

Ministry in Action

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



Ascension Wisconsin

FISCAL YEAR 2025

Our Mission

Rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer, we commit ourselves to serving all persons with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable.

Our Catholic health ministry is dedicated to spiritually centered, holistic care which sustains and improves the health of individuals and communities. We are advocates for a compassionate and just society through our actions and our words.

Our Vision

Answering God's call to bring health, healing and hope to all

Our Values

Service of the Poor

Generosity of spirit, especially for persons most in need

Reverence

Respect and compassion for the dignity and diversity of life

Integrity

Inspiring trust through personal leadership

Wisdom

Integrating excellence and stewardship

Creativity

Courageous innovation

Dedication

Affirming the hope and joy of our ministry



A letter from our president and CEO

As we reflect on the purpose of our organization, it's important to recall that our Mission is at the center of everything we do: We are rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer and we commit ourselves to serving all persons, with special attention to those most vulnerable.

We truly live Ascension's Mission here in Wisconsin, serving the most vulnerable populations. A disproportionate share of our patients are covered by Medicare or Medicaid and are often the most complex cases, greatly impacted by social determinants of health, such as poverty, education and access to care.

Through traditional clinical means and a myriad of community impact programs, we aim to enhance and protect the health of all people in our communities. We are committed to delivering comprehensive, high-quality care to all patients, and we are committed to our footprint in Wisconsin by way of tailoring services and allocating resources, including equipment, clinicians and community programs, with the goal of serving the people of Wisconsin long into the future.

This report demonstrates how our Wisconsin ministry is committed to delivering high-quality care, enhancing the consumer experience, strengthening our communities and supporting our associates.

As we continue to assess services and care delivery models to meet the ever-changing needs of our communities, we dedicate ourselves to live out our three Service Commitments: Extend Kindness, Listen To Understand and Serve Together. At the heart of all we do are our patients. Every decision we make puts our patients first.

Thank you to our patients for entrusting us to deliver safe, high-quality care, and thank you to our associates for strengthening the fabric of our entire community through their dedication, expertise and compassion. Together we can achieve our shared Mission of serving our patients and communities for many years into the future.



Daniel W. Jackson, FACHE
*Senior Vice President, Ascension and
Ministry Market CEO, Ascension Wisconsin*

Ministry in Action

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

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Community Impact

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Investing in Our Associates

57 | Embracing a spiritually centered, holistic approach to helping our associates flourish.

TOGETHER, WE ARE ASCENSION WISCONSIN

Ascension Wisconsin has enhanced its Mission with today's latest technology to provide advanced, innovative care for its most complicated conditions and create opportunities for patients and families to conveniently find care with 1,000+ providers at over 100 locations in Southeast Wisconsin and the Fox Valley.



Acute Care

Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Campus
1506 S. Oneida St.
Appleton, WI 54915

Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus
19333 W. North Ave.
Brookfield, WI 53045

Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Franklin Campus
10101 S. 27th St.
Franklin, WI 53132

Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital - Ozaukee
13111 N. Port Washington Road
Mequon, WI 53097

Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital - Milwaukee
2301 N. Lake Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53211

Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - St. Joseph Campus
5000 W. Chambers St.
Milwaukee, WI 53210

Ascension St. Francis Hospital
3237 S. 16th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53215

Ascension NE Wisconsin - Mercy Campus
500 S. Oakwood Road
Oshkosh, WI 54904

Ascension All Saints Hospital - Spring Street Campus
3801 Spring St.
Racine, WI 53405

Ascension All Saints Hospital - Wisconsin Avenue Campus
1320 Wisconsin Ave.
Racine, WI 53403

Ascension Wisconsin Hospital - Greenfield
4935 S. 76th St.
Greenfield, WI 53220

Ascension Wisconsin Hospital - Menomonee Falls
N88W 14275 Main St.
Menomonee Falls, WI 53051

Critical Access Hospital

Ascension Calumet Hospital
614 Memorial Drive
Chilton, WI 53014

Rehabilitation Hospital

Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital
13111 N. Port Washington Road, 2nd floor
Mequon, WI 53097

Joint venture

Midwest Orthopedic Specialty Hospital
10101 S. 27th St., 2nd Floor
Franklin, WI 53132

Orthopaedic Hospital of Wisconsin
475 W. River Woods Parkway
Glendale, WI 53212

2025 At a glance


137
SPECIALTIES


571K
UNIQUE LIVES SERVED


5.5K
BIRTHS

 **304K** EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

CELEBRATING PROGRESS AND THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

In FY25, Ascension Wisconsin demonstrated this commitment by:

- Expanding our Medical Education program, launching an Internal Medicine program and 75 programs that increase access to care and grow our healthcare workforce
- Achieving Leapfrog grade A awards at St. Joseph, St. Elizabeth and Elmbrook Hospitals, demonstrating exceptionally high-quality, safe care
- Establishing St. Francis Hospital in Milwaukee as our ministry's Southeast Wisconsin behavioral health hub, expanding community access to 24-7 inpatient and outpatient services
- Providing \$218M in community benefit through impactful programs like Blanket of Love, which provides prenatal and parenting education, and Women of Worth, which addresses addiction and mental health issues for women in Racine and Kenosha County
- Supporting essential programs, service lines and areas of care through \$6,092,097 in Ascension Wisconsin Foundation donations in FY24
- Having three hospitals named to Newsweek's Best Maternity Hospitals list



A LASTING LEGACY

For more than a century, Ascension Wisconsin has been dedicated to providing quality, compassionate healthcare for those most in need.

1848

Sisters of Charity open St. John's Infirmary in Milwaukee

1882

First St. Mary's Hospital in Racine is established

1883

St. Joseph Hospital in Milwaukee is dedicated

1899

St. Elizabeth Hospital in Appleton opens

1902

St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing in Milwaukee is built on hospital grounds

1933

Third St. Mary's Hospital in Racine opens

1983

Wheaton Franciscan Sisters establish Wheaton Franciscan Services, Inc.

1985

St. Mary's Hospital expands into Ozaukee County, Wisconsin

2008

Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare — Franklin Hospital opens

2018

Wisconsin becomes the first ministry market to rebrand its facilities as Ascension

1858

Daughters of Charity open St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee

1891

Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother begin oversight of St. Mary's Hospital in Oshkosh

1894

St. Mary's Training School for Nurses opens in Milwaukee

1904

Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother open the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing

1909

Cornerstone is laid for the second St. Mary's Hospital (later known as the East Facility) in Milwaukee

Columbia Hospital opens in Milwaukee

1915

Catholic Hospital Association begins in Milwaukee

1928

Seton Hall becomes the new home for St. Mary's School of Nursing in Milwaukee

1947

Wheaton Franciscan Motherhouse is established

1987

All Saints Healthcare System in Racine is established

1993

Covenant Healthcare in Milwaukee is established

1995

Affinity Health System — Fox Valley is established

Columbia St. Mary's Hospital is established in Milwaukee

1999

Ascension Health is formed

2010

New Columbia St. Mary's Hospital opens in Milwaukee

2012

Ascension is formed as the parent of Ascension Health and other supporting subsidiary organizations

2016

Southeast Wisconsin operations and related corporate services of Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare join Ascension



A healthcare worker in a black uniform is assisting an elderly man with a cane on a staircase. The man is wearing a blue t-shirt and black shorts. The healthcare worker is holding the man's arm and the cane. The background shows a staircase with wooden railings.

Quality and Access

CHAPTER 1

Quality and Access

9 | Delivering quality care and safe outcomes that help to sustain and improve the health of individuals and entire communities.

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OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFE AND QUALITY CARE

At Ascension Wisconsin, quality and safety are not just priorities — they are our promise. Every patient who walks through our doors deserves the highest quality of care, delivered with precision, compassion and a deep sense of responsibility.

Our approach to quality and safety is rooted in whole-person care. We believe that delivering exceptional clinical outcomes goes hand in hand with addressing the holistic needs of our patients — mind, body and spirit. All individuals should receive the best possible care, regardless of background or circumstance.

Awards and certifications

NATIONAL MEDIA RECOGNITION

Newsweek

2025 America's Best Maternity Hospitals

- Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - St. Joseph Campus
- Ascension All Saints Hospital - Spring Street Campus
- Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Campus

This annual ranking recognizes the top maternity hospitals in the U.S., spotlighting institutions that excel in providing exceptional care throughout the pregnancy, delivery and postpartum period. The list was determined through a rigorous evaluation process and results from patient experience surveys and hospital quality metrics from several sources with a focus on indicators relevant to maternity care. Only 14 hospitals in Wisconsin achieved this recognition.

U.S. News & World Report

2024-2025 Best 'High Performing' hospitals

- Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital - Milwaukee and Ozaukee Campuses
- Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - St. Joseph Campus
- Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Campus
- Ascension All Saints Hospital
- Midwest Orthopedic Specialty Hospital
- Orthopaedic Hospital of Wisconsin

This is the highest distinction a hospital can earn for U.S. News' Best Hospitals Procedures & Conditions ratings. U.S. News evaluated nearly 5,000 hospitals across 15 specialties and 20 procedures and conditions.



