



2026 Climate Resilience Plan



Background

Our climate is changing. Experts anticipate that by mid-century, central Pennsylvania will experience a high risk of increasing average temperatures, heat waves, heavy precipitation, and flooding. These risks will impact facilities, infrastructure, staff, patients, and our communities. This resilience plan outlines our approach to ensuring that we can provide continuous care to our most vulnerable populations under increasingly severe climate conditions.

WellSpan's sustainability program was established in 2021. We are committed to reducing our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 50% by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. We are also committed to developing a climate resilience plan that prioritizes support for communities expected to be most impacted by climate change. The World Health Organization defines climate-resilient health systems as those that are:

"...capable of anticipating, responding to, coping with, recovering from, and adapting to climate-related shocks and stresses, so as to bring about sustained improvements in population health, despite an unstable climate."

This climate resilience plan illustrates how our organization has already begun building resilience through our environmental initiatives in our facilities, infrastructure, and communities, as well as how we can expand on these efforts to prepare for the increased risks that a changing climate will bring.



About WellSpan Health

We are a nationally recognized, integrated health system serving central Pennsylvania and northern Maryland. WellSpan Health employs more than 23,000 team members and encompasses eight acute care hospitals (table 1), a physician practice network, specialty hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, satellite site facilities, and post-acute and retail services. We are committed to delivering exceptional and equitable care to all patients and communities in our regions.

Figure 1: Our mission, vision and values



Our sustainability goals are an extension of our commitment to exceptional care. We recognize that the healthcare industry and our daily operations has an impact the environment and the communities we serve. WellSpan is committed to upholding our responsibility to pursue sustainable best practices that protect the health of our communities and our planet.

Table 1: WellSpan acute care hospitals at-a-glance

Hospital	2025 Adjusted Patient Days (a)	No. Licensed Beds	County
York	341,798	593	York
Chambersburg	163,205	274	Franklin
Good Samaritan	117,281	163	Lebanon
Ephrata Community	93,559	141	Lancaster
Gettysburg	82,289	76	Adams
Surgery & Rehabilitation	64,794	73	York
Waynesboro	37,321	57	Franklin
Evangelical Community	80,317	132	Union
TOTAL	980,564	1,509	ALL

Notes: (a) Adjusted patient days is a measure of patient volume that accounts for both inpatient days and equivalent patient days for outpatient services.

About this document

Our climate and local environments can influence human health and health systems. As our climate patterns change, our health system facilities, patients, staff, and community are increasingly vulnerable to climate-related shocks, particularly as these events grow in severity and frequency. In a climate emergency, our hospitals must remain open to serve our communities. However, the burden of climate shocks is not shared equitably across our communities. Our plan focuses on the communities that will experience the most severe health impacts. It lays the groundwork for our organization to proactively limit our own contribution to climate change by driving down our carbon footprint, and strengthening the resilience of our facilities, infrastructure, and the communities we serve in the face of a changing climate. The goal of this plan is to strengthen our capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and manage climate-related emergencies, ensuring uninterrupted operations and delivering quality healthcare to the most vulnerable members of our communities.

WellSpan's Climate Resilience Plan relies on three separate but interconnected pillars: (1) environmental stewardship; (2) health care facility and infrastructure resilience; and (3) community health resilience. Our Climate Resilience Plan has been created with input from across WellSpan Health: Sustainability, Community Benefits, Facilities and Maintenance, Engineering, Emergency Management, Supply Chain, and clinician teams to ensure we capture how WellSpan currently responds to risks.

This plan is a living document which will be updated periodically to reflect changing climatic conditions, progress in reducing our carbon footprint, improvements to our facilities and infrastructure, emergency response protocols, and our efforts to support community needs. Addressing the needs of vulnerable populations in our community is critical to this plan. WellSpan plans to update this document every three years in alignment with the publication of our Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA).



Impacts of climate change

Pennsylvania’s infrastructure, economy, and public health are already feeling the effects of a changing climate. In the 2021 Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan, former Pennsylvania governor Tom Wolf noted that increasingly frequent heat waves, flooding, and other climate impacts are contributing to “public health stresses, evacuations and closings, flooded, buckled and washed-out roads and bridges, downed trees and power outages, large-scale cleanups, and destroyed homes, businesses and harvests in Pennsylvania.”

Heavy precipitation and inland flooding represent the greatest current climate-related risks in WellSpan’s regions. By mid-century, higher average temperatures and heat waves will also pose high risks for our facilities and populations (see Table 2, Figures 2a and b).



