

## **Executive Summary**

1. The assessment was conducted for fiscal year 2023-2024 to identify key health issues in the community and guide resource allocation.
2. Lower Umpqua Hospital District includes a 20-bed hospital, 24/7 emergency room, ambulance service, two clinics, and a community resource center serving coastal Douglas County, Oregon.
3. Key demographic trends in the primary service area include:
  - An aging population, with over 36% aged 65 and older
  - Lower income levels compared to state averages
  - Slower population growth compared to the state
  - A predominantly white population, but growing Hispanic/Latino community
4. Major health concerns identified include:
  - Higher mortality rates compared to county/state averages, especially for cancer and heart disease
  - Limited access to healthcare providers, especially for dental and mental health
  - High rates of emergency department use for dental and mental health issues
  - Challenges with prenatal care and infant mortality
5. Top community-identified needs include:
  - Exercise facilities
  - Veterans services
  - Mental health services
  - Healthcare provider retention and recruitment
  - Childcare services
6. The community survey highlighted issues around housing stability, food security, financial strain, and mental health concerns among residents.
7. The hospital will use this assessment to develop an implementation strategy to address significant community health needs in collaboration with other stakeholders.

## **Biggest Gaps in Service**

1. **Mental Health Services:** This was identified as one of the top needs in the community forums and is supported by data showing a low availability of mental health providers per 1,000 people.
2. **Primary Care Providers:** There's a noted need for more doctors and PCPs, indicating a shortage in primary care services.
3. **Dental Care:** The report mentions a low availability of dentists per 1,000 people, suggesting a significant gap in dental health services.
4. **Prenatal Care:** The rate of inadequate prenatal care in Reedsport (145.8 per 1,000 births) is significantly higher than Oregon's overall rate (60.7 per 1,000 births), indicating a major gap in maternity care services.

5. Substance Abuse Treatment: Drug and substance addiction recovery services were identified as one of the top needs by the community.
6. Specialty Care: While not explicitly stated, the need for residents to travel for healthcare services suggests a gap in specialty care availability locally.
7. Veterans Services: The community identified a need for better VA partnerships to connect veterans with available services in the area.
8. Childcare Services: While not strictly a healthcare service, this was identified as a significant need that can impact overall community health and access to healthcare.
9. Services for Children with Special Needs: This was highlighted as one of the top needs by the community.

### **Greatest Barriers to Care**

1. Geographic Access: The report mentions concerns about travel time to the nearest primary care provider, indicating that distance and transportation are significant barriers for many residents.
2. Provider Shortages: There's a noted lack of healthcare providers, particularly in primary care, dental care, and mental health services. The report mentions a low ratio of providers to population, which can lead to long wait times and difficulty accessing care.
3. Financial Constraints: The community has lower income levels compared to state averages, with 36.2% of survey respondents finding it very hard to pay for essentials like food, housing, and medical care. This financial strain likely makes it difficult for many to afford healthcare services or insurance.
4. Transportation Issues: 43.6% of survey respondents reported having issues with reliable transportation affecting their ability to attend appointments.
5. Limited Specialty Services: The need for residents to travel for healthcare services suggests a lack of specialty care in the local area, which can be a significant barrier for those needing specialized treatment.
6. Mental Health Stigma: While not explicitly stated, the high use of emergency services for mental health issues could indicate a stigma or lack of awareness about seeking regular mental health care.
7. Lack of Childcare: Childcare services were identified as a community need, and the lack of such services can indirectly act as a barrier to healthcare by making it difficult for parents to attend medical appointments.
8. Language Barriers: 15.6% of survey respondents speak a language other than English at home, which could present communication challenges in healthcare settings.
9. Aging Population: With over 36% of the population aged 65 and older, age-related mobility issues and complex health needs could present barriers to accessing care.

10. Limited Health Literacy: The report indicates that 17.2% of respondents want help with school or training, which could suggest a need for improved health education and literacy in the community.

### **The Unique Needs of the Community**

1. Services for an Aging Population: With over 36% of residents aged 65 and older, there's a significant need for healthcare services, specialized housing, public transportation, home support, and senior activities tailored to this demographic.

2. Veterans Services: There's a specific need for VA partnerships to connect veterans with available services in the area.

3. Mental Health Services: This is highlighted as a critical need, particularly given the high rates of emergency department visits for mental health issues.

4. Healthcare Provider Retention and Recruitment: The community needs more doctors and primary care providers, as well as strategies to retain existing healthcare staff.

5. Exercise Facilities: A public exercise gym was identified as a top need by the community, potentially addressing the low levels of physical activity reported in the survey.

