



# Ascension Wisconsin Community Health Improvement Plan

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2019-2022



**Howard Young  
Medical Center**



**Ascension  
Eagle River  
Hospital**



**Ascension  
St. Mary's Hospital**

## Ascension St. Mary's Hospital, Ascension Eagle River Hospital and Howard Young Medical Center, part of Ascension Wisconsin Community Health Improvement Plan – Implementation Strategy

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### Introduction

Ascension St. Mary's Hospital, Ascension Eagle River Hospital and Howard Young Medical Center are part of Ascension. Ascension Wisconsin ([ascension.org/wisconsin](http://ascension.org/wisconsin)) operates 24 hospital campuses, more than 100 related healthcare facilities and employs more than 1,300 primary and specialty care clinicians from Racine to Eagle River. Serving Wisconsin since 1848, Ascension is a faith-based healthcare organization committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable. As one of the leading non-profit and Catholic health systems in the U.S., Ascension operates 2,600 sites of care – including 151 hospitals and more than 50 senior living facilities – in 21 states and the District of Columbia.

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### Prioritized Significant Health Needs

The community health needs assessment (CHNA) was conducted in 2018 and focused on the needs of individuals in Forest, Oneida and Vilas counties. Based on this CHNA process, the hospitals will focus on the following priority health needs in 2019-2022:

- Mental Health
  - Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA)
  - Chronic Disease
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### Implementation Plan

This implementation plan is part of a broad community effort to address the priority health needs in the community and achieve long-term impact. As such, this plan includes collaborative efforts as well as hospital-specific initiatives. The hospitals participate in collaborative efforts through several coalitions. Those coalitions are described in each health priority section.

## Mental Health

**Goal:** Improve the mental health of community members

**Long-Term Performance Indicators:**

- By December 31, 2025, decrease the average number of mentally unhealthy days in the past 30 days reported by adults:
  - Forest County -- from 3.9 to 3.7 days
  - Oneida County -- from 3.4 to 3.2 days
  - Vilas County -- from 3.7 to 3.5 days
    - Source for all: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), available on the County Health Rankings website; baseline year is 2016
  
- By December 31, 2025, decrease the suicide rate to 0:
  - Forest County -- from 12.7 per 100,000 population
  - Oneida County -- from 16.5 per 100,000 population
  - Vilas County -- from 21.2 per 100,000 population
    - Source for all: Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health; baseline years are 2009-2013

For mental health strategies, the hospitals consistently participate in the Northwoods Community Outreach, Prevention and Education (COPE) Coalition. The mission of Northwoods COPE is to “serve and support all people affected by mental health and substance abuse through education, intervention and prevention.” Northwoods COPE partners and collaborates “to provide knowledge and meaningful resources to improve the well-being of all.” Multiple organizations participate in the coalition, including:

- Health departments from Forest, Oneida and Vilas counties
- Human Service Center - regional, quasi-governmental provider of services for mental health, chemical dependency and developmental disabilities
- Headwaters, Inc. - non-profit serving individuals with disabilities
- KIN (Kids in Need) - after school program
- County social services departments
- Marshfield Clinic Health System
- Lac du Flambeau Community Health / Peter Christensen Health Center
- Law enforcement
- Multiple school districts
- Lac du Flambeau schools
- Area Health Education Center (AHEC)
- County veterans service offices
- University of Wisconsin – Extension
- Community members

### Strategy 1: Awareness and Training

Building community awareness of current mental health issues contributes to community readiness to address the issue, helps reduce stigma and offers individuals and families resources to improve mental health. The hospitals, with the Community Outreach Prevention and Education (COPE) Coalition, will focus on several mental health topics with a variety of audiences.

#### The hospitals, with the COPE Coalition, will:

- Conduct suicide prevention trainings (e.g., Question, Persuade, Refer [QPR] or Mental Health First Aid) in each county annually
- Promote resources to individuals who may be more vulnerable to suicide or depression (e.g., the HeadsUPGuys campaign for men as promoted in bars/taverns)
- Promote prevention and treatment trainings (e.g., on family resiliency or recovery) for mental health and other health professionals and health professions students
- Lead the biennial Mental Health Summit

#### Medium-Term Indicators:

- By June 30, 2022, annually train individuals from at least seven sectors in suicide prevention (e.g., QPR) and/or mental health promotion/resiliency (e.g., Mental Health First Aid). Sectors: healthcare, business, media, schools, youth organizations, law enforcement, faith community, civic groups, government.
- By June 30, 2022, increase the number of QPR trainers per county by one each year. (Baseline 2018: Forest [9]; Oneida [9]; Vilas [5].)