Table 2: Current and mid-century climate risk rating in Pennsylvania

Climate Hazard	Current Risk Rating	Mid-Century Risk Rating	Projected Impacts by Mid-Century
Heavy precipitation/flooding Percent increase	High	High	+9%
Higher temperatures - Average temperature increase	Medium	High	+6.7 F
Extreme heat - No. days >90°F by mid-century	Medium	High	+24 days

Source: 2024 Pennsylvania Climate Impacts Assessment

Impacts of climate change, continued

- Heavy precipitation and flooding.** Pennsylvania is expected to experience an increase in frequency, magnitude, and intensity of heavy rain events. In areas where our facilities are located, the number of days with heavy rain and flooding is projected to be greater than statewide averages. Flooding can impact building operations, make transportation to health care facilities more hazardous, longer, or impossible, and contribute to greater risks of allergic and respiratory illness due to dampness and mold.
- Higher average temperatures and heat waves.** Average temperatures in Pennsylvania are rising as are the number of extreme heat days (with temperatures that exceed 90° F). Central Pennsylvania will experience significantly more hot days than the state average. Heat waves can increase heat-related illness and death, particularly among children and the elderly, outdoor workers, and those without air conditioning or shade trees. It can exacerbate existing conditions, damage or reduce the effectiveness of certain medications, and is associated with an increase in violent crime. Extreme heat can also impact infrastructure, buckling roadways and straining the electrical distribution system.

Figure 2a: Heavy rain events will increase
Observed and projected annual days with “very heavy” precipitation.

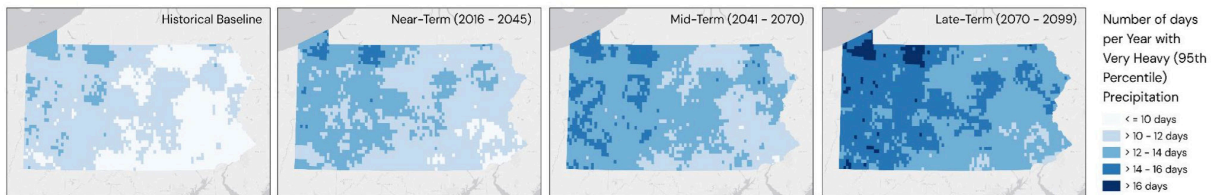
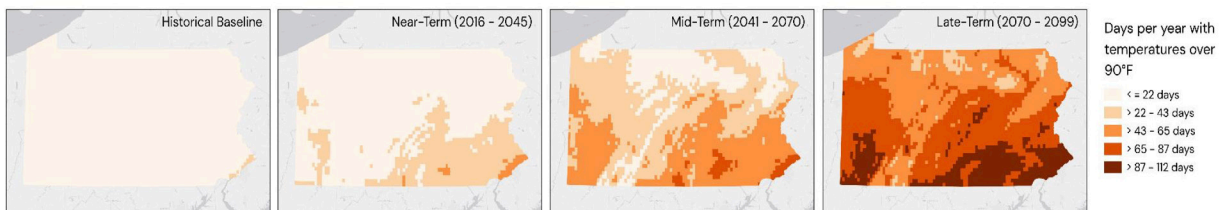


Figure 2b: Hot days will become more common
Observed and projected annual days with temperatures above 90 degrees F.



Source: 2024 Pennsylvania Climate Impacts Assessment



Impacts of climate change, continued



Higher temperatures and heavier precipitation caused by climate change magnify air pollution and vector-borne diseases. Extreme heat, higher temperatures, and wildfire smoke increase ground-level ozone and particulate pollution. WellSpan communities, on average, experience worse air pollution than the rest of the state, which can increase the prevalence of asthma and other respiratory conditions. These conditions make community members more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Higher average temperatures, increases in extreme heat, and increases in heavy precipitation contribute to expanding the range of vector-borne diseases, such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus.

The projected impacts of climate change on health provide important insights into how we can best prepare for climate emergencies, ensure that our facilities and infrastructure are resilient, and support resilience among staff, patients, and the broader community. The next three sections present an overview of what we have done or are currently doing to build a more climate-resilient health care system in each of the three pillars of our plan. It identifies next steps and considerations to improve our ability to provide quality health care to the most vulnerable in our community in the face of a climate emergency.

