



STRATEGIES FOR A HEALTHY TRENTON





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Dear Friends,

Trenton Health Team is truly a team — of experts, advocates, community leaders, and residents. We are proud of our progress and grateful to our partners for sharing expertise and perspectives.

THT has learned a lot about challenges, collaboration, and community since 2006. Those lessons informed the plans and strategies outlined here.

We look forward to continuing this important work, sustaining our partnerships, and building new relationships to achieve our shared vision of a healthier Trenton and happier lives for those living here.

Thank you to Trenton mural artist Leon Rainbow for donating original artwork for our cover. His vibrant painting reflects the energy of our city, brightening the THT office and inspiring graphics throughout this document.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg", written in a cursive style.

Gregory Paulson
Executive Director

Executive Summary

Trenton Health Team has been serving Trenton since 2006, as a community health care collaborative created in response to the closure of Mercer Medical Center and dedicated to improving access to quality healthcare for city residents.

Over the years, our focus has expanded to meet the range of health concerns affecting our community. THT has reviewed our mission and vision, engaging stakeholders across sectors and expanding our staff expertise.

With guidance from our Community Advisory Board, Trenton Area Stakeholders, our Board of Trustees, and staff, we adopted a theory of change that has inspired a new vision and redefined our work. This Strategic Plan introduces our new Vision for a Healthy Trenton and outlines our strategies for achieving these shared goals over the next three to five years.

Mission

The Trenton Health Team (THT) is an innovative multi-sector partnership dedicated to the health and well-being of the greater Trenton community.

Vision for a Healthy Trenton

THT, along with our partners working in the community and healthcare system, understands that health and well-being are inextricably linked to housing quality, food security, neighborhood safety, education, and nurturing environments — “upstream” health factors with long-term — “downstream” — influence. Our shared Vision incorporates these social determinants of health, defining a “healthy Trenton” that includes:

- Healthy Environment and Housing
- Vibrant Public Spaces
- Growing Economy
- Effective Education
- Healthy Food
- Improved Safety
- Equity and Social Cohesion
- Quality Healthcare

Strategies

1. Convene diverse partners in Trenton to improve health, well-being, and health equity
2. Analyze and share data to improve clinical care, public health and well-being
3. Enact direct interventions with priority populations to fill gaps in care and services
4. Define and communicate our value to stakeholders to ensure long-term sustainability
5. Advocate for policies that improve health and well-being and are supported by the community

To realize our Vision for a Healthy Trenton, THT must embrace a broader view of health and well-being in the community and consider how THT can work, along with partners, to advance that objective.

If we fail to act now, the situation may become even more challenging. Our fast-changing economy requires a skilled work force and higher levels of education and certification. Alarming high rates of childhood obesity point to potentially increased levels of chronic disease, contributing to lower productivity and higher healthcare costs. If social issues such as youth gangs and violent crime are not addressed, both the perception and the reality regarding a lack of safety will stymie growth and development in the city and negatively affect the quality of life for Trenton residents.



Who Are We?

History

Trenton Health Team was the answer to a health care crisis in Trenton, spurred by the closure of Mercer Medical Center. The Mayor of Trenton at that time engaged a consultant to assess health-care conditions and analyze the impact of losing the hospital on city residents. This consultant convened the local healthcare providers and found, among other challenges in Trenton, that residents lacked adequate access to primary care services and, in part due to this lack of access, had Emergency Department (ED) utilization significantly higher than national trends. Such heavy reliance on the ED not only exponentially increased medical expenses, but also failed to provide patients with long-term health solutions.

The consultant recommended leaders from area healthcare stakeholders, including Capital Health, St. Francis Medical Center, Henry J. Austin Health Center, and the City of Trenton Department of Health and Human Services, continue working together to address the concern.

As a result, competing healthcare providers partnered with city government to share data and collaborate to improve access to primary care services and reduce emergency department utilization in Trenton. This consortium became the Trenton Health Team, which formally registered as a 501(c)(3) organization in 2010 and hired its first executive director in 2011.

THT has grown significantly since its founding, recently creating an additional nonprofit structure to participate in the New Jersey Medicaid Accountable Care Organization (ACO) Demonstration project, and growing from one employee and a \$500,000 budget in 2011 to 22 employees and a \$3.6M budget by the end of 2018.

THT remains dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the greater Trenton community by partnering with the community to expand access to high-quality, coordinated, cost-effective healthcare.

While access to quality healthcare is a key component and asset of a healthy city, we recognize other important factors influence health and well-being. Expanding our vision to better reflect this reality prompted THT to reexamine what types of work will achieve our mission of a healthier Trenton, and what role we should play in this transformation effort.

Accomplishments

THT originally identified five key strategies to achieve our goal of making Trenton the state's healthiest city:

1. Expand Access to Primary Care
2. Provide Community-wide Care Coordination and Care Management
3. Engage the Community
4. Utilize Data to Improve Population Health
5. Expand Infrastructure to Become an Urban Medicaid Accountable Care Organization (ACO)

These strategic initiatives inspired much of THT's work in the first five years, especially highlighting the many ways data use can enhance well-being.

Success Story

To improve patient access to primary care, THT launched a new system for scheduling medical appointments. Implementing this Advanced Access Scheduling system helped patients see doctors more quickly—reducing wait times from 37 days to just 2 days at Henry J. Austin Health Center—and improved provider continuity for patients (0% to more than 95% at St. Francis Medical Center).

A combination of data-informed care coordination, individual patient care management by THT's community health workers, and technological improvements in scheduling and provider continuity, resulted in a 45 percent drop in emergency department visits and a 51 percent reduction in inpatient stays from 2010 to 2012. (see chart, below).

