



*Focus on:*  
**Building Strong, Healthy Communities**



# WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

---

Health and well-being are essential components of a productive, stable life. Yet, many of our most vulnerable neighbors struggle to access quality health care, supportive services and a strong community network.

Tennessee ranks 43rd out of 50 states for overall health and ranks in the bottom 20 percent of all states in diabetes and obesity, cardiovascular and cancer deaths and premature death. Roughly 10 percent of our population is uninsured.

Every day, people in our community struggle with health issues that may seem impossible to solve. People who aren't able to access healthy food nearby. Families who can't afford medical care for their children. Senior citizens who can't buy life-saving medicine. People affected with HIV and AIDS who can't access the vital support services they need.

These are tough problems that threaten the future of our neighbors and our community.

When it comes to healthy living, a person's hourly wage or zip code should never be deterrents to success. And yet, for many people, that's the case. Poverty limits peoples' ability to access healthy foods, safe neighborhoods and affordable care.

The differences in health are striking in communities with unstable housing, low income levels, unsafe neighborhoods or substandard education. In fact, socioeconomic factors such as education, job status, family and social support, income and community safety determine 40 percent of a person's health.

Physical environment, diet, exercise, tobacco and alcohol use and access to quality care make up the other 60 percent.



---

***Socioeconomic factors such as education, job status, family and social support, income and community safety determine 40 percent of a person's health.***

---

But a person's background should never determine their right to a healthy quality of life.

That's why we're fighting to build strong, healthy communities—to give every person an equal chance at a bright future.

# WHAT ARE WE DOING TO HELP?

Together, we are building a stronger, healthier Nashville by helping people access quality health care, assisting those suffering from mental health issues and chronic disease, and bringing people together to make connections and build strong, supportive communities.

## **Building Strong, Supportive Neighborhoods**

The path to health and wellness does not end with a doctor's visit. We bring neighbors together to make connections and build a sense of community. Through our Family Resource Center Partnerships and services such as senior citizen meal delivery and teen outreach programs

we help kids, families and neighbors make meaningful, lasting connections to those around them. It's a simple thing that can make all the difference to a senior living alone, a veteran living on the street, or an immigrant family settling into their new hometown.

We partner with organizations to foster a community that empowers older adults by connecting seniors who no longer drive with volunteers who do. A quarter of Tennesseans will be designated as seniors by 2020. This portion of our population is rapidly growing, which means the need for more reliable transportation among elders is increasing.

Language can also be a huge barrier for many non-English speaking members of our community, which is why we partner with organizations that provide support to families when navigating school systems. These programs help families understand how to







advocate for their child within the school system, communicate with school staff and how to build a strong learning environment at home.

### **Accessing Quality Health Care**

We work with our partners to help those without health insurance obtain affordable care. We also work with community-based clinics and care providers to link individuals to medical services, dental care and supportive services that promote healthy living.

United Way also partners with organizations that provide healing for children, adults and families affected by sexual assault and work to end sexual violence through counseling, education and advocacy.

### **Providing Support to Those Living With HIV/AIDS**

According to the Southern AIDS Strategy Initiative, Tennessee ranks 10th nationally in the rate of new HIV/AIDS diagnoses, and it ranks

---

***Tennessee ranks 10th nationally in the rate of new HIV/AIDS diagnoses, and it ranks eighth in the rate of AIDS-related deaths.***

---

eighth in the rate of AIDS-related deaths. While significant advances have been made to improve the quality of life for those living with HIV and AIDS, HIV is still an epidemic.

United Way works with partners to help those living with or affected by HIV/AIDS receive essential support and services. In partnership with the Tennessee Department of Health, we manage

the Ryan White Part B and CDC Prevention grants for 92 of the 95 counties in Tennessee to improve the lives of individuals affected by HIV/AIDS by providing services for people who do not have sufficient health care coverage or financial resources.

The program serves more than 3,000 individuals and supports comprehensive care and prevention education efforts, including medical case management, case management, emergency financial assistance, mental health, substance abuse, oral health care, psychosocial support, food bank meal delivery, transportation, housing assistance and eye care assistance.

### **Assisting Those Suffering From Mental Health Issues And Chronic Disease**

Living with chronic disease or mental health issues is a daily struggle for many in our community. We work with providers to help chronic disease sufferers receive the education and resources they need to manage their conditions so they can live healthy, productive lives.

Our partners help individuals coping with mental health or substance abuse issues and provide wrap-around support and case management to ensure long-term success.

### **Making Sure No One Goes Hungry**

No one living in a thriving community should have to worry about where they'll find their next meal. Through partnerships with local food banks, hot meal providers and meal delivery services, we're giving individuals and families in need access to high-quality, nutritious meals and bridging the gaps so that families are fed.