COVERDELL PARTNERS IN STROKE CARE AWARD

Ascension All Saints Hospital

Honored for outstanding collaboration in improving stroke outcomes across the community. This prestigious recognition highlights the collaborative efforts between Coverdell hospitals, EMS and community-based organizations to enhance stroke care and make a meaningful impact in the community.



JOINT COMMISSION CERTIFICATIONS

Stroke Center and Chest Pain Certification

- Ascension All Saints Hospital
- Ascension Columbia St. Mary’s Hospital - Ozaukee Campus
- Ascension Columbia St. Mary’s Hospital - Milwaukee Campus
- Ascension NE Wisconsin – Mercy Campus
- Ascension NE Wisconsin – St. Elizabeth Campus
- Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital – Elmbrook Campus
- Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital – Franklin Campus
- Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital – St. Joseph Campus
- Ascension St. Francis Hospital

GLOBAL VISION COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - St. Joseph Campus

The Women’s Outpatient Center at Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - St. Joseph Campus received this award from the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) for addressing community health needs and improving access to OB-GYN care for underserved women.



PRIMARY HEART ATTACK CENTER

- Ascension Columbia St. Mary’s – Milwaukee Campus

National Primary Heart Attack Center certification for meeting rigorous standards in treating severe heart attacks — one of the few in Wisconsin with this status.

LEAPFROG GROUP SAFETY RATING

- A
- Ascension NE Wisconsin – St. Elizabeth
 - Ascension SE Wisconsin – Elmbrook
 - Ascension SE Wisconsin – St. Joseph

Three hospitals earned ‘A’ grades for excellence across 30+ safety metrics in Spring 2025.

This grade places us among the top 30% of hospitals nationwide



VERIFIED REGIONAL BURN CENTER

- Ascension Columbia St. Mary’s Regional Burn Center

One of only two in Wisconsin and the fourth-oldest in the U.S., was re-verified by the American Burn Association for its comprehensive care team and outstanding quality care and outcomes, a distinction given only to facilities meeting the highest standards of care for a burn-injured patient.

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN ROBOTIC SURGERY

- Ascension All Saints Hospital

Earned this recognition from the Surgical Review Corporation for high-quality, evidence-based surgical care.

METABOLIC AND BARIATRIC SURGERY ACCREDITATION

- Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Hospital
- Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus
- Ascension Columbia St. Mary’s Hospital - Ozaukee Campus
- Ascension Columbia St. Mary’s Hospital - Milwaukee Campus

Comprehensive Center accreditation was awarded to our statewide bariatric program, recognizing quality outcomes and patient-centered care across four locations.

GREAT HEALTH OUTCOMES

Our patients trust us during their most vulnerable moments because we are dedicated to our greatest collective promise: healing without harm.

Through rigorous, high-reliability practices, and a commitment to the safety of both our patients and associates, we’ve seen a notable reduction in harm and improvement in patient safety indicators. Navigating today’s complex healthcare landscape demands resilience and the ability to adapt quickly. Success relies on high-reliability principles grounded in strong leadership, transparency, effective communication, education and ongoing learning.

Across Ascension Wisconsin care sites, continuous improvement efforts are yielding meaningful gains in safety, quality and clinical outcomes. From reducing patient harm to elevating a culture of safety, the data show year-over-year progress and performance exceeding national benchmarks, meaning we have fewer safety complications compared to other hospitals.



Our commitment to exceptional health outcomes

Ascension Wisconsin continuous improvement efforts are yielding meaningful gains in safety, quality and clinical outcomes in progress and performance (FY25 as compared to FY24)



Preventing infections

Catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI)

58.4% REDUCTION

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) Bacteremia

72.5% REDUCTION

Mitigate medication risks

12.7% DECREASE

Equating to 1,903 fewer patient days

Hypoglycemic and hyperglycemic events



Patient falls

4.5% FALL REDUCTION

Serving those in greatest need

Ascension Wisconsin is committed to addressing the social factors that most influence health outcomes for individuals and communities across the state.

We target upstream and midstream strategies to reduce disparities and address social determinants of health using data from the Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA), Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) data, internal screenings for social determinants of health (SDoH) and the Social Vulnerability Index — to better understand community needs and the barriers that impact well-being.

Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin

We prioritize health equity through focused clinical initiatives in diabetes, cancer, hypertension, well visits and primary care. In FY25, compared to the baseline performance at the beginning of the fiscal year, our clinical metric results have shown the following positive performance trends.



- ▼ **Decrease** in avoidable emergency department visits
4,873 fewer avoidable visits, 12.9% improvement
- ⬆ **Increase** in breast cancer screenings
1,840 more patients screened, 4.7% improvement
- ⬆ **Increase** in colorectal cancer screening
5,703 more patients screened, 6.6% improvement
- ⬆ **Increase** in depression screening + follow-up
10,288 more patients screened, 6.8% improvement
- ⬆ **Increase** in diabetic A1c control (<8)
252 more patients screened, 1.2% improvement
- ⬆ **Increase** in diabetic eye exam
337 more patients screened, 3.7% improvement
- ⬆ **Increase** in Medicare annual wellness visits
1,214 more patients completed their visits, 2.2% improvement
- ⬆ **Increase** in smoking history documentation
6,308 more patients screened, 75% improvement
- ⬆ **Increase** in adolescent depression screening
1,463 more patients screened, 23.5% improvement

The right care in the right place

Ascension Wisconsin is working to reduce avoidable emergency department (ED) visits by increasing primary care attachment among uninsured individuals and those eligible for Medicaid or financial assistance. Across Ascension Wisconsin, self-pay and Medicaid patients consistently represented the largest share of avoidable ED visits, underscoring persistent barriers to accessing routine care.

13%
IMPROVEMENT
IN PRIMARY CARE
Reflects better care navigation
and primary care access

Hospitals play a vital role in the community. Within the health system, the clinical team has a unique opportunity to be that bridge to services and resources for our patients so we can better meet their needs. By identifying high users of our emergency departments, we can then work with them on an individual basis to discover why that is and get them connected to the resources they need to live a healthy life.

Chintan Desai, MD, MSHI, MHA, CPE
Chief Medical Officer, Ascension Wisconsin



ADVANCING HEALTHCARE FOR THE FUTURE

Ascension Wisconsin is redefining healthcare delivery through innovation, integrated care and a strong commitment to health equity to help ensure access to quality care for all.

With forward-thinking investments in technology and clinical excellence, Ascension is making care more personalized, efficient and accessible — ensuring a healthier future for all communities it serves.

Ascension Wisconsin launches Southeast Wisconsin’s first da Vinci 5 surgical robot

In October 2024, Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital – Elmbrook Campus became the first hospital in Southeast Wisconsin to adopt the da Vinci 5 robotic surgical system. This next-generation platform enhances surgeon precision and patient safety through groundbreaking features:

- Up to 43% less force on tissue
- 10,000x computing power over its predecessor
- Advanced 3D visualization and image processing
- Enhanced surgical accuracy and control

Since adopting robotic surgery in 2009, Ascension Elmbrook has performed nearly 8,000 procedures. The hospital is one of only two Intuitive-designated robotic surgery bariatric teaching sites in Wisconsin.



Elmbrook is among Wisconsin’s top 10% in robotic surgery volume. This investment reflects our commitment to cutting-edge care.

Kurt Schley, MHA
President, Ascension Elmbrook



Expanding robotic surgery access at Ascension St. Joseph

Ascension St. Joseph expanded its surgical program to include robotic surgery, bringing advanced technology to patients and Milwaukee’s Northside community while enhancing the quality of care offered at the hospital. The introduction of the state-of-the-art da Vinci surgical system represents a significant step forward in minimally invasive surgery, potentially leading to improved outcomes for patients undergoing a variety of procedures.

Surgeons at Ascension St. Joseph use the robotic system, which provides 3D visualization and greater precision and control, to initially focus on several key areas, including gynecology, abdominal and general surgeries. While the robotic system provides advanced tools, it is still the surgeon’s expertise and skill that guide every procedure. Robotic-assisted surgery involves operating through small incisions, with the surgeon controlling instruments via a console that translates hand movements into precise micro-movements inside the patient’s body.

Ascension St. Joseph is proud of this investment in its advanced approach to surgery and furthering its commitment to the community by providing exceptional care to all persons, with special attention to those most vulnerable.



EXCELLENCE IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Ascension Wisconsin is making significant investments and aligning services in Southeast Wisconsin in an effort to answer the call for additional behavioral health services and ensure continued access to compassionate, high-quality care for years to come.

Ascension Wisconsin is developing a comprehensive behavioral health center at Ascension St. Francis Hospital, building upon the robust behavioral health program currently at that site, with a plan for up to 59 inpatient beds. In addition, Ascension plans to expand behavioral health access across the continuum at this site — including outpatient, partial hospitalization, intensive outpatient and complete inpatient care for adolescents and adults.

