Walworth County Health Needs Assessment

A summary of key informant interviews

2014

Prepared by:

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Introduction

This report presents a summary of public health priorities for Walworth County as identified in 2014 by a range of providers, policy-makers, and other local experts and community members (“key informants”). These findings are a critical supplement to the Walworth County Community Health Survey conducted through Aurora Health Care. The Walworth County Community Health Survey incorporates input from persons representing the broad interests of the community served, and from those who possess special knowledge of or expertise in public health.

Key informants in Walworth County were identified by the Aurora Health Care. Aurora Health Care invited the informants to participate, and conducted the interviews from June-July 2014. The interviewers used a standard interview script that included the following elements:

- Ranking of up to five public health issues, based on the focus areas presented in Wisconsin’s State Health Plan, that are the most important issues for the County; and

- For those five public health issues:
  - Existing strategies to address the issue
  - Barriers/challenges to addressing the issue
  - Additional strategies needed
  - Key groups in the community that hospitals should partner with to improve community health

All informants were made aware that participation was voluntary and that responses would be shared with the Center for Urban Population Health for analysis and reporting. Based on the information provided to the Center for Urban Population Health, this report presents the results of the 2014 key informant interviews for Walworth County.

The report first presents a summary of the health issue rankings, including a list of the five issues which were ranked most frequently by respondents. The next section describes the themes that presented themselves across the top ranked health topics. Finally, a summary of the strategies, barriers, and partners described by participants is provided as well.

Limitations: Sixteen key informant interviews were conducted in Walworth County. The report relies on the opinions and experiences of a limited number of experts identified as having the community’s pulse. However, responses may not be representative of the overall perception of community strengths and needs. It is possible that the results would have been substantially different if a different set of informants had been interviewed. Results should be interpreted with caution and in conjunction with other Walworth County data (e.g., community health surveys and secondary data reports).
A. Focus Area Ranking

A total of 16 key informants were asked to rank up to five of the major health-related issues in their county from a list of 13 focus areas identified in the State Health Plan. (See Appendix A for the full list of informants). The table below presents the results, including a summary of the number of times an issue was mentioned as a top five health issue and the number of times an informant ranked the issue as the most important health issue. Importantly, not every informant ranked five issues (some key informants identified three or four issues).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th># Key Informants Ranking Issue Among Top 5 Health Issues</th>
<th># Key Informants Who Ranked Health Issue as the Top (#1) Priority</th>
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<td>Alcohol and Drug</td>
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<td>Access</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury and Violence</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Top Five Health Issues

The five health issues ranked most consistently as a top five health issue for the County were:

1. Mental Health
2. Tie- Alcohol and Drug
   Chronic Disease
3. Oral Health
4. Access
5. 

Summaries of themes for each issue are presented below in the order listed in the table above. As a guide, issues ranked as the top five priorities for the County are marked with this thermometer symbol:
C. General Themes

It is important to note that since the last release of this report in 2012, there has been a shift in the highest ranking health issues. Alcohol and Drug, Chronic Disease and Mental Health were all identified as top health issues in both 2012 and 2014. Physical Activity and Injury and Violence, however, were no longer ranked within the top five health issues in 2014, and were instead replaced with Access and Oral Health.

Overall, many prevention efforts were frequently noted as missing or in need of additional resources. Lack of awareness and education for both lay community members and health care providers was commonly cited as a barrier. Relatedly, many informants cited that practitioners/providers and the public did not have adequate knowledge of the resources that are currently available. While there are new collaborations in the County, more interagency collaboration is needed to adequately disseminate knowledge of resources and to efficaciously utilize the services available. Although there are preventative strategies and efforts throughout the county, overall, resources are deficient and many informants contend that this is a result of a lack of funding. This lack of resources has manifested in a lack of adequately trained staff to meet the demand of services, especially in regard to vulnerable populations and an increasingly culturally diverse population.

