Winnebago County Health Needs Assessment

A summary of key informant interviews

2015

Prepared by:

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Introduction

This report presents a summary of public health priorities for Winnebago 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 a partnership between Affinity Health System; Aurora Health Care; Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin-Fox Valley; ThedaCare; and Health Departments of Appleton, Winnebago County, Menasha, Outagamie County, and Winnebago County. 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.

Key informants in Winnebago County were identified by the nine organizations listed above. ThedaCare, Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin-Fox Valley, Affinity Health System, Aurora Health Care, Winnebago County Department of Health and Human Services, and Winnebago County Health Department invited the informants to participate, and conducted the interviews in August and September 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 Winnebago 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: Thirty key informant interviews were conducted with 32 respondents in Winnebago County. Some interviews incorporated the views of more than one person from an agency or organization. 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 Winnebago County data.

A. Focus Area Ranking

In 30 interviews, a total of 32 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, not every informant ranked five issues, and some did not include an order ranking (e.g., included check marks, but no numbers). Those without an order ranking are included as being ranked in the top five, but are excluded from the top issue ranking.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Focus Area</th>
<th>Top 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communicable Disease Prevention and Control</td>
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</table>
B. Top Five Health Issues

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

1. Mental Health
2. Alcohol and Other Drug Use
3. Nutrition
4. Physical Activity
5. Healthy Growth and Development

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, Winnebago County key informants focused on Behavioral Health issues—Alcohol and Drug Use and Mental Health—with a focus on early education prevention, and addressing gaps in services and treatment for these issues. Other top health focus areas included Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Healthy Growth and Development. Within these three topics, key informants focused on obesity prevention and establishing healthy lifestyle behaviors. For all issues, key informants praised collaboration among community partners and called for expansions and continuation of partnerships to improve the health of the county. When asked about their impressions of the strengths of the community, key informants noted increased access to health services, information sharing, positive partnerships, and opportunities to be active outdoors as areas where the county has been very successful. One key informant noted:

“re:TH!NK of Winnebago County [is] one of the best collaborative efforts that is having success. There is a strong and growing local food/community garden initiative occurring in our county which promises to address the issue of access to healthy foods.”

Respondents also offered examples of areas where there are opportunities to grow and improve health. Key informants mentioned the need for the community to be more open about the issue of drug abuse, to encourage kids to make healthy choices early on, and the need for providers to make connections across sectors to ensure residents have access to the services and supports they need. This key informant summarizes the idea that the needs of some residents may not be met, even though services are present and collaborations have proven successful:

“There are some good collaborations in our area. There are things ‘in the works’ in our area. Momentum around some things, for example, the Weight of the Fox Valley, The Heroin Task Force, etc. There is also an abundance of health care services in our area. Folks have access to health services, but I am not sure if everyone’s health care needs are met.”
D. Issue Summaries

**Alcohol and Other Drug Use**

Nineteen key informants’ interview rankings included Alcohol and Other Drug Use as a top five health issue. Some key informants specifically responded to concerns about opiate addiction, drinking culture, and drinking and driving. Many responses focused on children and prevention efforts focused on children and teenagers. Another facet of the issue is the intersection with Access to Health Services — there are not enough treatment facilities or service providers and there are barriers to accessing those that do exist.

*Existing Strategies:* Law enforcement patrols and police stings, re:TH!NK, *Parents Who Host, Lose the Most* campaign, Party Zero, Heroin Task Force, OWI Task Force, Narcan to treat overdoses, STEP Industries employment and skills training for those in recovery, Morring House treatment, DARE in elementary schools, and alcohol and drug abuse covered in high school health curriculum are examples of services and strategies currently in place to address alcohol and drug use and addiction.

*Barriers and Challenges:* Drugs and alcohol are easy to access in the county, social acceptance of drug and alcohol use, alcohol is present at most community events, Pub Crawl in Oshkosh normalizes excessive drinking, lack of treatment and rehab facilities and high cost of treatment, the community isn’t convinced drug abuse is a problem that is happening here, stigma of admitting addiction, and DUI punishments that aren’t severe enough are examples of challenges to addressing these issues in the county.

