

Manitowoc County Health Needs Assessment

A summary of key informant interviews



2019

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Introduction

This report presents a summary of public health priorities for Manitowoc County, as identified in 2019 by a range of providers, policy-makers, and other local experts and community members (“key informants”). These findings are a critical supplement to the Manitowoc County Community Health Survey conducted through a partnership Aurora Health Care, Holy Family Memorial, and Lakeshore Community Health Care. The Community Health Needs Assessment incorporates input from persons representing the broad interests of the community served, and from those who possess special knowledge of or expertise in public health.

Key informants in Manitowoc County were identified by Aurora Health Care, Holy Family Memorial, Lakeshore Community Health Care, and the United Way of Manitowoc County. These organizations also invited the informants to participate and conducted the interviews from January to May 2019. The interviewers used a standard interview script that included the following elements:

- Ranking of up to five public health issues, based on the focus areas presented in Wisconsin’s State Health Plan, that are the most important issues for the County; and
- For those five public health issues:
 - Existing strategies to address the issue
 - Barriers and challenges to addressing the issue
 - Additional strategies needed
 - Key groups in the community that hospitals should partner with to improve community health
 - Identification of subgroups or subpopulations where efforts could be targeted
 - Ways efforts can be targeted toward each subgroup or subpopulation

All informants were made aware that participation was voluntary and that responses would be shared with the Center for Urban Population Health for analysis and reporting. Based on the summaries provided to the Center for Urban Population Health, this report presents the results of the 2019 key informant interviews for Manitowoc County.

The report first presents a summary of the health issue rankings, including a list of the five issues which were ranked most frequently by respondents. The next section describes the themes that presented themselves across the top ranked health topics. Finally, summaries of the strategies, barriers, partners, and potential targeted subpopulations described by participants are provided as well.

Limitations: Thirty-one key informant interviews were conducted with 32 respondents in Manitowoc County. One interview incorporated the views of more than one person from an agency or organization.

The report relies on the opinions and experiences of a limited number of experts identified as having the community’s pulse. However, responses may not be representative of the overall perception of community strengths and needs. It is possible that the results would have been substantially different if a different set of informants had been interviewed. Results should be interpreted with caution and in conjunction with other Manitowoc County data (e.g., community health survey and secondary data reports).

A. Focus Area Ranking

In 31 interviews, a total of 32 key informants were asked to rank up to 5 of the major health-related issues in their county from a list of 15 focus areas identified in the State Health Plan. (See Appendix A for the full list of informants.) Key informants were also able to write in other health issue areas if they believed it was a top health issue for the county. The table below presents the results, including a summary of the number of times an issue was mentioned as a top five health issue, and the number of times an informant ranked the issue as the most important health issue. Importantly, not every informant ranked five issues and not every informant provided rankings within their top selections. In interviews with more than one participant, only one set of rankings was provided. The results in the table below reflect the 31 rankings.

Key Informant Rankings		
Health Focus Area	Top 5	Number 1
Mental Health	28	8
Substance Use and Abuse	25	6
Alcohol Abuse	17	2
Adverse Childhood Experiences	10	3
Access to Health Care	9	2
Physical Activity	8	1
Chronic Disease	7	0
Nutrition	5	2
Injury and Violence	4	0
Oral Health	4	0
Environmental and Occupational Health	1	1
Communicable Disease	1	0
Healthy Growth and Development	1	0
Reproductive and Sexual Health	1	0
Tobacco Use and Exposure	1	0
Other Health Issues	4	1

B. Top Five Health Issues

The five health issues ranked most consistently as top five health issues for the County were:

1. Mental Health
2. Substance Use and Abuse
3. Alcohol Abuse
4. Adverse Childhood Experiences
5. Access to Health Care

Summaries of themes for each issue are presented below in the order listed in the table above. As a guide, issues ranked as the top five priorities for the County are marked with this thermometer symbol:



C. General Themes

It is important to note that since the last release of this report in 2016, the report has changed slightly. The interview guide has been updated to include Adverse Childhood Experiences as a health issue to be ranked. Since the last report Alcohol Abuse and Substance Use and Abuse have been separated into two separate health issue areas. This year key informants were also given the opportunity to write-in other health issues that are a priority for their community even if they are not included in the state health plan. In 2016, 30 key informants were interviewed, which is very similar to the number interviewed in 2019 (n=32).

