



**Jackson Care Connect**

# Report to the Community

Partnering to protect health and improve care

# 2021

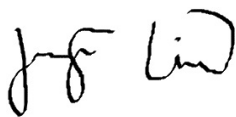
# Dear friends and colleagues,

## Welcome to our 2021 Report to the Community: Partnering to protect health and improve care.

As our community weathered the second year of a pandemic, health care providers and community partners stood strong. Throughout waves of challenges, you demonstrated enormous strength and compassion, and we are deeply grateful for your resilience and fortitude. Thank you for working to keep us all safe.

This report captures highlights of our work together throughout 2021. We are thankful for the many partnerships and collaborations that showed creativity and flexibility in serving our community, expanding access to care, and finding new ways to connect.

We hope you enjoy learning more about this work. Thank you for your continued commitment to our members and community.



Jennifer Lind  
CEO, Jackson Care Connect

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**Cover image:** Our school partnerships are important ways for us to learn about school and family needs. At Talent Elementary School, we supported improvements to the blacktop to help keep kids moving.

## Oregon Health Authority quality pool metrics:

Even with the challenges of the COVID pandemic, the continued impact of fire recovery and workforce shortages, our providers worked hard to get members the care they needed. Together, the network achieved the targets on 13 out of 14 OHA quality pool metrics, earning 100% of the quality pool funds.

In addition, Jackson Care Connect met 51.4% of the payout of funds related to the Emergency Outcome Tracking (EOT) for COVID-19 vaccinations.

### OHA 2021 quality metrics performance

**Jackson Care Connect achieved 100% of the targets for the following metrics:\***

Depression Screening and Follow Up
Language Access
SBIRT
DHS Mental / Physical / Oral Health
Postpartum Care
Cigarette Smoking Prevalence
Preventive Dental Services Ages 1-5
Preventive Dental Services Ages 6-14
Diabetes: Hemoglobin A1c
Well-Child Visits 3-6
Initiation: Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse or Dependence Treatment
Engagement: Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse or Dependence Treatment
Oral Evaluation for Adults with Diabetes
Immunizations for Adolescents
ED Utilization for Members with Mental Illness

*\*Projected results as of April 15, 2022*

### Our Vision

**Health, well-being and equity for all people of Jackson County**

### Membership

(as of December 31, 2021)

**59,946** members

**79%** of OHA membership for Jackson County

### Community giving

Fire recovery support:

**\$250,000**

COVID-related community support: **\$250,000**

Community Health Improvement Plan grants: **\$140,000**

Supporting Health for All through Reinvestment (SHARE) Initiative funds: **\$100,000**

School partnerships support: **\$90,000**

Event sponsorships: **\$50,000**



## Community continues to tackle challenges of pandemic

**As 2021 dawned, the rollout of vaccines brought hope in our battle against COVID-19. Our community came together to create efficient, low-barrier ways for people to access vaccines. With so many community priorities and a variety of population needs, it took a concerted effort to tackle them together.**

Jackson County worked with Asante and Providence Medford Medical Center on high-volume, drive-through clinics, in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). La Clinica and Rogue Community Health partnered with schools and community partners, including Unete, to make sure access was equitable, and that we collectively reached our Spanish-speaking community and rural residents. To help address transportation barriers, Mercy Flights partnered with Family Nurturing Center to reach out to people with complex health care or special mobility needs to deliver vaccines in person.

*"The holiday food boxes were soooo appreciated by our staff. We made sure the food was distributed throughout our departments and some boxes even went to some of our employees with the greatest need. The food was fresh, delicious and absolutely a wonderful gift to our staff. Thank you to Jackson Care Connect for partnering with Rogue Food Unites to make it happen and let our staff know they are appreciated."*

