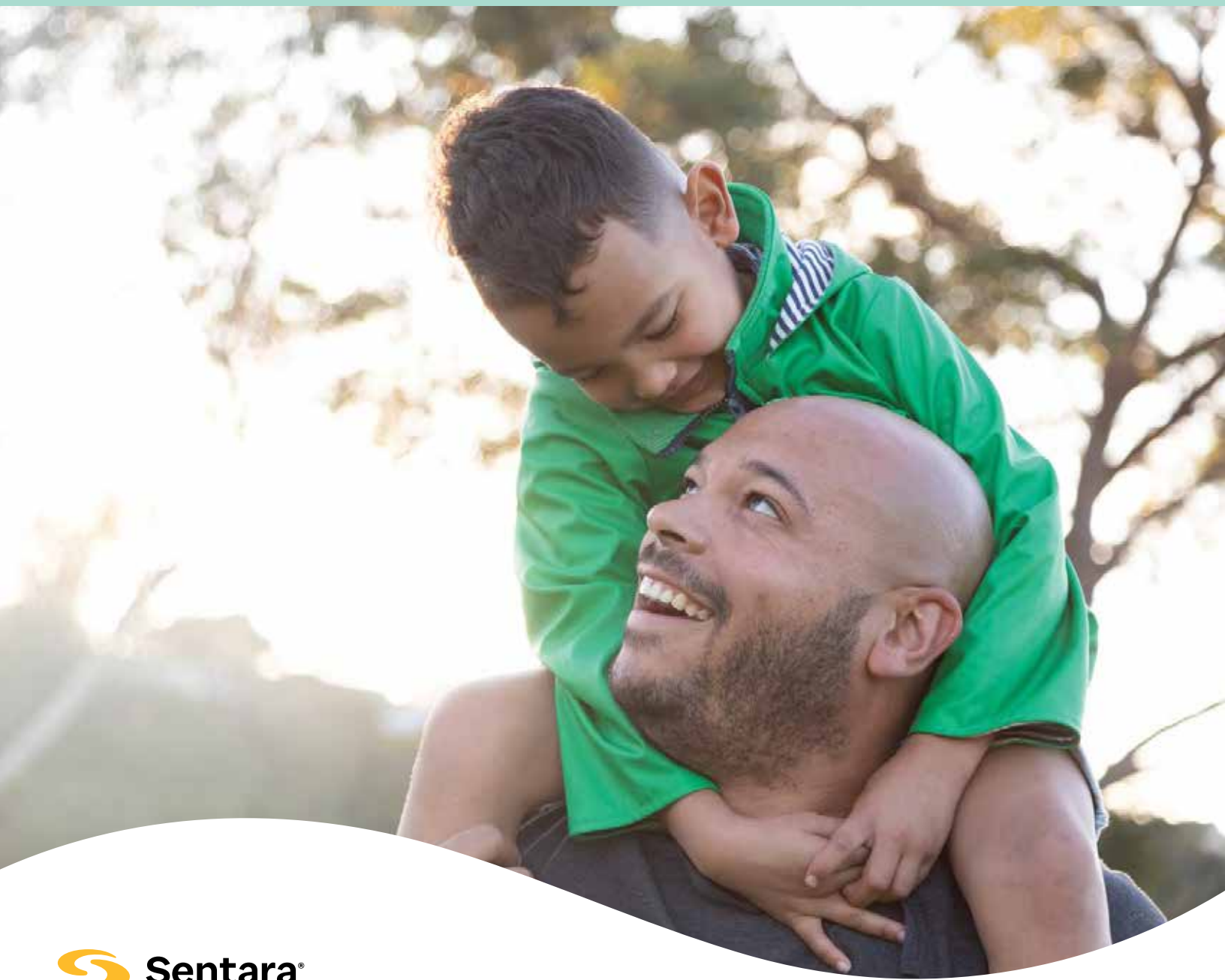


Building healthier communities

Advancing care, resources, and well-being for healthier communities



Welcome



At Sentara, our commitment to the health and well-being of the individuals we serve is our north star. Whether we are providing direct care to patients in our clinical settings or navigating benefits details with health plan members, our team works to ensure that those we serve

experience simple, seamless, and personalized care that is easier to access than ever before.

