



**HEALTH SERVICES**

## **Community Update**

March 6, 2025

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## Overview

Outer Cape Health Services (OCHS) is a rural & federally qualified community health center<sup>1</sup> with 501(c)(3) non-profit status governed by a majority patient-consumer Board of Directors representative of the community.

The mission of OCHS is to provide a full range of primary health care and supportive social services that promote the health and well-being of all who live in or visit the ten outermost towns of Cape Cod.

In December of 2023, the Board of Directors approved a strategic plan for the years 2024-2026<sup>2</sup> with an emphasis on the four key areas: patient experience, workforce experience, community impact and financial stewardship.

The charge of the strategic plan's execution was given to OCHS' newly appointed Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Damian Archer and the OCHS executive team. This report outlines the activities, achievements and progress made in the calendar year 2024 in fulfillment of OCHS' mission and strategic plan and a look forward to 2025.

## Strategic Plan: Our Areas of Focus

Three pillars of the OCHS strategic plan are all supported by sound financial stewardship.



<sup>1</sup> community health center: Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers. "About Community Health Centers." 2025, <https://www.massleague.org/public-resources/about-community-health-centers/>.

<sup>2</sup> Strategic plan for years 2024-2026: <https://www.outercapex.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/OCHS-Strategic-Plan-2024-2026.pdf>

## Executive Summary

The year was defined by a focus on operational excellence achieving the vision of OCHS as an accountable organization with effective teams providing patient care that achieves healthcare's North Star: the quintuple aim<sup>3</sup>.

### Specific Areas that Experienced the Most Impact

1. Leadership, Management and Staffing
  - a. A redesign of the executive team and an overhaul of Human Resources & Finance Teams to meet the current demands of the organization and maximize the potential of OCHS' workforce with its available resources.
2. Clinical and Pharmacy Operations
  - a. With strategic support from consultant partners, major investments of time and effort were made to improve patient-centered clinical and pharmacy services such as an expanded contract pharmacy network, a new call center model, enhanced new patient enrollment, integrated psychiatry & endocrinology care, clinical pharmacy care and an improved referral system.
3. Community Engagement and Population Health Initiatives
  - a. New and renewed partnerships with engaged community and legislative partners occurred to enhance OCHS' delivery of comprehensive primary care and supportive social services.
  - b. Launch of population health team led by a Chief Population Health Officer, Dr. Marie Constant, and an Associate Medical Director of Population Health, Gretchen Eckel PA-C

Looking to 2025 and beyond, OCHS will continue building upon the foundation set in 2024, adapt to new challenges and seize the opportunities ahead. There will be a need to continue significant investments in the areas of leadership and management development, investing in a new team based care model, building capacity in our advocacy and development efforts, preparing for and managing the impact of artificial intelligence, and enhancing the flexibility of our clinical and pharmacy operations to withstand changes in the healthcare industry.

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<sup>3</sup> The quintuple aim:  
<https://www.ihl.org/resources/publications/quintuple-aim-health-care-improvement-new-imperative-advance-health-equity>

## Organization Profile



Founded in 1987 through the merger of Health Associates of Provincetown (established in 1972) and the AIM Medical Center in Wellfleet (established in 1966), Outer Cape Health Services, Inc. (OCHS) now cares for more than 20,000 patients annually with no one being denied access to services due to an inability to pay. Over 200 committed and mission-driven clinical and administrative staff provide its services across all of OCHS' locations and services lines from Provincetown to Yarmouth.

OCHS is designated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is governed by a Board of Directors representative of its community. All Board members live on Cape Cod and the majority are OCHS patients. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has granted OCHS status as a Federally Qualified Health Center, and it is classified by the federal government to be a CHC (PHS 330 (c)).

OCHS has a long history of successful growth and expansion in pursuit of its mission. As a Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), OCHS holds itself accountable to the highest standards. Ensuring patients have access to quality care when they need it and validating that staff are working at the top of their licenses are foundations of the PCMH model.

In addition to telehealth, which has been an innovative solution to healthcare's staffing and access crisis, OCHS has a diversified geographical physical presence across the Outer and Lower Cape, including the new A.I.M. Wellness center in Wellfleet for outpatient substance use programming, community nursing and culturally-sensitive patient-navigator services as well as school-based health services.



