Community Health Needs Assessment for Froedtert Community Hospital Locations

A Summary of Key Stakeholder Focus Groups

2025

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Introduction

This report presents a summary of community health need priorities identified in community focus groups for Froedtert Community Hospital—New Berlin, Froedtert Community Hospital—Pewaukee, Froedtert Community Hospital—Oak Creek and Froedtert Community Hospital—Mequon. These findings are a critical supplement to the local Community Health Surveys Key Informant Interviews conducted through a partnership between health systems and local public health departments. The Community Health Needs Assessment for Froedtert Community Hospital locations incorporate input from persons representing the broad interests of the community served, and from those who possess special knowledge of or expertise in public health.

The Office of Community Engagement identified key stakeholders from the service areas of Froedtert Community Hospital locations and conducted four focus groups in September 2025. The interviewers used a standard interview script that included the following elements:

- Ranking of three social determinants of health that are the most important issues for the service area
- For those three social determinants of health, identification of:
    - What populations in our communities are most affected by this issue? Ranking of two health conditions and behaviors that are the most important issues for the service area.
    - What are the barriers/challenges to addressing this issue – What could we do differently?
    - What are the existing strategies addressing the health issue – what is working well? Who are the key partners working on this?
    - If the community rallied behind one major effort to radically improve this issue, what would that initiative be?
- Ranking of three health conditions and behaviors that are the most important issues for the service area.
- For those two health issues, identification of:
    - What populations in our communities are most affected by this issue? Ranking of two health conditions and behaviors that are the most important issues for the service area.
    - What are the barriers/challenges to addressing this issue – What could we do differently?
    - What are the existing strategies addressing the health issue – what is working well? Who are the key partners working on this?
    - If the community rallied behind one major effort to radically improve this issue, what would that initiative be?

All stakeholders were made aware that participation was voluntary and that responses would be analyzed by Community Engagement team members. Based on the summaries, this report presents the results of the 2025 key stakeholder focus groups for Froedtert Community Hospital locations.

Limitations: four key stakeholder focus group were conducted with four respondents representing the Froedtert Community Hospital—New Berlin service area, five respondents representing the Froedtert Community Hospital— Pewaukee service area, nine respondents representing the Froedtert Community Hospital—Oak Creek service area and four respondents representing the Froedtert Community Hospital—Mequon service area. This 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 stakeholders had been interviewed. Results should be

interpreted with caution and in conjunction with other Community Health Needs Assessment data (e.g., key informant interviews, community health survey and secondary data).

Social Determinants of Health Focus Area Rankings

A total of 20 key stakeholders ranked three social determinants of health issues from a list of 12 focus areas. The table below presents the results, including a summary of the number of times an issue was mentioned as a top three social determinant of health. More details about the top social determinants of health are included in the Social Determinants of Health Issue Summaries section of this report.

Social Determinant of Health	**Key Stakeholder Top 3 Ranking**
Access to Social Services	4
Accessible and Affordable Health Care	11
Accessible and Affordable Transportation	2
Affordable Childcare	6
Community Violence and Crime	3
Economic Stability and Employment	4
Education Access and Quality	1
Environmental Health	0
Family Support	4
Food Insecurity	5
Safe and Affordable Housing	7
Social Connectedness and Belonging	6

Top Three Social Determinants of Health

The areas ranked most consistently as top three social determinants of health were:

1. Accessible and Affordable Health Care
2. Safe and Affordable Housing
3. Social Connectedness and Belonging

Summaries of themes for each issue are presented below in the order listed in the table above.

Social Determinants of Health Issue Summaries

Accessible and Affordable Health Care

- Affected Populations:
    - Many individuals living paycheck to paycheck and having difficulty paying medical bills with high deductible plans
    - Many young adults early in their careers not earning much
    - The broad community
- Barriers and Challenges:
    - Work schedules that don’t allow flexibility
    - Timely medical appointments not available
    - Language barriers and differences
    - Prefer quick care from emergency department versus waiting for specialty care
    - Long wait lists to see providers and high co-pays
    - Mental health services for adults and youth

    - Lack of transportation
    - Lack of specialty care
- Existing Strategies:
    - Occupational health services
    - Telehealth helps reduce barriers
    - Health savings accounts helpful with out-of-pocket expenses
    - Preventative screenings and vaccinations that are onsite at workplaces and community events
    - Systems like MyChart
    - Sliding scale for services and cost
    - Support more free clinics
- One Major Effort:
    - Wellness resource hub for older populations to receive services such as social security and Medicaid/Medicare support or navigation
    - Meet people where they are
    - Wayfinding for health care to communicate and navigate between health systems
    - Focus on preventative services
    - More free clinics

