



2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS PLAN

PREPARED FOR THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

Driscoll Children's Hospital is a tertiary care regional referral center offering complex and comprehensive medical and surgical care for children. The Hospital's medical staff is comprised of pediatric specialists in more than 30 specialties.

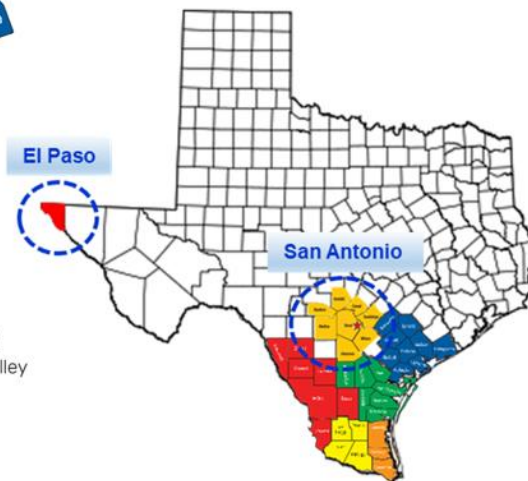
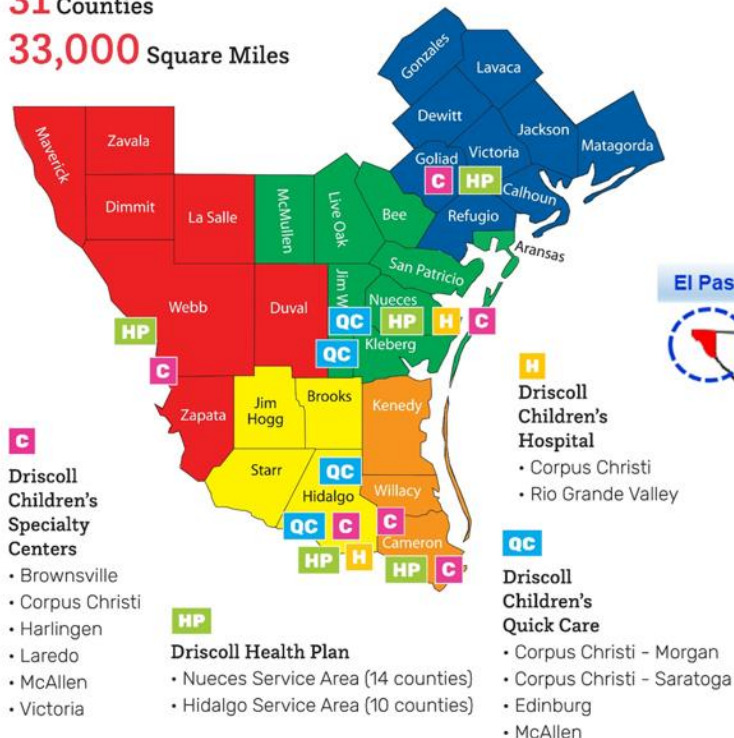
In May of 2024, Driscoll opened a new facility in Edinburg, Texas, the first licensed children's hospital along the South Texas border. Driscoll Children's Hospital and Driscoll Children's Hospital Rio Grande Valley combined had more than **203,000** clinic visits and performed more than **9,560** surgeries. Driscoll was the first hospital in South Texas to provide emergency services exclusively for children and in 2024, had more than **53,500** Emergency Room visits.

2024 REGIONAL Statistics

Driscoll Children's Hospital's Main Campus is in Corpus Christi, Texas. Additionally, Driscoll has five additional children's specialty clinics located throughout South Texas, offering **twenty-one** subspecialty services to serve the needs of all South Texas children with a new facility in Edinburg, Texas which opened in May of 2024.

