

Healthy Communities: A Call to Action



ANNUAL REPORT | 2023

Thundermist!
HEALTH CENTER

A Message from Jeanne

Hello,

2023 marked a year of innovation and investment at Thundermist. All in an effort to make sure those who need care get it.

Before I joined the Thundermist team more than 10 years ago, I worked in a variety of medical settings across many states. I thought I had seen high-quality, integrated, patient-centered care. Then I came to Thundermist.

I never knew care like this existed. Patients can get multiple health care needs met in one place, oftentimes during the same appointment. People get care from an integrated team of professionals working together to ensure each patient's unique needs are met.

This is important care. The care patients get from a federally qualified health center isn't available anywhere else. For many patients, we are their safety net. We need to continue to invest in health centers so they can grow to meet the increasing demand for primary care in our state. This also means investing in growing and sustaining a workforce to deliver this care.

In this report you will read more about the unprecedented demand for care and ways Thundermist is trying to rise to the challenge. Our organization has grown tremendously in my years here, but it hasn't been enough. We need more health care professionals and more space.

Health centers can be the answer to the crisis in primary care Rhode Island is facing. We ask that we work collaboratively and invest in community health centers. With the right resources and infrastructure, health centers like Thundermist can ensure every Rhode Islander has the care they need.

Thundermist would not be who we are without our passionate and dedicated employees, our board of directors, the generosity of our donors and the incredible communities we serve. While there is much work to be done, we look forward to taking on new challenges with you, as partners.

Thank you, and here's to more collaboration!

Jeanne LaChance

Jeanne LaChance
President/Chief Executive Officer



A Crisis in Primary Care

Meeting Rhode Island's health care needs means investing in the future

The Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner reports an estimated 18% of Rhode Islanders don't have a primary care provider (PCP). By 2030, as many as 200,000 Rhode Islanders could be without a primary care provider. There is expected to be an 11% shortfall in PCPs by that time.

According to the Health Resources and Services Administration, by 2035, there will be a shortage of more than 35,000 providers in the primary care workforce nationwide. In behavioral health there will be an anticipated 15,000 vacancies.

At Thundermist, we are already feeling the pain of this shortage. Our Woonsocket and West Warwick medical practices reached capacity. Patients in South County are waiting months for an appointment.

In 2023, in one five-day period, we received 10,738 calls — more than 2,000 calls daily from people seeking care at Thundermist. This is an increase of more than 3,000 calls from the same five-day period in 2021. We simply cannot grow fast enough to meet the demand.

During the pandemic, when many people lost access to dental care, Thundermist focused on increasing access. This expansion established a dental home for nearly 1,300 new patients in West



Warwick. In Woonsocket, more than 5,200 patients received dental care due to the expansion. However, Our dental clinics have 14,000 patients on waiting lists. In 2023, we doubled the size of our West Warwick dental practice, yet there are nearly 5,000 people still waiting for care in that community alone.

Thundermist's mission guides us to grow to meet the health care needs of our state. But it is nearly impossible to grow fast enough to meet the demand.

Growth is needed in workforce and infrastructure.

Community health centers can get more Rhode Islanders the care they need. Thundermist continues to create innovative ways to meet the needs of our communities. While we have made progress, funding these solutions remains a challenge. Community health centers need significant investments to create long-term solutions and access to primary care in Rhode Island.