One common theme across many issues, including Oral Health, Access, Chronic Disease and Mental Health is a lack of routine care. Many informants noted that community members lacked Primary Care Physicians and Dentists. The absence of routine care is amplified by high deductibles, limited providers accepting Medicare/Medicaid (due to insurance reimbursement policies), lack of training to meet the needs of diverse populations, lack of public knowledge regarding Marketplace health care, the lack of Wisconsin Medicaid expansion and substantial travel distances to care and treatment facilities.

Despite the aforementioned barriers, a wide variety of organizations are working diligently to address many health concerns in Walworth County, including the top ranked issues. Respondents noted a number of key assets in the community, including non-profit agencies, Walworth County Health and Human Services programming and faith-based organizations. For several issues, school-based programming seems to provide needed services and interventions. In Walworth County, many emergent and ongoing partnerships have been forged to address targeted needs.
D. Issue Summaries

Alcohol and Drug

Seven key informants included Alcohol and Drug abuse as a top five health issue.

Existing Strategies: Law enforcement and the Department of Health Services are cited by respondents as key strategies that are utilized in Walworth County. Additionally, several informants indicated that Walworth County Health and Human Services has implemented successful gender-specific treatment services for women. Respondents indicated that there are several county-level judiciary interventions including drug courts and Second Chance, a partnership with local municipal courts to address Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) issues with teenagers. Several informants also cited detox facilities within hospitals, guided by medical doctors as a prominent strategy. One respondent noted that Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous (AA/NA) programing is available in the county. Another informant suggested that outpatient treatment services are available for “risky” drinking behaviors.

Barriers and Challenges: Lack of knowledge about existing services and a lack of coordination between service providers is a significant challenge in the county. Nearly all informants indicated that a lack of resources is a considerable barrier. Resources that are lacking in the county include: staff, adequate training and space in treatment facilities. In addition, one respondent pointed out that detox facilities are located an hour away. Another informant elaborated upon the barrier of insurance explaining that high deductibles and a lack of Medicaid expansion hinder AODA treatment. A statewide “culture of drinking” wherein a first offense Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) is a misdemeanor is posed as another challenge by one informant. Undiagnosed alcoholism, particularly among the elderly, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among veterans, behavioral medication and alcohol interactions were also cited as challenges.

Needed Strategies: Public outreach and community education were frequently suggested as potential strategies to mitigate Alcohol and Drug use within the county. Elevating community awareness of existing services is another useful strategy moving forward. In addition to this, coordination of services among providers is needed. In regard to the lack of resources, respondents suggested the county provide better training to staff, increase space available in treatment facilities and increase AODA screening.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: There are many potential partners and stakeholders that are key partners such as; law enforcement, the Department of Health and Human Services, emergency responders—Fire department, Emergency Department staff. Local hospitals, long-term care facilities and schools/universities are key collaborators. AODA support groups, mental health service, ADRC (Aging & Disability Resource Center) and the Veteran’s Administration (VA) are also
desirable partners. And finally, area legislators are needed in collaboration with the aforementioned partners.

**Chronic Disease**

Seven informants included Chronic Disease in their top health issues for the County.

*Existing Strategies:* The Affordable Care Act and other insurance-oriented changes have impacted county-wide chronic disease management and diagnosis; for example, free annual physicals, better chronic care management from both private and public insurance providers and increased agency funding beyond health care serve as impactful strategies. In addition, emergent partnerships between schools, businesses and senior agencies were cited as active strategies. Respondents frequently mentioned an increase in transportation services, particularly for mobility-impaired community members. One respondent indicated that targeting younger age groups, like the Baby Boomers particularly regarding Fibromyalgia and Rheumatoid arthritis has been an effective strategy. And finally, among the elderly, many chronic care issues are dealt with in Long-term care facilities, however, among broader age groups, chronic diseases are at times managed by use of the Emergency Department.

*Barriers and Challenges:* A significant barrier in chronic disease care and management is lack of a primary care physician. To add to this challenge, the scope of the problem is ‘overwhelming’; lack of funding and personnel and substantial patient non-compliance (due to lack of health literacy) serve as significant obstacles. The scope of available services is unknown to many long-term care providers that are treating and managing chronic disease. Respondents suggested that high deductibles and constraints from a lack of statewide Medicaid expansion also pose substantial barriers. And one informant stated that in regard to youth with chronic diseases (like asthma and other respiratory health issues), parents who smoke, mold in housing, and healthy birth issues serve as barriers.

