

Executive Summary

The assessment was conducted collaboratively through the Healthy Columbia Willamette Collaborative (HCWC), which includes health systems, public health departments, and coordinated care organizations in the quad-county region of Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington counties in Oregon and Clark County in Washington.

- It used a community-informed approach led by a Community Action Team (CAT) of community leaders to center community wisdom and advance health equity.

- Data collection included community engagement sessions with over 300 participants, a survey with over 500 respondents, and analysis of secondary data sources.

- The CAT identified four key priority areas:

1. A Neighborhood for All
2. Essential Community Services and Resources
3. Access to Culturally- and Linguistically-Responsive Health Care
4. Support for Family and Community Ways

- Within these priority areas, several specific issues were highlighted, including safe and affordable housing, economic opportunity, culturally-responsive healthcare, and social connection.

- Top health concerns identified were mental health, chronic disease, and vaccine-preventable diseases.

- Based on this assessment, Providence Portland Medical Center identified the following priorities to address:

1. Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder
2. Health Related Social Needs
3. Economic Security
4. Access to Care and Services

- The report provides recommendations for addressing these priority areas and issues, focusing on community-driven and equity-centered approaches.

- It also highlights some results from implementing the previous 2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan.

The executive summary emphasizes the collaborative, community-centered approach to identifying health needs and priorities in the region. It provides an overview of the key findings and focus areas for future health improvement efforts.

Biggest Gaps in Service

1. Mental health and substance use disorder services: The report identifies this as a key priority area, noting challenges in accessing care due to workforce shortages, lack of culturally responsive care, and affordability issues.

2. Culturally and linguistically responsive care: There is a significant gap between the diversity of the population and the diversity of the healthcare workforce. The report notes that only 20% of

Oregon's healthcare workforce reports speaking a language other than English, and only 9% report using a non-English language with patients.

3. Access to care for underserved populations: The report highlights disparities in access to care, particularly for people of color, LGBTQ2IA individuals, and people with disabilities. These groups reported higher rates of delaying or avoiding care due to fear or discomfort.

4. Affordable health care: While the overall uninsured rate has decreased, geographic, socioeconomic, and racial/ethnic disparities persist. Certain populations, particularly Hispanic/Latino communities, are disproportionately represented among the uninsured.

5. Trauma-informed care: There is a need for health care that is attentive to healing marginalized communities' experiences, past traumas, and historical inequities.

6. Preventive care: The report indicates gaps in access to preventive services, particularly for dental care and certain screenings.

7. Specialty care: Some community members reported difficulty accessing specialty services, with long wait times and limited availability of providers.

8. Transportation to health services: Lack of transportation was identified as a significant barrier to accessing care, particularly for people with disabilities and those in rural areas.

9. Virtual care access: While telehealth has increased access for some, there are concerns about accessibility for those who lack technology skills or reliable internet access, particularly older adults and low-income populations.

Greatest Barriers to Care

1. Cultural and linguistic barriers:

- Lack of culturally and linguistically responsive care
- Shortage of providers who reflect the diversity of the community
- Limited availability of interpretation services and translated materials

2. Affordability and insurance issues:

- High out-of-pocket costs
- Lack of insurance coverage for certain populations, particularly Hispanic/Latino communities
- Challenges navigating insurance systems

3. Access and availability:

- Long wait times for appointments, especially for specialty care
- Limited availability of services in certain geographic areas
- Lack of evening and weekend hours

4. Transportation:

- Difficulty accessing non-emergency medical transportation
- Limited public transportation options, particularly in rural areas

5. Trust and discrimination:

- Distrust of the healthcare system due to past experiences of discrimination
- Fear of not being taken seriously or treated fairly due to race, ethnicity, gender identity, or disability status

6. Lack of trauma-informed care:

- Need for care that addresses historical traumas and inequities experienced by marginalized communities

7. Health literacy and navigation:

- Difficulty understanding health information and navigating complex healthcare systems
- Lack of awareness about available services and resources

8. Technology barriers:

- Limited access to reliable internet for telehealth services
- Challenges using technology, particularly for older adults

9. Social determinants of health:

- Housing instability, food insecurity, and economic challenges that impact ability to prioritize healthcare

10. Mental health stigma:

- Reluctance to seek mental health care due to cultural stigma or lack of understanding

11. Provider shortages:

- Lack of available providers, especially in mental health and certain specialties

12. Complexity of application processes:

- Difficulty completing complicated forms for services or insurance

The Unique Needs of the Community

1. Culturally and linguistically responsive care:

- Need for healthcare providers who reflect the diversity of the community
- Services that respect and incorporate cultural practices and beliefs
- Increased availability of interpretation services and translated materials

2. Mental health and substance use disorder services:

- Increased access to trauma-informed mental health care
- Culturally specific mental health support
- Substance use disorder treatment that is integrated with mental health care

3. Affordable housing:

- Safe and affordable housing options, particularly for low-income families
- Addressing displacement due to gentrification

4. Economic opportunity:

- Workforce development programs that provide pathways to living-wage jobs
- Support for small businesses, particularly those owned by people of color

