

Ascension SE Wisconsin - Elmbrook Campus

Implementation Strategy for the 2023 CHNA
Waukesha County, WI



Ascension



The purpose of this implementation strategy is to describe how the hospital plans to address prioritized health needs from its current Community Health Needs Assessment. The significant health needs the hospital does not intend to address are identified and a rationale is provided. Special attention has been given to the needs of individuals and communities that are more vulnerable, to unmet health needs or gaps in services and to input gathered from the community.

**Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus
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<https://healthcare.ascension.org/Locations/Wisconsin/WIWHE/Brookfield-Ascension-SE-Wisconsin-Hospital-Elmbrook-Campus>

262-785-2000

The 2023 Implementation Strategy was approved by the Board of Directors of Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus on August 20, 2024 (2023 tax year) and applies to the following three-year cycle: July 2024 to June 2027. This report, as well as the previous report, can be found at our public website.

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

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About Ascension

As one of the leading non-profit, Catholic health systems in the United States, Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons experiencing 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 139 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 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 (“Ascension Elmbrook”) is a non-profit hospital governed by a local board of directors and provides medical care to Waukesha County and the surrounding communities. In Wisconsin, Ascension operates 17 hospital campuses, more than 100 related healthcare facilities and employs more than 1,200 primary and specialty care clinicians from Racine to the Fox Valley.

Serving Wisconsin for about 150 years, Ascension is continuing the long and valued tradition of addressing the health of the people in our community. Following in the footsteps of our 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 Elmbrook, visit:

<https://healthcare.ascension.org/locations/wisconsin/wiwe/brookfield-ascension-se-wisconsin-hospital-elmbrook-campus>

Overview of the Implementation Strategy

Purpose

This implementation strategy (IS) is the hospital's response to the health needs prioritized from its current Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). It describes the actions the hospital will take to address prioritized needs, allocate resources and mobilize hospital programs and community partners to work together. This approach aligns with Ascension Elmbrook's commitment to offer programs designed to address the health needs of a community, with special attention to persons who are underserved and vulnerable.

IRS 501(r)(3) and Form 990, Schedule H Compliance

The CHNA and IS satisfy certain requirements of tax reporting, pursuant to provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, more commonly known as the Affordable Care Act (ACA). As part of the ACA, all non-profit hospitals are required to conduct a CHNA and adopt an implementation strategy every three years. Requirements for 501(c)(3) Hospitals Under the Affordable Care Act are described in Code Section 501(r)(3), and include making the CHNA report (current and previous) widely available to the public. In accordance with this requirement, electronic reports of both the CHNA and the current implementation strategy can be found at <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA> and paper versions can be requested at the hospital.

Needs That Will Be Addressed

Following the completion of the current CHNA, Ascension Elmbrook has selected the prioritized needs outlined below for its 2023 Implementation Strategy. Ascension has defined "prioritized needs" as the significant needs which have been prioritized by the hospital to address through the three-year CHNA cycle:

- Chronic Disease and Prevention was selected because prevention is an important step toward a healthier community. A healthy lifestyle through access to healthy foods, increase in activity and decreased stress can reduce the risk of several chronic diseases, lessening the need for medication or other treatments. For those with chronic diseases, proper treatment and support can help improve quality of life. This priority especially focuses on communities at an increased risk. Ascension Wisconsin is committed to quality treatment of chronic diseases and focusing on prevention efforts.
- Mental Health was selected because mental health challenges have increased since the pandemic and the community has clearly expressed the need for more support and resources. 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.
- Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) was selected because an individual's environment influences health outcomes and it is important to support unmet needs to improve health. SDOH will focus on basic and social needs interventions for patients and contributions to

community efforts in areas such as social connectedness and belonging, to improve well-being for individuals and the larger community for positive outcomes. Ascension Elmbrook will support community efforts and look for future opportunities to fund and contribute to initiatives.