When looking at the top three health issues in the county in 2019, there has been little change from 2016. Mental health, substance abuse, and alcohol abuse remain the top issues, though mental health has become the number one priority and substance abuse and alcohol abuse have been separated into two separate issues and are ranked second and third respectively in 2019. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) has been added as a health issue and was ranked fourth in 2019. Finally, access to health care remains ranked fifth, as it was in 2016. Previously, physical activity and nutrition were ranked third and fourth, while in 2019 they are no longer top-five priority issues for key informants (sixth and eighth respectively). Chronic disease prevention and management was tied for fifth in 2016, and in 2019 is ranked seventh.

Across health issue areas in 2019, key informants noted the importance of Healthiest Manitowoc County's coalitions and work groups as a strategy in place to address many of these topics. Access to services continues to be an area for improvement across health issue areas. Key informants suggested expanding access to mental health, substance abuse detox and treatment, dental services, nutritious foods, physical activity opportunities, and specialty health care. Beyond service provision, key informants also recognized the importance of having bi-lingual and bi-cultural outreach and services across all health issue areas, particularly for the Hmong and Hispanic

members of the community. Finally, for nearly every topic, key informants suggested community education and messaging to raise awareness of these health issues and the resources available to the county.

D. Issue Summaries

Behavioral Health

Mental Health, Substance Use and Abuse, and Alcohol Abuse were the three issues receiving the most rankings in key informants' top five health focus areas. Almost all key informants discussed mental health, substance use and abuse, or alcohol abuse as priority areas, with many discussing two or three of these. Mental health received the most rankings as the number one health issue in the county. Key informants' insights also suggest these topics overlap significantly with the issue of access to health services, with the main barriers and challenges to addressing mental health, alcohol abuse, and substance use and abuse being a lack of providers and services in the county, waiting lists to access providers and services that do exist, and difficulty paying for services or lack of coverage by insurance for services or medication.



Mental Health

Twenty-eight key informants' interview rankings included Mental Health as a top five health issue.

Existing Strategies: Providers of mental health services in public and private settings, Healthiest Manitowoc County initiatives and the work of the mental health coalition, Manitowoc County has a networking group among public schools for student mental health services, Lakeshore Community Health Care has an integrated model of care, UW Extension's efforts to reach and support farmers through challenging times, Veterans Services office resources, police department, EMT services, Veterans Court in Sheboygan, Veterans Center in Green Bay provides mental health counselors in Manitowoc a few times per week, QPR: Question, Persuade, and Refer trainings, support groups, daytime and after hours crisis systems, Ascend Services, Inc., Painting Pathways, The Haven program for young men in high school, Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) offered through employers, work has been done to decrease the stigma of mental illness, and the community is working together.

Barriers and Challenges: A major barrier is access to care. A few of the issues are the cost of services, especially if a person is uninsured or their insurance doesn't cover mental health services. Co-payments, deductibles, and the cost of prescription drugs are barriers, even for the insured. There are shortages of some provider types or people have to travel to reach providers that do exist. The closest in-patient treatment is in Sheboygan. There are not enough providers to meet the demand, especially psychiatrists and child and adolescent psychiatrists. There can be long waiting lists for appointments. The stigma of mental illness is still such that it can be a barrier in preventing

early diagnosis and prevention. People may not be aware of the services they have access to or may be afraid to use them, such as EAPs. Lack of understanding and support from families and the community, especially for veterans. When people are afraid to get help or can't find help, they sometimes abuse alcohol or substances to cope, which can further complicate their illness and require more complex treatment. Prevention is difficult to address.

Needed Strategies: The two most commonly named needs were more providers and more affordable services. Key informants also suggested social stigma reduction and wellness normalization. Other suggestions were focusing on prevention, more wrap around services, training for law enforcement, provide training in Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) to all school staff, increasing partnerships between government and non-profits, providing interpreting services to decrease language barriers that keep people from scheduling appointments or talking to insurance companies, more focus on farmers who are facing a crisis in the state right now, and creating more support groups and advocate positions to support mental health in the community.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Health systems, hospitals, and mental health providers, school districts, Manitowoc County Human Services, YMCA, Kids at Hope, social workers, meditation coaches, family therapists, law enforcement, fire and rescue departments, Healthiest Manitowoc County, Painting Pathways, city, county, and state government, non-profit organizations that do this type of work, UW Extension, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, drug courts, and veterans courts.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Though this issue affects everyone, some key informants suggested specifically targeting efforts towards children, people with disabilities, low-income residents, the elderly, trauma survivors, and patients who have been transported to a hospital for mental health services. These subgroups may be most in need of services or have the most difficulty accessing services they need. Key informants suggested the following: Providing transportation opportunities to appointments; prevention and education; and training police officers through the National Alliance on Mental Illness so they understand issues when they encounter them and know how to best respond.



