.

Activity

Implement the Hospital CORE/Bridge program in the Emergency Department.

Output

- Number of patients screened
- Number of patients referred to behavioral health services
- Number of patients enrolled in behavioral health services

Outcome

By December 31, 2028, 25% of patients referred by a peer specialist will be enrolled in behavioral health services based on community partner metrics.

Hospital Contributions

- In-kind space donation
- Donation of team member time

Community Partnership

- Tri-County Human Services

Mental Health

Goal

Reduce the impact of mental health and substance use disorders on the Highlands and Hardee County communities.

Activity

Establish continuous support for Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®) training in the community through the Worthy and Known Family Project.

Output

- Number of people trained
- Amount of funding

Outcome

By December 31, 2028, support TBRI® trainings for 1,500 community members throughout Highlands and Hardee County.

Hospital Contributions

- Cash donations
- In-kind space donations
- Donation of team member time
- Marketing and referrals

Community Partnership

- Worthy and Known Family Project

Mental Health

Goal

Reduce the impact of mental health and substance use disorders on the Highlands and Hardee County communities.

Activity

Support organizations providing mental health programs in the community.

Output

- Number of people served
- Number of organizations supported
- Amount of funding
- Number of team member hours donated

Outcome

By December 31, 2028, maintain continuous partnership and support for at least four community organizations providing mental health education and services in Highlands and Hardee Counties.

Hospital Contributions

- Cash donations
- In-kind space donations
- Donation of team member time
- Referrals and marketing

Community Partnership

- Worthy and Known Family Project
- Central Florida Area Health Education Center (AHEC)
- Lake Placid Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Avon Park Seventh Day Adventist Church

Nutrition and Healthy Eating

In Hardee County, 39.3% of adults have obesity, slightly above the state average. Food insecurity affects 19.6% of the community's residents (Feeding America, 2022), and 25% of residents live in a very low food access area. Additionally, 84.4% do not consume at least three servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Poor nutrition may contribute to chronic illnesses. By prioritizing this issue, the hospital can collaborate with community partners to improve access to healthy foods and promote better health outcomes.

Goal

Improve access to healthy food and nutrition programming for Highlands and Hardee County community members.

Activity

Support the United Way of Central Florida's End Hunger Initiative in Highlands and Hardee County.

Output

- Number of individuals served
- Number of families served
- Number of children served
- Pounds of food served
- Amount of funding
- Number of team member hours donated

Outcome

By December 31, 2028, increase the number of Highlands and Hardee County residents connected to healthy food and nutrition resources through the End Hunger Initiative and related community programs.

Hospital Contributions

- Cash donations
- Donation of team member time
- Referrals and marketing

Community Partnership

- United Way of Central Florida

Nutrition and Healthy Eating

Goal

Improve access to healthy food and nutrition programming for Highlands and Hardee County community members.

Activity

Provide continuous pre-diabetes, gestational diabetes, and cardiac nutrition classes for the community.

Output

- Number of people served
- Number of team member hours donated

Outcome

By December 31, 2028, serve at least 650 participants through pre-diabetes, gestational diabetes, and cardiac nutrition classes.

Hospital Contributions

- Donation of team member time



Nutrition and Healthy Eating

Goal

Improve access to healthy food and nutrition programming for Highlands and Hardee County community members.

Activity

Provide community-based nutrition education programs.

Output

- Number of community nutrition education programs provided
- Number of people served
- Number of team member hours donated

Outcome

By December 31, 2028, provide community-based nutrition programs for 1,500 people.

Hospital Contributions

- Donation of team member time
- Donation of local produce

Community Partnership

- Local non-profits and faith communities
- Double K Farm, LLC
- Solace Farms
- Burgin Farms

Nutrition and Healthy Eating

Goal

Improve access to healthy food and nutrition programming for Highlands and Hardee County community members.

Activity

Provide support to local organizations addressing food insecurity in Highlands and Hardee County.

Output

- Number of people served
- Pounds of food donated
- Number of organizations supported
- Amount of funding

Outcome

By December 31, 2028, increase the number of Highlands and Hardee County residents connected to healthy food, nutrition resources and related community programs.

Hospital Contributions

- Cash donations
- Referrals and marketing
- Donation of team member time
- Donation of local produce

Community Partnership

- Lake Placid Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Avon Park Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Wauchula Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Cutting Edge Ministries, Inc

Priorities Not Addressed



Priorities Not Addressed

AdventHealth Wauchula also identified the following health needs during the CHNA process. In reviewing the CHNA data, available resources and ability to impact, the Hospital determined these needs will not be addressed.

Cancer

Although cancer is the second leading cause of death and Hardee County's cancer mortality rate (180.9 per 100,000) exceeds the state rate (141.6), the Collaborative did not select it as a priority. Other issues were considered more impactful and feasible for the hospital to address through partnerships and programs.

Heart Disease and Stroke

Although heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death and 38.2% of survey respondents reported being diagnosed with hypertension or heart disease, the Collaborative did not select this as a priority. Other issues were considered more feasible for impact, and several community organizations are already addressing this need effectively.

Economic Stability

In the hospital's community, 35.1% of residents are housing cost-burdened, paying 30% or more of their income on housing. 24.3% live below the federal poverty level, and 33% fall into the ALICE category—households earning above poverty but still unable to afford basic needs. While the cost of living is a significant challenge, the Collaborative determined it could not make a measurable impact within the three-year Community Health Plan given current resources.

Neighborhood and Built Environment

Transportation was frequently cited as a barrier to care in Hardee County, where 5.3% of households lack a vehicle. While this limits access to health services, the Collaborative determined other needs were more feasible to address.



**Adventist Health System/Sunbelt, Inc. d/b/a
AdventHealth Wauchula**

CHP Approved by the Hospital Board on: February 19, 2026

For questions or comments please contact:
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