Crisis support

All Ascension Wisconsin emergency departments (ED) now offer 24/7 telepsychiatry and around-the-clock peer support for substance use disorders, including alcohol use. These efforts have significantly improved emergency care for patients.



DECREASE In ED boarding times

54.47% Ascension Columbia St. Mary's
Hospital - Ozaukee Campus

12.07% Ascension Mercy

REDUCTION In repeat ED visits within 72 hours

53.16% Ascension All Saints

41.24% Ascension St. Joseph

39.14% Ascension St. Francis

Integrated screening in primary care

Ascension Wisconsin remains committed to addressing behavioral health needs within its primary care settings. Expanding the use of evidence-based screening tools is a critical step toward improving the early detection and management of depression and substance use. By integrating these screenings into routine care, providers can more effectively identify and treat behavioral health concerns — helping to reduce disparities and improve outcomes across all patient populations.

In 2024 and 2025, Ascension Wisconsin achieved a 37.63% increase in depression screenings among adults and adolescents, and a 6% increase in screenings for unhealthy alcohol use among adults.



37.63%

INCREASE
IN DEPRESSION
SCREENINGS

Among adults and adolescents

Treating medication-resistant depression

Ascension Wisconsin offers transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), a non-invasive therapy for patients who haven't responded to traditional treatments. Initially offered in Appleton, TMS is now also available in Racine and Milwaukee.



TESTIMONIAL: Patient
Having a whole suite of behavioral health services in one place — including TMS — made a real difference for me.



EXCELLENCE IN MATERNAL HEALTH

Ascension Wisconsin is committed to providing exceptional, compassionate care at every stage of a woman's life — whether she is preparing for motherhood, seeking advanced gynecological care, or managing complex health conditions.

Improving postpartum care

Ascension St. Joseph Hospital reduces readmissions for high blood pressure after childbirth

Ascension St. Joseph Hospital has successfully implemented a quality improvement initiative aimed at reducing hospital readmissions among new mothers experiencing postpartum preeclampsia — a potentially serious condition that can develop before or after childbirth.



A proactive, team-based approach

In response to an observed increase in postpartum readmissions related to high blood pressure, an interdisciplinary team of physicians, nurses and clinicians launched a targeted effort to take a more proactive approach.

Coming to the hospital to have a baby is expected — but having to return due to potentially serious complications is not.

Courtney Pickar, MS, RNC-OB, ACNS-BC, C-ONQS, C-EFM
Perinatal Clinical Nurse Specialist, Ascension St. Joseph

Developing an evidence-based solution

Ascension St. Joseph launched an initiative to reduce readmissions for postpartum hypertension, developing a standardized algorithm that includes:

- Lower treatment thresholds
- Defined discharge parameters
- Home blood pressure monitoring
- Earlier follow-up appointments

Meaningful results in maternal health

The impact has been significant. After the first six months of implementing this approach, Ascension St. Joseph Hospital achieved a greater than 50% reduction in postpartum hypertension readmissions — from a baseline rate of 3.5% to just 0.86%. Further chart reviews confirmed that remaining readmissions during this period were due to new onset postpartum pre-eclampsia after discharge, which could not have been prevented through earlier intervention.

Monitoring at home, supporting moms

New moms with hypertension receive blood pressure cuffs and monitoring guidance, allowing them to manage their health from home.

This initiative reflects the hospital's commitment to improving maternal health outcomes through evidence-based, patient-centered care. This successful approach to reduce hospital readmissions for women postpartum, has been implemented at Ascension hospitals across the state.



OVER 50% REDUCTION
Postpartum hypertension readmissions



NEUROSCIENCES

Ascension Wisconsin has positioned itself as a leader in neurological healthcare by prioritizing rapid transfers and comprehensive treatment protocols across our healthcare system.

Our ability to swiftly coordinate transfers ensures that stroke patients receive timely access to critical interventions. By focusing on accessibility, speed and excellence in neuroscience healthcare, we continue to set benchmarks in stroke care, ensuring that patients receive the best possible outcomes through proactive and coordinated treatment efforts.

Speed of access

Neurological rehabilitation for brain, spine and nerve disorders

Unique to Southeastern Wisconsin, rehabilitation specialists at Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook provide comprehensive, advanced neurological rehabilitation outpatient care to adults with a neurological deficit, disorder or injury that affects the brain, spine and nerves. The neurorehabilitation team uses occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech-language pathology to create an individualized treatment plan to help patients reach their goals and improve their quality of life in one convenient location.

Ascension Wisconsin stroke recognitions

Advanced stroke care — Comprehensive Stroke Center

Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital - Milwaukee Campus Comprehensive Stroke Center is Milwaukee's advanced stroke center, recognized by The Joint Commission. Our care teams deliver advanced stroke care for even the most complex cases around the clock.

As part of our commitment to building a fully integrated network of services within neurosciences across the state, we added two highly specialized proceduralists at our Comprehensive Stroke Center.



Sheri Dewan, MS, MD, FAANS
Minimally invasive robotic spine surgery



Adam N. Wallace, MD
Neurointerventional surgery aneurysms, stroke and other complex neurovascular diseases

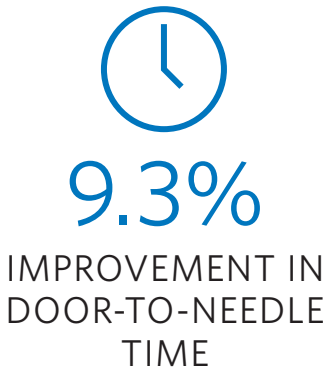
Ascension Wisconsin outperforms industry goal time in stroke care

Door-to-needle time (DNT) refers to the time elapsed from when a patient arrives at the hospital to when they receive intravenous thrombolysis (IVT), a treatment for acute ischemic stroke. The sooner IVT is administered, the better the chances of a good outcome, so minimizing DNT is crucial.

- The national and industry goal is 60 minutes or less
- Ascension Wisconsin's median time is 50 minutes.
- Three-month average is 20 minutes, reflecting a 9.3% year-over-year improvement

Door-in-door-out (DIDO) times refer to the time elapsed for interhospital transfer of patients. Shorter DIDO times are associated with better outcomes in emergencies like stroke and heart attack.

- The national median door-in-door-out time is 174 minutes.
- The rolling 12-month average for Ascension Wisconsin is 99 minutes, significantly better than the 120-minute benchmark.



Inpatient stroke mortality

Ascension Wisconsin is exceeding its inpatient mortality stroke measure, with a statewide average of 0.51. Monthly trends show consistent performance throughout the year.

Doctors and care teams across Ascension Wisconsin offer high-quality stroke care, including emergency care and rehabilitation to help with recovery after a stroke.

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Award

Gold Plus

- Ascension All Saints Hospital
- Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook
- Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Franklin
- Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Hospital
- Ascension St. Francis Hospital

Silver Plus

- Ascension Columbia St. Mary's - Milwaukee
- Ascension Wisconsin continues to set benchmarks in stroke treatment, driving better outcomes through coordinated, high-quality care.

LEADING THE WAY IN CANCER CARE

At Ascension Wisconsin, we are committed to providing comprehensive, compassionate cancer care that goes beyond treatment. From early detection and advanced therapies to survivorship support, we walk alongside patients at every step of their journey.

Awards and accreditations

Commission on Cancer Accreditation

Ascension Wisconsin is accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC) as an Integrated Network Cancer Program (INCP) — an honor achieved by just 14% of CoC-accredited programs. This reflects our system-wide commitment to multidisciplinary, patient-centered care.

National breast and rectal cancer accreditations

- **Breast Cancer Care** in Southeast Wisconsin is accredited by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC), recognizing excellence in comprehensive, multidisciplinary care.
- **Rectal Cancer Care** is accredited by the National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer (NAPRC), one of only three systems in Wisconsin to receive this designation. This model is proven to reduce recurrence, improve quality of life and increase survival.



CoC accreditation and INCP designation are among the highest levels of recognition in cancer care. It reflects our ability to treat even the most complex cases across our nine cancer centers.

Beth Schmitt, RN, OCN
Director of Cancer Care,
Ascension Wisconsin

Innovation

Robotic bronchoscopy improves lung cancer diagnosis

Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. Early diagnosis is critical — yet small, hard-to-reach nodules near the lung lining have been difficult to biopsy using traditional methods.

Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital – Milwaukee Campus is transforming lung cancer care with the Ion Robotic Bronchoscopy System and cone beam CT. This GPS-like, minimally invasive technology allows pulmonologists to access and biopsy even the smallest nodules with unmatched precision.

This integrated approach positions Ascension as a regional leader in advanced lung cancer diagnostics.

