

Each Critical Access Hospital must conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) once every three years, as mandated by law. Local public health units seeking to gain/maintain accreditation conduct an assessment every five years. CHNAs completed by the Center for Rural Health (CRH) include secondary data review, community focus groups, key informant interviews, and a community survey. This fact sheet presents key community strengths and opportunities from the Watford City service area 2022 CHNA.

The McKenzie County Healthcare Systems (MCHS) service area's population decreased by 6% from 2020 to 2021. The average number of residents younger than age 18 (31.8%) for McKenzie County comes in 8.2 percentage points higher than the North Dakota average (23.6%). The median household income in McKenzie County (\$75,238) is much higher than the state average for North Dakota (\$65,315).

Community Strengths

The top three assets identified in the community survey included people being friendly, helpful, and supportive; access to local events and festivals; and it being family friendly. Other community assets include people who live here are involved in their community and activities for families and youth. The community also reports that unemployment rates were below those in the state and the top 10% of U.S. counties.

Health Outcomes and Factors

In review of secondary data, 16% of McKenzie County residents reported poor or fair health. They also reported having a greater percentage of residents reporting physical inactivity, adult smoking, obesity, and alcohol impaired driving deaths than the top 10% of U.S. counties. See Table 1.

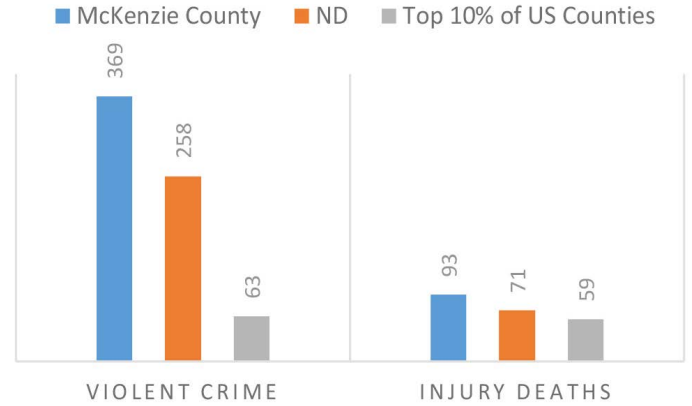
Table 1. Health Factors by % of Population, 2021

	McKenzie County	ND	Top 10% U.S.
Uninsured	10%	9%	6%
Food environment index	22	9.0	8.6
Access to exercise opportunities	43%	74%	91%
Physical inactivity	26%	24%	20%
Adult obesity	34%	33%	26%
Adult smokers	20%	14%	18%

Violent crimes were more prevalent in McKenzie county (369 per 100,000 residents) than in the state overall (258 per 100,000 residents) and the top 10% of U.S. counties (63 per

100,000 residents). Injury deaths were higher as well. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Cases per 100,000 Population, 2021



In 2020, data shows Medicaid recipients (% of population ages 0-20) was 22.9% for McKenzie county, which is lower than the North Dakota average of 26.1%. See Table 2 for more information on children's health factors.

Table 2. Children's Health Factors by % of Population

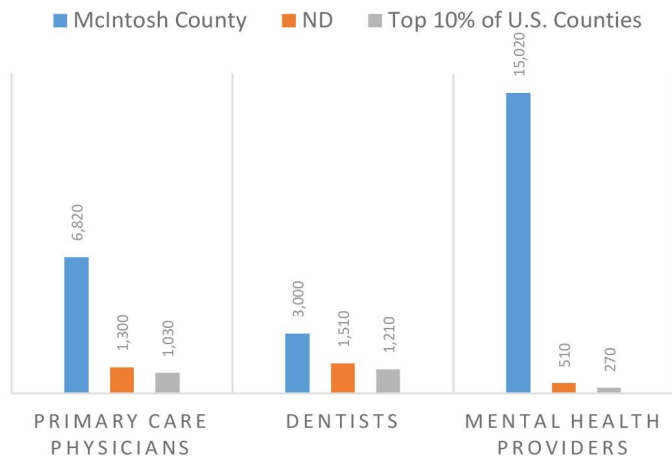
	McKenzie	ND
Victims of child abuse and neglect requiring services (2020)	NA	9.98
Children food insecurity (2019)	9.6%	9.6%
Medicaid recipients (2020)	22.9%	26.1%
Children enrolled in Healthy Steps (2020)	1.6%	2.1%
Receiving SNAP (2020)	9.0%	16.5%

In 2021, the teen birth rate for McKenzie County was 29 births per 1,000 females (15-19 years old), which is higher than the than the state average of 20 per 1,000 and higher than the top 10% of U.S. counties (12 per 1,000).

Healthcare Access

Based on the provider to population ratio, McKenzie County has far more residents per single dentist, primary care physicians, and mental health providers than the state's average and the top 10% of U.S. counties. See Figure 2.

Figure 2. Provider to Population Ratios, 2021



Community Concerns

In a survey conducted by CRH, residents identified up to three primary community concerns. The top two concerns were alcohol use and abuse in adults and drug use and abuse in youth. Alcohol abuse showed up three places in the top five – adults, youth, and oil impact concerns. See Table 3.

Table 3. Community Concerns, 2021

Community Concerns	%
Drug use and abuse – youth	54%
Alcohol use and abuse—adult	54%
Drug use and abuse – adult	47%
Alcohol use and abuse – youth	46%
Alcohol use and abuse (oil impact)	44%
Lack of affordable housing	37%
Having enough child daycare services	35%

In April 2022, a community focus group identified their top concerns as:

1. Availability of mental health and substance use disorder treatment services
2. Availability of resources to help elderly stay in their homes
3. Having enough child daycare services

In the survey, community members also identified perceived barriers (up to three) specifically related to accessing local healthcare. The top five barriers were:

1. Can't get transportation services (33% of respondents)
2. No insurance/limited insurance (32%)
3. Distance from health facility (25%)
4. Not able to get appointment/limited hours (23%)
5. Poor quality of care (22%)

Individuals also indicated which specific healthcare services, if any, they felt should be added locally. The most often cited service was mental healthcare.

Steps Undertaken Since 2019 CHNA

MCHS has taken steps to address the top concerns identified in the 2019 assessment. The affordable housing issue is a continuing effort, but they have migrated non-MCHS employees out of the rental units owned by the hospital and have provided these for new employees. In regard to attracting and retaining physicians, other providers, and registered nurses to the area, MCHS's new hospital facility has been a great tool for attracting new employees. As local economic development efforts flourish, it has increased the diversity in types of jobs available for spouses. In 2021, MCHS established a human resource recruiter position to enhance and expand recruitment networks and, specifically, to make a concerted effort to hire additional nursing staff in the midst of a national shortage. The domestic violence issue has been addressed in the emergency room along with providers asking questions during clinic visits. Resources have been shared and made available through social media, along with meetings being held with the local family crisis shelter representative.

Implementation Strategies

Hospitals and local public health units prepare implementation strategies as a blueprint for meeting needs identified in a CHNA. Access the complete and community-specific CHNA Reports and Implementation Strategies at ruralhealth.und.edu/projects/community-health-needs-assessment/reports.

Full Report

Nissen, K., & Bosch, J. Watford City Service Area: Community Health Needs Assessment, 2022.

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