



Ascension Wisconsin Implementation Strategy

2021-2024

The goal of this report is to offer a meaningful understanding of the most significant health needs across Waukesha county, as well as to inform planning efforts to address those needs. Input was intentionally gathered from the most vulnerable individuals and communities to identify their unmet health needs or gaps in services. Findings from this report can be used to identify, develop and focus hospital, health system and community initiatives and programming to better serve the health and wellness needs of the community.

Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus

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39-0816857

The Spring 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment report was approved by the Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital, Inc., board on April 27, 2021. This implementation strategy was subsequently created for the following three-year cycle: July 2021 to June 2024. This report, as well as the previous report, can be found at our public website: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>

Suggested citation:

Ascension Wisconsin. (2021). *Ascension Wisconsin implementation strategy: 2021-2024: Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus*. Unpublished report. Ascension.

<https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>

We value the community's voice and welcome feedback on this report. Please visit our public website (<https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>) to submit your comments.

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About Ascension

As one of the leading non-profit and Catholic health systems in the U.S., Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable.

Ascension

Ascension is a faith-based healthcare organization dedicated to transformation through innovation across the continuum of care. The national health system operates more than 2,600 sites of care – including 145 hospitals and more than 40 senior living facilities – in 19 states and the District of Columbia, while providing a variety of services including clinical and network services, venture capital investing, investment management, biomedical engineering, facilities management, risk management, and contracting through Ascension's own group purchasing organization.

Ascension's Mission provides a strong framework and guidance for the work done to meet the needs of the communities across the U.S. It is foundational to transform healthcare and express priorities when providing care and services, particularly to those most in need.

Mission: Rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer, we commit ourselves to serving all persons with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable. Our Catholic health ministry is dedicated to spiritually-centered, holistic care which sustains and improves the health of individuals and communities. We are advocates for a compassionate and just society through our actions and our words.

For more information about Ascension, visit <https://www.ascension.org/>.

Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus

As a Ministry of the Catholic Church, Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus is a non-profit hospital governed by a local board of directors, and provides medical care to Waukesha County residents and the surrounding communities. In Wisconsin, Ascension operates 17 hospital campuses, more than 100 related healthcare facilities and employs more than 1,100 primary and specialty care clinicians from Racine to Fox Valley.

Serving Wisconsin for about 150 years, Ascension Wisconsin is continuing the long and valued tradition of addressing the health of the people in our community. Following in the footsteps of our foundresses and founders, Ascension Wisconsin was formed in 2016 when sponsorship transitioned from four health systems: Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, Ministry Health Care, Columbia St. Mary's and Affinity Health System.

For more information about Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus, visit <https://healthcare.ascension.org/Locations/Wisconsin/WIWH/Elmbrook-Campus>.

Acknowledgements

The 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) process represented a true collaborative effort in order to gain a meaningful understanding of the most pressing health needs across Waukesha County. Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus ("Ascension Elmbrook") is exceedingly thankful to the many community partners and members who shared their views, knowledge, expertise and skills with us. We look forward to our continued collaborative work to make this a better, healthier place for all people.

Overview

As part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, all not-for-profit hospitals are required to conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) and adopt an implementation strategy (IS) every three years. The purpose of the IS is to address the needs prioritized during the CHNA process in order to improve the health of those who live and/or work in the communities served by the hospital. To read the current CHNA for the hospital, visit <https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>.

Purpose of the Implementation Strategy

This implementation strategy plan is part of a broad community effort to address the priority health needs in the community and achieve long-term impact. As such, the hospital will collaborate with other key partners in the community. Recognizing that no one organization can affect substantial community change alone, the potential long-term, community-level impact identified in this plan can only be achieved with many community organizations working together.

To ensure our efforts best meet the needs of our Waukesha County community and will have a lasting and meaningful impact, Ascension Elmbrook developed this Implementation Strategy plan to focus on those prioritized health needs during the three-year term duration of July 2021-June 2024.

Community Needs in Waukesha County

Following the completion of the community health assessment, Ascension Elmbrook stakeholders have selected the prioritized needs outlined below for its 2021-2024 implementation strategy. Please refer to the CHNA for more information on the process for data collection and the methodology for uncovering the significant health needs of the county. Ascension Wisconsin has defined "prioritized needs" as the significant needs which have been prioritized by the hospital to address through the three-year CHNA implementation strategy:

- Chronic Disease Prevention - This need was selected because prevention is an important step towards a healthier community. A healthy lifestyle can reduce the risk of several chronic diseases, lessening the need for medication or other treatments. The steering group felt it had the resources to not only help treat chronic diseases, but to support preventative measures.
- Mental Health - This need was selected because mental health challenges are increasing during the pandemic. Additionally, mental health issues can lead to numerous physical health

complications. Ascension Wisconsin is committed to expanding access to mental health providers and partnering with community organizations to address this health priority.