Substance Use and Abuse

Twenty-five informants included Substance Use and Abuse in their top health issues for the county.

Existing Strategies: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Coalition through Healthiest Manitowoc County, drug court, sober events in the community, education to youth in schools, DARE in schools, treatment facilities, residential treatment, sober spaces, recovery coaching, Alcoholics and Narcotics

Anonymous (AA and NA) meetings, activities for the recovery community like Sunday volleyball at the YMCA, Lighthouse Recovery Community Center, MARCO Services, Inc., Pathways to a Better Life, Vivitrol, Veterans Court in Sheboygan that Manitowoc County veterans can use, the VA's focus on holistic pain management rather than overprescribing opioids, free in-patient rehab and detox program in Toma for veterans, BadgerCare is covering more services, Narcan use at many agencies, methadone treatment program in Sheboygan, and housing and employment support services.

Barriers and Challenges: Lack of funding and resources for recovery, waiting lists for providers and services, the lack of detox and treatment facilities (both day treatment and in-patient) means people either don't have access or have to travel to other communities, lack of capacity in the drug court and no local tax levy dedicated to support it (it is a good program, but needs to serve more people), the social stigma related to drug use and being in recovery, normalization of drinking and drug use, ease of access to drugs, inconsistent legalization of marijuana, lack of staff for coordination of Vivitrol, lack of resources to look at root causes or triggers of substance use and investment in prevention, and due to the small community it may be hard for people in recovery to avoid running into people they used to use with.

Needed Strategies: In response to the barriers and challenges named, the most frequently cited response was more treatment facilities. Key informants suggested the county needs more facilities for detox and treatment, an inpatient treatment facility in town, local treatment programming for substance use that includes medicine assisted treatment, more providers of treatment and supportive services, cultural work to destigmatize substance abuse disorders and seeking treatment, as well as changing norms that normalize drinking, drug use, and easy access to medications and illegal drugs, continued collaboration between organizations in the county, a needle exchange program, development of a comprehensive community plan to understand this as a public health issue rather than a criminal one, more research to understand the impact of drug use, education to students and parents about risks and consequences, and expansion of alternative pain management that goes beyond prescriptions that can be addictive.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Schools, local non-profit organizations, YMCA, the business community, faith communities, safe rides, recovery coaches, law enforcement, judges, local health systems and health care providers, drug court, Manitowoc County Human Services, Lighthouse Recovery Community Center, Lakeshore CAP, Manitowoc County Public Health Department, Healthiest Manitowoc County, landlords in the community, and transitional and sober housing providers.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Middle and high school students can receive targeted prevention efforts and education in schools, low-income residents may be more vulnerable and protective factor training may help them make sure they have the tools they need to overcome barriers and challenges they face. Disabled veterans might need specific attention to pain management issues and working with alternative pain management methods rather than opioids. People exiting incarceration need opportunities to connect with

programs and coordinated exits from jail with a warm hand-off to a program to reduce the likelihood of relapse.



Alcohol Abuse

Seventeen key informants ranked Alcohol Abuse as a top health priority for the county. Many of the existing strategies, barriers, and needed strategies named were the same as those suggested for Substance Use and Abuse.

Existing Strategies: Key informants cited school assemblies to educate students about the effects of drinking, education in schools, drunk driving crash demonstrations, community-wide events for teens, the Healthiest Manitowoc County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, treatment facilities, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in English and Spanish, sober community events, Sunday volleyball at the YMCA for the recovery community, tool kits and education for parents, police interventions, social host penalties, sober rides and taxi services offering free rides, free sodas at bars for designated drivers, treatment through MARCO Services, Inc., and alcohol and other drug abuse assessments through the county Human Services Department and Holy Family Memorial as strategies in place to address alcohol abuse in the county.

Barriers and Challenges: Cultural acceptance of alcohol and heavy drinking, parents drinking in front of their children, the large number of bars in the community and presence of alcohol at many community events, alcohol being widely accessible at many retailers, cycles of addiction, alcohol's use as a way to deal with mental health problems or hiding from other life problems, general misunderstanding of the dangers of alcohol abuse, social stigma attached to seeking help for alcohol abuse, limited options for treatment and no detox facility in the county, lack of consequences for drinking and driving, and lack of resources in Spanish are barriers and challenges to addressing this issue.