#### Collaborative partners:

- COPE Coalition
- Tavern League

#### Resources committed:

- Staff time
- Travel
- Printing
- Meeting space

### Strategy 2: Access to Resources

Ascension Wisconsin hospitals will increase access to Mental Health/AODA resources by collaborating with community partners to promote awareness of and services provided through the Wisconsin Addiction Recovery Hotline, managed by 2-1-1 Wisconsin.

#### The hospitals, with the COPE Coalition, will:

- Throughout the community, share resources (e.g., flyers, posters, tear-offs, business cards) containing the 2-1-1 Wisconsin Addiction Recovery Hotline information to increase awareness of the services provided

**Medium-Term Indicators:**

- By June 30, 2022, increase by 50 percent annually the number of 2-1-1 calls for addiction and mental health, from 83 in 2018 to 280 in 2021. (Source: 2-1-1 Counts for Forest, Oneida and Vilas Counties combined)
- By June 30, 2022, 75 percent of primary care providers will be aware of 2-1-1 and have referred patients. Ascension Medical Group clinic locations: Crandon, Eagle River, Rhinelander and Woodruff.

**Collaborative partners:**

- COPE Coalition
- United Way (regional 2-1-1 provider)

**Resources committed:**

- Staff time
- Travel
- Printing
- Meeting space

**Strategy 3: Depression Screening in Primary Care**

From July 2019 – June 2022, Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin will implement standardized processes statewide according to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Guidelines for depression. This will include routine screening, referral mechanisms and sources for treatment, electronic medical record (EMR) reminders and the creation of tools.

**Ascension Wisconsin will:**

- Build automatic reminders/alerts into the electronic medical record
- Identify sources for referral for management or treatment
- Create referral pathways
- Develop provider and patient tools to guide the process
- Implement the routine screening statewide

**Medium-Term Indicator:**

- By June 30, 2022, depression screening and remission systems/protocols will be in place in 90 percent of Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin primary care clinics.

**Resources committed:**

- Staff and provider time

## Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA)

**Goal:** Prevent and reduce the impact of substance abuse

### Long-Term Performance Indicators:

- By June 30, 2025, decrease the rate of alcohol-related hospitalizations by 10 percent:
  - Forest County -- from 3.4 to 3.1 per 1,000 population
  - Oneida County -- from 2.9 to 2.6 per 1,000 population
  - Vilas County -- from 5.2 to 4.7 per 1,000 population
    - Source for all: Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Public Health Profiles; baseline is 2015
  
- By June 30, 2025, decrease the rate of drug-related hospitalizations by 10 percent:
  - Forest County -- from 2.4 to 2.2 per 1,000 population
  - Oneida County -- from 0.9 to 0.8 per 1,000 population
  - Vilas County -- from 1.3 to 1.2 per 1,000 population
    - Source for all: Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Public Health Profiles; baseline is 2015

For AODA strategies, the hospitals consistently participate in the Northwoods Community Outreach, Prevention and Education (COPE) Coalition. A description of the coalition and its members is in the Mental Health section of this report.

### Strategy 1: Access to Resources

Ascension Wisconsin hospitals will increase access to Mental Health/AODA resources by collaborating with community partners to promote awareness of and services provided through the Wisconsin Addiction Recovery Hotline, managed by 2-1-1 Wisconsin.

#### The hospitals, with the COPE Coalition, will:

- Throughout the community, share resources (e.g., flyers, posters, tear-offs, business cards) containing the 2-1-1 Wisconsin Addiction Recovery Hotline information to increase awareness of the services provided

#### Medium-Term Indicators:

- By June 30, 2022, increase by 50 percent annually the number of 2-1-1 calls for addiction and mental health, from 83 in 2018 to 280 in 2021. (Source: 2-1-1 Counts for Forest, Oneida and Vilas Counties combined)
- By June 30, 2022, 75percent of primary care providers will be aware of 2-1-1 and have referred patients. Ascension Medical Group clinic locations: Crandon, Eagle River, Rhinelander and Woodruff.

**Collaborative partners:**

- COPE Coalition
- United Way (regional 2-1-1 provider)

**Resources committed:**

- Staff time
- Travel
- Printing
- Meeting space

**Strategy 2: Community-Based Services**

Ascension Wisconsin hospitals will collaborate with community partners to provide services to community members, such as recovery coaches and prescription drug ‘take back’ events.

