



Veterans Memorial Hospital Community Needs Health Assessment

December 2022

Overview and Executive Summary

Veterans Memorial Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment was performed in adherence with federal requirements of the nonprofit hospital set forth in the Affordable Care Act. According to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Veterans Memorial Hospital is required to complete a CHNA & HIP (Community Health Needs Assessment and Health Improvement Plan) every three years. Veterans Memorial Hospital started its Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in March 2022 with a target completion of August 2022.

In order to review the members of Allamakee County, Veterans Memorial Hospital (VMH) undertook a more in-depth approach to involving the community in identifying significant health needs. The method to this assessment was conducting an online survey in the months of March, April, May and June which was completed by 125 participants. Our methodology is outlined in greater detail within this report.

Our Community Health Needs Assessment identified priority categories of concern:

Health Problems to Address:

- Obesity
- Untreated Mental Health
- Aging, (arthritis, hearing/vision loss, dementia, etc.)
- Cancer

Health Behaviors to Improve:

- Physical Activity
- Stress Reduction and Ability to Function with Stressors
- Healthy Nutritional Behaviors
- Alcohol Abuse
- Suicide

The top five areas of need for health care services, according to survey respondents were:

- Counseling & Mental Health Services
- Women's Services (Obstetrics and Gynecological Care)
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment
- Cancer Treatment
- Emergency/Trauma Care

Veterans Memorial Hospital took into account the mission, vision and overall resources of the hospital in order to get the most accurate information for the CHNA process.

Topics Included:

- Overall community health
- Identifying health problems as well as safety concerns
- Children's health concerns
- Personal health
- Healthy behavior improvement goals, opportunities and barriers
- Concerning social issues
- Environmental health
- Disaster/Emergency Preparedness

- Demographics such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, insurance, zip code and medical services

The Veterans Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees approved this assessment and plan February 2023. The full report can be found on: <https://www.veteransmemorialhospital.com/community-needs-assessment/>.

Section 1: Background – Past Community Health Needs Assessment

The issues identified in the 2019 Community Needs Health Assessment were:

Health Problems to Address:

- Health Care: Access to healthcare (doctor/hospitals), affordable health insurance
- Health Conditions/Prevention: Alcohol and drug abuse, mental health services, cancer treatment, obesity, aging (arthritis, hearing/vision loss, dementia, etc.), cancer
- Counseling/Mental Health: Access to services, availability of local health providers
- Safe Behaviors: Alcohol abuse, depression/suicide, illegal drug use, bullying, screen time, affordable health insurance, poor parenting skills, poverty, single parent families.

Health Behaviors to Improve:

- Physical Activity: Provide additional recreational trails/sidewalks, affordable wellness and fitness facilities.
- Healthy Behaviors: Drinking more water, eating more fruits and vegetables, more fresh fruits and produce available.

Section 2: Defining the Community Served

Population of Service Area

For the purpose of the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), Allamakee County and Northern Clayton County were the primary focus. Allamakee County has a current population of 13,926¹.

Demographics for Allamakee County²

	County	Iowa
Population	13,926	3,163,561
% Below 18 years of age	23.4%	22.9%
% 65 and older	23.6%	17.9%
% Non-Hispanic Black	1.7%	4.0%
% American Indian & Alaska Native	0.7%	0.6%
% Asian	0.5%	2.8%
% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.2%
% Hispanic	7.6%	6.5%
% Non-Hispanic White	89.3%	84.5%
% Not proficient in English	2%	2%
% Females	49.1%	50.2%
% Rural	74.0%	36.0%

¹ United States Census Bureau

² 2022 County Health Rankings

Health Characteristics

The 2022 Health Rankings show Allamakee ranked #48 in Health Outcomes out of 99 Iowa counties. The data further showed that Clayton ranked #38 in Health Outcomes out of 99 Iowa counties.

Health Characteristics ³	Allamakee, IA	Clayton, IA	United States
Adult Smoking	18%	21%	16%
Adult Obesity	36%	38%	32%
Food Environment Index	8.9	8.7	7.8
Physical Inactivity	30%	30%	26%
Access to Exercise Opportunities	60%	48%	80%
Excessive Drinking	23%	22%	20%
Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths	50%	38%	27%
Uninsured	9%	7%	11%
Primary Care Physicians	1,960:1	3,510:1	1,310:1
Dentists	3,410:1	1,920:1	1,400:1
Mental Health Providers	3,410:1	5,770:1	350:1
Mammography Screening	53%	54%	43%
Unemployment	5.1%	5.7%	8.1%
Children in Poverty	17%	13%	16%
Children in Single-Parent Households	13%	17%	25%
Suicide ⁴	5 deaths in 2021	0 deaths in 2021	552 deaths in Iowa
New Cases of Cancer 2022* ⁵	95 cases	130 cases	
Currently Living with Cancer*	830 cases	1,075 cases	
Deaths due to Cancer in 2022*	35 cases	50 cases	

*Rates are age adjusted and per population 2014-2018

Section 3: Assessing the Community's Health

In determining the most comprehensive snapshot of the state of population health for Allamakee residents, a survey was developed as the primary tool for assessing Allamakee residents. This survey was made available online and at county functions such as the county fair. Survey was completed by 125 respondents.