Needed Strategies: An inpatient rehab facility in town, a detox facility in the county, limiting access to purchase alcohol, increased parent vigilance about supervision, retailers need to check identification, preventing advertising that targets minors, more information about resources available in Spanish, increased access to treatment facilities and rehabilitation programming, more education about what binge drinking is and the consequences of alcohol abuse, more sober community activities for adults to keep people busy, program or messaging to address stigma reduction, more funding for services, especially to help the uninsured access services, limiting bar hours so they cannot be open for third shift workers, stronger penalties for drinking and driving, removing alcohol from publicly funded events, continuing education through middle and high school, and community education for retailers of alcohol like gas stations and grocery stores were suggested as strategies that could be used to address this issue.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Schools, the business community, faith communities, safe ride providers, bar owners, recovery coaches, children and youth, the Tavern League, Healthiest Manitowoc County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, counselors and therapists, law enforcement, Manitowoc County Human Services, the Manitowoc County Health Department, hospitals, health care systems, health care providers, drug court, peer groups, alcohol-related task forces, Alcoholics Anonymous groups, and Lighthouse Recovery Center were suggested as key partners to work on this issue in the county.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Some key informants noted this issue affects all ages and all populations and education about prevention should be offered to all. A few key informants recommended doing outreach to kids and adolescents to teach healthy habits and resilience from an early age, to offer alcohol-free events, and to discuss alcohol use and consequences. One key informant recommended tailored social media campaigns about alcohol abuse for the Hispanic population. One key informant suggested tailored outreach and protective factor training to low-income residents to make sure they have the tools to overcome barriers to challenges they face.



Adverse Childhood Experiences

Ten informants' rankings included Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as a top health issue for the county.

Existing Strategies: Collaboration among agencies, Healthiest Manitowoc County workgroup focused on trauma-informed care, multiple agencies offering to meet different needs and provide support, increasing awareness, increased screening in primary care settings, county Human Services and the county Health Department, Kids at Hope, the Crossing, Lakeshore CAP, school districts working through trauma training for full time staff and teachers, and peer support for parents.

Barriers and Challenges: Lack of resources (time, money, and interest from some), a system that is too overwhelmed, individuals living in a constant state of crisis, too many expectations placed upon schools and primary care providers to get to ACEs screening, lack of education or public knowledge about the issue, lack of understanding, too few professionals trained in ACEs and trauma-informed approaches, and it is still a relatively new concept, so not every organization has fully embraced it yet.

Needed Strategies: More training opportunities, more frameworks to assist organizations to become trauma-informed, a workgroup to focus on helping the community become trauma-informed, federal, state, and county funding for ACEs, school board funding, more consistent referrals for those who need help, earlier intervention, education and buy-in, continue to push trainings and

conversations, more programming in schools that teach children about healthy behaviors, relationships, and families, and targeting businesses and organizational leadership to educate them on ACEs and how to become trauma informed.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Hospitals and health care networks, schools, churches, non-profit organizations, government at all levels, the business community and The Chamber, Healthiest Manitowoc County, Kids at Hope, Lakeshore CAP, Manitowoc County Human Services, law enforcement, Manitowoc County Health Department, youth serving organizations, Lakeshore Community Health Care, Lakeland Care District, and the general public are key partners to address this issue.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Most respondents indicated this affects everyone, some suggested starting with young children and their families, and one suggested starting with those affected by addiction, mental illness, and children in foster care. It was suggested those who have been exposed to ACEs need the resources to help them heal. Education was suggested as an intervention for parents.



Access to Health Care

Access to Health Care was ranked as a top health issue by nine key informants.

Existing Strategies: Outreach from the public health system, Lakeshore Community Health Care, free clinics, phones or computers offer language interpreting services for non-English speaking patients, health insurance coverage if people have it, and coalitions and collaborations through Healthiest Manitowoc County.

Barriers and Challenges: Key informant named lack of services, especially related to mental health, substance abuse, detox, and sober living, limited numbers of appointments available, limited hours of availability, high provider and employee turnover, lack of staffing, lack of health insurance or limited coverage, even if services are free or reduced-cost there still may be fees, co-payments, insurance deductibles, and the cost of specialty services and prescriptions, and a lack of services offered in Hmong or Spanish or with in-person interpreting services. Respondents also named lack of knowledge of what is available, difficulty navigating the resources that are available, lack of care coordinators or case managers, and difficulty understanding or choosing the best insurance coverage through employment as challenges to accessing health care.