- Take-back events are opportunities for community members to give unused prescription drugs, especially opioids, to law enforcement. The risk of misuse is increased when unused opioid prescription medications are in a home. Proper disposal programs are intended to reduce illicit use and unintentional poisoning.
- Recovery coaches are formally trained individuals who provide one-on-one contact, outreach and community education. The purpose of the recovery coach efforts is to reduce prescription drug, opioid and other substance use disorders. Ascension St. Mary’s is a host site for recovery coaches through a regional program.

**The hospitals, with the COPE Coalition, will:**

- Annually conduct two take-back events in each county

**Ascension St. Mary’s will:**

- Host at least one recovery coach annually. The recovery coach will provide prevention and recovery services in the community.

**Medium-Term Indicators:**

- By June 30, 2022, at least 50 percent of the unique individuals served annually by recovery coaches will demonstrate progress on at least one dimension of wellness.
- By June 30, 2022, the number of pounds of medication recovered at take back events will increase. (Baseline TBD)

**Collaborative partners:**

- COPE Coalition
- Marshfield Clinic Health System,  
AmeriCorps Recovery Corps Program

**Resources committed:**

- Staff time
- Travel
- Printing
- Office/Meeting space
- Funding

### Strategy 3: Alcohol Misuse Screening in Primary Care

From July 2019 – June 2022, Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin will implement standardized processes statewide according to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Guidelines for alcohol misuse. This will include: routine screening, referral mechanisms and sources for treatment, EMR reminders and the creation of tools.

#### Ascension Wisconsin will:

- Build automatic reminders/alerts into the electronic medical record
- Identify sources for referral for management or treatment
- Create referral pathways
- Develop provider and patient tools to guide the process
- Implement the routine screening statewide

#### Medium-Term Indicator:

- By June 30, 2022, alcohol misuse screening systems/protocols will be in place in 90 percent of Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin primary care clinics.

#### Resources committed:

- Staff and provider time

## Chronic Disease

**Goal:** Increase the proportion of residents of Forest, Oneida and Vilas Counties who have a healthy diet and regular physical activity

#### Long Term Indicator(s):

- By June 30, 2025, decrease the percent of residents who are physically inactive:
  - Forest County -- from 26 percent to 24 percent
  - Oneida County -- from 23 percent to 21 percent
  - Vilas county -- from 25 percent to 23 percent
    - Year for all: 2014. Source: County Health Rankings (Centers for Disease Control)
- By June 30, 2025, increase the percent of residents who have a healthy weight (BMI less than 30):
  - Forest County: from 66 percent to 70 percent (obesity level is 34 percent)
  - Oneida County: from 67 percent to 70 percent (obesity level is 33 percent)
  - Vilas County: from 71 percent to 75 percent (obesity level is 29 percent)
    - Baseline year for obesity data: 2014. Source: County Health Rankings (National Diabetes Surveillance System)

For chronic disease strategies, the hospitals consistently participate in the regional Coalition for Activity and Nutrition (CAN). CAN aims to “reduce the burden of chronic disease in our community by promoting physical activity and nutrition.” Multiple organizations from all three counties participate in the coalition, including:

- University of Wisconsin-Extensions
- Health departments
- Schools
- Libraries
- Forest County Potawatomi Tribe
- Marshfield Clinic Health System
- Lac du Flambeau Community Health / Peter Christensen Health Center
- Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council
- Northwoods Breastfeeding Coalition
- YMCA
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers
- Community members

### Strategy 1: Diabetes Prevention Program

The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) is a small-group program that helps people with pre-diabetes eat healthier, increase their physical activity and lose weight, which can delay or even prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. This program plays a vital role in the national effort to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes and improve the overall health and well-being of participants. DPP is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Recognized lifestyle change program.

#### Ascension St. Mary's will:

- Deliver the year-long program, which includes 24 sessions total, at least once per year (more, if the participants are available)

#### Medium-Term Indicators:

- By June 30, 2022, at least 75 percent of the participants who complete a year-long Diabetes Prevention Program will have lost five percent of their body weight.
- By June 30, 2022, at least 75 percent of the participants who complete the year-long Diabetes Prevention Program will self-report at least 150 minutes weekly of moderate physical activity.