31 Counties

33,000 Square Miles



- Over **330** Doctors on Medical Staff in more than **30** specialties
- More than **3,500** employees and **155** volunteers
- **6th** largest private sector employer in Corpus Christi

Combined, the facilities have:

- **30** Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) beds
- **35** Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU) beds
- **61** Level IV Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) beds
- **87** Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) beds
- **18** surgical suites
- More than **53,500** Emergency Room visits
- Comprehensive Surgical Services including General Surgery, Cardiovascular, Orthopedic and Neurologic
- Pediatric Subspecialty Centers located in Corpus Christi, Harlingen, Laredo, McAllen, El Paso, Brownsville and Victoria
- Pediatric Cardiology Clinics
- Child Abuse Resource and Evaluation Team
- 4 Quick Care Centers
- Driscoll sponsors Maternal Fetal Medicine clinics that seek to improve birth outcomes for the region
- One of 210 pediatric residency programs in the United States with **48** pediatric residents
- Texas A&M University Affiliation (affiliated with 34 colleges and universities across Texas and the United States)
- Accredited by The Joint Commission (TJC)
- **3,823** Admissions and **3,990** Observation patients in 2024

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

We state our **Mission**: Devoted to expert care, education, outreach and advocacy

With a **Vision**: Until all children are well

Utilizing Core **Values**: Compassion, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence, and Stewardship

IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY NEEDS IN 2024

The identified health care needs based upon an ongoing Community Needs Assessment performed in 2022 identified 3 elements:

- 1) Preventable Hospital Use
- 2) Opportunities to manage Chronic Illness
- 3) Addressing Mental Health Needs

PLANS TO ADDRESS IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Items included in the plan for 2024 included:

- 1) Improve access to primary and specialty care services
- 2) Increase education of primary care physicians and mid-level providers in managing illnesses and injuries in children
- 3) Improve care of children with chronic diseases
- 4) Improve access to mental health professionals

Improving Access

Driscoll Health Plan shows that there are 36 more primary care physicians in the South Texas area credentialed in Medicaid in 2024 compared with 2023. Driscoll Children's Specialty Services hired 21 pediatric specialists in 2024 with 14 providing specialized outpatient pediatric care in clinics across South Texas including Victoria, Laredo, Brownsville, Harlingen, McAllen, and Corpus Christi. With these additional specialists, wait time for new appointments is about 36 days, on average, for all specialists.

Driscoll Children's Hospital instituted a new program in 2024 to encourage our pediatric residents to stay within South Texas. Driscoll Children's Hospital Community Retention Program was developed to help fill needs in underserved communities with pediatric physician shortages. Driscoll is committed to retaining our pediatric residents to continue caring for patients across South Texas. In this program, Driscoll provides financial assistance to residents upon graduation for a commitment to live and serve pediatric patients in underserved areas of South Texas for three years. During residency, Driscoll provides support in finding practice opportunities. Residents are introduced to physicians and practices interested in recruiting pediatricians in South Texas. Residents can rotate with community physicians interested in recruiting partners during their 2nd or 3rd year and Driscoll assists with living and travel expenses to support resident exposure to underserved communities in South Texas. Also, residents who are pursuing subspecialty training can interview for subspecialty positions prior to starting fellowship. In 2024, nine residents stayed in South Texas, four went on to fellowships and five left to practice outside of South Texas.

Improving Education

Driscoll Children's hospital offered 114 continuing medical education events in various formats that included face to face and virtual meetings for 263 available continuing medical education hours with 4,189 attendees. These educational sessions were based on the needs of the primary care and specialty physicians.

Managing Chronic Illness

The Youth Wellness Institute was instituted in February of 2024 in partnership with Texas A&M. This Institute provides comprehensive, evidence-based care for children and adolescents suffering from obesity and its co-morbidities. Texas A&M provides the 26 hours of lifestyle education (diet, mental health, physical activity) overseen by the medical director, Dr. Ana Paez. The patients receive a comprehensive evaluation to assess for common complications of obesity (like sleep apnea, diabetes, hypertension) and are referred for appropriate management of those conditions. Likewise, primary care and specialist physicians can refer patients with complications of obesity to the Institute for comprehensive evaluation and management. In addition to lifestyle

management, appropriate medical and surgical therapy are also offered. In 2024, 557 patients were seen, with 1,568 total visits. Early results indicate modest improvements with 47% losing weight who completed at least 50% of the classes.