THT has seen similarly impressive, statistically significant, results reducing ED and inpatient admissions in high risk populations that we work with currently as part of contracts with Managed Care Organizations. Engagement with THT Care Management staff resulted in a 60 percent decrease in ED utilization over two years among about 100 patients followed, and inpatient stays were reduced more than 65 percent.

Lessons Learned

THT's staff and Board of Trustees have learned a tremendous amount from growing an informal partnership into a well-resourced nonprofit with a wide array of programs and interventions. Select lessons from our transformation that specifically relate to THT's strategy and "Theory of Change" are discussed below.

Competitors become collaborators when supported by a trusted organization

THT's early leadership team learned that certain conditions can encourage competitors, such as the two Trenton hospitals, to collaborate on issues in their community. Having a neutral organization that is trusted, transparent, and has broad leadership is key. Having a dedicated administrative infrastructure to schedule meetings, take minutes and notes and keep people accountable with follow-up also is necessary for a successful, ongoing, partnership. Demonstrating value for partners, all of whom may define value differently, is also paramount to sustaining partnerships with THT and keeping organizations engaged with the Community Advisory Board (CAB).

Convening diverse stakeholders builds value across sectors

Bringing diverse entities together regularly through the CAB to discuss health issues in Trenton has revealed valuable perspectives that would have gone unnoticed had THT stuck to working only with traditional healthcare entities. While the CAB originally was intended to inform THT's work, information and advice now flow in both directions, with THT serving as a valuable resource to partner organizations as well.

Innovation and improvement depend on access to robust data analysis

THT creates value for our partners by providing access to, and use of, health data. In 2014, THT launched the Trenton Health Information Exchange (HIE) to aggregate Electronic Health Records from providers across the region, and share holistic, real-time patient records with subscribers. THT added Medicaid claims data in 2015, creating a robust data set for patient and population information. THT and our partners have used that data to inform and improve clinical workflow and patient care planning, as well as applying analytic tools for population health analysis. As the HIE user base grows, THT is exploring more potential partners and uses for this valuable data as a tool to improve health and well-being.

Underlying causes of poor health outcomes are multi-faceted and many

Underlying drivers of poor health outcomes in Trenton are many, varied, and related to poverty, structural racism, undiagnosed behavioral health conditions, food insecurity, homelessness, childhood trauma, cultural and lifestyle behaviors, immigration status and many other variables that a traditional medical entity is ill-equipped to address.

Top 50 ED	July- Dec 2010	Jan-June 2011	July-Dec 2011	Jan-June 2012	% Change
# ED Visits	2,398	1,633	1,501	1,321	45% Reduction
# IP Stays	181	98	78	88	51% Reduction
Charges	\$10.8 million			\$6.6 million	39% Reduction

Healthcare providers, and payers, such as state Medicaid programs and Managed Care Organizations, serving patients in high-poverty urban centers have long known they have little control over many factors affecting patients' health outcomes. While organizations can offer case management, provide additional services such as help with transportation, and work to increase access to primary care and behavioral health treatment, these efforts are often too little too late for the sickest patients, and furthermore, too limited in scope to truly address the vital conditions in a community or have a measurable impact on population health. As one clinical partner recently expressed, the business model of a hospital, even one focused on community health, is still too episodic in nature to really "do prevention" at the level Trenton needs.

We must address both urgent needs and vital conditions

Unlike traditional healthcare entities, THT can not only provide direct services such as care management, but also must work with partners to address social determinants of health throughout the city. We can leverage our knowledge of, and relationships with, other service providers in the city and other social networks and community assets such as churches, to improve health and well-being. THT's Care Management Team, staffed by Community Health Workers with significant ties to the Trenton community, does exceptional work connecting high-risk patients to the healthcare services they need, teaching self-management strategies, providing support and friendship, and helping patients and their families with challenges such as housing, food access, and social services. However, clients come into the Care Management program when they already have significant healthcare needs.

THT understands there are ways to influence health and well-being before patients require intensive support. While there will always be a need to focus on and provide resources for the highest-need patients, we see that a clinical focus cannot be the only strategy for addressing the health status of a community. As a result, THT will be shifting more resources toward prevention and toward policies advancing community conditions that contribute to better health and well-being.

Funding must be strategic, not opportunistic

THT's early projects and priorities were at times driven by economic opportunities, i.e., areas where funding was available. As we move forward as an organization and become more financially stable, we can establish priorities for THT and Trenton and then seek funding to support that work, making us more strategic and effective at improving health outcomes.

Funding Our Work

In our first years, THT chose to apply for a wide array of grants and contracts. Today, THT selectively pursues opportunities that align with our Vision for a Healthy Trenton, support our ongoing initiatives and priorities, and leverage our competencies and assets, allowing us to implement our strategy to improve health and well-being in Trenton (including by piloting and prototyping).

"THT's priority is bringing maximum impact and improvement to Trenton."

As a multi-sector convener, THT's priority is bringing maximum impact and improvement to Trenton; if there is another organization that can more successfully meet a need, THT supports their grant application, rather than competing for resources. Our backbone function provides a forum for communication and transparency around financial opportunities so organizations can make informed decisions about which opportunities to pursue.

Aside from grants, project-specific funding, and philanthropic support, THT continues working toward more sustainable revenue from services such as Care Management contracts, HIE user fees, and long-term infrastructure funding. Part of our financing plan has been leveraging the HIE to add more paying users, and, in alignment with our strategy to define and communicate our value, ensuring those who benefit from the work of THT are doing their part to fund the work of the organization. This includes, for example, the City of Trenton, Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), and local healthcare providers.