Results of the survey were reviewed with a VMH task force to summarize the Health Assessment as well as develop an Improvement Plan.

An invitation to take the survey was made to the public online, in person and through social media. A survey link could be found at <https://www.veteransmemorialhospital.com/community-needs-assessment/>.

³ County Health Rankings, 2022

⁴ Healthy Iowans – Iowa State Health Assessment 2022 & Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal

⁵ Iowa College of Public Health

Geographic Distribution		
Zip codes	52101 – 5 52140 – 2 52146 – 2 52151 – 16 52161 – 1 52162 – 2 52172 – 73 53172 - 1	52133 – 1 52135 – 1 52156 – 2 52159 – 2 52160 – 4 52170 - 6 52242 – 1 55931 – 1
Gender Identity		
Surveyed participants	87.39% Female 0.84% Other	11.76% Male
Additional Demographics		
Race/Ethnicity	95.83% White or Caucasian 1.67% Hispanic or Latino 2.50% Prefer Not to Answer	
Age Group	9.09% age 18-24 14.88% age 25-34 20.66% age 35-44 17.36% age 45-54 25.62% age 55-64 12.40% age 65 +	
Household Income	17.65% \$15,000 – \$29,999 22.69% \$30,000 – \$49,999 29.41% \$50,000 – \$74,999 12.61% \$75,000 – \$99,999 10.08% \$100,000 – \$150,000 7.56% \$150,000 +	
Education Level	10% High School Graduate/GED 17.50% Some College 52.50% College Graduate 20% Advanced Degree	

Section 4: Prioritized Description of Significant Health Needs

Community Needs Identified

The Veterans Memorial Hospital Community Health Assessment identified the following priority concerns:

- Access to Health Care- 82.40%
- Counseling/Mental Health Services- 80.83%
- Alcohol Abuse- 64.80%
- Physical Inactivity- 62.90%
- Radon Exposure- 62.6%

Additional areas of high concern include:

- Poor Parenting Skills- 52.89%
- Children’s Screen Time- 52.00%
- Obesity- 47.88%
- Access to Childcare/Daycare- 40.80%

Personal Health Needs Identified

- Uninsured Adults- 10%
- Uninsured Children- 3%

COMPLETE RESULTS OF SURVEY

Overall Health of the Community	
Very Healthy	0.00%
Healthy	26.19%
Somewhat Healthy	61.90%
Unhealthy	11.90%
Very Unhealthy	0.00%
Health Community Factors Which Improve Quality of Life	
Access to health care (doctor/hospital)	81.75%
Affordable housing	12.70%
Excellent race relations	1.59%
Good Schools	28.57%
Low adult death & disease rate	3.17%
Parks and recreations	13.49%
Arts and cultural events	1.59%
Good jobs and healthy economy	41.27%
Healthy behaviors and lifestyles	52.38%
Low crime/safe neighborhoods	19.84%
Religious or spiritual values	7.94%
Clean environment	17.46%
Good place to raise children	16.67%
Low infant deaths	2.38%
Low level of child abuse	3.97%
Strong family life	17.46%
Access to mental health care	28.57%
Other	3.97%
Health Problems in the Community	
Aging (arthritis, hearing/vis ion loss, dementia, etc.)	41.60%
Cancer	40.00%
High blood pressure	12.80%
Injuries (falls, cars accidents , drowning)	6.40%
Limited or no access to dental care	3.20%
Sexually trans mitted disease	0.80%
Diabetes	20.00%
Infectious disease	1.60%
Limited or no access to doctor	8.00%
Limited or no access to mental health services	35.20%
Teenage pregnancy	0.80%
Asthma	0.80%
Heart disease/stroke	17.60%

Obesity	47.20%
Poor nutrition	14.40%
Untreated mental health	44.00%
Other	6.40%

Risky Behaviors or Safety Concerns

Alcohol Abuse	64.29%
Suicide	43.65%
Driving while drunk or high	31.75%
Dropping out of school	0.00%
Illegal drug use	35.71%
Lack of physical activity	30.16%
Not getting shots to prevent disease	4.76%
Not wearing a helmet on bike/motorcycle	7.14%
Not using a seatbelt/child safety seat	0.79%
Texting or using cell phone while driving	30.95%
Prescription drug abuse	1.59%
Unsafe sex	1.59%
Using tobacco	10.32%
Untreated mental health	41.27%
Other	0.79%

