Brown County Health Needs Assessment

A summary of key informant interviews

2015

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Introduction

This report presents a summary of public health priorities for Brown County, as identified in 2015 by a range of providers, policy-makers, and other local experts and community members ("key informants"). This key informant report is conducted through Aurora Health Care. The Community Health Needs Assessment 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.

Aurora Health Care identified key informants in Brown County, invited the informants to participate, and conducted the interviews in August 2015. 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 summaries provided to the Center for Urban Population Health, this report presents the results of the 2015 key informant interviews for Brown 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: Only six key informants were interviewed in Brown County. The report relies on the opinions and experiences of a limited number of experts identified as having the community’s pulse. 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 Brown County data.
A. Focus Area Ranking

In five interviews, a total of six key informants were asked to rank up to 5 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, most key informants only ranked three issue areas.

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<th>Health Focus Area</th>
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B. Top Five Health Issues

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

1. Mental Health
2. Nutrition
3. Alcohol and Drug Use
4. Chronic Disease Prevention and Management
5. Physical Activity

Summaries of themes for each issue are presented below. As a guide, issues ranked as the top five priorities for the County are marked with this thermometer symbol:

C. General Themes

Overall, Brown County key informants focused on Behavioral Health issues—Alcohol and Drug Use and Mental Health—with a focus on increasing access to treatment and services and increasing coordination of resources and services in the county. Other priority areas included Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Chronic Disease Prevention and Management. Though these topics are related, there was little overlap in respondents’ discussions of existing strategies, barriers, and needed strategies within the county. For physical activity and nutrition, responses focused on the assets of the natural environment in Brown County: outdoor space, parks, and trails as sites of intervention to increase physical activity; and local farms, co-ops, and gardens as solutions to increasing access to healthy foods in the county.

Of note, key informants did not specifically include Access to Health Services as a top-five health focus area in the county, but issues of access did arise related to other health focus areas, such as Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Use, Chronic Disease Prevention and Management, and Oral Health. Though lack of providers and facilities are major challenges, key informants emphasized assets that exist in the county, including partnerships, collaborations, and learning from others as strategies to improve health.

Issue Summaries

Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Three key informants’ interview rankings included Alcohol and Other Drug Use as a top-five health issue. Their responses highlight the intersections of this issue with other key health issues, such as mental health and access to health services.
Existing Strategies: Data produced by the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), Brown County Human Services, United Way partnerships with mental health nonprofits that treat issues of alcohol and drug abuse, the Brown County Drug Task Force, many providers working independently, some screening at primary care appointments for adults, and the formation of an alcohol task force to begin community intervention work were named as strategies in place to address drug and alcohol use in the county.

Barriers and Challenges: Cultural acceptance of alcohol and drug use, lack of treatment services, and lack of access to treatment or services that do exist were identified as barriers to addressing this issue in the county. For example, key informants noted the lack of a detox facility, lack of a women’s residential center for treatment or detox, the fragmented nature of available services, difficulty navigating insurance, and lack of affordable transportation to access services or treatment.

Needed Strategies: More education, law enforcement to reduce drinking and driving, addressing substance abuse with treatment rather than punishment, getting the community involved, using a standardized screening tool and expanding screening to include youth, assessing levels of care and identifying gaps in care, and exploring a “no wrong door” approach were strategies recommended by key informants to address this issue.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Brown County Drug Task Force, hospital systems, American Foundation of Counseling Services, Inc. (AFCS), health departments, faith-based organizations, colleges, chambers of commerce, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), the Jackie Nitschke Center, law enforcement, the Human Services Department, the Department of Transportation, the VA, and the Aging and Disability Resource Center were named as key partners to engage in addressing this issue.

Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

Three informants included Chronic Disease among their top-five health issues for the county. One respondent noted this issue can be addressed with nutrition and physical activity, two of the other health focus areas. Other responses indicated there may be some overlap between chronic diseases and issues of access to health services.

Existing Strategies: Existing primary care, acute care, and general medical services; nurse coaches; fitness staff; free glucose tests; and the N.E.W. Community Clinic were named as services and strategies currently addressing chronic disease in the county.

Barriers and Challenges: Some barriers have to do with issues of access—lack of money to pay for health insurance or insurance deductibles and other barriers related to poverty. Other barriers named by key informants included the challenges of treating a condition that has been unmanaged
for a long period of time, the challenge of educating patients about disease without scaring or overwhelming them, and the short amount of time providers have to talk to patients in an appointment.