Similarly, our effort to secure state funding as a Regional Health Hub is intended to create an additional source of sustainable revenue to fund our infrastructure, data sharing, care coordination, and convening work. We expect grant dollars will always be a portion of THT's revenue stream, as grants are more likely than government funding to support innovative, pilot projects. We also will continue seeking sustainable funding for the significant, evidence-based, proven work underway with the HIE and Care Management Team, as well as our valuable role as multi-sector convener for the greater Trenton community.

STRATEGY IN ACTION: PARTNERSHIP

In the summer of 2018, THT executed a services agreement with the City of Trenton to codify work THT does to keep Trenton in compliance with the Public Health Practice Standards. In the past, the partnership with the city was informal, with the city providing office space for THT staff at 218 N. Broad Street and THT providing services, such as data analysis, that would normally be the responsibility of a health department. Today, the agreement is codified and recognizes the mutual importance of the relationship.

Respect for our Community

Trenton has a proud tradition as the Capital City of New Jersey and, whether we reside in the city or not, we are all invested in its success. Each THT member understands we work with the Trenton community, as partners and neighbors. Both in our behavior and in the way we speak about and write about our programs, THT respects patients, providers, and community members. Indeed, respect is at the core of how we do our work, make strategic decisions and interact.

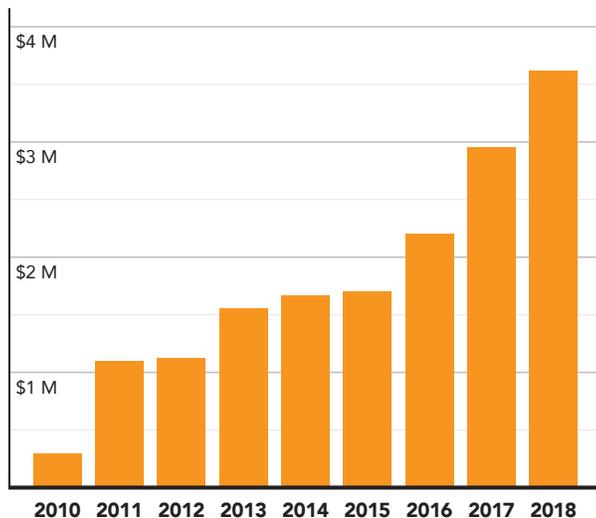
THT is committed to including feedback from community members and patients in decisions about how we allocate resources and design programs. We are both in, and of, Trenton and fully accountable to the residents we serve.

Focus on Accountability

THT began as a group of representatives from the City of Trenton, the Henry J. Austin Health Center, St. Francis Medical Center, and Capital Health dedicated to improving access to healthcare in Trenton. Having grown into a nonprofit with dedicated budget and staff, THT remains accountable to the community we serve, our founders (who, together, still hold eight seats on THT's Board), and to additional Board members and the Community Advisory Board.

THT has a 15-member Board of Trustees and a separate Accountable Care Organization Board of Trustees, both led by an Executive Committee team of officers. The New Jersey Department of Health, as well as other partner organizations in Trenton, are represented on the Board. Additionally, there are subcommittees such as the HIE Steering Committee and the Audit and Finance Committee. The Board guides THT's major objectives, projects, and the organization's Budget. The Executive Committee provides input on Human Resources decisions and oversees the THT Executive Director.

Total Revenue





THT's Community Advisory Board (CAB) represents more than 60 organizations and 152 individuals, convening at least quarterly to share information, brainstorm ideas, and co-design interventions pertaining to improving health and healthcare. A current list of CAB members is maintained on the THT website: <https://trentonhealthteam.org/about-us/our-partners/>

Feedback from these organizations and the people they serve shapes our work and provides qualitative data by which to evaluate progress toward achieving our Vision for a Healthy Trenton.

Outcome Measurement

THT is committed to using a continuous quality improvement approach in all our programs and projects. We rely on the review and analysis of data to drive our decision-making and to help determine the best interventions and strategies. We believe in using data both to prove, and to improve the quality of, our work.

Our early work focused on clinical metrics, such as reductions in avoidable ED utilization (which we still pursue and monitor), but our broader population-level goals will require us to develop new metrics and ways of measuring success, drawing on research and evidence-based approaches for revitalizing a community and improving the health of its residents.

To that end, THT will seek to understand what measures and results are of interest to Trenton residents. While our clinical and social service partners may be impressed by ED utilization numbers, THT needs to better understand what Trenton residents consider signs of a successful partnership for health.

If, with our partners, we are successful in realizing our Vision for a Healthy Trenton, we will see an increase in household income, a more beautiful and welcoming city, a reduction in rates of crime and violence, an increase in the high school graduation rate and college readiness scores, a reduction in the rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic diseases, a reduction in tobacco use, and an increase in life expectancy.

Trenton will see improved housing conditions and more retail and businesses moving into the city. Disparities will be reversed or reduced in rates of poverty and homeownership, the median income will begin to track to state averages, and the city will be an attractive place to live for individuals working in central New Jersey.

As we refine our metrics and monitor program outcomes, THT will explore the best avenues to communicate our findings and successes, considering all print, web and social media options.

A New Vision for a Healthy Trenton

THT's original goal, to make Trenton "the healthiest city in the State of New Jersey," focused on improving healthcare through five strategic initiatives. Nearly a decade later, our goal for a healthy Trenton remains the same but THT now operates with a broader understanding of what health and well-being — and health equity — mean for Trenton, as well as what activities and strategies will help address all the factors that influence a healthy city, including both existing challenges and community assets.

While access to quality healthcare is a key component and asset of a healthy city, other factors influence health and well-being. Expanding our vision to better reflect this reality prompted THT to reexamine what types of work will achieve our mission of a healthier Trenton, and what role we should play in this transformation effort.