Needed Strategies: Key informants suggested making services more available through free clinics, sliding fee scale payment, and charity care, expansion of BadgerCare to cover more people and non-employer-based workers (like farmers), creating a one-stop shop for needs assessment and referral to services that are available, education or navigation tools to help individuals decide where to apply

for health insurance and answer questions about what kind of coverage they need, hiring more bilingual staff or having in-person interpreters on site, and hiring more providers in the county to meet all of the needs, or incentivizing providers to come to work in underserved areas.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Health systems, hospitals, health care providers, Manitowoc County Public Health Department, Lakeshore Community Health Care, rural insurance agents, lobbying groups, elected officials at all levels, and advocates who understand the barriers un- and under-insured individuals encounter.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: The uninsured, children and their families, Hispanic families working on farms who do not have insurance for themselves or families, the asset limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE) population, the aging and elderly, those who are incarcerated or being released from custody, people who live in outlying areas and need transportation to appointments, the Amish community, and the Hmong community were named as groups who may be especially vulnerable or need more assistance accessing health care. Key informants suggested support groups, educational materials printed in multiple languages, providing transportation, reaching out to organizations who work with or elders within specific populations, like Amish, Hmong, and Latinos, and organizations need to hire bilingual outreach staff.

Physical Activity

Eight key informants included Physical Activity in their ranking of top health issues.

Existing Strategies: Healthiest Manitowoc County's physical activity and nutrition coalition, the YMCA and local fitness clubs, Holy Family Memorial's Wellness Center, county parks and trails, businesses and schools that have gyms and support employee/student wellness, Lean on the Lakeshore, and local running groups were named and organizations and strategies in place that are increasing access to Physical Activity in the county.

Barriers and Challenges: People are living more sedentary lives with technology. Physical Education is limited in public schools and there are limited opportunities for children and adolescents who do not participate in organized sports. There is a lack of bike lanes and crosswalks on busier streets that discourages walking and cycling. Lack of community resources and facilities, lack of motivation to exercise, lack of work-life balance, lack of opportunities for people who are new to exercise to engage, and Wisconsin's weather were also named as barriers to increased Physical Activity.

Needed Strategies: Making school facilities available for fitness after hours, Boys and Girls Clubs, separate bike lanes and crosswalks on busy streets, community education on sharing the road with cyclists and pedestrians, making exercise facilities and bike locks/racks/helmets available for people to use, funding to help with the costs of gym memberships, outreach to people to remind them to

get active, and parents/adults being active and providing role-modeling to children were suggestions for how to make the county's residents more physically active.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Schools, the non-profit community, health care providers, Public Health, Human Services, law enforcement, local fitness clubs and the YMCA, athletic/personal trainers, yoga teachers, physical and occupational therapists, community members who are passionate about this topic, and Healthiest Manitowoc County were named as key partners to improving health.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: It was suggested that all people need to be reached. Some specific suggestions were to reach young people, the elderly, middle-aged people, and to make sure all genders and ethnicities are included in physical activity and education opportunities. One suggestion was to reach low income parents and their children because they may not be able to afford fitness center memberships or have the time or flexibility due to work. They recommended keeping public schools open later for activities at their facilities.

Chronic Disease

Seven key informants ranked Chronic Disease among their top-five health issues.

Existing Strategies: Health networks and health care organizations partnering together, Lakeshore Community Health Care, the Red Shield Clinic, and community paramedic programs were named as existing strategies to address Chronic Disease.

Barriers and Challenges: The high cost of health care, health insurance, "hoops" to jump through in the health care and payment systems, lack of individualized therapies, and decreasing quality of life are barriers and challenges named by key informants.

Needed Strategies: Increased focus on caring for people and decreasing focus on making money, accountability from insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, and medical device companies; financial support for patients; visiting Registered Nurses; longer hospital stays to provide more education and support; and community education with wrap around services for those with chronic disease were suggestions from key informants.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: The hospitals and health care systems, Lakeshore Community Health Care, Healthiest Manitowoc County, fire-based Emergency Medical Services, visiting nurses, and Manitowoc County Health Department.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Key informants identified lower-income residents, those with disabilities, and the elderly as populations

that may be especially vulnerable and most in need of services or assistance. One suggestion is policy changes to Medicare to better serve these individuals.

Nutrition

Five key informants ranked Nutrition as a top health issue for the county.

Existing Strategies: Key informants named specific entities working on this issue including the physical activity and nutrition coalition of Healthiest Manitowoc County, the Foodwise program through UW Extension, Grow it Forward, and the USDA and other food pantries that distribute food in the county. Another strategy is nutrition education through health classes.

Barriers and Challenges: Some challenges named were the abundance of processed food, fast food restaurants, food deserts, and a lack of nutrition education in the community. At food pantries, sometimes there is a lack of food or food for people with certain allergies and intolerances, and sometimes there are issues with food being expired.

