

Every three years, as part of its mission to serve communities, Abbott Northwestern Hospital (Abbott Northwestern) conducts 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.

Abbott Northwestern's primary service area (and focus of the CHNA) is Hennepin County. The 2022 CHNA further focused on the experiences and needs of South Minneapolis. Abbott Northwestern has been a part of the South Minneapolis community for more than 140 years and is committed to supporting its recovery and revitalization following the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest related to the killing of George Floyd.

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. Therefore, the 2022 CHNA goals were to refine our understanding of 2019 priorities and identify new or emerging needs not 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 Prioritization

To complete its CHNA, Abbott Northwestern established a core planning team with representatives from the hospital's Community Engagement and Health Equity staff.

In spring 2021, this team reviewed county-specific data related to demographics, social and economic factors, health behaviors, prevalence of health conditions and health care access. Sources included patient data; local public health survey data; the Minnesota Student Survey; and Vital Statistics, among others. Additionally, to ensure alignment with local public health, the team reviewed findings from the Minneapolis Health Department's 2020 community health assessment. Based on this review, the planning team identified 18 topics to consider for prioritization.

Next, the team surveyed Allina Health leaders from primary care, pharmacy, EMS, hospital operations, mental health and addiction. Respondents chose the top five issues facing Hennepin County. They then ranked broad health categories based on the size and seriousness of the problem, effectiveness and feasibility of interventions and opportunity for improving health equity.

Based on this process, Abbott Northwestern will pursue the following priorities in 2023–2025:

- Mental health and substance use
- Preventative health education
- Social determinants of health and health-related social needs
- Access to culturally responsive care

Additionally, the following communities have been prioritized for 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, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and/or Questioning,

Community Input

To further refine its priorities, Abbott Northwestern staff conducted 16 key informant interviews with nonprofit, faith and business leaders in South Minneapolis and contracted with community partners to host four focus groups with community members. Hospital staff also facilitated one focus group with South Minneapolis mental health professionals. Diversity of experience was sought with a particular focus on the experiences of people who identify as Black or African American, Hispanic/Latine, Indigenous and/or Somali.

Dialogue participants described many concerns identified in 2019 as being exacerbated by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the murder of George Floyd and corresponding civil unrest, experiences of racism and increased neighborhood violence. Participants envisioned a health care system deeply engaged in community, supportive of community development and dedicated to safety and security for all. Participants suggested Allina Health work to improve trust with communities of color and access to culturally responsive care.

2023–2025 Implementation Plan

Based on community input, Abbott Northwestern developed strategies and activities it will pursue in 2023–2025. The hospital will collaborate closely with residents and other agencies. This plan reflects contributions from community partners, Abbott Northwestern and Allina Health System Office.

Mental Health and Wellness

Goal 1: Increase resilience and healthy coping.

Goal 2: Increase access to mental health services.

Strategies

- Implement initiatives that address trauma and increase community safety in Minneapolis.
- 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.

Evaluation of 2020–2022 CHNA implementation plan

Between 2020 and 2022, Abbott conducted activities to pursue the health priorities identified in its 2019 CHNA: mental health and wellness; physical activity and nutrition; and healthcare access.

With community partners, Abbott implemented community health improvement initiatives, advocated for health-promoting policies and made charitable contributions to community organizations. Highlights included:

- Distributed nearly \$1 Million dollars in grant funding to local non-profits that were providing emergency mental health services, culturally based community mental health support and job training and housing.
- Donated more than \$100,000 to providing healthy food access programs and participated in March Food Share campaigns.
- Distributed nearly 300 bicycles and helmets to first responders and children in our communities.
- Provided vision screenings and follow-up vision care or referrals to treatment for nearly 7,000 children in the Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Schools.
- Partnered with Hennepin County to create inclusive LGBTQIA+ digital content for Change to Chill, focusing on stress and identity.

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

- Improve access to continuum of substance use disorder care.

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.
- Create new workforce development opportunities focused on jobs that recruit participants from diverse communities and provide living wage careers.
- Create culturally reflective spaces.

Preventative Health Education

Goal: Increase access to preventative health education in communities facing the greatest health disparities.

Strategies

- Create and deploy culturally specific preventative health education information by co-creating opportunities, tactics and messages with key stakeholders.
- Deploy culturally specific Change to Chill content to school partners and youth in the west metro.

Evaluation Plans

Hospitals will monitor the general health and wellness of the community. Additionally, each hospital will 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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