

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

United Hospital (United) is part of Allina Health, a nonprofit health system of clinics, hospitals and other health and wellness services, providing care throughout Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Every three years, Allina Health's hospitals conduct a federally-required Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to examine health in the communities it serves, identify health priorities and develop strategies and action plans to pursue them. The hospitals conduct their CHNA in partnership with local public health departments, other hospitals and health systems, community organizations and residents.

Hospital and Community Description

Located in St. Paul, Minnesota, United is among the largest hospitals in the Twin Cities east metro area. Annually, it serves more than 200,000 patients and their families. Though the hospital serves patients from a wide geographic area, its primary service area (and focus of the CHNA) is Ramsey County, a dense urban and suburban area in the Twin Cities metro.

According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), Ramsey County has 537,893 people and the highest population density in Minnesota. The median age in the county is 34.8 years and 23.3 percent of its total population is under age 18. One-third of Ramsey County residents are people of color: primarily Asian (14 percent), Black (11.5 percent) or Hispanic or Latino (7.4 percent). The county also has a large immigrant population. In 2017, nearly 16 percent of residents were foreign-born and 10.6 percent had limited English proficiency. Five percent of residents are uninsured and 15 percent of residents live in households with income below the federal poverty level.

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

United provides services in a community in which government agencies, institutions and community-based organizations independently and collectively address pressing issues affecting communities. To efficiently conduct its 2020–2022 CHNA, United worked with the Center for Community Health (CCH) East Metro CHNA Collaborative. The St. Paul-Ramsey County Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) Community Leadership Team and other organizations' data review and community engagement activities also influenced the process. The CHNA was conducted in three steps: data review and prioritization, community input and the development of a three-year implementation plan. The process began in July 2018 and was completed in July 2019.

EVALUATION OF 2017–2019 CHNA IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Between 2017 and 2019, United conducted activities to pursue the health priorities identified in its 2016 CHNA: mental health and well-being, overweight/obesity and access to healthy food. With community partners and as part of coalitions, United helped to integrate health programming in schools and community organizations, advocated for health-promoting policies and made charitable contributions to community organizations. Highlights included:

- Reaching 20,000 elementary students, families and staff with Health Powered Kids™.
- Donating 800 pounds of food to The Food Group through United's Healthy Food Drive.
- Actively participating in the development of St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan.
- Providing \$127,000 in charitable contribution to the East Metro Mental Health Crisis Alliance, The Guild, CLUES and other community-based mental health providers.
- Awarding \$90,763 in Neighborhood Health Connection™ grants to 15 local organizations in the east metro to foster social connectedness through physical activity.
- Supporting wellness activities and 12 "Walk with a Doc" events with residents of St. Paul Public Housing Agency.

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

Data Review and Prioritization

As part of these groups, United's staff reviewed Allina patient data and state and local data related to demographics, social and economic factors, health behaviors, prevalence of health conditions and health care access. The CCH East Metro CHNA Collaborative conducted surveys with 2,100 residents in Ramsey, Washington and Dakota counties who shared their perspectives on factors that affect their efforts.

Based on the data review and survey results, United chose to continue its 2017–2019 CHNA priorities in the 2020–2022 cycle:

- **Mental health, including stigma and access to services**
- **Healthy weight**
- **Access to healthy food**

Community Input

To further refine its priorities, United's staff attended community dialogues facilitated by local partners and attended by approximately 60 community residents. Staff also participated in Ramsey County East Metro Mental Health Crisis Alliance meetings and conducted its own interviews with six representatives from health, public health and social service agencies.

For mental health and substance use, participants cited the need for education on mental health and substance use conditions and opportunities for social interaction. For obesity, they expressed the need for accessible physical activity and affordable healthy eating opportunities. They said language barriers, trust and access to health insurance affect access to care. Lack of affordable transportation options and culturally specific information and services were common problems with each priority.

Implementation Plan

Based on the community input, United developed a 2020–2022 implementation plan that outlines the strategies and activities it will pursue to address its health priorities. To make progress in achieving health equity among residents in its service area, United will prioritize partnerships and activities that engage populations that are historically underserved.