In alignment with these priorities and the voice of the community, strategies addressing these health issues will focus on equity, working to address the root social causes of health disparities in our communities and giving special attention to those who have been made vulnerable by historic disadvantages.

Ascension Elmbrook understands the importance of all the health needs of the community and is committed to playing an active role in improving the health of the people in the communities it serves. For the purposes of this implementation strategy, Ascension Elmbrook has chosen to focus its efforts on the priorities listed above.

Needs That Will Not Be Addressed

Alcohol and Drug Misuse was not selected in this CHNA cycle, as a community response is necessary to this issue, and further resources outside of the hospital are needed. Ascension Elmbrook refers patients to numerous internal and community programs for treatment when needed and will actively participate in further collaborative efforts. Some efforts will also be incorporated under the Mental Health priority as these issues are often interrelated, but it will not be prioritized as a separate need.

Access to Care was not selected as a separate priority, as the steering group felt that this should instead be incorporated as a foundation to all chosen priorities, 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 for chronic disease management and mental health, as well as strive to meet individual patients' access to care needs through screening and referrals.

Social Determinants of Health encompass multiple social factors. Considering capacity, partnerships and the focus of Ascension Elmbrook, not all Social Determinants of Health can be addressed directly at the community-level. However, providers and associates will continue to refer to community resources for identified needs of individual patients in the hospital and clinics.

This report does not encompass a complete inventory of everything Ascension Elmbrook does to support health within the community. To find a list of resources for each need not being addressed, please refer to the Ascension Elmbrook's 2023 CHNA: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA>.

Acute Community Concern Acknowledgement

A CHNA and IS offer a construct for identifying and addressing needs within the community(s) it serves. However, unforeseen events or situations, which may be severe and sudden, may affect a community. At Ascension, this is referred to as an acute community concern. This could describe



anything from a health crisis (e.g., COVID-19), water poisoning, environmental events (e.g., hurricane, flood) or other event that suddenly impacts a community. If adjustments to an IS are necessary, the hospital will develop documentation to notify key stakeholders of possible adjustments.

Written Comments

This IS has been made available to the public and is open for public comment. Questions or comments about this report can be submitted via the website: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>.

Approval and Adoption by the Board of Directors of Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus

To ensure Ascension Elmbrook's efforts meet the needs of the community and have a lasting and meaningful impact, the 2023 Implementation Strategy was presented and adopted by the Board of Directors of Ascension Elmbrook on August 20, 2024. Although an authorized body of the hospital must adopt the IS to be compliant with the provisions in the Affordable Care Act, adoption of the IS also demonstrates the board is aware of the IS, endorses the priorities identified and supports the action plans developed to address prioritized needs.

Action Plans

The IS below is based on prioritized needs from the hospital’s most recent CHNA. These strategies and action plans represent where the hospital will focus its community efforts over the next three years. While these remain a priority, the hospital will continue to offer additional programs and services to meet the needs of the community, with special attention to people who are experiencing poverty/low income or are otherwise made vulnerable.

Priority 1: Chronic Disease and Prevention
<p>Background</p> <p>Chronic conditions are responsible for the majority of deaths in the United States (CDC, 2022). A healthy lifestyle reduces risk of several chronic diseases, risk factors and illnesses. However, not all people have equal access to healthy opportunities. For example, individuals experiencing low income and some racial and ethnic minorities live farther from supermarkets, limiting their access to affordable and nutritious food (Healthy People 2030), and/or have built environments that otherwise worsen their quality of life (AJMC, 2022). This can contribute to disparities in chronic disease morbidity and mortality. Individuals experiencing 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. For example, in Wisconsin, the Black/African American death rate due to heart disease is 1.5 times higher than the overall rate and 12.4% of Hispanic adults report having diabetes compared to 9.2% of White adults (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2021). Older adults are also disproportionately affected by chronic conditions, with 80% managing at least one chronic condition (CDC, 2011).</p>
<p>Objective</p> <p>By 2027, the percentage of adults that reported that they consider themselves in fair or poor health will decrease (baseline: 10%).</p>
<p>Healthy People 2030 Alignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NSW-01 - Reduce food insecurity and hunger ● NSW-03 - Reduce the proportion of adults with obesity ● HDS-01 - Improve cardiovascular health ● IVP-08 - Reduce fall-related deaths among older adults <p>(Healthy People 2030)</p>
<p>Collaborative Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Current: Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin, TouchPoint Support Services, local farmers market ● Potential: Schools, faith groups, local food pantry, hospital volunteers, various community based organizations (CBOs)
Strategy 1: Expand Healthy Living Opportunities and Awareness Within the Community
<p>Anticipated Impact</p> <p>Increased access to healthy foods and increased education on the benefits of healthy living activities for community members in Waukesha County.</p>