Benefits include:

- Earlier, more accurate diagnoses
- Fewer follow-up procedures
- Faster path to treatment



Excellence and compassion

Cancer survivorship and wellness care

The Ascension Wisconsin cancer survivorship program provides comprehensive care following cancer treatment with the goal to help improve health and quality of life after having cancer treatment. Services address:

- Emotional health and fear of recurrence
- Financial and insurance navigation
- Long-term and late effects of cancer treatment, such as fatigue and “chemo brain”
- Nutrition and weight management, and sexual health

Ascension Wisconsin Cancer Prevention and Wellness Program

The Ascension Wisconsin Cancer Prevention and Wellness Program is designed to identify individuals who may be at a higher risk of developing cancer and create a plan that can lower that risk. Care teams provide a comprehensive approach to cancer surveillance with personalized health screenings, risk assessment and lifestyle modification.

Our team recommends targeted screenings, genetic risk assessment, surveillance and follow-up care based on a person’s individual risks. We work closely with each person to create a personalized plan and connect them to the care that’s right for them. Putting all of these pieces together gives us a clearer picture, a better understanding of a patient’s probability of developing certain types of cancer and the best way we can try to prevent it.

Rhodora C. Khan, APNP
General Surgery, Ascension Wisconsin



HEAL Program: Healthy Eating Active Living

Ascension Wisconsin’s Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Program is a free 10-week program that promotes healthy eating and active living for breast cancer patients. Each HEAL program consists of health education, nutrition counseling, cooking classes and exercise classes from a registered dietitian and oncology nurses, with certifications as cancer exercise specialists. Participants are encouraged to bring a support person.



TESTIMONIAL: Participant
This program saved my life. I really appreciated how the program incorporated so many aspects of healthy living: physical, nutritional, spiritual, emotional.



HEAL is open to cancer patients between the ages of 19-80 who have been diagnosed with cancer, currently undergoing treatment or completed within the last five years. Participants do not need to be Ascension patients.

Participants say that after attending the program, they have a better understanding of how healthy eating and active living can prevent cancer recurrence and enhance cancer survivors’ quality of life.

Addressing food insecurity in cancer care

In 2024, Ascension screened more than 1,100 patients for food insecurity using the Hunger Vital Sign tool — 17% screened positive. With American Cancer Society funding, nearly 200 patients received food assistance, including:

- Nutrient-rich groceries
- Gift cards
- Community resource referrals

In 2025, we are expanding access to fresh produce from local farms and piloting a “Giving Table” pantry in partnership with the ACS — ensuring patients and families have reliable access to nourishing food during their cancer journey.





Consumer Experience

CHAPTER 2

Consumer Experience

31 | Elevating the consumer experience by putting the patient at the center of everything we do.

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ASCENSION WISCONSIN'S CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

Making every interaction count

Every interaction, across all touchpoints — human, physical and digital — is guided by a deep understanding of consumer behaviors, attitudes and needs.

We understand that healthcare experiences are deeply personal. We are called to care for the whole person and treat each human life that we have the honor to care for with the dignity, grace and compassion they deserve. Driven by this calling, Ascension Wisconsin is reimagining our consumer experience by embracing a comprehensive, proactive and innovative approach. We aim to transform our experience — powered by our exceptional people — by breaking free from the traditional models of “patient experience” and adopting a modernized approach aligned with evolving expectations.



EXPERIENCE
HUMAN | PHYSICAL | DIGITAL

Consumer voice in decision-making

We place our consumers at the center of everything we do. A foundational change in our approach is using consumer feedback to guide how we shape their experience. By adopting best-in-class techniques from leading Fortune 100 companies, we’ve implemented a systematic way to stay connected — daily — to the voices of our patients. We rely on their input to guide decisions, both big and small, ensuring that we deliver enhanced experiences that serve them and eliminate the friction often associated with healthcare in the U.S.

Leveraging expertise from healthcare and beyond

Ascension Wisconsin draws on practices from a range of industries, including hospitality, tech, aviation and consumer products, to reimagine healthcare delivery. We’re blending the expertise of skilled professionals, from both inside and outside healthcare, with input from patients and associates to enhance how we care for consumers.



PRE-CARE INNOVATIONS

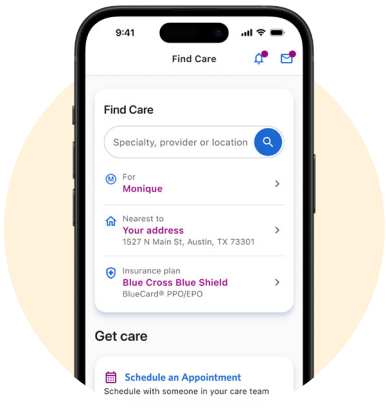
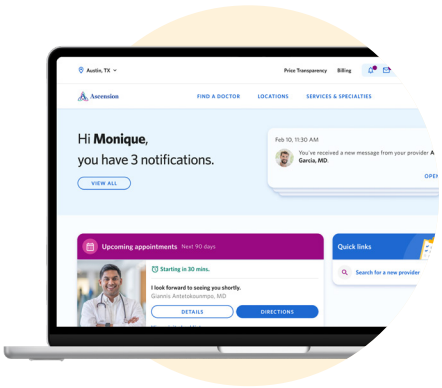
Ascension Wisconsin is enhancing the pre-care experience with new digital tools and services that make finding and scheduling care easier for patients and their families.

The updated ascension.org website and the new Ascension One app are at the forefront of this effort, providing convenient access to care through user-friendly platforms. Consumers can now easily search for and schedule appointments, view clinician ratings and manage their healthcare needs — all from the convenience of their device.

Reimagined Ascension website

Patients and their families can find and book care with enhanced digital tools and expanded chat support.

The new Find Care feature on ascension.org, co-created with consumers, clinicians and operators, is available across all Ascension markets. We’ve expanded the range of services patients can schedule directly, added a function to search by type of insurance accepted and given patients the ability to view clinician ratings.



24/7 call center scheduling support

Ascension is introducing clinics after-hours support in select markets. This service gives patients the flexibility to reach someone regarding their schedule needs at any time, day or night, as well as paging on-call providers.

Chat for scheduling

Ascension is making care more convenient by offering a voluntary web-based chat option. By offering this highly convenient channel, we ensure patients can reach us whenever they need to. For our associates, offering chat reduces call volume and allows them to handle multiple inquiries more efficiently.



Proactive outreach

Creating a better consumer experience means more than just delivering exceptional care — it’s about ensuring the proper care happens at the right time. To achieve this, Ascension has introduced voluntary proactive outreach to support patients along their health journey. This outreach uses personalized messages via email and text to gently prompt patients to set follow-up appointments, take their medications, schedule annual wellness visits and complete screenings.



WITHIN OUR WALLS — ON-SITE CONSUMER ENHANCEMENT

We're dedicated to making sure that once patients and their families arrive, their time within our walls is marked by care, comfort and support.

To achieve this, we are focused on creating calming spaces, reducing wait times, making navigating our facilities easier and offering language services to meet the diverse needs of our communities.

Our Service Commitments

We foster a culture of service excellence that is guided by our Service Commitments — a foundational service promise to extend Kindness, Listen and work Together. These commitments are upheld by everyone who interacts with our patients and their loved ones — not just clinical staff.

Ascension's unified Service Commitments are composed of three simple behaviors: Extend kindness, Listen to understand and Serve together. Aligned directly with our Mission and Values, Our Service Commitments create clear, simple and shared behavioral standards that will be universally known and practiced by all in Ascension.

EXTEND KINDNESS | LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND | SERVE TOGETHER

Our commitment to exceptional service is deeply rooted in empowering our associates, who are the driving force behind our experience, influencing roughly 70% of our Net Promoter Score (NPS) — a key metric that measures customer loyalty and satisfaction by asking patients how likely they are to recommend our services to others.

SPOTLIGHT: Service Commitment Champion

Terri Gudbrandsen-Broadnax, a nurse in the Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Regional Burn Center ICU, exemplifies Ascension Wisconsin's Service Commitment, Extend Kindness. When a patient in her care who had suffered a fire at home was discharged to an assisted living facility, Terri noticed they had no clothing. Without hesitation, she secured shirts, pants and underwear, then hand-delivered them to the patient. She also took the time to visit, ensuring they felt valued and supported. Terri's compassion and generosity go beyond exceptional clinical care — she truly cares for the whole person as a Service Commitment Champion.

Pictured: Terri Gudbrandsen-Broadnax, RN



Reducing and communicating wait times



To improve patient satisfaction, we've taken a proactive approach to keeping patients informed and reassured about wait times. Regular updates that keep consumers informed create a calmer, more trusting environment where patients feel valued and respected. Additionally, we enhanced the arrival experience by training associates on the importance of first impressions to ensure patients feel welcomed and reassured from the moment they arrive.

Creating calming spaces

We are committed to creating clean, calming spaces that reflect our high standards of care while promoting patient recovery and healing.

New emergency department waiting room standards and enhanced cleaning protocols ensure a consistent environment. Our Care Ready training reinforces these efforts and empowers associates to understand and deliver an ideal care experience.

In November 2024, Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital-Milwaukee Campus began the first of four phases to remodel and refresh its Emergency Department waiting room and EMS lounge. The project includes new flooring, enhanced lighting, refreshed furniture and a fresh coat of paint. Additional improvements include a calming background music program, improved WiFi and curated artwork to enhance the spaces.

