Aurora Medical Center – Bay Area Community Health Implementation Strategy

January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2025

Community health improvement is an effective tool for creating a shared vision and supporting a planned and integrated approach to improving health outcomes. The basic premise of community health improvement is that entities identify community health issues, prioritize those that can be addressed, and then develop, implement, and evaluate strategies to address those issues. Tax-exempt hospitals are required to conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) and develop an implementation strategy to document how the hospital will address prioritized community health needs. The following outlines a summary of the CHNA process and provides details on Aurora Medical Center – Bay Area's plans to address their prioritized community health needs.

SUMMARY OF MARINETTE AND MENOMINEE COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Beginning in 2022, Aurora Health Care, the Marinette County Public Health Department, and Provident Health Foundation conducted the first collaborative Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) for Marinette County. The CHNA serves as the foundation from which hospitals and the local health department develop their respective community health improvement strategies.

These findings are also intended to inform a broader audience — community health centers, government health agencies, public health departments, philanthropy, community-based organizations, and civic leaders — about the top health issues facing our community.

The Marinette and Menominee County CHNA relies on three sources of information:

- **Community Health Survey (primary data):** online and phone surveys conducted April – July 2022, with nearly 900 (400 phone and 489 online) Marinette County, Wisconsin and Menominee County, Michigan residents completing questions related to the top health needs in the community, individuals' perception of their overall health, access to health services, and social drivers of health, including racism and health equity.
- **Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups (primary data):** conducted by health system community benefit leaders with 45 individuals to identify the community's most pressing health issues and effective health improvement strategies.
- **Metopio (secondary data):** Advocate Aurora Health has a contract with Metopio to provide an internet-based data resource for their hospitals. This robust platform offers curated data from public and proprietary sources for information on health behaviors and health risks, health outcomes, health care utilization, demographic, and community-level drivers of health like economic, housing, employment, and environmental conditions. Data for each indicator is presented by race, ethnicity, and gender when the data is available (Metopio: https://public.metop.io).

This report along with additional Marinette and Menominee County CHNA materials can be found here Community Benefits | Aurora Health Care.

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SIGNIFICANT HEALTH NEEDS IDENTIFIED AND SELECTED FOR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND WHY

Advocate Aurora Health has a strong history of community engagement and service. A targeted strategy was developed to build on this history—one that transforms and aligns our community-facing work through a health equity lens. Health equity means everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. The Advocate Aurora Health Community Strategy provides an overarching framework for the health system centered on six areas of focus which include: access to innovative care; access to behavioral health; workforce development; community safety; housing; and food security. The Aurora Medical Center – Bay Area Community Health Implementation Strategy aligns with the Advocate Aurora Community Strategy, but this plan is unique to the health needs of the community served by Aurora Bay Area. Aurora Bay Area prioritized the following health issues to be addressed with their 2023-2025 Community Health Implementation Strategy:

- Access to Innovative Care and Services
- Behavioral Health: Mental Health and Substance Use
- Living Well: Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity
- Workforce Development

Access to Innovative Care and Services

Access to health care was a top health issue identified in the Aurora Bay Area Community Health Needs Assessment. Key stakeholder and survey respondent data call out that access to care is more comprehensive than just being seen by a health care provider. For this strategy, Access to Innovative Care and Services is about creating conditions in our hospital, across our health system and in our community to provide accessible, available, affordable, and targeted health care and health services to support everyone's ability to live well.

Data indicates that access to health care coverage and health care utilization is a top concern in Marinette County and Menominee County. The Primary Care Provider rate in Marinette County is 72.7 physicians per 100,000 residents, which is lower than the Wisconsin average of 89.7 physicians per 100,000 residents. The Primary Care Provider rate in Menominee County is 29.5 physicians per 100,000 residents, which is lower than the Michigan average of 94.2 physicians per 100,000 residents.

Behavioral Health: Mental Health and Substance Use

Behavioral health, which includes treatment and services for mental health conditions and substance use disorder, is a growing public health concern and was identified as a top health issue in the Aurora Medical Center - Bay Area Community Health Needs Assessment. The 2021 mental health hospitalization rate in Marinette County was 694.4 admissions per 100,000 residents, higher than the Wisconsin average of 650.8 admissions per 100,000 residents. The 2021 mental health emergency department visit rate was 892.8 visits per 100,000 residents, lower than the Wisconsin average of 919.8 visits per 100,000 residents. The 2017-2021 mental health Emergency Department visit rate for non-Hispanic Black residents was higher than the county average.

