



## Access is **Everything**

Access to essential healthcare remains challenging for millions of Americans, particularly those living in rural and underserved communities.

Major obstacles and barriers to care include lack of transportation, limited and dwindling healthcare facilities, a shortage of physicians and other key healthcare professionals, financial constraints, and demanding work and family obligations.

To address these challenges, we are launching *Driving Health Forward*, a national campaign to bring essential care to communities through mobile healthcare.

### Background

The impetus for *Driving Health Forward* emerged in the fall of 2024 as an increasing number of leaders of mobile healthcare programs, advocacy groups, and policymakers issued warnings about the state of access to essential care in the United States.

With the support of the [Leon Lowenstein Foundation](#), a Connecticut-based family foundation focused on addressing health disparities through a major expansion of mobile healthcare, a group of leaders began meeting to consider a path to scaling the mobile healthcare sector in the U.S. as an effective way to increase access to essential care.

This led to *Driving Health Forward*.

## Why It's Important Now

Barriers to basic healthcare are nearly insurmountable for millions of Americans, so it's never been more important to exponentially expand access to essential care. Here's why:



**Morbidity and Mortality Rates are Stubbornly High:** Many of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the United States, such as heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory disease, and stroke, are preventable, but remain very high, particularly in rural areas. Why? Too many Americans lack basic access to preventative screenings and follow-up care. An estimated 75% of Americans are not up to date on high-priority preventative screenings and vaccines.



**Our Existing Healthcare Infrastructure Cannot Meet the Current Demand for Essential Care:** Even if transportation were not an issue, there is a shortage of primary care practitioners in the U.S., and that shortage is expected to worsen over the next decade. It's no surprise that 3 in 10 Americans lack access to primary care. Additionally, hospitals are closing at alarming rates, especially in rural areas. The American Hospital Association [reported](#) 136 rural hospital closures between 2010 and 2021, and that number continues to climb.



**The Impact of Healthcare Deserts is Real and Growing:** Healthcare deserts, regions whose populations lack sufficient access to proper medical care, exist in communities around the country. Rural areas typically have few – if any – healthcare facilities, but healthcare deserts also exist in suburban and urban environments. Lack of access to proper healthcare services is a leading cause of high morbidity and mortality rates.



**Not Everyone Can Afford Healthcare Services...:** Many individuals simply cannot afford healthcare due to rising health insurance premiums as well as high deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses. For these individuals, basic medical care is out of reach.



**...Especially Those Who Often Need It the Most:** The gap in healthcare access disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable within our communities, including low-income families, the elderly, minorities, and people living with disabilities. Without a call to action, these disparities will continue to widen, leading to worse health outcomes.

The status quo is failing too many people and communities across the country, and the real human cost in terms of poor quality of life and reduced life expectancy is both heartbreaking and avoidable.

*Driving Health Forward* aims to answer the call for collective action to achieve meaningful, long-term system change.

## Our Response

We are organizing a national campaign for collective action around a common purpose, namely expanding access to essential care through mobile healthcare.

Through *Driving Health Forward*, a broad and growing coalition of community organizations, schools, local healthcare groups and providers, insurers, mobile health clinic operators, vehicle manufacturers, local, state, and federal government representatives, and other interested parties, are joining forces to identify and address the barriers to scaling mobile healthcare nationwide.

## Our Approach

To help realize the mission of *Driving Health Forward*, the campaign is centered around three P's – policies, practices, and partnerships.

Participants will work together to advance specific **policy** initiatives, share best **practices** in clinical care, finance, and operations, and enter into new or expanded **partnerships** in five priority areas:

1



**Promoting greater access to essential care and improved connection to follow-up care:** Expanding access to essential care and screenings and improving the connection to follow-up care for individuals and families facing barriers to care.

2



**Creating more capital investment in mobile healthcare services:** Providing greater access to capital for at least 100,000 new and retrofit mobile health clinics to accelerate the supply chain.

3



**Expanding jobs in the mobile healthcare sector:** Creating up to 500,000 new and well-paying employment opportunities for individuals living in economically disadvantaged areas.

4



**Providing an achievable path to financial sustainability:** Adopting health insurance coverage and payment policies to create an achievable and sustainable path forward for mobile healthcare.

5



**Creating greater impact through improved data collection, evaluation, and information sharing:** Measuring the number and direct impact of mobile healthcare over time.

# Why It Works

Mobile healthcare services offer an effective – and increasingly necessary – way to bridge the gap between brick-and-mortar facilities and telehealth services. They are an essential part of the healthcare ecosystem to improve health outcomes in healthcare deserts throughout the country. Specifically, mobile healthcare services:

- ✔ **Offer convenient, effective, high-quality care.** Many offer varied preventive care services, which can improve health outcomes and enhance quality of life. According to [Mobile Health Map](#), a mobile health unit prevents approximately 600 emergency room visits yearly.
- ✔ **Adapt to their community’s needs.** Since they are deeply connected to their communities, they are acutely tied to specific or evolving public health needs. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many mobile health clinics began offering the vaccine once it became available.
- ✔ **Engender trust among previously skeptical patients.** Practitioners who get to know communities and their residents are praised for delivering patient-centered care that does more listening and less talking. This goes a long way in repairing the sometimes-fractured relationship between patients and healthcare professionals.
- ✔ **Are cost effective.** According to a report in the *Journal of Primary Care & Community Health*, mobile health clinics provide annual savings of up to \$36 for every dollar invested, compared to emergency room visits. Additionally, the cost per patient for all mobile service clinic types appears to be considerably less than those reported for fixed clinic services.

# Potential Impact

Initial metrics for the five-year campaign include:

| SHORT TERM:  | MEDIUM TERM:                                    | LONG TERM:   |
|--|---|--|
| Introducing new participants into the <i>Driving Health Forward</i> coalition by Q2 2025 | New policies and partnerships developed in 2025 | Population-level changes in individuals getting care and screenings, and prevention of serious disease |

# How You Can Help

Your support can make a life-changing impact. We are actively recruiting organizations, healthcare providers, and local, state and federal officials to join the campaign.

*Driving Health Forward* is not just a campaign; it's a movement to ensure that every person, no matter their location or financial situation, has access to the healthcare they deserve. Together, we can reduce health disparities, improve quality of life, and build a healthier future for all. Your support can make this vision a reality.