Environmental stewardship

A key element of our Climate Resilience Plan lies in our commitment to environmental stewardship. Recognizing the critical link between climate change and the health of our patients and communities, we are working to reduce our own contribution to climate change by reducing our carbon footprint. These actions not only improve patient health and wellbeing but also reduce the vulnerability of our facilities and supply chain to climate shocks, support our local economy, and improve community resilience.

WellSpan has committed to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. As a first step towards reaching these goals, we collected baseline measurements of our Scope 1 and 2 emissions in calendar year 2021 to understand our impact and opportunity for emissions reductions. We identified several opportunity areas:

Table 3: Carbon emissions reduction opportunities

Carbon Source	Emissions Reduction Opportunities
Energy	Reduce emissions by optimizing on-site energy efficiency, investing in and procuring carbon-free energy, and electrifying our infrastructure.
Buildings	Strive to meet green building standards for new construction or major renovations/additions, targeting LEED Gold certification.
Transportation	Promote telehealth to reduce patient vehicle use, electrify our vehicle fleet, and installing EV charging stations across the system.
Procurement	Increase re-usable and re-processable devices, increase sustainable and local food purchases, and prioritize low carbon committed vendors.
Waste	Reduce waste at the source by transitioning to reusables and reprocessable devices and maximize landfill waste diversion through innovative recycling programs.

Building a culture of sustainability will help ensure these initiatives are successfully implemented across all facilities and departments. Employee education, training, and engagement, as well as participating in healthcare sustainability forums, will contribute to a culture that integrates sustainability as part of our mission to “improve health through exceptional care for all, lifelong wellness, and healthy communities.”



Environmental stewardship, continued

WHAT ARE WE DOING

We are already making considerable progress in advancing sustainability, managed by governance structures that have been put in place to drive sustainability initiatives. These include:



- **Executive Sustainability Oversight Group.** This team includes Sustainability Department leaders, project partners, and the SVP of Corporate Shared Services.
- **Sustainable Procurement Team.** This team, overseen by Supply Chain leadership and comprised of sustainability and supply chain stakeholders, evaluates opportunities for sustainable sourcing across WellSpan.
- **Sustainable Energy Team.** This team looks for opportunities to optimize energy usage by prioritizing energy-conservation capital improvement projects, ensuring energy efficient design, implementing commissioning programs, and exploring carbon-free energy alternatives.
- **Greening the OR Team.** A multi-disciplinary task force was created to drive greenhouse gas emission reduction initiatives specific to the OR through projects involving medical device reprocessing, anesthetic gas, recycling, and other source reduction efforts.
- **Sustainable Food & Nutrition Team.** Led by Food & Nutrition leadership and facility level directors, this group evaluates opportunities for sustainable and local food purchasing options and establishes waste reduction programs in our cafeterias.

Environmental stewardship, continued



WHAT ARE WE DOING

WellSpan has also implemented several sustainability initiatives to reduce energy use, carbon emissions and waste:

- **Reducing Building Energy Use.** We have initiated several projects in our existing facilities that reduce our baseline load on the electric grid, contributing to greater resilience in climate-related weather events that impact electricity distribution. We have additionally incorporated more stringent design and construction standards to ensure efficient facilities with new construction. Examples include seeking LEED Gold certification for the York Hospital expansion project and retro-commissioning to increase operational efficiency at the Gettysburg Hospital. We are in the process of building an energy management dashboard with Constellation Energy to monitor electric/natural gas/fuel oil/water usage and greenhouse gas emissions in real time.
- **Reducing Transportation Energy Use.** We are reducing transportation-related carbon emissions by replacing conventional vehicles with hybrid electric vehicles, when possible, and adding electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the system for community residents.
- **Reducing Plastic Waste.** We are improving and expanding plastics recycling by partnering with a CRDC Global, based in York, in an innovative pilot program to increase the transparency and quantity of our plastics recycling.
- **Greening the OR.** We have undertaken initiatives in the OR to reduce waste and emissions, including eliminating Desflurane system-wide in 2024, an anesthetic gas with a high global warming potential. We are also striving to increase the number of reprocessed medical devices that we purchase and collect.

Environmental stewardship, continued

- **Investing in Local and Sustainable Food.** In 2021, we signed the Good Food, Healthy Hospitals initiative, a project of the Hospital and Health System Association of Pennsylvania (HAP), which strives to improve community health through improved nutrition. We are increasing our purchases of locally sourced food, tracking our sustainable food purchases, and using source reduction methods to reduce food waste.
- **Community Partnerships for Sustainability.** WellSpan is partnering with York College to have horticulture students, starting in spring of 2026, participate in the design of a green roof to be included in the York Hospital expansion project design. This will improve energy efficiency, reduce stormwater runoff, and provide patients and visitors with recreational green space. Additionally, WellSpan partnered with community stakeholders for a tree planting event on Earth Day 2024 (figure 3).