*Needed Strategies:* Better communication about the impact of heroin, education and treatment for offenders, positive role modeling, parents modeling responsible behaviors for children, public awareness campaigns, support for families affected by addiction, services integrated into community centers, alcohol-free activities for adolescents and adults, and additional funding for treatment and programming are key informants’ recommendations to address alcohol and drug use in the county.

*Key Community Partners to Improve Health:* Parents, the State, hospitals, law enforcement, schools, media, community organizations, District Attorney, courts, employers, sports bars, churches, role models, health systems, public health departments, Heroin Task Force, public safety, first responders, shelters, Tavern League, and better integration among partners.

**Chronic Disease Prevention and Management**

Five informants included Chronic Disease among their top-five health issues for the County. Key informants specifically talked about congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease,
illness among frail elders, obesity, wellness, healthy lifestyles, prevention, the role of primary care, and the importance of consistent, culturally-appropriate messaging in chronic disease prevention and management.

**Existing Strategies:** Medical homes, call back programs following discharge from the emergency department, home health care, discharge planning teams, tobacco prevention programs, programming and education about physical activity and nutrition, Weight of the Fox Valley (WOTFV) initiative, Well Oshkosh and Well City Fox Cities, and corporate wellness and other healthy lifestyle programs were named as strategies in place to address chronic disease.

**Barriers and Challenges:** Key informants named these challenges in addressing chronic diseases: Aging Baby Boomers are facing more chronic diseases at this stage in their lives, lack of prevention education, effects of negative health behaviors may not be observed until later in life, behavior change is difficult and it is usually easier or more convenient to make less healthy choices, lack of education materials in Spanish or other non-English languages, many providers only speak English, lack of consistent messaging about chronic conditions like diabetes, lack of seamless continuum of care among health systems, lack of patient follow up, and too often there is a focus on reacting to a diagnosis rather than preventing disease.

**Needed Strategies:** More education about healthy eating and physical activity; support for a social and community environment that encourages healthy eating and physical activity; healthy eating campaigns; tobacco cessation campaigns; addressing health disparities related created by the built environment with regard to safety, opportunities for recreation, and access to healthy food choices for all people; a working agreement between the health systems and community clinics to provide consistent messages to patients about their conditions so there is less confusion; and awareness raising efforts about the importance of patient compliance are examples of strategies recommended to improve the county’s health related to chronic disease.

**Key Community Partners to Improve Health:** Health systems, health insurance companies, city councils, local government, public health departments, community organizations, clinics, hospital discharge planners, medical social workers, skilled nursing facilities, YMCA and other fitness clubs, and all residents of the county are needed to improve health in the county.

**Communicable Disease Prevention and Control**

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

Two informants ranked Environmental and Occupational Health as a top health issue for the County. Specifically these informants addressed lack of job training, employment opportunities, and resulting poverty, and general environmental issues.

Existing Strategies: Key informants named programs from the county health departments and the State, social programs that provide food and clothing, and other local partnerships to address these issues.

Barriers and Challenges: The key informants cited challenges at the individual and systems levels. Individuals who are out of work may feel hopeless in their economic situation and they may not be able to afford health insurance or access opportunities for job training. At the systems level, proposed corrective actions are costly or less expensive options cannot be considered because they don’t meet certain criteria.

Needed Strategies: Key informants suggested employment opportunities that pay a living wage, and getting decision makers and people on the ground involved together in decisions and actions would help the county overcome the identified challenges.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Schools (including higher education and technical diploma programs), municipalities, the county, the state, University of Wisconsin- Extension, and land and water conservation groups were identified as key partners needed to address these issues.

Healthy Growth and Development

Healthy Growth and Development was ranked as a top health issue by eight key informants. Key informants mainly focused on early childhood and family support. Responses featured elements of other health issues such as the importance of addressing physical activity, nutrition, cycles of violence, and access to services.

Existing Strategies: Services offered by child and family serving organizations, programs focused on getting kids moving, mandatory reporting of abuse and neglect, and cross-agency collaboration are strategies in place to support healthy growth and development.

Barriers and Challenges: Many children experience trauma in early childhood, lack of interventions and supports for children and families, lack of positive adult relationships, difficult to break cycles of abuse and neglect within families, services may be expensive or otherwise difficult to access for families who need them most.

