Aurora Psychiatric Hospital
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 Psychiatric Hospital (APH) plans to address their prioritized community health needs.

SUMMARY OF CHNA PROCESS

In 2025, Aurora Psychiatric Hospital (APH) participated with the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership (MHCP) collaborative in Milwaukee County to conduct a collaborative Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), which consisted of a comprehensive presentation and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data.

The APH CHNA relies on two sources of primary data information, gathered through the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership:

Community Health Survey: An online survey of more than 6,200 Milwaukee County residents that addressed adult and child health risk factors, health behaviors and perceptions of pressing community health needs.

Community Partner Interviews: Conducted by health system community benefit leaders with 42 individuals representing 36 organizations and 11 focus groups to identify community health needs, root causes and contributing social factors. Interviewees offered insight on effective health improvement strategies currently in place as well as suggestions for future opportunities.

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 – Milwaukee 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 Psychiatric Hospital CHNA were:

- Access to Care
- Chronic Disease
- Economic and Housing Opportunities
- Food Insecurity
- Maternal and Child Health
- Mental Health
- Safety and Violence
- Substance Use

The top health issues identified were presented to the Aurora Psychiatric Hospital team, 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 Psychiatric Hospital has prioritized the significant health needs to address in 2026-2028:

Significant Need	Implementation Strategy Selection Reasoning
Mental Health	Mental health was selected as a priority because it was voted as the most important health issue affecting our community during the survey process. Emergency departments across the system continue to see patients experiencing mental health crises. Mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression affect a significant portion of the population and are closely associated with poor overall health. As a specialty hospital with expertise in mental health care, APH is committed to advancing community-based mental health initiatives and supporting efforts that improve access, awareness, and outcomes.
Substance Use	Substance use was selected as a priority because it was identified as a major health concern through community surveys and local health data. It ranks among the top issues affecting Milwaukee County and often co-occurs with mental health conditions, increasing complexity of care. Rising rates of substance use disorders contribute to poor health outcomes and community safety challenges. As a behavioral health specialty hospital, APH is committed to addressing this need through treatment, crisis intervention, programs, and partnerships that support prevention and recovery.

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: Mental Health

IMPACT: Improve access to care and increase awareness on mental health issues to better promote overall well-being for all community members.

DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:

- Mental health emergency department (ED) visits are much higher in Milwaukee County compared to the state average.
- Depression rates in the county and the state have been increasing since 2020; suicide mortality rates have also been steadily increasing.
- The suicide and self-injury ED visit rate is highest among children ages 5-17 compared to other age groups in the county.

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

LOCAL: MKE Elevate

- Improve availability and uptake of behavioral health resources.

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.

STRATEGY #1: Increase access to innovative mental health services

Planned Interventions	Collaborative Partners	Intended Outcomes
• Deliver comprehensive wraparound services through patient coordination addressing social needs • Continue to provide intake assessments in the ED by Aurora behavioral health team members for all 16 Aurora Health Care hospitals, either in person or via secure video link, and direct patients to appropriate resources and levels of care • Continue to provide tele-intake assessments to direct patients to appropriate resources and levels of care • Provide 24/7 Aurora Behavioral Health Services call center coverage to support assessment and crisis intervention • Enhance the behavioral health - primary care integration model of care by increasing the number of patient contacts • Provide a care model to meet the needs of children and adolescent mental health • Continue to provide enhanced access to virtual Behavioral Health care	• Aurora Medical Group (AMG) • All Aurora Health Care hospitals • Community-based organizations within the FindHelp platform	• Increased access to mental health services • Improved coordination for mental health care • Increased referrals to resources and follow up care • Reduced mental health crisis ED and hospitalization visits

Measures

- Number of ED intake assessments provided
- Number of tele-intake assessment calls provided
- Number of Aurora Behavioral Health Services Call Center calls offered; Number of calls answered; Number of services to Behavioral Health orders
- Number of psychiatry consultations provided
- Number of referrals provided
- Process milestones of behavioral health - primary care integration; number of patients served; number of Primary Care Physicians supported
- Number of children and adolescents served
- Progress Milestones

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

PRIORITY: Mental Health (CONTINUED)

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

Planned Interventions	Collaborative Partners	Intended Outcomes
• Partner with local mental health organizations on awareness and education campaigns • Mobilize hospital and system resources to support organizations working on preventing mental health issues within the community	• Local health departments • NAMI of Southeast Wisconsin • Education institutions • Community-based Organizations • Milwaukee Health Care Partnership	• Increased awareness and access to mental health services in the community • Reduced stigma • Improved partnerships and reduced wait time to mental health services

Measures

- Progress Milestones
- Number of community-based organizations supported; funding provided; total hours of employee time provided

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

PRIORITY: Substance Use

IMPACT:
Expand substance use treatment, support and prevention education to reduce overdose deaths and substance-related accidents

DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:

- ED and hospitalization rates due to substance use are significantly higher in Milwaukee County than in Wisconsin overall.
- There are vast disparities relating to opioid-related deaths, with the highest death rates for American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black/African American, suggesting a gap in availability to SUD treatment and risk reduction materials, such as Narcan.
- The percent of adults that report binge drinking is much higher in both Milwaukee County and Wisconsin when compared to the United States; the alcohol-related mortality rate is also significantly higher in the county.

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

LOCAL: MKE Elevate

- Improve availability and uptake of behavioral health resources.
- Promote efforts at all levels to increase harm-reduction methods.

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

- Reduce drug and alcohol addiction.

STRATEGY #1: Increase access to comprehensive treatment for substance use disorders (SUD)

Planned Interventions	Collaborative Partners	Intended Outcomes
• Offer the evidence-informed Dual Diagnosis Program designed to address mental health and substance use needs at the same time to strengthen long-term sobriety outcomes • As part of SUD treatment, provide increased programming to support life skills education • Provide non-clinical meeting space for Lighthouse on Dewey to accommodate support groups serving individuals and their families seven days a week through the journey to maintain sobriety • Operate the Alumni House, staffed by Peer Support Specialists, which provides safe housing and supportive, structured living conditions for up to nine months to individuals exiting drug rehabilitation programs at the Aurora Dewey Center	• Aurora Medical Group (AMG) • Aurora Behavioral Health Services • Milwaukee Health Care Partnership	• Increased access to substance use disorder treatment • Reduced substance-related harm and emergency events • Improved early screening, referral and harm reduction • Increased peer support services to aid in recovery

Measures

- Average number of hours per week Lighthouse on Dewey is utilized by support groups
- Average number of support groups and individuals attending per week
- Progress milestones of local partnerships
- Number of Alumni House residents
- Number of visits

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

PRIORITY: Substance Use (CONTINUED)

STRATEGY #2: Collaborate on prevention tactics to reduce harm from substance use

Planned Interventions	Collaborative Partners	Intended Outcomes
• Participate in local initiatives that focus on risk reduction and prevention of substance use disorders • Mobilize hospital and system resources through investments and community service with community-based organizations working on preventing substance use disorders within the community	• Local health departments • NAMI of Southeast Wisconsin • Education institutions • Community-based Organizations	• Fewer cases of unintentional drug poisoning • Improved coordination between system and partners • Sustained reduction in substance misuse and related harms • Increased support for community-based SUD organizations

Measures

- Progress milestones for local coalitions
- Number of community-based organizations supported; funding provided; total hours of employee time provided

**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 substance use, access to care, chronic disease, economic and housing opportunities, food insecurity, maternal and child health, and safety and violence. These needs are not directly addressed in this CHIS because the hospital is a specialty psychiatric hospital and has limited capacity to implement strategies outside its primary area of focus. 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.