In 2022, 7 percent of Marinette and Menominee County phone survey respondents reported heavy drinking, which is defined as 61 or more drinks total per month for males and 31 or more drinks total per month for females in the past month. Additionally, 20 percent of Marinette and Menominee County phone survey respondents reported binge drinking, higher than the United States average of 16 percent. Binge drinking reflects the percent of adults aged 18 and older who report having five or more drinks (men) or four or more drinks (women) on an occasion in the past 30 days. Alcohol use is likely seriously underreported, so these estimates are an extreme lower bound on actual binge drinking prevalence.

Living Well: Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity

The socioeconomic and environmental conditions where people live, work, learn, play and pray have a direct impact on a wide range of health and quality of life outcomes. Living well is the aspirational goal we have when communities address targeted, yet critical community health needs. In the Aurora Bay Area Community Health Needs Assessment, the community identified nutrition, physical activity, and obesity as conditions that need to be addressed to achieve living well.

Ten percent of Marinette County residents have limited access to healthy foods, higher than the Wisconsin average. Twelve percent of Menominee County residents have limited access to healthy foods, lower than the Michigan average of 14 percent.

In 2019, 25.5 percent of adults in Marinette County reported no exercise in the past month, higher than the Wisconsin average (23.3 percent). Additionally, 27.3 percent of adults in Menominee County reported no exercise in the past month during the same year.

In 2019, 36.6 percent of adults in Marinette County were obese (have a body mass index (BMI) ≥30.0 kg/m^2 calculated from self-reported weight and height), higher than the Wisconsin and national averages of 34.6 percent and 32.3 percent, respectively. Additionally, 37.5 percent of adults in Menominee County were obese during the same year, higher than the Michigan average of 36.3 percent.

Workforce Development

A steady job in favorable working conditions means more than just a paycheck. Employment can also mean a link to health insurance benefits for a family, the ability to pay for childcare services or education, and the opportunity to purchase healthy, nutritious food. Unemployment, on the other hand, can lead to negative health outcomes such as a decline in one's ability to access care for themselves or their family members, development of depression or other behavioral health issues, or an inability to pay for basic living expenses. Employment can also affect health if one's working conditions are unsafe or if wages are not at a level that sustains one's living expenses.

The median household income in Marinette County is $55,209, which is lower than the Wisconsin median household income of $66,706. The median household income in Menominee County is $51,166, which is lower than the Michigan median household income of $62,428.

HEALTH PRIORITY: Access to Innovative Care and Services

IMPACT:

Increase initial and continual access to care by improving primary care offerings and access while also decreasing financial and social drivers of health barriers to receiving physical health care in the community.

DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:

- Ten percent of Marinette and Menominee County phone survey respondents reported an unmet medical care need in the last 12 months
- Nineteen percent of Marinette and Menominee County phone survey respondents reported using an Urgent Care as Primary Care

Source: Marinette Menominee County Community Health Survey, 2022

- Seventeen percent of Marinette and Menominee County online survey respondents reported they cannot get an appointment for their health needs quickly

Source: Marinette Menominee County Community Health Survey, 2022

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

LOCAL: **ADVOCATE AURORA COMMUNITY STRATEGY**
- Access to Innovative Care

NATIONAL: **HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030**
- Settings and Systems: Health Care

STRATEGY #1: Increase Consistent and Reliable Access to Primary Care

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS AT AURORA BAY AREA	COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS	OBJECTIVES
• Provide appropriate follow-up with non-emergent patients using our emergency department for primary care	• Aurora Medical Group	• Decrease the number of people using the Emergency Department as primary care and increase access to the full continuum of care
• Recruit primary care physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and specialty care physicians to the area	• Aurora Medical Group	• Increase quantity of qualified and competent medical professionals
• Conduct patient and community education on Advance Directives		• Improve patient autonomy and self-determination in medical decisions during all healthcare interactions

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

- Number of non-emergent ED visits without a primary care physician; seen by an Aurora Medical Group primary care provider within 28 days
- Number of new providers recruited, by type
- Number of educational sessions around Advance Directives conducted; Number of Advance Directives created and/or updated

HEALTH PRIORITY: Access to Innovative Care and Services cont.

