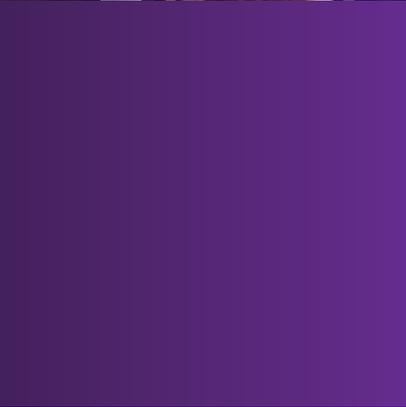




**MetroHealth**  
Institute for H.O.P.E.™



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## 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

When explaining our name – the Institute for H.O.P.E.<sup>™</sup> (Health, Opportunity, Partnership, Empowerment) – we often say the letter P should stand taller than the rest. After all, our partnerships with our patients, community organizations, funders and other health systems are what make this work possible.

Improving the health of our community cannot happen in a silo. It takes all of us working together to identify our community's needs, develop bold interventions to address health disparities and analyze our efforts to ensure they're truly helping people live healthier lives.

And in 2021, that's exactly what we did.

About 80% of an individual's health depends on factors that go beyond traditional medical care – access to food, safe housing, transportation, job opportunities and so much more. In the coming pages, you'll learn about just some of the ways the Institute for H.O.P.E.<sup>™</sup> and its partners are helping people meet these basic needs that so many take for granted.

Addressing one person's immediate needs is only one element of our work. To truly achieve health equity and break down the structural barriers that prevent far too many people from living their healthiest lives, we must set our sights even higher.

That shared vision – that collective momentum among our partners – is something we're proud to have accomplished in 2021.

With thanks, gratitude and hope,



**Susan Fuehrer**  
President, Institute  
for H.O.P.E.<sup>™</sup>



**James Misak, MD**  
Medical Director, Institute  
for H.O.P.E.<sup>™</sup>

*In the coming pages, you'll read how we're helping build a healthier and more resilient community. This, of course, is just a glimpse of our work. The Institute for H.O.P.E.<sup>™</sup> is a cross-functional team that includes professionals from all corners of the organization, including the Center for Health Resilience, Center for Arts in Health, School Health Program and more. To learn more, visit [metrohealth.org/hope](https://metrohealth.org/hope).*



## BY THE NUMBERS

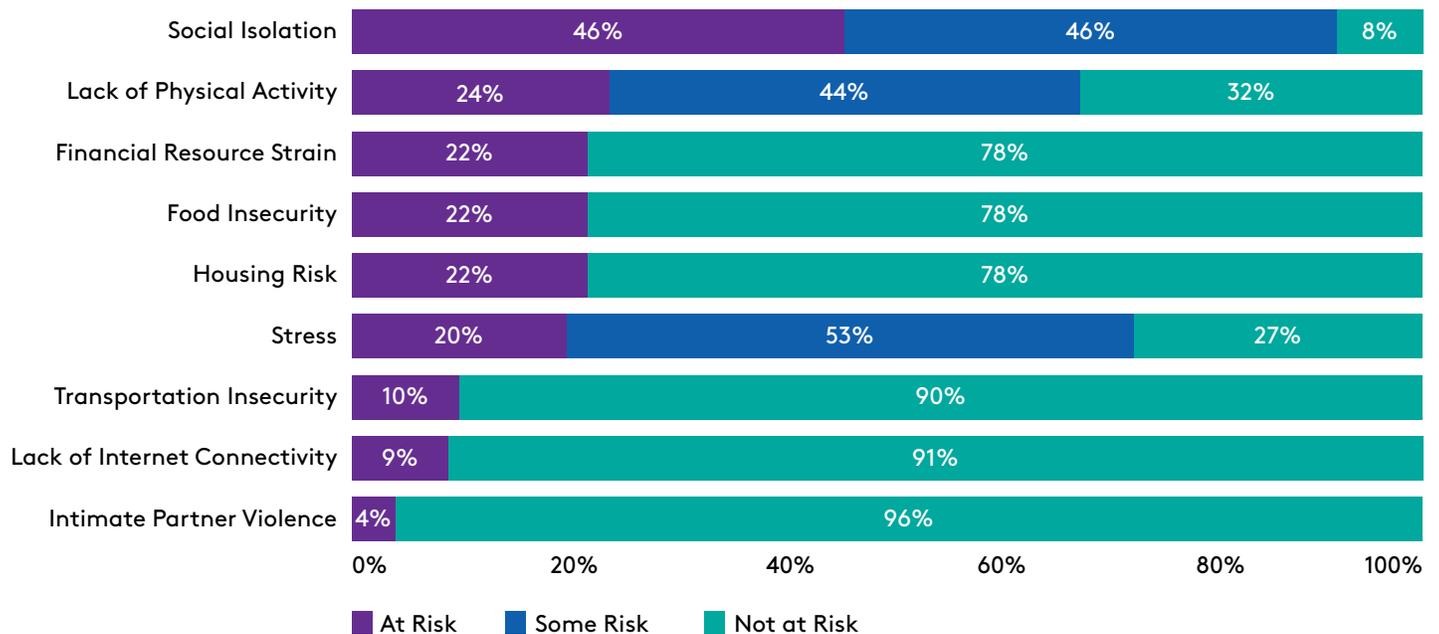
In 2021, MetroHealth screened 35,446 patients for their health-related social needs – things like access to food, safe housing, transportation, job opportunities and the like. We also asked about stress, social isolation and intimate partner violence.