Priority Populations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families and individuals experiencing poverty and/or low income; Older adults
Resources Committed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time donated to numerous organizations, cash donations to community organizations, education collateral, Neighborhood Resource
TACTICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to and partner on healthy living community education, focusing on early interventions Provide chronic disease support and prevention to groups that have historically been marginalized Donate fresh produce and other healthy foods through various channels
Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process outcomes of community engagement activities to respective tactics Number of education events Number of community members served Funds invested
Strategy 2: Actively Engage Patients and Associates in Healthy Living Activities
Anticipated Impact Increased access to healthy foods and increased education on the benefits of healthy eating for Ascension Wisconsin patients and associates.
Priority Populations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients experiencing barriers to healthy foods, particularly those experiencing low-income; patients who are under/uninsured; older adults
Resources Committed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time, rooming standard updates, IT infrastructure for tracking, funding as needed for food support, education collateral
TACTICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen patients for food insecurity and refer to programs in community to support access to healthy foods Hold healthy living demonstrations, particularly around specific chronic conditions, within Ascension Wisconsin healthcare facilities Provide holistic support to older adults that have chronic diseases
Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of patients screened Number of referrals Number of patients supported Process outcomes to respective tactics

Priority 2: Mental Health

Background

In the most recent CHNA for Waukesha County, mental health was identified as a significant health issue by key stakeholders and community members. The average reported number of unhealthy mental health days is nearly four out of 30 days and 13% of the county's population report frequent mental distress ([CHRR, 2024](#)). 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) ([NIH, 2021](#)). At Ascension Wisconsin, mental health includes prevention, treatment and access to mental health care services. Key stakeholders were particularly concerned with mental health for youth.

Objective

By 2026, fewer individuals will report frequent mental distress in Waukesha County (baseline: 13%).

Healthy People 2030 Alignment

- MHMD-07 - Increase the proportion of people with substance use and mental health disorders who received treatment for both
- MHMD-08 - Increase the proportion of primary care visits where adolescents and adults are screened for depression
- MHMD-01 - Decrease the suicide rate ([Healthy People 2030](#))

Collaborative Partners

- Current: Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin, emergency medical services, health departments, Ascension Wisconsin Employee Assistance Program
- Potential: Schools, various community based organizations (CBOs), faith communities

Strategy 1: Support Positive Mental Health in the Community

Anticipated Impact

Increased access to mental health services, support on the social needs that contribute to mental health issues and reduced stigma on behavioral issues for community members in Waukesha County.

Priority Populations

- Families and individuals experiencing poverty and/or low income; older adults

Resources

- Staff time donated to numerous organizations, cash donations to community organizations, education collateral

TACTICS

- Actively participate in suicide prevention initiatives and promote other bystander interventions
- Partner to support stigma reduction around mental health issues, including substance use disorders (SUD)
- Direct efforts to important prevention activities in the community to reduce substance misuse within the community and reduce harm for those with SUD

Measures

- Process outcomes of community engagement activities to respective tactics
- Number of activities
- Reach/participation numbers