The pulmonology department hired a physician assistant to see asthma patients admitted to the hospital to provide in-depth asthma education to families and re-energize the Coastal Bend Asthma Initiative.

Driscoll Health Plan has a Dental Director focused on education to primary care physicians about early childhood caries detection and treatment with a focus on ensuring all primary care physicians are certified to do oral education and application of fluoride varnish at well-child visits. In 2024, 272 primary care physicians sent claims for over 30,000 visits for oral evaluation and application of fluoride varnish. These visits also include establishing a dental home and providing nutritional and oral hygiene information.

Improving Access to Mental Health

The goals of the Driscoll Health System are to improve early detection and access to mental health services for youth to prevent ED visits and inpatient admissions. We have used a multi-pronged approach- placing mental health resources where children go- to schools and primary care.

The two large primary care practices that are “integrated” practices with embedded mental health professionals have seen 711 patients in 2024. Driscoll Clinics have screened 1,265 children 10 years of age and older. Over 740 families have participated in the Positive Parenting Program that provides skills to families in dealing with common behavioral issues.

Driscoll has a full year of our pilot program with a large ISD where we have embedded mental health professionals in five elementary schools and one high school. These MH professionals had 2,445 mental health interventions among almost 500 children. Student attendance improved in 36% and student achievement improved 50%. More importantly, on several occasions children were identified who had suicide plans that were averted.

Driscoll has also supported a local child and adolescent psychiatrist to open a Partial Hospitalization Program for adolescents as an alternative for some patients to inpatient treatment and as a bridge from inpatient treatment back to their normal school environment to prevent relapse.

With these improvements in access to care, Driscoll saw a decrease in ED visits for behavioral health issues, the first decrease (5%) in 5 years.

COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY OF SOUTH TEXAS

In FY 2024 (latest financial information available), Driscoll Children's Hospital community contributions totaled **\$655,408,102.47** and were distributed within the following areas:

- **\$517,106,965.12**

- Financial Assistance and Government Programs***

- Charity care at cost, the unreimbursed cost of Medicaid, and means-tested government programs

- **\$6,999,000.22**

- Community health improvement services and community benefit operations***

- Community Health Education and Support, Public Relations and Awareness, Patient Family and Support Services.

- **\$15,781,654.00**

- Health Professions Education***

- Education and training of medical and allied health professionals, nurses, students, interns, residents and fellows

- **\$115,520,483.13**

- Subsidized Health Services***

- Clinical services provided in response to community need despite financial loss incurred.

Additionally, Driscoll Children's Hospital provides programs to the community for health education and prevention for diseases and chronic conditions, food insecurity, diabetic and asthma education classes, education for current and future health professionals, and community events that promote awareness of health awareness of children health issues to the public

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

Driscoll Health System offers reduced or no-charge services for all emergency or other medically necessary care for individuals eligible under our Financial Assistance Policy (FAP). Eligibility is based on the Federal Poverty Guidelines, number of dependents and gross annual income along with supportive income documents. Additional means of determining eligibility may be utilized by the hospital if individual circumstance supports that a completed application is not practical. Any third-party resource that may be available to the patient must be used before assistance is approved by the Hospital. A review by the Hospital's financial counselor will also be required. Non-medically necessary services such as cosmetic procedures, pre-set cash-only procedures and non-covered screening services are not eligible for financial assistance. The Financial Assistance Policy (FAP) can be located at <https://driscollchildrens.org/patients/resources/financial-assistance/> and upon request at hospital locations and clinics throughout South Texas.

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS STANDARD (ASCBS)

Driscoll Children's Hospital total operating expenses for the most recent completed and audited fiscal year (2024) were \$ 578,676,933*. The Annual Statement of Community Benefits Standards is submitted to the Hospital Survey Unit, Department of State Health Services, and includes completed worksheets that compute the ratio of cost to charge.

*990 Schedule H Time Period 09/01/2020-09/21/2021