Needed Strategies: Additional research on food quality, community awareness of nutrition, more funding for food pantries, and healthy donations and recipes for food pantry customers were recommendations offered by respondents.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Schools, non-profits who already do nutrition education, counselors and therapists, Human Services, Public Health, law enforcement, local grocery stores and restaurants, UW Extension, health care providers, food pantries, Grow it Forward, and the Lions Club were named as partners to work together on this issue in the county.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Key informants suggested focusing on children and their families at school by collaborating with schools on health education, healthy meal and snack policies, and education on how to build nutrition into daily life. One key informant suggested focusing on the most vulnerable who do not have access to food and reaching them through food pantries, subsidized housing units, and community health centers.

Injury and Violence

Four respondents' rankings included Injury and Violence as a top health issue for the county. Respondents discussed domestic violence, sexual assault, and the needs of veterans related to injury.

Existing Strategies: For domestic violence/abuse, In Courage offers advocacy and shelter services, for sexual assault, the hospitals offer Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) programs, and there is a

response from law enforcement. For veterans with injuries and in need of mental health services, there is promotion of federal benefits and the VA is a leader in mental health and prosthetics research.

Barriers and Challenges: A main challenge is the accessibility of services. In Courage may not be accessible to those who don't speak English if an interpreter isn't present and undocumented residents may be afraid to ask for help. Veterans may not be able to access services because they have to travel to Green Bay, Appleton, or Cleveland and these clinics are appointment-based only. For emergency services they have to travel to Milwaukee, which is too far for many clients. Other challenges for victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault include problems finding landlords that will rent to them when they need to leave a violent situation quickly, a lack of therapists who do trauma treatment, transportation problems, a lack of community outreach and communication about services available, and law enforcement that aren't trained to deal appropriately with family violence and sexual assault. Another challenge is an increase in violence in the county due to drug use.

Needed Strategies: Key informants suggested hiring Hispanic counselors at In Courage, providing more education for law enforcement on how to handle domestic violence and sexual assault situations, more promotion of the services that do exist, and services to deal with the long-term effects of violence. For veterans, more needs to be done at the state level for VAs. Local clinics should look to the state for guidance. More public announcements and advertisements are also needed to increase awareness of veterans' health issues, resources available, and the population's rights.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Health care systems and providers, local counselors, Manitowoc County Human Services Department, In Courage, interpreters, law enforcement, and local government were named as important partners in addressing injury and violence.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: One key informant suggested focusing on low income people and partnering with key community groups to reach them. Another suggested focusing on Hispanic women, men, children, and families by working with providers that serve domestic abuse victims. One respondent focused their responses on veterans' needs.

Oral Health

Four key informants included Oral Health as a top health issue for the county. Responses indicated accessibility of information and oral health services is important to improving health in this area.

Existing Strategies: Lakeshore Community Health Care offers oral health services with a sliding fee scale, accepts uninsured patients, and has school-based locations. They are working on creating a

pipeline of public health dentists by partnering with schools to have students rotate through the clinic and offering them employment after graduation. Oral health and hygiene education is offered to children in schools. Members of Ascend Services, Inc. participate in an oral health class. Education programs in the community work well when there is an in-person interpreter for non-English speakers.

Barriers and Challenges: There are financial barriers for dental patients who do not have dental insurance, cannot afford co-payments, or do not qualify for assistance, but the out-of-pocket costs are too high. It can be hard to find dentist who serve patients who have Medicaid. It can be even harder to find accessible specialty care. Staff turn-over for dental providers within Lakeshore Community Health Care is another challenge. The distance to travel to access providers who will see uninsured or Medicaid patients is a barrier. Finally, there are barriers for patients who do not speak English. Patients prefer in-person interpreters and have a smoother time with follow up care instructions when there is someone they can talk to in-person, but many providers only speak English.

Needed Strategies: More free or low-cost services are needed to refer to, more providers to provide education to adults with disabilities, and more bilingual staff in clinics were offered as suggestions to improve oral health in the county.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Lakeshore Community Health Care, schools, the American Dental Association, local dentists willing to provide free or low-cost services to some patients, health care systems, and law makers (to increase Medicaid and other reimbursement rates) were suggested as the key partners who should work together on this issue.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Low-income and uninsured patients, adults with disabilities, and elderly Hmong-speaking patients are groups that might need targeted outreach, education, and linking to services.

Environmental and Occupational Health

One key informant ranked Environmental and Occupational Health as a top-five health issue for the county. They focused mainly on health and safety in agricultural occupational settings.

Existing Strategies: Education and safety signage in English and Spanish, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations for farms of 11 or more employees, the Farm and Tractor Safety program through UW Extension, skid steer training programs, animal handling workshops through UW Extension, and individual farm safety consultations are examples of strategies in place to make farms safer places to work.

