



COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (CHNA)

VERNON MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE 2024

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507 SOUTH MAIN STREET, VIROQUA, WI 54664



## COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (CHNA)

Vernon Memorial Healthcare (VMH) will engage key community partners in implementing evidence-based strategies across our service area to address the needs identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). Recognizing the many organizations and resources in place to meet the health needs of our communities, VMH has strategically reviewed both internal and external resources.

This portion of the CHNA, the Implementation Plan, will explain how VMH will address health needs identified in the CHNA by continuing existing programs and services and by implementing new strategies. It will also explain why VMH cannot address all the needs identified in the CHNA, and if applicable, how VMH will support other organizations in doing so.

The 2024 Compass Now report is an assessment of needs in the five-county Great Rivers Region. Vernon Memorial Healthcare partnered with other area healthcare organizations, county health departments, and United Way in gathering information via random household surveys, focus group discussions, and an analysis of key socio-economic indicators.

The implementation plan outlines the problems, strategies, activities, and outcomes for health needs identified in the CHNA. Many of the strategies and activities outlined address risk factors associated with multiple health problems. For example, strategies to promote healthy eating and physical activity will affect obesity as well as heart disease.

These strategies also might have a positive impact on mental health, as will strategies to reduce substance abuse. The strategies and activities outlined here will be implemented in coordination with county health departments, local school districts, and other local agencies and organizations.

**\*\*Key Health Issues/Needs Identified in CHNA 2024\*\* - Mental Health - Social & Economic Issues - Healthcare Access**

# MENTAL HEALTH

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## HEALTH ISSUE | NEED

Per the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, 43% of survey respondents in Vernon County reported being very concerned about mental health, and 31% expressed significant concern about mental health stigma. This highlights the need for initiatives in Vernon County that address both mental health services and the reduction of stigma in the community.

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## STRATEGY

Vernon Memorial Healthcare is committed to reducing mental health stigma in the community by providing additional resources and education to staff members and employees. This effort aims to normalize mental health care by integrating waiting rooms and providing services in primary care clinics.

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## ACTION PLAN

Vernon Memorial Healthcare is committed to enhancing behavioral health services in the community by expanding its staff with three new providers in 2023 and 1 additional provider in 2024. This expansion aims to improve access and stigma around mental health care within the community. This is supported through Integrating waiting rooms and providing mental health services in primary care clinics to normalize mental health care. Furthermore, Vernon Memorial Healthcare will launch public health campaigns to increase awareness about mental health and the available services, ensuring that the community is well-informed and supported.

Initiatives to reduce mental health stigma include:

- Conducting public awareness campaigns to educate the community about mental health and available resources.
- Establishing a club for elderly women to mitigate loneliness and foster connections within the community.
- Emphasizing mental health education during May Mental Health Month.
- Training staff on mental health stigma, focusing on how to support family, friends, and coworkers.

# SOCIAL & ECONOMIC ISSUES

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## HEALTH ISSUE | NEED

Per the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, Vernon County faces significant challenges related to food access and economic stability. With an estimated 1,643 households living at or below the poverty line, representing 14% of all households, and 3,125 ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households struggling to afford basic necessities, the community is in dire need of support. The assessment revealed that 18% of residents rate their access to healthy food as poor or fair, while 25% struggle to pay for healthy food. Alarming, 5% reported that their food supplies often did not last, and they lacked money to buy more. Additionally, concerns about economic issues are prevalent, with 67% of residents worried about poverty, 57% about hunger, and 76% dissatisfied with efforts to reduce poverty. The assessment underscores the urgent need for comprehensive community support to address food insecurity and improve economic stability for vulnerable households.

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## STRATEGY

To effectively address the significant challenges related to food access and economic stability identified in the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment across Vernon County, Vernon Memorial Healthcare will implement a comprehensive strategy. This strategy will encompass various initiatives, including organizing quarterly food drives, distributing patient packets containing hunger resources to improve awareness and access, and collaborating with community partners to enhance food access points. Additionally, we will prioritize assisting patients in accessing financial assistance programs to alleviate economic strain and ensure equitable access to essential resources.

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## ACTION PLAN

To address the significant needs identified in the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, Vernon Memorial Healthcare will implement an action plan to improve food access and support households with low incomes. The plan includes the following efforts:

- Organizing quarterly food drives to gather donations for local food banks.
- Providing patient packets with resources on hunger and strategies to overcome barriers to accessing food and other area resources on overstock groceries resources.
- Collaborating with community partners to expand resources such as community gardens and food access points, including partnerships with farmers markets, community gardens, and overstock grocery programs like Ruby's Pantry.
- Conducting internal education on diversity training and social conditions to better support vulnerable populations.
- Assisting patients in planning and educating them about available financial assistance programs, ensuring streamlined and accessible application processes.

# HEALTHCARE ACCESS

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## HEALTH ISSUE | NEED

According to the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, in 2020, 71% of respondents had a mammogram within the past 2 years, 82% underwent cervical cancer screening, and 59% received colorectal screening. However, 22% of respondents in Vernon County reported difficulty scheduling appointments at convenient times.

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## STRATEGY

In response to the identified challenge of difficulty scheduling appointments, Vernon Memorial Healthcare is committed to implementing a proactive strategy. This comprehensive approach will involve closely monitoring Press-Ganey NarrativeDx trends related to scheduling delays. Alongside, we will launch an extensive community education campaign to emphasize the importance of timely access to healthcare services and help educate and inform patients on the use of MyChart to reduce barriers and scheduling difficulties. By taking these steps, we aim to empower our community with the knowledge needed to navigate healthcare efficiently and ensure equitable access to essential healthcare resources.

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## ACTION PLAN

To effectively address the challenge of improving health screening participation and awareness within the community, Vernon Memorial Healthcare will implement an action plan aimed at promoting preventive screenings and enhancing access to healthcare resources helping to ensure timely and proactive scheduling of screenings.

The plan includes the following initiatives:

- Developing and launching public awareness campaigns highlighting the importance of preventive screenings and promoting community participation.
- Educating community members on how to sign up and utilize MyChart for screening notifications and reminders.
- Launching dedicated colorectal cancer campaigns in March, cervical cancer in January and breast cancer in October to increase awareness and encourage screenings.
- Educating community members on technology for breast cancer screenings innovations.
- Ensuring accessibility and availability of cervical cancer screening services.
- Conducting employee education sessions to underscore the importance of screenings and empower staff to advocate for screening awareness.
- Utilizing technology to streamline screening processes and optimize reminders for improved efficiency.
- Continue to educate and inform patients on financial assistance programs to help reduce barriers to financial impact for preventative screenings.