Health Concerns for Children

Access to health care	9.52%
Access to mental health services	34.13%
Access to immunizations	0.00%
Affordable fresh foods	22.22%
Affordable health insurance	15.08%
Bullying	39.68%
Childcare/day care availability	41.27%
Depression/suicide	21.43%
Healthy diets	20.63%
Nutritious school lunches	1.59%
Physical activity opportunities	7.94%
Screen time	52.38%
Responsible sexual behavior	0.79%
Substance abuse	17.46%
Structured, safe or supportive living environment	17.46%
Other	3.17%

Personal Health

Very Healthy	9.52%
Healthy	59.52%
Somewhat Healthy	29.37%
Unhealthy	1.59%
Very Unhealthy	0.00%

Routine Health Care

Medical Provider/Doctor's Office	90.48%
Urgent Care	7.14%
Emergency Room	2.38%
I don't receive routine care	9.52%

Healthy Behaviors to Improve

Drinking more water	42.40%
Decreasing stress	43.20%
Getting shots /vaccines	0.80%
Eating more fruits or vegetables	32.80%
Getting more physical activity	63.20%

Quit smoking	1.60%
Reducing alcohol intake	5.60%
Routine cancer screenings	4.00%
Routine dental care	4.00%
Routine physicals	6.40%
Other	2.40%

Barriers to Become Healthier

Financial concerns	24.59%
Lack of motivation	54.92%
Not enough time	59.02%
Lack of access to vaccines & medications to prevent sickness	0.00%
Nowhere to exercise	4.10%
Need education on healthy choices	2.46%
Physical health is too poor	1.64%
Too expensive to buy healthier foods	24.59%
No health insurance	0.82%
Other	8.20%

What would help you start or maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Additional recreational trails /s sidewalks	48.28%
Affordable wellness & fitness facilities	24.14%
Community physical activity programs	8.62%
Employee wellness program	24.14%
Local school wellness programs	7.76%
Health education classes (diabetes prevention/management, heart disease, arthritis, cooking, etc.)	17.24%
More fresh food and produce available	33.62%
Transportation to fitness /food markets	1.72%
Other	12.93%

Rate of Social Environment in Community

Excellent	13.49%
Very Good	50.00%
Good	28.57%
Fair	7.94%
Poor	0.00%

Social Issues Facing the Community

Child abuse/neglect	15.57%
Crime and violence	6.56%
Domestic abuse	15.57%
Lack of transportation services	31.15%
Lack of health insurance coverage	34.43%
Poor parenting s kills	53.28%
Poverty	45.08%
Single parent families	45.90%
Unemployment	19.67%
Other	9.84%

Environmental Health Issues in the Community

Abandoned private wells	10.28%
Contaminated food supply	10.28%
Lead exposure	29.91%
Lack of fluoride in drinking water	13.08%
Old septic system	25.23%
Radon exposure	62.62%

Outdoor air quality (asthma triggers)	43.93%
Un-sewered communities	4.67%
Unsafe drinking water	19.63%
Other	18.69%

Prepared for a natural or man-made disaster

Yes	38.02%
No	61.98%

Prevents Community Members from being Prepared

Access to supplies (no transportation, no place to purchase supplies)	6.09%
Need more information about how to prepare for an emergency	40.00%
Not a priority	35.65%
Not enough time	7.83%
Too expensive to purchase supplies	21.74%
Not applicable - My family is prepared	21.74%
Other	3.48%

Preparedness Steps Community Members Have Taken

My family has a cell phone with charger	96.72%
My family has a first aid kit	77.05%
My family has discussed a central meeting place	41.80%
My family has practiced a fire drill at home	29.51%
My family has practiced a tornado drill at home	35.25%
My family keeps a supply of bottled water and extra non-perishable food items on hand	45.90%
My family has a weather radio, flashlight and batteries in our home	36.07%
My family keeps a list of current medications and important paperwork for each family member	19.67%
My family has made a list for emergencies (kids know how to call another family member & use 911)	21.31%

Location You Heard About Survey.

Church	0.00%
Community event or meeting	2.46%
Grocery store/shopping mall	1.64%
Mail	1.64%
News paper	14.75%
Newsletter	3.28%
Personal contact	2.46%
Website	10.66%
Workplace	58.20%
Other	12.30%

You or your family members covered by health insurance.

Yes - I'm covered by health insurance	99.18%
Yes - My spouse is covered	61.48%
Yes - My child(ren) are covered	40.16%

Section 5: Implementation Strategy

Five priorities were identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment conducted by Veterans Memorial Hospital in 2022. Those five priorities are: access to health care, counseling/mental health, alcohol abuse, physical inactivity, and radon exposure. Over the next three years, Veterans Memorial Hospital will continue to work on improving quality of life to all our patients, providing resources to our community members, and access to health care. The improvement plan outlines the actions by Veterans Memorial Hospital on how we are addressing these five priorities.