6. Childcare Services: This was highlighted as a significant community need, which can impact overall community health and access to healthcare.

7. Services for Children with Special Needs: The community identified this as a specific area of concern.

8. Substance Abuse Recovery Services: Drug and substance addiction recovery services were noted as a key need.

9. Prenatal Care: Given the high rates of inadequate prenatal care, there's a unique need to improve access and quality of maternity services.

10. Economic Development: With lower income levels compared to state averages, there's a need for strategies to improve economic opportunities and financial stability in the community.

11. Housing Support: The survey revealed concerns about housing stability and quality, indicating a need for housing assistance and improvement programs.

12. Food Security Programs: A significant portion of survey respondents reported concerns about food shortages, suggesting a need for food assistance programs.

13. Transportation Services: Given the rural nature of the area and reported transportation issues, there's a need for improved transportation options to healthcare services.

14. Hispanic/Latino Outreach: With a growing Hispanic population, there's a need for culturally tailored health services and outreach programs.

15. Chronic Disease Management: High mortality rates from cancer and heart disease indicate a need for robust chronic disease prevention and management programs.

These unique needs reflect the complex interplay of health, social, and economic factors in this specific community, requiring a multifaceted approach to community health improvement.

### **What the Hospital or CCO is Doing Well**

1. Community Engagement: The hospital seems to be doing well in engaging with the community. They hosted three well-advertised community forums, offering various times and even transportation to ensure broad participation. This shows a commitment to community involvement and transparency.

2. Comprehensive Services: The report mentions that the hospital district comprises a 20-bed hospital, 24/7 emergency room, ambulance service, two clinics, and a community resource center. This suggests they are providing a wide range of services to meet various community needs.

3. Family Resource Center (FRC): The hospital funds an FRC that provides resources, information, and services to community members, including help with applications for various assistance programs, information about local services, and provision of essential items to people in crisis.

4. Surgical Services: The report mentions that the hospital has two fully equipped surgical suites and offers a range of surgical services, indicating a strong capability in this area.

5. Pharmacy Services: The hospital operates a retail pharmacy, which is noted as a great convenience for area residents given the next closest pharmacy is 25 miles away.

6. Swing Bed Program: This program offers skilled nursing and rehabilitative care, allowing patients to recover closer to home.

While these points suggest areas where the hospital is providing valuable services, it's important to note that the primary purpose of this report is to identify areas for improvement rather than to highlight existing strengths. A more comprehensive evaluation of the hospital's performance would be needed to fully assess what they are doing well.

### **Strengths of the Community**

1. Community Engagement: There was active participation in the community forums and surveys, indicating a community that is engaged and concerned about its health and well-being.

2. Diverse Leadership Involvement: The community forums were attended by various local leaders, including state representatives, county commissioners, city council members, the mayor, and school board members. This suggests strong local leadership engagement in community health issues.

3. Resilience: Despite facing various challenges such as lower income levels and healthcare access issues, the community continues to work towards improving its situation.

4. Aging Population as a Resource: While the aging population presents challenges, it also represents a wealth of experience and potential volunteers for community initiatives.
5. Growing Diversity: The report mentions a growing Hispanic/Latino population, which could bring cultural richness and new perspectives to the community.
6. Historical Engagement in Healthcare: The community has a history of coming together for healthcare needs, as evidenced by the formation of the Lower Umpqua Association in the 1950s to address local medical care needs.
7. Supportive Community Organizations: The presence of civic and fraternal groups that have historically supported the hospital (e.g., by donating equipment) suggests a tradition of community support for healthcare.
8. Focus on Physical Activity: Despite challenges, a significant portion of the community (82.8%) engages in some form of moderate exercise weekly, indicating a community value for physical health.
9. Low Substance Abuse Rates: The majority of survey respondents reported never using tobacco, prescription drugs for non-medical reasons, or illegal drugs, suggesting relatively low substance abuse rates in the community.
10. Stable Housing for Many: While there are housing concerns, 62% of survey respondents reported having a stable living situation.

### **Priorities**

1. Expansion of access points to healthcare
2. Improving the provider ratio in the service area by maintaining existing primary care capacity and growing specialty providers
3. Expansion of mental health support to the service area
4. Veterans services - particularly VA partnerships to connect veterans with available services in the area
5. Staff/employee retention in healthcare
6. Healthcare systems - improving access to healthcare services and communication amongst providers
7. Childcare Services
8. Need for more doctors/Primary Care Providers (PCPs)
9. Services for children with special needs
10. Substance abuse and drug addiction recovery services