Safe and Affordable Housing

- Affected Populations:
    - Everyone
    - Single parents
    - Young families can't afford homes or get priced out of neighborhood
- Barriers and Challenges:
    - Not enough housing
    - Lack of financial education and literacy
    - Cost of houses
    - Lack of financial planning
    - Investment in schools and youth, increase the earning power of families
    - Opportunities for housing for employees
    - Government subsidies
- Existing Strategies:
    - Engage elected official and developers
- One Major Effort:
    - Mandatory finance education in school
    - Workshops on reducing debt
    - Improve public transportation
    - Understand reasons why housing costs are up

Social Connectedness and Belonging

- Affected Populations:
    - Youth and teens
    - Elderly
- Barriers and Challenges:
    - Approachability
    - Encouraging volunteering and getting involved in the community
    - Get families to feel a strong connection with school districts and community
    - Social media influences and growing technology
    - Lack of transportation
- Existing Strategies:

    - Interaction in workplaces and other environments
    - Community events and social gathering with friends
    - Park systems
    - Chamber events
- One Major Effort:
    - More intimate community events for people to connect
    - School groups focused on comprehensive services
    - More funding for recreation departments
    - Engage seniors in social activities

Health Conditions and Behaviors Focus Area Ranking

A total of 20 key stakeholders ranked three health conditions and behaviors from a list of 10 focus areas. The table below presents the results, including a summary of the number of times an issue was mentioned as a top three health condition and behavior. More details about the top health conditions and behaviors are included in the Health Conditions and Behaviors Issue Summaries section of this report.

Health Conditions and Behaviors	**Key Stakeholder Top 3 Ranking**
Chronic Diseases	9
Communicable Diseases	1
Intimate Partner/Domestic Violence	0
Maternal, Infant, and Child Health	5
Mental Health	17
Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity	13
Oral Health	0
Reproductive Health, Sexual Health and STIs	0
Substance Misuse	12
Unintentional Injury	3

Top Health Conditions and Behaviors

The areas ranked most consistently as top three social determinants of health were:

1. Mental Health
2. Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity
3. Substance Misuse

Summaries of themes for each issue are presented below in the order listed in the table above.

Health Condition and Behavior Issue Summaries

Mental Health

- Affected Populations:
    - Universal issue and widespread
    - Youth
    - Middle-aged adults
    - Middle-aged men
    - Older adults lacking social connectedness
    - Veterans

- Barriers and Challenges:
    - Availability and affordability of care
    - Establishing a provider takes time, it can take up to seven counselors to find a good fit – with low health literacy it is even harder – most people get the immediate help they need but give up on getting long term help
    - Stigma
    - Social isolation
    - Social media influences
    - Lack of community offerings
    - Parents feeling social pressure to be over scheduled
    - Everyone's mental health is so individual that it is hard to create a system level solution – needs to be based on individual needs, yet scoped up to serve a lot of people
    - Other factors can directly affect someone's mental health – ACE, transportation, employment, food, basic needs for living, day to day life
- Existing Strategies:
    - Onsite chaplains have been effective
    - Telehealth breaks down travel barriers, childcare issues
    - School-based services
    - Workforce Health – focus on adult population using education, reducing access problems
    - Spring Health (Froedtert ThedaCare)
    - SilverCloud (Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin health network) for patients and community
    - NAMI
    - Wellpoint
    - Care Solace
    - Comprehensive Community Services
    - Mental health social workers embedded in the 911 dispatch center
    - Warm Lines / 211 phone resources
- One Major Effort:
    - Teen mental health therapy groups
    - Schools should do more outreach
    - Faith-based youth groups
    - Universal mental health education and prevention
    - Every single student (middle or high school) should have a touch base with a mental health care professional
    - Resources centralized – easier for people to know where to go for care
    - More work around stigma reduction– positive movement has been made but still need more attention to middle-aged men and seniors who have been raised not to ask for help, need to continue bringing awareness to how mental health is like one's physical health (like diabetes)
    - More champions in the community to talk openly about mental health – bosses, teachers, favorite podcast personalities (people in the community that are trusted)
    - Political leaders on both sides coming together on bipartisan effort to support mental health
        - Be bolder with messaging – often messages are diluted because they don't want to irritate anyone

<u>Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity</u>

- Affected Populations:
    - People with lower social economic status – healthy food is expensive and less accessible
    - Kids do/eat what is modeled to them and is available to them – they are learning about healthy habits but those behaviors could be out of their control