THT's new vision is a result of input from our Board, CAB, and staff retreat discussions about the attributes of a healthy city, and what is possible for Trenton over the next two decades.

Theory of Change:

What are we doing to achieve our Vision?

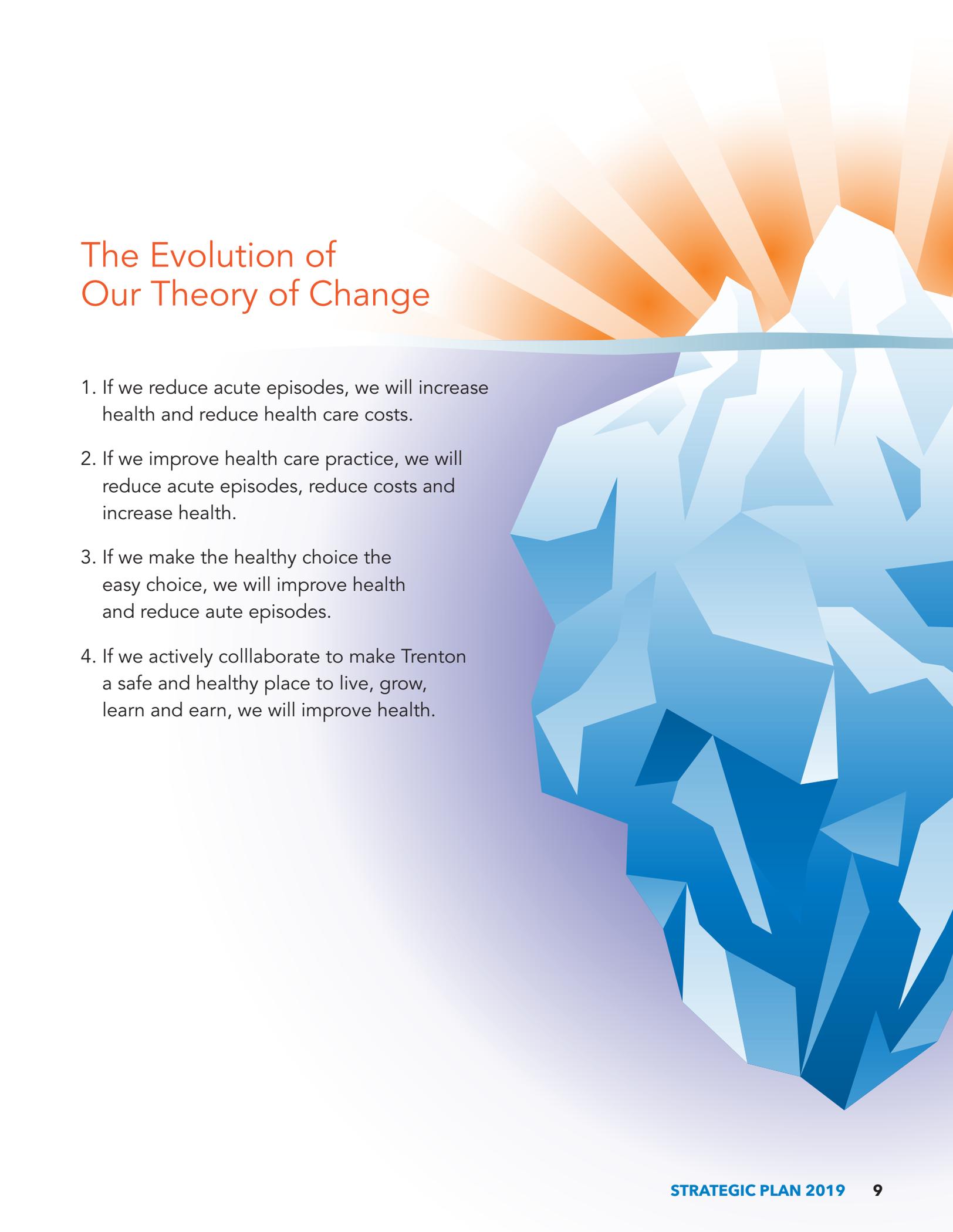
To address the gap between today's reality and our Vision for a Healthy Trenton, THT leadership has considered deeply what activities to pursue over the next three to five years to begin making the Vision a reality. To guide discussions, we've used a few analogies and schema to help us think about how underlying vital conditions contribute to healthy behaviors, health outcomes, and healthcare utilization.

One metaphor is that THT's HIE patient alerts and Care Management Team are catching people who have fallen "off the cliff" and need significant help to manage their healthcare diagnoses and additional challenges, such as homelessness, literacy, and addiction. However, continuing the metaphor, it would be more prudent to build a fence along the edge of the cliff to prevent people from going too far.

Another is the idea of an iceberg, which informs THT's "Theory of Change" and illustrates how we believe that Trenton, given current resources and challenges, can make lasting improvements to health and well-being. Only the tip of the iceberg is visible—yet the more significant area is below the surface and difficult to address, including transformations in the delivery system, coordination of services across medical and social service areas, education about and access to healthy lifestyle choices that support prevention and well-being across the population.

While THT's early work was aimed at addressing issues at the tip of the iceberg – acute health episodes leading to ED visits – we now are addressing "deeper" issues such as improving the healthcare system and how care is provided, along with promoting healthier lifestyles and behaviors. A consistent focus and substantial investment are needed in the vital conditions at the base of the "iceberg" related to safety, education, transportation and the economy, which influence what population health improvements are possible.

This approach can also be described as "policy, systems, and environment" (PSE) efforts. THT has implemented several projects with a PSE component related to health behaviors, such as access to healthy food and physical activity, but there is much more to be done on policy, systems, and the environment to make our community a healthy, safe place to live, grow, earn and learn and begin the city's transformation toward our 20-year vision.