**— Asante Ashland  
Community Hospital**



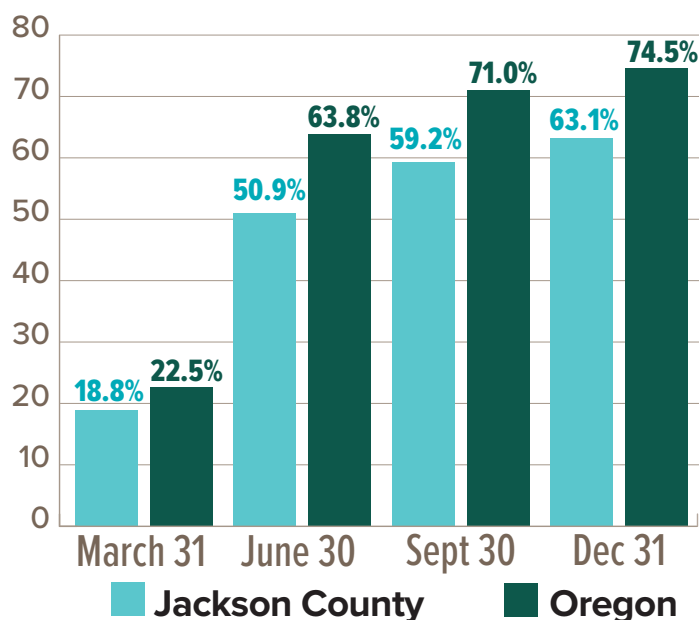
**Jackson Care Connect staff helped Rogue Food Unites prepare appreciation boxes for our provider network.**

Though vaccines were rolling out all over the county, vaccination rates were slow to increase, and COVID-19 continued to cause serious illness. In the fall, our health care system was tested like never before when the COVID Delta variant caused sharp spikes in cases and hospitalizations, putting our valley in national news headlines. This, in combination with provider burnout and workforce shortages, put hospitals and clinics under extreme stress, as they worked heroically to support the community and prioritize safety. As the year ended, the Omicron variant began to take hold, and providers braced themselves for another surge.

At every turn in the road, providers and community organizations showed enormous resilience and endurance in serving the community, maximizing telehealth options and finding new ways to support our members where they are.

### 2021 COVID-19 Vaccination rates

*People ages 18  
years and older  
who completed  
their primary  
COVID-19  
vaccination series*



### Thanking our partners

Providers and community partners endured extreme stress and witnessed intense trauma, especially through the strain caused by the Delta surge in the fall. We are deeply grateful for their commitment to our community, even in the face of such challenges. By partnering with Rogue Food Unites, we showed our appreciation in a more tangible way. Together we created and delivered more than 1,200 boxes of locally sourced food to hospital, clinical and community partners.

### Member and community support

Jackson Care Connect found unique ways to ensure members and the community had the support they needed. We:

- Established a Rapid Response Team (RRT) to help members find COVID vaccine and testing options. The RRT also connected members to physical and behavioral health care and all types of social supports.
- Co-chaired the public health Vaccine Equity Hub committee, to help ensure all populations had access to vaccines.
- Provided more than \$250,000 to community-based organizations that were affected by COVID, focusing on those addressing homelessness, food insecurity and at-risk populations.
- Amplified public health messaging regarding the safety and effectiveness of vaccines through media campaigns and public messages.



## Integrated care improves options for members

**We are committed to improving whole-person health care for our members. As a coordinated care organization, we continually look for ways to integrate physical, behavioral and oral health care, with the goals of improving access to care for members, improving health outcomes and making it easier for our providers across all functional areas to share information and care for members as a team. To further that work in 2021, we knew our provider network needed support.**

### **Workforce support efforts aim to strengthen behavioral health network**

The behavioral health network has been challenged throughout the pandemic, as stress and isolation led more people to seek mental health services and substance use treatment. This led to a sharp increase in provider caseloads, as well as stress levels. To help providers address workforce shortages and chip away at professional burnout, we provided \$1.3 million in workforce support to our behavioral health anchor partners, as part of a larger CareOregon investment. The funding was designated for efforts including retention bonuses, costs associated with licensure support and other financial incentives.

*“Like many behavioral health providers, OnTrack Rogue Valley is experiencing a significant staffing shortage,” said Sommer Wolcott, Executive Director of OnTrack Rogue Valley, one of the fund’s recipients. “With the help of Jackson Care Connect’s workforce support funding, we will attract more applicants to our open positions and also reward our hard-working staff who have helped us keep our doors open throughout the pandemic.”*



**Staff at OnTrack Rogue Valley**

In addition to funding support, we are working on ways to strengthen the behavioral health ecosystem over the long run. We continued our advocacy work with elected officials on issues including funding support for staff recruitment and retainment, and we advocated with OHA for reduced administrative burden for providers.