Needed Strategies: Parents’ voices need to be included “at the table,” transportation to programs and appointments, engage families who are left out of programs and services, mentoring programs for families, facilitating stronger connections in neighborhoods, building more partnerships, schools
need to teach healthy eating and physical activity, offering additional early intervention options, educating the community on the impact of childhood trauma, in-home parent training, community centers open more often, and more free activities for families (especially low-income) are suggestions key informants offered to address healthy growth and development.

**Key Community Partners to Improve Health:** Many partners need to be engaged to address these issues, including: Neighborhoods, parents, schools, faith communities, Boys and Girls Club, parks and recreation departments, YMCAs, Early Childhood Coalition, Head Start, re:TH!NK, Weight of the Fox Valley, health care providers, business organizations and leaders, local government, Birth to 3, Family Training Program, Winnebago County Department of Human Services and Health Department, Catalpa Health, and wellness coordinators are all needed to address healthy growth and development in the county.

### Mental Health

Twenty-three respondents ranked Mental Health as a top health issue for the County, making it the top-ranked health priority area in Winnebago County.

**Existing Strategies:** Telepsych has just been installed at Aurora Medical Center Oshkosh, suicide prevention hotline, primary care providers referring to mental health, No Wrong Door, suicide prevention trainings, inpatient and outpatient services, Reach Counseling services, re: TH!NK program, Zero Suicide, Winnebago County Child Death Review team, and Community for Hope were named as existing strategies and partners in addressing mental health.

**Barriers and Challenges:** There aren’t enough providers of mental health services, services that exist can be hard to access in terms of payment and distance from facilities, stigma around mental illness, not enough support or services for kids, people don’t know where to go for help with mental illness, people’s lives are busy and stressful, and the lack of funding for advocacy for mental health were key challenges identified by respondents.

**Needed Strategies:** Increased funding for services; more providers; each county should have a mental health center; more support to get kids connected with resources; more services and screenings available at schools; stronger public health and community support; more supports and screenings in workplaces; address upstream factors like poverty, joblessness, and addiction; and focusing on recruitment and retention of providers in the mental health services workforce were suggestions offered to improve mental health in the county.

**Key Community Partners to Improve Health:** State and Federal funding mechanisms, insurance companies, Catalpa Health, Hope Hotline, North East Wisconsin (NEW) Mental Health Connection, schools, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Fox Valley, hospitals, health care providers,
workplaces, churches, social services organizations, community organizations, emergency departments, law enforcement, and child advocacy services are the partners who need to be engaged to improve mental health in the county.

**Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Healthy Lifestyle**

Though Physical Activity and Nutrition are separate health focus areas within the State Health Plan, key informants understood the interconnectedness of these issues, frequently ranking both issues or discussing them in tandem with regard to obesity prevention, wellness, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. For some respondents, nutrition also included addressing food insecurity, especially among children and seniors. Finally, key informants also mentioned physical activity and nutrition as strategies in other health issue rankings, including Chronic Disease Prevention and Healthy Growth and Development.

Eleven respondents included Nutrition as a top health issue for the County, and included Physical Activity as a top-five priority.

*Existing Strategies:* Local food movements, food banks’ services, Weight of the Fox Valley (WOTFV), physical activity classes and programs, farmers markets vouchers for SNAP participants, smart plate, community gardens, and farm to school programs were named as strategies already in place to address these issues.

*Barriers and Challenges:* Lack of time and money to make healthier choices, our climate is not conducive to being outdoors or growing healthy food year-round, denial that obesity is a problem, unhealthy meals offered at schools, and an overabundance of unhealthy low cost food options were important barriers noted by key informants.

*Needed Strategies:* Programs to reach seniors who are isolated or have trouble cooking, more free community garden plots, better use of outdoor space and facilities, more community nutrition education programs that start at younger ages, better promotion of WOTFV, better promotion of food banks, more partnerships with health care organizations, consistent messaging, standing desks in workplaces, workplace wellness policies and programs, insurance companies incentivizing physical activity and healthy lifestyles, and bringing a grocery store to downtown Oshkosh were suggestions key informants offered to address existing challenges in the county.

*Key Community Partners to Improve Health:* Early child care and education settings, any organization with a cafeteria, restaurants, YMCA and other fitness facilities, hospitals, health care systems, schools, social service agencies, community organizations, health departments at the city and county levels, Rotary Club, farmers markets, employers, local farmers, community supported agriculture, and food pantries were named as key partners to engage in efforts around physical activity and nutrition.
**Oral Health**

Two key informants included Oral Health as a top health issue for the County. Their responses highlight the intersections of Oral Health and lack of Access to Health Services.