#### Resources committed:

- Staff time
- Funding
- Printing
- Meeting space

### Strategy 2: Healthy Options at Food Pantries

The three hospitals will work with food pantries in their region to strengthen the provision of healthy options. Some examples of strengthened options include healthy cooking classes and “Safe and Healthy Food Pantries” from the University of Wisconsin-Extension. “Safe and Healthy Food Pantries” promotes approaches such as offering healthy samples and promoting healthy donations to pantries.

#### The three hospitals will:

- Integrate health promotion and other support services into area food pantries; examples include diabetes glucose checks, blood pressure checks and foot examinations
- Collaborate with the University of Wisconsin-Extension to implement and/or expand “Safe and Healthy Food Pantries” program
- Collaborate with the food pantries to conduct an assessment, identify possible strategies and create and implement an action plan

#### Medium-Term Indicator:

- By June 30, 2022, at least one food pantry in each county, for a total of three pantries, will each have implemented and evaluated at least one strategy identified as a result of the assessment and action planning.

#### Collaborative partners:

- Lakeland Food Pantry (Arbor Vitae, Vilas County)
- Eagle River Food Pantry (Vilas County)
- Rhinelander Food Pantry (Oneida County)
- Wasmogishek Food Pantry (Forest County)
- Coalition for Activity and Nutrition (CAN Coalition)

#### Resources committed:

- Staff time
- Printing
- Meeting space
- Travel
- Funding

### Strategy 3: Promoting Breastfeeding

Ascension St. Mary’s Hospital will implement steps in the “Baby Friendly Hospital” designation process. In doing so, it will work internally as well as with the area primary care clinics to improve breastfeeding rates and provide support and education to families served at Ascension St. Mary’s and the primary care clinics, as well as in the community. Promoting breastfeeding is an evidence-based strategy for reducing the likelihood of childhood obesity and other risks.

#### Ascension St. Mary’s Hospital will:

- Promote breastfeeding by offering education, information and counseling to women throughout pre- and post-natal care
- With its community partners, promote breastfeeding in community settings such as workplaces, child care centers and community-based events

**Medium-Term Indicators:**

- By June 2022, 75 percent of moms contacted after giving birth at Ascension St. Mary's will state they received breastfeeding support.
- By June 30, 2022, all 10 "Baby-Friendly USA" 'Steps to Successful Breastfeeding' will be practiced at Ascension St. Mary's.
- By June 30, 2022, increase breastfeeding initiation rates in the counties' Women, Infant and Children (WIC) programs:
  - Oneida County -- from 70.5 percent to 75 percent
  - Vilas County -- from 76 percent to 80 percent
  - Forest County -- from 90 percent to 95 percent
    - Baseline year for all: 2018. Source: Wisconsin WIC Program / Local Health Department
- By June 30, 2022, increase breastfeeding 6-month duration rates in the counties' Women, Infant and Children (WIC) programs:
  - Oneida County -- from 27.5 percent to 30 percent
  - Vilas County -- from 24 percent to 30 percent
  - Forest County -- from 28 percent to 30 percent
    - Baseline year for all: 2018. Source: Wisconsin WIC Program / Local Health Department

**Collaborative partners:**

- Northwoods Breastfeeding Coalition
- Le Leche League
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program (based out of the health departments)
- Tribal partners

**Resources committed:**

- Staff time
- Meeting space
- Funding

**Strategy 4: Policy, System and Environmental Changes**

Working collaboratively with the organizational members of the Coalition for Activity and Nutrition (CAN), the three hospitals will pursue interventions to strengthen local policies, systems and/or environmental structures to make healthy nutrition and physical activity options easier for more people. Some examples include healthy snack policies at local businesses and placement of healthy foods in convenience stores.

**The hospitals, working collaboratively with CAN, will:**

- Conduct an environmental scan in 2019 to identify the policy, system and environmental interventions most likely to be successful
- Identify at least two policy, system and environmental change approaches to be pursued during the time of this plan
- Provide funding for selected components of the interventions
- Integrate awareness of the new interventions into the existing organizational infrastructure

**Medium-Term Indicator:**

- By June 30, 2022, at least two policy, system or environmental changes will have been successfully implemented and evaluated in conjunction with the coalition.

**Collaborative partners:**

- Coalition for Activity and Nutrition (CAN)

**Resources committed:**

- Staff time
- Meeting space
- Funding

**Strategy 5: Body Mass Index Screening in Primary Care**

From July 2019 – June 2022, Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin will implement standardized processes statewide according to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Guidelines for healthy weight/Body Mass Index (BMI). This will include routine screening, referral mechanisms and sources for treatment, EMR reminders and the creation of tools.