*Needed Strategies:* Some respondents indicated that educational campaigns are needed in the county, one respondent specifically suggested public health billboard promotion. One informant suggested targeted youth age groups. Ongoing programs should continue according to many informants, however, one respondent noted that there is a need for increased access to care. Several informants suggested that more cross-site collaboration is needed in order to increase staff and personnel knowledge of available services and also to share information with more ease. In addition to this, one respondent suggested a county-wide wellness coalition to develop and implement interventions. Another respondent stated that more partnering agencies could work more collaboratively, which would help to diffuse the financial burdens.

*Key Community Partners to Improve Health:* Key partners include Walworth Human Services and Human Resources Association. Collaboration among public health practitioners, schools, businesses
and senior agencies is needed. Another key partner is VIP services (contractors for transportation services in the county). Hospital personnel, pediatricians and long-term care providers are also potential partners. And finally, one respondent suggested that lay community leaders are needed.

**Communicable Disease**

Two informants ranked Communicable Disease as a top health issue for Walworth County.

*Existing Strategies:* The utilization of an immunization registry was noted as one existing strategy. One respondent indicated that they were uncertain of current strategies beyond public health initiatives.

*Barriers and Challenges:* One barrier for the county is identifying patients for treatment. To add to this, there are a limited number of local public health department personnel and infection control medical doctors. One respondent cited the presence MRSA and C.Difficile in the county as a challenge.

*Needed Strategies:* Public health outreach is a needed strategy. Along with outreach, school nurses should be educated regarding communicable diseases. The county at large needs more knowledge about accessing information, county resources, and relevant contact personnel. Another strategic focal point is vaccinations.

*Key Community Partners to Improve Health:* Public health should forge a partnership with media and school nurses. The local public health department should collaborate with infection control nurses and specialists as well as long-term care providers.

**Environmental and Occupational**

Two informants ranked Environmental and Occupational Health as a top health issue for the County.

*Existing Strategies:* A significant asset in the county is a partnership between Geneva Lake Environmental Agency and Linn Sanitary District. In addition to this, the county has a public health water lab to test private wells. One respondent indicated that there are a variety of environmental health educational materials available in the county. As of late, signage to increase awareness of Lyme Disease and West Nile Virus has been apparent. There are ongoing initiatives targeting housing and employment concerns.

*Barriers and Challenges:* One barrier is a lack of knowledge regarding the scope and importance of environmental health. On a political level, one respondent noted that there is a lack of support from elected officials as well as a vocal, organized interest group opposed to expansion of environmental health services.
**Needed Strategies:** One strategy is mobilizing grass roots support of environmental concerns throughout the county. Another suggested strategy is educating the public regarding the importance and effects of environmental health. One respondent cited that more communication regarding vacant entry-level jobs is needed.

**Key Community Partners to Improve Health:** “Everyone” in the county is a key partner. One respondent specified that an Aurora Employment Team to raise awareness about job openings is needed.

**Growth and Development**

Growth and Development was not ranked as one of the top health related priorities for the County. Strategies, barriers and key partners were not described by any informants.

**Mental Health**

Thirteen respondents ranked Mental Health as a top health issue for the County.

**Existing Strategies:** There are many mental health services available in Walworth County currently and there is an ongoing county-wide needs assessment in order to further develop programs and interventions. In addition to this, use of education to promote awareness of the issue was cited as an existing strategy. Community members have access to crisis intervention services (like a 24-hour phone line through Health & Human Services), behavior counseling for more chronic conditions (like anxiety and depression) and AODA treatment services. A variety of services are available for geriatric patients in long-term care facilities. Individuals in Walworth County can access medications and hospitals when needed, and this access has been enhanced by increased linkage and coordination between providers. These strategies have been implemented and informed by Department of Health Services (DHS) and emergency department personnel.