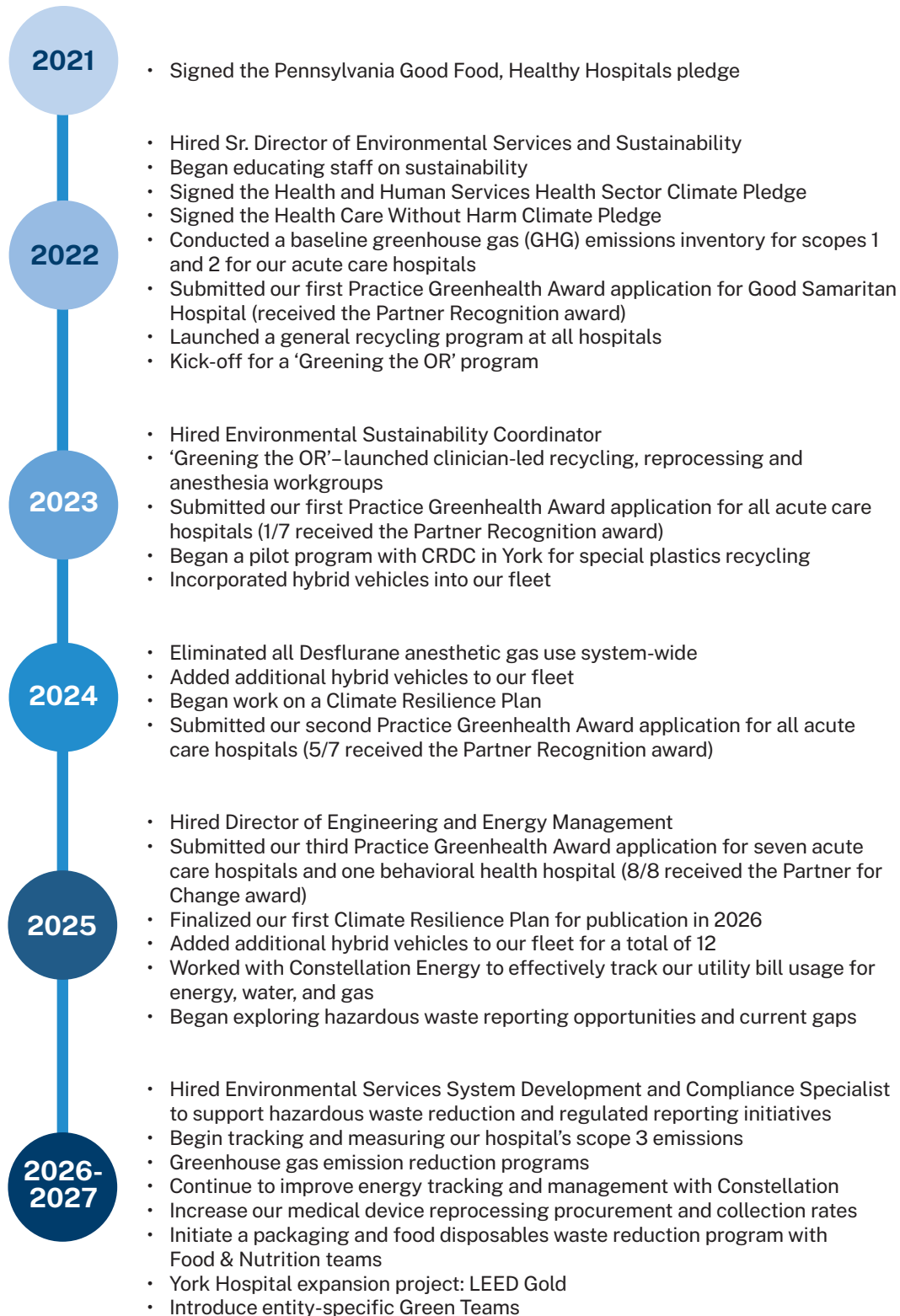
Figure 3. For Earth Day 2024, WellSpan partnered with the Garden Club of York, the Lebanon County Clean Water Alliance, and a local Boy Scout Troop in Chambersburg to plant trees in our communities.

