

BUILDING A COMMUNITY-BASED CARE COORDINATION EFFORT

Freeman Health System in southwest Missouri recognized that many medically complex patients visiting its emergency departments would be better served if connected with primary care providers and relevant community resources.



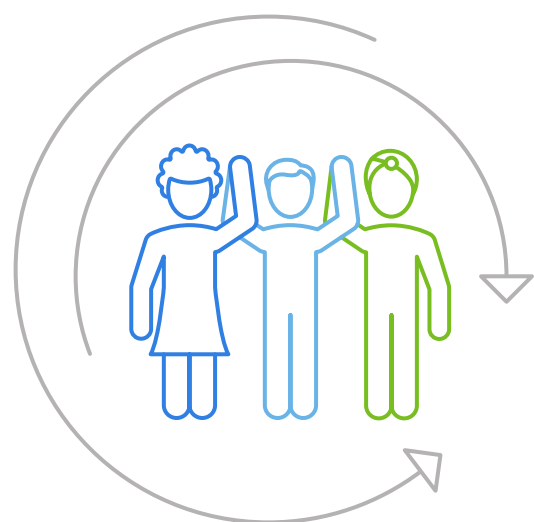
Freeman Health System’s collaborative efforts to learn about these patients’ social needs sparked creation of a network dedicated to changing the way referrals are made.



Over three years, a partnership that began between Freeman Health System and 10 social service organizations in Joplin, Mo., has grown into the 90-member strong [Care Partner Network](#). This network includes:

- ▶ Health care, government, nonprofit and other community-based organizations serving three states
- ▶ More than a third of participants from neighboring counties

Network partners are committed to working together to better address social drivers of health and provide better care to patients.



As a catalyst to establishing and growing the Care Partner Network, Freeman Health System sought the partnership of Mercy Hospital Joplin and the United Way of Southwest Missouri & Southeast Kansas.

The HCC helped these three partners align their vision and leadership to advocate for a centralized referral tracking system to:



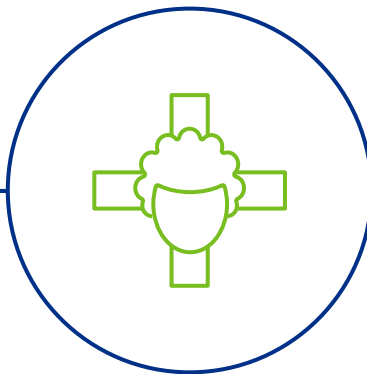
Share information about current social needs.



Empower health and social service providers to efficiently coordinate care.



Grow cross-sector collaboration built on trust.



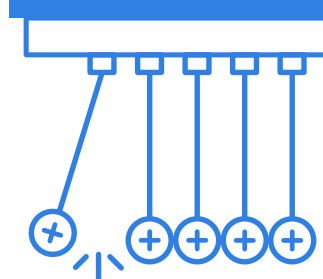
UNITE US

Network partners chose Unite Us, a medical and social referral technology platform, with the understanding that:

Freeman Health System and Mercy would each buy platform licenses.

United Way would staff and manage the Care Partner Network.

Social service organizations could access the platform for free.



Inspired by their work with the HCC, the partners are sustaining momentum to improve care coordination in their communities.



Freeman Health System is hiring community health workers to conduct social needs screenings across inpatient and outpatient settings.

- ➔ The health system tracks the number of patients referred and monitors the greatest health-related social needs.



United Way references social needs data in proposals to increase funding for health initiatives.

- ➔ Funds for health initiatives are distributed through the Unite Us platform.



Partners held an inaugural Care Partner Network Summit in May 2021.

- ➔ The summit set the stage for increased collaboration, generating a three-year strategic plan.

“The collaborating organizations decided to endorse a different relationship to better serve patients. Instead of asking patients to change, we put the change burden on our organizations and adopted a technology platform to assure referrals are more appropriate and efficient for patients.”



Lisa Nelson
Care Partner Network Founding Member
Freeman Health System