Illinois Health and Hospital Association

In August 2025, Healthy Jacksonville began providing services to the Price family, a household of seven experiencing homelessness and unemployment, with no established primary or specialty medical care.

A Community Health Worker (CHW) conducted a comprehensive needs assessment and coordinated access to stable housing, employment opportunities, primary and specialty healthcare services, as well as daycare and early childhood education programs.

Confronting a behavioral health issue can be a daunting experience, from knowing where to seek care to how to navigate the healthcare system. Community health workers (CHWs) with Jacksonville Memorial Hospital have a significant role in assisting local residents through these challenges and more. The hospital's Healthy Jacksonville program sends CHWs into the community to help connect residents, especially those who are vulnerable or at-risk, to behavioral health services.

At its core, Healthy Jacksonville leverages CHWs who build trusting relationships with clients, assess their health and social needs, and guide them to the appropriate care. These workers:

- Provide informal counseling;
- Help clients navigate the health system;
- Advocate for individuals who may otherwise struggle to find or access behavioral health support;
- Help connect clients to counseling, substance use services, therapy, and support groups through providers such as Memorial Behavioral Health and other community partners.

Key to the effort are ongoing partnerships with local agencies and resource networks in the Jacksonville area. In addition to direct client support, Healthy Jacksonville strengthens community collaborations that broaden access to behavioral healthcare. As part of the program, Jacksonville Memorial Hospital collaborates with social service organizations and work groups that address barriers to care such as transportation, food insecurity, and social drivers of health that often intersect with mental well-being.

Through these partnerships, Healthy Jacksonville helps ensure clients can connect to supportive services that enhance long-term wellness. These efforts make it easier for individuals and families to find and follow through with behavioral healthcare, which improves overall community health outcomes in the Jacksonville region.

The program's impact extends even farther. Healthy Jacksonville also links clients to employment resources, job fairs, and social services that strengthen economic stability and self-sufficiency. This holistic support has helped clients secure jobs, navigate challenges at home, and build healthier routines.

By addressing both clinical and non-clinical needs, Healthy Jacksonville helps clients make meaningful progress toward stability and wellness. Clients who once struggled with barriers to care find that consistent support leads to greater independence, improved mental health, and successful participation in work and family life, reflecting the program's success in helping people thrive across multiple areas of life.