In all, MetroHealth has screened more than 72,000 patients for these factors, which are often called the social determinants of health.

What does this have to do with health care? Everything. About 80% of a person’s health depends on factors that go beyond traditional medical care.

With this data, we’re able to tailor our programming and elevate the work of our partners that address the community’s most pressing needs.

### 2021 SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH SCREENING RESULTS



# MAKING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Technically speaking, Unite Ohio is a collective of like-minded organizations linked by an electronic platform that helps people get the resources they need to live their healthiest lives.

But what does that mean in practice?

It served as a link for an expecting mother – an immigrant without nearby family – to Providence House, a local crisis nursery, so that her 2-year-old was cared for while she gave birth at MetroHealth.

It connected a young woman, hoping to better her life, with literacy courses at the local nonprofit Seeds of Literacy.

It helped connect a Spanish-speaking patient with a Spanish-speaking representative at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank who helped her enroll in SNAP benefits. The patient had attended one of MetroHealth’s COVID-19 vaccine clinics and reported food insecurity during a routine social needs survey.

These are just three of the thousands of connections made possible through the Unite Ohio network since its launch in September 2020. In 2021 alone, MetroHealth and its 160 partners in the network sent more than 8,000 referrals to address the health-related social needs of people across the community.

Most important, the platform – developed by Unite Us, an innovative technology company – allows the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ to track the outcomes of these referrals and ensure people are getting the resources they need.

“Gone are the days when we’re giving patients a slip of paper with a phone number they can call for help, and not knowing if they connect with the services they need,” says Karen Cook, Director, Healthy Families & Thriving Communities at the Institute for H.O.P.E.™

“Now with a few clicks, and the consent of our patients, we can make a connection to a local organization that can do that proactive outreach and connect them with the resources and services they need – sometimes in a matter of hours.”

Carmine Stewart, Vice President of Programming at Seeds of Literacy, characterizes it this way.

“Often our students face barriers that prevent them from achieving their academic goals,” Stewart says. “It’s nice to have a source where we can find providers who are close to our students’ residences that provide the services they need. As other providers find a student who has a literacy need, they can refer them to us as well. That’s why we’re part of Unite Ohio.”



## UNITE OHIO IN 2021



**161** organizations  
in the network



**8,151**  
referrals

**4,358** unique  
individuals served



**1,020** registered users

## REPLACING HUNGER WITH HOPE

Because of generous philanthropic support and the ongoing commitment of partners like the Greater Cleveland Food Bank and Perfectly Imperfect Produce, the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ is helping more patients than ever overcome food insecurity.

