

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What is the South Side Health Transformation Project?

The South Side Health Transformation Project www.southsidehealthtransformation.com is a collaborative effort between healthcare providers and the community on Chicago's South Side driving towards more equitable healthcare, better access to resources and prevention services, ultimately creating a healthier community. It was convened by St. Bernard Hospital, Advocate Trinity Hospital, UChicago Medicine and Holy Cross Hospital with other healthcare providers and community leaders.

2. What role does the community play in this?

Since early September 2020, we've been convening listening sessions all across the South Side -- seeking ideas and thoughts for how healthcare access and outcomes can be improved throughout our community. A broad swath of the community has been actively engaged, including churches, community organizations, other healthcare providers, elected leaders and neighborhood residents.

We started with a virtual community-hosted discussion September 10th, 2020, with 144 people attending that included break-out sessions so ideas and comments could be further shared. We had hoped that community members would host 4-6 follow-up small group listening sessions – and were energized when 12 more dialogues were held. Nearly 150 community members shared their thoughts through a Google portal, and over 220 filled out and returned a survey we shared through community partners. And, on October 8th, 2020, we held a follow-up, virtual large group session, where a developing healthcare transformation model was discussed with 102 community participants during 10-break-outs facilitated by community leaders.

We met again with the larger community in March 2021 to give an update on the model and next steps.

3. What is the community saying?

The input focuses on some common themes. Community participants are saying that:

- *A healthy community needs coordinated wellness services for the whole person, and a higher level of trust in their care providers.*
- *They want more care providers who reflect the community, who can better understand their lived experiences.*

- *They believe the community would be healthier with more care programs focused on prevalent diseases found among South Side residents, such as diabetes and mental health issues.*
- *Access is vital– both in terms of the convenient location of services and more resources, like community health workers, guiding people to both care and wellness.*

4. What's different about this process than what went on in the Spring of 2020?

Our current project is not focused on consolidation, building something new or closing services. Rather, we are collectively focused on using the resources we have in the community more effectively and in a much more coordinated and collaborative way to address the needs and issues that matter most in our neighborhoods.

We are hoping that, working together, we can find ways to better connect our existing health organizations, increase access to both primary and specialty care, address some of the most challenging social determinants of health, and ultimately ensure a stronger, healthier community.

5. How would health transformation on the South Side be funded?

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services released their application for \$150 million in funding dedicated to health transformation in March 2021 and have stated that proposals for these transformation funds are due April 9th, 2020. The South Side Health Transformation Project is applying for a portion of these transformation funds, and then will seek other funding through foundations, corporate partners and other sources.

6. What would you plan to do with the transformation funds?

We have developed a model for transformation that reflects community input, and starts with four primary actions:

- *More access to doctors, nurses and health care providers of and in the community for both primary and specialty care;*
- *Targeted and integrated care programs to support people with concerns common on the South Side, such as behavioral health, diabetes, and maternal and infant health;*

- *Hiring community health workers to provide informational counseling and social support, help patients understand their health conditions and refer them for health care and social services; and*
- *Integrated, real-time data to create a complete picture of residents' health status, social needs and individual health goals. By sharing data, we will provide South Side residents with the health care and social services they need in a timely, convenient manner and support them in their complete health journeys.*

7. Who on the South Side will actually get this money?

We are looking at a structure or organization that would accept the funds and implement the Healthy Community model on behalf of all the South Side healthcare organizations.

We plan to deliver on the goal of having a fully-connected healthcare system that links all assets together. This means care coordination across the full spectrum – including significant outpatient and inpatient options, community health workers and support services across our community.

8. Can you move this project forward without state money?

None of us alone has the resources necessary to make sustainable transformation a reality. We need the federal and state dollars that have been appropriated specifically for this critically important purpose. Advocate Trinity Hospital and UChicago Medicine are willing to also put some funds behind this, and we are hopeful to find other dollars through foundations and corporate partners.

9. You've laid out this transformation model – how will it be implemented?

That is an important next step in this process – the right framework and structure for having the greatest impact on health outcomes. Even as we tweak the transformation model based on community input, we are working now on an implementation strategy-- and will have more to share as the process continues.

10. How many healthcare centers will be part of this Healthy Community Model? Which ones?

The idea is that all the existing providers would be part of this connected platform because that's what's best for patients. Each would maintain its own identity, but be virtually connected to the technology infrastructure.

11. What's the next step?

The next step is to apply for the state funding by April 9th, 2021 and win a portion of it when state decisions are made in May. If we are fortunate enough to secure some state funding, we will begin implementation planning.