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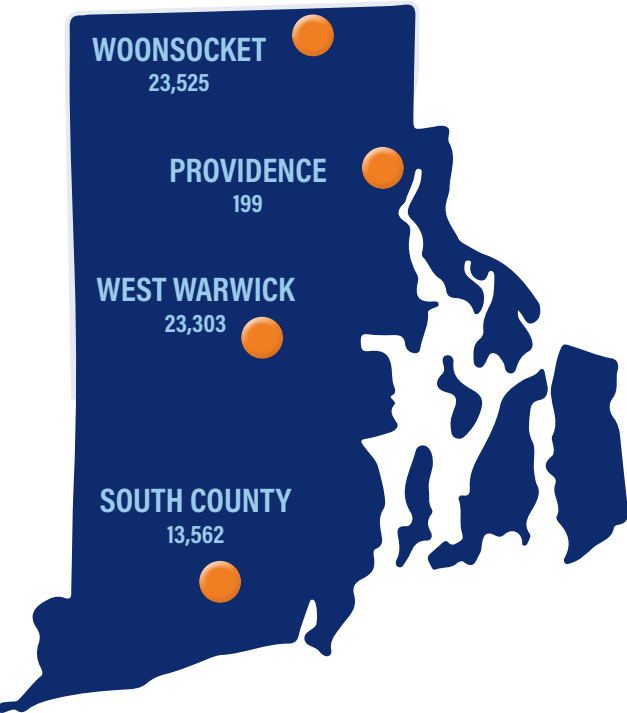
Our Response

Even while facing workforce challenges and skyrocketing demand, we're planning for ways to get care to more people

In 2023, Thundermist Health Center provided integrated primary care to more than 62,000 Rhode Islanders. We took care of 10,000 more patients than just five years ago. Thundermist is doing all we can to care for everyone who walks through our doors, but it has proven very difficult to keep up with the health care needs of our state.

We see every day that people have a need for more care. Our Patient Contact Center receives nearly 11,000 calls each week from people who need our services. National experts point to a mental health crisis that is also being acutely felt in Rhode Island. The pandemic reduced access to dental care for tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders who now have nowhere to turn.

Patients Served



Some patients are seen in more than one site. Providence location serves a limited scope and special populations.

Strategically preparing for the increased demand in care is our greatest priority. It requires innovation and investment. We hope to work collaboratively with stakeholders throughout Rhode Island to ensure all patients get the care they need. Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island is among the first community partners to step up to address these needs with a financial investment.

West Warwick

In 2019, Thundermist doubled the size of our West Warwick medical site. Since that time, the practice reached capacity.

In 2023, we opened our new state-of-the-art dental practice creating access to dental care for more than 5,000 additional Rhode Islanders.

Last year, Thundermist purchased a building at 1155 Main Street in West Warwick, which was previously a Rite Aid pharmacy. This new location will help ensure more patients have access to primary care.

We look forward to expanding care and remaining in the heart of Arctic Village.

Woonsocket

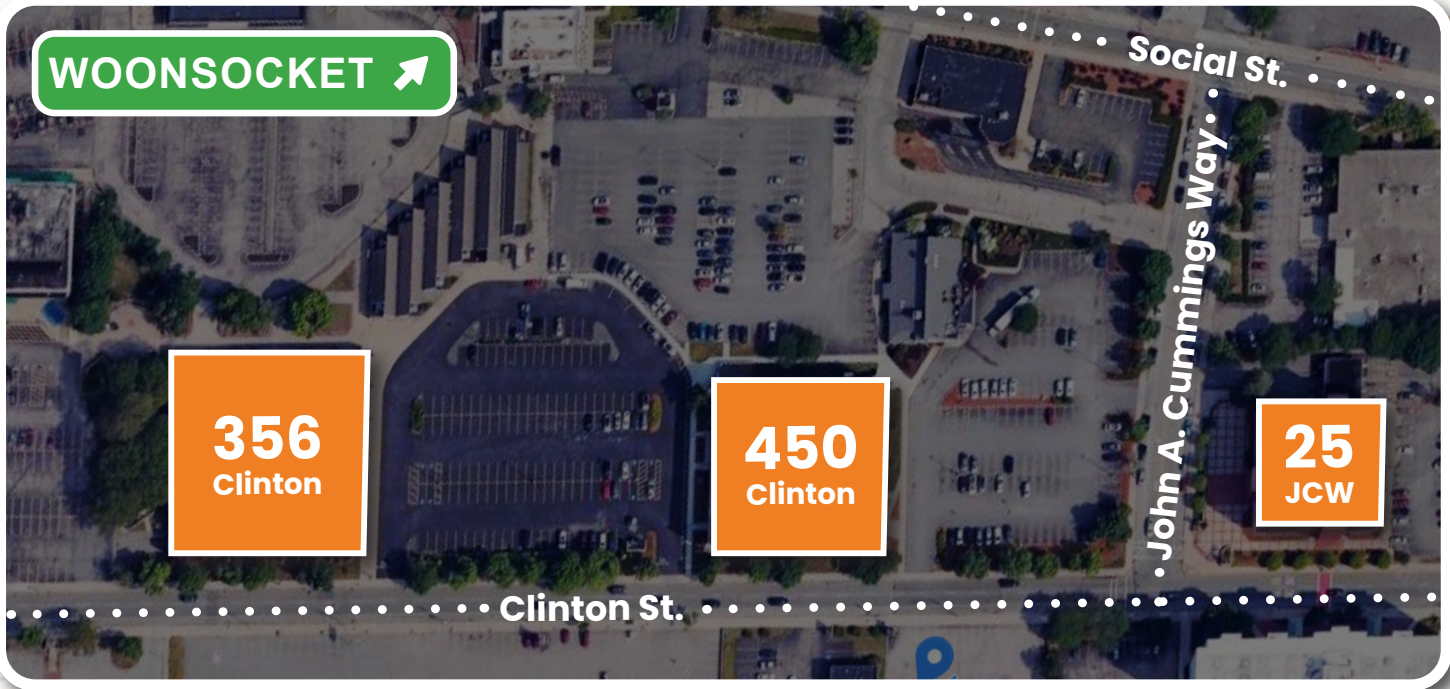
In late 2023, Thundermist purchased the building at 356 Clinton Street in Woonsocket. This expands our footprint and creates a three-building campus in the heart of downtown Woonsocket.