Strategy 2: Improve Behavioral Health Programs and Services for Patients and Associates
<p>Anticipated Impact</p> <p>Increased access to mental health services, improved support on the social needs that contribute to mental health issues, and reduced stigma on behavioral issues for Ascension Wisconsin patients and associates.</p>
<p>Priority Populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients experiencing behavioral health conditions; patients who are under/uninsured; patients and associates who have underlying trauma
<p>Resources Committed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time, quality improvement initiatives, IT infrastructure for tracking, funding
<p>TACTICS</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and evaluate different models of care to increase access and timeliness to outpatient mental health providers and prescribers, including telehealth • Coordinate response programs for trauma-informed care and spiritual care offerings for patients and associates that encourage healing and mental wellbeing • Increase access to a variety of substance use treatment and support, including medication-assisted treatment, innovative models of care and peer support programs
<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent/number of patients screened • Number of patients referred to/served by support services • Process outcomes to respective tactics

Priority 3: Social Determinants of Health	
Background	<p>The social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks (OASH, 2024). These conditions influence exposures, opportunities, and challenges that shape a person’s and community’s ability to thrive (Community Commons, 2024). Primary care providers, and the larger healthcare system, play a significant part of people’s lives, with a majority of Americans regularly accessing the system - though, disparities among certain groups exist. Healthcare systems that learn about the communities their patients live in, and the social needs that members face to become and stay healthy, can better adapt their recommendations to people’s lives (AHRQ, 2020). Therefore, addressing these conditions which often result in barriers to accessing primary care and other SDOH issues may help reduce both disparities and risk of poor health outcomes (OASH, 2024). In Waukesha County, key stakeholders were especially concerned with social connectedness for older adults, which is important to mental and physical health, protecting against serious illness and disease (CDC, 2024).</p>
Objective	<p>By 2026, fewer individuals will report feeling lonely in the last year on SDOH screenings at Ascension Elmbrook and associated clinics (baseline: 3.7%).</p>
Healthy People 2030 Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AHS-08 - Increase the proportion of adults who get recommended evidence-based preventive health care ● HC/HIT-R01 - Increase the health literacy of the population ● HC/HIT-04 - Increase the proportion of adults who talk to friends or family about their health (Healthy People 2030)
Collaborative Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Current: Ascension Medical Group Wisconsin, health department, emergency medical services ● Potential: Schools, various community based organizations (CBOs), faith communities
Strategy 1: Support A Thriving Community	
Anticipated Impact	<p>Increased access to support on the social needs that contribute to physical and mental health issues for community members in Waukesha County.</p>
Priority Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Families and individuals experiencing poverty and/or low income; older adults
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff time donated to numerous organizations, cash donations to community organizations, education collateral
TACTICS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore and develop partnerships that actively support and address social factors that influence wellbeing ● Actively engage older adults in the community to support social connectedness
Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Process outcomes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of partnerships/funds invested • Number of people impacted
Strategy 2: Support the Ability for Patients and Associates to Thrive
Anticipated Impact Increased access to support on the social needs that contribute to physical and mental health issues for Ascension Wisconsin patients and associates.
Priority Populations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients who are under/uninsured; patients and associates who are socially isolated
Resources Committed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time, quality improvement initiatives, IT infrastructure for tracking, funding
TACTICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and mitigate barriers to healthcare services and treatments for Ascension Elmbrook-identified priority populations • Identify key social needs and focus tactics to address those needs for both associates and patients
Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of self-reported SDOH needs • Number of patients referred to/served by support services • Process outcomes to respective tactics • Number of associates supported with programs

Evaluation

Ascension Elmbrook will develop a comprehensive measurement and evaluation process for the implementation strategy. The ministry will monitor and evaluate the action plans outlined in this plan for the purpose of reporting and documenting the impact these action plans have on the community. Ascension Elmbrook uses a tracking system to capture community benefit activities and implementation. To ensure accountability, data will be aggregated and reported on in the next CHNA.