In 2021, MetroHealth's monthly mobile pantry program and other growing food distribution efforts throughout the System served nearly 2,000 households that received the equivalent of about 50,000 nutritious meals.

MetroHealth also added a site for its Food As Medicine program, which offers "prescriptions" for healthy food for patients with certain medical conditions, at the Ohio City Health Center. With this expansion – generously supported by CareSource, Thatcher Family Fund and The Murphy Family Foundation – the Food As Medicine program accommodated 1,304 visits in 2021, with a 167% increase in the number of active patients compared to 2020.

One of the key additions to the food security effort has been Pat Hardy, a veteran MetroHealth employee who recently took on a new Community Health Worker role within the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ During monthly mobile pantry distributions, Hardy – whose position is funded through support from Bank of America – delivers fresh produce from the Greater Cleveland Food Bank to dozens of homes of MetroHealth patients.

She also delivers food for the Food As Medicine program to patients with mobility limitations or transportation barriers – and she does it all from behind the wheel of HOWie (H.O.P.E. on Wheels), a 2021 Ford Transit 250 cargo van, made possible because of generous support from CareSource. In 2021, close to 400 home deliveries of food were made to patients in the Food As Medicine program.



"There are so many people going through challenging things in their lives, and if I can do one thing to make a difference, then I know I'm doing my job," says Hardy, who also connects patients with other community resources. "I want to give people hope when they don't see anything else."

**"I want to give people hope when they don't see anything else."**

Another ambassador of hope is Ellen McLaughlin, a MetroHealth dietetic technician who manages the Food As Medicine program's Main Campus location under the direction of the Food and Nutrition Services Department. A few times a month, patients enrolled in the program visit the Food As Medicine clinics at Main Campus or Ohio City to "shop" for a variety of nutritious foods – fresh produce, grains, proteins and the like. McLaughlin guides them through the clinic as they make their food choices, explaining each item's nutritional benefits and offering healthy meal tips.

But here, no money is exchanged. The food and advice come free.

"We're so much more than a pantry," McLaughlin says. "This program is about helping people take ownership of their health."

### A COMMUNITY-WIDE COLLABORATION

In September 2021, United Way of Greater Cleveland, The Rose Centers for Aging Well and 11 hospital and health insurance partners, including MetroHealth, announced the launch of the Collaborative Investments + Health program. This innovative investment strategy brings together hospital networks, Medicaid managed care providers and other stakeholders to collaborate on and lead programs designed to improve the lives of Clevelanders.

The initial component of the program includes a six-month pilot designed to address food insecurity and social isolation – and ultimately lower health care costs – by delivering ready-made, nutritious meals to patients. The effort is being evaluated in early 2022, with the goal of expanding the program more broadly.

# A SHINING LIGHT IN BUCKEYE

MetroHealth's Buckeye Health Center is more than a medical facility. It's a beacon of hope.

Inside these walls, patients find top-notch medical care but also the expanded Buckeye Community Resource Center – organized by the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ – that brings together organizations from throughout Greater Cleveland to address community members' health-related social needs.

With one stop, patients can see their doctor and meet with representatives from the Greater Cleveland Food Bank for food assistance, CHN Housing Partners for help with housing and utilities, Goodwill Industries for vocational help and other community agencies for assistance.

The center's services are available to anyone in the community – not just MetroHealth patients.

"You shouldn't have to go outside your zip code to find these services," says MarLa Bell, a MetroHealth Trauma Recovery Coach working in the Buckeye neighborhood. "Having all of these resources and medical care under one roof should be a model for other communities."

Community is at the heart of everything at the Buckeye Health Center – even the art on the walls, which includes works from local artists. One of those pieces, for example, is from Wendy Mahon who transformed light boxes previously used to read X-rays into an image of hope.

"Art cannot only transform a space but an experience," says Linda Jackson, Director, Center for Arts in Health, which is part of the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ "We wanted



everyone to feel welcome and that they could engage with us, our partners and the services we all provide. It was also very important to reflect the community and the Buckeye neighborhood while making the space feel a little less clinical."

In the coming year, the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ will also grow services at the recently launched Economic Opportunity Center at Buckeye, which includes connecting community members with financial coaching and digital literacy training.