The expansion will allow for even greater access to services in an area of the state where transportation barriers can hinder or delay access to care.

The building will also make way for Thundermist's new family medicine physician residency, slated to start in 2026. The new program will train four family medicine physicians each year. The program is expected to increase access to primary care for more than 1,600 people across northern Rhode Island. Most importantly, it will train future family medicine physicians to provide care to patients with complex medical needs in a community health center setting.

Following expansion in Woonsocket and West Warwick, we will review the needs of our South County health centers, where we know further expansion is needed.

CARING FOR COMMUNITIES



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As the shortage in health care workers continues to impact access to care, Thundermist is investing in innovative programs to support our employees and the next generation of health care professionals.

Thundermist is committed to hiring a diverse workforce that represents the communities we serve. Because of the challenges and burnout that came from the COVID-19 pandemic, many people left health care, leading to a nationwide shortage of staff at all levels. At the end of 2023, Thundermist had 113 vacant positions.

We need innovative solutions to increase the number of professionals entering the health care workforce, create career ladders and growth opportunities for current employees, and ensure training to prepare team members to deliver care in a community health center setting. Thundermist



In October, Thundermist joined with Sens. Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse to celebrate \$1.5M in federal funding to support health care workforce development.

Investing in the Health Care Workforce

is answering the call with dedicated workforce development programs with these goals at the forefront.

Educating the Next Generation of Nurses

In nursing school, primary care nursing is often overlooked, with a focus on hospital and specialty medicine sectors.

In 2023, Thundermist partnered with the University of Rhode Island to change that. Together, we enhanced the nursing curriculum to include a first-of-its-kind, community health and primary care nursing component and clinical rotation.

Nearly 150 students participated in an orientation at which Thundermist nurses talked about their work in community health. Many students shared they were unaware of career opportunities in primary care. Sixteen student nurses went on to complete semester-long clinical rotations at Thundermist.

Thundermist's clinical education team developed a curriculum to train 20 Thundermist nurses and medical assistants to become preceptors. This unique, three-part training enhanced their leadership skills and helped meet their licensing requirements. It has also benefited them when onboarding new hires and training students.

As one student shared of their experience: "[It] not only opened my eyes to the importance of community health centers, but also planted a

Life-Changing Opportunities for Thundermist Employees

Thundermist, with federal funding, granted scholarships to five qualified employees, who had started college but didn't finish their bachelor's degree. This scholarship helps students complete their degrees while still being able to balance work and home.

