

Executive Summary

This CHNA was conducted in 2022 through a collaboration of partners including Columbia Memorial Hospital, Providence Seaside Hospital, Clatsop County Health Department, Columbia County Health Department, and Columbia Pacific Coordinated Care Organization. The assessment covered Clatsop and Columbia counties in northwest Oregon. Methods included analyzing quantitative data, conducting stakeholder interviews and community listening sessions, and distributing a community survey.

Key health needs identified:

1. Access to health care services
2. Behavioral health challenges and access to care (mental health and substance use)
3. Houselessness and housing instability
4. Affordable child care and preschools
5. Economic insecurity
6. Access to dental care
7. Chronic health conditions

Specific issues highlighted include:

- Long wait times for appointments and few options for uninsured/OHP patients
- Need for more mental health providers and substance use treatment
- High rates of houselessness, especially in Clatsop County
- Lack of affordable housing and child care options
- Many jobs in tourism/hospitality that don't pay living wages
- Lack of dental providers accepting OHP
- COVID-19 exacerbated many existing health inequities and created new challenges

Biggest Gaps in Service

1. Affordable mental health services and substance use disorder treatment: Outpatient mental health services, harm reduction programs, and substance use disorder treatment, particularly for those with Medicaid (Oregon Health Plan) or without insurance.

2. Dental care for underserved populations: Many community members lack dental insurance. There are also very few dental providers accepting Medicaid, forcing people to travel outside the community for care.

3. Culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate services: There is a lack of culturally specific services, especially for the Latino/a/x community. There are insufficient bilingual and bicultural providers, and a need for more interpretation services and health education materials in Spanish.

4. Specialty care and services for specific populations: Children with special needs, comprehensive reproductive health care services and affirming care for LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals.

Greatest Barriers to Care

1. Lack of providers and appointment availability: Provider shortages, especially for mental health services, dental care, and specialty care. Many providers are not accepting new patients.

2. Cost of care and lack of insurance: Particularly for dental care and mental health services. Many jobs in the tourism and hospitality industries do not offer comprehensive health benefits.
3. Transportation: Limited public transportation options and long distances to care facilities, especially for older adults and people with disabilities.
4. Language and cultural barriers: There is a shortage of bilingual and bicultural providers
5. Stigma and discrimination: Fear of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity, especially for the LGBTQ2SIA+ community.
6. Limited health literacy and awareness of resources: Community members are not aware of available health care services and resources, or may have difficulty navigating complex application processes.
7. Housing instability and poverty: The high cost of housing and prevalence of low-wage jobs contribute to economic insecurity, which can force people to prioritize other basic needs over health care.
8. Availability of affordable child care and preschools: Clatsop and Columbia counties are considered child care deserts, with a severe shortage of slots for infants and toddlers ages 0-3.

The Unique Needs of the Community

1. Services tailored to the seasonal tourism industry: The region's economy relies heavily on tourism and hospitality, which often come with low wages, seasonal employment, and limited health benefits. This leads to higher rates of uninsured individuals and difficulty accessing affordable care.
2. Culturally specific services for the Latino/a/x community: More bilingual and bicultural providers, interpretation services, and culturally responsive outreach and education.
3. Affirming and inclusive care for the LGBTQ2SIA+ community: Particularly in gender-affirming care and mental health support.
4. Addressing the needs of an aging population: The region has a significant proportion of older adults, who face challenges with transportation, social isolation, and managing chronic conditions. More geriatric care services and support for aging in place is needed.
5. Tackling the opioid epidemic and substance use disorders: Like many rural communities, there is a need for expanded access to addiction treatment, harm reduction services, and mental health support.
6. Collaboration and coordination among regional partners: Health care providers, social service agencies, and community organizations
7. Improving health equity for marginalized populations: Addressing the root causes of health inequities, such as poverty, racism, and discrimination, which disproportionately impact certain communities.

