

Improving the Health of Our Communities: Access to Care



Catholic healthcare is expanding access to essential health services.

Catholic Healthcare in Action

Catholic healthcare works to ensure care is available, accessible and affordable for all, especially for those who experience poverty, are marginalized or are underserved. Through community benefit and other health initiatives, it addresses barriers to care and expands access beyond traditional clinical settings.

Across the country, Catholic healthcare support access through financial assistance policies, telehealth, community partnerships, care coordination, language services, transportation support and outreach programs. These efforts reflect a commitment to human dignity, the common good and healthier communities, so that all may flourish.

Why This Matters

Access to care helps people receive preventative services, manage chronic conditions and get treatment before health issues become emergencies. Yet many face barriers such as lack of insurance, transportation challenges, workforce shortages, language barriers and limited availability of services in rural and underserved communities.

These barriers disproportionately affect vulnerable populations and contribute to poorer health outcomes, higher costs, and growing disparities. Improving access to care is essential to building healthier communities and ensuring people receive the care they need when and where they need it.

By the Numbers: A National Snapshot on Access to Care

- Only 51% of Americans can access and afford quality healthcare ([Gallup](#), 2025).
- 1 in 10 people in the United States do not have health insurance ([Healthy People 2030](#)).
- 21.7% of adults delayed or skipped care due to at least one nonfinancial barrier (e.g., inability to get to an appointment, being too busy or provider issues) ([NCBI](#), 2022).
- The U.S. faces a projected shortage of up to 86,000 physicians by 2036 ([AAMC](#), 2024).

Stories of Impact

Articles from Catholic Health World featuring community health programs from across the ministry



[CommonSpirit sees care navigation networks gain momentum](#)

CommonSpirit is scaling community-based care navigation networks that connect patients to both medical and social services through local coordinators, with improved access and more coordinated support (2023).



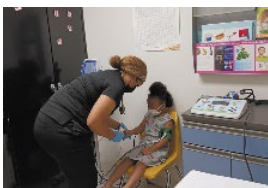
[Milwaukee's Ascension St. Joseph offers free child care so patients can get to appointments](#)

The program directly removes a major barrier to care for low-income families (2024).



[Holy Cross Health program helps low-income and minority women to access care for breast health](#)

Holy Cross Health removes barriers to care (i.e., cost, fear, and delayed diagnosis) through free screenings and navigation support (2025).



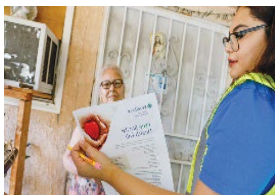
[In St. Louis, SSM Health partners with other providers to assess and address barriers](#)

The collaboration uses shared insight to address non-medical barriers and improve coordination for underserved communities (2025).



[CHRISTUS Health's ongoing investment in pediatric heart program in South Texas improves care access for kids](#)

Bringing advanced cardiac care closer to home for children, this program is improving access and outcomes for complex pediatric heart conditions in the region (2025).



[Providence pairs with health department in Los Angeles County to meet residents at their doors to assess needs](#)

Providence is going door-to-door with the LA County health department to identify residents' health and social needs where they live. This effort brings care outreach directly into communities to connect people to services they might otherwise miss (2024).

September 2026

A Mission to Care + A Commitment to the Community

From their beginning and continuing today, Catholic and other nonprofit healthcare organizations are responding to the unique needs of their communities, working to improve health and well-being for all. They do this through their primary charitable purpose of providing healthcare, community benefit and other activities and investments in health.

Learn more at chausa.org/communitybenefit