Within our communities, we partner with dedicated allies to drive greater access to the health and community resources we all need to thrive. Our investments reflect Sentara's enduring pledge to extend our reach beyond our facilities and uniquely address challenges affecting the ability of our fellow community members to live their fullest, healthiest lives.

In the following pages, we will share stories demonstrating Sentara's joint commitment to developing community-informed housing, access to care, food security, and behavioral health solutions. We will share how we nurture future healthcare leaders and support grassroots organizations and researchers working to address health disparities.

I invite you to immerse yourself in these inspiring stories of shared community successes and discover how Sentara continues to fulfill our commitment to our mission: We improve health every day.

Dennis Matheis
President & CEO
Sentara Health

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We are committed to increasing **access to care**, **mobilizing community resources**, and **driving meaningful impact**. Through investments and partnerships, we collaborate with partners to enhance behavioral health services, workforce development, community development, and nutrition security.

These stories of transformation and resilience showcase the co-creation of communities where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

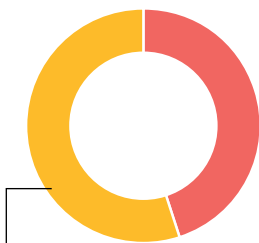
The growing challenge



Sentara's nearly \$3 million Behavioral Health Innovation Fund helps meet current and future needs.

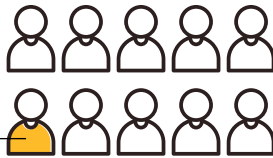
Whether viewed through the lens of Sentara's own Community Health Needs Assessments or nationwide studies, our communities continue to grapple with mental and behavioral health challenges on an unprecedented scale.

For example, Mental Health America's most recent "State of Mental Health in America" report found that:



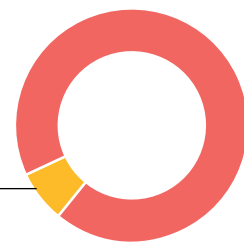
55%

of adults in the U.S. with mental illness (more than 28 million individuals) receive no treatment.



1 in every 10

young people is experiencing depression that severely limits their ability to function at school or work, at home, with family, or in their social life.



More than 15%

of adults (and more than 6% of youth) experienced substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year – and of those adults with SUD, 93% did not receive any form of treatment.

Sentara is strengthening its focus on the behavioral health crisis in response to the increasingly urgent demand for services and the lack of access in many communities. These disparities require decisive action, and Sentara has committed to investing in partnerships aimed at identifying and implementing sustainable and effective solutions tailored to the needs of both patients and health plan members. Sentara has taken a leadership role in addressing the crisis by establishing the Sentara Behavioral Health Innovation Fund. This nearly \$3 million initiative fosters collaboration among healthcare providers, nonprofits, government agencies, and community organizations to develop innovative care delivery models that address stigma and other barriers to care.



Learn more about how we're aiding behavioral health organizations within our communities.



Sentara Behavioral Health Innovation Fund in action

Our partnerships support training and capacity-building strategies to ensure more individuals have access to qualified providers, innovative and effective models of care, and holistic support in times of crisis.

Workhouse Arts Foundation

Lorton, Virginia

Through its Workhouse Military in the Arts Initiative, Workhouse Arts Foundation provides space for active-duty service members, veterans, and their families to engage in art psychotherapy; therapeutic artmaking; performance and culinary art; and multidisciplinary cultural experiences designed to support healing.

Ketchmore Kids, Inc.

Newport News, Virginia

Ketchmore Kids' programs seamlessly blend arts and culture to captivate and inspire young minds, providing them the skills to avoid drugs, gangs, and negative law enforcement interactions.

The Women's Initiative

Charlottesville, Virginia

The Women's Initiative works to destigmatize mental health treatment and improve outreach to marginalized populations, particularly within the region's Hispanic and Latino communities.

A space for care, connection, and support

With its new location, the Birth Sisters of Charlottesville expands support for women of color and takes aim at maternal health disparities.

“I always wanted to help young mothers,” says Charlottesville resident Kamil Chambers. “I just didn’t know how I wanted to help them.”