Aracelis Aponte is a behavioral health case manager. She has been with Thundermist for more than 10 years. She hoped for years to obtain her bachelor's degree.

"It is hard to balance a job, being a mom, and going to school to achieve my goals," she notes. She has a lot of life experience and has overcome many obstacles. Not having a degree has been a barrier to achieving her career goals. She felt she "could never get to the next level."

The Bachelor of Professional Studies (BPS) program at Rhode Island College is helping her do just that. In the BPS program, she is part of a cohort of students working toward the same goal. "Being part of a cohort has been supportive and impactful," she says. "I always have someone I can turn to and ask questions, and the program leaders are always very responsive."

Having the right support has been a game-changer for Aracelis. And when graduation day comes, it won't be just her walking across a stage to receive a piece of paper. It will be much more.

"My family is graduating with me, my kids are graduating with me, Thundermist is graduating with me!"



seed in my brain that after my licensure, I have other options to choose from outside of a hospital setting."

Participants learned community health centers offer much more than traditional primary care. They were able to experience all areas of care, including medication-assisted treatment, behavioral health, gender-affirming care, size-inclusive health, pediatrics, and more. The program helped broaden their view on what being a nurse can look like.

Addressing the Behavioral Health Provider Shortage

One of the greatest needs at Thundermist is for more behavioral health clinicians. Thundermist partners with Rhode Island College to train more behavioral health professionals through internships.

Social work interns at Thundermist receive a unique experience. Interns collaborate with patients' medical care teams, spend time with the organization's trans health team, size-inclusive health team, and community health team—

[Continued next page]



Ingrid Read, Angela Cadima, and Aracelis Aponte, all participants in innovative workforce development programs, in conjunction with CCRI and RIC, celebrate after an October press conference with Sen. Jack Reed.



Top Right: Sen. Jack Reed details the success of Thundermist's workforce development programs. Bottom Right: A local news station captures the press conference live.

opportunities not afforded to them in private practice. "This internship helped me understand the clinical and team approach to integrated behavioral health care," Jonluc Mottl, a former intern who is now a practicing behavioral health clinician at Thundermist,

\$74.1M

Wages + Benefits
Paid in 2023

says. Interns receive a well-rounded experience, seeing first-hand the impact of Thundermist's circle of care. Thundermist hired seven clinicians following graduation. To date, they have provided more than 12,000 behavioral health visits. This

program, during internship and after, has increased access to care for thousands of patients in our communities.

Medical and Dental Assistant Training

With support from Sen. Jack Reed and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, and in collaboration with the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), we created two new training programs for medical and dental assistants.

In 2023, a cohort of medical and dental assistant students received classroom training at CCRI. The dental assistants then spent 72 hours in hands-on externship at Thundermist's new West Warwick dental clinic.

new jobs

in 5 years **463**

923 employees

Medical assistant students participated in 120 hours of hands-on externship across all Thundermist sites. Ten medical assistants completed the training. Half of them were current Thundermist employees looking to advance their careers. Nine dental assistants completed the training.

"I am thrilled to be working alongside providers and directly with patients," Ingrid Read shared. Ingrid began her career at Thundermist in 2021 as a patient service representative. She is now a certified medical assistant. More than half of the training participants were hired to join the Thundermist team.



Thundermist Receives Prestigious Joy in Medicine Award

Thundermist Health Center is proud to be a 2023 Joy in Medicine™ recognized organization—an honor we received from the American Medical Association. Thundermist is the only health care provider in Rhode Island to receive the Joy in Medicine recognition, and one of only 72 recipients nationwide. This award is presented to health care systems that prioritize the health and well-being of clinical care teams to help reduce burnout, which has increased significantly over the last four years. Thundermist was first recognized in 2021 at the bronze level and achieved silver status last year.

"Thundermist is at the cutting-edge of promoting health care worker well-being," Matthew Malek, MD, MPH, medical director of clinician wellness at Thundermist, says. "We understand the primary driver of burnout among health care professionals is not a lack of resiliency among the clinicians, but rather the broken system in which they practice. That's why our wellness work focuses on optimizing the system in which our clinicians practice."