The background features a stylized illustration of an iceberg. The top part of the iceberg, which is above the water line, is white and jagged. Below the water line, the iceberg is a deep blue color and also jagged. In the upper right corner, there are several rays of light in shades of orange and yellow, suggesting a sun or a bright light source. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

The Evolution of Our Theory of Change

1. If we reduce acute episodes, we will increase health and reduce health care costs.
2. If we improve health care practice, we will reduce acute episodes, reduce costs and increase health.
3. If we make the healthy choice the easy choice, we will improve health and reduce acute episodes.
4. If we actively collaborate to make Trenton a safe and healthy place to live, grow, learn and earn, we will improve health.

What does a “Healthy Trenton” look like?

OUR VISION

Healthy Environment and Housing

A city where people want to live, work, worship, learn, and play

Vibrant Public Spaces

Clean, green, and accessible spaces that invite recreation, including neighborhood parks and an active, developed waterfront

Growing Economy

Stable businesses, job growth, increased median income, equalized opportunity, and a growing middle class

Effective Education

Youth development pipeline, rising graduation rates, adult education opportunities supporting better jobs, and greater community engagement

Healthy Food

Nutritious options available in schools, restaurants, and grocery stores, leveraging urban agriculture; a society with capacity for healthier eating habits

Improved Safety

Reductions in violent crime, gangs, interpersonal violence and trauma; safe maintained streets supporting all users (“complete streets”) and public spaces enabling community interaction

Equity and Social Cohesion

Peer connections and civic muscle leveraged to reduce disparities and meet community need; accessible support for families and caregivers

Quality Healthcare

People-centered, integrated, and holistic care; a focus on prevention, inclusivity, accessibility, and cultural competence for all populations

Our Town: Trenton Assets and Challenges

Trenton has assets that many smaller urban centers lack, and some specific amenities that any city would covet. Trenton is New Jersey’s capital, with thousands of state workers, including legislators and staff, commuting into the city during the work week. The Trenton Transit Center is served by NJ Transit, SEPTA, and Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor rail line providing mass transit to other New Jersey locations, as well as Washington DC, Philadelphia, Newark, New York City, and Boston. A number of colleges and universities are in, or near, Trenton, including Mercer County Community College, Thomas Edison State University, The College of New Jersey, Rider University, and Princeton University.

Trenton historic and cultural sites include the State House, the New Jersey State Museum, the Battle Monument, the Old Barracks Museum, and the War Memorial.

Trenton sits on a beautiful stretch of the Delaware River, with a waterfront prime for development and recreation. The city is close to many farms in New Jersey and Pennsylvania that sell fresh produce year-round at area farmers markets.

THT’s 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment, along with other surveys, shows Trenton scoring high on social cohesion factors such as residents being able to count on one’s neighbor for help — 60 percent of survey respondents agreed with the statement. There is a strong faith-based community with many large and active churches playing an influential role in the community. And, specifically relevant to THT’s particular healthcare interventions, New Jersey is a state that expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, meaning many low-income Trenton residents have access to health insurance through NJ FamilyCare. In fact, in THT’s Medicaid ACO geography of Trenton’s six zip codes, 57 percent of the population is enrolled in Medicaid.

Trenton also has its share of challenges, from a lack of economic opportunity to scarcity of healthy food access. On several key metrics, Trenton falls far short of the state average.

Measure	Trenton	NJ Average
Median Income	\$46,166	\$82,517
% Living below Poverty Line	18.4%	7.8%
Unemployed (ages 16+)	11.9%	6.4%
Hold Bachelor's Degree (ages 25+)	10.8%	23.5%

Source: Conduit Healthy Communities Institute January 2019

Trenton's challenges are often interrelated and can create multiplier effects. Pockets of crime and gang violence, combined with continued lower achievement on standardized academic tests compared to surrounding communities, appear to discourage economic development within the city.

Related to THT's work, the ethnic diversity in Trenton – 35 percent of residents speak a language other than English – can create a language barrier to healthcare and other needed services.

To realize our Vision for a Healthy Trenton, THT must embrace a broader view of health and well-being in the community and consider how THT can work, along with partners, to advance that objective.

If we fail to act now, the situation may become even more challenging. Our fast-changing economy requires a skilled work force and higher levels of education and certification. Alarming high rates of childhood obesity point to potentially increased levels of chronic disease, contributing to lower productivity and higher healthcare costs. If social issues such as youth gangs and violent crime are not addressed, both the perception and the reality regarding a lack of safety will stymie growth and development in the city and negatively affect the quality of life for Trenton residents.

New Strategies

Over the next three to five years, THT will strive to effect true, lasting change that demonstrably improves health and well-being for residents of the greater Trenton community. Strategies listed here are described in more detail on the following pages.

- 1. Convene diverse partners in Trenton to improve health, well-being, and health equity**
 - Actively collaborate with partners locally and nationally
 - Align clinical and social service efforts to maximize effectiveness and efficiency
 - Maintain a systems approach
 - Grow the capacity of THT and partners
 - Involve and be accountable to residents
- 2. Analyze and share data to improve clinical care, public health and well-being**
- 3. Enact direct interventions with priority populations to fill gaps in care and services**
 - Include piloting and prototyping of novel interventions
- 4. Define and communicate our value to stakeholders to ensure long-term sustainability**
 - Include clinicians, HIE users, funders, policymakers, residents, and partner-organizations in target audiences
- 5. Advocate for policies that improve health and well-being and are supported by the community**

NEW STRATEGY

1

**Convene diverse partners
in Trenton to improve
health, well-being,
and health equity**



Our role as a convening entity is a core THT strategy for improving city-wide health and well-being. Indeed, THT was created specifically to fulfill this role and over the years we have facilitated partnerships on health-related issues including funding, programs and needs assessments. THT continues to provide backbone support in situations when there is not another clear choice for doing the work.