## Oral health team finds creative ways to expand care options

We also looked for ways to further integrate oral health care across the physical health care network, knowing how important it is to overall health. Our dental care team provided trainings and found new ways to involve all kinds of providers in improving members' oral health care. They also worked to open new pathways to care, so dental referrals can come from many points of the health care and social support system. That work included:

- ▶ Training and certifying La Clinica primary care providers in the First Tooth curriculum, which addresses preventive oral health services and dental referrals for infants and toddlers.
- ▶ Providing oral health training and technical assistance to peer support specialists at Rogue Retreat.
- ▶ Embedding a Capitol Dental Care hygienist at Options for Southern Oregon.
- ▶ Providing dental hygiene kits to Oasis Center of the Rogue Valley through Capitol Dental.
- ▶ Deepening our relationship with Jackson County's WIC program, doubling the amount of care requests via WIC.



## Community partners help members connect and rebuild

**In our tight-knit community, we're fortunate to have close partnerships with many organizations that serve our members. As we continue building on those relationships, we are finding ways to strengthen the community together, and in 2021 we focused our efforts on a couple of ways.**

### Unite Us launches local network

One major effort was the launch of Unite Us, a community information exchange network

we are partnering on with AllCare Health. With this launch, we are part of Connect Oregon, a growing statewide network designed to create a streamlined, closed-loop referral process to meet members' needs and make care more efficient by connecting health care and social service organizations. As we develop this tool and take full advantage of the capabilities it offers, we will improve the way we collectively address community health and social needs, while also deepening our relationships with each other. Our regional network currently includes 78 participants, with 61 from Jackson County.



*"Our Mobile Integrated Health team began using the Unite Us platform at the beginning of July. The platform has allowed the team to go away from the old digital form and allows the provider to track updates and connect with the clinic if there are any patient needs... The process is straightforward, the patients referred are scheduled quickly, and this platform has streamlined our work with our patients."*

**— Sabrina Ballew,  
Mercy Flights**

**Sabrina Ballew leads the Mobile Integrated Health team at Mercy Flights.**





## Keeping the focus on fire recovery

Our recovery from the devastating 2020 Alameda fire remains one of our community's most urgent needs, and we are committed to helping with recovery and rebuilding efforts. To that end, we dedicated \$250,000 in support to organizations helping with fire recovery. We also invested \$100,000 in Supporting Health for All through Reinvestment (SHARE) Initiative funds to support housing specialists at Rogue Community Health.

Our work also included long-term rebuilding efforts, including:

- ▶ Recovering \$352,828 in funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) used for motel vouchers for members who lost homes or were evacuated in the 2020 Alameda fire. Those funds were put back into housing efforts.
- ▶ Participating in committees for the new Jackson County Community Long-Term Recovery Group (JCC LTRG) and allocating \$25,000 to help with efforts to assess fire survivors' needs.
- ▶ Helping engage members with the Oregon Wildfire Transitions Team.

**The Community Engagement Team talks with members about their benefits.**



## Investments in health equity aim to improve access to care

**Ensuring that all our members can access the health care they need is at the heart of our mission. This means we continually work on achieving health equity by identifying and addressing disparities in both health and health care access, and it also means we strive to make sure those at the greatest risk of poor health have the support they need.**

To set strategy and lead our organizational efforts around health equity, CareOregon hired Dr. James Mason as our new Chief Equity Diversion and Inclusion Officer in 2021. Jackson Care Connect also added two positions focused on our local equity efforts. Our staff, Board of Directors, and Community Advisory Council members also took part in equity trainings and ongoing conversations. We are exploring ways we might extend those trainings to our partners.

### Scholarships support improvements in language access

One focus of health equity is ensuring members can get care in their preferred language. Meaningful language access is crucial to members' understanding of health care and services, and it also helps improve health outcomes. To help improve local language access, we provided scholarships to six employees at partner organizations to complete health care interpreter training and become certified or qualified. We also provided funding for clinical staff to take proficiency testing, and we supported clinics' work to assess their needs, along with additional financial incentives. Moving into 2022, we are adding more language vendors, including those that can provide sign language interpretation, based on feedback from our Community Advisory Council (CAC).

*"I feel safer [now that I learned about all the services and benefits]. I feel like I don't need to hold back with certain aspects of my care. I wanted to take care of certain things, but I was afraid of the cost. I feel more peace."*

**— Jackson Care Connect member**



## Members provide insights

Seeking and listening to member feedback is also key as we work to improve programs. Throughout the year, we worked on more ways to be engaged in conversations with members. We:

- ▶ Participated in community groups on listening sessions about local housing needs.
- ▶ Elevated member voices and experiences in our work with the crisis response project.
- ▶ Started processes to form family and youth advisory councils within the Jackson Youth System of Care.
- ▶ Conducted member interviews to learn more about the experiences of our Spanish-speaking members and members who live in remote, rural areas.