Collectively, these initiatives support patient health by reducing our environmental footprint and building a more resilient, and reliable, local supply chain which will help WellSpan keep our doors open in a climate-related emergency.

Environmental stewardship, continued

The timeline below, *Figure 4*, highlights our major sustainability initiatives since 2021.

Figure 4: WellSpan Health's Sustainability Timeline



Environmental stewardship, continued

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

We are already making strides to understand and reduce the environmental impact of our operations, but our work is only just beginning.

- **Create A Sustainability Plan:** Our Sustainability Plan will serve as a roadmap for how we will achieve our 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. It will identify key focus areas for emission reductions, establish reduction goals/interim targets, and identify specific emission reduction measures, with a timeline and plan for implementation. It will also evaluate and recommend policies and standards that support emission reductions, in areas such as green building, energy, transportation, and sustainable purchasing.
- **Develop Strategic Energy Management Plan:** Our strategic Energy Management Plan will support the Sustainability Plan, outlining specific procurement strategies, energy optimization initiatives, electrification projects, and carbon-free energy projects needed to achieve emission reduction goals outlined in the Sustainability Plan.
- **Expand Emissions Accounting and Reporting:** To ensure we are on track for our emission reduction goals, we plan to measure our Scope 1 (direct emissions) and Scope 2 (purchased energy) carbon footprint for our acute care hospitals every year. We have plans to benchmark our Scope 3 (indirect emissions) impact to better understand and mitigate the impact of our hospital’s environmental footprint. Scope 3 upstream emissions accounting and reporting will be done in phases.

		Benchmark measured
Scope 1	Direct emissions from operations	CY2021
Scope 2	Indirect emissions from purchased energy	CY2021
Scope 3 - Phase 1	Category 1: purchased goods & services Category 2: capital goods Category 3: fuel & energy related activities	FY27 <i>(July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027)</i>
Scope 3 - Phase 2	Category 5: waste generated in operations Category 6: business travel Category 7: employee commuting	FY28 <i>(July 1, 2027 - June 30, 2028)</i>
Scope 3 - Phase 3	Category 4: upstream transportation & distribution	FY29 <i>(July 1, 2028 - June 30, 2029)</i>

- **Build on Current Work:** We will continue to build upon existing initiatives and assess new opportunities to further reduce emissions and waste. Near-term plans include identifying opportunities for new EV chargers, standardizing and streamlining our system-wide recycling program, increasing the number of reprocessed medical devices that we purchase throughout WellSpan’s system, and increasing the amount of waste diverted from landfills.

Facility and infrastructure resilience



Well-maintained facilities are central to our ability to provide high-quality care to patients. In the event of a climate emergency, however, our facilities, their supporting infrastructure, and the supply chain may face significant strain. Below, we outline current initiatives to enhance the resilience of our facilities, including ongoing building and equipment maintenance, supply chain risk management, and emergency planning.

WHAT ARE WE DOING

Building Operations and Efficiency. Regular maintenance is critical to ensuring that equipment operates efficiently, and hospital operations run smoothly. Our staff routinely conducts maintenance checks, documenting results and implementing improvements as needed. When equipment requires replacement or repair we prioritize energy and water conservation measures by installing more efficient equipment, rather than replacing in-kind, that not only reduces our environmental impact but also enhances resilience. Energy conservation measures such as automated temperature controls enhancements and replacing existing lamps with LEDs, reduce our baseload energy consumption and save operational expense. At Gettysburg Hospital, we initiated a retro-commissioning project to ensure building systems are operating as intended, which has reduced ~15% of HVAC system energy use. We also performed a network wide assessment of retro commissioning opportunities, identifying 10 to 20 percent savings at each of our major facilities. We plan to implement these changes in the coming years. For the York Hospital expansion project, we are implementing best practices in green building design, energy and water use, and waste reduction. These initiatives reduce our carbon footprint and reduce demand on the local utility grid, which in turn decreases the likelihood of outages during extreme weather events. Reducing demand also makes our system less vulnerable to disruptions.

Facility and infrastructure resilience, continued...