In coordination with our community partners, we also provide access to food pantries and work to ensure kids are fed when school is not in session.

## **UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**



Health starts in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods and communities. We know that taking care of ourselves by eating well and staying active, not smoking, getting the recommended immunizations and screening tests, and seeing a doctor when we are sick all influence our health. Our health is also determined in part by access to social and economic opportunities; the resources and supports available in our homes, neighborhoods and communities; the quality of our schooling; the safety of our workplaces; the cleanliness of our water, food and air; and the nature of our social interactions and relationships. The conditions in which we live explain in part why some Americans are healthier than others and why Americans more generally are not as healthy as they could be.

To ensure that every person has the opportunity to make choices that lead to good health, advances are needed not only in health care but in education, childcare, housing, business, law, media, community planning, transportation and agriculture. Making these advances involves working together to:

- Explore how programs, practices, and policies in these areas affect the health of individuals, families and communities.
- Establish common goals, complementary roles and ongoing constructive relationships between the health sector and these areas.
- Maximize opportunities for collaboration among Federal-, state-, and local-level partners related to social determinants of health.

*— Originally published by the Office of Disease Prevention & Promotion*

# BUT WE COULDN'T DO IT ALONE

We are working to expand access to affordable health care, healthy food and strong, supportive neighborhoods. Because of your generous commitment, our neighbors are leading healthy, successful lives. Together, we can give every person the chance to be a part of strong, healthy communities.

## Because of you...



**2,741**

individuals with chronic disease received the tools and resources to maintain optimum health



**2,548**

people affected by HIV/AIDS accessed vital support services



**2,080**

individuals reported a decrease in feelings of depression or hopelessness



**6,417**

neighbors were connected to a primary health care provider





# MEET RITA

Rita is legally blind. Nearly a year ago, she lost her vision, and, with that, the ability to drive.

“You can feel very isolated once you can’t get in that car and go any time you want,” Rita says.

Rita has many friends but lives alone in a small, quiet community for adults ages 55 and up. Two of her daughters are nearby, and she’s grateful for their support.

“But you just can’t call on family and neighbors that often and interrupt their lives to get you where you need to go.”

After her diagnosis, Rita was having pinched nerve problems in her legs, and she needed treatment. But without the ability to drive, getting to her doctor’s appointments posed a significant problem. A neighbor who volunteers for FiftyForward recommended Senior Ride Nashville, an organization that calls on volunteers to provide transportation to adults who can no longer drive themselves. For the first couple months in the program, she used Senior Ride Nashville twice a week to get to her appointments.

“I don’t know what I would have done without them. To have the opportunity to get to the doctor, the grocery store, get to the pharmacist ... shopping even,” she says. “It’s helped me so much in many ways. Without the ability to be independent and move around the way you’d like to—the way you always have—it can lead to depression in many people.”

Thanks to Senior Ride Nashville, she gets to maintain that independence despite the fact that she can no longer get behind the wheel.

“Rita is fully capable; she’s just lacking the ability to drive,” says Elizabeth Madsen, a program manager at



Senior Ride Nashville. “She wants to continue her life as she did before her diagnosis. She wants to stay involved, to see her friends and family and to get to those doctor’s appointments.”

Reduced mobility often puts seniors at risk for loneliness and prevents them from getting access to nutrition and the health care they need. Adults typically live six to 10 years after they stop driving, Elizabeth says.

“When you stop driving, it increases isolation and leads to depression and you can be less likely to be able to get to a doctor for those needed appointments and treatment, and we’re really working to fight against that to help those folks stay connected and active. We find the biggest desire for seniors is affordable, reliable transportation. You would think with the plethora of ride shares in the community that everyone is using these services. But, if you are relying on that kind of service to get to your appointments on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis, it gets expensive really quickly.”

## About Leaders United

Leaders United donors provide the foundation for a better community with a generous annual gift of \$500 or more. Your gifts allow us to continue to fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community.

**Eagle Level**  
\$500 - \$999

**McGavock Level**  
\$2,500 - \$4,999

**Tocqueville Society  
Alpha Chapter Level**  
\$10,000+

**Robertson Level**  
\$1,000 - \$2,499

**Cockrill Level**  
\$5,000 - \$9,999

## Looking for more ways to get involved?

- Find a volunteer opportunity
- Host a poverty simulation
- Build Comradery with a Cause by recruiting friends or colleagues to create kits for our neighbors in need
- Share this newsletter with friends and families

## Contact Info

**Celeste Wilson**  
*Senior Director, Major Gifts*  
615.780.2403  
celeste.wilson@uwmn.org

**Kate Keene**  
*Director, Major Gifts*  
615.780.2460  
kate.keene@uwmn.org



United Way of Metropolitan Nashville