

Executive Summary

1. Blue Mountain Hospital District (BMHD) conducted this 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) for Grant County, Oregon.

2. The assessment process included:

- Analysis of secondary data on demographics, socioeconomic factors, and health indicators
- A community survey with 286 respondents
- Two focus groups with community stakeholders
- A priority-setting meeting with community partners

3. Key demographic findings:

- Grant County population: 7,174
- Higher percentage of seniors compared to state average
- 93.57% white population
- Higher poverty rates compared to state averages

4. Top health issues identified:

- Access to care
- Mental/behavioral health
- Substance abuse
- Chronic diseases

5. Social determinants of health impacting the community:

- Housing
- Transportation
- Economic factors
- Childcare

6. The priority-setting group recommended three focus areas for BMHD:

- Mental/Behavioral Health
- Access to Care
- Social Determinants of Health

7. BMHD will develop an implementation plan to address these priorities over the next three years.

8. The report also evaluated progress on priorities from the 2019 CHNA.

This community health needs assessment will guide BMHD's community health improvement efforts over the next three years.

Biggest Gaps in Service

1. Specialized health care: The report mentions it's hard to get specialized health care, and residents often have to leave the community for these services.

2. Mental health services: There's a lack of mental health providers and long wait times for services. The report notes "Lacking. Not enough counselors. Constantly recruiting. High turnover rate."

3. Substance abuse treatment: There are long waits to get service for substance use disorders.
4. Dental care: Some lack of emergency dental care is noted.
5. Pain management services: The report states these services are lacking.
6. Dialysis and cancer treatments (chemotherapy): The report mentions it would be nice to have these services locally.
7. Sexual assault resources: These are noted as limited.
8. Evidence-based childcare therapies: The report indicates a need for these services.
9. Inpatient mental health care: There's "nowhere to send people after suicide attempts."
10. Continuity of care for chronic illnesses: People struggle to see the same doctor consistently.
11. Specific specialties mentioned as needed include pulmonologist, otolaryngologist (ENT), urologist, dermatologist, rheumatologist, oncologist, and orthopedist.

The report also highlights challenges with access to existing services, including difficulty getting appointments, long wait times, and problems with communication and follow-up from healthcare providers.

Greatest Barriers to Care

1. Limited access to specialized care: Residents often have to leave the community for specialized health services.
2. Long wait times: Difficulty in getting appointments, especially for mental health and substance abuse treatment.
3. Shortage of providers: Particularly for mental health services, with constant recruitment and high turnover rates.
4. Geographic isolation: As a rural area, access to certain services requires travel to larger cities.
5. Transportation issues: Lack of transportation keeps some residents from medical appointments and accessing daily living necessities.
6. Communication problems: Difficulty getting through to clinics, lack of return calls, and problems with provider-patient communication.
7. Continuity of care: Challenges in seeing the same provider consistently, especially for chronic illnesses.
8. Insurance limitations: Some insurance plans (like those for school and federal employees) limit access to certain services like vision and dental.

9. Stigma: High community stigma about seeking help for mental health issues.
10. Cultural barriers: Resistance to change and new ideas in the community, which can affect healthcare practices and utilization.
11. Lack of childcare: Poor or inadequate access to childcare, which can indirectly affect healthcare access.
12. Economic factors: Poverty and low wages can make healthcare less accessible.
13. Workforce shortages: Difficulty in recruiting and retaining healthcare workers.
14. Lack of awareness: Some residents are unaware of available health services.
15. Technology limitations: Internet and cell service are limited in many areas, which can affect access to telehealth services.
16. Confidentiality concerns: In a small community, concerns about privacy can be a barrier to seeking care.

These barriers collectively contribute to challenges in accessing and utilizing healthcare services in Grant County.

The Unique Needs of the Community

1. Mental health services: There's a significant need for more accessible and destigmatized mental health care.
2. Substance abuse treatment: The community needs more readily available services for substance use disorders.
3. Specialized healthcare: There's a need for more specialized medical services locally to reduce the need for travel to larger cities.
4. Childcare services: The report highlights poor or inadequate access to childcare as a significant issue.
5. Workforce development: There's a need to address workforce shortages, particularly in healthcare.
6. Economic development: The community is dealing with issues related to the decline of the wood products industry and needs economic diversification.
7. Transportation services: Improved transportation options, especially for medical appointments and daily necessities.
8. Services for the aging population: Grant County has a higher percentage of seniors compared to the state average, creating unique needs for elder care and support.

9. Improved internet and cell service: These are limited in many areas throughout the county.
10. Youth activities: There's a noted lack of activities for children and youth.
11. Addressing generational poverty and trauma: The report mentions cycles of poverty and untreated mental health issues.
12. Housing: There are concerns about inadequate housing and its impact on health.
13. Education and prevention services: Particularly for substance abuse and chronic diseases.
14. Cultural shift: The community needs to become more open to change and new ideas.
15. Community cohesion: There's a need to bridge divides in the community, particularly around political issues.
16. Support for caregivers: This was identified as a potential priority area.
17. Addressing domestic violence, abuse, and neglect: These were identified as potential priority areas.

What the Hospital or CCO is Doing Well

1. Quality of care: The report mentions that the quality of care at the hospital is excellent, though it may be under-communicated to the public.
2. Scope of services: BMHD offers a broad scope of services including 3D mammography, MRI, and a fully staffed Emergency Room.
3. Provider recruitment: The system is working hard to recruit providers at all levels of care.
4. Emergency Medical Services: The Emergency Medical Technicians are described as "great" and "one of our gold stars."
5. Pharmacy services: The pharmacy is noted to work well, with the Emergency Department able to provide prescriptions when the town pharmacy is closed.
6. Public Health collaboration: The public health department has stepped up, especially during COVID-19, and does a good job working with schools through the School Based Health Clinic.
7. Improvements in access to care: The hospital has implemented several strategies to improve access, including:
 - Expanding same-day appointments
 - Hiring new providers
 - Implementing a resident physician program
 - Expanding provider hours
8. Specialty care expansion: BMHD has brought in new specialists and expanded services in areas like dermatology, ophthalmology, cardiology, and orthopedics.

9. Telemedicine: The hospital built a telemedicine infrastructure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

10. Community health initiatives: BMHD has implemented programs like Walk-with-a-Doc and a Health & Wellness Program for staff.

11. Care coordination: The hospital launched a robust care coordination program including community health workers.

12. Chronic care management: BMHD partnered with ChartSpan to assist with chronic care management and patient outreach.

Strengths of the Community

1. Beautiful natural environment with outdoor recreational opportunities
2. Welcoming and close-knit community where people look out for each other
3. Many opportunities for meaningful community involvement
4. Sense of physical safety
5. Strong emergency medical services
6. Community support for local healthcare institutions
7. Opportunities for personal and community growth
8. Culture of volunteerism and serving others
9. Well-attended Farmer's Market
10. Resilience in facing challenges

Priorities

1. Mental/Behavioral Health
2. Access to Care
3. Social Determinants of Health