

Executive Summary

PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend conducted this Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to identify and address critical health needs in Lane County, Oregon.

- Key findings include:

- A need for improved health equity for vulnerable populations including racial/ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, rural residents, and low-income families
- A lack of affordable housing and support services like childcare and food access
- A need for more community health workers and support specialists
- Concerning trends in mental health, especially among youth
- Challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic which exacerbated existing health disparities

- The hospital is focusing on four key pillars to address community needs:

1. HOME: Improving access to housing
2. HOPE: Increasing addiction treatment and prevention
3. CARE: Expanding access to community caregivers
4. NOURISH: Addressing food insecurity

- Key initiatives highlighted include:

- Pallet shelter housing program for homeless patients
- Syringe exchange and naloxone distribution to combat opioid crisis
- Partnerships with schools and community organizations to provide wraparound services
- Support for food banks and nutrition programs

- PeaceHealth emphasizes the importance of community partnerships and a commitment to health equity and justice in addressing the identified needs.

The report demonstrates PeaceHealth's efforts to understand and respond to critical health needs in Lane County through targeted programs and community collaboration. They acknowledge ongoing challenges and pledge to continue evolving their work to serve the community.

Biggest Gaps in Service

1. Access to care for vulnerable populations: The report highlights disparities in access to care for Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, low-income families, people with disabilities, rural residents, and those experiencing homelessness.

2. Mental health care and substance abuse treatment: The report notes a concerning trend of worsening mental health among Lane County residents, especially youth, and identifies a need for increased access to mental healthcare and substance abuse prevention services.

3. Primary care and specialty services: The report mentions that as the population grows and ages, there is an increasing need for healthcare services. However, many current providers are retiring, creating a gap in available providers for basic and critical care services. This is driving up wait times and making it difficult to access care, especially in rural areas.

4. Medical respite care: There is a gap in care for individuals with complex healthcare needs who do not qualify for skilled nursing facility stays or home health nursing visits, particularly those experiencing homelessness.

5. Culturally appropriate care: The report emphasizes the need for more bilingual, multicultural health workers and programs to reduce healthcare disparities.

6. Preventive and holistic care: There is a need for more community-based, integrated care that addresses social determinants of health, such as housing, nutrition, and education, alongside medical care.

7. Care coordination: The report suggests a need to bridge gaps between outpatient care, social services, and inpatient care, particularly for vulnerable populations.

These gaps are exacerbated by factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, rapid population growth in the area, and ongoing social and economic inequities.

Greatest Barriers to Care

1. Lack of affordable housing: The report mentions a very low vacancy rate (around 2%) and high percentage of renters (58%), indicating housing instability which can significantly impact access to healthcare.

2. Provider shortages: The report states that "the number of available providers for basic and critical care services is declining," creating "a significant gap in available healthcare services, driving up wait times and wait lists."

3. Rural access: There's mention of it being "nearly impossible to access care in more rural communities," indicating geographic barriers for rural residents.

4. Income and poverty: The report discusses challenges faced by low-income families and individuals experiencing poverty, which can limit their ability to access and afford healthcare.

5. Racial and ethnic disparities: The report highlights disproportionate impacts on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, including higher risks for chronic medical conditions and less access to healthcare.

6. Language and cultural barriers: For the growing diverse population, language barriers and immigration concerns are mentioned as factors limiting healthcare access.

7. Mental health care access: The report notes "a concerning trend of worsening mental health among Lane County residents, especially youth" and mentions a need for increased access to mental healthcare.

8. Substance abuse treatment: There's an identified need for increased access to addiction treatment, particularly among vulnerable youth and young adult groups.

9. Food insecurity: While not directly a healthcare barrier, the report emphasizes food insecurity as a factor that can lead to poor health outcomes and increased healthcare needs.

10. COVID-19 impacts: The pandemic exacerbated many existing barriers and created new challenges in accessing healthcare services.

The Unique Needs of the Community

According to the report, some of the unique needs of the Lane County community include:

1. Affordable housing: The report highlights a critical shortage of affordable housing options, with a very low vacancy rate of just over 2% in 2021.
2. Support for a growing diverse population: Lane County's population increased by more than 10% from 2010 to 2020 while becoming more diverse, creating a need for more culturally appropriate services.
3. Addressing the opioid crisis: Oregon has one of the highest rates of prescription opioid misuse in the nation, requiring targeted interventions.
4. Mental health support, especially for youth: There's a concerning trend of worsening mental health among residents, particularly young people.
5. Food security: Despite being in the average national range for food environment, 14% of the county experiences food insecurity.
6. Rural and remote area services: There's a need to ensure access to healthcare and other essential services in rural parts of the county.
7. Support for families in poverty: Many families struggle with housing, nutrition, education, and emotional well-being, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
8. Substance abuse prevention and treatment: Particularly for youth and young adults.
9. Care for unhoused individuals: Including medical respite care for those with complex health needs.
10. Workforce development in healthcare: To address the shortage of providers as the population grows and current providers retire.
11. Community-based integrated care: To address social determinants of health alongside medical needs.
12. Support for the Latinx community and other minorities: Including immigration services and culturally appropriate care.