5. Food access:

- Increased access to culturally specific and healthy foods
- Addressing food deserts in certain neighborhoods

6. Community safety:

- Addressing concerns about violent crime and community safety
- Culturally responsive approaches to public safety

7. Support for immigrant and refugee communities:

- Assistance navigating complex systems (healthcare, education, social services)
- Civic engagement and education programs

8. LGBTQ2IA-specific services:

- Healthcare providers trained in LGBTQ2IA health needs
- Safe and affirming spaces for LGBTQ2IA community members

9. Disability services:

- Improved physical accessibility in healthcare settings and public spaces
- Increased support for people with disabilities to live independently

10. Youth support:

- Non-academic youth development programs
- Peer mentorship and education services

11. Elder care:

- Services to address social isolation among older adults
- Culturally specific elder care options

12. Transportation:

- Improved public transportation options, especially in rural areas
- Non-emergency medical transportation services

13. Digital equity:

- Increased access to reliable internet and technology
- Digital literacy programs, especially for older adults

14. Community spaces:

- Culturally specific spaces for community gatherings and events
- Safe outdoor spaces for physical activity and recreation

15. Traditional and cultural healing practices:

- Integration of traditional healing methods with Western medicine
- Support for cultural practices that promote health and wellness

What the Hospital or CCO is Doing Well

1. Community-informed approach:

- Establishing a Community Action Team (CAT) composed of community leaders to guide every aspect of the assessment

- Conducting 37 community engagement sessions with over 300 community members
 - Surveying over 500 community members
 - Using a peer review group of data professionals of color to inform the approach
2. Focus on social determinants of health:
 - Identifying and prioritizing root causes of health inequities rather than just individual health outcomes
 - Focusing on four key priority areas that address broader community needs
 3. Acknowledging data limitations:
 - Recognizing and addressing limitations of traditional data sources
 - Working to incorporate more community voices and qualitative data
 4. Collaborative efforts:
 - Partnering with other health systems, public health departments, and coordinated care organizations to fund and conduct the regional assessment
 5. Investments in previous needs:
 - Contributing to a Regional Supportive Housing Impact Fund
 - Investing in Project Access NOW to improve access to care for underserved populations
 - Partnering on COVID-19 response efforts like vaccine clinics
 6. Commitment to health equity:
 - Centering community perspectives in the assessment process
 - Taking a more holistic, equity-focused approach to understanding community health needs
 7. Transparency:
 - Acknowledging areas for continued improvement in future assessments
 8. Adaptability:
 - Conducting the assessment despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic
 9. Comprehensive approach:
 - Addressing a wide range of health issues and social determinants of health
 10. Future planning:
 - Committing to use the assessment findings to inform future community health improvement plans and investments

Strengths of the Community

1. Social connection and community support:
 - Community members rely on their social networks when unable or unwilling to access the formal health care system.
 - There is a strong sense of "showing up and supporting each other" within communities.
2. Cultural practices and traditions:
 - Cultural practices are seen as vital to overall wellness and healing.

- Spiritual gatherings, ceremonies, and cultural events are important for discussing past traumas and working toward healing together.

3. Storytelling and information sharing:

- Sharing stories and relating to each other is seen as part of how communities connect and heal from traumas.
- Young adults reported the importance of peer education and sharing information on health issues affecting marginalized communities.

4. Connection to the environment:

- Community members noted the importance of connection to land and nature for health, healing, and wellness.

5. Resilience and problem-solving:

- Communities have developed strong problem-solving skills out of necessity, adapting to overcome challenges and barriers.

6. Intergenerational knowledge and compassion:

- There is a deep respect for supporting youth and children and finding ways to pass on cultural practices that support health and healing.

7. Awareness of mental health issues:

- There is an increased awareness and attention to mental health issues among both youth and adults, with efforts to reduce stigma.

8. Community partnerships:

- Some community members noted strong connections with other organizations serving their communities to support healing and wellness.

9. Traditional foods and medicine:

- Access to and knowledge of traditional foods and medicines was seen as important for maintaining health in some communities.

Priorities

1. A Neighborhood for All

- Safe and affordable housing
- Physical safety in community
- Cultural displacement due to gentrification

2. Essential Community Services and Resources

- Economic opportunity
- Educational opportunity
- Culturally-specific and healthy foods
- Transportation
- Virtual resources

3. Access to Culturally- and Linguistically-Responsive Health Care

- Affordable health care

- Culturally- and linguistically-responsive health care
- Trauma-informed care
- Delayed or avoided health care

4. Support for Family and Community Ways

- Social connection

Additionally, the community survey identified three primary health concerns:

1. Mental health (e.g., stress, anxiety, depression, grieving)
2. Chronic disease (e.g., diabetes, heart disease and stroke, high blood pressure)
3. Vaccine preventable diseases (e.g., COVID-19, measles, influenza, mumps, pertussis)

The report also highlights three priority health outcomes based on the community input and population health data:

1. Mental Well-Being
2. Chronic and Communicable Disease Management
3. Accidental Injury

Based on these findings, Providence Portland Medical Center identified the following priorities to address:

1. Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder
2. Health Related Social Needs
3. Economic Security
4. Access to Care and Services