

Every three years, as part of its mission to serve communities, St. Francis Regional Medical Center (St. Francis) 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.

Annually, St. Francis serves approximately 170,000 patients and their families. Its primary service area (and focus of the CHNA) includes Scott County and eastern Carver County — suburban areas south of the Twin Cities metro.

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.

Although jointly owned by Allina Health, Health Partners Park Nicollet and Essentia Health and sponsored by the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth, St. Francis carries out the CHNA process as part of Allina Health.

As a community partner, St. Francis and Allina Health collaborate 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

St. Francis staff partnered with Scott and Carver County Public Health Departments and the St. Francis Regional Medical Center Community Advisory Council to review county-specific data related to demographics, social and economic factors, health behaviors, prevalence of health conditions and health care access. Sources included patient data; the Minnesota Student Survey; surveys conducted by local public health; Scott County Health Care Collaborative COVID impact survey and Minnesota Housing Partnership. Where possible, data were disaggregated by race and ethnicity.

To prioritize needs, the Community Advisory Council considered preexisting CHNA priorities and goals from Scott and Carver Counties in light of the data. Special consideration was given to how COVID has impacted the health of the community and the importance of addressing health related social needs.

Based on this process, St. Francis will pursue the following 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 living at or near poverty
- People who identify as Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color (BIPOC)

Community Input

To understand community members' perspectives on identified health issues and ideas for addressing them, St. Francis staff conducted community dialogues with women from the Latine community and pregnant and parenting mothers recovering from substance use. Additionally, staff interviewed 20 community residents and nonprofit leaders representing the broad interests of the community.

Community Input Results

Many of the concerns identified in 2019 were described as being exacerbated by current events such as 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.

For mental health, participants urged St. Francis to continue to increase access to mental health services however possible. Access to services was also a key concern related to substance use due to limited services, lack of transportation, stigma related to experiencing a substance use disorder and significant provider shortages, especially multi-cultural and multi-lingual providers and those focusing on adolescents.

To address social determinants of health, participants suggested Allina Health continue to partner with and refer patients to community organizations who help people address their health-related social needs. They also suggested Allina Health operate as an anchor institution and leverage its organizational heft to invest in upstream solutions and improve the long-term social and economic vitality of communities.

2023–2025 Implementation Plan

Based on community input, St. Francis 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, St. Francis 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

- 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.

Evaluation of 2020–2022 CHNA implementation plan

Between 2020 and 2022, St. Francis conducted activities to pursue the health priorities identified in its 2019 CHNA: mental wellness and substance abuse, obesity and health care access for the uninsured in addition to Allina systemwide priorities.

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

- Opened additional ED rooms to increase the access and ability of St. Francis to care for patients needing emergency care during a mental health crisis.
- Actively engaging in the Steering Team and Parental Resilience Committee for Together We Can Work to End Child Abuse and Neglect (Together WE CAN), a community-driven movement with more than 50 partners who have the shared goal of ending child maltreatment in Scott County within a generation.
- Actively partnering and funding both St. Mary's Health Clinic in Shakopee and River Valley Health Services (\$50,000 in contributions annually). Together, these organizations serve more than 1,000 uninsured or underinsured people each year.
- Provided charitable contributions totaling \$75,000 to Esperanza/Carver Scott Dakota CAP Agency and Mi Casa/Shakopee Community Education in support of physical activity such as soccer and special enrichment activities with special focus on Hispanic-Latine population.
- Held annual Healthy Food Drives, collecting over 1,200 pounds of food and made charitable donations during March Food Share Month totaling nearly \$15,000.

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

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.

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 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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