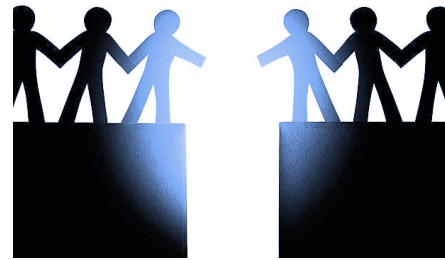
The rural location of OCHS qualifies it as a Medically Underserved Area. As a healthcare organization that is both a rural and federally qualified community health center, the demand for OCHS' essential services is critical to support the health and well-being of the communities on the Lower and Outer Cape. As a matter of fact, the Provincetown

health center site of OCHS is the furthest medical facility from an emergency department in the state of Massachusetts. Without the walk-in and comprehensive primary care services provided in Provincetown, there would be worsened health outcomes for those living in or

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visiting Provincetown and its surrounding communities. This is particularly felt during the very busy tourist season where the population of Provincetown can balloon from 3,000 year round residents to well over 60,000 residents and visitors at peak festival and event days.

OCHS is dedicated to its mission of providing high-quality healthcare on the Outer and Lower Cape, despite facing significant challenges. Like many areas across the country, our communities are experiencing a severe shortage of primary care services. This shortage stems from a high demand for care combined with a declining number of healthcare workers. The situation worsened during the recent pandemic, as many professionals left the healthcare field, further straining an already aging workforce.



Additionally, our region is grappling with a critical affordable housing crisis, which complicates the recruitment and retention of qualified staff across various income levels.

## Services Provided at OCHS

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>List of Services at Outer Cape Health</b> <i>Harwich, Wellfleet &amp; Provincetown</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">To learn more, please visit <a href="#">our website</a>.</p>		
Category	Services	Available At
<b>Primary Care</b>	Family Medicine, Adult Medicine, Adolescent Health, Women's Health	<i>All Sites</i>
<b>Specialty Care</b>	Infectious Disease, Endocrinology, Dermatology, Optometry	<i>All Sites   Telehealth</i>
<b>Radiology Care</b>	X-Rays, Bone Density Screenings, Mammography	<i>Provincetown</i>
<b>Behavioral Health</b>	Psychiatry, Collaborative Care, Psychotherapy (Individual, Family, Couples, Group)	<i>All Sites</i>
<b>Community Resource Navigator Program</b>	Referral and connection to community resources (social services, mental health, substance abuse, housing assistance, medical care, case management)	<i>All Sites</i>
<b>Laboratory Services</b>	by Quest Diagnostics	<i>All Sites</i>
<b>Women's Health Services</b>	Obstetrics: Prenatal & Postpartum Care, Breastfeeding & Lactation Support Gynecology: Preventative Health Screenings, Family Planning, STI Screening/Treatment/Counseling, Menopausal & Postmenopausal Symptom Treatment	<i>All Sites</i>
<b>Vision Care</b>	Routine Eye Exams, Contact Lens Fittings, Testing for Glaucoma, Cataracts, Macular Degeneration, and other Eye Abnormalities	<i>Provincetown</i>
<b>Women, Infants &amp; Children (WIC) Food &amp; Nutrition</b>	Personalized Nutrition Support, Free Healthy Food, Referrals for Medical/Dental Care, Health Insurance, Childcare, Housing Assistance, Breastfeeding Support, Farmers' Market Coupon Support, Immunization Screenings, Nutrition & Health Education	<i>Harwich Port</i>
<b>Sexual Health</b>	tNt™ Testing & Treatment, HIV/Hepatitis C/Syphilis/Chlamydia/Gonorrhea Testing, PrEP/PEP Testing, HIV Case Management, MPOX Information	<i>Provincetown</i>
<b>Insurance Enrollment Assistance</b>	Help with applications for MassHealth, Connector Qualified Health Plans, Health Safety Net, Children's Medical Security Plan, Transition to Medicare	<i>All Sites</i>

<b>Referrals</b>	Short-term Financial Assistance, Food Pantries, Housing Assistance, Legal Services	<i>All Sites / Telehealth</i>
<b>Pharmacy</b>	Curbside Pick-Up, Prescription Delivery, Clinical Pharmacy Support	<i>Harwich Port Health Center Provincetown Health Center Wellfleet AIM &amp; Wellness Center</i>
<b>Walk-In Care</b>	Provincetown Walk-In Care (Monday - Saturday)	<i>Provincetown</i>
<b>Recovery Services</b>	Medication Assisted Substance use Treatment, Intensive Outpatient Addiction Program, Recovery Coaching, Recovery Support Groups, Care Coordination	<i>All Sites</i>
<b>Recovery Support Groups</b>	"All Things Recovery" Mondays, 10 AM - Wellfleet AIM & Wellness Center Mondays 4 PM- Harwich Port Health Center Fridays 10 AM - Harwich Port Health Center	<i>Wellfleet AIM &amp; Wellness Center Harwich Port</i>

## 2024 Highlights

### I. Leadership Appointments



The appointment of key leadership roles was a pivotal achievement in 2024. Dr. Marie Andrine Constant was welcomed as the Chief Population Health Officer and Medical Director for the Provincetown site, filling a crucial gap in clinical leadership. This role will enhance achievement of OCHS' organizational quality goals and population health plans.