This investment's goal is to create a more comfortable, clean and calming space for our patients, their families, friends, community partners and our associates.



A focus on wayfinding

We're creating a seamless wayfinding experience that includes intuitive navigation, clear signage and maps, and strategic color coding. To enhance these physical elements, we will provide intuitive digital tools that offer essential information before and during visits. This evolution in wayfinding will benefit patients, their families and our associates alike.

Language services

Acknowledging the critical role language plays in healthcare access, we have significantly expanded our language services. Ascension Wisconsin's interpreters, translators and partners are vital to fulfilling our Mission by ensuring that patients from diverse linguistic backgrounds, and those who are deaf or hard-of hearing receive the care they deserve.

Additionally, Ascension Wisconsin offers guidance and tools for serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including information accessibility, staff training and adaptive equipment and technology.



WHEN YOU LEAVE — POST-CARE ADVANCEMENTS

Exceptional care doesn't end when patients leave our facilities. We are committed to ensuring the post-care phase is just as comprehensive as the care provided on-site.

With real-time Net Promoter Score tracking, patients can provide immediate feedback, allowing us to promptly address concerns, make improvements and acknowledge positive experiences. Our focus on real-time recovery and ongoing communication ensures patients feel valued and supported after their visit.

Real-time listening

We've made real-time Net Promoter Score (NPS) listening and responsive actions a priority across all Ascension Wisconsin care sites to ensure we're continuously improving the consumer experience. After each visit, patients receive a survey to share feedback on everything from scheduling to discharge. This input is available through an online dashboard, providing associates immediate access to positive feedback and giving leaders actionable insights for recognition, coaching, performance enhancements and quick problem-solving.

Service recovery

Service recovery is about listening to feedback from those we serve and understanding the full spectrum of experiences consumers, patients and their families have before, during and after care. We are committed to delivering unparalleled, best-in-class consumer experiences. To do so, it is important that we respond to broken moments of trust that patients and visitors might experience while in our care. Our robust processes to resolve concerns provides an opportunity for our leaders to make genuine connections with our patients and visitors while working toward full resolution.

Real-time recovery

Real-time NPS provides instant feedback, allowing us to continuously monitor and improve satisfaction. This approach enables quick recovery and immediate adjustments. If a patient submits a survey with an NPS of 6 or below, our platform automatically generates a service ticket with all relevant information and assigns it to the appropriate leader. This system ensures we address concerns promptly, showing our dedication to excellence and building patient loyalty.

The billing experience

Ascension Wisconsin is simplifying the billing experience by consolidating charges into a single, easy-to-understand statement to make billing more transparent and reduce stress for patients and their families.

Community Impact



CHAPTER 3

Community Impact

41 | Advocating for a compassionate and just society through both our actions and our words.

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LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

Ascension Wisconsin is committed to delivering programs and services for individuals most impacted by health disparities. Our goal is to build healthier communities by investing in initiatives that improve the health of our community members.

At a glance




\$218M+
IN COMMUNITY
BENEFIT ACROSS
WISCONSIN

SDOH screening and resource connection

Since 2020, Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin has used a standardized screening tool to identify social factors — like food insecurity, housing instability, financial hardship, loneliness and exposure to violence — that affect patients’ health. Understanding these needs helps care teams, especially in primary care, tailor support and connect individuals to community resources such as transportation assistance, housing programs and local food access services.

Community health needs assessments

Every Ascension Wisconsin hospital conducts a community health needs assessment to determine which priorities should be addressed as part of its community health implementation strategy (IS). Input is collected from key stakeholders and the general public to ensure many different voices are heard.

Collectively, Ascension Wisconsin hospitals conducted approximately 80 activities to address health concerns to improve community health and build community capacity, including in the three key areas.

Access to care

Financial advocates screened 14,300+ uninsured or self-pay patients, helping them access charity care or Medicaid. Hundreds more received specialty care, radiology and testing at no cost through partnerships with community clinicians. We invested nearly \$1.5M to provide comprehensive healthcare to families living in the most high-need ZIP codes in Milwaukee and Racine. Ascension is providing \$1M to support a free clinic in Racine over five years.

Chronic disease/healthy living

More than 165 community events reached thousands with education, screenings and chronic condition support. Over 3,300 individuals received health screenings, along with referrals and resources for social needs and primary care access.

Mental health and substance misuse

Ascension Wisconsin hospitals absorbed \$6.5M+ in costs to ensure access to essential mental health and addiction services, including school-based services for 8,000 children and emergency mental health support in Milwaukee. Ascension Wisconsin prevents, identifies and treats substance use disorders through screenings, data-driven interventions and partnerships. Efforts also focus on reducing stigma and supporting community-based recovery programs.




3,300+
INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED
HEALTH SCREENINGS

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Ascension’s Mission is to provide compassionate care to all, with special attention to those most vulnerable.

It is with this in mind that Ascension Wisconsin contributed more than \$218,000,000 in community benefit in FY25, benefiting the communities we are blessed to serve.

Community programs

In FY25, Ascension Wisconsin invested nearly \$26 million in community programs and services across its footprint. These investments included supporting partner programs aligned with our clinical services — such as the American Cancer Society’s fund/awareness-raising events, as well as bolstering programs and organizations that address health disparities. This includes the Outreach Community Health Center, which offers quality, integrated care and services that address social determinants of health.

More than 60,000 children live in poverty in Milwaukee alone, and are at high risk for untreated tooth decay and related issues which can lead to systemic health problems. **Ascension Smart Smiles** provides free oral health services to children in the Milwaukee and Racine areas, and has provided care to more than 14,000 students at more than 100 schools in Milwaukee County this past year.



Food insecurity programs

Food insecurity is a key focus area for Ascension Wisconsin. In FY25, the organization invested more than \$70,000 on programs that provide nutritious food to those most vulnerable in our communities. Those funds resulted in delivering nearly 17,000 meals and more than 3,600 healthy snacks to people in need. Examples of such programs include **UpStart Kitchen**, which has served meals to more than 10,000 individuals facing food insecurity in the Milwaukee area, and **Father Carr’s Life Enrichment Center in Oshkosh**, which provides meals to those in need among its myriad services.



Ascension Wisconsin Foundation

Ascension Wisconsin Foundation serves as the philanthropic arm of Ascension Wisconsin, supporting all of its sites, service lines, community programs and clinics to ensure patients receive the care they deserve regardless of their ability to pay.

The Foundation is a generous community of individuals passionate about serving those most in need and experiencing personal hardships — a Mission that first started with our religious founders and continues today throughout Ascension Wisconsin.

In FY25, generous donors to the Ascension Wisconsin Foundation made it possible to fund \$6,092,097 in lifesaving care, impactful programs, advanced treatments and state-of-the art technology to support the health of our Wisconsin communities.

Notable investments

- \$156,331 of support was directed toward helping patients and associates across Ascension Wisconsin experiencing hardship. This support made it possible for more than 4,000 patients to keep a roof over their head, have healthy groceries, receive transportation to treatment and more.
- \$290,680 was directed toward behavioral health across Ascension Wisconsin, making it possible to expand the availability of transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) therapy.
- \$1,383,097 of funding was directed toward our community clinics and programs in the Greater Milwaukee area and Racine, ensuring that those who are most vulnerable can receive the care they so desperately need.
- \$536,097 was directed toward the cancer care service line, making it possible for patients to receive personalized, compassionate care while navigating an incredibly difficult diagnosis.



CONTRIBUTIONS
EMPOWER
\$6M

Supporting the health of our Wisconsin communities

ENHANCING ACCESS TO CARE

In Milwaukee, Ascension Wisconsin bridges gaps in care for individuals facing homelessness, poverty and other barriers through two community-based clinics: Ascension St. Ben's and Ascension Angel of Hope.

These clinics provide respectful, relationship-based care to people who are often uninsured, underinsured or in unstable housing — offering more than medical services by building trust and dignity.

Each clinic emphasizes low-barrier access, integrated social support and strong community partnerships to address challenges like language needs, transportation, mental health, or substance use.

Ascension St. Ben's Clinic

Working alongside one of Milwaukee's largest meal programs, the Ascension St. Ben's Clinic serves individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability. In partnership with Outreach Community Health Center and St. Benedict the Moor Ministries, the clinic provides primary care, behavioral health services, immunizations and chronic disease management in a space rooted in hospitality and trust.

The clinic integrates clinical oversight with social work support, ensuring that each patient's physical and social needs are addressed holistically. In FY25, St. Ben's cared for nearly 800 patients — many of whom would otherwise have no access to traditional medical care.

Ascension Angel of Hope Clinic

Embedded within Hope House of Milwaukee, a shelter and permanent housing provider, the Ascension Angel of Hope Clinic brings healthcare directly to those facing crisis or transition. The clinic offers care for illness and injury, preventive screenings and chronic disease support.