**Barriers and Challenges:** Although there are many existing strategies in place, the barriers that exist within the County reduce their effectiveness. Firstly, nearly all respondents cited significant deficiencies related to resources, such as; an increase in number of patients and need, lack of training, lack of funding, lack of culturally-competent training, limited number of providers, lack of personnel to treat “complex” patient cases, and an overall lack of knowledge about the interactions between poverty, trauma and mental health. There is also an apparent lack of public knowledge about the services that are available and there is a lack of mental health knowledge among many parents in the community. An additional barrier to mental health treatment is that HIPAA laws preclude follow-up for many patients as a result of privacy policies. Relatedly, many individuals are unable to pursue continuous treatment or even diagnosis to begin with as a result of high deductibles and the lack of Medicaid expansion in the state of Wisconsin. Partnerships and
outreach are needed to further address the ongoing challenges of suicide prevention, cognitive screenings and patient non-compliance.

Needed Strategies: There are many strategies that can be used to augment ongoing efforts to address mental health in Walworth County. One such strategy is increasing education and outreach throughout the county; this includes enhancing knowledge of mental health issues and thereby decreasing stigmatization of mental illness among law-makers, Emergency Department staff, law enforcement, community members and the local press. An increase in funding would be helpful in addressing the concerns of inadequate staffing, lack of training and education among providers (particularly concerning low-income and youth populations), and a need for more counseling centers. Increasing communication among personnel in emergency departments is a strategy that can be used to increase awareness of services available for referrals and also perhaps to better communicate the knowledge of when and how to report cases. One respondent suggested that Walworth County is in need of a community-wide suicide prevention program.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Public health personnel and agencies should partner with churches, law enforcement and legislators. Schools, Head Start and Early Childhood Education facilities and UW Counseling Centers are potential partners particularly for addressing targeted age groups. Hospitals should partner with employer groups as well as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). And within hospitals, emergency department staff in particular is crucial to mental health partnerships and collaborations.

Nutrition

Three respondents included Nutrition as a top health issue for the County.

Existing Strategies: Many informants cited food banks and pantries as an existing strategy throughout the county. In addition to this, several agencies have ongoing fundraising efforts to contribute to food pantries and hunger awareness. One respondent indicated that free/reduced-rate school lunch programs also help address nutrition in the county. In addition to increasing access to food via pantries and school lunch, one respondent cited that one-on-one health counseling is available as well as lifestyle coaching.

Barriers and Challenges: The economic downturn has impacted many families and individuals, many respondents cited that the volume of need is difficult to meet as resources are limited. In addition to this, access to food pantries and banks is constrained because of limited hours of operation and because county regulations mandate that individuals prove their financial need (although this is not implemented in faith-based pantries). For children, access changes annually as school lunch programs are unavailable during summer months. Knowledge of nutrition is an additional challenge for many community members.
Needed Strategies: One strategy that could help to address the issues of access and volume is funding more food pantries across the county. One respondent indicated that individuals on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are vetted enough, thus should not be required to reestablish need at a food bank or pantry. Several respondents suggested that there is a need to establish stronger education regarding nutrition and health and a related need to develop cooking and shopping skills.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Walworth County Resource Center, food pantries, food stores and food services should forge partnerships. The Boys & Girls club, Head Start, county human services and local faith-based organizations are suggested key partners as well.

Oral Health

Six key informants included Oral Health as a top health issue for the County.

Existing Strategies: Respondents indicated that the Wisconsin Dental Association is an asset to the county. In addition to this, respondents cited that both the ‘Seal-A-Smile’ program and a Walworth County Health Services and school district initiative to educate families and students about oral health are impactful existing strategies. A low-cost dental clinic in Beloit (that emerged from a Beloit Community Center and Inspiration Ministries) has resulted in access to the clinic; however, two respondents suggested that the access is limited. One respondent specified that Beloit sends dental hygienists three times per year. While several respondents cited existing strategies in the county, one respondent suggested that there have been county efforts, but none have been successful.