Our work to address clinician wellness and prevent burnout is never over. We continue to work collaboratively to ensure our clinicians feel supported and have the tools and resources they need to succeed.

Medical Director of Clinician Wellness Matthew Malek, MD, MPH, celebrates Thundermist's Joy in Medicine distinction.



The impact of the workforce development programs has been extraordinary. They're helping Rhode Islanders get the care they need. More people are prepared for good jobs with great benefits and steady employment. And health care professionals have the opportunities they need to advance their careers.

— Jeanne LaChance, Thundermist President & CEO

Our Continued Commitment to Health Care for All

Thundermist is proud to be the second largest provider of gender-affirming care in New England

For 55 years, Thundermist has been rooted in its mission to remove barriers to health care for everybody. In 2015, we recognized people who are trans and gender diverse had nowhere to turn for safe, high-quality, affirming health care. Guided by our mission, we established a trans health program.

As a community health center, we recognize our work must extend beyond the exam room. Caring for a community means ensuring people have safe housing, transportation, basic necessities, and the same rights as every other person.

This is why our trans health program has grown in scope and size over the past almost ten years. Patients are cared for by a team of multi-disciplinary health care professionals we call the Trans Health Access Team, or THAT. The services are rooted in primary care and include medical, behavioral health, and dental care. But patients also are served by peer navigators, housing support specialists, community health workers, health and

wellness events, and more. In addition, Thundermist closely monitors legislation and policy that impacts the health of our trans and gender diverse patients and actively advocates for their rights.

Meet Cole

Cole is a trans man. Five years ago, he was unsure of where to turn for health care. Then he met a member of our Trans Health Access Team, who pointed him to Thundermist.

“Before my first appointment, I was excited—nervous, but excited,” he remembers. “I had no idea what the process would be like.”

For years, Cole avoided seeking care due to fear. At Thundermist, he feels welcome and understood by every member of his care team.

Cole’s care at Thundermist goes beyond medical visits. Like many people who are trans and gender diverse, he needed help navigating the very complex systems involved with things like changing his name.

“I had no clue what probate court was; I went to the courthouse I drove by every day,” he says.

Thundermist peer navigators helped him with his name change, as there were many steps he was unaware of. This is just one reason he is grateful to receive all his care in one place.

“Thundermist stands up for people like me; they never turn their backs when so many others do. Here, people listen.”

In addition, the wellness events Thundermist’s Trans Health Access Team host, such as trans swimming nights and Thanksgiving dinner, are special to him. Before he met his wife, he didn’t have a family to spend holidays with. But Thundermist was there.



The Legislative Landscape

Access to safe, evidence-based health care is under threat. Lawmakers in 22 states have ignored all professional standards of medicine to restrict access to care for gender diverse youth and are expanding to target care for adults. A growing number of states are pushing back to ensure people within their borders can access the care prescribed by their physicians. The result is a patchwork across the U.S. where availability of prescribed health care depends on someone’s ZIP code. Overriding medical standards for any care puts all care at risk.

Thundermist stands firmly with its patients, staff, and the wider community to ensure every member of our community can lead a healthy life. Thundermist continues to organize events that empower community members, provide expert testimony during state and local government meetings, and champion policies that support all our patients.



Trans Health Access Team Patients

86% increase over 5 years	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	1,003	586	1,437	1,704	1,870

What is Gender-Affirming Care?

Gender-affirming care is primary care. It is delivered in an exam room and is about the relationship between a provider and patient. Gender-affirming care is a group of health care services that many transgender, nonbinary, and gender diverse people use to align their bodies with their gender identity. Examples include gender-affirming hormonal care or gender-related surgeries. Gender-affirming care might also more broadly describe general medical care delivered in a way that conveys understanding and respect for the lived experiences of trans people and trans bodies. For example: behavioral health services that do not pathologize someone’s gender identity; cancer screening that accounts for differences in trans bodies; and a clinic environment where all staff use a patient’s correct name and pronouns.

Training the **Next Generation**
of Family Medicine Providers

The Gift of Health
How one patient's care from Thundermist transformed her life

As we see the overwhelming need for primary care providers grow, Thundermist is delivering innovative solutions and will become a teaching health center in 2026.

