

Executive Summary

Kaiser Permanente conducts a community health needs assessment (CHNA) every three years to identify and prioritize significant health needs in the communities it serves.

- For the 2022 CHNA, Kaiser Permanente of the Northwest identified the following top 5 health needs, in priority order:

1. Housing
2. Access to care
3. Mental & behavioral health
4. Income & employment
5. Food insecurity

- Key findings on these priority health needs include:

Housing: The region faces high housing costs, housing scarcity, and disparities in homeownership rates for communities of color.

Access to care: While insurance coverage is relatively high, barriers remain including travel distance to facilities in rural areas and lack of culturally relevant services.

Mental & behavioral health: There is a need for more culturally conscious and trauma-informed mental health support, especially for youth.

Income & employment: The region has lower than average household incomes in many areas and disparities in job access and wages.

Food insecurity: An estimated 25% of Oregonians experienced food insecurity in 2020, with disproportionate impacts on communities of color.

- The CHNA process included analysis of community health data and input from representatives of diverse communities. Kaiser Permanente will use the findings to develop strategies to address the prioritized health needs.

Biggest Gaps in Service

1. Access to care in rural areas: Key informants serving rural communities reported that travel distance to healthcare facilities prevented residents from seeking preventative care and filling prescriptions.

2. Culturally relevant services: The report mentions a lack of providers who can provide culturally relevant services across the region. This includes not just language services, but providers with similar lived experiences who understand cultural norms and historical barriers to care.

3. Dental care: Despite high enrollment in comprehensive dental care programs, Oregon has one of the country's highest rates of childhood dental disease. Dental care is often delayed or neglected, especially among Black, Latino/a, and low-income communities, due to factors like multiple jobs, lack of transportation, or lack of insurance.

4. Mental health services: While access to mental health providers is higher than the national average, there is still a significant unmet need for mental health treatment. The report states that Oregon has the fourth highest rate of unmet need for mental health treatment in the country.
5. Culturally diverse healthcare workforce: The report mentions challenges in developing a culturally diverse workforce that reflects the changing demographics of the region.
6. Services for co-occurring disorders: Service providers face challenges in managing people with co-occurring mental health disorders and substance misuse.
7. Youth mental health services: Many key informants expressed concern about the mental health status of youth in the region, particularly in light of isolation experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These gaps highlight areas where healthcare services may be insufficient or inaccessible to certain populations in the Northwest region.

Greatest Barriers to Care

1. Geographic distance: Especially in rural areas, travel distance to healthcare facilities prevents residents from seeking preventative care and filling prescriptions.
2. Lack of culturally relevant services: There's a shortage of providers who can deliver culturally appropriate care, including understanding cultural norms and historical barriers to care.
3. Language barriers: While not explicitly stated, this is implied as part of the need for culturally relevant services.
4. Lack of transportation: Mentioned as a barrier, particularly for dental care access among low-income communities.
5. Financial constraints: This includes lack of insurance for some populations and inability to afford care even when insured.
6. Time constraints: Particularly for low-income individuals working multiple jobs, finding time to seek care is challenging.
7. Lack of diverse healthcare workforce: The report notes difficulties in developing a culturally diverse workforce that reflects the changing demographics of the region.
8. Mental health stigma: While not explicitly stated, this can be inferred from the high unmet need for mental health services despite relatively good provider availability.
9. Limited availability of specialized services: Particularly for managing co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.
10. Digital divide: During the pandemic, lack of access to computers, internet, or private spaces hindered telehealth utilization for some populations.

11. Long wait times: The report mentions long wait times (often more than 6 months) for rescheduling procedures that were postponed due to the pandemic.

12. Trust issues: The report implies that historical barriers and lack of culturally relevant care have led to trust issues between some communities and healthcare providers.

These barriers collectively contribute to health disparities and unequal access to care across different populations in the Northwest region.

The Unique Needs of the Community

1. Affordable housing: The region faces high housing costs, housing scarcity, and disparities in homeownership rates, particularly for communities of color.

2. Culturally responsive healthcare: There's a significant need for healthcare providers who can offer culturally relevant services, including understanding cultural norms and historical barriers to care.

3. Mental health support: Especially for youth and communities of color, there's a need for culturally conscious and trauma-informed mental health services.

4. Economic opportunities: The region has lower than average household incomes in many areas and disparities in job access and wages, particularly affecting communities of color and women.

5. Food security: An estimated 25% of Oregonians experienced food insecurity in 2020, with disproportionate impacts on communities of color, immigrant communities, and LGBTQ+ communities.

