Aurora Medical Center – Manitowoc County
Community Health Implementation Strategy

January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2028

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 how Aurora Medical Center – Manitowoc County plans to address their prioritized community health needs.

SUMMARY OF CHNA PROCESS

In 2024, Aurora Medical Center – Manitowoc County (Aurora Manitowoc) participated with the Healthiest Manitowoc County collaborative to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) with partners in Manitowoc County, which consisted of a comprehensive presentation and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data.

The Aurora Manitowoc CHNA relies on two sources of primary data information, gathered through the Healthiest Manitowoc County (HMC) collaborative:

Community Health Survey: 458 valid online surveys were completed between August 28 and October 21, 2024, to gain insight from the community on top health needs in the community, individuals' perception of their overall health, access to health services and social drivers of health.

Key Stakeholder Interviews: 37 interviews were conducted between August and October 2024 to provide qualitative data regarding community needs. Key stakeholders interviewed were considered community experts who can provide valuable insight on pressing health issues in Manitowoc County.

Additionally, Aurora Health Care analyzes secondary data, or existing information gathered from various sources, to provide valuable insights and context from the following sources:

Metopio: Aurora Health Care 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. All data collected through Metopio was quantitative and included data comparisons between county, state and United States data.

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps – Manitowoc County: A program of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R) provides a snapshot of health for nearly every county in the nation, based on a variety of public health data. CHR&R advocates for an understanding of data and evidence to develop methods to improve health and equity. (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, About Us, 2024)

The top health issues identified in the Aurora Manitowoc CHNA were:

- Access to Care
- Chronic Disease and Prevention
- Economic Stability
- Mental Health
- Substance Misuse
- Unintentional Injury

The top health issues identified were presented to the hospital leadership team and community steering council, and members were asked to rank the issues based on the following criteria: size and seriousness of the problem; effectiveness of available interventions; available resources to address the health issue; whether the health care system is adequately positioned to address the issue; alignment with a defined community need identified through data; potential for the issue to impact other health and social issues; and the ability to effectively address or impact the issue through collaboration.

Using these criteria, Aurora Manitowoc has prioritized the significant health needs to address in 2026-2028:

Significant Need	Implementation Strategy Selection Reasoning
Behavioral Health	This need was selected because behavioral health issues, which includes both Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders, continue to rise in the county, including mental health crises such as suicide and self-harm. There are also concerns related to substance use emergency department visit rates being higher than the average in Wisconsin. The hospital is committed to supporting access to care and community initiatives to support better behavioral health for all.
Chronic Disease and Prevention	This need was selected because Manitowoc County has an aging population, which is associated with a greater burden of disease. The hospital brings strong expertise in treating these conditions and is actively engaged in educating the community on prevention strategies. Additionally, the hospital is committed to expanding its support for healthy food access within the community.
Unintentional Injury	The Aurora Manitowoc team decided to focus efforts on unintentional injury due to concerning trends in falls among their older adult population. It is also an area they have dedicated resources, especially in trauma and falls prevention. The hospital will strive to continue the momentum they currently have to impact outcomes and work with partners in the community to prevent injuries.

For each prioritized health need, the hospital plans to commit resources, which may include staff time, information technology systems, outreach, promotions and educational materials, funding, medical supplies, and other resources as available.

PRIORITY: Behavioral Health

IMPACT:
Improve access to mental health care and substance misuse treatment, and work on prevention of these issues within the community.

DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:

- The suicide death rate is higher in Manitowoc County than the state and the U.S.
- Manitowoc County has far fewer mental health providers per capita than the state and nation, which may lead to less access to mental health services for community members.
- Manitowoc County ranks in the highest (worst) 5% of the state for opioid-related emergency department visit rates.