Needed Strategies: Key informants recommended patient education, better time management in health care appointments, breaking disease management into smaller pieces and prioritizing one thing at a time, and increasing the standard of living in the community overall as ways to support prevention and management of chronic disease in the county.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Key informants named health care providers, patients, and the N.E.W. Community Clinic as the key partners to be engaged in chronic disease prevention and management efforts in the county.

Communicable Disease Prevention and Control

Communicable Disease Prevention and Control was not ranked as a top health issue in Brown County. Existing strategies, barriers and challenges, strategies needed, and key partners were not provided for this issue.

Environmental and Occupational Health

Environmental and Occupational Health was not ranked as a top health issue in Brown County. Existing strategies, barriers and challenges, strategies needed, and key partners were not provided for this issue.

Healthy Growth and Development

Healthy Growth and Development was ranked as a top health issue by one respondent.

Existing Strategies: United Way's Community Partnership for Children was the only existing strategy named to address healthy growth and development in the county.

Barriers and Challenges: A lack of time and resources are the barriers to addressing this issue in the county.

Needed Strategies: Maximizing the resources, including volunteers, that do exist in the county to eliminate waste is one strategy needed to address this issue. Assessing what is working in other counties is another strategy needed to inform work to improve healthy growth and development in Brown County.
**Key Community Partners to Improve Health:** United Way’s Community Partnership for Children was the only partner named in the county.

**Mental Health**

Five respondents ranked Mental Health as a top health issue for the County, making it the top-ranked health priority area in Brown County. One informant specifically noted stress as a priority aspect of mental health. Key informants’ responses also intersected with issues of access to health services, another health focus area included in this report.

**Existing Strategies:** United Way’s partnership with Beyond Health as well as supporting three non-profits: American Foundation of Counseling, Counseling Clinic of Family Services/Crisis Center, and Catholic Charities’ mental health programs; employee assistance programs; therapists; new psychiatric residencies; social outlets for clients; law enforcement involvement; increase in depression and suicide outreach education; crisis centers; the suicide prevention coalition; the National Alliance on Mental Illness; Gathering Place; and stress reduction education and coaching are examples of strategies in place to address the mental health needs of the county.

**Barriers and Challenges:** Lack of access to services for clients who are un- or under-insured, lack of child psychiatrists and waiting lists for the psychiatrists who do treat children, lack of therapists, challenges of navigating of insurance coverage, limited availability of bilingual services, lack of transportation, stigma of mental illness, lack of care coordination, bullying, lack of integration of mental health and physical health services, lack of preventive education and services, and the presence of stressors in daily life are examples of barriers to addressing mental health in the county.

**Needed Strategies:** More coordination of treatment, community collaboration, reduction of stigma around mental illness, increased awareness of services and ease of access to services, creation of a behavioral health council to coordinate resources, compilation of an online listing of mental health services and community events, partnership with N.E.W. Mental Health Connection as a model to establish a similar platform in Brown County, and work with primary care providers to identify educational needs and strengthen primary care as an entry point for mental health treatment were strategies suggested for improving mental health in the county.

**Key Community Partners to Improve Health:** CHIP, schools, health departments, businesses, hospital systems, the VA, human services, colleges, providers of counseling services, FQHC, law enforcement, and United Way were named as key partners to engage to improve mental health in the county. One key informant noted the importance of “**partnering together to know different resources available.**"
**Nutrition**

Four respondents included Nutrition as a top health issue for the County. Key informants focused on access to healthy foods, locally-sourced foods, the role of the workplace in addressing nutrition and healthy eating, and changes at both the individual and structural levels.

*Existing Strategies:* Farm to school programs in eight school districts throughout Brown County, farmers market vouchers for low income residents on FoodShare, a food pantry initiative for healthier food pantry donations, the farm to table movement, SLO Farmers Co-op, UW-Extension nutrition education and community gardens, cooking demonstrations, community gardens, improved school lunch guidelines, and a nutrition coalition to organize community are strategies currently in place to address nutrition.

*Barriers and Challenges:* The cost of fresh produce, the convenience of packaged and low-nutrient foods, lack of knowledge about what is in food and how to eat healthy, lack of motivation, cultural norms that incorporate less healthy food choices, grocery store design and layout, lack of time to cook, and lack of knowledge about existing resources are current barriers to addressing nutrition across the county.

*Needed Strategies:* A local grocer (for healthy food access) in downtown Green Bay, healthier choices at convenience stores and gas stations, restaurant food labeling, healthier vending options, food coops and mobile markets, educating leadership on bringing healthy food options into work places, incorporating healthy food policies into food pantries, continuing messaging and awareness efforts of healthy food donations to pantries, and planting urban orchards are key informants’ recommendations for enhancing nutrition throughout the county.

