

Racine 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 Racine County, as identified in 2015 by a range of providers, policy-makers, and other local experts and community members (“key informants”). These findings are a critical supplement to the Racine County Community Health Survey conducted through a partnership between Aurora Health Care, Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, Columbia St. Mary’s Health System, Froedtert Health, ProHealth Care and Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare. 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 Racine County were identified by the five organizations listed above. The partnership invited the informants to participate, and conducted the interviews from May to June 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 Racine 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: Thirteen key informant interviews were conducted in Racine 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 Racine County data (e.g., community health surveys and secondary data reports).

A. Focus Area Ranking

A total of 13 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.

Focus Area	# Key Informants Ranking Issue Among Top 5 Health Issues	# Key Informants Who Ranked Health Issue as the Top (#1) Priority
Alcohol and Drugs	7	1
Chronic Disease	5	1
Communicable Disease	1	1
Environmental and Occupational Health	1	0
Growth and Development	0	0
Mental Health	10	3
Nutrition	4	0
Oral Health	2	2
Physical Activity	2	1
Reproductive and Sexual Health	3	0
Tobacco	2	0
Access	4	1
Injury and Violence	6	1

B. Top Five Health Issues

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

1. Mental Health
2. Alcohol and Drugs
3. Injury and Violence
4. Chronic Disease
5. Tie- Nutrition
5. Tie- Access to Health Care

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, the report has changed slightly. Fewer key informants were interviewed in 2015 than in 2012. Mental health, alcohol and drug abuse, chronic disease, and nutrition remain top health issues in 2015, while injury and violence and access to health care have replaced oral health, physical activity, and tobacco use as top concerns for the county.

Importantly, the health issues that the key informants indicated as priorities for Racine County affect residents across the life span and require engagement across sectors to adequately address the residents' needs. Key informants named a wide variety of partners across sectors employing strategies to address the health issues of residents.

Many key challenges and barriers named are related to money and insurance. Examples include high out-of-pocket costs related to services, high insurance deductibles and co-payments, health services not covered by Medicaid, and the other costs for transportation to appointments, medication, healthy food options, and dietician services. Other challenges and barriers across issues are related to the lack of transportation, language barriers and lack of translation services, lack of education and health literacy, and a gaps in case management and follow up services. Finally, shame, stigma, and fear were named as challenges and barriers for certain populations and health issues including mental health, alcohol and drug abuse, reproductive and sexual health, and violence and injury.

Key informants identified strategies needed to improve the health of the county. For many of the issues discussed, more education and public awareness are important. Other needs identified are related to health insurance policy and payment for services, and better systems of care that offer options for low-income patients and better transitional services and support. Across health issues, some key informants also named support for care-givers and more robust systems of support that engage entire families as a needed strategy.

For the health issues identified in this report, respondents noted cross-sector collaboration as important to improving the health of Racine County. Schools, law enforcement, health care systems, state and local government, public health departments, non-profit agencies, and the business community were consistently named as partners who need to be involved in addressing these issues for the health of Racine County.

D. Issue Summaries



Alcohol and Drugs

Seven key informants' interview rankings included abuse of Alcohol and Drugs as a top five health issue. Responses highlight the need for cross-sector collaboration around this far-reaching issue.

Existing Strategies: Key informants identified several strategies currently in place to address this issue in the county: Efforts of the public health department, partnerships with health care systems, behavioral health services in place for crises, active relationships with and education in schools and a focus on work with youth where they are, media messaging about responsible drinking, drug courts, medication collection sites, the Women of Worth program, and Crisis Intervention Officer Training for law enforcement.

Barriers and Challenges: Lack of education, lack of affordable treatment services located in the communities, the normalization and acceptance of alcohol consumption, parents' fears and lack of trust in criminal justice and child protection systems, lack of funding, ease of access, and lack of awareness were barriers and challenges to addressing this issue named by key informants.