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

LOCAL: Healthiest Manitowoc County

- Access to mental health crisis services
- Access to substance use services

STATE: Wisconsin State Health Improvement Plan

- Pursue population-level prevention of and intervention for mental health and substance use issues
- Increase accessibility of mental health and substance use intervention and recovery services

NATIONAL: Healthy People 2030

- Improve mental health
- Reduce drug and alcohol addiction

STRATEGY #1: Increase access to innovative behavioral health services

Planned Interventions	Collaborative Partners	Intended Outcomes
• Continue providing a behavioral health team member to screen for behavioral health issues in the ED including mental health, depression, alcohol abuse and drug use, and provide follow-up care and referral as appropriate • Expand integrated behavioral health services in primary care to reduce barriers to mental health care and improve timely, coordinated access for patients	• Aurora Medical Group (AMG) • Aurora Behavioral Health • Organizations within Findhelp platform	• Increased access to behavioral health services • Improved coordination for behavioral health care • Increased referrals to resources and follow up care • Reduced behavioral health ED and hospitalization visits

Measures

- Percent of patients screened
- Number of patients referred to services
- Number of patients screened in primary care
- Percent of patients receiving follow up care

**Impact measures are subject to change depending on the direction of each intervention.*

PRIORITY: Behavioral Health (CONTINUED)

STRATEGY #2: Collaborate on prevention tactics for improved behavioral health outcomes

Planned Interventions	Collaborative Partners	Intended Outcomes
• Mobilize system resources through investments and community service with mental health organizations • Participate in the HMC Substance Abuse/ Mental Health Coalition, which works to create a community that helps support people who have a substance use disorder or suffer from mental illness in staying safe, getting treatment, and maintaining their recovery • Continue supporting public awareness efforts for decreasing prescription drug misuse, including maintaining a designated drug take-back resource • Partner with local schools to provide counseling, behavioral health education and life-balance services through the Aurora Health Student and Family Assistance Program	• Healthiest Manitowoc County • Local schools • Community-based organizations • Manitowoc Police Department and Sheriff's Department	• Fewer cases of unintentional drug poisoning • Improved coordination between system and partners on mental health response • Increased support for community-based substance use disorder organizations

Measures

- Progress milestones
- Number of community-based organizations supported; funding provided; total hours of employee time provided
- Number of individuals educated
- Pounds of medication collected
- Number of families served; number of education sessions

**Impact measures are subject to change depending on the direction of each intervention.*

PRIORITY: Chronic Disease and Prevention

IMPACT:
Improve chronic disease management and access to resources to support prevention efforts and long-term health outcomes.

DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:

- Heart disease and cancer mortality rates are higher in Manitowoc County than in the state and nation.
- In the county, over 35% of adult residents are obese, and this rate has increased over time.
- Food insecurity and physical inactivity contribute to increased risk of chronic disease. In Manitowoc County, 11.5% of households experience food insecurity, and 20.5% of adults report no physical activity.

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

LOCAL: Healthiest Manitowoc County

- Making healthy food choices

STATE: Wisconsin State Health Improvement Plan

- Ensure that health care services meet the unique needs of all Wisconsinites
  - » Increase emphasis on social determinants of health supports and other preventive services

NATIONAL: Healthy People 2030

- Improve cardiovascular health and reduce deaths from heart disease and stroke
- Reduce the burden of diabetes and improve quality of life for all people who have, or are at risk for, diabetes
- Improve health by promoting healthy eating and making nutritious foods available

STRATEGY #1: Support access to comprehensive services, resources and education to promote healthy living and prevent chronic disease

Planned Interventions	Collaborative Partners	Intended Outcomes
• Provide education and referrals to the WIC Special Supplemental Nutrition Program • Screen patients for social drivers of health needs that impact health outcomes, including food security, and provide community referrals through a social worker • Deliver education on diabetes, hypertension, and stroke prevention and management to better support chronic disease outcomes	• Aurora Medical Group (AMG) • Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program • Clinical educators	• Increased access to food, health care and nutrition education • Increased connection to community-based resources that support disease prevention and management • Improved disease management • Reduced preventable emergency department use related to chronic conditions

Measures

- Number of women educated
- Number of women receiving WIC referrals
- Number of patients referred to resources
- Number of individuals receiving education by type of chronic disease

**Impact measures are subject to change depending on the direction of each intervention.*

PRIORITY: Chronic Disease and Prevention (CONTINUED)

STRATEGY #2: Collaborate on chronic disease prevention within the community

Planned Interventions	Collaborative Partners	Intended Outcomes
• Participate in local initiatives that focus on chronic disease prevention • Mobilize system resources through investments and community service with health and wellness organizations • Host food drives and coordinate cafeteria donations and other initiatives on campus that increase access to healthy food options	• Aurora Health Care Women's Health • Farmer's Market • Boys and Girls Club • Healthiest Manitowoc County • Food pantries • Community-based organizations	• Increased access to healthy foods for community members • Stronger prevention efforts through partnerships and advocacy alignment • Increased reach of education among priority populations