As conveners, THT enables co-designed solutions, reduces duplication, grows community capacity, encourages partners to work together on projects, and links clinical partners with the constituencies they serve. Our ability to connect entities to relevant data, either as Health Information Exchange members or as collaborators on projects involving data-driven decision-making, is one way THT provides value to our community. We also enhance networking and information-sharing through our Community Advisory Board.

Actively collaborate with partners, both locally and nationally

Collaboration with partners, locally and across the state and country, is a key component of THT's convening work. At a local level, individuals and organizations working on challenging issues in Trenton understand moving toward our broad, shared vision cannot be accomplished by one entity or organization alone.

While the Community Advisory Board began as a body to advise THT, it has become an active networking community. To reflect this evolution, CAB members recently decided to rename the group "Partners Advancing Trenton's Health" (PATH) as we are all true partners in health and well-being in Trenton.

When THT senses more than one Trenton stakeholder may be interested in a grant or funding opportunity, we invite CAB members to meet and discuss that opportunity. Such discussions are not always the most comfortable, but the process has resulted in successful partnerships, as well as enabling Trenton to put forth strong applications and bring resources into the city. This process

also promotes a culture of trust and transparency, paving the way for increased coordination and efficiencies, as groups learn of synergies and areas where they can partner.

STRATEGY IN ACTION: PREVENT VIOLENCE

Violence is clearly a public health concern and contributes to a lack of economic opportunities for Trenton residents. THT is actively engaged with local organizations with expertise, funding, and authority to address these issues. THT also incorporates crime and violence prevention objectives and best practices in our projects whenever feasible.

THT's collaboration strategy calls for focusing our efforts where we have competency, and partnering with others to leverage their work and experience. As with the violence prevention example, THT will assess whether there is an existing coalition or community organization actively engaged on an area of work or whether THT would be an appropriate body to bring partners together. Similarly, THT is happy to support others, often with our unique access to data. THT and partners have discussed and pursued projects where our HIE data would be merged with other systems, including Trenton Public Schools data, Homeless Management Information System data, and Isles Inc.'s data on housing conditions to help inform work on chronic absenteeism, homelessness, and lead remediation, respectively.

Actively collaborating to improve safety, education, economic development--and address other interconnected issues that no single organization or sector can resolve—is how THT can address those "bottom of the iceberg" issues.

Through our projects funded by national organizations, THT staff meet professionals in other cities working within public health-focused organizations and/or multi-sector partnerships to improve health. While each project team faces unique circumstances on the ground, and has different resources, there is much to be learned from work going on in other states and cities. THT will prioritize participation in learning networks of similar organizations oper-

ating in other cities in New Jersey and across the country to share successes and challenges. In addition to providing THT an opportunity to publicize Trenton and our work, these networks allow THT to learn what is working in other communities and consider bringing those programs and policies back to our community.

STRATEGY IN ACTION: SHARE DATA

As one of the three Medicaid-certified ACOs, we attend regular meetings with our sister organizations in Camden and Newark to share best practices, and our HIEs all exist on the same data platform so we all can take advantage of analytic tools. THT also participates on a steering committee providing guidance to the state Department of Health for its Health Information Network project.

Align clinical and social service efforts to maximize effectiveness and efficiency

While THT has been fortunate to have long-standing ties with the major Trenton healthcare institutions, we cannot take for granted our close working relationship with the two hospitals, the federally qualified health center, and the city department that together provide healthcare to the majority of Trenton-based patients. Similarly, social service agencies have been good partners with THT and clinical partners to provide information about their clients' needs and gaps in services.

There is often a missing piece of communication among providers that touch the same patients about what services are available, with clinicians not well-equipped to provide referrals to social services, and vice versa. THT will bridge that gap to provide better service to the Trenton patients in need through our work as a community convener and data resource, both generally, and as it relates to specific priorities funded through grants and projects.

Maintain a systems approach

Professionals working with vulnerable populations in Trenton are clearly aware of how limited their influence can be when operating independently and addressing just one of their patient's or client's challenges. Taking a systems approach to health improvement means understanding all of the factors impacting health and well-being, including the environment, the economy, local and national policy, education, behavioral health, personal history, access to clinical care, and more. THT, as a convener, has a unique viewpoint into how the different systems intersect, where leverage points can begin to improve conditions in ways that reverberate to other aspects of the system, and how interventions within a system can either interact in unintended ways to produce poor outcomes or work in tandem to produce better results.

One way to keep people willing to invest time to participate in a multi-sector partnership is to continually remind partners of the ways in which our community is impacted by entire systems, and the reality that it will take a systems approach to address challenges, whether those be educational outcomes, health outcomes, economic realities, homelessness or any other area of work in Trenton. While currently our partners are very willing to participate on the Board of Trustees and on the Community Advisory Board, THT will continue to emphasize the systems view as a reason to engage with other sectors and expand to additional partners whose areas of work impact our community.

Grow the capacity of THT and partners

While convening and collaborating is part of the capacity building strategy for Trenton-based organizations, THT will engage in additional activities to ensure that we are all working at our highest abilities. THT's investment in our staff as leaders is both a core part of the company culture and a component of our strategy to improve health and well-being in Trenton. THT staff will be encouraged to work across the organization to enhance skills and knowledge, adding new perspectives and value to their colleagues' work. Further, providing learning and development opportunities for our partner organizations' staff is a way THT will grow the capacity and effectiveness of all the groups working in Trenton.