Emergency Planning. In a climate emergency, effective emergency management is essential to maintaining operations and ensuring a quick recovery from disruptions to facilities and equipment. It is critical to note that Emergency Management life cycle focuses on four aspects: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery as a comprehensive and holistic approach to manifold emergencies and disasters. Emergency management teams at each of our hospitals perform annual Hazard Vulnerability Analyses (HVAs) to assess risks and preparedness for a wide range of natural and human-caused disasters. These assessments inform WellSpan’s response strategy, which is guided by both a system-level Emergency Management Plan (EMP) and individual hospital Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs). Collectively, these plans outline our approach to maintaining and/or restoring operations in the event of disasters that:

1. Significantly disrupt the environment of care (e.g., damage to infrastructure)
2. Significantly disrupt care, treatment, and services (e.g., loss of power)
3. Result in sudden, increased demand for services (e.g., pandemic)

System-wide EMP. WellSpan Health adopts and employs the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) “Whole Community” approach to Emergency Management. In principle, Emergency Management is multi-disciplinary, often involving multiple agencies and jurisdictions in climate change mitigation relative to people, policies, processes, and procedures. The system-level plan outlines coordination and joint planning functions with the Pennsylvania Regional Healthcare Coalition, Pennsylvania Department of Health, and Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), as needed, regarding safe road travel, supplies, and communication. It also provides a foundational standard for consistency across the system while supplementing local preparedness and resiliency.

Facility and infrastructure resilience, continued...

Supporting Staff Resilience

During a disaster, staff are likely to experience long hours, high levels of stress, and low levels of self-care. The system-wide EMP outlines a set of support services, including housing, transportation, family support, and incident stress debriefing, made available to staff, as appropriate, in the event of an emergency.

Facility-level EOPs. The HVAs, delineated above, informs the formation and content of the EOPs. These plans define the authority, responsibility, and procedures to be followed by staff, volunteers, and community organizations in response to emergency events. Each facility EOP addresses the management of six critical functions: (1) Communications; (2) Resources and assets; (3) Safety and security; (4) Staffing responsibilities; (5) Utilities; and (6) Patient clinical/support activities. To determine if a facility can successfully support medical care, EOPs specify the deployment of teams to assess damage to the facility structure, equipment, elevators, water supply, waste and communication systems as well as evaluate air and water quality. Plans are in place to engage back-up generators or alternative power sources, fuel reserves, alternative water sources, excess medical gases, and waste disposal options to maintain patient care.

Supply Chain. Building resilience into our supply chain is crucial, given potential disruptions in the flow of critical medical supplies, food, and water, from extreme weather, flooding, or other climate shocks. Each hospital's EOP includes processes for tracking supplies, addressing shortages, and ensuring resupply by working with trusted agencies and vendors. Following the pandemic, WellSpan hired a supply chain risk manager to monitor supplier risks and recommend mitigation strategies. These measures, combined with increased supplier redundancy and local sourcing, help bolster resilience and mitigate risks.

Public Infrastructure. Each WellSpan hospital manages its own infrastructure but is connected to and operates within local and regional systems, such as telecommunications, utilities, and roadways. Redundancy plays a vital role in minimizing the impact of disruptions on critical infrastructure, and therefore our ability to provide quality patient care. All but one of our hospitals are equipped with backup generators to maintain operations during power outages. We also have agreements with vendors to provide other services in the event of disruptions, ranging from potable water to medical gases and waste disposal. At some of our locations, we have arranged for non-potable water tankers to be connected to buildings for operational uses, such as toilet flushing, to conserve potable water.

Partnerships. Our strong partnerships with local emergency responders, law enforcement, government agencies, utility representatives, and medical supply vendors are vital to our climate resilience. As an active member of the Pennsylvania Healthcare Coalition, we collaborate with other healthcare organizations to coordinate emergency response and recovery efforts, participating in joint planning exercises, training, and response reporting. We maintain clear communications with utility companies to help us stay informed about outages and power restoration. We have fostered relationships with local and regional governments to minimize the impacts on patients and staff of disruptions to roadways, water, or other infrastructure.

Facility and infrastructure resilience, continued...

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

As climate change accelerates, large-scale disaster events will require enhanced coordination among our hospitals, other Pennsylvania hospitals and health systems, and local, regional, and state emergency planners. Proactive steps that we can take to address climate-related risks and improve the resilience of our facilities and infrastructure include the following:



- **Develop Green Building Standards.** High-performance Green Building Standards that are based on industry certification frameworks, such as LEED and ENERGY STAR, can provide a comprehensive process for implementing sustainable and resilient features into all new construction and renovation or addition projects. Incorporating such standard practices into project design is an assurance that WellSpan's new buildings consistently perform to optimal sustainability and resilience criterion.
- **Develop Sustainable Purchasing Policy.** Sustainable purchasing policies can drive reductions in carbon emissions and waste, often saving money over the long run. A sustainable purchasing policy may include requirements that prioritize local and diverse suppliers, suppliers with lower process carbon emissions, and may favor products that can be reused, reprocessed or are more resource efficient.
- **Integrate Climate Risks.** Risk assessments and planning across WellSpan need to be considered through a climate lens. Our staff can ensure that climate risks –extreme heat, flooding, air pollution, vector-borne disease, etc. –are included in the HVA process and that the same set of potential hazards are applied across all WellSpan facilities' HVAs. Supplier risk is assessed based on commitment to climate mitigation and exposure to future climate risks. Additionally, supply redundancies should be established in collaboration with suppliers.
- **Standardize EOPs.** While our emergency plans are robust, we are working to standardize them across all facilities. In their current state, site-specific EOPs vary considerably and present different strengths and opportunities. Standardization will improve efficiency, coordination, and consistency in our emergency response. A new Director of Emergency Management and Operations will oversee this effort, ensuring that best practices are shared across all hospitals.
- **Strengthen Partnerships.** Close collaboration between emergency management and community benefits teams allows us to better understand how vulnerable populations may be disproportionately impacted by climate-related events and adjust our response strategies accordingly. We plan to identify additional opportunities to work with local authorities to strengthen communication, coordination, and climate resilience. One example is working with local governments to ensure that they have adequate capacity in cooling centers to alleviate some of the patient surge during weather extremes.

Community health resilience



Central to WellSpan’s climate resilience planning is supporting the communities most impacted by environmental changes. Climate-related impacts are not, and will not, be experienced equally in the communities we serve. More severe impacts will be felt by those that are hardest hit by economic inequities, populations more likely to struggle to meet rising energy, food, medication, and other costs.



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We understand good health goes beyond the care you receive at the doctor’s office. It’s why we focus on building partnerships and investing in programs to address the broader social and economic factors influencing health.

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- Roxanna Gapstur, President & CEO, WellSpan Health

Community health resilience, continued...

Every three years, we conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment, which identifies community health needs based on the prevalence of health risks, health disparities, and disabling conditions. As part of our CHNA, we identify the percentage of our population living in poverty, one indicator of communities likely to experience greater impacts from climate change. In addition, “disadvantaged” communities across the United States that share a higher burden of climate change impacts were accessed from a previously available federal Environmental Justice Screening Tool. Rates of poverty and disadvantaged population in counties we serve are listed in Table 4 below. In Lebanon County, for example, where Good Samaritan Hospital is located, far more of the population is considered disadvantaged than in other counties where our acute hospitals are located. As WellSpan builds its community health resiliency efforts, this data provides useful information on where we might focus our efforts.

Table 4: Indicators of climate change burden on county populations

Hospital	County	Percentage of Population in Poverty (a)	Percent Disadvantaged Population (b)
Good Samaritan	Lebanon	7.5%	20.8%
Ephrata Community	Lancaster	8.4%	13.1%
York	York	8.4%	11.2%
WSRH	York	8.4%	11.2%
Chambersburg	Franklin	7.2%	7.0%
Waynesboro	Franklin	7.2%	7.0%
Gettysburg	Adams	9.9%	0.0%

Notes:

(a) Data on poverty rates in each county is from WellSpan’s 2025 CHNA.

(b) Communities are considered disadvantaged if they meet the census track thresholds for at least three of the following categories of burden: climate change; energy; health; housing; legacy pollution; transportation; water and wastewater; workforce development. The site from which these data were accessed in 2024, the White House Council on Environmental Quality’s Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, has since been removed from government websites.

(c) WellSpan Evangelical Community Hospital is not included in this table. Data for this location is not yet available as they merged with WellSpan in July 2024. They will be included in future versions of this plan.

The most recent CHNA notes worse health outcomes in our communities with poorer air quality. The interdependence of community health and environmental health makes it imperative that we manage our own natural resource use in ways that protect our patients and communities. The CHNA also highlights social determinants of health that can flag patients and community members more at risk for extreme heat, food and housing insecurity, mobility challenges, and other factors that may impact community resilience.

Community health resilience, continued...