There is a nationwide shortage of primary care providers, and Rhode Island is no exception. This shortage comes from a combination of factors, including burn out during the pandemic, early retirements, and the time and fiscal commitment to become a fully trained and licensed primary care provider. This, combined with more patients seeking care than ever before, has created a primary care crisis in our state. Rhode Island simply needs more primary care providers.

Federally qualified health centers are the largest provider of primary care in Rhode Island.

More importantly, they provide a unique, integrated, patient-centered approach to primary care that benefits patients and the entire community.

Thundermist is stepping up to train family medicine physicians to provide care to patients with complex medical needs in a community health center setting. We will launch a family medicine physician residency in 2026, making Thundermist an official teaching health center. The physician residency builds upon the success of our nurse practitioner fellowship programs that have trained 39 nurse practitioners since 2015. The residency will train four providers per year as part of a three-year program.

Paul George, MD, family medicine physician residency program director, says: “We know residents who train in a health center are more likely to practice in underserved settings during their career. This program will provide Rhode Island with four physicians each year who are well trained to provide primary care in the communities we serve.”

The residency will also allow Thundermist to care for more patients and better meet the growing health care needs of northern Rhode Island in particular. We expect to care for an estimated 1,600 additional unique patients as residents learn side by side with our experienced physicians.

Where a Physician Practices After Graduation*	Teaching Health Center Graduate	Other Program Graduate
Rural area	17.9%	11.8%
Within 5 miles of residency	18.9%	12.9%
Medically underserved communities	35.3%	18.6%

Paul George, MD, Family Medicine
Physician Residency Program Director

Trina used to face a lot of barriers to getting health care. That meant she was not getting the care she needed. When she was seen by other providers, she felt pushed off and not seen or heard.

Her first memory of Thundermist is her mom taking her for an appointment as a child. As an adult, years went by, and she could not find a primary care provider she trusted. Then she met Dr. Nithin Paul, a primary care provider at Thundermist.

Dr. Paul was seeing patients at Safe Haven, a drop-in center for people who are unhoused in Woonsocket. He talked to Trina about the last time she was seen for a routine appointment. Trina explained that she hadn't gotten care in a long time because other doctors didn't listen and she always felt dismissed. But something about Dr. Paul made Trina feel comfortable and she agreed to an appointment with him.

As Trina was unhoused, the first thing Dr. Paul worked on was helping her get safe housing. Dr. Paul put her in touch with the community health team at Thundermist to help her find a place to live.

“One day, I found a lump on my breast,” Trina explains. “I didn't know what to do or where to go. Then Dr. Paul came to Safe Haven, and I jumped at the chance to see a doctor and talk about my concerns.”

Trina hoped it wasn't the worst-case scenario. Dr. Paul sent her to the hospital for some tests, which confirmed she had breast cancer. But because of Dr. Paul's guidance, she was able to get in for treatment.

Trina recently completed her chemotherapy treatment and has a stable housing situation that has helped her rest and recover.

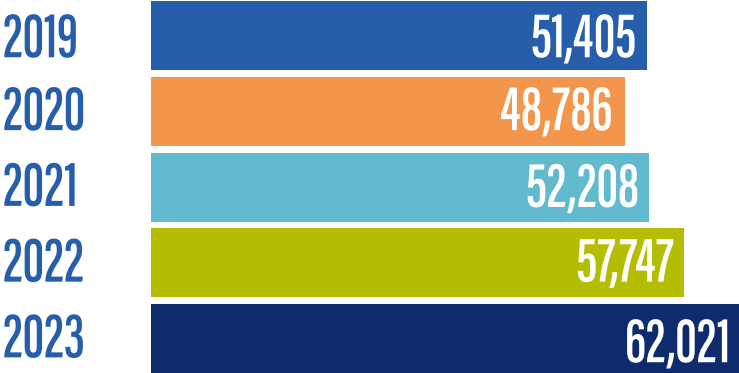
“One of the best things I have learned through this time is how to advocate for myself,” Trina says. “I have tools to be able to advocate for housing and care. Thundermist helped me get there.”

