

Executive Summary

Key Health Issues Identified:

- Access to Health Care Services: Challenges with outmigration for specialty care and limited local options.
- Mental Health: High suicide rates and concerns about access to mental health services.
- Substance Abuse: Identified as a major concern by community stakeholders.
- Nutrition, Physical Activity & Weight: High rates of overweight adults and limited access to affordable healthy foods/exercise options.
- Chronic Diseases: Heart disease and cancer are leading causes of death. Higher rates of high blood pressure compared to state/national benchmarks.
- Tobacco Use: Identified as an ongoing health concern by stakeholders.
- Injury & Violence: High rates of unintentional injury deaths, including falls among older adults.
- Social Determinants of Health: Challenges with affordable housing and child care access.

Community Input:

The assessment incorporated input from community stakeholders and residents through surveys and interviews. Mental health, COVID-19, substance abuse, and nutrition/physical activity were identified as top priorities.

Implementation Strategy:

Wallowa Memorial Hospital will use these findings to develop an implementation strategy to address significant health needs over the next three years. This will build on previous efforts around lifestyle factors, injury prevention, preventable hospitalizations, immunizations, and tobacco cessation.

The assessment provides a comprehensive overview of health issues and community needs to guide health improvement efforts in Wallowa County in the coming years.

Biggest Gaps in Service

1. Specialty care: Many residents have to travel outside the county for specialized medical services.
2. Mental health services: There's a shortage of mental health providers and limited access to services.
3. Substance abuse treatment: Limited local options for addiction treatment and rehabilitation.
4. Dental care: Limited access to affordable dental care, especially for those on Medicaid.
5. Hospice services: Identified as lacking in the community.

6. Geriatric and memory care: Limited facilities and services for the aging population, especially those with dementia.

7. Pediatric services: Limited specialized care options for children.

Greatest Barriers to Care

1. Cost: High costs of healthcare and inadequate insurance coverage.

2. Transportation: Difficulty accessing care due to long distances and lack of transportation options.

3. Provider shortages: Limited availability of healthcare providers, especially specialists.

4. Appointment availability: Difficulty getting timely appointments with healthcare providers.

5. Lack of awareness: Limited knowledge about available health services and resources.

6. Cultural/language barriers: Some residents face challenges due to cultural differences or language barriers.

7. Inconvenient office hours: Healthcare facilities' operating hours may not accommodate all residents' schedules.

8. Stigma: Particularly for mental health and substance abuse services.

9. Childcare: Lack of childcare options can make it difficult for parents to attend medical appointments.

The Unique Needs of the Community

1. Rural healthcare access: Addressing challenges of providing comprehensive healthcare in a remote, rural setting.

2. Aging population services: Meeting the growing needs of an older-than-average population.

3. Mental health support: Improving access to mental health services, particularly given high suicide rates.

4. Substance abuse treatment: Expanding local options for addiction services.

5. Affordable healthy food access: Improving availability of nutritious food options.

6. Year-round exercise facilities: Providing indoor exercise options for the long winter months.

7. Tobacco cessation programs: Addressing higher-than-average tobacco use rates.

8. Injury prevention: Focusing on reducing high rates of unintentional injuries, especially among older adults.

9. Affordable housing: Addressing housing insecurity issues.
10. Childcare services: Improving access to affordable childcare options.
11. Cultural competency: Enhancing services for diverse populations, including LGBTQIA+ and racial/ethnic minorities.

What the Hospital or CCO is Doing Well

1. Community Investment: They have invested over \$3,500,000 in community benefit and more than \$300,000 in charity care and financial assistance programs over the past three years.
2. Cardiac Wellness: They implemented a Cardiac Wellness Program, which approximately 50 patients have successfully completed.
3. Physical Activity Promotion: They installed a 0.5-mile walking path around the Wallowa Memorial Hospital campus, which is widely used by community members of all ages.
4. Care Management: They started a Readmission Reduction Program with a continuous improvement process in place, involving patients and families.
5. Tobacco Cessation: They made the hospital campus tobacco-free, trained a Tobacco Cessation Specialist, and offer community tobacco cessation classes and individual coaching.
6. Immunizations: They conducted county-wide flu vaccine clinics, including in outlying areas.
7. Antimicrobial Stewardship: They implemented a program to improve prescribing practices for pneumonia.
8. Collaboration: They have partnered with various local organizations to address community health needs.
9. Primary Care Education: They've worked to educate the public on Patient Centered Primary Care Homes.
10. Responsiveness: They have made efforts to address the significant health needs identified in their previous Community Health Needs Assessment.

Strengths of the Community

1. Community engagement: There seems to be active participation from community members and stakeholders in health initiatives and surveys.
2. Collaborative spirit: The report mentions numerous partnerships between local organizations to address health needs.
3. Natural environment: The area likely has outdoor recreational opportunities, given mentions of hiking and exploring.

4. Rural character: While presenting challenges, the rural nature of the community is also an asset for many.

5. Committed healthcare providers: Despite shortages, there are dedicated local healthcare professionals working to improve community health.

6. Awareness of health issues: The community seems aware of its health challenges and is working to address them.

7. Strong primary care base: There's emphasis on patient-centered primary care homes.

8. Local food initiatives: Mentions of farmers markets and community garden efforts suggest a focus on local, healthy food options.

Priorities

1. Mental Health
2. COVID-19 / Respiratory Disease
3. Substance Abuse
4. Nutrition, Physical Activity & Weight
5. Tobacco Use
6. Potentially Disabling Conditions
7. Oral Health
8. Diabetes
9. Heart Disease & Stroke
10. Cancer
11. Injury & Violence
12. Access to Health Care Services