*Key Community Partners to Improve Health:* Live 54218, UW-Extension, schools, restaurants, grocery stores, CHIP, organizations that provide direct services to the community, organizations that can convene partners, educators, colleges, the Aging and Disability Resource Center, health departments, the Women Infants and Children (WIC) Program, and United Way are key partners to improve the health of the county related to nutrition.

**Physical Activity**

Two key informants included Physical Activity as a top-five priority. Key informants responses emphasized the importance of partnerships and collaboration, and making use of outdoor spaces in the county.
**Existing Strategies:** Green Bay Active Communities Alliance and other municipal groups focusing on access to walking and biking, schools working to increase opportunities for physical activity throughout the day, Live 54218’s work to increase opportunities for physical activity throughout Brown County, partnerships between primary care physicians and City of Green Bay to “prescribe” physical activity, and community events such as walks and runs are examples of strategies in place to address physical activity.

**Barriers and Challenges:** Concerns about safety for walkers and bicyclists, lack of sidewalks and bike lanes, lack of time and other priorities, cost of membership at fitness facilities, and lack of public bikes were named as barriers to addressing physical activity.

**Needed Strategies:** Winter maintenance of outdoor paths and trails, more sidewalks, more sidewalks and bike lanes, even more opportunities for physical activity built into and around the school day, community space for residents, and more workplace fitness initiatives were strategies key informants recommended to improve physical activity in the county.

**Key Community Partners to Improve Health:** Live 54218; local municipalities’ planning, public works, and parks and recreation departments; schools; the Community Health Improvement Plan; workplaces; sponsors of community events; and a variety of organizations that connect and convene as well as those organizations that provide direct services to the community are needed to improve and increase physical activity in Brown County.

**Oral Health**

One key informant included Oral Health as a top health issue for the County. This informant’s responses highlighted the intersection of oral health with access to health services, another health focus area.

**Existing Strategies:** Dental services for the underserved provided by the N.E.W. Community Clinic, the Brown County Oral Health Partnership, and referral resources for the underserved that have been disseminated to providers are the strategies in place to improve oral health in the county.

**Barriers and Challenges:** Lack of transportation to services, the need for more education and prevention efforts, lack to access to after-hours care, and lack of education for primary care providers to increase their comfort conducting basic oral health screening are current barriers to addressing this issue.

**Needed Strategies:** Community-wide protocol for dental issues, increased capacity and hours of the N.E.W. Community Clinic Dental services, incorporating oral health into health curriculum and research projects, policy advocacy on Medicaid coverage for services like dental cleanings twice per year, and allowing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits to pay for oral hygiene supplies are strategies needed to address oral health in the county.
Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Hospital systems, the Brown County Oral Health Partnership, colleges and technical schools, health departments, United Way, the Aging and Disability Resource Center, and the Head Start Program were named as key partners to engage in improving oral health in Brown County.

Reproductive and Sexual Health
Reproductive and Sexual Health was not ranked as a top health issue in Brown County. Existing strategies, barriers and challenges, strategies needed, and key partners were not provided for this issue.

Tobacco Use and Exposure
Tobacco Use and Exposure was not ranked as a top health issue in Brown County. Existing strategies, barriers and challenges, strategies needed, and key partners were not provided for this issue.

Access to Health Services
Access to Health Services was not ranked as a top health issue in Brown County. Existing strategies, barriers and challenges, strategies needed, and key partners were not provided specifically for this issue. Access to health services was mentioned by several key informants in relation to other health focus areas for the county: Oral Health, Alcohol and Drug Use, Chronic Disease Prevention and Management, and Mental Health.

Injury and Violence
Injury and Violence was not ranked as a top health issue in Brown County. Existing strategies, barriers and challenges, strategies needed, and key partners were not provided for this issue.
### Brown County Key Informants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howard Endow</td>
<td>Community Impact Manager</td>
<td>Brown County United Way</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarah Inman</td>
<td>Vice President of Community Investment and Strategic Impact</td>
<td>Brown County United Way</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amy Kluska</td>
<td>Fitness Consultant/ Wellness Coach</td>
<td>UnitedHealth Group Wellness Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lauren Lindsley</td>
<td>Green Bay Health and Wellness Manager</td>
<td>Festival Foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melinda Morella</td>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td>Live 54218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrystal Woller</td>
<td>Health Director</td>
<td>City of De Pere Health Department</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