“One day, I found a lump on my breast. I didn't know what to do or where to go.”



More Health Care

Unique Patients



20%
more patients served
in 5 years

Health Care Highlights

	Medical Care	Dental Care	Convenient Care	Behavioral Health	Social Services	Substance Use Treatment
Patients Served*	50,128	21,167	22,470	8,081	5,063	8,331
Patient Visits*	186,473	53,397	37,656	70,333	17,858	22,153
Total Patient Visits: 328,051						

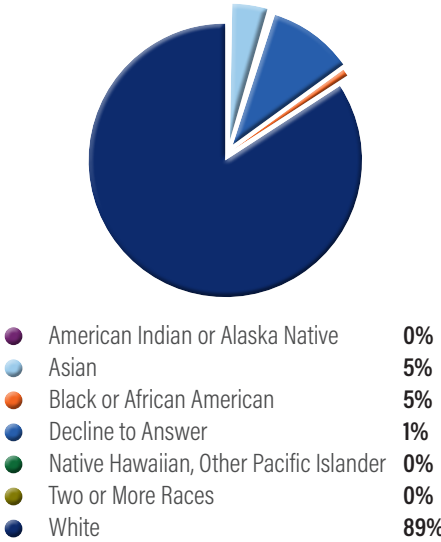
*Not all services are included in this chart and some patients receive multiple services.

Financial Highlights

	2023
Net patient service revenue	\$102,673,114
Grants and contributions	\$16,442,512
Other revenue	\$578,909
Fundraising	\$208,801
Total Operating Revenue	\$119,903,336

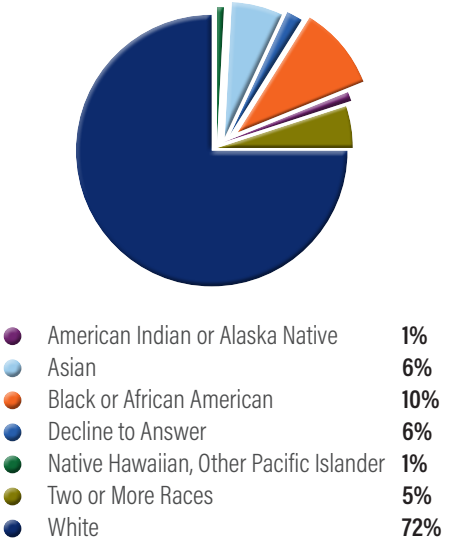
Demographics

Race - Leader Employees



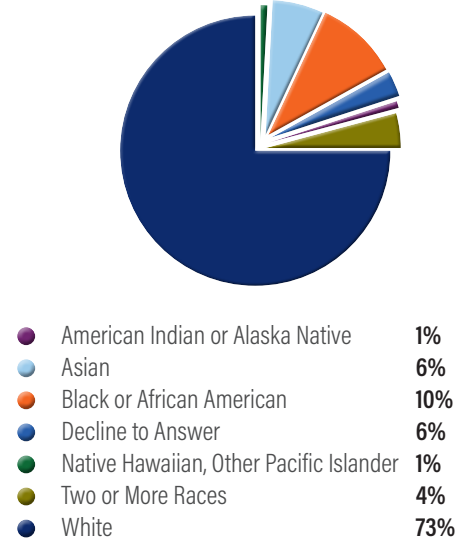
19% of leader employees identify as Hispanic or Latino. Percentages are rounded.

Race - Non-Leader Employees



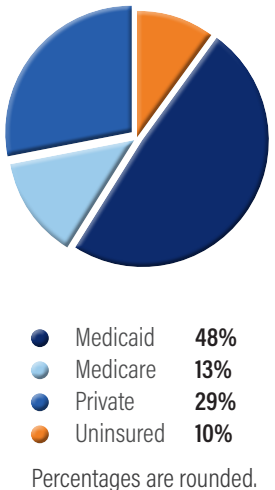
21% of non-leader employees identify as Hispanic or Latino. Percentages are rounded.