WHAT WE ARE DOING

The findings from our CHNA have important implications for how we address community needs and partner with external stakeholders to bolster resilience. We are proud to have received the Health Equity Accreditation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance, which recognizes our role as a leader in the region in addressing health equity. Our initiatives to increase health equity, health access and preventative health are outlined below:

- **Increasing Health Equity.** Our online resource, HereToHelpAll.org, available to clinicians and their patients, is built into our electronic health record (EHR) system. It provides a closed-loop referral system where providers refer patients from the EHR, and the organization responds when they complete the referral.
- **Supporting Preventative Care.** Patients that receive preventative care show better health outcomes, which make them less likely to suffer from the conditions that compound sensitivity to a changing climate. Our current initiatives to provide quality preventative care include increasing screening rates for breast and colon cancer and screening for social drivers of health (SDOH) during the check in process.
- **Increasing Access to Care.** We have increased telehealth visits and home health visits, opened a restorative pain clinic, and provided language assistance to help remove barriers to accessing quality health care.
- **Supporting Positive Mental Health.** Not only are mental health patients among the populations that are more vulnerable to climate conditions, but heat is also shown to increase levels of anxiety and violence. Our current initiatives to improve community mental health include community grants and collaborations with county health coalitions to promote mental well-being, helping to integrate mental health education into community activities, using social media for outreach, spreading mental wellbeing messaging with local communities, implementing mobile crisis care in York and Adams counties, and providing access to online mental health support to our patients.
- **Housing and Food Insecurity.** Rising energy, housing, and food costs are likely to leave more patients without housing and food, making them less able to recover from climate event impacts. We work to reduce housing and food insecurity through a variety of programs by supporting projects aimed at addressing food and housing insecurities across our service area with funding and staffing resources.



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In 2024, WellSpan contributed \$346 million in community benefit to support Central Pennsylvanians in living their healthiest lives.

- Roxanna Gapstur, President & CEO, WellSpan Health

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Community health resilience, continued...

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

Although we are working diligently to assess and address community health needs, there are several opportunities to build on current successes by better understanding the impact climate change has on our local communities and helping to mitigate those impacts. Other projects currently being implemented or in the planning phases include the following:



- **Identify Vulnerable Patients.** We plan to extend our identification of patients that are vulnerable to extreme heat, storms, and flooding due to age, health conditions, occupation, environmental exposure, and income. Clinical champions will be central to this process.
- **Build on Health Equity Work.** Our planned work to use electric drones will reduce GHG emissions, make it easier for patients to track medications and improve medication access for those with mobility challenges. We are also beginning a research project to better understand the relationships between environmental and other social determinants of health and longevity, as well as expanding lead testing in children and providing resources to families with lead paint in their homes.
- **Support Our Community through Grants.** We will continue to provide grants that support access to health care, mental well-being, children's health, and those with housing or food insecurities.



Conclusion

The impacts of climate change are already being felt worldwide, with the communities shouldering the greatest economic burdens least able to prepare for and respond to climate disasters. The communities in which our healthcare facilities are located are no exception. As a health system with a mission of working to improve health through exceptional care for all, we must prepare our facilities and our communities to the greatest extent possible. We have made strides to prepare for unforeseen events. Some key next steps that will help us build on our current work include:



- **Environmental Stewardship.** Develop a strategic sustainability plan that sets goals and timelines for our stewardship programming initiatives. Establish interim targets for GHG emission reductions and implement initiatives to reach targets. Plan for energy and transportation demand reductions. Review opportunities for policies to address GHG emission reductions.
- **Facilities and Infrastructure.** Identify risks to facilities and equipment resulting from severe weather, including the likelihood and magnitude of each risk's impact. Review and update current response and execution plans to avoid and reduce climate-related risks. Incorporate a climate resilience lens into current emergency management efforts. Build on current vendor risk assessments to ensure that climate risks are reflected in the risk scores for suppliers. Strengthen relationships and build supply chain redundancies with local and regional suppliers.
- **Community Benefits.** Build on current community benefit initiatives by expanding patient vulnerability screenings to include climate risks and providing tools and information that prepare clinicians to address conditions exacerbated by climate change (e.g., respiratory distress). Engage internal clinical champions to advise on best communicative and educational pathways.

This plan is but one step in our journey to becoming a climate-resilient health system. As we take this plan forward, we will further develop a team with representatives from Sustainability, Facilities and Planning, Emergency Management, Supply Chain and Clinical Departments to advise on ongoing comprehensive climate resilience planning and implementation. It will be updated every three years to coincide with the Community Health Needs Assessment, providing insight into how we can most equitably serve our communities as needs change and vulnerabilities shift. As we prepare to provide excellent healthcare even in the event of a climate emergency, we are ensuring that we live out our vision to reimagine healthcare.