- Substance Abuse - This need was selected because alcohol abuse and illicit drug use in Waukesha County continues to be a significant problem. The steering group identified possible strategies that can support the momentum in the community around addressing this priority.

These priorities will additionally consider strategies through the lens of the lasting social impact of COVID-19, Access to Care and Social Determinants of Health and Equity.

Health Needs Not Selected for this Plan

Ascension Elmbrook 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 Implementation Strategy, we have chosen to focus our efforts on the priorities listed above. The following health needs were not selected to be included in this plan for the reasons described below.

- Coronavirus/COVID-19: While Coronavirus/COVID-19 was identified as a top need, the steering group agreed that it should not be listed as a priority because responding to this acute community concern is our duty as healthcare providers and should not be counted as community health improvement. Instead, all strategies should be created through the lens of the pandemic, with a particular focus on the resulting social impacts and exacerbated health disparities.
- Access to Care: Similarly, the group recommended that Access to Care be used as another lens versus its own priority in the implementation strategy, as it is the main role of healthcare facilities. In creating strategies for the three priorities, Ascension Elmbrook will consider how to amplify access to health services.
- Chronic Disease, Overweight or Obesity and Nutrition: These significant needs were combined under one health priority called “chronic disease prevention” for cohesion, as these issues intersect. The campus will be addressing these issues, but in a broader approach.

Written Comments on Implementation Strategy

No comments were received on the previous implementation strategy. If you have a question or comment about Ascension Elmbrook’s IS, please visit: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>.

Approval by the Hospital Board

The 2021-2024 implementation strategy will be presented to the Ascension SE Wisconsin, Inc. board for approval and adoption on October 26, 2021. Although an authorized body of the hospital must adopt the CHNA and implementation strategy reports to be compliant with the provisions in the Affordable Care Act, adoption of the implementation strategy also demonstrates that the board endorses the priorities identified and supports the strategy that has been developed to address prioritized needs.

Priority 1: Chronic Disease Prevention

Goal: Improve access to healthy foods, provide opportunities for healthy physical activity and increase health education and awareness for prevention of chronic disease for residents in Waukesha County. --Potential long-term, community-level impact would be demonstrated by fewer individuals reporting obesity (baseline: 27%), fewer individuals reporting physical inactivity rates (17%) and fewer individuals who reported their household went hungry because they could not afford enough food in the past year (baseline: 2%) in Waukesha County.

Background: Chronic conditions are responsible for the majority of deaths in the United States (CDC, 2020a). Chronic Disease, Overweight or Obesity, and Nutrition were all identified within the top five priority issues by survey and key informant respondents. As these issues often intersect, Ascension Elmbrook chose to combine these issues for cohesion. While Waukesha County is one of the healthiest counties in Wisconsin, there are certainly still concerning chronic disease issues in the community. For instance, the diabetes prevalence within Waukesha County is 10%, which is slightly worse than the state's prevalence. The adult obesity rate of 26% is better than the state's rate of 31% but key informants felt there were many opportunities to improve health factors for residents. A healthy lifestyle reduces risk of several chronic diseases, risk factors and illnesses. It is important to note that concerning health disparities exist within chronic disease prevalence: individuals with low income and some racial and ethnic minorities have higher rates of obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol and blood pressure and stroke. Older adults are also disproportionately affected by chronic conditions, with 80% managing at least one chronic condition (CDC, 2020b) and food insecurity can contribute to diet-related chronic diseases, which adds to the complexity of prevention and health disparities (USDA, 2017).

Healthy People 2030 Alignment: This goal aligns with Healthy People 2030 goals: NSW-03 - Reduce the proportion of adults with obesity, NSW-01: Reduce household food insecurity and hunger, HDS-04: Reduce the proportion of adults with high blood pressure, PA-0: Reduce the proportion of adults who do no physical activity in their free time, and HDS-01: Improve cardiovascular health.

Strategy 1: Healthy Living Community Initiative

Anticipated Impact: Increase the number of community members who have access to education and opportunities to be engaged in healthy living activities. There is no baseline at this time; baseline will be established in FY22.