In fact, she says, that knowledge didn’t become clear until her second pregnancy, when she was introduced to the Birth Sisters of Charlottesville as a potential resource in helping her achieve a delivery as natural and free of medical intervention as possible.

What she found at the women of color doula collective was the community and guidance she wished she’d had during her first pregnancy at age 19. Now, Chambers has become part of that community as a trained doula and Birth Sister.

That empowerment is at the heart of the Birth Sisters’ mission and array of pre-, peri-, and post-natal services — all of which take direct aim at the root causes of maternal health disparities and inequities for women of color in Charlottesville and the surrounding region.

Now that community has a central place where they can access the care and services Birth Sisters provide. In January 2023, thanks in part to Sentara’s support, the Birth Sisters officially opened the doors of its new permanent location off Preston Avenue in Charlottesville — a space that allows not only direct services, but also doula training, workshops, support groups, and community events.

“I’m here to help all women,” Chambers says, “but I’m particularly focused on young moms because I know firsthand what that experience is like. I can use what I went through as testimony and empower them to make decisions.”

**Learn more about
this partnership.**





Supporting the emotional journey

According to the National Institutes of Health, the most common complications associated with childbirth fall under the umbrella of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMAD). Through our partners, we help ensure more women and their families have access to resources to help them navigate the emotional, not just the physical, journey of welcoming a child into the world.

Postpartum Support Virginia

Arlington, Virginia

Our partnership with Postpartum Support Virginia provides greater access to perinatal mental and behavioral health services and increases awareness of PMADs.

The Up Center

Norfolk, Virginia

Our partnership with The Up Center has helped the organization expand its perinatal mental health counseling services for mothers and families in the Hampton Roads region.

The Virginia Department of Health estimates that

2x

Black women in Virginia are more than twice as likely as white women to die from a pregnancy-related cause

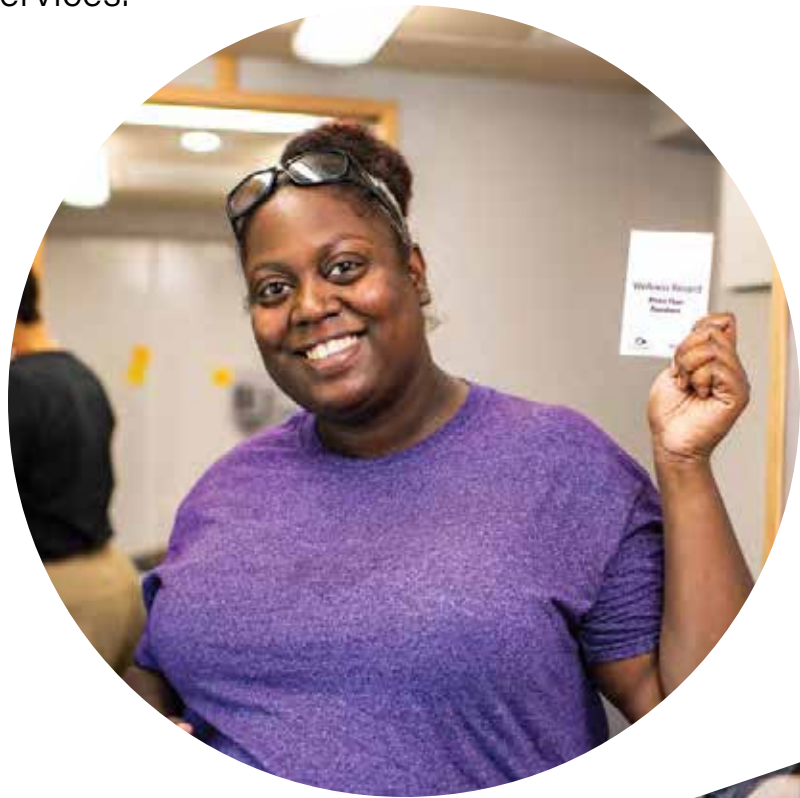
— a number that jumps to three times as likely nationwide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The National Institutes of Health points to numerous studies conducted over the past decade that suggest access to doula care correlates to reduced medical interventions like cesarean sections, lower rates of premature deliveries, and decreased maternal anxiety and depression.