Patients needing free medications or advanced care are connected to Ascension's pharmacy network and specialist teams. In FY25, Angel of Hope treated 925 patients, providing essential services to individuals on the path to greater stability and well-being.



Ascension All Saints Family Health Center

The Ascension All Saints Family Health Center in Milwaukee is deeply committed to improving community health. Located in an underserved neighborhood on Milwaukee's northside, it provides high-quality, family-centered care alongside a wide range of wellness programs. Resident and faculty physicians work together to address both medical needs and social determinants of health, with a focus on prevention, education and access to essential resources like nutritious food.

A unique feature is the center's community garden and urban farm, developed in collaboration with Mount Calvary Community Development Corporation. Youth interns help grow and distribute several tons of fresh produce, supplying patients, local farmers markets and families facing food insecurity. The farm has expanded to include a greenhouse and offers hands-on education in healthy living.

The center also serves as a training ground for family medicine residents with a focus on community medicine, helping shape compassionate, skilled physicians who are prepared to serve diverse communities. Through these efforts, the health center has become a hub where healthcare and community support work hand in hand to build stronger, healthier neighborhoods.



PROMOTING HEALTHY LIVING

Chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension and breast cancer continue to impact communities across Wisconsin — especially those facing barriers to care. Ascension Wisconsin is responding with programs that combine education, prevention and culturally tailored support to improve long-term health outcomes.

Heart health and diabetes support

More than 9% of Wisconsin adults live with diabetes, and 33% have high blood pressure — conditions that disproportionately affect underserved communities and increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Ascension Wisconsin is addressing these issues through targeted programs that combine early detection, culturally responsive education and comprehensive support to help individuals manage their health and prevent long-term complications.

- **Be of Good Heart** provides screenings and culturally responsive guidance, with a focus on African American communities.
- **Under 8** helps adults lower A1C levels through group sessions, peer support and access to healthy meals and fresh produce. In 2025, participants saw an average A1C reduction of almost 1%. The program recently expanded to reach Hispanic patients at Angel of Hope Clinic.



TESTIMONIAL: Patient
From the day I started Under 8, I felt love. The mental and emotional support gave me strength, and I knew I was going to be OK.

Community fall prevention

Waukesha County has one of the highest fall rates among seniors in the entire country, according to the CDC. In Wisconsin, falls account for 74% of all injury-related deaths for adults 65 years and older.

Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus is working to keep more older adults healthy and out of the hospital. The hospital holds annual Fall Prevention Fairs to provide tips and techniques aimed at improving strength, balance and confidence to help reduce falls among seniors. The event connects patients and community members to clinicians and programs that teach fall prevention year-round.



Health screenings and prevention education

Breast cancer remains one of the most common cancers among women in Wisconsin — and early detection is key to improving outcomes. Black women in the U.S. are 40% more likely to die from breast cancer than white women, despite having lower overall incidence rates.

Hispanic women are more likely to be diagnosed at later stages, in part due to lower screening rates and systemic barriers to care.

Programs like Faces of Hope and Su Salud are designed to close these gaps and ensure education, screenings and culturally responsive care are available to all.

- **Faces of Hope** empowers African American and other minority women with education on breast health and the importance of early detection. Led by culturally competent staff, the program offers trusted, community-based guidance and resources to help reduce stigma, improve access and support early intervention.
- **Su Salud** (“Your Health”) has provided bilingual education and breast care services since 2004. With a focus on Hispanic women, the program delivers mammography screenings, diagnostic services and connections to primary care — all in an accessible, culturally responsive setting. In FY25, 2,350 women received education, navigation and breast cancer support.



2.3K+
WOMEN

PROVIDED BILINGUAL
EDUCATION AND
BREAST CARE SERVICES

FY25

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION RECOVERY

Access to timely, compassionate mental health and addiction services remains a pressing need across Wisconsin. Through innovative partnerships and person-centered programs, Ascension Wisconsin is helping individuals in crisis find stability, healing and hope.

Emergency mental health care

The Mental Health Emergency Center (MHEC) is Milwaukee County’s dedicated psychiatric emergency department. A joint effort between Milwaukee County, Ascension Wisconsin and three other local health systems, MHEC provides 24/7 crisis care for individuals of all ages.

This collaborative care model is the result of a decade-long effort to reimagine Milwaukee’s mental health system based on extensive community input. In 2024, 7,824 patients received emergency mental health care at MHEC — underscoring its vital role in expanding access to behavioral health support.

Meeting patients where they are

Since 2018, recovery coaches have been available 24/7 across all Ascension Wisconsin hospitals to meet with patients in the emergency department following a substance use-related visit. These coaches provide real-time support, care navigation and help build trust during moments of vulnerability.

To further support stigma-free care, three stigma-reduction training modules have been introduced to the Nurse Residency Program — reaching 121 new nurses and reinforcing the importance of respectful, compassionate care for patients with substance use disorders.



Addiction recovery services

At Ascension Columbia St. Mary’s Hospital – Milwaukee Campus, the Behavioral Health and Addictions team provides evidence-based, individualized care for people living with substance use disorders — particularly those struggling with opioid addiction.

For more than 16 years, the program has served Milwaukee’s underserved and underinsured communities through a flexible, patient-centered approach that combines medication management, therapy and long-term support.

- **Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP):** Three hours a day, three days a week for six weeks
- **Aftercare:** Focused on relapse prevention, two days a week
- **Medication management:** Offered alongside IOP
- **Individual therapy:** Addressing the root causes of addiction

Each care team includes substance use counselors, licensed therapists, a psychiatric nurse practitioner, RN and psychiatrist — ensuring holistic, team-based care.



Whatever a patient needs help with, we can assist them. Our approach is flexible, and each treatment plan is customized to the individual — not a one-size-fits-all timeline.

Kim McCormick
Behavioral Health and Addictions Supervisor, Ascension Columbia St. Mary’s Hospital – Milwaukee Campus

ADVANCING ORAL HEALTH

Oral health plays a vital role in overall well-being — but too often, routine and urgent dental care remain out of reach.

Expanding access to dental care and education

Ascension Wisconsin is expanding access through school-based services, community clinics and mobile care that meets people where they are. By embedding services across neighborhoods, schools and hospitals, Ascension is improving dental health outcomes for individuals and families across Southeastern Wisconsin.

Smart Smiles

Smart Smiles delivers preventive oral healthcare to children from birth through adolescence. Services include screenings, fluoride treatments, sealants and referrals — building lifelong oral health habits early. In FY25, the program reached:

- 14,206 students at 107 schools in Milwaukee
- 699 students at five schools in Racine

Seton Dental Urgent Care

Seton Dental Urgent Care Clinics, based at Ascension St. Francis Hospital, serve Medicaid, uninsured and underinsured patients with Milwaukee’s only daily urgent dental care. These clinics reduce avoidable ER visits by offering same-day support for pain and urgent needs. Services include:

- Exams, X-rays and cavity treatment
- Basic extractions and emergency referrals.

Mobile and Community Dental Services

The Ascension Mobile Dental Program brings care directly to high-need sites using a mobile unit and portable chairs. In 2025, care was provided at community locations including:

- Angel of Hope and St. Ben’s Clinics
- Cathedral Center, Milwaukee Rescue Mission
- Salvation Army ARC, COA Goldin Center

Seton Dental Clinic at Outreach Community Health Centers

Seton Dental Clinic at Outreach Community Health Centers offers comprehensive dental care on Milwaukee’s north side — helping fill a longstanding gap in access.



IMPROVING FOOD ACCESS AND HOUSING STABILITY

Health starts with the basics — nutritious food, stable housing and community support.

Across Wisconsin, Ascension is partnering with local organizations and faith-based groups to help individuals and families access what they need to thrive. In FY25, Ascension Wisconsin invested over \$70,000 to fight hunger — resulting in nearly 17,000 meals and more than 3,600 healthy snacks for individuals in need. Key partners include:

- **UpStart Kitchen**, which served meals to 10,000+ people facing food insecurity in Milwaukee
- **Father Carr’s Life Enrichment Center** in Oshkosh, offering meals alongside other vital services

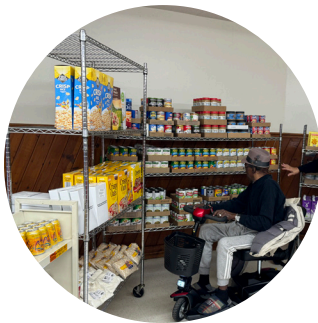


\$70K+
INVESTED
TO FIGHT HUNGER



Addressing food insecurity and promoting wellness

Food insecurity is a major driver of poor health outcomes, especially for older adults and low-income families. Ascension is pairing access to nutritious food with health education and screenings to promote whole-person wellness.



Ascension Ebenezer Health Resource Center

Ascension Ebenezer Health Resource Center Ascension Ebenezer Health Resource Center offers groceries along with screenings, cooking demos and referrals for chronic disease management and other services. The food pantry, in partnership with Ebenezer Church of God in Christ and the Hunger Task Force, served 3,934 in FY25



Urban Church Wellness

Urban Church Wellness Urban Church Wellness works with nearly 50 Milwaukee churches to provide screenings, diabetes and nutrition education and health events in trusted community space.