*“For me, JCC has built trust over time. I always get the help I need quickly. And they’re straightforward and clear. JCC provides more services than I knew about! They really are looking out for the community.”*

— Jackson Care Connect member



**We supported COVID vaccine clinics throughout the community.**



## Changing needs require flexibility and new solutions

**The past couple years have tested us all. The health care system and community-based organizations alike have endured challenge after challenge, and along the way, our community has shown resilience, endurance and ingenuity.**

To support our members through all these changes, we found creative ways to encourage them to safely get preventive and routine care. We also laid the groundwork to increase service options for our providers, and to incorporate new learnings into our work as we move forward.

### Starting Strong program encourages preventive care

While we couldn't meet with members in person throughout much of the pandemic, we knew it was still important for families to keep getting preventive care, including well child visits, screenings and immunizations. Our Starting Strong program serves pregnant members and families with young children, and throughout the pandemic we have operated this program virtually. Members are able to earn vouchers for preventive care and healthy activities and use those vouchers on essential child care items like car seats and diapers. In 2021 we started a new partnership with Family Nurturing Center, and we are working with the organization on plans to co-locate and reopen a physical Starting Strong store in a new spot.

### Traditional Health Workers support members

As we continually look for ways to support members' overall health, we are building a network of traditional health workers (THW), including doulas, peer support specialists (PSS) and community health workers (CHW). THWs support member health in a variety of ways, and in 2021 we strengthened relationships with local providers, and began building pathways to start expanding our THW network. We:

- ▶ Created peer-to-peer connection groups for three THW types to foster relationships and learn what support they need.
- ▶ Built stronger relationships with local doulas, which resulted in an increase in the number of members who used doula services in 2021.

- ▶ Began a collaboration with Pathfinder Network to provide peer support to justice-involved members. This will inform our approach to supporting peer support specialists.
- ▶ Conducted a pilot with CHWs who outreach to members with diabetes through La Clinica's Phoenix clinic. This \$15,000 pilot will inform the way we approach fee-for-service for CHWs.
- ▶ Started a pilot program with Rogue Retreat to train CHWs and change reimbursement models.

## Behavioral health explores new avenues

Telehealth proved to be an important way to access care, and this was especially true for behavioral health services, as it allows members to connect with providers and get the care they need, even when they can't see them in person. As we move forward, telehealth will remain an important option for accessing care, and the behavioral health team is taking a deeper dive into supporting and expanding telehealth.

We're also working on ways to better support behavioral health providers. This includes implementing the feedback-informed treatment (FIT) incentive metric, as well as a composite score for mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) providers based on best-practice standards for care. Substance use residential treatment providers will also receive rate increases to help them better care for our members.



# 2021 Committees

## Board of Directors

### Laura Bridges

Chief of Social Work  
Services, La Clinica

### John Curtis

JCC Community Advisory Council

### Jason Elzy

Executive Directory, Housing  
Authority of Jackson County

### Eric C. Hunter

President and Chief Executive  
Officer, CareOregon

### Brenda Johnson

Chief Executive Officer,  
La Clinica Health

### Scott Kelly

Chief Executive Officer,  
Asante Health System

### Paul Matz, MD

Family Practice Physician,  
Rogue Community Health

### Cindy Mayo

Chief Executive Officer, Providence  
Medford Medical Center (Retired)

### Craig Newton

JCC Community Advisory Council

### William North

Chief Executive Officer,  
Rogue Community Health

### Mark Orndoff

Director, Jackson County Health  
& Human Services

### Lori Paris

President & Chief Executive Officer,  
Addictions Recovery Center

### Matt Sinnott

Director of Government Affairs  
and Contract Management,  
Willamette Dental

[jacksoncareconnect.org](http://jacksoncareconnect.org)

## Community Advisory Council

### George Adams

Diana Alfaro Soto-Cordoba

### Jennifer Bethany

Brenda Borchman

Donald Bruland

Leonore Bugarin

Autumn Chadbourne

Lisa Collins

John Curtis

Barrett Gifford

Jaquie Jaquette

Craig Newton

Chelsea Reinhart

Rich Rhode

Melinda Sprauge

## Clinical Advisory Panel

Justin Adams, MD

Laura Bridges, LCSW, QMHP

Amy Fine, DMD

Matt Hough, MD

Eric Jensen, MD

Jason Kuhl, MD

John Mahan, MD

Paul Matz, MD

Gary McConahay, PhD

Kim Oveson, MS

Dan Weiner, MD



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