

# Wright County Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan

## 2020–2022

## Executive Summary

*The mission of Allina Health is to serve our communities by providing exceptional care as we prevent illness, restore health and provide comfort to all who entrust us with their care.*

### INTRODUCTION

To better understand health issues facing the communities of Wright County, Buffalo Hospital conducted a joint community health needs assessment (CHNA) as part of the Wright County Community Health Collaborative (WCCHC). WCCHC members include all Wright County organizations who are encouraged or required to complete a CHNA: Buffalo Hospital, part of Allina Health, CentraCare—Monticello, Wright County Public Health and Wright County Community Action. The purpose of the group is to collect and prioritize data from various sources and develop a joint community health implementation plan. All major CHNA decisions are based on consensus, open dialogue between the partners and community input.

From 2017–2019, WCCHC engaged residents and organizations in a process that identified the following priority areas for community health in the communities served by the collaborative:

- 1) **Mental health and wellness**
- 2) **Dental care**
- 3) **Substance use and abuse**

### Hospital and Community Description

Buffalo Hospital is located in Buffalo, Minnesota. This 65-bed hospital served more than 79,000 people in 2018. Its service area (and focus of the CHNA) is Wright County, located in central Minnesota, slightly northwest of the Twin Cities.

According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), 131,130 residents live in the 716-square mile area occupied by Wright County. The median age is 36 years and 29 percent of residents are under age 18. Seven percent of area residents are people of color, primarily Hispanic or Latino at 2.8 percent. Nearly 6 percent of residents live in households with income below the Federal Poverty Level.

### COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Wright County Community Health Collaborative (WCCHC) used the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP) framework, which emphasizes collaboration of health care entities, public health and community organizations and is centered upon community engagement. The framework has six major phases: Organizing, Visioning, The Four Assessments, Identifying Strategic Issues, Formulating Goals and Strategies and the Action Cycle. For the purposes of this report, the phases are condensed to data review and prioritization, community input and implementation plan. The process began in October 2017 and was completed in August 2019.

## Data Review and Prioritization

WCCHC utilized a variety of information and data sources including community input to analyze and prioritize community health issues. Members reviewed hospital patient data and state and local data related to demographics, social and economic factors and health behaviors, prevalence of health conditions and health care access.

Additionally, members reviewed 2018 findings and three-year trends from a community health survey administered by Wright County Public Health and supported by Buffalo Hospital and CentraCare Health—Monticello. The survey was administered in 2015 and 2018, collecting information on residents' health status and behaviors and perceptions of top health issues facing Wright County. In 2018, 2,039 people responded.

## Community Input

To gain additional perspectives on top health issues, WCCHC members talked to community members at the Wright County Fair in July 2018. In November 2018, using a variety of assessment tools and the Hanlon Method for Prioritizing Health Problems, WCCAA selected the following health priorities for 2020–2022:

- 1) Mental health and wellness
- 2) Dental care
- 3) Substance use and abuse

From January through May 2019, WWCHC then conducted key informant interviews and community meetings with 150 residents and residents from over 40 community organizations to understand the community's perspectives on these priorities, as well as ideas for addressing them.

## Implementation Plan

Based on the community input, WCCHC developed a 2020–2022 implementation plan that outlines strategies and activities its members will pursue individually and collectively. As part of this collaborative, Buffalo Hospital will be actively involved in implementing this plan. The members of the collaborative will maintain organization specific work plans and commit to working as a group on at least one collective impact tactic for each identified priority.

## EVALUATION OF 2017–2019 CHNA IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Between 2017 and 2019, Buffalo Hospital conducted activities to pursue the health priorities identified through its 2016 CHNA: mental health, obesity (including physical activity) and access to care. The hospital helped integrate health programming in schools and community organizations, advocated for health-promoting policies and services, engaged its employees in volunteer opportunities and made charitable contributions to community organizations. Highlights included:

- Delivering the Change to Chill™ curriculum to more than 2,400 students in area schools.
- Contributing \$90,000 in [Neighborhood Health Connection™](#) grants to programs such as Tai Chi, group fitness classes, a community bike program and others.
- Assisting Fare For All healthy food program through 375 employee volunteer hours.
- Serving 294 families experiencing food insecurity with Allina Health Bucks that were redeemed for \$2,940 worth of produce.
- Providing health education to patients and residents through the hospital's programs: Healthy Eating for Better Health, Diabetes Prevention Program and Let's Talk Wellness.
- Offering [Bounce Back Project](#) classes focused on resilience in middle and high schools through community teams of staff and residents in Buffalo, Annandale and Cokato.
- Convening a monthly mental health committee with clinics, law enforcement, mental health professionals, Wright County Health and Human Services and the four-county crisis team to develop countywide strategies to improve mental health.