Senior Stock Boxes

Senior Stock Boxes supply monthly food staples to older adults at three Ascension hospitals. More than 805 seniors have participated. Sites also provide blood pressure checks, glucose screenings and referrals to social services.

Housing stability and crisis support

Without stable housing, individuals are more likely to delay care, experience poor health outcomes and cycle through emergency services. Ascension Wisconsin is investing in upstream solutions that prevent homelessness and support people in moments of crisis.

Safe & Stable Homes initiative

Safe & Stable Homes, led by United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County, helps nearly 9,000 households annually. Ascension has served as the sole matching gift sponsor since 2020, contributing up to \$215,000 each year.

The program provides:

- Rapid re-housing within days or weeks
- Long-term support services for lasting stability
- Evidence-based solutions adapted from successful national models

UP TO
\$215K
CONTRIBUTED
ANNUALLY
TO HOUSING
STABILITY

Ascension Wisconsin's Mobile Sexual Assault Treatment Center (SATC) and Forensic Nurse Program

Ascension Wisconsin's Mobile SATC and Forensic Nurse Program delivers 24/7 trauma-informed care to survivors of sexual assault, trafficking and interpersonal violence. In FY25, 970 individuals and 150 associates were trained to identify and support trafficking survivors.





Investing in Our Associates

CHAPTER 4


Investing in Our Associates

57 | Embracing a spiritually centered, holistic approach to helping our associates flourish.

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OUR COMMITMENT TO INVEST IN OUR ASSOCIATES

At a glance

 **3,626**
NURSES

1,014 NURSING SUPPORT STAFF
431 PROVIDERS
40 RESIDENT PHYSICIANS
58 residents in all positions



**Ascension Wisconsin
employs more than
12,535 associates**

The associate journey

Ascension Wisconsin is more than hospitals, emergency departments and clinics. We are centers of hope, health and compassion, made possible by the doctors, nurses, care professionals and associates who contribute to our work.

Together, we are creating an associate experience that

- **Connects** personal values to Ascension’s Mission of serving those most in need.
- **Delivers** team structures that foster success and a sense of belonging.
- **Appreciates** associates by providing tools for success and integrating their feedback to drive improvement.

Supporting the associate journey

ATTRACT

- Connect an associate’s personal values to our Mission
- Affirm an associate’s decision to join Ascension

PREPARE

- Deliver the information, equipment, access, systems, experiences and tools an associate needs to succeed

APPRECIATE

- Recognize and reward an associate’s performance
- Support an associate’s well-being through culture and resources

INCLUDE

- Ask associates for feedback and show them that they’ve been heard
- Connect associates with their leader and team

TEACH

- Communicate what is expected of associates
- Show an associate how we do things

GROW

- Acknowledge an associate’s strengths and ambitions
- Offer development opportunities

ENCOURAGE

- Give associates a positive last impression
- Welcome associates back in the future



ATTRACT AND PREPARE

By engaging associates in cross-functional collaboration with teams across Ascension Wisconsin’s service lines and care settings, we create a collaborative foundation that strengthens their skills, promotes patient-centered care and enables us to meet healthcare’s evolving demands together.

Identifying talent

We look to help internal and external candidates embark on their career journeys with confidence, allowing them to bring their true, authentic selves to work every day. We are passionate about recruiting talent who are searching for a workplace where innovation, collaboration and continuing education are part of the daily experience.



Onboarding experience

Over the past year, Ascension completed a comprehensive review of the onboarding experience, incorporating internal insights and external data to shape our improvement strategy.

As part of our commitment to preparing associates for success, we identified three essential elements for a positive onboarding experience.

Culture, Connection and Clarification

To strengthen **Culture**, we’ve introduced a Day 1 Framework that immerses new associates in Ascension’s Mission and Values, with a focus on connecting their personal values to our work through our “One Community for One Mission” overview.

Each new associate is paired with a new associate navigator, a dedicated guide who assists with pre-boarding tasks like completing paperwork and license verification, ensuring a smooth transition and building **Connection** from the start.

In terms of **Clarification**, we are streamlining pre-boarding processes and introducing new tools and resources to ensure associates have clear guidance on their roles, responsibilities and career pathways. Our efforts also encompass reducing duplication and simplifying forms to create a smoother onboarding journey that enhances efficiency and allows new associates to enter our organization with ease. By focusing on clarity, we help associates feel prepared, valued and connected from day one.



NURSES WANTED

Ascension Wisconsin offers abundant and in-demand opportunities

Ascension Wisconsin is addressing the growing demand for nurses by increasing pay, offering incentives for non-traditional hours and actively recruiting across specialties. To build a strong future workforce, the organization engages students early through career fairs and outreach programs. Committed to fostering a supportive, collaborative environment, Ascension Wisconsin empowers nurses to grow, thrive and make a meaningful impact in patient care.

APPRECIATE AND INCLUDE

Creating a workplace where every associate feels appreciated and included starts with listening, recognition and a culture of belonging. When team members know their contributions matter, engagement grows, and the care we provide to our communities strengthens.

We celebrate achievements, embrace diverse perspectives and ensure every associate feels supported. Beginning meetings with a prayer or reflection sets a thoughtful tone, offering a moment to pause, focus and connect with the deeper purpose behind our work.

Associate well-being as a priority

To deliver great experiences and excellent patient care, we understand the importance of first caring for our associates. By listening to their needs and providing the resources necessary to help care for themselves and their patients, we ensure they can bring their best selves to work daily. When our associates feel supported — personally and professionally — they are more engaged and motivated, leading to better patient outcomes, improved morale and a stronger, more resilient team. This focus on well-being helps reduce burnout, increase job satisfaction and strengthen long-term retention.



myCare

myCare, Ascension’s internal well-being site, provides associates with monthly access to tools, videos and live support focused on six key well-being categories: relational, occupational, financial, mental, spiritual and physical.

Well-being sessions

Associates can participate in live and recorded educational well-being sessions on topics such as healthy eating, ergonomics, behavior change, stress management, fitness and meditation, designed to instill healthy habits.

Spiritual direction

We provide virtual spiritual care by partnering associates with a licensed spiritual director to address spiritual and emotional needs, offering confidential support to navigate burnout, discern vocations and handle life transitions.



Provider Associate Care Team

The Provider Associate Care Team (PACT) connects associates experiencing distress from work-related events with trained volunteer peer supporters, offering a safe and confidential space to share emotions and concerns.

Socially Just Benefits Approach

Designed with fairness and inclusivity in mind, this approach offers comprehensive coverage that addresses associates’ physical, mental and financial well-being. The Health Benefits Subsidy provides financial waivers to eligible associates, covering costs for medical, pharmacy, dental, vision plans and more, ensuring that care remains affordable and accessible to all, regardless of their financial situation or life circumstances.



Continuously listening to our associates

Ascension Wisconsin's inclusive culture is built on the voices of our associates, whose insights drive meaningful improvements across our hospitals, emergency departments, clinics and care facilities. Actively seeking and acting on feedback fosters engagement, enhances patient care and strengthens operational outcomes.

'Always On' program

The Always-On Listening platform is intended for nursing teams to provide feedback in order to get a full picture of their experience and make the adequate adjustments in a timely manner. To better understand the daily challenges nurses face, the Always On listening feedback tool is designed to route the barrier or concern directly to the appropriate team responsible for the issue. Ascension Wisconsin is collating and trending those concerns to improve wider-spread system opportunities, all connecting back to enhance the nurse's experience working at Ascension Wisconsin.

Nurses' feedback on the annual Associate Experience Survey identified the importance of psychological safety and active listening. To better understand the daily challenges nurses face, nurses are encouraged to engage with the Always-On Listening tool when they encounter a challenge or barrier. Those who submit feedback receive a response within 72 hours. The program complements, rather than replaces, existing reporting processes by helping pinpoint barriers nurses face in delivering optimal care. In the first month after the platform launched, the tool helped to identify 25 barriers. The program will be expanded to include all associates in the coming year.

Our listening strategies

- **Unit-Based Councils (UBCs):** Encourage collaboration and innovation by empowering nurses to drive improvements in patient care and workflow efficiency.
- **Listening Sessions:** Provide deeper insights into survey results to guide action plans.
- **Employee Engagement Committee:** Gathers associate input and recommends strategies to enhance workplace culture and engagement.
- **Associate Experience Survey:** Captures feedback to improve the overall associate experience.



Encouraging and celebrating our teams

At Ascension Wisconsin, recognizing and celebrating the dedication of our associates is an essential part of fostering a culture of excellence.

These awards honor individuals who go above and beyond in providing compassionate care, living our Mission and Values and making a meaningful impact on patients, families and colleagues. From nurses delivering exceptional bedside care to associates demonstrating leadership, teamwork and service, these recognitions highlight the incredible contributions of our team members.