STRATEGY #2: Increase Financial Access to Care

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS	COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS	OBJECTIVES
• Provide needed prescriptions upon discharge free of cost to under-insured patients who lack resources through the Aurora Essential Medication Fund	• Aurora Pharmacy	• Decrease the number of patients forgoing necessary medication due to the cost barrier
• Provide financial counseling that provides both patients and the public with a better understanding of health coverage options available to them and how to better manage health care costs. This will be done primarily through staff financial counselors who are licensed in both Michigan and Wisconsin to encourage sign-ups for both Exchange coverage and Michigan and Wisconsin Medicaid programs during enrollment periods. We will also ensure community agencies are aware of this no-cost service available to their clients	• Aurora Financial Counseling • Wisconsin Badger-Care • Michigan Medicaid/ Medicare	• Increase awareness and understanding of health coverage options

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

- Number of prescriptions provided; value
- Financial counseling sessions provided; number of Medicaid applications completed; number of Medicaid impact dollars realized

HEALTH PRIORITY: Access to Innovative Care and Services cont.

STRATEGY #3: Intentionally Address Social Drivers of Health Barriers to Access

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS	COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS	OBJECTIVES
• Provide a Social Worker in our Emergency Department to work with patients to identify social drivers of health needs (including housing, food security, etc.) and offer social service navigation, and appropriate linkages to community resources	• Community Resource Organizations	• Address the contributing factors in patients lives that affect their health and wellness and connect to resources to decrease negative health outcomes
• Provide complimentary transportation for individuals with transportation limitations needing rides home from Aurora Bay Area	• Marinette and Menominee Taxi Companies and Transportation Companies	• Decrease unnecessary extended hospital stays through providing reliable transportation home. Assist Emergency Department patients with transportation home after an ambulance ride, the inability to drive home, and/or a lack of available transportation
• Identify partners within the community to collaboratively increase transportation from a systemic perspective	• Kaizen Health	• Influence the systemic level of availability of public transportation and alternative transportation in our community
• Provide free childbirth classes for expectant mothers		• Increase education, knowledge, and supply access to expectant mothers of all socioeconomic statuses to better improve infant health and wellness outcomes

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

- Number of Emergency Department patients navigated to community resources
- Complimentary rides provided and dollar value of transportation costs
- Case Coordination program milestones
- Partners identified and initiatives undertaken
- Number of expectant mothers served

HEALTH PRIORITY: Behavioral Health: Mental Health and Substance Use

IMPACT:

Improve mental health and reduce misuse of alcohol and drugs among Marinette and Menominee County residents through integrating behavioral health in health care practices as well as improving community-wide behavioral health via collaborative efforts

DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:

- Eighty-three percent of Marinette Menominee online survey respondents reported alcohol and substance use as a top health issue in their community
- Sixty-five percent of Marinette Menominee online survey respondents reported mental health as a top health issue in their community

Source: Marinette Menominee Community Health Survey, 2022

- There are 810 Marinette County residents to every one mental health provider, compared to the Wisconsin rate of 490:1. There are 880 Menominee County residents to every one mental health provider, compared to the Michigan Rate of 370:1

Source: County Health Rankings, 2022

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

LOCAL: **ADVOCATE AURORA COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- Access to Behavioral Health Services

STATE: **WISCONSIN STATE HEALTH PLAN PRIORITY AREAS**

- Alcohol
- Opioids
- Suicide

NATIONAL: **HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030**

- Health Conditions: Mental Health and Mental Disorders
- Health Behaviors: Drug and Alcohol Use

HEALTH PRIORITY: Behavioral Health: Mental Health and Substance Use cont.