Needed Strategies: Respondents cited education about the issues, more affordable follow up and treatment services, public service announcements, stronger enforcement of legal penalties for driving under the influence, bringing back the DARE program, addressing related or underlying issues, training more officers in crisis intervention, and having more counselors in schools as strategies still needed to address this issue in the county.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Key partners needed to address this issue are NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Racine, Catholic Charities, churches, county Health and Human Services, prescribers, pharmacists, youth, law enforcement, local health departments, YMCA, Alcoholics Anonymous, law enforcement, employers, school districts, and Love, Inc.



Chronic Disease

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

Existing Strategies: Diabetic and pre-diabetes education programs, life transition coaching, geriatrician services, nutrition education and healthy cooking programs, health care providers, wellness programs, and senior resource nurses were named as examples of existing strategies to address this issue.

Barriers and Challenges: Lack of transportation, lack of parish nurses, cultural barriers and unhealthy food traditions, lack of information and lack of understanding of illness, language barriers, lack of case management, breakdowns in transitions of care, financial issues, lack of support in home,

stress, lack of time at primary care appointments, and lack of a “one stop shop” for health care and related services in the community were identified as barriers and challenges in addressing chronic disease.

Needed Strategies: Translation services, follow up calls after Emergency Department visits, transportation to appointments, education in multiple languages and more emphasis on educating the whole family, positive role models, more consultations with dieticians, more case management, more diabetic educators, more affordable healthy foods, more in-home support options, physician respect for patients, and education about when to use Urgent Care instead of the Emergency Department were named as strategies needed to address the barriers and challenges of chronic disease.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Emergency Medical Services, primary care providers, community groups, churches, state and local government, United Way, case managers, the Aging and Disability Resource Center, food banks, schools, transportation providers, and Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) are key partners to engage in efforts to improve health.

Communicable Disease

One key informant ranked Communicable Disease as a top health priority for the County.

Existing Strategies: No existing strategies were identified, but there is an agreement in place between Burlington and the Racine County Health Department for services.

Barriers and Challenges: Lack of a widespread notification or tracking system in case of emergency was the main noted challenge to addressing this issue.

Needed Strategies: One area of need is a notifications system in case of potential or existing hazards, such as an auto-call system for all residents.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Emergency services, police and fire departments, and health departments were named as key partners needed to address this issue.

Environmental and Occupational Health

One informant ranked Environmental and Occupational Health as a top health issue for the County.

Existing Strategies: Internal city and department policies and procedures were named as strategies currently addressing these issues.

Barriers and Challenges: The presence of environmental hazards and occupational issues in critical industries were named as key challenges in addressing these issues.

Needed Strategies: Partnering with emergency services, providing training on environmental and occupational health issues, and an upcoming drill in October 2015 were named as strategies needed to address potential hazards in the community.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Key partners identified as needed to address these issues are: Emergency services, police and fire departments, health departments, and the Department of Workforce Development.

Growth and Development

Growth and Development was not ranked as a top health issue for the County. Existing strategies, barriers and challenges, needed strategies, and key community partners to improve health were not identified for this issue.



Mental Health

Ten respondents ranked Mental Health as a top health issue for the County, making it the top-ranked priority.

Existing Strategies: Psychological care and services, Crisis Intervention Training, teaching mental health literacy in schools, peer specialists, cross-sector partnerships, school counselors, support groups, and various programs through law enforcement, public health, schools, and local organizations and agencies were cited as examples of strategies currently in place to address this issue.

Barriers and Challenges: Challenges to addressing mental health in the county include lack of follow up services, being unable to access mental health appointments, lack of referrals to services, difficulty identifying people who may be in need of services, lack of providers who accept Medicaid, gaps in service to adolescents and the elderly, stigma of mental illness, lack of knowledge of available community resources, poor family support, lack of case management for psychiatric medication, and lack of trust in law enforcement.

Needed Strategies: Key informants cited more community engagement, stronger connections between mental health and other health care providers, services in school settings, transportation to services, more community education, peer support, more case management, and more police engagement in the community as strategies needed to address mental health in the county.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: NAMI, Health and Human Services, providers of crisis intervention, public health departments, EMS responders, the Aging and Disability Resource Center, United Way, law enforcement, health systems, churches, shelters, Love, Inc., transitional living centers, schools, and the Alzheimer's Association were named as key partners needed to improve mental health in the county.



