

Executive Summary

St. Charles Madras is a not-for-profit, 25-bed Critical Access Hospital located in Madras, Oregon. As the only hospital in Jefferson County, it provides a wide range of medical services to residents throughout the region. Following federal regulations for not-for-profit hospitals, St. Charles Madras conducted this Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to identify and prioritize the health needs of their community.

The assessment process involved extensive secondary research of health data and a professionally facilitated phone and text message survey. The research was done through collaboration between the St. Charles Community Benefit department and the Central Oregon Health Council.

St. Charles Madras identified six significant health needs for Jefferson County:

1. Stable Housing & Supports
2. Address Poverty & Enhance Self Sufficiency
3. Upstream Prevention: Promotion of Individual Well-Being
4. Substance & Alcohol Misuse Prevention & Treatment
5. Behavioral Health: Increase Access and Coordination
6. Promote Enhanced Physical Health Across Communities

These prioritized needs will form the basis for St. Charles Madras's Regional Health Implementation Strategy (RHIS) for 2023-2025, which will outline specific plans to address these community health challenges.

The St. Charles Health System Board of Directors reviewed, approved, and adopted this CHNA on October 27, 2022. The assessment will be made widely available to the public through various platforms, including the St. Charles Health System website.

Biggest Gaps in Service

1. **Wait times for appointments:** This was identified as the most significant barrier to care, with 46% of residents saying wait times prevented them from seeking care "almost always" or "many times" - an increase of 23 points since 2018.
2. **Cost of care:** 39% of residents cited cost as preventing them from seeking care "almost always" or "many times" - an increase of 12 points since 2018.
3. **Dental and vision insurance coverage:** While 88% of Jefferson County residents have health insurance, only 65% have dental insurance and 56% have vision insurance. This gap is even more pronounced for low-income residents.
4. **Time away from work:** 23% of residents cited this as preventing them from getting care "many times" or "always" - an increase of 15 points since 2018.
5. **Lack of insurance:** 26% of Jefferson County residents (higher than other counties in the region) cite lack of insurance as a barrier to care.
6. **Location and transportation:** Jefferson County residents were more likely than residents of other counties to cite location (24%) and transportation (11%) as barriers to care.
7. **Mental health and substance abuse services:** 23% of Jefferson County residents viewed mental health and substance abuse programs as the way to most improve community health, indicating a significant perceived gap in these services.
8. **Technology for virtual appointments:** 18% of Jefferson County residents cited lack of technology for virtual appointments as a barrier to care.

Greatest Barriers to Care

1. **Wait times for appointments:** This is the most significant barrier, with 46% of residents reporting that wait times "almost always" or "many times" prevented them from seeking care. This has dramatically increased by 23 points since 2018.
2. **Cost or expense of care:** 39% of residents cite cost as preventing them from seeking care "almost always" or "many times" - an increase of 12 points since 2018.
3. **Time away from work:** 23% of residents say this prevents them from getting care "many times" or "always" - a 15-point increase since 2018. This is especially difficult for women (27%) and residents with young children (39%).
4. **Lack of insurance:** 18% of residents cite this as a barrier to care (a 6-point increase since 2018), with Jefferson County residents (26%) more likely to report this as a barrier compared to other counties in the region.
5. **Location of services:** 16% of residents cite the location of where they need to go as a barrier to care, with Jefferson County residents (24%) more likely to report this issue.
6. **Transportation:** 10% of residents report transportation as a barrier, with Jefferson County residents (11%) slightly more likely to experience this issue.
7. **Technology for virtual appointments:** While telemedicine has increased access for some, 18% of Jefferson County residents cite lack of technology for virtual appointments as a barrier.

The Unique Needs of the Community

1. **Demographics:** Jefferson County has a higher proportion of residents under the age of 18 (23.3%) compared to neighboring Crook and Deschutes counties (19.8%). It also has a more diverse population, with 18.5% American Indian or Alaskan Native residents and 20.4% Hispanic or Latino residents.
2. **Economic challenges:** With a median household income of \$55,844 (in 2020), Jefferson County has lower income levels than neighboring Deschutes County (\$68,937) and Crook County (\$59,000).
3. **Health outcomes:** Jefferson County is ranked 34th out of 35 Oregon counties for health outcomes according to the 2022 County Health Rankings, indicating significant health challenges compared to other areas.
4. **Life expectancy:** The life expectancy at birth for Jefferson County is 76 years, notably lower than Deschutes (81.7 years) and Crook counties (79.3 years).
5. **Mental health and substance abuse:** Jefferson County residents were more likely than residents of other counties to identify mental health and substance abuse programs (23%) as the way to most improve community health, on par with affordable housing (22%).
6. **Community priorities:** When asked what would improve their overall quality of life, Jefferson County residents specifically identified:
 - Affordable housing (22%)
 - Living wage jobs (12%)
 - Affordable healthy food (11%)
7. **Health care barriers:** Jefferson County residents face unique barriers including:
 - Higher rates of uninsured residents (26% cite lack of insurance as a barrier)
 - Greater challenges with location of services (24%)
 - Transportation difficulties (11%)
 - Lower overall satisfaction with health care (72%)
8. **Top-rated health issues:** Residents specifically identified:
 - Affordable access to health insurance

- Chronic pain
- Diabetes/other conditions

What the Hospital or CCO is Doing Well

1. Jefferson County moved up four counties in health factors since the 2019 CHNA, indicating that "the work community partners is doing is working and will continue to take time to affect the health outcomes."
2. St. Charles Madras provided more than \$6,072,976 in community benefit to the population it serves in 2021, including charity care, unreimbursed costs of Medicaid and other public programs, and community benefit activities.
3. The health insurance coverage rate remains high at 88% for Jefferson County, which suggests some success in helping residents obtain coverage.
4. The adoption of telemedicine, with 54% of regional residents having attended a telemedicine visit in the last two years.

Strengths of the Community

1. **Community engagement:** The fact that residents participated in surveys and provided input for the needs assessment demonstrates community engagement in health issues.
2. **Strong collaborative network:** The report mentions numerous community organizations and resources working together, showing a robust network of support. Appendix III lists many potential community resources across different health needs, indicating strong community infrastructure.
3. **High health insurance coverage:** Despite economic challenges, 88% of Jefferson County residents have health insurance, which is a relatively high percentage and suggests successful enrollment efforts.
4. **Education achievement:** The high school graduation rate in Jefferson County is 88.3% (2021), which is a positive educational indicator.
5. **Telemedicine adoption:** The community has shown adaptability with 54% of regional residents having used telemedicine in the past two years.
6. **Cultural diversity:** The community has significant diversity with 18.5% American Indian or Alaskan Native residents and 20.4% Hispanic or Latino residents, which can contribute to cultural richness and varied perspectives.
7. **Established health partnerships:** The Central Oregon Health Council and its collaborative approach with St. Charles Health System shows a strength in regional partnership to address health issues.
8. **Improving health factors:** The report notes that Jefferson County moved up four places in health factors since the 2019 CHNA, suggesting positive momentum in addressing some community health issues.
9. **Community satisfaction:** Despite challenges, 89% of Jefferson County residents report positive quality of life satisfaction, indicating resilience and community attachment.

Priorities

1. Behavioral Health: Increase Access and Coordination
2. Substance and Alcohol Misuse Prevention and Treatment
3. Stable Housing and Supports
4. Address Poverty and Enhance Self Sufficiency
5. Upstream Prevention: Promotion of Individual Well-Being
6. Promote Enhanced Physical Health Across Communities