Relationships with the community, though, are as important as the resources offered. Over the last year, the team has spent considerable time canvassing the neighborhood and talking with residents about what they need to live healthier lives. Also, the team distributed school supplies to dozens of neighborhood children, handed out 900 turkeys for Thanksgiving and hosted about 200 children for a Halloween trunk-or-treat event.



## BUCKEYE COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER PARTNERS

- College Now Greater Cleveland
- Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging
- CHN Housing Partners
- Family Connections
- Goodwill Industries
- Greater Cleveland Food Bank
- The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
- Seeds of Literacy

## CONNECTING A COMMUNITY

Digital connectivity plays a major role in an individual's ability to succeed. An internet connection is necessary to access social service resources, health care portals, online coursework and job applications.

It's also important for human connection, especially amid a global pandemic that, at times, makes face-to-face interaction a challenge.

Just ask Gary Murphy, a resident at Scranton Castle – a Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority housing complex near MetroHealth's Main Campus. He's among 373 households in the Clark-Fulton neighborhood to receive subsidized internet through an innovative partnership between MetroHealth, AT&T, DigitalC and Dollar Bank.

"No one wants to feel alone in their lives," Murphy said about the importance of being digitally connected. "When you have the ability to reach out to others, that enables them to feel better about themselves."

**“When you have the ability to reach out to others, that enables them to feel better about themselves.”**

Margarita Hernandez, the manager for CMHA at Scranton Castle, agrees.

"The internet connections have improved the residents' lives here at Scranton Castle," she says. "Seniors can reach out to family and friends and not feel secluded. They can shop online and have groceries delivered to them. With time, I think more residents will feel comfortable using the internet and start utilizing the service even more."

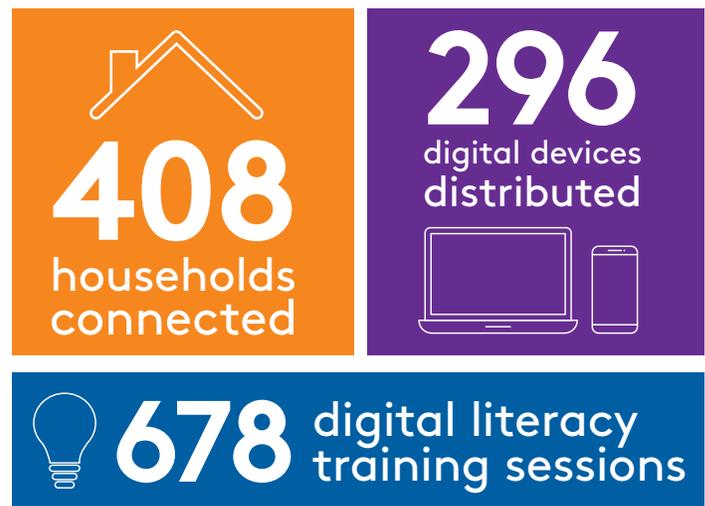
In 2019, MetroHealth President and CEO Dr. Akram Boutros made a bold commitment to address the digital divide in Clark-Fulton – well before the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the digital disparities in Greater Cleveland. Since then, with the support of many partners, MetroHealth's digital connectivity initiative has impacted more than 600 people in the Clark-Fulton neighborhood. Similar efforts are now underway in Cleveland's Buckeye and Old Brooklyn neighborhoods with PCs for People, another affordable broadband internet provider.

An internet connection, though, is only one piece of the equation. That's why the MetroHealth Institute for H.O.P.E.™ partnered with organizations like Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center (ASC3) and Cuyahoga Community College for hundreds of digital literacy training sessions. MetroHealth also worked with MCPc, Computers Assisting People and PCs for People to distribute almost 300 laptops and other digital devices to community members in need.



"An internet connection – and knowing how to use it – can open so many doors," says Marielee Santiago, Director, Transformative Knowledge & Education, at the Institute for H.O.P.E.™ "We want to ensure that everyone in Cleveland has access to these types of opportunities."

### BY THE NUMBERS





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