THT has launched an educational “learning network” series, bringing nationally recognized speakers to Community Advisory Board meetings as part of a project funded by The Nicholson Foundation. Another way to grow community expertise and help THT employees and our partners will be creation of “affinity groups” where staff from different Trenton organizations can convene to learn from others doing similar work.

STRATEGY IN ACTION: LEARN TOGETHER

The September 2018 Community Advisory Board meeting featured renowned community development expert Dr. Tiffany Manuel from Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. Dr. Manuel shared insights on ways to better communicate our efforts and build consensus for work focused on health and equity.

Involve and be accountable to residents

As a community convener, it would be unacceptable for THT to have conversations about what is best for Trenton without meaningful input from city residents. As a backbone organization, THT will be deliberate in including patients and community members in needs assessments, decisions about resource allocation and program design, and program evaluation.

To ensure that community members are able to provide feedback to THT and partners, we will hold community forums in a range of neighborhood locations, such as churches and community centers, at a variety of times to accommodate different work and family schedules. When feasible, THT will provide a meal, refreshments, parking validation, childcare options, and/or a stipend for attending and providing feedback.

THT will distribute county-wide surveys, such as the Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership’s Community Health Assessment, to residents and partners to ensure that Trenton is well represented in the data. Similarly, THT will continue to be a resource to other entities, such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and New Jersey Department of Health, as they look to understand stakeholder feedback and be connected to community members.

STRATEGY IN ACTION: LISTEN

As a part of our Merck Foundation grant, THT hosted a number of “diabetes listening dinners” in churches and other community organizations (such as the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen), inviting those living with diabetes, plus family members or caregivers. THT uses these forums to learn what additional resources would be helpful to this population and to provide access to a clinician to answer questions. The information shared by participants allows THT to better tailor programs and interventions for patients. One recent grant application was specifically informed by the feedback THT received about a desire for more peer support programming.

In addition to involving our community, THT will seek to understand what measures and results are of interest to Trenton residents. While our clinical and social service partners may be impressed by ED utilization numbers, THT needs to better understand what Trenton residents would consider a sign of a successful partnership for health. THT will explore the best avenue to communicate our metrics and/or successes, whether that be through social media, an annual report, or other means of communication.

NEW STRATEGY

2

Analyze and share data to improve clinical care, public health and well-being



NEW STRATEGY

3

**Fill gaps in care and services
for priority populations,
pilot and prototype
innovative approaches**



Current THT interventions and projects can be classified in the following categories:

- Care Coordination/Management
- Chronic Disease Prevention and Self-Management
- Health Promotion
- Built Environment
- Clinical Workflow Enhancement
- Intervention Prototyping

While THT is deliberately focusing on community conditions supporting health and well-being, we recognize any strategy to improve health outcomes must address patient needs and the healthcare system directly. Even when we succeed in moving the community toward our Vision of a Healthy Trenton, gravely ill individuals will still need help managing chronic conditions.

For that reason, THT will continue deploying “on the ground” patient and public health interventions. And, as healthcare evolves to place more value on prevention, care management, and reducing readmissions, our clinical partners may depend more on THT.

Our interventions and programs increasingly straddle the line between clinical and community-facing programs, and are likely to include both direct patient interventions and work on vital conditions and/or policies. THT will continue incorporating information from our provider organizations and HIE data to design programs and seek support for community-based work.

THT’s Care Management Team, including one nurse, one social worker, and three community health workers, is integral to improving health in Trenton.

Our Care Team members engage in hands-on patient intervention, providing health education and support to vulnerable individuals and families and referring them to needed clinical and social services. We recruit community health workers with deep roots in the community; they are trusted and effective, often “finding” patients who may otherwise be lost to providers or insurance companies. These caring professionals become a meaningful member of a patient’s support network.

THT conducts programming and direct patient interventions promoting healthy lifestyles, health education, and managing chronic diseases. Faith in Prevention, a health education program open to all faith and religious traditions, emphasizes healthy eating and physical activity to prevent and manage chronic disease. THT reaches both adults and youth, hosting resource groups about diabetes, breastfeeding, and breast cancer, and advising the Trenton Public Schools’ District Wellness Policy.

Our direct interventions include infrastructure and environmental projects, engaging with the City on necessary improvements to streets, food access, youth recreation, transportation, tobacco-free living, and other issues that affect health and well-being. THT, because of our small size, nimble staff, and comparative lack of bureaucracy, is well positioned to pivot and try new things. Some risk is necessary to innovate, and an additional benefit of being more financially stable is the ability to make small investments on unproven strategies to test them out.

THT can easily prototype interventions in target populations as a way of testing and/or refining unproven public health strategies. Our access to HIE health data also allows THT to evaluate programs in a timely manner and, in some cases, “fail fast” and adjust quickly.

STRATEGY IN ACTION: AN APP FOR THAT
THT is working with start-up Wellth to pilot an app-based medication adherence incentive program. THT will evaluate whether this technology and its financial incentives for taking medicine improve health outcomes in a small population of Trenton residents with diabetes. This is not something a Medicaid Managed Care company could roll out or try with a limited target population as easily, and, should this fail to meet our outcome expectations, it will be done with limited resources and minimal loss.



NEW STRATEGY

4

**Define and communicate
our value to stakeholders
to ensure long-term
sustainability**

TH T has evolved as a multi-sector partnership, and our value as an organization has grown. Our operations, staffing model, data capabilities, and our vision for THT's role in Trenton's transformation have all changed dramatically in a few short years. THT needs to communicate this evolution to stakeholders, articulating our role as a convener and how that supports the broader goal for Trenton. We need to frame THT as more than a healthcare or clinically oriented organization and highlight our multi-sector partnership focused on community health and well-being. To that end, THT will undertake a thought exercise with each new program or intervention to explicitly define why the program and outcomes have value in our community, and who derives that value.