Barriers and Challenges: A frequently cited barrier to oral health is insurance reimbursement policies. For individuals with MA/Badger Care, there is a lack of dental providers who are willing to serve them. In fact, one respondent cited that there is only one dentist in the county who accepts MA/Badger Care. The lack of routine dental care has led to Emergency Department utilization for many individuals. One respondent indicated that funding of oral health products (particularly in food pantries) is non-existent.

Needed Strategies: Many respondents suggested strategies in order to increase access to cleaning and routine dental services, such as; opening a clinic catering to low-income people, reforming insurance reimbursement policies, and training pediatricians to provide fluoride varnishes. Awareness and education were frequently cited by informants as needed strategies, several respondents suggested more uniform awareness campaigns. One informant suggested forming a county-wide dental coalition to develop and implement plans to increase oral health.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Hospitals should partner with Walworth County Health and Human Services, Dental Association, local public health, Head Start, APFV, Treehouse, and the
Lake Geneva Dental Clinic. Lastly, respondents indicated that legislators are crucial partners in order to target insurance reimbursement policies.

**Physical Activity**

Three key informants included Physical Activity as a top health issue for the County.

*Existing Strategies:* The County has recreational opportunities for physical activity along with programs from the wellness department. One respondent indicated that they were unaware of strategies beyond ‘Healthy Kids Club’.

*Barriers and Challenges:* Public knowledge and awareness are cited as challenges to increasing physical activity. Specific to youth, the time constraints as a result of school scheduling is cited as a challenge. One respondent suggested that an ‘online’ culture has resulted in lifestyle patterns that serve as a barrier to being physically active.

*Needed Strategies:* Public awareness was cited by both respondents as a needed strategy. One respondent specified that the existing communication strategies to promote the benefits of exercise should be improved.

*Key Community Partners to Improve Health:* Hospitals should be partnering with schools, child care providers, and public health.

**Reproductive and Sexual Health**

Two key informants included Reproductive and Sexual Health as a top health priority for the County.

*Existing Strategies:* Public Health programs to assess and treat STDs and provide access to birth control in Walworth County are ongoing. Specific programs like WIC and B SANE are cited as assets to sexual health strategies in the county.

*Barriers and Challenges:* Current challenges include lack of information and education to promote sexual health and prevent outcomes like teen pregnancy. In addition to these challenges, lack of adequate insurance coverage also poses as a threat to sexual health, particularly among out-of-state college students.

*Needed Strategies:* Informants suggest the continuation of current initiatives and linkages between programs and service providers.

*Key Community Partners to Improve Health:* Respondents indicated that key partners include Wisconsin Public Health, OB staff, SANE nurses and Emergency Department staff.
**Tobacco**

Tobacco was not ranked as one of the top health related priorities for the County. Strategies, barriers and key partners were not described by any informants.

**Access**

Access was ranked as a top five health issue by four key informants.

*Existing Strategies:* Informants indicated that transportation and affordability are being targeted by the county. Mental health and AODA treatment services are available in the county. One respondent indicated that while inadequate, in the case of a crisis, individuals can utilize the Emergency Department (however, law enforcement is involved at that point).

*Barriers and Challenges:* Many respondents noted that increased cost of health care is significant challenge; informants also cited that service providers rejecting Medicare/Medicaid patients and high deductibles contribute greatly to this issue. In addition to this, most undocumented individuals have no access to care because their citizenship status. Conversely, one informant suggested that there are many eligible individuals in the county who have not utilized marketplace health care for unknown reasons. Relatedly, one informant suggested that the county’s ‘cultural issues’ restrict access. Informants indicated that transportation is an issue for many community members, especially since distances to service providers are often substantial. Limited awareness and education regarding health care and services poses another barrier to access.

*Needed Strategies:* Walworth County has a transportation coordination committee, one respondent stated that this committee should continue to meet in order to provide better transportation county-wide. Several respondents intimatated that transportation strategies should be enhanced; one respondent specified that both transportation and clinics should cater more to long-term care and skilled living residents. Respondents suggested that education and knowledge campaigns, particularly at community events would prove to be an impactful strategy. More specifically, education regarding marketplace healthcare might also help address the people who do have insurance coverage. One informant suggested more education for Emergency Department staff. Informants also suggested strategizing to change reimbursement policies regarding Medicare/Medicaid would prove helpful. One informant stated that coordination of care is an unmet need in the county.