Community cornerstones

Sentara Community Care's continued expansion provides more equitable access points to care and services.

Since its inception in August 2022, Sentara Community Care has embarked on a transformative journey to address healthcare disparities and enhance access to essential services for underserved communities across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Through a multifaceted approach encompassing community care centers, mobile care vehicles, school-based healthcare centers, and strategic partnerships, Sentara has made significant strides in bringing hope and healing closer to home.



Enhancing access to health

Building on this momentum, in 2024, Sentara anticipates expanding our reach with the addition of two new care centers and three mobile vehicles. Our goal is to extend services to more than 30 communities monthly, marking a significant step toward realizing a future in which comprehensive health services are universally accessible. Sentara Community Care supplements its direct care services with health education programs tailored to community needs, promoting lifelong wellness and disease prevention, such as nutrition and healthy eating workshops, mental health support classes, and chronic disease management support.

School supports

In 2023, Sentara Community Care introduced a groundbreaking model of care by partnering with Harrisonburg City Public Schools, in Virginia, to establish its first school-based healthcare center. This initiative not only provides vital healthcare services but also fosters a culture of health and well-being among students.

Prescription program

Recognizing the financial barriers many individuals face in accessing essential medications, Sentara established strategic partnerships to address this critical issue. Through collaborations with NOVA ScriptsCentral in Northern Virginia and Peoples Pharmacy Store in Norfolk, Virginia, Sentara is facilitating access to prescription drugs for patients in need, particularly for those not covered by insurance. This initiative underscores Sentara's commitment to reducing health inequities and ensuring that all individuals and families can affordably access the care they require.

4,000+

Virginians served through
community care centers,
mobile care vehicles,
and community
health events



The future of healthcare

Sentara's scholarship program supports the next generation of healthcare workers.

A 2021 study by Mercer, the global professional services firm, estimates that the American healthcare system will face a workforce shortfall of 3.2 million healthcare professionals by 2026. While higher education and training programs remain a key component to addressing this shortfall, many individuals with a passion for healthcare, particularly those in marginalized communities, are too often unable to pursue these opportunities due to financial considerations.

In its first year, the Sentara Scholars program helped more than 7,000 students across Virginia and North Carolina overcome financial barriers — whether through tuition assistance or by providing emergency funds to cover unexpected expenses like vehicle repairs or textbook costs.

The result? A workforce bolstered with better-equipped professionals ready to care for and support communities throughout Virginia and Northeast North Carolina through a range of healthcare and healthcare-related fields.

2022-23 Sentara Scholars partners

ACCESS College Foundation

Centura College

College of the Albemarle Foundation

Eastern Mennonite University

Elizabeth City State University

George Mason University
Foundation, Inc.

Hampton Roads Community
Foundation

James Madison University

Medical College of
Virginia Foundation

Norfolk State University
Foundation

Old Dominion University
Educational Foundation

Sentara College of Health Sciences

Virginia Foundation for Community
College Education

Virginia Foundation for
Independent Colleges

Virginia Ready Initiative
(VA Ready)

Virginia State University

Virginia Union University

Virginia Wesleyan University

Western Governors University



**Learn more about
Sentara Scholars.**

What Sentara's support means to our students



Jennifer Sierra, College of Public Health, George Mason University

"The Sentara Cares scholarship has lightened my financial burden and allowed me to pursue my dream of becoming a nurse... it has opened doors for me and provided me with the means to embark on this transformative journey."



Jacob Davidson, College of Public Health, George Mason University

"The Sentara Cares scholarship may not be able to change the entire world through their efforts, but thankfully, they have changed mine."



Bruno Motutu, School of Science, Aviation, Health, and Technology, Elizabeth City State University

"Getting the Sentara scholarship was a lifesaver. It wasn't just about the money; it was the vote of confidence from the donors. It made me more determined."



Lacei Banks, School of Science, Aviation, Health, and Technology, Elizabeth City State University

"Having the Sentara scholarship while working towards my career has been very helpful. It's helping me expand my knowledge and learn about the things that I want to pursue in the future to be able to work towards my master's."