STRATEGY IN ACTION: RETHINK

THT was selected to participate in the national ReThink Health Ventures project, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson and Rippel foundations. This project, which included regular coaching and a learning network with other multi-sector partnerships across the country, was largely focused on understanding and defining the value proposition of regional conveners. Much of the work done as part of the ReThink Health Ventures project directly informs this strategic plan and has allowed THT to better articulate our role in the region, speaking to how we can directly and indirectly impact health and well-being through various avenues and a systems approach to health and healthcare transformation.

Ensuring that stakeholders in our region understand the importance of THT's work is both a communications objective and an advocacy objective. We will tell our story in a way that is compelling and understandable to a variety of audiences, including policymakers. If we want to be involved in collaborative efforts around non-clinical healthcare issues, we need to build awareness of what THT can contribute, communicating why we see crime and safety, economic development, education, housing, criminal justice policy and other social determinants as vital to community health and well-being. We must ensure that we are not speaking in public-health language when describing our work to non-healthcare audiences.



THT, in partnership with the Camden Coalition, the Health Coalition of Passaic County, and Healthy Greater Newark Accountable Care Organization, is working with the New Jersey Department of Health and the New Jersey Medicaid program to transition our work as Accountable Care Organizations and a "look-a-like ACO" into a new structure, recognizing and funding the core work of serving as a regional convener. This "Regional Health Hub" (RHH) concept envisions a statewide network of regional backbone organizations working on healthcare in their communities and will allow for sustainable infrastructure funding for this convening, care coordination, and data-sharing work. Part of the work of advocating for the RHH is ensuring a role for regional conveners in New Jersey, the value of these organizations is defined and communicated, and the work is supported by the state in a sustainable model that is co-designed with the state agencies (rather than legislatively prescribed).

THT will use the CAB, our Board, and our reach into the community through partnerships with state agencies, funders, and other entities to ensure that our collective successes are known and that THT's value to our community is understood.

NEW STRATEGY

5

Advocate for policies that improve health and well-being and are supported by the community



Residents of Trenton are affected every day by policies at the city, county, state, and federal levels — and policies impacting health and well-being are not limited to the Health and/or Human Services agencies or legislative committees. Decisions on environmental conditions, housing, economic development, social safety net programs, criminal justice, and other non-clinical healthcare areas have significant influence over health and well-being, especially in high-poverty communities where public resources and programs serve a substantial portion of the population. With THT's overarching strategy of addressing health and well-being at the individual and the population level, we cannot overlook how policies shape the community and its health.

STRATEGY IN ACTION: TOBACCO 21

As a component of the Trinity Health Transforming Communities Initiative, THT led an advocacy effort to ban tobacco sales to youth and young adults under the age of 21 in Trenton. Organizing diverse stakeholders, including retailers who were originally opposed to the ban, around this policy was a new experience for the organization, but one THT found positive. Ultimately, this policy change is having an impact on tobacco use for the young adult population beyond that of traditional smoking prevention interventions.

STRATEGY IN ACTION: INFORM POLICY

THT's Executive Director served on the Trenton Mayor's Health Transition Team in 2018, positioning THT to influence the health and human services priorities of the Trenton City Administration to align with our shared Vision for a Healthy Trenton and our deep understanding of the needs of the community.

THT will be more involved in policy advocacy related to health and well-being in Trenton, with the key objective of our advocacy in 2019 obtaining state designation and funding as a Regional Health Hub. As a state-designated Regional Health Hub, THT will work to create relationships within state agencies to provide policy feedback and guidance, in accordance with the needs and priorities of our community, to state policymakers.

THT also will work on priorities identified by our community, such as lead abatement, oral health, economic security, food access, safe streets, housing affordability, safety, and crime prevention. THT's policy positions will be vetted by the Board of Trustees and CAB to ensure we accurately represent the views and priorities of our partners and the Trenton community.



Our Promise



Trenton Health Team faces the coming decade with renewed energy, financial stability, and an expanded understanding of what a healthy Trenton would mean for our community and state. We have enhanced staff capacity and plan to seek new opportunities and partnerships that will lead to improved health and well-being in our city.

THT has evolved beyond just a healthcare or clinically focused organization. As such, we will be working with partners on priorities identified by our community, such as lead abatement, oral health, economic security, food access, safe streets, housing affordability, safety, and crime prevention. With each new program or intervention, we will explicitly define why the program and outcomes have value in our community, and who derives that value.

THT, as a convener, has a unique viewpoint into how the different systems intersect, where leverage points can begin to improve conditions in ways that reverberate to other aspects of the system, and how interventions within a system can either interact in unintended ways to produce poor outcomes or work in tandem to produce better results.

At the same time, THT recognizes that any strategy to improve health outcomes will need to address patient needs and the healthcare system functionality. For that reason, THT will continue deploying “on the ground” patient and public health interventions. Such interventions increasingly straddle the line between clinical and community-facing programs, and are likely to include both direct patient interventions and work on vital conditions and/or policies.

THT will continue incorporating information from our provider organizations and HIE data on diagnoses and utilization to design programs and seek support for community-based work. Our unique access to health data enables co-designed solutions, reduces duplication, grows community capacity, encourages partners to work together on projects, and links clinical partners with the constituencies they serve.

We understand that realizing our Vision for a Healthy Trenton requires embracing a broader view of health and well-being, and reaching out to new partners for new ways to build on community assets and improve outcomes for those calling Trenton home.





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