Nutrition

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

Existing Strategies: School lunch programs, the 5210 program, nutrition programs, and nutrition education at various community-based agencies and organizations were named as key strategies in addressing nutrition.

Barriers and Challenges: Lack of a local nutritionist, lack of motivation to prioritize healthy eating, busy lifestyles, low cost of unhealthy food options, and lack of education for parents about how nutrition affects children are key challenges related to this issue.

Needed Strategies: More nutrition education, wider availability of existing nutrition programs and services, more community gardens, more family engagement, and public service announcements are strategies still needed.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Schools, local government, and restaurants and other private sector partners are needed to address this issue.

Oral Health

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

Existing Strategies: Current dental care providers were the only existing strategy named.

Barriers and Challenges: Key barriers to addressing this issue are the lack of providers who accept Medicaid, the high cost of services, long wait times for appointments, and lack of transportation to get to providers.

Needed Strategies: Key informants identified providers who accept Medicare and Medicaid, free dental clinics in local areas, education and media messaging about the importance of oral health care, and legislative changes as needed strategies to improve the oral health of the county.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Key partners in addressing this issue locally are dental schools, local dentists, schools, parent associations, churches, child care providers, and health care networks.

Physical Activity

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

Existing Strategies: Physical education, community education, and the 5210 program were named as strategies in place to address physical activity.

Barriers and Challenges: Programs and education that do not address the population in need, limited health care benefits for wellness, lack of motivation to change, and competing priorities were named as barriers to addressing this issue locally.

Needed Strategies: Strategies needed to address this issue include better promotion of existing walks and runs, wellness programs through employers, more incentives to be active, long term activities for children, a focus on prevention of illness and promotion of healthy lifestyles, and parent and child education.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Schools, local government, restaurants, local businesses, fitness clubs, event coordinators, Leadership Racine, and Young Professionals of Racine were named as key partners in addressing this issue in the County.

Reproductive and Sexual Health

Three key informants included Reproductive and Sexual Health as a top health issue.

Existing Strategies: Classes in the school system, physicals, services provided by Planned Parenthood, and services provided by the Women’s Resource Center were named as current strategies to address these issues.

Barriers and Challenges: Misinformation, lack of communication between children and parents, and lack of collaboration among systems were key challenges named.

Needed Strategies: More education for physicians and law enforcement officials, public service announcements, payment for emergency contraception, and more parental involvement and education were named as strategies still needed to address these issues.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Local service agencies, schools, parents, pediatricians, and police departments were named as key partners in addressing these issues.

Tobacco Use

Two key informants included Tobacco Use as a top health priority for the County.

Existing Strategies: Increased taxes to decrease use and Major League Baseball’s ban of tobacco use on the field and better role modeling for young athletes were two current strategies named in addressing this issue.

Barriers and Challenges: Individuals' beliefs that the long term consequences of tobacco use do not apply to them is a key challenge in addressing this issue.

Needed Strategies: Health insurance companies, including Medicaid, should incentivize quitting through wellness programs.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: No key partners were specifically named.



Access to Health Care

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

Existing Strategies: Health care systems, Health Care Network, Inc., providers who accept Medicaid, Love, Inc., social workers, and sealant programs for children were named as current strategies to address this issue.

Barriers and Challenges: Lack of awareness of services available in the community, lack of transportation, language barriers, lack of health literacy, cultural barriers, stigma, recent closure of a community health clinic, lack of providers who accept Medicaid, expense of insurance co-payments, patients moving between providers and systems, patients accessing Emergency Departments for primary care needs, and health departments no longer being able to provide free immunizations were key challenges named by respondents.