Barriers and Challenges: This environment can be very dangerous for workers, visitors, animals, and equipment. Farms don't have to comply with OSHA if they have fewer than 11 employees. It is hard

to get farmers to come to meetings or trainings because of the time away from their farm. UW Extension had done a lot of the training and safety work, but has recently lost a lot of funding and retiring doctoral-level experts are retiring and not being replaced in Madison. Grants that allow for roll-over protection on tractors are not being utilized.

Needed Strategies: Safety education about working in confined spaces, more signage, more encouragement for all farms to use, regularly update, and practice safety plans, and hiring consultants who can help to develop safety plans are additional strategies that could make farms safer places to work.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: UW Extension, local technical colleges, county Farm Bureaus, Farmers Union, dairy promotion group, Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center, and Manitowoc County Forage were suggested as key partners due to their reach and active involvement in farming promotion.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Children should be taught safety and relevant laws. Hispanic farms workers may need specialized outreach in Spanish. Education materials (print and video) should be offered in English and Spanish. Having education provided in-person on farms would also reduce barriers of travel and time away from farms driving to the city.

Communicable Disease

One key informant ranked Communicable Disease as a top five health priority area for Manitowoc County.

Existing Strategies: More bilingual information is available in the last 10 years, which has been helpful. Information is available in schools and other settings.

Barriers and Challenges: More public health outreach into the community is needed. Bilingual brochures are helpful, and bicultural materials are even more helpful, but more people talking about the issue are needed as well.

Needed Strategies: It was suggested that getting bilingual information into church communities could be a good outreach strategy because the church is a trusted resource with good relationships.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Churches and schools.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Focus especially on the young and non-vaccinated. Birth to kindergarten is a key age group to focus on, and especially in minority populations. Parents of these children should be reached with more education about the benefits to themselves and their community.

Healthy Growth and Development

One key informant ranked Healthy Growth and Development among their top health areas for the county. They focused their responses on healthy aging across the lifespan and inter-generational learning.

Existing Strategies: Nothing currently exists in the community to bring

Barriers and Challenges: Younger generations have different social skills than older generations (technology vs. face-to-face). Older generations don't know how to connect with younger populations.

Needed Strategies: Programs that exist to bring the retired and elderly into non-profits and education settings to fill gaps or needs within the agency or educational setting. Other programs and strategies to bridge the generation-to-generation divide are also needed.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Elementary schools, senior and retirement communities, Aging and Disability Resource Center, and senior centers.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Create opportunities to pair elementary students or college students with seniors/retirees.

Reproductive and Sexual Health

One key informant rated Reproductive and Sexual Health among their top health priority areas for the county.

Existing Strategies: Health care providers such as Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Lakeshore Community Health Care, and private providers can provide access to birth control.

Barriers and Challenges: Teens need education about where to obtain contraceptives.

Needed Strategies: Post information on social media platforms and at frequently visited places like clinics, hospitals, laundromats, Mexican stores, etc.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Health care providers like Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Lakeshore Community Health Care, and private medical providers, and social service agencies.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Hispanic teens and adults were suggested as a group that may need targeted outreach, through the same methods recommended in the Needed Strategies section: posting information on social media and at places frequently visited by these teens and adults.

Tobacco Use and Exposure

One key informant selected Tobacco Use and Exposure as a top health issue for the county.

Existing Strategies: This key informant expressed concern that current strategies are not working, and that recent gains this area may have been taken for granted because we aren't seeing anti-tobacco messaging and warnings as often as we used to.

Barriers and Challenges: More people, including young people are smoking. Tobacco products are easily accessible. Gas stations and other retailers may not have enough oversight, especially for young people.

Needed Strategies: More education in schools and elsewhere.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Police to monitor retailers of tobacco products, parents and schools.

Subgroups/populations where efforts could be targeted and how efforts can be targeted: Children and adolescents who are at an age of first exposure, and 14 to 25-year-olds. These children and young adults can be reached at school or by mass media marketing campaigns.

Other Health Issues

Four key informants added other health issues they believed were top-five priority issues for the county. These issues are hygiene; elderly fall prevention; and healthy aging, Alzheimer's Disease, and dementia.