Race - All Employees

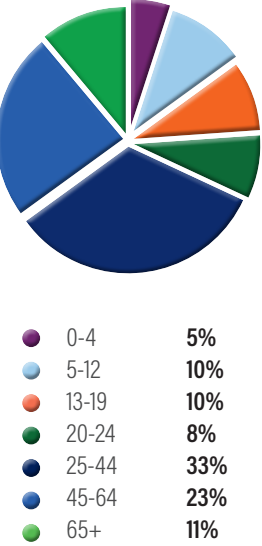


21% of all employees identify as Hispanic or Latino. Percentages are rounded.

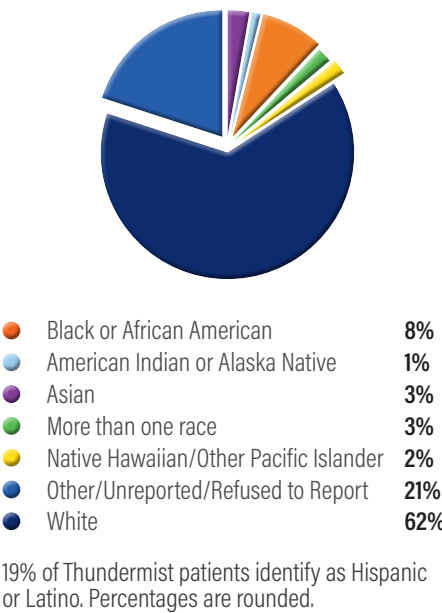
Insurance Category



Age



Race



Thundermist Board Members

In December 2023, current Thundermist board members completed an anonymous demographic survey, to which 11 of 14 board members responded. One respondent identified as Black, one as "other," and the remaining 75% as white. Twenty-five percent of respondents are gender diverse, 16% are women, and 50% are men. Survey participants reported

experience with being unhoused, living in public housing, having or being in recovery from a substance use disorder, having been a veteran, having a disability, being a member of the LGBTQ+ community, and living with HIV. Currently, more than 60% of board members are Thundermist patients.

Save the Dates!



Moonlight at the Garden Roger Williams Botanical Center

Thursday, October 24, 2024
6 - 8 p.m.

Moonlight at the Garden is Thundermist’s largest fundraising event of the year, raising nearly \$100,000 to support patient care in 2023. At last year’s event, attendees heard directly from Trina, a patient who had been diagnosed with breast cancer while she was unhoused. For more information on sponsorship opportunities for Moonlight at the Garden, contact Lauren Spivack at LaurenSp@ThundermistHealth.org.

Thundermist Annual Golf Tournament

Sakonnet Golf Club
Monday, June 3, 2024
10:30 a.m. Registration
11:30 a.m. Shotgun start

Thundermist Health Center’s Annual Golf Tournament is hosted at the beautiful Sakonnet Golf Club in Little Compton, RI. Last year, more than 100 attendees enjoyed a day of golf overlooking the water, all to support high-quality health care for our communities. For more information on sponsorship opportunities for this year’s tournament, contact Lauren Spivack at LaurenSp@ThundermistHealth.org.



Thundermist is grateful for our donors

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Our Mission

To improve the health of our patients and communities by delivering exceptional health care, removing barriers to that care, and advancing healthy lifestyles.

Our Vision

Every member of the Thundermist community can lead a healthy life.

Our Values

CARING: We bring passion and commitment to serve our diverse communities, patients and each other in a safe environment.

COMMUNITY: We respect the knowledge and skills of our local partners, patients, and employees. We support, create, and lead opportunities for growth and development.

INNOVATION: We develop, adopt, and contribute to advancements for improved health. We share knowledge openly with our staff, partners, patients, and communities.

EXCELLENCE: We maintain high standards and deliver exceptional results.

INTEGRITY: We are champions and advocates for our patients, communities, and each other. We stay true to our mission, vision, and values.

DIVERSITY: We are committed to building and fostering a team that is representative of the communities we serve, to ensure that all our patients, staff, and community members are seen, heard, and valued.



THUNDERMIST HEALTH CENTER SENIOR LEADERSHIP

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Thundermist!

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