

# 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

River Falls Area Hospital (River Falls) 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.

River Falls implemented the CHNA as part of Healthier Together Pierce & St. Croix Counties (Healthier Together), a community coalition working to create and maintain healthy communities and provide a strategic framework for local health improvement activities.

### Hospital and Community Description

River Falls is located in River Falls, Wisconsin. Its healthcare campus includes River Falls Hospital, Allina Health River Falls Clinic, a number of specialty provider partners and the Kinnic Health & Rehab Facility. Its service area (and focus of the CHNA) is Pierce County and St. Croix County, rural counties in western Wisconsin.

According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), 128,402 residents live in the 1,296-square mile area occupied by the two counties. In Pierce County, the median age is 36 years and 21 percent of residents are under age 18. In St. Croix County, the median age is 38 years with 28 percent of the population under age 18. Approximately 4 percent of area residents are people of color, primarily Hispanic or Latino. In Pierce County, 10 percent of residents live in households with income below the Federal Poverty Level; nearly 8 percent of St. Croix County residents live in poverty. The ratio of residents to mental health providers is 2,460:1 in Pierce County and 780:1 in St. Croix County.

### COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Healthier Together's Executive Committee includes staff from River Falls, Hudson Hospital & Clinic, Western Wisconsin Health, Westfields Hospital & Clinic, Pierce County Public Health, St. Croix County Public Health and the United Way of St. Croix Valley. They jointly led a CHNA process to identify health priorities and develop an implementation plan to address them. The process began in June 2018 and was completed in October 2019.

## Data Review and Prioritization

The committee reviewed hospitals' 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. It also conducted a comprehensive community survey available both online and in paper form distributed at clinics and community events; 1,072 residents responded.

In December 2018, representatives from 39 organizations reviewed data and prioritized health issues using a feasibility/impact matrix, an equity analysis and a root cause analysis. From this process, Healthier Together selected its top priorities:

- **Mental health**
- **Substance use disorder**

## Community Input

To understand residents' perspectives on these priorities and their ideas for addressing them, Healthier Together conducted focus groups with farmers, seniors, youth, people in mental health or substance use recovery, providers and people who work with youth.

Focus group members identified root causes of mental health and substance use including not feeling appreciated, stigma related to help-seeking and a shortage of mental health and substance use providers. They also emphasized the importance of teaching people to recognize the signs of mental health and substance use conditions.

## Implementation Plan

Based on the community input, Healthier Together developed a 2020–2022 implementation plan that outlines strategies and activities it will pursue to address these health priorities. As part of Healthier Together, River Falls will be actively involved in implementing this plan. To make progress in achieving health equity among residents, River Falls will prioritize partnerships and activities that engage populations that have been historically underserved.

## EVALUATION OF 2017–2019 CHNA IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Between 2017 and 2019, River Falls and Healthier Together conducted activities to pursue the health priorities identified in its 2016 CHNA: mental health, obesity and overweight and alcohol abuse. As part of Healthier Together and on its own, River Falls 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:

- Conducting an assessment of youth mental health services and hosting a Youth Mental Health Collaboration meeting with 24 local school, county, and healthcare leaders.
- Training 365 Make It Ok ambassadors who implemented 5,250 “touch points.”
- Promoting National Walk to School Day in which 1,700 students participated.
- Enrolling 104 families in SNAP.
- Conducting a campaign on the dangers of alcohol overconsumption and assessing alcohol-related ordinances in Hudson and River Falls.

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

## HEALTHIER TOGETHER 2020–2022 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### Mental Health

#### Goals

- Increase healthy coping skills and stress reduction strategies.
- Support coordination of mental health services between schools, providers and counties.
- Increase services that promote family stability.

## Strategies

- Implement activities that connect kids to nature.
- Promote Hopeline, Make It OK, Mental Health First Aid and school-based resilience programs.
- Provide Dementia Friends and Dementia Live trainings.
- Explore [Bounce Back](#) program components.
- Support Taking Care of You courses.
- Continue convening the Youth Mental Health Collaboration.
- Pilot conducting universal emotional health screenings in schools.
- Explore social-emotional screening for children under age three.
- Support the roll out and strategic growth of United Way of St. Croix Valley 211
- Conduct a built environment assessment.
- Support healthy initiatives in food pantries.

## Substance Use Disorder

### Goals

- Advocate for policies that increase access to substance use treatment.
- Increase early intervention, education and prevention services for substance use.
- Increase coordinated youth prevention work, provide education, healthy activities and resilience training.

### Strategies

- Advocate for Medicaid expansion.
- Support youth alcohol compliance checks.
- Market WI Addiction Recovery Help Line via United Way 211.
- Promote proper drug storage and disposal.
- Implement SAMSHA's "Talk. They Hear You." Campaign.
- Advocate for Narcan provision by first responders.
- Market DITCHJUUL vaping cessation text service.
- Explore drug impairment training for education professionals.
- Coordinate biannual meetings for substance use and mental health providers.
- Support local SADD chapters.

## RIVER FALLS—ALLINA HEALTH IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In addition to its involvement with Healthier Together, River Falls 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 seeking help 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

Allina Health and its hospitals acknowledge that addressing social determinants of health is essential to improving identified health priorities. In response, Allina Health identified a systemwide plan for addressing social determinants of health; River Falls will participate in its 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.

## Community Partners

Beyond Healthier Together's leadership team, partners include law enforcement, school districts, numerous community members, local government and businesses, numerous outreach agencies and UW Extension.

## Resources

To fulfill the implementation plan, River Falls 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

River Falls will monitor progress on the implementation plan by tracking process measures, such as number of programs delivered and people served. Each strategy will be evaluated annually during a data review and group discussion, allowing for any adjustment to the implementation plan. 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 Healthier Together, River Falls developed a 2020–2022 CHNA by reviewing and prioritizing data, seeking community input and developing an implementation plan. River Falls will pursue goals and strategies through its own activities and programs and initiatives of Allina Health.

The full report for the Healthier Together 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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