*Existing Strategies:* The Tri County Dental program offers dental services to low income families in the area.

*Barriers and Challenges:* Underutilization of the mobile dental clinic; inappropriate utilization of the emergency department for dental care issues; the high cost of dental care; services in larger cities like Appleton are more difficult for people to access to live further away and do not have transportation; more dental services are needed throughout the county, not just in cities; existent dental programs focus on children, but there are not enough for adults; and Vicodin prescriptions for dental pain leading to prescription drug abuse are examples of barriers to oral health in the county.

*Needed Strategies:* Key informants suggested local dentists should volunteer once a month to provide dental services, and educating dentists and patients that emergency departments are not a venue for dental health care may be helpful to overcoming some of the named challenges.

*Key Community Partners to Improve Health:* Local dentists, emergency departments, and the Partnership Community Health Center dental clinic were named as key partners needed to improve oral health in the county.

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**Reproductive and Sexual Health**

One key informant included Reproductive and Sexual Health as a top health issue for the County, also ranking this as their top health focus area. This informant focused on youth and education.

*Existing Strategies:* Oshkosh schools’ human growth and development and sexuality education curricula go beyond abstinence.

*Barriers and Challenges:* Education on these topics in schools ends after 9th grade and doesn’t cover self-exams for breast or testicular cancer, and all students in the county do not receive the same messages.

*Needed Strategies:* Recommended strategies offered were to expand health classes past 9th grade, and provide education to all people via public service announcements.

*Key Community Partners to Improve Health:* Important community partners include Planned Parenthood, Bella Health Clinic, and local city and county public health.
**Tobacco Use and Exposure**

Three key informants included Tobacco Use and Exposure as a top health priority for the County.

**Existing Strategies:** School prevention programs, re:TH!NK outreach about the hazards of tobacco use, smoke free laws, FACT movement among youth, and CVS stores going tobacco free were named as key successes and strategies within this issue.

**Barriers and Challenges:** High school-aged students (age 18) being able to buy tobacco products, electronic cigarettes attracting very young users, marketing of tobacco products target youth, lack of funding locally to help with cessation efforts, and a lack of active cessation programming were identified as challenges to addressing tobacco use and exposure in the county.

**Needed Strategies:** More coordinated efforts between public health, health care, and the community to limit tobacco use and exposure; spreading the word about prevention and cessation in the community and more broadly with media and public service announcements; and more education in schools (health classes), specifically about tobacco were examples of strategies needed to address tobacco use and exposure.

**Key Community Partners to Improve Health:** Cities, schools and health teachers, parks departments, the FACT movement, re:TH!NK, and health care systems were identified as partners necessary in work to address these issues in the county.

**Access to Health Services**

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

**Existing Strategies:** The Affordable Care Act, the Living Healthy Clinic, employer sponsored health services, and improved access to care and mental health services are strategies in place to increase access.

**Barriers and Challenges:** People are not aware of services, legal constraints to access within correctional institutions, difficulty taking time off from work to care for a sick family member or go to an appointment due to employers not offering paid time off or any sick time at all, high insurance deductibles for services, lack of transportation to get to providers, and some providers’ lack of cultural sensitivity are all barriers to people accessing the health services they need.

**Needed Strategies:** Decoupling health insurance from employment, incentivizing preventive care, increasing transparency about costs and giving consumers more decision making power, increasing collaboration with state organizations, staffing urgent care facilities around the clock, and offering employees paid sick time are examples of strategies needed to address barriers to access.
Key Community Partners to Improve Health: This issue can be addressed with collaboration from corporations and the business community, policy makers, insurance companies, drug companies, school systems, and health care providers.

**Injury and Violence**

Injury and Violence was ranked as a top five health issue by seven key informants. Key informants specifically addressed domestic and intimate partner violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, injuries caused by guns, drug and alcohol related violence, and suicide.

**Existing Strategies:** Screening, education, services for survivors of violence and abuse, child death review teams, law enforcement’s work to reduce drug-related crime, hunter safety courses, the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program, coordinated community response teams, tri-county partnerships, and counseling services were named as examples of strategies and services in place to address injuries and violence in the county.