2020–2022 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Mental Health and Wellness

Goal 1: Increase resilience and healthy coping skills.

Strategies

- Increase resilience among school-age youth.
- Increase social connectedness and community-wide resilience efforts.

Activities will include making charitable contributions to mental-health service providers in schools and communities; implementing [Health Powered Kids™](#), Mental Health First Aid and Make It OK workshops; offering mindfulness and stress-management workshops to public housing residents and school staff; and expanding [Change to Chill™](#) to additional high schools and other community partners.

Goal 2: Reduce barriers to mental health and substance use services.

Strategies

- Decrease stigma associated with seeking help for mental health and substance use conditions, with a particular focus on racial and ethnic minorities and other historically underserved communities.
- Support and advocate for local and state policies that improve access to adolescent mental health and substance use services.
- Strengthen and increase services along the mental health continuum.
- Improve transportation to mental health services.

Activities will include enhancing mental health, substance use and stigma elimination components of [Change to Chill™](#); supporting NAMI MN's student and parent programming and support groups; promoting help-seeking for mental health and substance use conditions; and participating in local mental health and addiction coalitions.

Healthy Weight

Goal: Decrease the percentage of people in United's service area that is obese or overweight.

Strategies

- Increase healthy eating.
- Increase and promote physical activity opportunities.

Activities will include recruiting United employee volunteers to conduct [Health Powered Kids™](#) workshops and help with Safe Routes to School and school gardens; and increasing opportunities for physical activity among seniors and people from diverse communities.

Access to Healthy Food

Goal: Increase percentage of population in United's service area with access to healthy food.

Strategies

- Build capacity of local food access organizations to address community needs.
- Advocate for policies, programs and partnerships that increase access to healthy food.

Activities will include promoting opportunities for United's employees to volunteer at Neighborhood House food markets and other food access organizations; participating on the Ramsey County Food and Nutrition Commission; and making charitable contributions to mobile markets, food shelves, community gardens and similar initiatives.

Social Determinants of Health

Across Allina Health's service area, hospitals indicated that addressing social determinants of health is essential to the success of improving identified health priorities. In response, Allina Health identified a systemwide plan for addressing social determinants of health; United will participate in the plan's implementation.

Goal: Reduce social barriers to health.

Strategies

- Establish a sustainable, effective model to systematically identify and support patients in addressing health-related social needs.
- Establish a sustainable network of trusted community organizations that can support patients with these needs.

- Increase policy and advocacy efforts to improve social conditions related to health.

Activities will include supporting implementation and evaluation of the Accountable Health Communities model and transitioning to a modified version; identifying community partners and a referral process connecting patients to them; and supporting coalitions aimed at improving access to transportation, housing and food.

Community Partners

Meals on Wheels, Loaves and Fishes, Twin Cities Mobile Market, Keystone Community Services, Neighborhood House, Frogtown Farms, Urban Roots, St. Paul Ramsey County Public Health, Ramsey County Food and Nutrition Commission, Model Cities, Ramsey County Friends of the Library, YMCA, St. Paul Public Housing Agency, St. Paul Public Schools, MN Community Care and NAMI MN.

Resources

To fulfill the implementation plan, United 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.

Evaluation Plans

United will monitor its progress on the implementation plan by tracking process measures such as number of programs delivered and people served, staff time dedicated and dollars contributed. Allina Health will also evaluate systemwide programs to assess their effects on intermediate outcomes (e.g., eating and physical activity), which evidence shows are likely to lead to improvement on population health measures such as obesity. To assess long-term effects, Allina Health will monitor population-level indicators related to United priorities and systemwide priorities.

CONCLUSION

Through the CHNA process, United used data and community input to identify health priorities it will pursue in 2020–2022 with its own strategies and activities and Allina Health initiatives.

The full report for the United 2020–2022 Community Health Needs Assessment is available on the Allina Health website:

<https://www.allinahealth.org/about-us/community-involvement/need-assessments>.

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