Physician recognition

In FY24, Ascension Wisconsin launched a quarterly recognition program to honor physicians who demonstrate outstanding performance in consumer experience. This program spans inpatient, emergency department and clinical care settings, with recognition based on key metrics such as clinician likelihood to recommend, clinician interaction and patient feedback.

The goal of the program is to acknowledge one physician from each hospital, as well as four physicians from across Ascension Medical Group-Wisconsin, each quarter. Awardees receive a plaque, with the recognition personally presented by executive leadership at the hospital, further emphasizing the value placed on exceptional patient care and clinician engagement.



Pictured: Spencer Gantz, MD

Guardian Angel

Guardian Angel, a program of Ascension Wisconsin Foundation, extends an invitation for patients to recognize any Ascension Wisconsin associate that made a lasting difference in their care.

So far, more than 350 associates have been recognized as a Guardian Angel. From extending a listening ear or giving a lifesaving diagnosis, to being there in times of difficulty and providing hope, every recognition is filled with kind words that exemplify the work of our associates. When recognized for the first time, associates receive a Guardian Angel pin, card and frame with their story of recognition.



TESTIMONIAL: Patient

Dr. Shah put me at ease from the moment I met her. I never doubted that I was receiving the best treatment possible. She is the perfect balance of compassion and professional knowledge. Her warmth and intelligence were conveyed at every encounter. I am almost 6 years cancer free because of Dr. Shah. I am so very grateful.



*Pictured: Varsha V Shah, MD and
Silvana Bittner, CSM-M*

TEACH AND GROW

A career at Ascension Wisconsin is more than just a job — it's a gateway to advancement and economic mobility for both current and prospective associates.

We strive to be more than an employer; we are a partner in helping associates thrive personally and professionally, guiding them toward success and fulfillment that may have once felt out of reach.

Vocare Tuition Program

We understand that a career is not just a series of jobs but a journey of continuous learning, making it essential to support our associates' growth and economic success.

The name "Vocare," meaning "to call forth," was deliberately chosen to underscore Ascension's commitment to employee empowerment. The Vocare Program reflects this commitment by actively "calling forth" the potential within each associate, fostering career growth and enabling them to contribute even more effectively to Ascension's Mission of delivering exceptional care.

Starting in FY25, the education reimbursement program:

- Provides up to \$5,250 annually for eligible degrees and certifications.
- Provides flexible learning options.
- Allows associate eligibility on day one for both full and part-time benefit-eligible associates (vs. a previous six-month waiting period).

At Ascension Wisconsin, we believe each of our associates has been called to serve with Ascension Wisconsin at this time for a reason. Vocare helps them explore the new horizons available to them on their Ascension Wisconsin career journey.



Learn more about Guardian Angel at giveAWF.org/guardian-angel

Ascension Center for Career Advancement

The Center for Career Advancement (CCA) offers career services, coaching, training and educational programs designed to develop a skilled workforce within the communities we serve, with a focus on reaching and empowering marginalized groups.

In partnership with our leadership teams, the CCA is committed to nurturing a culture of lifelong learning and development for our associates. Our “people-first” approach to career development includes efforts like short-term training programs, facility tours, job shadowing days, associate support, mentorship programs and high school summer camps.

Internal mobility and career pathways

We want to ensure our associates have a clear understanding of the many possibilities within their career journeys. More importantly, we aim to equip them with the knowledge to confidently map those journeys, making the pathways to education and economic success more accessible. To simplify the process of choosing a career path or growth opportunity, we conducted an in-depth assessment of workforce development programs across our markets. This resulted in approximately 100 career paths for internal associates. These pathways are designed to provide clear, accessible routes for growth and development, helping associates navigate opportunities as they advance at Ascension Wisconsin.

CAREER PATHWAYS

We identified 100+ career paths for our associates

Clinical career paths: Clinical care, nursing, pharmacy services, clinical and patient support services, patient administrative services and providers.

Non-clinical career paths: Administrative services, business operations, business strategy development, charitable and community services, finance, human resources, information technology, marketing and communications, revenue cycle, supply chain and risk, quality and safety.

To ensure our associates have all the information they need about potential career paths, we used the information from our assessment to develop a visual mapping tool that highlights common career progression routes. The tool outlines advancement opportunities and provides key details such as role overviews, typical responsibilities and necessary credentials or education. It also helps associates identify transferable skills and areas where additional development, certifications or experience may be required.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The healthcare landscape is constantly evolving, driven by advancements in technology, shifts in patient demographics and new care models. As a result, Ascension Wisconsin is continuously assessing both current and future workforce needs and addressing potential gaps. This proactive approach allows us to adapt to emerging trends, such as the increasing demand for specialized care, the integration of digital health tools and the need for culturally competent care.

Our workforce development efforts are essential to meeting the healthcare demands of our communities.

One of the ways we do this is by building strong relationships with students through academic affiliation agreements. We aim to implement intentional, focused efforts to prepare future healthcare professionals and build a workforce that promotes equal employment opportunities for all.

Early career exposure and workforce development

Ascension Wisconsin is proud to support early career exposure and workforce development through its partnership with the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) Foundation. As part of this initiative, Ascension Wisconsin hospitals are among 30 participating healthcare organizations providing grants to establish HOSA-Future Health Professionals chapters in high schools across the state. By fostering early interest in healthcare careers, this effort ensures a strong, well-prepared workforce to meet Wisconsin’s growing healthcare needs. Additionally, Ascension Wisconsin is committed to inspiring the next generation of caregivers by engaging with students and offering career pathways that lead to fulfilling and impactful roles in healthcare.



Building Wisconsin's healthcare future

Ascension Scholar Program at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside

Ascension Wisconsin is expanding its commitment to workforce development through the Ascension Scholar Program at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, now in its second year. With a \$1.5 million investment over five years, the program provides financial assistance, mentorship and success coaching to students pursuing careers in nursing, clinical mental health, radiologic sciences and the upcoming Physician Assistant program. Scholars receive full tuition for their final two years of study and commit to working at Ascension Wisconsin for two years post-graduation, strengthening the local healthcare workforce. As Wisconsin faces a projected shortage of 20,000 nurses by 2040, initiatives like this are essential to ensuring a strong pipeline of skilled professionals dedicated to patient care.



Ascension St. Joseph Marquette Nursing Scholars Community Clinical

Ascension Wisconsin is committed to addressing healthcare disparities and creating a healthier, stronger community through an innovative nursing education program through Marquette University at Ascension St. Joseph. Rooted in the hospital's longstanding Mission of providing holistic, compassionate care, this program offers nursing students hands-on experience in a variety of clinical departments and service lines with a community focus. By immersing students in real-world healthcare settings, the program equips future nurses with the skills and knowledge necessary to serve diverse patient populations, particularly those who are vulnerable or underserved. Through structured rotations in areas such as Women and Infant Services, Acute Care, Spiritual Services, the Emergency Department and Transitions of Care, students gain firsthand insight into the critical role healthcare providers play in addressing both medical and social determinants of health.

By integrating students into daily hospital operations and community outreach initiatives, Ascension Wisconsin is fostering the next generation of healthcare professionals who are not only clinically proficient but also deeply attuned to the needs of their community. Students engage in meaningful activities such as assisting new mothers in the Women's Outpatient Center, supporting long-term patients through therapeutic engagement and working alongside case managers to reduce preventable hospital admissions. These experiences cultivate a well-rounded understanding of patient care beyond clinical treatment, reinforcing Ascension's Wisconsin's dedication to holistic healing. This program not only enhances the education of nursing students but also strengthens Ascension Wisconsin's commitment to creating a healthier, more equitable future for the communities it serves.



Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Nurse Intern Program

It's been said that nurses are the future of healthcare, and Ascension Wisconsin is committed to investing in and supporting their growth. The Nurse Intern Program at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee provides hands-on experience across multiple hospital units, ensuring well-rounded skill development and a seamless transition into professional nursing.

This innovative program has evolved to give interns broader exposure by hiring them into the float pool, allowing them to rotate through diverse departments such as Critical Care, Med/Surg, Surgical Services, Women's Services and the Emergency Department.

This structure offers:

- Comprehensive clinical experience in multiple areas of care
- Increased confidence and skill development before graduation
- Personalized career placement in a preferred unit before transitioning to a full-time RN role



With a remarkable 80% conversion rate from intern to full-time nurse, this program is a proven pathway for students to find their passion, gain invaluable experience and build a fulfilling career at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital.

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**Ascension Wisconsin’s Ministry in Action Report for FY25 demonstrates
our commitment to community health and lasting social impact.**

Data for this report was gathered from diverse sources, including patient services, financial assistance and community benefit initiatives conducted from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2025.

The report highlights critical data metrics. In some cases the data is calculated by a third party and/or includes reasonable estimates. We remain committed to continually refining our approach to enhance our data collection and reporting practices so that we can ensure that our Mission, to foster health equity and improve the well-being of our communities, is both resilient and impactful.



Ascension Wisconsin

ascension.org