Breanna Burke, Leavitt School of Health, Western Governors University

"Deciding to go back to school to continue my education while having kids put a lot of stress on my family because we were trying to figure out financing. The Sentara scholarship has eased that burden and allowed me to focus more on my classes and our family's schedule for the next couple of years."



Kasey Matta, Leavitt School of Health, Western Governors University

"I am a full-time worker and active mom, so affordability was a major stumbling block for me at one time. I can now let my guard down and sigh with relief, knowing my school finances are covered!"

New heights

Sentara's founding investment in LISC Hampton Roads significantly enhances affordable housing access, community support, and economic empowerment for underrepresented communities.



In Norfolk's vibrant St. Paul's district in Virginia, Market Heights embodies the impact both Sentara and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) envisioned in 2019 when Sentara's \$10 million investment helped to establish LISC's presence in Hampton Roads.

Market Heights is more than a "typical" housing development. The community reflects a commitment not only to affordability but also accessibility with 17 specially designed apartments compliant with accessibility standards and 80 units crafted under the Universal Design principle.

"Every individual has a fundamental right to a sanctuary they can call home, equipped with the amenities that nurture their well-being and growth," says Jay Grant, executive director of LISC Hampton Roads. "That's why we are committed to ensuring residents of Market Heights have access to essential amenities such as healthy food, fitness facilities and wellness programs, empowering them to lead fulfilling lives."

To honor that commitment, LISC leveraged Sentara's investment to partner with Hope House Foundation,

providing a \$100,000 grant to the community nonprofit in 2023 to bring a variety of programs and services to Market Heights residents.

These programs include the Foodbank Mobile Market, where more than 65 households have been able to shop for fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, and other home essentials in the past year. In addition, residents have access to fitness equipment and instruction, and will soon have access to a telehealth booth called "Zenbooth" starting in 2024.

Grant says he hopes Market Heights can serve not just as a model of affordable housing but as a testament to what can be achieved when anchor institutions collaborate with community developers to invest in the health and happiness of our communities.



Learn more about how we're aiding housing organizations within our communities.

Raising resilience

Sentara, LISC Hampton Roads and RISE Resilience are leading the Community Resilience Innovation Challenge, a pioneering program designed to strengthen and empower Hampton Roads' most vulnerable communities. This initiative harnesses community and partner expertise to pinpoint and solve critical challenges with practical, scalable solutions supported by crucial mechanisms like funding, mentorship, and networking to ensure effective implementation and lasting success.

Lending with a purpose

Leveraging their diverse lending products, LISC Hampton Roads supports Unity Place at Kindred, a part of the greater reimagining of Tidewater Gardens in St. Paul's district in Virginia. It is a vibrant mixed-income and mixed-use project featuring 140 residential units, ground-floor retail spaces, and pioneering business incubators. This project marks a significant step forward in fostering accessible, inclusive communities.



Food is: hope, equity, medicine, dignity

Sentara works with an extensive network of partners to increase equitable access to food and community resources, enabling the people we serve to thrive.

For many individuals and families across the country, 2023 marked another year of rising food costs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported a 5.8% increase in food prices in 2023 (on the heels of a 9.9% increase in 2022). However, that increase tells only half the story.

When expanded pandemic-era benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) expired in February 2023, many food budgets simply met their breaking points. In a survey by Feeding America, 95% of food banks reported increased or steady demand in the months that followed.

To support the hunger relief resources families most often turn to in times of need, Sentara continues to take a multi-pronged approach.

Strengthening the network

In Virginia, our continued partnership with the Federation of Virginia Food Banks (Federation) — a part of its Statewide Health Equity Plan — increased the capacity of all seven food banks in the Commonwealth to provide healthier and more culturally relevant foods. In addition, our support helped enhance the Federation's ability to deliver services like the Food Pharmacy program and the Healthy Pantry Initiative, which are designed to remove barriers to access and support neighbors on their path to health and economic sufficiency.



Thanks in part to Sentara's support, in 2023:

THE FOOD PHARMACY PROGRAM

11,000+

new individuals reached

The program now can benefit more than 28,000 individuals annually.

THE HEALTHY PANTRY INITIATIVE

>60%

pantry partners assessed operations & aligned strategies to address barriers to access and ensure connections to other community supports.