Additionally, the operational management team was strengthened with the hiring of Kate Swanson, MBA as the Chief Strategic Officer overseeing Finance, IT and Operations teams. Kate's hire reinforced OCHS' commitment to operational excellence and effective primary care management systems.

### II. Operational Improvements

Outer Cape Health made significant strides in optimizing clinical access and operational effectiveness. Initiatives launched to enhance patient access resulted in a reduction of patient waitlists and an increase in appointment availability.



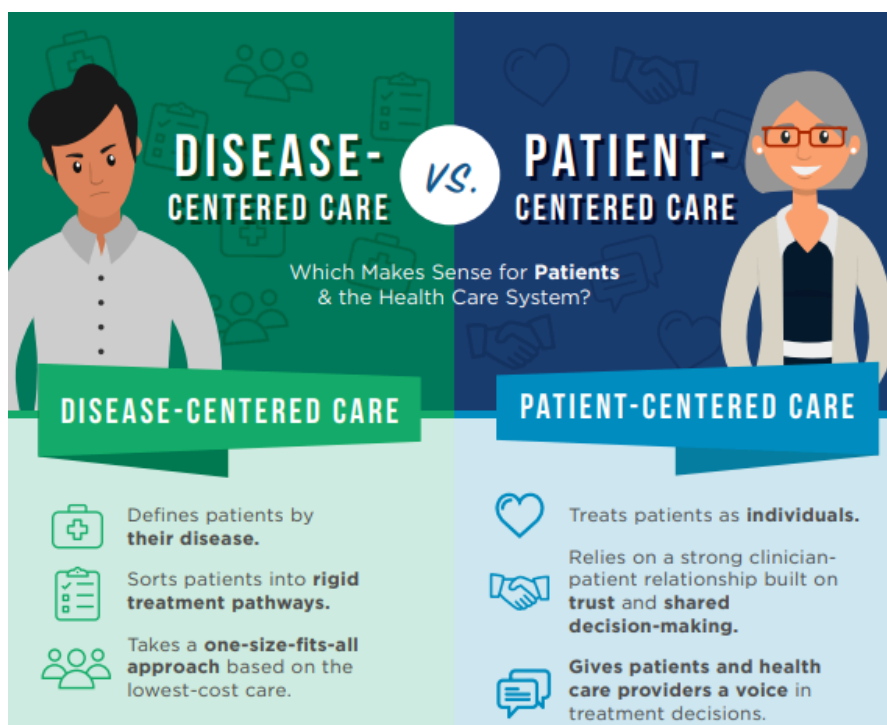
In December of 2024, a new 24/7 call center was implemented to enhance the efficiency of call center operations. With enhanced access and improved call services, additional improvements to team-based care service delivery will be easier to execute in the months ahead.

Despite recent improvements, patient access continues to be a major challenge due to an increasing demand for primary care across the state which is heightened in rural areas like Cape Cod. OCHS will pursue innovative strategies to optimize patient assignments, scheduling workflows and patient panel sizes. Our goal is to ensure that we maximize access to services in a way that continues to support patients receiving timely and high quality care.



### III. Community Engagement and Population Health Initiatives

OCHS has been actively working with community stakeholders to promote patient-centered health care and improve access to care. Engaging at the local, state and national levels to advocate for improved investment in primary care, particularly in rural settings.



Increasing awareness of the impact that Outer Cape Health Services has as a rural and community-based healthcare provider was an imperative of the Board and leadership team in 2024. To that end, there were several key media releases at the local, state, and national level which highlighted the significant impact to the community OCHS has to provide access to high quality care and advance population health initiatives. Sharing the importance of what community health centers like Outer Cape Health Services do as safety-net providers also provided more evidence for the need to receive support from all stakeholders that depend on high-quality, low-barrier and accessible healthcare. Below are a few examples of the news we shared across our region, state and nationally about the impact OCHS is having:

- WBUR featured Gretchen Eckel PA-C who highlighted remote blood pressure monitoring programs that expand access to high quality care.

- NPR and WBZ interviewed Jeffrey Schaffer RN who helped to educate the public on sexual health, HIV/AIDS and the harms of stigma.
- Dr. Marie Constant made the headline statement for a news article with The Commonwealth Beacon that shared the challenges of rural healthcare.
- Brianne Smith LICSW was featured and interviewed several times by local and national press sharing the impact of our behavioral health and substance use services, patient navigator program and the opening of the AIM Wellness center.

