Executive Summary

Every three years, as part of its mission to serve communities, Allina Health and its hospitals conduct a federally required Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to examine health in the communities it serves, identify health priorities and develop an action plan to address them. The hospitals conduct their CHNA in partnership with local public health, other hospitals and health systems, community organizations and residents.

The focus of Allina Health hospital's CHNAs are the counties surrounding each hospital, including the seven-county Twin Cities Metro and suburban and rural communities in western Wisconsin, southern Minnesota and central Minnesota.

Community Health Needs Assessment Process

The priorities identified in the previous cycle were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and require long-term effort to see significant, measurable improvement. As a result, the 2022 CHNA goals were to refine our understanding of 2019 priorities and identify new or emerging community needs that may not be addressed through existing work. For the first time, Allina Health and each of its hospitals also identified prioritized communities in addition to prioritized health topics.

As a community partner, Allina Health collaborates with community members, organizations and policymakers to improve the health of all people in our communities and to focus our community health improvement initiatives and investments to improve health equity. These commitments served as the guiding principles of our CHNA approach, including the process, implementation, and evaluation methods.

The CHNA process occurred in three steps: data review and prioritization, community input and the development of a three-year implementation plan. The impact of these efforts will be tracked and evaluated over the three-year cycle.

Data Review and Local Prioritization

Each hospital's CHNA team reviewed county-specific data related to demographics, social and economic factors, health behaviors, prevalence of health conditions and health care access. Sources varied but included patient data; the Minnesota Student Survey; surveys conducted by local public health; COVID impact surveys; local research studies and secondary public health data. Where possible, data were disaggregated by race, ethnicity and zip code.

Based on the data review and community feedback, local CHNA teams chose CHNA priorities and priority communities for the 2023–2025 cycle. Hospital priorities include:

- Mental health and wellness
- Substance use
- Healthy eating and active living
- Chronic disease and health habits

Based on this process, Allina Health will pursue the following systemwide priorities in 2023–2025:

- Mental health and wellness
- Substance abuse and prevention and recovery
- Social determinants of health and health-related social needs
- Access to culturally responsive care

Additionally, the following communities have been prioritized for system action:

- People with disabilities
- People living at or near poverty
- People who identify as Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color (BIPOC)
- People who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans, Queer and/or Questioning, and other historically underserved sexual and gender identities (LGBTQ+)

- Access to care
- Social determinants of health
- Social isolation
- Relationship violence
- Dental care
- Aging services
- Affordable housing

Specific prioritization criteria were determined locally, but size and seriousness of the problem, the impact of COVID-19, importance to the community and organizational capacity to address the need were all considered.

Hospital priority communities include:
- People with disabilities
- People who identify as Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color (BIPOC)
- People living at or near poverty
- People who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans, Queer and/or Questioning, and other historically underserved sexual and gender identities (LGBTQ+)
- Older adults
- Youth and adolescents
- Immigrants and refugees
- People from specific cultural communities (e.g., Somali, Hispanic/Latine)
- Farmers

Community Input

To increase their understanding of community members' perspectives on identified health issues and ideas for addressing them, staff solicited input from individuals such as residents, staff from social service and public health organizations. Additionally, feedback was sought from Allina Health staff with unique roles supporting patients including Language Services, Community Paramedics and Spiritual Care. Staff collected feedback through a range of methods, including focus groups and interviews. Focused outreach occurred to historically underserved communities who experience health disparities.

Community input results

Many of the concerns identified in 2019 were described as being exacerbated by current events such the COVID-19 pandemic, the murder of George Floyd and corresponding civil unrest, experiences of racism, increased gun violence and increased political division. Communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by these events.

E-cigarette use, marijuana, youth access to alcohol and opioids were common substance use concerns. Social isolation and community division contributes to stress among all people, but particularly seniors, people with disabilities and immigrants/refugees.