Measures

- Progress updates
- Number of community-based organizations supported; funding provided; total hours of employee time provided
- Number of individuals utilizing EBT receiving support at the Farmer's Market
- Number of food donation events
- Pounds of food donated

**Impact measures are subject to change depending on the direction of each intervention.*

PRIORITY: Unintentional Injury

IMPACT:
Enhance patient and community safety by advancing fall prevention and strengthening trauma-informed recognition, response, and access to care following injury or assault.

DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:

- Accidents is the third leading cause of death in the county.
- Unintentional falls are a concern in the county for older adults, leading to a high number of emergency department visits and hospitalizations; the fall mortality rate in the county is significantly higher than the national rate.
- Manitowoc County has higher mortality rates for injuries than Wisconsin and the United States.

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

LOCAL: Healthiest Manitowoc County

- Safe recreational opportunities for all ages

Aurora Health Care Services

- Forensic Nursing Services

STATE: Wisconsin State Health Improvement Plan

- Build systems that support and protect the physical safety of people and communities
- Build systems that support and protect the mental and psychological safety of people and communities

NATIONAL: Healthy People 2030

- Prevent Injuries
- Prevent violence and related injuries and deaths
- Prevent hospital visits and improve emergency department and hospital care

STRATEGY #1: Enhance patient safety to reduce injury risk and support individuals affected by violence

Planned Interventions	Collaborative Partners	Intended Outcomes
• Engage the Aurora Manitowoc Falls Team to improve falls prevention best practices on campus • Provide trauma-informed care and a private, supportive waiting space for individuals impacted by assault to reduce distress and support recovery • Refer patients to appropriate medical, clinical, counseling, and advocacy services following a safety event	• Aurora Medical Group (AMG) • Forensic Nursing Services • Organizations within Findhelp platform	• Reduced risk of falls and fall-related injuries among hospitalized patients • Increased awareness of fall risks and prevention strategies • Improved coordination among multidisciplinary teams to support patient safety • Increased access to trauma-informed, patient-centered care for individuals who have experienced assault • Improved patient experience through the availability of a safe, supportive, and private care environment

Measures

- Progress updates
- Number of fall-risk assessments completed
- Number of individuals provided with services
- Number of referrals; percent connected to services

**Impact measures are subject to change depending on the direction of each intervention.*

PRIORITY: Unintentional Injury (CONTINUED)

STRATEGY #2: Advance community safety through injury prevention, assault support services, and coordinated emergency preparedness

Planned Interventions	Collaborative Partners	Intended Outcomes
• Explore falls prevention partnerships and support for a Stepping On program • Partner with local organizations and teammates on assault education and awareness • Strengthen emergency response through participation in incident command-based preparedness drills and coordinated planning with local partners to improve readiness for large-scale community incidents	• Aging and Disability Resource Center of Lakeshore • Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging • Local first responders • Point Beach Powerplant • Forensic Nursing Services • Community-based organizations	• Increased awareness of fall risks and prevention strategies • Reduced emergency department and hospitalization rates due to falls • Increased awareness of available assault support services within the community • Improved coordination of emergency response

Measures

- Progress updates
- Number of education events
- Number of individuals educated
- Hours of staff time provided to emergency response planning

**Impact measures are subject to change depending on the direction of each intervention.*

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.

Needs Not Addressed

This Community Health Implementation Strategy focuses on the above priority health needs selected by the hospital based on community input, available resources, and alignment with organizational and community partner capacity. The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) also identified additional significant health needs, including access to care and economic stability. These needs, while also important, are not addressed in this CHIS due to factors including the presence of existing initiatives and a determination that the hospital is not best positioned to lead efforts in the area of economic stability at this time. Aurora Health Care will continue to collaborate with community partners and share resources, when appropriate, to support progress on these needs within the community.

Adoption of the Implementation Strategy

The Community Health Implementation Strategy report was adopted by the Aurora Health Care Metro Board, the authorizing body of the hospital, on April 20, 2026.