Nearly **2,000 new households** received assistance with SNAP applications.

The Federation **established a cloud-based data warehouse** to track sourcing, distribution, and neighbor insights from across the network.

The Federation and its partners **advocated for state policies that support sustainable access** to nutritious foods through Medicaid coverage as a means to prevent and manage chronic diseases.



Learn more about how we're aiding food organizations within the communities we serve.



Supporting Virginia food systems

Food is so much more than what we grow or the meals we put on our tables — it's what connects us and centers communities. To that end, we partnered with local organizations in the past year that recognize food as the key to equitable communities.

Greater Richmond Fit4Kids

In 2023, Fit4Kids worked with local community leaders and the Richmond Food Justice Alliance on a variety of initiatives to strengthen community gardens and markets in marginalized communities and improve the school lunch program.

Cultivate Charlottesville

Through our long-standing partnership, Cultivate Charlottesville continues to support sustainable agricultural initiatives in underserved areas of the region and pursue educational and outreach initiatives that elevate the voices and experiences of Black residents in the pursuit of food justice.

Hampton Roads Urban Agriculture

Our work with Hampton Roads Urban Agriculture helps strengthen the organization's urban farm in Newport News and expand its capacity to deliver education and outreach to promote healthy lifestyles through gardening and healthy cooking.

A home for healing

Sentara partners to provide a critical bridge for the unhoused in the Shenandoah Valley.

When Cindy Mays received a diagnosis of severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), she was living in her car and unsure how she would manage her care and recovery.

“Unhoused residents in our communities are some of our most vulnerable,” says Stephanie Webb, BSN, RN, integrated continuum case manager at Sentara RMH Medical Center. “And when patients don’t have a safe and secure place to get better, they’re much more likely to be readmitted due to a health crisis.”

Recognizing this vulnerability, leaders at Sentara RMH Medical Center and Strength in Peers, a long-standing community partner in the Shenandoah Valley, created the Safe & Secure Program, which provides a dedicated recuperation environment after treatment for patients experiencing unstable living conditions.

In just two years since its establishment, the program has enhanced recovery for more than 50 community members and has helped save approximately \$345,000 in medical costs due to lower readmission rates, according to a March 2023 report commissioned by Sentara.



Cindy Mays, patient, Strength in Peers, Harrisonburg, Virginia

But for Mays, the Safe & Secure Program was more than an opportunity to heal physically. It was the bridge from the uncertainty of her car to the hope of a stable home. With the support of Strength in Peers and Sentara, she transitioned from temporary housing to her own apartment.

“When I first walked into RMH, I felt like I had no one. I was just another homeless person,” Mays recalls. “But they took me in. They showed me I wasn’t alone. They became my family.”



Learn more about this partnership.

Holistic supports

Sentara empowers partners to support community members on their journey to attain their health goals.

Recovering Hands

Nathalie, Virginia

Our partnership with Recovering Hands supports women in their journey to rediscover life beyond substance use. Recovering Hands uses the transformative “Each One, Teach One” recovery model, founded on the therapeutic principle that one recovering individual can positively transform the life of another.

“The Safe & Secure Program was born out of the basic premise that everyone deserves a place to recuperate, especially after a hospital stay.”

— Strength in Peers founder
Nicky Fadley



Mind, body, and spirit

Through holistic approaches to counseling and training, Sentara's partners provide critical pipelines to address future needs.

When it comes to behavioral health, we often think and speak of the physical and emotional barriers to access. But what if we shifted our focus to what can be done to help open someone up to the possibility of seeking help?

For more than 50 years, the Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center (PPCC), located in Newport News, Virginia, has used faith and spirituality as that open door — regardless of race or whether an individual is affiliated with any particular denomination.

“Whether they’re Jewish, Muslim, Christian, or spiritual but not religious, we recognize the important role faith and spirituality play for people and focus on the whole person — mind, body, and spirit,” says the Rev. Rebecca E. Glass, M.Div., M.Ed., PPCC’s executive director.

“The residency offers additional clinical instruction and consultation that otherwise would be quite expensive. The program has also introduced me to resources and networks that can benefit my clients, which is invaluable,” says the Rev. Chesla T. Nickelson, M.Div., MAMFT, a current resident.