    - Aging adults experiencing health and mobility issues that may limit access to fresh foods, grocery store access and walking
    - Aging population with food insecurity due to lack of transportation
    -
- Barriers and Challenges:
    - The demands of life and family have gotten greater, no family-style dinners anymore
    - Quick meals and late meals due to other demands
    - Misinformation, offer more educational programming
    - Cost of fresh food is high, cheaper to eat processed or ready-made foods
    - Prescription prices are high
    - Do not provide follow-up after falls care (EMS visits or hospital visits)
    - Falls – people living alone, isolated
    - It costs money to be physically active, Wisconsin weather reduces activity in the winter
    - Not a walking forward community – driving required for most destinations, people do not walk to a store
- Existing Strategies:
    - Offer more programs
    - Promotion of health education topics
    - Cooking demos, workshops, nutrition coaching, training and teaching how to make recipes
    - Utilize technology
    - Focus and acceptance on less screen time, less focus on assessment scores, more recess times, more time for lunch, strong school board support for these types of changes
    - Recreation departments
    - YMCA
    - Schools
    - Hospital systems
    - UW-Extension (Strong Bodies class)
    - WIC – Farmers Market Stipends (currently being underutilized, on the surface a wonderful program, in practice this is a change on how people are used to getting their food)
    - Community gardens (increase in)
    - Seeing more green spaces available
    - Insurance offering incentives

- One Major Effort:
    - Community gardens
    - Health options at corner stores and buyback programs
    - Engage organizations like the YMCA on programming, employee discounts and educational workshops
    - Community-wide challenge
    - More community gardens and green space is lower social economic status neighborhoods
    - Blue Zones Project
    - Free access to County Parks

Substance Misuse

- Affected Populations:
    - Youth – younger than high school
    - People with mental health needs
    - People in jail/incarcerated (experience high overdose rate when released)
- Barriers and Challenges:
    - Addiction is challenging
    - People need better coping mechanisms

    - Poor mental health is a factor
    - People don't want to admit it's a problem
    - Culture in Wisconsin
    - Lack of providers and prevention efforts
    - Access is so easy for youth
    - Delta-8 is available everywhere
    - Fentanyl exposure
    - Stigma around substance misuse and harm reduction strategies
    - Kids don't think it will negatively affect them
    - Availability of community resources and treatment for youth under the age of 18, if abuse recognized earlier, they have less options for help than adults
    - Billing/reimbursement for Peer Specialist services
- Existing Strategies:
    - Smoking cessation classes
    - American Lung Association strategies and resources related to tobacco prevention
    - Peer specialists (can interact with people who have substance abuse disorders in a unique way)
    - Supporting building resiliency
    - Schools – moving away from consequences of a ticket and towards requiring youth to take an online educational class (not solving the issue but making a dent)
- One Major Effort:
    - Look at the whole body when address health

Appendix A: Key Stakeholder Focus Group Participants

Name	Title	Organization
Froedtert Community Hospital – New Berlin		
Chelsea Kujawa	Association Director of Healthy Living	YMCA of Greater Waukesha County
Julie Niedfeldt	VP of HR and EHS	Dynatect Manufacturing, Inc.
Katie Malone	Director, Human Resources	Wenthe-Davidson Engineering Co.
Michelle Clark	Hospital Administrator FCH-New Berlin	Froedtert ThedaCare
Froedtert Community Hospital – Pewaukee		
Adriana Plach	Continuous Improvement Coordinator	Pewaukee School District
Erin Dejarlais	WFH Strategic Operations Manager	Froedtert ThedaCare
John Roubik	Director of Human Resources	Hamilton School District
Frances Thomas	Public Health Strategist	Waukesha County Health Department
Jackie Blankenship	Hospital Administrator	Froedtert ThedaCare
Froedtert Community Hospital – Oak Creek		
Andre Bennett	Assistant Superintendent	Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District
Jared Owen	Safety and Lean Director	Grunau Company
Monique Miller	Human Resources Director	Zenar Corporation
Drew Tilkens	Director of Network Operations	Froedtert ThedaCare
Froedtert Community Hospital - Mequon		
Lisa Holtebeck	Executive Director	Ozaukee Family Services
Matt Joynt	Superintendent	Mequon-Thiensville School District
David Bialk	Fire Chief	Southern Ozaukee
Matt McCann	Branch Director	Feith Family YMCA
Hollie Milam	Deputy Director	Washington Ozaukee Health Department
Kathleen Schilling	Executive Director	Ozaukee Economic Development
Tina Schwantes	Executive Director	Mequon-Thiensville Chamber of Commerce
Jenny Terrill	HR Manager	Wilo
Chrystal Otto	Director Clinical Operations	Mequon Health Center