Needed Strategies: Key informants named these strategies as needed for addressing this issue in the County: Education and screening, free immunizations, affordable health insurance deductibles and co-payments, services for children in schools, translation services, home health care options, and paramedic community care.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Emergency Medical Services, Fire Chiefs Association, home health care agencies, transportation providers, health literacy service providers, state and local government, health care systems, and the Health Care Network, Inc. were named as key partners in improving health related to this issue.



Injury and Violence

Injury and Violence was ranked as a top five health issue by six key informants. This topic covers a broad range of issues. Two key informants specifically addressed the elderly population, with one noting fall prevention for the elderly as a priority concern. Other areas of focus included crime, child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence.

Existing Strategies: Current strategies in place to address crime include: Proactive approaches such as bike patrols and beat patrols, Community Oriented Policing (COP) Houses, police check-ins at facilities, and community engagement efforts. Related to domestic violence and violence against women, programming and services at Love, Inc., the Women’s Resource Center, Sexual Assault Services, and domestic violence worksheets were named as strategies in place. The Central Racine County Health Department, maternal and child health home visiting programs, the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF), and other community initiatives and programs focused on supporting parents and including fathers were named as strategies in place to address child abuse and neglect. Related to the elderly, hip and knee programs, the Stepping On program, occupational therapy and physical therapy referrals, free home visits, adult protective services, Powerful Tools for Care, and NAMI were named as current strategies to address this issue.

Barriers and Challenges: Broadly, lack of information to those who need it, lack of shelter or emergency housing in some areas, lack of foster care providers, lack of utilization of Legal Aid, complicated root causes of violence, lack of large scale funding, lack of transportation services, breakdowns in family support, lack of respite for caregivers and related burn out, stigma and fear related to reporting abuse, and lack of adult day programs for adults were named as key barriers and challenges to addressing the many issues related to violence and injury in the county.

Needed Strategies: More shelters, a domestic violence task force, alcohol and drug counseling programs, community counseling programs, getting more information to those who need it, upstream strategies, adult day programs, respite programs, affordable services, accessible transportation, walk-in clinic resources, community partnerships, better integrations of law enforcement into the community, transgender sensitivity training programs, and more trauma informed care across sectors were cited as strategies needed by the county.

Key Community Partners to Improve Health: Many important partners were named in addressing these issues, including police, Health and Human Services, Sexual Assault Services, YMCAs, first responders, fire, emergency services, social workers, shelters, elderly housing personnel, the Central Racine County Health Department, home visiting programs, Family Smart Kid Friendly, teen parenting programs, elder care providers, the Aging and Disability Resource Center, NAMI, health care systems, transportation providers, and the Alzheimer’s Association.

Appendix A

Racine County Key Informants

Name	Title	Organization
Rolando DeLaCruz, MD ^{†††}	Pediatrician	Aurora Health Care
Susanne Malestic, RN, BS, GRN ^{†,††,†††}	Senior Resource Coordinator	Aurora Health Care- Western Racine County
Gail Kopp, RN, BSN, SANE-A	SANE Coordinator Interim	Aurora Memorial Hospital of Burlington
Rosemary P. Dolatowski, MSN, RN ^{†,††,†††}	Director, School Health Services	Burlington Area School District
Jan Ludtke ^{†,††,†††}	Executive Director	Burlington Chamber of Commerce
Brian Zwiebel ^{†,††}	EMS Chief	Burlington Rescue Squad
Margaret Gesner, MS, BSN, RN ^{†,††,†††}	Health Officer	Central Racine County Health Department
P. Howard	Fire Chief	City of Burlington Fire Department
Henry E. Zimmermann, D.D.S.	Owner	Henry E. Zimmermann, D.D.S., S.C.
Dottie-Kay Bowersox ^{†,††,†††}	Public Health Administrator	Racine City Health Department
Jeff Collen ^{†,††,†††}	Chief Executive Officer	Racine Family YMCA
Aldred Days ^{†,††,†††}	Lieutenant, Chief's Staff Unit	Racine Police Department
Arthel Howell ^{†,††,†††}	Chief of Police	Racine Police Department

[†] 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