

Every three years, as part of its mission to serve communities, Cambridge Medical Center (CMC) 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, CMC serves more than 150,000 patients and their families. Its primary service area (and focus of the CHNA) is Isanti County — a rural county located north 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.

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.

Cambridge collaborated with Isanti County Public Health to complete its CHNA. With representatives from 35 local agencies, they used the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) community-driven strategic planning process, which includes six phases: Organizing, Visioning, The Four Assessments, Identifying Strategic Issues, Formulating Goals and Strategies and the Action Cycle. For the purposes of this report, the phases are condensed to data review and prioritization, community input and implementation plan.

Data Review and Prioritization

CMC and Isanti County Public Health convened the MAPP Committee members 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; East Central Regional survey; and Isanti County Sheriff's data. Where possible, data were disaggregated by race and ethnicity.

After reviewing data and considering preexisting CHNA priorities and Isanti County goals, the MAPP Committee members selected their top health priorities using nominal group technique (NGT). NGT is a structured method for group brainstorming that encourages contributions from everyone. 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, CMC will pursue the following priorities in 2023–2025:

- Lack of social connectedness
- Mental health and well-being
- Substance use

Additionally, the following communities have been prioritized for action:

- People with disabilities
- People who are economically challenged
- People who are socially isolated

Community Input

To understand community members' perspectives on identified health issues and ideas for addressing them, CMC and Isanti County Public Health conducted three community dialogues with 33 representatives from local organizations representing the broad interests of the community.

Through these community dialogues, participants shared infrastructure issues, social media and lack of in-person support systems as contributing to social isolation and decreased mental health. Lack of knowledge and a limited number of providers were identified as barriers to accessing mental health care. Factors contributing to substance use include trauma, community norms and youth access to alcohol and tobacco.

2023–2025 Implementation Plan

Based on community input, CMC 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, CMC and Allina Health System Office.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Goal 1: Increase resilience and healthy coping.

Goal 2: Increase access to mental health services.

Strategies

- 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.
- Increase use of mental health crisis services.
- Improve awareness of mental health points of access and the right care at the right time.
- Support public policy and advocacy efforts to improve access to services.

Social Connections

Goal: Increase social connections across all ages and stages of life.

Strategies

- Improve social connections and social cohesion
- Support existing and create new opportunities for people to connect in meaningful ways.

Evaluation of 2020–2022 CHNA implementation plan

Between 2020 and 2022, CMC conducted activities to pursue the health priorities identified in its 2019 CHNA: lack of social connectedness; mental health and well-being, including youth suicide and adult mental well-being; and youth substance use, including alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes in addition to Allina systemwide priorities.

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

- Launched the Happiness Advantage Initiative. In 2022, more than 170 CMC employees attended Happiness Advantage Initiative workshops. Also, in partnership with Isanti County, CMC hosted 10 community-based workshops, which were attended by more than 245 community members.
- Organized the “Scavenger Hunt” Goosechase Event — a month-long social connectedness challenge.
- Introduced the community to Kindness Connection Bingo and a six-week long Connect for Wellbeing educational series.
- Conducted 12 presentations about tobacco use and the dangers of vaping to students and local schools, which reached more than 1,145 students from 2020–2022.
- Provided \$10,000 to organizations implementing suicide prevention trainings and stigma reduction efforts.
- Partnered with Region 7E Mental Health Initiative to develop a local Mental Health Resource Guide for the community and held stigma reduction efforts throughout the region.

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.

Strategies

- Improve environmental factors and individual knowledge and skills associated with decreased substance misuse, focusing on youth, adolescents, and older adults.
- Improve adults' confidence and skills around talking with youth about mental health, substance use, and other issues affecting their mental well-being.
- Decrease youth access to substances.
- Decrease access to opioids within the community.
- Improve access to a continuum of substance use disorder care.

Additionally, while not explicitly identified as priorities by Cambridge Medical Center, social determinants of health, health-related social needs and access to culturally responsive care were identified as key factors in health across all Allina Health regions. These priorities will be pursued via systemwide efforts. A complete description of 2023–2025 systemwide efforts is available online at [allinahealth.org/about-us/community-involvement/need-assessments](https://www.allinahealth.org/about-us/community-involvement/need-assessments).

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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