Evaluation of 2020–2022 CHNA implementation plan

Between 2020 and 2022, Allina Health adopted mental health (including substance use); healthy eating and active living; and social determinants of health as systemwide priorities. With community partners, Allina Health implemented community health improvement initiatives, advocated for health-promoting policies and made charitable contributions to community organizations. Highlights included:

- Launching Hello4Health™ in April 2021. Hello4Health is a new online resource focused on increasing social connections among adults, with a focus on older adults. Nearly 9,500 people visited the website in 2021.
- Partnering with 60 schools to deliver mental health and well-being resources to teens via the Change to Chill™ School Partnership.
- Screening more than 85,000 people for social needs such as housing instability and social isolation in the first six months of implementing Allina Health's Health-Related Social Need (HRSN) Program. The program builds off learnings from Allina Health's implementation of the CMS Accountable Health Communities model, which took place from June 2018 through April 2022.
- Providing free COVID-19 vaccinations to more than 4,400 people living in communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- Investing $2 million in local economic development opportunities through the Allina Health Impact Portfolio.

A complete description of 2020–2022 achievements is available online at allinahealth.org/about-us/community-involvement/need-assessments.

Access to mental health and substance use services continues to be difficult due to limited services, lack of transportation, stigma related to experiencing a substance use disorder and significant provider shortages, especially providers who identify as members of the prioritized communities, those who speak languages other than English and those focusing on adolescents.

Access to healthy food, safe housing and reliable transportation were mentioned as key factors in the topics above. Affordable housing and crisis housing support is limited across all communities. Community members shared many examples of models for supporting people living in poverty that were developed in response to COVID19, but voiced concerns about the community's ability to keep those supports in place.

Increasing cultural responsiveness and being more welcoming of racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and LGBTQ+ communities has been identified as an opportunity for Allina Health in both metro and regional communities.

Systemwide prioritization

In March, April and July 2022, community engagement leaders from each of Allina Health's hospitals discussed the results of each hospital's data review, prioritization and community input processes. Priorities and common themes for action were identified across all geographies. The prioritized communities identified by each Allina Health hospital were also compared and the most common were identified for system action.

2023–2025 Implementation Plan

Based on community input, Allina Health hospitals developed a systemwide 2023–2025 implementation plan that outlines the strategies and activities it will pursue to address its health priorities. Each hospital will also pursue local strategies and activities. Allina Health hospitals collaborates closely with residents and other agencies to pursue the identified strategies.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Goal 1: Increase resilience and healthy coping.

Goal 2: Increase access to mental health services.

Strategies

- Improve social connections and social cohesion.
- Increase resilience and support the creation and maintenance of environments that contribute to positive well-being.
- Improve adults' confidence and skills around talking with youth about issues affecting their well-being.
- Support public policy and advocacy efforts to improve access to services.

Substance Abuse Prevention and Recovery

Goal 1: Decrease substance misuse.

Goal 2: Decrease harm and deaths related to substance misuse, with a focus on opioids.

Strategies

- Improve environmental factors and individual knowledge and skills associated with decreased substance misuse.
- Improve adults' confidence and skills around talking with youth about issues affecting their well-being.
- Decrease youth access to substances.
- Decrease access to opioids.
- Improve access to continuum of substance use disorder care.
- Improve adults' confidence and skills around talking with youth about issues affecting their well-being.

Social Determinants of Health and Health-Related Social Needs

Goal 1: Improve access to community resources.

Goal 2: Improve the long-term social, physical and economic conditions.

Strategies

- Build a sustainable network of trusted community organizations that can support patients with social needs.
- Reduce community resource gaps.
- Operate as an anchor institution by using the collective strength of Allina Health as a care provider, employer, purchaser and community partner to eliminate systemic inequities and racism.

Access to Culturally Responsive Care

Goal: Increase access to care, services and programs that are culturally specific, honoring and appropriate.

Strategies

- Improve cultural responsiveness of programs and services.
- Improve access to community resources that specialize in meeting the unique needs of prioritized communities.
- Increase diversity of Allina Health workforce.

Evaluation Plans

Hospitals will monitor the general health and wellness of the community. Additionally, each hospital will establish or continue evaluation plans for specific programs and initiatives (e.g., HRSN Program). Evaluation plans will include process measures, such as participant or partner satisfaction, goal completion, people served and dollars contributed, to monitor reach and progress on planned activities. Where possible, Allina Health will also assess outcome metrics to evaluate the effects of its initiatives on health and related outcomes.

Conclusion

Through the CHNA process, Allina Health hospitals used data and community input to identify health priorities and priority communities for action in 2023–2025.

Full 2023–2025 Community Health Needs Assessment reports for each hospital are available on the Allina Health website:

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

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