Actions	Target	Anticipated Result
Increase health education in the community	Annually from 2021-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct at least three community education sessions - Provide at least one education session to an at-risk population - Encourage "Walk with a Pro" with ADRC and other community organizations

Support access to healthy foods for community members	Annually from 2021-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate a community garden and invite community members to participate - Donate food from the community garden two times a year - Establish a baseline for how to measure amount of food donated or families served - Support local farmer's markets' efforts to serve low-income community members
Encourage physical activity	Annually from 2021-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct at least three community physical activity education sessions - Encourage use of the walking path for patients, associates and community members, with a focus on seniors and their safety - Offer "Walk with a Pro" program
Strategy 2: Screening and Referral		
Anticipated Impact: Increase the percentage of individuals who are screened for elevated BMI by 5% and the number of referrals for resources. A baseline for referrals will be established in FY23.		
Actions	Target	Anticipated Result
Expand BMI screenings and referrals for patients with elevated BMI	Annually from 2021-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 93% of patients will be screened for BMI in wellness visits - Refer patients with BMI > 35 to clinical resources and track number of referrals - Refer and provide community and nutrition resource education upon discharge to patients with BMI > 35
Develop a food insecurity screening and referral program for patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plans developed by Q1 of FY23 (July 2022) - Conduct and gain insight from a pilot by Q3 of FY23 (January 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore process and tracking capabilities - Develop a plan for referrals after screening indicates risks - Develop a plan for food education upon discharge
<p>CDC, 2020a: <i>About chronic diseases</i> https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/index.htm#:~:text=Chronic%20diseases%20such%20as%20heart,in%20annual%20health%20care%20costs</p> <p>CDC, 2020b: <i>Promoting health for older adults</i> https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/promoting-health-for-older-adults.htm</p> <p>USDA, 2017: <i>Food insecurity, chronic diseases and working adults</i>. https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84467/err-235.pdf</p>		

Priority 2: Mental Health

Goal: Promote a Waukesha County that is more understanding and supportive of mental health by decreasing stigma surrounding mental health issues and training individuals to recognize mental health crises and support the mental health wellness of all residents by providing resources to those in need.

--Potential long-term, community-level impact would be demonstrated by fewer individuals reporting poor mental health days (baseline: 3.5) and a decreased suicide rate (baseline: 13 per 100,000) in Waukesha County.

Background: Mental Health was rated the number one issue by key informants and number five by survey respondents. Numerous key informants identified the biggest barrier as a shortage of mental health providers. In Waukesha County, the mental health provider ratio to the population is 440:1, which is far worse than top U.S. performers' rate of 290:1. Ten percent of the county's population report mental distress. While this rate is better than the state's, the suicide rate per 100,000 people is 15.1 - far higher than the Healthy People 2020 goal of 10.2. The survey respondents in the bottom 40% income bracket were more likely to report a mental health condition. Individuals with low income tend to have higher rates of poor mental health, as economic challenges (e.g., unemployment, poverty, stress) can contribute to poor mental health. Mental health issues are associated with increased rates of smoking, physical inactivity, obesity and substance abuse. As a result, these physical health problems can lead to chronic disease, injury, disability and death (including overdose or suicide) (CDC, 2020a).

Healthy People 2030 Alignment: This goal aligns with Healthy People 2030 goals: MHMD-08: Increase the proportion of primary care visits where adolescents and adults are screened for depression, MHMD-07: Increase the proportion of people with substance use and mental health disorders who get treatment for both, MHMD-01: Decrease the suicide rate and IVP-19 - Reduce emergency department visits for nonfatal intentional self-harm injuries.

Strategy 1: Community Mental Health Focus

Anticipated Impact: Increase the number of community members who have access to education and awareness around mental health and increase Ascension Elmbrook's involvement in mental health partnerships. There is no baseline at this time; baseline will be established in FY22.

Actions	Target	Anticipated Result
Partner with community organizations to increase mental health awareness by expanding mental health education, training capacity and support for community-driven initiatives	Annually from 2021-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host NAMI trainings (such as Stories of Hope Sessions) to reduce stigma - Conduct 3 QPR trainings in the community - Collect information on mental health coalitions and general mental health education via LAUNCH students - Have hospital leaders join Waukesha County coalitions

Initiate partnerships that support mental health and wellness among specific marginalized populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plans developed by Q3 of FY22 (January 2022) - Initiate plans by Q1 of FY23 (July 2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilize the existing partnership with the Brookfield-area schools' LAUNCH program to conduct research on mental health resources for referral opportunities - Explore how to support the Hope Squad, a Waukesha County School District initiative, potentially with QPR trainings - Explore partnerships with the ADRC and other organizations that support older adults - Collaborate with identified partners to support community-level initiatives on mental health
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Strategy 2: Screening and Referral

Anticipated Impact: Increase the percentage of individuals that are screened for depression by 5% and the number of referrals for resources. A baseline for referrals will be established in FY23.