What the Hospital or CCO is Doing Well

1. Collaboration: The report highlights strong collaboration between local organizations, including health care providers, mental health services, law enforcement, businesses, and non-profits. They are working together towards common goals.
2. COVID-19 Response: Clatsop County Public Health was noted for its effective COVID-19 vaccination events, including outreach and education to build trust in vaccine safety.
3. Harm Reduction: Clatsop County Public Health's Harm Reduction Program, which includes a Syringe Service Program and Naloxone training and distribution, was mentioned as successful in reversing overdoses in the community.
4. HIV/AIDS Support: The report notes good supports for people living with HIV/AIDS, including case management services through the HIV Alliance.
5. Coordinated Care: Columbia Pacific CCO was praised for supporting communities in addressing social needs and looking at the whole person beyond just medical care.
6. Mental Health Services: Several initiatives were highlighted:
 - Clatsop Behavioral Health's Rapid Access Clinic (RAC) offering mental health and substance use drop-in services for adults.
 - Columbia Community Mental Health's peer groups that visit people living unsheltered.
 - The Better Outcomes thru Bridges (BOB) Program providing mental health and substance use disorder peer support specialists.
7. Housing Support: Programs by Clatsop Community Action and Helping Hands Reentry Outreach Center were noted for addressing houselessness.
8. Latino/a/x Services: Consejo Hispano was highlighted for its trusted relationships in the community and comprehensive approach to meeting needs.
9. Family Support: The Healthy Families Program was mentioned for its effective home visiting services, which adapted well during the pandemic.
10. Medical Services: While not explicitly stated as "doing well," the report mentions that Columbia Memorial Hospital and Providence Seaside Hospital provide essential medical services to the community.

Strengths of the Community

1. Community engagement and helping one another:
 - Community members are aware of needs and actively engage in solutions through conversation and volunteerism.
 - People rally together for events and step up to help others in need.
 - There's strong support for schools and children.
2. Community knowledge and wisdom:

- Community members have significant knowledge about addressing needs and supporting each other.

- The LGBTQ2SIA+ community shares information about affirming health care providers.

- The Latino/a/x community has a lot of trust and wisdom to share.

3. Stakeholder collaboration and commitment:

- Local organizations collaborate well and have a shared sense of responsibility.

- There's a sense of accountability due to the community's size and interconnectedness.

4. Strong support for children and youth:

- The community is engaged in supporting children, particularly in creating access to sports and recreation opportunities.

5. Adaptability:

- Programs like Healthy Families adapted well to pandemic challenges, continuing to provide support through virtual visits.

6. Trust in community organizations:

- Organizations like Consejo Hispano have built strong, trusted relationships within the community.

7. Natural resources:

- The area has beaches, parks, and other natural attractions that contribute to quality of life and tourism.

8. Community-building resources:

- Libraries, community radio, and social media groups were mentioned as valuable resources for connecting people and sharing information.

9. Commitment to addressing complex issues:

- The community shows a willingness to engage in solutions for complex problems like houselessness.

10. Cultural diversity:

- While not explicitly stated as a strength, the report mentions efforts to serve diverse populations, suggesting a degree of cultural diversity in the community.

Priorities

1. Access to Healthcare Services: The community needs more medical providers and facilities, with challenges including long wait times for appointments and barriers for uninsured and underserved populations.

2. Behavioral Health Challenges and Access to Care: This includes both mental health and substance use/misuse issues. There's a need for more affordable mental health services and professionals, especially for those on Oregon Health Plan or without insurance.

3. Houselessness and Housing Instability: There's a high rate of houselessness, particularly in Clatsop County, and a need for more safe and affordable housing options.

4. Affordable Childcare and Preschools: There's a significant lack of affordable childcare and preschool options, which affects both families and the workforce.

5. Economic Insecurity: Many jobs in the community, particularly in tourism and hospitality, don't pay living wages. This is exacerbated by the high cost of housing.

6. Access to Dental Care: There's a lack of dental care options, particularly for those on Oregon Health Plan or without insurance.

7. Chronic Health Conditions: The prevalence of chronic conditions like obesity, diabetes, asthma, cancer, and heart disease is a concern.