- **Hygiene:** For children, schools help to keep them clean and are a good place to reach children. For adults, the key informant didn't see any strategies in place and believes some people have given up on taking care of themselves or they have co-occurring substance abuse that prevents them from caring for themselves. They recommended a strategy of reaching adults with education at places where they can learn better hygiene. Key partners to improve health are Lakeshore Community Health Center and the Manitowoc County Health Department.
- **Elderly fall prevention:** Currently there is collaboration among the Aging and Disability Resource Center, the health department, the fire and rescue departments, skilled nursing facilities as well as public education and wellness classes. A major challenge is providing the proper follow up once concerns are identified. The community needs more tools to correct the issues, like in-home care that goes beyond education, or free installation of the materials needed to make homes safer environments. This respondent suggested continued work with churches and civic groups to create volunteer opportunities for assisting elderly and aging people in their homes. There may need to be more work with

Aging and Disability Resource Center and parish nurses. They also recommended more public education and celebrating successes. They also suggested reaching the elderly through traditional media, like print media, radio, and TV and offer a single point of contact to address the needs.

- Healthy Aging, Alzheimer's Disease, and Dementia: Currently there are day services for the disabled at Ascend Services, senior centers, programs for healthy aging, Aging and Disability Resource Center programming, the Alzheimer's Association, Felician Village, and other senior living communities. Some challenges named were lack of funding, lack of local data, lack of community knowledge around the community's future needs as the population ages, and on an individual level, sometimes families don't get their aging loved one into the doctor quick enough to diagnose and prevent the progression of dementia. Community education around early diagnosis could help that. Another suggestion is to address the entire county and look at system level changes. One example is to research naturally occurring retirement communities. Key partners on this issue are health care providers who specialize in aging, dementia, and Alzheimer's Disease and the Aging and Disability Resource Center. One key informant recommended reaching out to people aged 50-65 about these issues at their workplaces, churches, and health care providers. One key informant recommended reaching out specifically to people with disabilities and Down syndrome.

Appendix A. Interview Participants for Manitowoc County

Key Informant Interview Participants

Thirty-two individuals participated in 31 key informant interviews about our community's most pressing health needs. The organizations listed here include many that serve low-income, minority, and medically underserved populations. They represent an array of perspectives from communities that include, but are not limited to: racial and ethnic minorities, the elderly, youth, veterans, faith communities, individuals with disabilities, rural and agricultural communities, survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and those living with mental illness and substance abuse.

Name	Title	Organization
Ashley Bender	Associate Director	United Way Manitowoc County
Todd Blaser	Chief of Fire Rescue	City of Manitowoc
Brian Boomgarden	Operations Manager	Holy Family Memorial Behavioral Health
Todd Brehmer	Veterans Service Officer Department Director	Manitowoc County Veteran Services Office
Antonio Butturini	Superintendent	Reedsville Public School District
Belinda Esquinas	Executive Director	The Crossing of Manitowoc County
Michael Etheridge	Executive Director	The Haven of Manitowoc County, Inc.
Deanna Genske	Executive Director	Ascend Services, Inc.
Julie Grossman	Chief Executive Officer	Manitowoc-Two Rivers YMCA
Scott Gunderson	Agricultural Agent	UW-Extension Manitowoc County
Douglas Hamm	Dean, Business and Technology	Lakeshore Technical College
Sister Marlita Henseler	Pastoral Leader	St. Thomas the Apostle
Barb Hirssig	Co-Chairman	Maribel Food Pantry
Colleen Homb	Executive Director	Lakeshore CAP
Lori Joas	Deputy Director, Economic Support	Manitowoc County Human Services Department
Amy John	Director of Operations of Emergency and Critical Care Services	Holy Family Memorial
Deborah Keil	Director of Social Services	Ascend Services, Inc.
Yer Kue	Bilingual Health Aide	Manitowoc County Health Department
Cathy Ley	Director	Aging and Disability Resource Center of the Lakeshore
Madeline McCannon	Case Manager	Hope House of Manitowoc County
Norma Medrano	Bilingual Health Aide	Manitowoc County Health Department
Sara Meier	Executive Director	In Courage
Michael Morgen	Mental Wellness Coordinator	Manitowoc Public School District
Karen Nichols	Executive Director	The Chamber of Manitowoc County
Nancy Randolph	Deputy Director	Manitowoc County Human Services Department
Matt Sauer	Co-Pastor	First Presbyterian Church

Marty Schaller	Chief Financial and Operating Officer	Lakeshore Community Health Care
Sara Schuette	Registered Nurse, Jail Nurse	Manitowoc County Sheriff's Office, Jail Health Services
Lynn Skarvan	Coordinator	Two Rivers Ecumenical Pantry
Nancy Slattery	Vice President	League of Women Voters Manitowoc County
Lisa Stricklin	Program and Outreach Director	The Salvation Army
Gina Wotruba	Executive Director	MARCO Services, Inc.