Community Health Assessment – Improvement Plan

<p>Good Jobs, Schools & Healthy Economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VMH Clinic will explore the opportunity to provide occupational health services in the community workplaces. ▪ VMH will continue to maintain excellent hiring and a large employment in our service area, being an exemplary employer with the goal to retain our staff.
<p>Healthy Lifestyles and Behaviors for all Allamakee Residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to provide athletic training hours. ▪ Continue to provide babysitting classes, CPR and stop the bleed training multiple times during the year. ▪ Provide healthy and active events. ▪ Continue to provide prepared childbirth classes. ▪ Offer car seat checks. ▪ Promote and offer low-cost walk-in wellness lab testing to the community. ▪ Provide skilled care to the community for safe recovery from hospitalization for illness or surgery. ▪ Provide educational resources on Veterans Memorial Hospital’s website. ▪ Provide free screenings for diabetes. ▪ Provide daily access for blood pressure screening at no cost. ▪ Provide website links to healthy activities throughout the area ▪ Work with county stakeholders to provide opportunities to increase overall health of area residents.
<p>Substance Abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborate with Helping Services in providing smoking cessation packets to Veterans Memorial Hospital patients. ▪ Provide links on our website to Substance Abuse treatment/assistance options.
<p>Mental Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue strategic focus on mental health. ▪ Offer tele-psychiatry through the Emergency Room ▪ Mental health first aid training for staff and the community. ▪ Provide safe and accessible care in our mental health room within the VMH Emergency Department. ▪ Explore the implementation of a counselor at the Waukon Clinic. ▪ Continue to increase local access to mental health providers. ▪ Continue to utilize Social Work services available through VMH. ▪ Collaborate with community partners such as Law Enforcement to decrease the emergency visits and transfers for mental health crisis.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to promote local mental health/suicide awareness opportunities in the area.
Exposure to Environmental Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain resources and education for hazardous materials. ▪ Promote area prescription drop off days. ▪ Public education on radon awareness and home safety. ▪ Coordinate the biannual safety day camp to include education for children on environmental hazards. ▪ Collaborate with Allamakee Environmental Health Dept. in promoting environmental hazard education.
Community Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work collaboratively with Allamakee Public Health that sits within our organization and Emergency Management to provide the community with a disaster plan. ▪ Participate in tabletop and full-scale exercise drills that occur within the area. ▪ Continue collaboration with county stakeholders to refine the Hazardous Mitigation plan for Allamakee County.
Treatment Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the community with urgent care services after normal clinic operations. ▪ Evaluate need and provide for specialty providers and outpatient services according to needs addressed in this review. ▪ Provide support to patients/community through the Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP). ▪ Provide an updated listing available on VMH website of providers and specialty clinics, as well as how to make an appointment with a provider.
Social Determinants of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Optimize our patient referrals to home health care. ▪ Support patients in establishing primary care. ▪ Provide language support to patients. ▪ Continue to work with community partners to provide transportation for patients. ▪ Provide individualized, comprehensive patient financial assistance services. ▪ Refer patients to WIC, the special supplemental food program. ▪ Provide well child checks and athletic physicals for area students. ▪ Provide education to staff in communicating with non-English speaking population as well as those with different cultural backgrounds (example: Somalian, Latino, Orthodox Jew) ▪ Increase in reliable translator services for staff and patrons. ▪ Frequently provide education and current reliable health topics on media platforms.

Section 6: Adopting the Community Health Needs Assessment

Board of Trustees

The Veterans Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees (seven board members, appointed by the Board of Supervisors of Allamakee County) approved this plan February 28, 2023. We appreciate their guidance and input in the community health assessment process, as well as their dedication to both Veterans Memorial Hospital and the community.

Section 7: Collaboration

Community Partners

Survey invitations were sent to members of the Waukon Chamber of Commerce and all members of Allamakee County and Northern Clayton County.

The following media were invited to share information on the survey with the general public:

- Allamakee County Economic & Development & Tourism
- Driftless Journal
- Postville Herald Newspaper
- Monona Outlook Newspaper
- Waukon Standard Newspaper
- KVIK Radio
- KNEI Radio
- KMRV Radio
- KDEC Radio
- VMHCF Newsletter

We appreciate the input on the survey from 125 people.

Section 8: Dissemination of the CHNA Results

Availability of the CHNA

Veterans Memorial Hospital will post its community health needs assessment on its website at www.veteransmemorialhospital.com. A paper copy will be available for public inspection also without charge at Veterans Memorial Hospital by making arrangements through Administration.