**Barriers and Challenges:** People don’t speak up when they see violence happening, shame and stigma around some kinds of violence and abuse, lack of understanding of sexual consent, culture that is permissive of rape and excessive drinking, professionals are not consistent in their responses, open carry laws, and a culture that embraces guns were all cited as examples of challenges in preventing violence and injuries.

**Needed Strategies:** Examples of how to appropriately express emotions like anger, more Reach advocates, more community outreach, multi-disciplinary team education approaches, examination of underlying causes of violence, making Huber center a treatment facility, more counselors and rehab programs (alternatives to jail and punitive approaches), more firearm safety courses, more support for parents, and more resources for emotional abuse are services and strategies needed to meet the needs of the county related to these health issues.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services, churches and faith communities, parent-teacher organizations, parent groups, the District Attorney’s office, law enforcement, Reach Counseling Services, social workers, correctional organizations, community organizations, social service organizations, employers, Tavern League, community leaders, and schools are key partners needed to address injury and violence prevention in the county.
## Appendix A

### Winnebago 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>Amy Barker</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Future Neenah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Blaze</td>
<td>President and CEO</td>
<td>Oshkosh YMCA</td>
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<td>Doug Brey</td>
<td>Crisis Supervisor</td>
<td>Winnebago County Department of Human Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barry Busby</td>
<td>Coroner</td>
<td>Winnebago County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamie Constantine</td>
<td>Oshkosh West High School Junior</td>
<td>re:TH!NK Youth Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noell Dickman</td>
<td>Education Watchdog</td>
<td>Oshkosh Northwestern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emily Dieringer</td>
<td>Health Educator/ Coalition Coordinator</td>
<td>Winnebago County Health Department/ re:TH!NK, Winnebago’s Healthy Living Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenda Doolittle</td>
<td>SANE Coordinator</td>
<td>Aurora Medical Center Oshkosh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Flauger</td>
<td>Leader of Family Services</td>
<td>Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosann Fochs</td>
<td>Community Relations and Volunteer Services Coordinator</td>
<td>Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin- Fox Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff Gilderson-Duwe</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Oshkosh Public Library &amp; Winnefox Library System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darren Heesacker, MD</td>
<td>Emergency Department Medical Director</td>
<td>Aurora Medical Center Oshkosh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amy Jahnke</td>
<td>Emergency Department Manager</td>
<td>Affinity Health System</td>
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<td>Mike Kading</td>
<td>Director of Parks and Recreation</td>
<td>Town of Menasha</td>
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<td>Matthew Kaemmerer</td>
<td>Director of Pupil Services</td>
<td>Oshkosh Area School District</td>
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<td>Lynn Kleiman</td>
<td>Development Manager</td>
<td>Mercy Health Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexandra Molinski</td>
<td>Oshkosh North High School Senior</td>
<td>re:TH!NK Youth Coalition</td>
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<td>Catherine Neiswender</td>
<td>Community Development Educator</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin- Extension, Winnebago County Extension Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracy Ogden</td>
<td>Development and Marketing Director</td>
<td>Boys and Girls Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenn Olson</td>
<td>Winnebago County Board Supervisor</td>
<td>Winnebago County Health Department</td>
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<td>Sue Panek</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Denise Parrish</td>
<td>Vice President of Patient Care Services</td>
<td>Affinity Health System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Peters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amy Putzer</td>
<td>Director of Programs</td>
<td>Oshkosh Area Community Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petra Roter</td>
<td>Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin- Oshkosh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gina Schwebke, RD, CD</td>
<td>Registered Dietician</td>
<td>Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin- Fox Valley</td>
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<td>Nicole Slusser</td>
<td>Emergency Department Manager</td>
<td>Aurora Medical Center Oshkosh</td>
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<td>Mark Weisensel</td>
<td>Supervisor of Aging and Outreach Services</td>
<td>Winnebago County Department of Human Services</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Al Wenig</td>
<td>Director of Recreation</td>
<td>Oshkosh Area School District</td>
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<td>Leona Whitman ⌂, ⌂, ⌂, ⌂ ⌂, ⌂, ⌂, ⌂ ⌂, ⌂, ⌂</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin- Oshkosh Living Healthy Community Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annette (Andi) Wolf ⌂</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>Emmanuel United Church of Christ</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