6. Rural healthcare access: Improved access to healthcare services in rural areas, including preventative care and prescription services.

7. Dental care: Despite high enrollment in dental programs, there's a high rate of childhood dental disease, indicating a need for better dental care access and utilization.

8. Support for co-occurring disorders: There's a need for better management of individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

9. Community safety: Particularly in areas like Marion County, there's a need to address safety concerns for communities of color.

10. Early childhood education: The report highlights the importance of equitable funding and access to early childhood education.

11. Addressing health disparities: There's a consistent theme of addressing disparities in health outcomes and access to care across racial and ethnic groups.

12. Support for pandemic recovery: The community needs support in recovering from the economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These unique needs reflect the specific demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic characteristics of the Northwest region.

What the Hospital or CCO is Doing Well

1. High insurance coverage: The Northwest region has relatively high insurance coverage, with only 6.3% of the population uninsured, which is 28% better than the national average.
2. Children's insurance coverage: 97% of children are insured, far exceeding the national average. This is partly due to the Cover All Kids Medicaid program that began in 2018.
3. Mental health provider availability: The region has 517 mental health providers per 100,000 population, which is twice as high as the national average.
4. Integrated health services: The report mentions that the Northwest region provides integrated health services, including medical, dental, and behavioral health, to best meet the needs of the community.
5. Dental care program enrollment: Oregon has enrolled 90% of its Medicaid patients in a program that includes comprehensive dental care for children.
6. Vaccination efforts: The report mentions a partnership with Medical Teams International to administer vaccines and provide dental visits at community-based mobile health clinics across the region.
7. Efforts to address social determinants of health: While not specific to a hospital or CCO, the report mentions various initiatives to address issues like housing, food insecurity, and economic opportunity.

It's important to note that this report is primarily focused on identifying community health needs and gaps in services, rather than highlighting successes of specific healthcare providers or organizations. Therefore, it doesn't provide a comprehensive evaluation of what hospitals or CCOs are doing well.

Strengths of the Community

1. Community engagement: The report mentions input from various community leaders and organizations, suggesting an engaged community that participates in health improvement efforts.
2. Diversity: The report acknowledges the region's diverse population, which can be seen as a strength in terms of cultural richness and varied perspectives.
3. Collaborative efforts: There are mentions of partnerships and collaborative initiatives, indicating a community that works together to address health issues.
4. Awareness of health disparities: The community seems aware of health disparities affecting various groups, which is a first step in addressing these issues.
5. Resilience: While facing challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and economic difficulties, the community has shown resilience in recovery efforts.

6. Focus on youth: There's a clear concern for youth well-being, particularly regarding mental health, suggesting a community that prioritizes its younger members.

7. Innovative approaches: The report mentions initiatives like allowing dentists to provide certain vaccinations, indicating a community open to innovative health solutions.

8. Strong social services: The presence of various social service organizations addressing issues like housing, food insecurity, and mental health suggests a robust social support system.

9. Education focus: The community recognizes the importance of early childhood education, suggesting a value placed on learning and development.

10. Health coverage initiatives: High rates of insurance coverage, especially for children, suggest successful community efforts to expand healthcare access.

While these strengths are inferred rather than explicitly stated, they reflect positive aspects of the community that could be leveraged to address the identified health needs.

Priorities

According to the report, Kaiser Permanente of the Northwest identified five priority health needs for the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment. These priorities, listed in order, are:

1. Housing: This includes addressing issues like high housing costs, housing scarcity, and disparities in homeownership rates, especially for communities of color.

2. Access to care: While insurance coverage is relatively high, this priority focuses on addressing barriers such as travel distance to facilities in rural areas and lack of culturally relevant services.

3. Mental & behavioral health: There is a need for more culturally conscious and trauma-informed mental health support, especially for youth. This also includes addressing challenges related to substance use and co-occurring disorders.

4. Income & employment: This priority addresses the lower-than-average household incomes in many areas and disparities in job access and wages, particularly affecting communities of color and women.

5. Food insecurity: An estimated 25% of Oregonians experienced food insecurity in 2020, with disproportionate impacts on communities of color, immigrant communities, and LGBTQ+ communities.

These priorities were identified based on several criteria, including:

- Severity and magnitude of the need
- Community priority
- Clear disparities or inequities

The report indicates that Kaiser Permanente will use these identified priorities to develop strategies and allocate resources to address the most pressing health needs in the Northwest region.