Actions	Target	Anticipated Result
Expand routine depression screenings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plans developed by Q2 of FY23 (December 2022) for ED - Annually from 2021-2024 for wellness visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a plan for screening patients for depression in the Emergency Department and establishing a baseline - At least 75% of patients will be screened for depression in wellness visits
Enhance community partnerships for referrals for those at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of partners and plans developed by Q4 of FY22 (June 2022) - Initiate new process and track referrals by Q2 of FY23 (December 2022) - Identify a baseline by Q4 of FY23 (June 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify community partners for referral of those at risk - Develop a plan for referrals after screening indicates risks, particularly for older adults - Refer patients to clinical or community resources and track number of referrals

CDC, 2020a: *About chronic diseases* <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/index.htm#:~:text=Chronic%20diseases%20such%20as%20heart,in%20annual%20health%20care%20costs>

Priority 3: Substance Abuse

Goal: Increase awareness and decrease stigma around substance misuse by supporting education initiatives and encourage recovery opportunities for Waukesha County residents.

–Potential long-term, community-level impact would be demonstrated by a decrease in excessive drinking (baseline: 29%) and a decrease in overdose deaths (baseline: 17) in Waukesha County.

Background: Substance use and abuse was ranked as the number two issue by key informants and illegal drug use specifically was ranked as the number two issue with survey respondents. The percent of the county's population that partakes in excessive drinking is even with the state of Wisconsin at 24%, but this is much higher than U.S. top performers' percentage of 13%. The overdose drug rate per 100,000 people is 18, compared with 10 for top U.S. performers. Racial/ethnic populations have been disproportionately affected by the consequences of drug abuse and addiction due to various systemic issues. Social attitudes and political and legal responses to the consumption of alcohol and illicit drugs make substance abuse one of the most complex public health issues. In addition to considerable health implications, substance abuse has been a flash-point in the criminal justice system and a major focal point in discussions about social values. (Healthy People 2020). Key informants highlighted treatment barriers due to cost, insurance and shortage of crisis centers. Key informants also identified the need for more collaboration among those doing prevention and treatment work.

Healthy People 2030 Alignment: This goal aligns with Healthy People 2030 goals: SU-01- Increase the proportion of people with a substance use disorder who received treatment in the past year, MHMD-07- Increase the proportion of people with substance use and mental health disorders who received treatment for both, SU-D02- Increase the proportion of people who received a referral for substance use treatment after an emergency department visit, SU-05- Reduce the proportion of adolescents who used drugs in the past month, SU-15- Reduce the proportion of people who had drug use disorder in the past year, SU-03- Reduce drug overdose deaths and SU-R01- Increase the proportion of adolescents who think substance abuse is risky.

Strategy 1: Substance Use Community Collaboration

Anticipated Impact: Increase the number of community members who have access to education and awareness around substance use and increase Ascension Elmbrook's involvement in substance abuse partnerships. There is no baseline at this time; baseline will be established in FY22.

Actions	Target	Anticipated Result
Provide substance use education sessions in the community	Annually from 2021-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct at least two "Walk with a Pro" sessions on substance use - Promote drug and alcohol awareness with high school students through the LAUNCH program - Partner with senior living facilities on staff education to recognize substance use and abuse by residents
Partner with community organizations to expand substance abuse awareness and support of community initiatives	Annually from 2021-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commit to regular staff involvement on the the Heroin Task Force - Provide anti-stigma education to associates and partner organizations to encourage individuals to seek treatment

Strategy 2: Screening and Referral

Anticipated Impact: Increase the percentage of individuals who are screened for alcohol use by 5% and the number of referrals for resources. A baseline for referrals will be established in FY23.

Actions	Target	Anticipated Result
Screen patients for alcohol use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plans developed by Q2 of FY23 (December 2022) for ED - Annually from 2021-2024 for wellness visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a plan for screening patients for alcohol abuse in the Emergency Department and establishing a baseline - At least 25% of patients will be screened for alcohol abuse in wellness visits
Refer patients to internal clinical or community resources if screening or visit reasons indicates risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plans developed by Q1 of FY23 (September 2022) - Initiate new process and track referrals by Q2 of FY23 (December 2022) - Identify a baseline by Q4 of FY23 (June 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a plan for referrals after screening indicates risks - Refer patients to clinical or community resources and track number of referrals - Connect patients with recovery coaches if needed

Plan to Evaluate the Strategies

Evaluation Framework

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.

Evaluation Schedule / Process

At the beginning of the three-year cycle:

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

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

- Reevaluate/establish metrics for short-term (fiscal year) and medium-term (three-year) indicators, as needed, for each strategy
- Reevaluate/establish action steps 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 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