What the Hospital or CCO is Doing Well

1. Community Partnerships: The hospital has formed strong collaborations with various community organizations to address health needs. Examples include partnerships with St. Vincent de Paul, HIV Alliance, Catholic Community Services, and local school districts.
2. Housing Initiatives: PeaceHealth has invested in the Pallet Shelter program, providing temporary housing for patients experiencing homelessness after hospital discharge.

3. Substance Abuse Prevention: The hospital supports the Syringe Exchange Program and distribution of naloxone kits in partnership with HIV Alliance, which has been credited with saving hundreds of lives.
4. Food Security: PeaceHealth has provided funding to Food For Lane County, helping to waive food transportation costs for 34 food banks throughout Lane County for a year.
5. School-Based Health Centers: The hospital has partnered with local school districts to provide physical and mental health services in school-based health centers.
6. COVID-19 Response: PeaceHealth quickly adapted to pandemic challenges, providing funding for vaccine clinics and outreach to vulnerable populations.
7. Addressing Social Determinants of Health: The hospital is taking a holistic approach to healthcare, addressing issues like housing, food insecurity, and social support alongside medical care.
8. Cultural Competence: There are efforts to provide more culturally appropriate care and support for diverse communities, including the Latinx population.
9. Community Health Worker Programs: The hospital is supporting the development of traditional health worker roles to bridge gaps between healthcare and social supports.
10. Commitment to Health Equity: Throughout the report, there's a clear emphasis on addressing health disparities and promoting health justice for all community members.

These initiatives demonstrate PeaceHealth's commitment to addressing a wide range of community health needs beyond traditional medical care.

Strengths of the Community

1. Strong infrastructure: The report mentions that the community is "blessed with a strong infrastructure of educational institutions, social service organizations, health partners and local businesses."
2. Community collaboration: There's evidence of strong partnerships and collaboration between various organizations to address community needs. For example, the Live Healthy Lane Community Health Improvement Plan partners include multiple stakeholders.
3. Resilience: The report describes the Eugene-Springfield community as "Strong. Resilient. Engaged. Courageous."
4. Rapid response to crises: The community is noted for coming together quickly in times of crisis to support vulnerable populations.
5. Diverse support organizations: There are numerous organizations dedicated to supporting various community needs, including housing, food security, healthcare, and social services.

6. School-based health centers: The community has five Certified School-Based Health Centers, which serve as important hubs for youth and family health.
7. Strong food bank network: Food for Lane County has an extensive network able to distribute millions of pounds of food annually.
8. Innovative health programs: The community has implemented creative solutions like the Syringe Exchange Program and naloxone kit distribution to address the opioid crisis.
9. Cultural diversity: The growing diversity in the community is presented as an asset, though it also presents challenges in ensuring equitable services.
10. Community engagement: There's evidence of active community participation in health initiatives and a willingness to address social and health justice issues.
11. Educational resources: The presence of educational institutions is mentioned as a community asset.

Priorities

1. Improving access to service-enriched housing (HOME pillar):
 - Developing medical respite housing for those with complex healthcare needs
 - Continuing to support programs like the Pallet Shelter initiative
2. Increasing education, access to treatment, and prevention of substance dependence (HOPE pillar):
 - Expanding access to mental health care and addiction treatment, particularly for youth and young adults
 - Continuing support for harm reduction programs like syringe exchanges and naloxone distribution
3. Expanding knowledge, access, and engagement with community caregivers (CARE pillar):
 - Growing traditional health worker roles (e.g., doulas, peer support specialists, community health workers)
 - Increasing bilingual and multicultural health programs
 - Strengthening partnerships with school-based health centers
4. Addressing food insecurities to enhance family and child well-being (NOURISH pillar):
 - Expanding food partnerships and programs like community gardens, Veggie RX, and Double Up food bucks
 - Continuing support for food banks and nutrition programs
5. Promoting health equity:
 - Focusing on improving care and access for vulnerable populations, including racial/ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, rural residents, and low-income families
6. Addressing workforce shortages:
 - Improving the provider pipeline to meet growing care needs

7. Enhancing community-based, integrated care:

- Bridging gaps between outpatient care, social services, and inpatient care

8. Improving mental health support:

- Especially for youth, given the concerning trends in mental health

9. Continuing COVID-19 response and recovery:

- Addressing the pandemic's ongoing impacts on community health and disparities