# Aurora West Allis Medical Center
# 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 West Allis Medical Center plans to address their prioritized community health needs.

## SUMMARY OF CHNA PROCESS

In 2024, Aurora West Allis Medical Center (Aurora West Allis) participated with the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership (MHCP) to conduct a collaborative Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in Milwaukee County, which consisted of a comprehensive presentation and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data.

The Aurora West Allis 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 key 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.

Milwaukee County CHNA reports were developed in collaboration with the Center for Urban Population Health and IMPOWER.

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 – 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 West Allis CHNA were:**

- Access to Care
- Chronic disease
- Economic and housing opportunities
- Food insecurity
- Maternal, child and reproductive health
- Mental health
- Safety and violence
- Substance use

The top health issues identified were presented to the Aurora West Allis Medical Center 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 West Allis has prioritized the significant health needs to address in 2026-2028:**

| Significant Need | Implementation Strategy Selection Reasoning |
|---|---|
| **Food Security** | This need was selected because the data and community conditions demonstrate its prevalence, impact, and inequitable distribution across Milwaukee County. Food deserts have become widespread, forcing residents to rely on dollar stores or convenience retailers that offer limited healthy food options. These access challenges are especially concerning given Milwaukee's large population and existing health disparities. Lack of reliable access to nutritious food contributes directly to negative health outcomes, including chronic disease, poor nutrition, and reduced overall well-being. |
| **Maternal and Child Health** | This need was selected because Milwaukee County experiences higher-than-average rates of births to single or unmarried women and higher teen birth rates, which are often associated with economic vulnerability, reduced access to resources, and increased caregiving burdens. These challenges are compounded by the county's worse Economic Hardship Index score compared to the state, with Black and Hispanic families disproportionately affected. These conditions contribute to persistent gaps in maternal and child health outcomes across the county, underscoring the need for focused strategies to improve health and equity for families. |
| **Mental Health** | Mental health was selected as a priority for the Community Health Implementation Strategy because it is a foundational component of overall health and was consistently identified as a critical concern by both community members and key stakeholders. Mental health affects emotional, psychological, and social well-being, shaping how individuals cope with stress, maintain relationships, make decisions, and function in daily life. Supporting mental health is essential not only to prevent illness but to help individuals and communities thrive. |

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: Food Security

**IMPACT:**
Improve overall food security for residents of West Allis and Milwaukee County.

**DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:**

- In Milwaukee County, many residents experience food insecurity, including 10% who are White, 25% who are Hispanic/Latino, and 30% who are Black.
- In Milwaukee County, 20% of residents receive Food Stamps.

## ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

### LOCAL: City of Milwaukee Health Department

- Reduce food injustice in areas of food apartheid through a combination of community-based interventions, relationship building and equitable practices

### STATE: Wisconsin State Health Plan Priorities

- Provide person and community centered care

### NATIONAL: Healthy People 2030

- Reduce household food insecurity and hunger

## STRATEGY #1: Offer connections to food resources for residents of West Allis and Milwaukee County

| Planned Interventions | Collaborative Partners | Intended Outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| • Manage the west Allis Food Panty and Resource Fair<br>• Explore food drives and other initiatives to increase access to healthy, shelf stable food options<br>• Support expanding the trusted partner network of food resources to increase access to healthy foods for patients that screen positive for food insecurity | • Aurora Medical Group (AMG)<br>• Just One Ministries<br>• Community Based Organizations (CBOs) within the Findhelp platform | • Increased free food and resources to the community<br>• Decreased food insecurity<br>• Improved coordination between food partners and Aurora West Allis |

### Measures

- Number of individuals served
- Number of connected partners
- Pounds of food donated

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

# PRIORITY: Maternal and Child Health

**IMPACT:**
Improve overall maternal and child health for the residents of Milwaukee County through preventative strategies and community collaboration.

**DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:**

- The infant mortality rate in Milwaukee County exceeds the state rate, with stark racial disparities - Black/African American infants die at more than three times the rate of White infants.
- Milwaukee County has much higher rate of births to single/unmarried women, which may correlate to economic vulnerability and limited access to resources.
- Depression during pregnancy is highest among Black women in Wisconsin, at 27% compared to 17% of white women and 15% of Hispanic women.

## ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

### LOCAL: City of Milwaukee Health Department

- Increase access to full-spectrum, holistic and supportive care throughout pregnancy and the postpartum period

### STATE: Wisconsin State Health Plan Priorities

- Creating supporting systems of care

### NATIONAL: Healthy People 2030

- Increase the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care
- Increase the proportion of women who had a healthy weight before pregnancy

## STRATEGY #1: Offer initiatives that support maternal and child health outcomes

| Planned Interventions | Collaborative Partners | Intended Outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| • Provide car seat safety and education<br>• Distribute Pack N Play to families to promote safe sleep initiatives<br>• Provide maternal depression screenings and facilitate referrals as needed<br>• Improve awareness of WIC services for delivering mothers<br>• Provide flexible supports that meet the diverse needs of mothers and children | • Aurora Maternal Health Service line<br>• Aurora Behavioral Health Services<br>• Community-based organizations<br>• Women, Infants, Children program | • Improved car seat knowledge and compliance<br>• Reduced safety risks in the first year of life<br>• Increased access to mental health services to perinatal mothers |

### Measures

- Number of education classes conducted
- Number of participants per class/cohort
- Number of referrals for maternal depression screening
- Number of Pack N Plays distributed
- Number of children and adolescents served
- Process updates

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

# PRIORITY: Maternal and Child Health (CONTINUED)

## STRATEGY #2: Increase healthy birth outcomes through community collaborations

| Planned Interventions | Collaborative Partners | Intended Outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| • Receive referrals and refer patients to the Healthy Beginnings Program, which is designed to provide services and support to expectant mothers who are considered high risk for adverse pregnancy outcomes<br>• Provide referrals to the Connect to Care Primary Care Program<br>• Participate in maternal health coalitions to improve maternal and child health outcomes<br>• Explore opportunities to advocate for improved access to care | • Southwest Suburban Health Department<br>• Milwaukee Health Care Partnership<br>• Advocate Government Affairs | • Improved support to high-risk expectant mothers<br>• Increased referrals to primary care/OB services<br>• Improved maternal and child health outcomes<br>• Increased access to care for expectant mothers and children |

### Measures

- Number of referrals made to primary/OB services
- Number of referrals made via the Southwest Suburban Health Department
- Annual process updates

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

# PRIORITY: Mental Health

**IMPACT:**
Improve mental health among Milwaukee and Waukesha County residents through preventative strategies and increased access to behavioral health services.

**DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH NEED DATA:**

- Mental health was noted as the number one health issues selected during key stakeholder interviews and focus groups and was ranked 2nd overall by all survey respondents.
- Among Milwaukee County residents, 17% reported poor mental health as part of the 2022 survey.
- Milwaukee County residents visit the ED for behavioral health concerns at a rate of 2369.9 per 100,000 residents compared to Wisconsin residents at 1,446.2 per 100,000 residents.

## 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 mental health services

| Planned Interventions | Collaborative Partners | Intended Outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| • Provide maternal depression screenings<br>• Administer depression and, if indicated, suicide screening at all Emergency Department patient encounters, and provide safety planning and linkages to resources<br>• Provide trauma recovery support through the Trauma Recovery Advocate<br>• Enhance the behavioral health - primary care integration model of care by increasing the number of patient contacts<br>• Provide a care model to meet the needs of children and adolescent mental health | • Aurora Medical Group<br>• Aurora Behavioral Health Services<br>• Milwaukee Health Care Partnership | • Increased number of individuals treated for postpartum depression<br>• Improved identification and referrals for patients to appropriate Behavioral Health services |

### Measures

- Number of Emergency Department patients assessed for Behavioral Health Services
- Number of new mothers screened for maternal depression
- Number of patients supported with trauma recovery services
- Number of referrals to mental health services
- Process updates

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

## PRIORITY: Mental Health (CONTINUED)

**STRATEGY #2:** Improve mental health through community collaborations

| Planned Interventions | Collaborative Partners | Intended Outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| • Participate in Overdose Fatality Review to examine trends, risk factors, and missed opportunities for intervention to support people with mental health and substance use issues<br>• Participate in the Mental and Behavioral Health Task Force to inform hospital-based practices, referral pathways, and community partnerships<br>• Host NAMI Family to Family initiative, an educational program for family, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions<br>• Partner with local mental health organizations on awareness and education campaigns | • Milwaukee County Health Department<br>• South Suburban Health Department<br>• West Allis Police and Fire Departments<br>• National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) | • Reduced system gaps and increased access to innovative community-specific overdose prevention and intervention strategies<br>• Improved awareness of mental health and substance abuse issues to support individuals and families impacted<br>• Improved support for families dealing with mental illness through education and support<br>• Increased awareness and access to mental health services in the community |

### Measures

- Number of outreach activities held by Mental and Behavioral Health Task Force
- Progress milestones of the Mental and Behavioral Health Task Force
- Progress milestones of Overdose Fatality Review
- Number of participants in NAMI programs

**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, economic and housing opportunities, safety and violence, and substance use. These needs, while also important, are not addressed in this CHIS due to factors such as limited hospital resources, the presence of existing initiatives, or a determination that the hospital is not best positioned to lead efforts in these areas 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.