A complete description of 2017–2019 achievements is available online at <https://www.allinahealth.org/about-us/community-involvement/need-assessments>.

## WCCHC 2020–2022 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### Mental Health and Wellness

**Goal:** Reduce the rate of mental health care delay and the number of “not good” mental health days in Wright County.

**Strategies:**

- Address all aspects of the mental wellness continuum, including well-being maintenance, prevention of disease and intervention.
- Increase social connectedness, and combat isolation.
- Education around mental illness as a medical condition.
- Increase awareness about suicide-related issues – suicide prevention.

**Collective impact tactic:** Implement coordinated awareness campaign educating the community about mental illness as a medical condition.

### Dental Care

**Goal:** Reduce the rate of dental care delay in Wright County .

**Strategies**

- Increase access to dental care for all, with a focus on underserved populations.
- Educate the community about the importance of regular dental care.

**Collective impact tactic:** Actively participate in the Dental Health Work Group—part of the Public Health Task Force to help advance the work around dental care access in Wright County.

### Substance Use and Abuse

**Goal:** Support local prevention efforts, and advocate for policy changes to address substance abuse in Wright County.

**Strategies:**

- Reduce stigma related to diagnosis and treatment of addictions and substance abuse disorders, and the possible connection to mental health conditions.
- Provide education and address tobacco and e-cigarette use and access.

- Identify and create better linkage to appropriate and available resources.

**Collective impact tactic:** Engage in policy, system and environmental changes that reduce access to e-cigarettes among youth and adults.

## BUFFALO HOSPITAL—ALLINA HEALTH IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In addition to its involvement with Wright County Community Health Collaborative, Buffalo Hospital also collaborated with other Allina Health hospitals to develop Allina Health-specific goals, strategies and activities it will pursue.

### Mental Health and Substance Use

**Goals:**

- Increase resilience and healthy coping skills.
- Reduce barriers to mental health and substance use services.

**Strategies**

- Increase resilience among school-age youth.
- Increase social connectedness and community-wide resilience efforts.
- Decrease stigma associated with help-seeking for mental health and substance use conditions, with a particular focus on racial and ethnic minorities and other historically underserved communities.
- Increase support of policy and advocacy efforts aimed at improving access to adolescent mental health and substance use services.

### Social Determinants of Health

**Goal:** Reduce social barriers to health for Allina Health patients and communities.

**Strategies:**

- Establish a sustainable, effective model to systematically identify and support patients in addressing their health-related social needs.
- Establish a sustainable network of trusted community partners who are able to support

our patients in addressing their health-related social needs.

- Increase support of policy and advocacy efforts aimed at improving social conditions related to health.
- Improve access to healthy food.

## Community Partners

Schools, local government and law enforcement agencies, various civic organizations, community-based mental health care providers, and our many food shelves and faith-based organizations.

## Resources

To fulfill the implementation plan, Buffalo will contribute financial and in-kind donations such as personnel, charitable donations and Allina Health's systemwide programs. It will also encourage staff to volunteer with local organizations. To make progress in achieving health equity among residents, Buffalo Hospital will prioritize partnerships and activities that engage populations that have been historically underserved.

## Evaluation Plans

Buffalo Hospital will monitor progress on the activities in the implementation plan by tracking process measures, such as number of programs delivered and people served, staff time dedicated and dollars contributed. WCCHC's shared collective impact tactics will have measurable outcomes and involve mutually reinforcing activities with the backbone support of participating organizations. Allina Health will evaluate systemwide programs to assess their effects on intermediate outcomes that evidence shows are likely to lead to improvement on population health measures. To assess long-term effects, Allina Health will monitor population-level indicators related to the health priorities.

## CONCLUSION

As part of Wright County Community Health Collaborative, Buffalo Hospital conducted a joint CHNA process that used data and community input to identify health priorities it will pursue in 2020–2022.

The full report for the WCCHC 2020–2022 Community Health Needs Assessment is available on the Allina Health website:  
<https://www.allinahealth.org/about-us/community-involvement/need-assessments>.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Members of the CHNA steering team, representing the two hospitals, public health department and community action organization; and
- Other staff at Allina Health and Buffalo Hospital who provided knowledge, skills and leadership.

For more information, please contact [Janna Netterfield](#) or [Mona Volden](#) at Buffalo Hospital or [Christy Dechaine](#), Community Benefit and Evaluation Manager at Allina Health.