

# Waukesha County Health Needs Assessment



A summary of key informant interviews

2012

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## Introduction

This report presents a summary of public health priorities for Waukesha County, as identified in 2012 by a range of providers, policy-makers, and other local experts and community members (“key informants”). These findings are a critical supplement to the Waukesha County community health needs assessment (CHNA) survey conducted through a partnership between Aurora Health Care, ProHealth Care, and Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin. The CHNA incorporates input from persons representing the broad community served by the hospitals, focusing on a range of public health issues relevant to the community at large.

Key informants in Waukesha County were identified by Aurora Health Care and Columbia St. Mary’s. These partners also invited the informants to participate and conducted the interviews. The interviewers used a standard interview script that included the following elements:

- Gaps and Unmet Needs in the Community
- Barriers and Challenges to addressing these needs
- Priorities in High Demand – summarized into broad topic areas

All informants were made aware that participation was voluntary and that responses would be shared with the Center for Urban Population Health for analysis and reporting. Based on the summaries provided to the Center for Urban Population Health, this report presents the results of the 2012 CHNA key informant interviews for Waukesha County.

**Limitations:** Eighteen key informant interviews were conducted for Waukesha County. The report relies on the opinions and experiences of a limited number of experts identified as having a finger on the community’s pulse. However, responses may not be representative of the overall perception of community strengths and needs. It is possible that the results would have been substantially different if a different set of informants had been interviewed. Results should be interpreted with caution and in conjunction with other Waukesha County data (e.g., CHNA surveys and secondary data reports).

## Participation

Eighteen community residents from Waukesha County were interviewed to gather information concerning the health of the County. Interviewees represented education, health services and support organizations, churches, police and fire departments, businesses, government, and non-profit services for adults and youth.

## Gaps and Unmet Needs

Key informants identified numerous gaps and unmet needs in community health in Waukesha County. Overall, **lack of access to health and dental services** is a key challenge. Health insurance, lack of interpreters and bilingual staff, and transportation further add to the difficulty of accessing health care for many residents. Small businesses were noted as struggling with insurance regulations. **Mental health, diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular issues were also named as common chronic conditions facing the community.** Importantly, many key informants emphasized **isolation, stress, and lack of support** alongside the challenges related to accessing services. **Wellness programs and issue-specific support services** and groups are in demand.

**Many gaps related to services for children and youth.** For children, issues included lack of afterschool programs, alcohol and drug issues, warm winter clothing, and general health education. Many interviewees indicated that education for parents and children on how to maintain a nutritious diet would greatly support the community. **Teen pregnancy** seems to be a pressing issue in the community. Services for teen mothers, car seat distribution, and accessible Cribs for Kids programs (currently challenged by a distribution center inconvenient for many) were also noted as specific gaps.

The picture is still challenging for adults, who also lack insurance and need more health education. **For older adults, the lack of transportation options combined with mobility issues** (related to orthopedic procedures and conditions) to limit access to services and increase isolation. Respite care was noted as another missing service in the County.

## Barriers and Challenges

Barriers to improving community health tended to echo the gaps and unmet needs identified above. **Informants felt that the lack of wellness programs for children and adults** challenges the community's capacity to change health-related behaviors. They also identified a lack of educational programs and **support groups for chronic diseases** and mental illness as challenges. Respondents felt that **support for parents and their children is missing**, and without these services, it is easy for "*children [to follow] the unhealthy habits of their parents.*" Healthy community activities are needed for children and youth, as are efforts to connect teenagers with available afterschool programs. **Funding and financial issues** further complicate these challenges.

**Lack of providers (specifically, dental and mental health), insurance issues, health literacy, and stigma** were also noted as challenges that the community must overcome. Currently, it's *"not easy to navigate health care."* **More communication about available services is needed**, although it was noted that compiling a resource guide is a difficult and time-consuming endeavor. One respondent suggested there needed to be increased cooperation between healthcare organizations, which potentially could assist with sharing information about available services to providers and community members. Lastly, **respondents felt too few providers accepted Medicaid**. Spanish-speaking providers or interpreters are also needed.

## **Priorities in High Demand**

Key informants were asked to identify the top health-related priorities for Waukesha County. Five issues were named by at least eight respondents as top priorities. In rank order, these included:

- (1) Transportation**
- (2) Mental Health Services**
- (3) Prevention and Early Detection**
- (4) Dental services**
- (5) Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco issues**

Of note, two informants noted that prevention and early detection services were needed specifically for dental health issues. Access to primary or specialty care and chronic disease were also noted as top priorities for the County. One respondent named each of the following as a top issue: care coordination, vision screening for diabetics, fitness, nutrition, prenatal care, and senior housing.

## Appendix A

### Waukesha County Key Informants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Laura Blanco, BA, MDiv	Pastor	St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Margaret Cory, MSW	Mobility Manager	Interfaith Senior Programs Waukesha County
Joan Erickson, CPRP	Director	Menomonee Falls Community Education and Recreation
Laura Hensel, MSE	Director	Hope Network
Jeff Hevey	Chief	Menomonee Falls Fire Department
Julie Italiano-Thomas, RN, BSN	School Nurse	Menomonee Falls School District
Nancy Major, MBA	Executive Director	Pregnancy Support Connection
Geoff Mertens, MA	Center Director	Tri-County YMCA
Julie Pekarske, RN	Parish Nurse	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Renee Ramirez	Executive Director	Waukesha County Community Dental Clinic
Theresa Reagan, MBA	Executive Director	Stillwaters Cancer Support Services
Claudia Roska, PhD	Executive Director	Addiction Resource Council
Anna Ruzinski	Police Chief/ Director of Protective Services	Menomonee Falls Police Department
Aaron Schmalzle, MHA	Executive Director	Sussex Area Outreach Services
Linda Smith, NP	Nurse Practitioner/ Coordinator	Community Outreach Health Clinic
Kathryn Wagner	Executive Director	Sussex Area Chamber of Commerce
Kathy Wodushek	Director	Falls Area Community Services
Toni Gumina Yates, IOM	Executive Director	Menomonee Falls Chamber of Commerce, Inc.