We were also privileged in 2024 to have Leo Blandford, LICSW, receive the Rural Health Practitioner of the year award by the National Rural Health Association. Leo exemplifies OCHS' commitment to developing strong and meaningful ties with our communities.



While we await improvements in payment models for community health and primary care, strong partnerships and support from aligned stakeholders are vital for OCHS to achieve its mission. In 2024, a significant partnership was formed with the Lillylulu Foundation, which generously donated \$100,000 to enhance diabetes care on the Lower and Outer Cape. This contribution helped establish an integrated Endocrinology care model, similar to the existing Psychiatry care model at OCHS. This model expands access to specialists by providing high-quality nursing care, allowing us to assist more patients in need. Building and maintaining partnerships like the one with the Lillylulu Foundation is essential for delivering effective social services to the communities served by OCHS.

## Looking Forward to 2025 and Beyond

2024 was marked by significant achievements that have strengthened OCHS' capacity to provide high-quality care to our communities. As we look ahead, focusing on team based care, having a positive community impact and having a compassionate organizational culture will be critical to navigating any challenges that lie ahead. By building on our achievements and addressing these focus areas, we will continue to fulfill our mission of delivering comprehensive primary healthcare and supportive social services to the Outer & Lower Cape community.



### Enhancing Team Based Care

The management team at OCHS will continue its commitment to implementing and improving clinical-operations to ensure maximum access to high quality primary care and supportive social services. The focus of patient access and satisfaction in OCHS' strategic plan will be a main driver for change across the organization.

### Strengthening Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability is paramount for non-profit community health centers like OCHS. Efforts to implement cost reduction strategies and maximize revenue remains essential. This includes exploring innovative solutions such as Team Based Care and the safe and thoughtful implementation of Artificial Intelligence to enhance clinical operations and improve patient care delivery.



### Emphasis on Community Impact and Population Health Initiatives

Community Impact will remain a central theme in our strategic plan. Engaging in community partnerships and participating in population health initiatives will be crucial as we strive to address the needs of all people served by our organization.

## Leadership Development and Staff Support

Ongoing training and development for leadership and management roles will help maintain a focus on accountability and patient care excellence.



## Fostering a Culture of Belonging

As OCHS grows, fostering a culture of belonging will be essential in retaining talent and enhancing staff morale to provide excellent healthcare. Engagement initiatives, such as the Staff Advisory Council, staff surveys, and feedback sessions, will be prioritized to ensure that all voices are heard and valued within the organization.



## Notable 2024 Media and Press

Cape Cod Chronicle - OCHS Gets \$100k Gift For Integrated Diabetes Program

<https://capecodchronicle.com/articles/859/view/ochs-gets-100k-gift-for-integrated-diabetes-program>



Provincetown Independent - Wildfire Smoke Blankets Cape For Five Days

<https://provincetownindependent.org/featured/2024/08/21/wildfire-smoke-blankets-outer-cape-for-five-days/>

Lower Cape News - Filling A Void

<https://www.lowercapenews.org/filling-a-void>

Cape Cod News - Outer Cape Health Services To Open In Person Care For Behavioral Health

<https://www.capecod.com/newscenter/outer-cape-health-services-to-open-in-person-center-for-behavioral-health/>

Cape Cod News - Outer Cape Health Services Offering Vaccines for COVID, Other Common Illnesses

<https://www.capecod.com/newscenter/outer-cape-health-services-offering-vaccines-for-covid-other-common-illnesses/>

Provincetown Independent - New Wellness Center Offers In Person Support

<https://provincetownindependent.org/featured/2024/10/02/a-new-wellness-center-offers-in-person-support/>

NPR Cape and Islands (CAI) Sexual Health and Stigma Segment

<https://www.capeandislands.org/local-news/2024-11-29/outer-cape-nurse-provides-sexual-health-care-amid-persisting-stigma>

Cape Cod Chronicle - Type One Diabetes Program at OCHS

<https://capecodchronicle.com/articles/2011/view/type-one-diabetes-program-up-and-running-at-ochs>

WBUR - Remote Blood Pressure Monitoring program

<https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/12/16/masshealth-hospitals-blood-pressure-remote-data-medicine>

Cape Cod Chronicle - Community Services Program at OCHS

<https://www.capecod.com/newscenter/outer-cape-health-services-encourages-use-of-community-services/>



Patch News - Essential Services at OCHS

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/barnstable-hyannis/outer-cape-health-services-offers-new-program-essential-services>

Commonwealth Beacon - "We need more people to work" by Ava Berger

<https://commonwealthbeacon.org/health-care/we-need-more-people-to-work/>