PPCC works with individuals like Rev. Nickelson regardless of their ability to pay. In fact, according to Glass, nearly a quarter of those seeking support from PPCC are uninsured or underinsured, which is why supplemental funding through community partners like Sentara is so critical to providing access to services for those who may otherwise not have access.

The same holds true for individuals, like Rev. Nickelson, who are pursuing careers as providers, Glass adds. PPCC also commits to training students in the field, particularly students of color. With Sentara’s funding, Glass says, PPCC will be able to take on additional residents who can earn the 200 hours of supervised sessions and 2,000 hours of face-to-face clinical experience needed for licensure.





Building capacity

Training behavioral health practitioners with the latest resources, programs, and tools is crucial for providing up-to-date and effective care, while also helping to mitigate burnout and address workforce shortages in the field. This ongoing education maintains a robust pipeline of skilled professionals essential for tackling the evolving challenges in mental health care.

Virginia Health Care Foundation

Richmond, Virginia

With our support, the Virginia Health Care Foundation has launched the “Brighter Days Ahead” initiative. This initiative will expand its Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Scholarship Program, increase school-based children’s mental health services, and provide support for mental health providers themselves to overcome burnout and other challenges that cause many to leave the field.

PRS Inc.

Oakton, Virginia

Through our collaboration, PRS Inc. is set to launch an internship program, enhancing its team with vital roles focused on behavioral health services, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention. This initiative is designed to fortify the organization’s mission of fostering hope, wellness, and community integration. PRS Inc.’s wide range of programs enhances the lives of individuals grappling with mental health challenges by promoting recovery and independence.

The Confess Project of the Southeast

Richmond, Virginia

We partner with The Confess Project of the Southeast to improve mental health outcomes in Black communities by training barbers as mental health advocates. This unique program empowers barbers to serve as trusted confidants and first responders, offering support and resources to those without access to traditional mental health services.

Learners of any age

Sentara's support helps build the necessary skills to navigate health, financial, and career development journeys.

Literacy is more than the ability to read and comprehend words on a page. It's helping a child finish their homework. It's understanding the potential interactions listed on a bottle of medicine. It's conducting a job search with confidence.

One of Sentara's long-standing partners, Literacy for Life, takes this expanded definition to heart, working with adults in Williamsburg, Virginia, who often come to the organization without a high school diploma, reading below a fourth-grade level, or lacking proficiency in English.

"Each of these individuals carry their own unique life experiences and their own specific goals," says Jason Thornton, Literacy for Life's executive director, "and yet all navigate a world that requires multiple literacies to thrive."

"People need digital literacy skills, financial literacy, health literacy, and employment literacy," Thornton says. **"That's why we take a holistic approach that also centers what they want to accomplish so they can reach those goals and stay engaged."**



Did you know?

54%

In the U.S., nearly 54% of adults ages 16 to 74 read below a sixth grade level.

Low literacy levels put these individuals at a significant disadvantage in the job market, leading to reduced earnings and having a negative impact on health outcomes.

Through programs like Health Education and Literacy (HEAL), On the Money, and EmployEd, Literacy for Life offers complementary instruction and support services to help individuals navigate their health, financial, and career development journeys. With the help of funding from Sentara, Literacy for Life's newest program, TechConnect, aims to reduce the digital equity gap by teaching digital literacy and helping learners access affordable broadband and free devices.

In 2023, the organization served 700 learners, and if trends hold, Thornton says many will stay on as volunteers to share their experiences and pass on the skills they've learned. In fact, every year, Literacy for Life provides opportunities for more than 200 community volunteers to work directly with learners while continuing to build their own life and career skills in the process.



3x **Individuals with inadequate health literacy** are three times more likely to revisit the emergency department within 90 days of discharge.

10x **Adults with low literacy** are over 10 times more likely to rely on public financial assistance and earn an average of only \$300 per week, even when working full-time.

10x **Patients with low health literacy** experience more frequent and prolonged hospital admissions and higher mortality rates.



Scan QR code to learn more
or visit [SentaraCares.com](https://www.SentaraCares.com)