*Key Community Partners to Improve Health:* Hospitals should partner with local public health, the Office of Population Studies, County Health Services, and emergency care providers. The transportation coordination committee and ADRC Walworth are key players. Informants also
suggested the partnering of specific health care providers such as; Aurora Resource Nurses, Psychiatrists, Long-term Care staff, palliative Care Clinic, and Gerontologists.

**Injury and Violence**

Injury and Violence was ranked as a top five health issue by three key informants.

*Existing Strategies:* Informants revealed that several agencies such as; Association of Prevention of Family Violence (APFV), Treehouse, Alliance for Children, Children's Hospital, and Walworth County Health and Human services collaborate at a central site to independently address injury and Violence and develop an action plan. On respondent elaborated upon safety initiatives in the county including: The Safety Fair, Child Death Review Team, and the Highway Safety Commission. The informant cited car seat safety, safe sleep and shaken baby prevention campaigns as active strategies.

*Barriers and Challenges:* Specific to violence, respondents indicated that fear and secretiveness revolving around this issue is a substantial barrier. Informants also suggested that the county has limited safe space and that the community at large is unaware that the problem exists for families and individuals in the area. For both injury and violence, informants suggested that there is limited ongoing counseling and support available.

*Needed Strategies:* Informants suggested that there are many potential strategies to help address the barriers and challenges of injury and violence. Firstly, current resources should be utilized more efficiently and knowledge about existing resources needs to be disseminated widely. Relatedly, public education campaigns regarding these topics may help in prevention and treatment. Two specific areas cited for strategizing include suicide prevention and geriatric service. Informants also suggested that more counselors are needed county-wide. And while one informant stated that survivors of violence need additional protection, another informant suggested a system in the Emergency Department to identify victims.

*Key Community Partners to Improve Health:* APFV, Treehouse, law enforcement, Emergency Medical Services, ADRC, Child Advocacy Center, schools, Children’s Hospital, Walworth County Health and Human Services and Public Health Agencies and Personnel were cited as key partners.
## Appendix A

### Walworth County Key Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derek D’Auria</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Walworth County Economic Development Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janis Ellefsen</td>
<td>Health Officer</td>
<td>Walworth County Department of Health and Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Walsch</td>
<td>Public Health Supervisor</td>
<td>Walworth County Department of Health and Human Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Ennis</td>
<td>Lieutenant Emergency</td>
<td>Walworth County Sheriff Depart Enforcement Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>David J. Flatden, NREMT-P</td>
<td>EMS Coordinator</td>
<td>Aurora Lakeland Medical Center</td>
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<td>Lisa Furseth, MA</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Rock-Walworth Community Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sonia Hill</td>
<td>Crisis Intervention Supervisor</td>
<td>Walworth County Department of Health and Human Services</td>
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<td>Mariann Hunter</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>United Way of Walworth County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lori Muzatko</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Aging &amp; Disability Resource Center</td>
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<td>Sara Nicholas</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Open Arms Free Clinic</td>
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<td>Connie Robers</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Rock-Walworth Comprehensive Family Services Inc./Head Start &amp; Early Head Start</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Genthe</td>
<td>Child Development &amp; Health Assistant</td>
<td>Rock-Walworth Comprehensive Family Services Inc./Head Start &amp; Early Head Start</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eric Schmetter, RPh</td>
<td>Staff Pharmacist and Store Manager</td>
<td>The Pharmacy Station</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ann Simpson</td>
<td>Director of Nursing</td>
<td>Lakeland Health Care Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Swisher, RN, MS</td>
<td>Director of Health</td>
<td>University Health &amp; Counseling Services, UW-Whitewater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etty Wilberding, MA</td>
<td>Manager, Children &amp; Family Services, Inc.</td>
<td>Walworth County Department of Health and Human Services</td>
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† Denotes this individual’s position/organization represents low-income populations

†† Denotes this individual’s position/organization represents medically underserved populations

††† Denotes this individual’s position/organization represents minority populations