STRATEGY #1: Behavioral Health Services Integration

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS	COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS	OBJECTIVES
• Transform the way health care is delivered by adding Behavioral Health providers to patient's Primary Care provider team. Service goals include: screening and assessing for behavioral health, providing personalized assistance to understand emotional wellness, identifying useful community resources to help support patient wellness, facilitate communication between health care providers and patients, as well as help patients develop a personalized plan to keep patients on track of managing health and wellness needs	• Aurora Medical Group • Aurora Behavioral Health Services	• Reclassify Behavioral Health as Primary Care instead of Specialty Care to both decrease stigma as well as increase access
• Develop a pilot program that implements a Mental Health Navigator position in the Emergency Department to serve patients with high Emergency Department recidivism due to Mental and Behavioral Health related concerns and/or conditions	• Aurora Foundation • ADAPT Clinic • Northpointe Behavioral Health • HSHS Libertas • Area nonprofits	• Provide expertise and clarity in navigating the Behavioral Health recovery system in order to decrease crisis situations with Behavioral Health presenting individuals
• Provide support for the public awareness program, Drug Take Back Day, enabling community members to discard of unwanted opioid and other prescriptions safely and securely, reducing their availability within the community. Additionally provide a secure Drug Drop Box in the lobby of Aurora Bay Area for community members to safely discard unused and expired medications		• Reduced availability of opioids and other unwanted prescriptions in the community
• Collaborate with ADAPT Clinic when a patient arrives at the Emergency Department with a Behavioral Health crisis and continue ADAPT partnership	• Marinette County ADAPT Clinic	• Provide community members struggling with Behavioral Health crises in the Emergency Department and in-person Behavioral Health expert that will then refer and connect them to sustainable care opportunities

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

- Behavioral Health Primary Care Integration program milestones
- Pilot program process milestones
- Pounds of medication collected
- Number of patients assessed or referred to ADAPT for Behavioral Health services
- Number of ADAPT clinic referrals and connection to long-term affordable care

HEALTH PRIORITY: Behavioral Health: Mental Health and Substance Use cont.

STRATEGY #2: Improve Behavioral Health through community collaborations

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS	COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS	INTENDED RESULTS
• Provide coordination of the Behavioral Health Alliance. Our hospital will act as lead for resuming quarterly meetings with local partners and law enforcement who deal with various aspects of behavioral health care and response	• Menominee County Law Enforcement Agencies • Marinette County Law Enforcement Agencies • Marinette County ADAPT Clinic	• Ensure common practices and procedures between immediate responders to Behavioral Health incidents and crises. Respond to community behavioral health needs timely and appropriately
• Support Healthy Youth Coalition programming in the community	• Healthy Youth Coalition	• Support and elevate the longest-running, most successful youth behavioral health prevention and promotion program in Marinette and Menominee Counties
• Continue involvement with the N.E.W. Hope Coalition which assesses current resources available and determines what is needed for residents battling substance abuse in Oconto, Marinette, Menominee, Shawano, Florence, and Menominee (MI) Counties. The team will develop a strategic workforce plan to sustain long-term prevention and treatment resources in all six counties	• N.E.W. Hope Coalition	• Implement and advance regionally successful strategies for behavioral health improvement. Regionally collaborate to improve behavioral health in Northeast Wisconsin and Menominee County, Michigan
• Continue involvement in the Overdose Fatality Review	• Marinette County Department of Health and Human Services	• Identify system gaps and innovative community-specific overdose prevention and intervention strategies
• Serve in a leadership role in the Marinette County Community Health Improvement Plan Workgroups	• Marinette County Department of Health and Human Services	• Collaborate with community-wide stakeholders behavioral health to identify improvement areas as well as collaborate on innovative tactics to improve mental health
• Participate in outside organizations supporting Behavioral Health	• Marinette County Department of Health and Human Services	• Increase community collaboration around Behavioral Health to promote a positive community-wide attitude toward attaining help for Behavioral Health conditions

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

- Process milestones of Behavioral Health Alliance
- Process milestones of Healthy Youth Coalition
- Process milestones of N.E.W. Hope Coalition
- Process milestones of Overdose Fatality Review
- Process milestones of Marinette County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) workgroup
- Process milestones of community partnerships

HEALTH PRIORITY: Living Well

IMPACT:

Improve Marinette and Menominee County residents' quality of life and health by increasing access to physical activity opportunities, increasing nutrition education and healthy food access, while also focusing on a reduction in obesity

DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:

- Ten percent of Marinette County residents have limited access to healthy foods, higher than the Wisconsin average. Twelve percent of Menominee County residents have limited access to healthy foods, lower than the Michigan average of 14 percent

Source: Feeding America, 2020

- Seventy-seven percent of Marinette County residents have access to exercise opportunities, and 72 percent of Menominee County residents, both are lower than the Wisconsin and Michigan averages of 85 percent

Source: County Health Rankings, 2022

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

LOCAL: **ADVOCATE AURORA COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- Food Security

STATE: **WISCONSIN STATE HEALTH PLAN – KEY CONDITIONS**

- Improved Social and Community Conditions
- Healthy Environments and Supportive Systems

NATIONAL: **HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030**

- Social Determinants of Health: Economic Stability: Nutrition and Healthy Eating

