

Executive Summary

This Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was conducted collaboratively by Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center, Samaritan Albany General Hospital, Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital, Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital, and Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital to identify significant health needs in Benton, Linn, and Lincoln Counties.

Assessment Process

The assessment used both quantitative and qualitative methods, including analysis of secondary data from public health sources, community health surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews with community stakeholders. The process engaged diverse community members and organizations to ensure comprehensive input.

Key Findings

The assessment identified several priority health needs across the three-county region: Mental health and substance use disorders emerged as top concerns, with limited access to behavioral health services, long wait times, and insufficient providers. Housing instability and homelessness were identified as critical social determinants affecting health outcomes. Access to health care services, particularly for low-income and rural populations, remains challenging due to provider shortages, transportation barriers, and insurance gaps. Chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, and obesity continue to affect community health. Oral health access is limited, especially for adults on Medicaid and uninsured individuals.

Community Assets

The region benefits from strong collaboration among health care providers, public health departments, and community organizations. Samaritan Health Services operates multiple hospitals and clinics across the region, providing comprehensive care. Community resources include social service agencies, food banks, housing assistance programs, and transportation services that support vulnerable populations.

Next Steps

Based on these findings, participating hospitals will develop implementation strategies to address prioritized health needs in collaboration with community partners. The assessment will guide strategic planning and resource allocation to improve community health over the next three years.

Biggest Gaps in Service and Barriers to Care

Behavioral Health Services

The most significant gap is in mental health and substance use disorder services. The region faces severe shortages of behavioral health providers, with wait times ranging from weeks to months for appointments. Limited inpatient psychiatric beds and crisis stabilization services force many individuals to seek care outside the region or go without treatment.

Primary and Specialty Care Access

Provider shortages exist across primary care, dental care, and specialty services, particularly in rural areas. Long wait times for appointments and limited clinic hours restrict access. Many providers do not accept Medicaid or Medicare patients, creating barriers for low-income individuals.

Transportation

Transportation is a major barrier, especially in rural Lincoln County and outlying areas of Benton and Linn Counties. Limited public transit options, long distances to providers, and unreliable transportation services prevent many residents from accessing health care appointments.

Insurance and Affordability

High costs of health care, insurance premiums, deductibles, and copayments create financial barriers. Many residents are underinsured or uninsured. Confusion about insurance coverage and eligibility for assistance programs further limits access.

Social Determinants

Housing instability and homelessness significantly impact health care access and utilization. Lack of affordable housing forces individuals to prioritize basic needs over health care. Food insecurity, poverty, and limited social support networks compound health care access challenges.

Oral Health Care

Dental care access is severely limited, particularly for adults on Medicaid and uninsured individuals. Few dentists accept Medicaid, and high out-of-pocket costs prevent many from receiving necessary dental treatment.

The Unique Needs of the Community

Behavioral Health Crisis Services

The community needs expanded crisis intervention services, including mobile crisis teams, crisis stabilization beds, and 24/7 access to mental health support. There is demand for integrated behavioral health services within primary care settings and increased substance use disorder treatment capacity.

Affordable Housing

Critical need exists for affordable housing options across all three counties, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing for individuals experiencing homelessness. Housing assistance programs and rental subsidies are needed to prevent homelessness.

Transportation Solutions

Rural areas require expanded public transportation options, particularly for medical appointments. The community needs affordable, reliable transportation services that connect outlying areas to health care facilities and social services.

Care Coordination and Navigation

Residents need assistance navigating complex health care and social service systems. Community health workers, care coordinators, and centralized resource directories would help connect individuals to appropriate services and support.

Provider Workforce Development

The region needs to recruit and retain health care providers, particularly behavioral health specialists, primary care physicians, dentists, and specialists willing to serve Medicaid patients. Provider training in trauma-informed care and cultural competency is also needed.

Prevention and Education Programs

The community requires expanded health education focused on chronic disease prevention, diabetes management, nutrition, and physical activity. Youth-focused programs addressing substance use prevention, mental health awareness, and healthy behaviors are priorities.

Culturally Responsive Services

Services need to be accessible and culturally appropriate for diverse populations, including Latino/Hispanic communities, elderly residents, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Language interpretation services and culturally tailored health programs are needed.

Integrated Service Delivery

The community needs better integration between health care, behavioral health, housing, and social services to address interconnected needs holistically rather than in isolation.

Strengths of the Community

Samaritan Health Services Network

Samaritan Health Services operates five hospitals across the region (Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center, Samaritan Albany General Hospital, Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital, Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital, and Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital) along with numerous clinics and specialty services, providing comprehensive health care access throughout Benton, Linn, and Lincoln Counties.

Collaborative Partnerships

Strong collaboration exists among health care providers, public health departments, community organizations, and social service agencies. Organizations work together on community health initiatives, share resources, and coordinate care for vulnerable populations.

Public Health Infrastructure

Benton, Linn, and Lincoln County Health Departments provide essential services including immunizations, disease prevention programs, health education, environmental health services, and maternal-child health programs. These departments serve as key resources for community health improvement.

Community-Based Organizations

Numerous nonprofit organizations and social service agencies provide housing assistance, food banks, transportation services, substance use treatment, mental health counseling, and support for vulnerable populations. These organizations fill critical gaps in the social safety net.

Educational Institutions

Oregon State University in Corvallis and Linn-Benton Community College provide educational resources, research capacity, workforce development, and community outreach programs that support health and wellness initiatives.

Engaged Community Members

Residents demonstrate commitment to improving community health through participation in assessment activities, volunteer efforts, and advocacy for needed services. Community members actively engage in identifying priorities and developing solutions.

Health Care Quality

Samaritan Health Services maintains high-quality clinical care with patient safety focus, evidence-based practices, and continuous quality improvement efforts across all facilities.