

The Gateway to Health Study

The Gateway to Health Study (a project of Mass-ACCERT) helps community health centers improve breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screening and tobacco treatment, while also encouraging patients to stay connected to their communities.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

1. Closing cancer screening and tobacco treatment gaps

- Working with clinical champions and quality improvement staff to optimize workflows and use of population management tools to improve breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screening and tobacco treatment.

2. Strengthening patient digital access and navigation

- Training navigators to connect patients with digital resources.

3. Building community connection and social capital

- Referring patients to Union Capital as part of social needs screening.
- Supporting patients' learning and connections via network nights hosted by health center Union Capital Coordinator.
- Using a multilingual app to share information, including cancer prevention resources.



Union Capital is a nonprofit that offers small rewards to encourage civic participation and resource-sharing, hosts networking nights, and provides leadership opportunities

HOW IT WORKS

The Gateway to Health Study uses a randomized, step-by-step rollout to test the impact of an intervention at health centers across Massachusetts.

- Six health centers implement the 1-year intervention on a rolling basis starting in Spring 2026.
 - Clinical champions and quality improvement staff meet with the cancer screening and tobacco treatment research team to plan implementation approach on a biweekly basis.
 - Navigators participate in a comprehensive training to support digital access and literacy.
 - Health center staff that deliver social needs screening refer patients to Union Capital.
 - Union Capital Coordinator hosts network nights.
- EHR data will be used to measure cancer screening rates and tobacco treatment delivery.
- Health center staff will complete brief surveys at baseline and follow-up to share perspective of the acceptability and feasibility of the intervention, their health center context, and engagement.
- Health center and community partner staff will participate in one-on-one interviews to explore successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.
- Six comparison health centers share 2026-2028 data. They will be offered the cancer screening, tobacco, treatment, and digital navigation tools at the end of the study.

Mass-ACCERT is a research partnership between the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, and health centers across Massachusetts.