**Ascension Wisconsin will:**

- Build automatic reminders/alerts into the electronic medical record system
- Identify sources for referral for management or treatment
- Create referral pathways
- Develop provider and patient tools to guide the process
- Implement the routine screening statewide

**Medium-Term Indicator:**

- By June 30, 2022, healthy weight screening systems/protocols will be in place in 90 percent of Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin primary care clinics.

**Resources committed:**

- Staff and provider time

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## Plan to Evaluate the Strategies

Ascension Wisconsin is committed to making a positive, measurable impact on the health of the people in the communities we serve. To that end, we evaluate the strategies we implement to address the health needs of the community.

We use a logic model, an approach that is nationally recognized for program evaluation. Logic models provide methods for documenting the following:

- **Inputs:** Resources needed to implement the strategies
- **Outputs:** Actions taken, the number of programs/tactics implemented and the number of people reached
- **Outcomes:** Measures of the impact of the programs/strategies, such as changes in learning, actions or conditions

To be specific about the outcomes for which we will be accountable, we set SMART metrics – metrics that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-related.

### Evaluation Schedule/Process

At the beginning of the three-year cycle:

- Establish SMART metrics for medium-term (three-year) indicators for each strategy
- Establish SMART metrics for long-term (beyond three years) indicators for each priority area

At the beginning of each fiscal year in the three-year cycle:

- Establish SMART metrics for short-term (fiscal year) indicators for each strategy
- Establish action steps and output indicators for each strategy

Quarterly each fiscal year:

- Report actions completed
- Report the status of each strategy/priority

At the end of each fiscal year:

- Report on results for short-term and output indicators
- Describe accomplishments and analyze results

At the end of the three-year cycle:

- Report on results for medium-term indicators for each strategy
- Describe and analyze results
- Incorporate results into next Community Health Needs Assessment

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## Health Needs Not Selected for this Plan

Ascension Wisconsin understands the importance of all the health needs of the community and is committed to being an active participant in improving the health of the people in the communities we serve. For the purposes of this CHNA, we have chosen to focus our efforts on the priorities listed above.

In the prioritization process, the following health issues were ranked lower: child abuse and graduation rates. The group recommended not naming these as priorities in order to focus efforts on the top three selected. In addition, the group indicated the youth components should be woven into the selected priorities when possible, which could have an impact on child abuse and graduation rates.

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## Next Steps

This implementation plan outlines a three-year community health improvement process. Each year within this timeframe, we will:

- Participate actively in community coalitions focused on the health priorities
- Create an annual action plan with specific steps for that year
- Set and track annual performance indicators for each strategy
- Track progress toward medium-term performance indicators
- Report progress toward the performance indicators to the board
- Share actions taken to address the needs with the community at large

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## Approval

This implementation plan report was adopted by the Boards of Directors of Ascension Eagle River Hospital, Inc., Ascension Sacred Heart-St. Mary's Hospitals, Inc., and The Howard Young Medical Center, Inc., on April 2, 2019, and by the Ascension Wisconsin Board on May 16, 2019.

## Addendum: Summary of Strategies by Hospital Facility

| Priority/Strategy                         | Starting Page Number |             |            |
|---|----------------------|-------------|------------|
|   | Howard Young         | Eagle River | St. Mary's |
| <b>Mental Health</b>                      |                      |             |            |
| Awareness and Training                    | 4                    | 4           | 4          |
| Access to Resources                       | 4                    | 4           | 4          |
| Depression Screening in Primary Care      | 5                    | 5           | 5          |
|   |                      |             |            |
| <b>AODA</b>                               |                      |             |            |
| Access to Resources                       | 6                    | 6           | 6          |
| Community-based Services                  | 7                    | 7           | 7          |
| Alcohol Misuse Screening in Primary Care  | 8                    | 8           | 8          |
|   |                      |             |            |
| <b>Chronic Disease</b>                    |                      |             |            |
| Diabetes Prevention Program               | NA                   | NA          | 9          |
| Healthy Options at Food Pantries          | 10                   | 10          | 10         |
| Promoting Breastfeeding                   | NA                   | NA          | 10         |
| Policy, System and Environmental Changes  | 11                   | 11          | 11         |
| Body Mass Index Screening in Primary Care | 12                   | 12          | 12         |

To learn more about Ascension Wisconsin, visit [ascension.org/wisconsin](https://www.ascension.org/wisconsin)



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