STRATEGY #1: Improve nutrition education, healthy food access, and obesity reduction programming

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS	COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS	OBJECTIVES
• Introduce a more structured, evidence-based weight loss program in the Endocrinology Department, with a certified Endocrinologist	• Aurora Medical Group	• Provide evidence-based, data proven, successful weight loss programming to patients categorized as overweight or obese
• Continue serving on Marinette County Community Health Improvement Plan workgroup for Physical Activity, Nutrition and Obesity	• Marinette County Department of Health and Human Services	• Collaborate with community-wide stakeholders on physical activity, nutrition, and obesity to identify improvement areas as well as collaborate on innovative tactics to improve healthy living
• Plan, organize, and host food drives on our campus for healthy, shelf-stable options	• Marinette County food pantries	• Increase access to nutritious food options as well as food pantries

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

- Weight loss program milestones; pounds lost; BMI downward changes
- Marinette County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity process milestones
- Quality of food collected; pounds of food collected

HEALTH PRIORITY: Living Well cont.

STRATEGY #2: Increase access to opportunities as well as education about physical activity

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS	COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS	OBJECTIVES
• Develop model for promoting and increasing use of hospital grounds walking trails that can be extended to other community resources that promote healthy lifestyles (e.g. bike paths, walking trails, running routes etc.)	• Marinette County Tourism Department	• Provide year-round exercise access to Marinette and Menominee residents
• Support physical activity among community members	• Activity organizers	• Sustain and increase the number of physical activity events in the community
• Support physical activity among local youth	• Select Marinette and Menominee Area School Districts	• Prevent long-term physical activity injuries among student athletes, educate students on sustainable healthy living, and help student to achieve their healthy living goals in a productive and safe manner
• Provide Athletic Trainers to area schools in order to support concussion protocols and safe physical activity	• Select Marinette and Menominee Area School Districts	• Prevent concussions and increase physical activity among students

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

- Days of walking trail availability and program development process milestones
- Dollars given to local physical activity events
- Dollars given to school programs for their athletic and interscholastic sports programs
- Number of students served through Athletic Trainers provided and program measures

HEALTH PRIORITY: Workforce Development

IMPACT:

Increase opportunities for stable employment

DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:

- The median household income in Marinette County is $55,209, which is lower than the Wisconsin median household income of $66,706. The median household income in Menominee County is $51,166, which is lower than the Michigan median household income of $62,428

Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

LOCAL: **ADVOCATE AURORA COMMUNITY STRATEGY**
- Workforce Development

STATE: **WISCONSIN STATE HEALTH PLAN – KEY CONDITIONS**
- Improved Social and Community Conditions
- Healthy Environments and Supportive Systems

NATIONAL: **HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030**
- Social Determinants of Health: Economic Stability

STRATEGY #1: Increase Healthcare Industry Employment Opportunities

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS	COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS	OBJECTIVES
• Host clinical preceptorships as a clinical experience site for local LPN and RN programs	• Northeast Wisconsin Technical College	• Increase the number of highly trained and qualified LPNs and RNs in the community
• Provide ongoing education and training to local EMS agencies	• Local EMS agencies	• Increase the quality of emergency medical services in Marinette and Menominee counties
• Provide training programs for nursing assistant, medical assistant, sterile processing/surgical tech, and phlebotomist positions	• Herzing University • ACL Laboratories	• Hire trained individuals into permanent positions and upskill frontline team members

HEALTH PRIORITY: Workforce Development cont.

STRATEGY #1: Increase Healthcare Industry Employment Opportunities cont.

SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS	COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS	OBJECTIVES
• Provide Temporary Work Experience internships at our hospital. The 90-day internship is intended to give job seekers first-hand, paid experience on job duties, role expectations, and workplace culture	• Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)	• Offer permanent employment opportunities at Advocate Aurora Health when positions become available
• Provide NAVIGATE program, which includes soft-skills workshops, mentorship, and career coaching and development		• Provide advancement opportunities for current team members

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

- Number of clinical preceptorship participants
- Number of EMS trainings held
- Number of individuals, by program type trained and hired, by position
- Number of individuals completing interns; number of interns hired
- Number of team members participating in NAVIGATE; advancement outcomes

Note: Plans to address selected CHNA priorities are dependent upon resources and may be adjusted on an annual basis to best address the health needs of our community.