

Waushara County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

2023-2027

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Photo of the Saxeville Covered Bridge

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Letter to the Community From the Health Officer

Dear Waushara County Residents and Friends,

Thank you for prioritizing health in our community. We live, work, and play alongside each other in a beautiful rural community that is made up of hard working individuals, caring neighbors, and learning children. Every one of us holds a responsibility to make healthy decisions for ourselves and those around us.

Waushara County Health Department utilizes a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) to provide insight into the health issues that impact our community and affect our residents. Throughout this process, we have gathered data and listened to our community members to determine the top health priorities in order to create a plan of action. The CHIP is an extensive process and we appreciate the health department staff and other partners and residents that provided valuable input and who worked to produce this plan.

Residents and community agencies interested in improving the health of Waushara County should use this plan as a guide. Each priority area has a goal followed by an objective and a list of strategies to reach the next level of improvement. Over time, we will evaluate our progress and post successes on the Waushara County Health Department website and through our social media outlets.

We look forward to working with community members, community friends, healthcare facilities, and local businesses to continuously improve the overall health in Waushara County.

We invite anyone to join us in making Waushara County a healthier place. It is because of you that we look forward to improving the health of our community every single day. Join us in this work by attending or joining the Waushara County Wellness Coalition, REACH, take part in one of our action teams, or make a comment on the plan.

Take care,



Stefanie Eldredge

Health Officer

Waushara County Health Department

CHIP 2018-2022 Summary

Over the last four years, we, along with our community partners, have worked to improve the health and well-being of Waushara County residents. The priorities we had worked on were Health Equity, Access to Care, Mental Health, Chronic Disease with a focus on physical activity, and AODA (Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse). Waushara County Public Health, REACH Waushara Wellness Coalition and many community partners and members have made many positive strides in these areas. The complete 2018-2022 CHIP Summary can be found on our website at www.WausharaCountyPublicHealth.com.



Community Health Improvement Process

Since 1993, WI State Statutes have required communities throughout Wisconsin to develop and implement local health plans to address health conditions affecting their residents. This process has been referred to as the “Community Health Improvement Process,” named partly due to the resulting health status changes in a community and the people who live there.

Where we live, learn, work, and play affects our health. Understanding the determinants of health, identifying best practices and creating partnerships to implement strategies to combat health related problems is a core function of public health. Every five years, local health departments are required to assess the health needs of the county they serve and develop a plan to address those needs. The 2023-2027 Community Health Improvement Plan provides the framework for improving the health of Waushara County. It also helps to create a shared vision between the Health Department and community partners so that together we can create positive, measurable change in our communities.

The 2023-2027 WCHD CHIP is a living document that will be reviewed and if needed, revised annually to continue to provide the appropriate opportunities to our community.

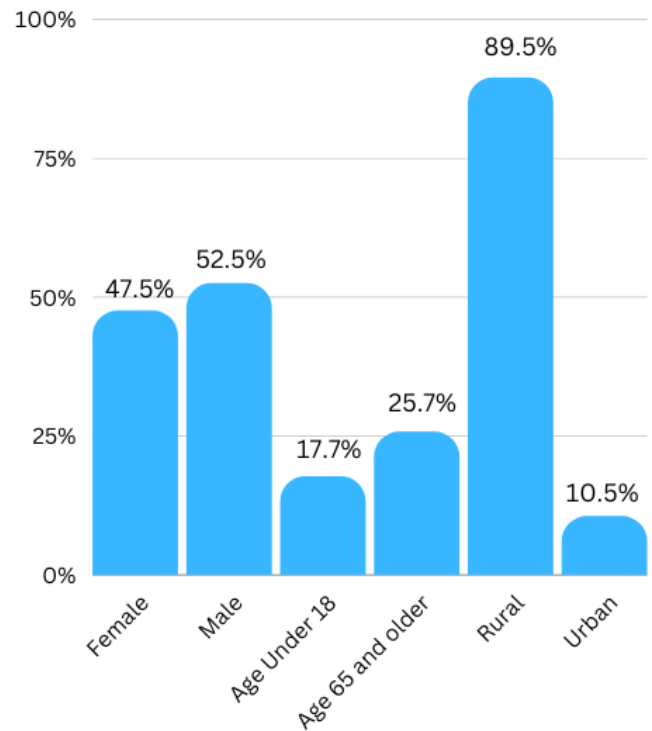
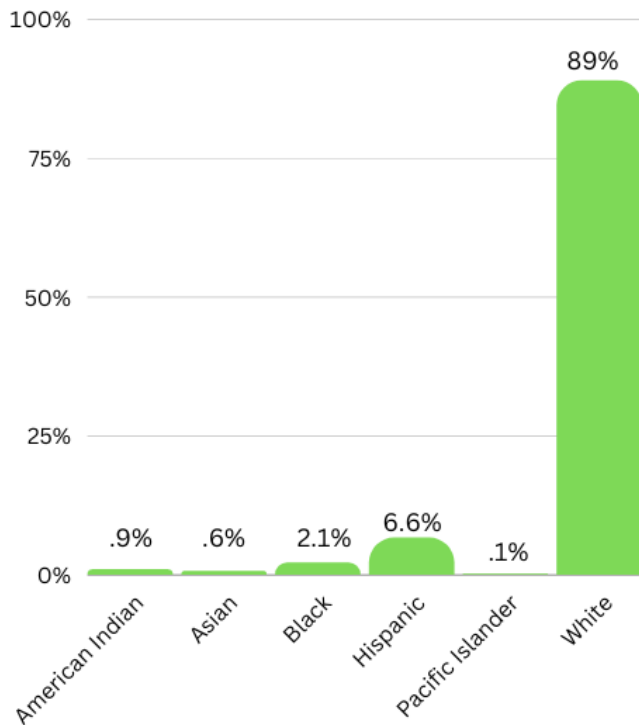
Health Priorities - CHIP 2023-2027

Four health priorities were identified in the 2022 Community Health Assessment (CHA). They were:

1. Access to Care
2. AODA (Alcohol and Drug Abuse)
3. Chronic Disease
4. Mental Health



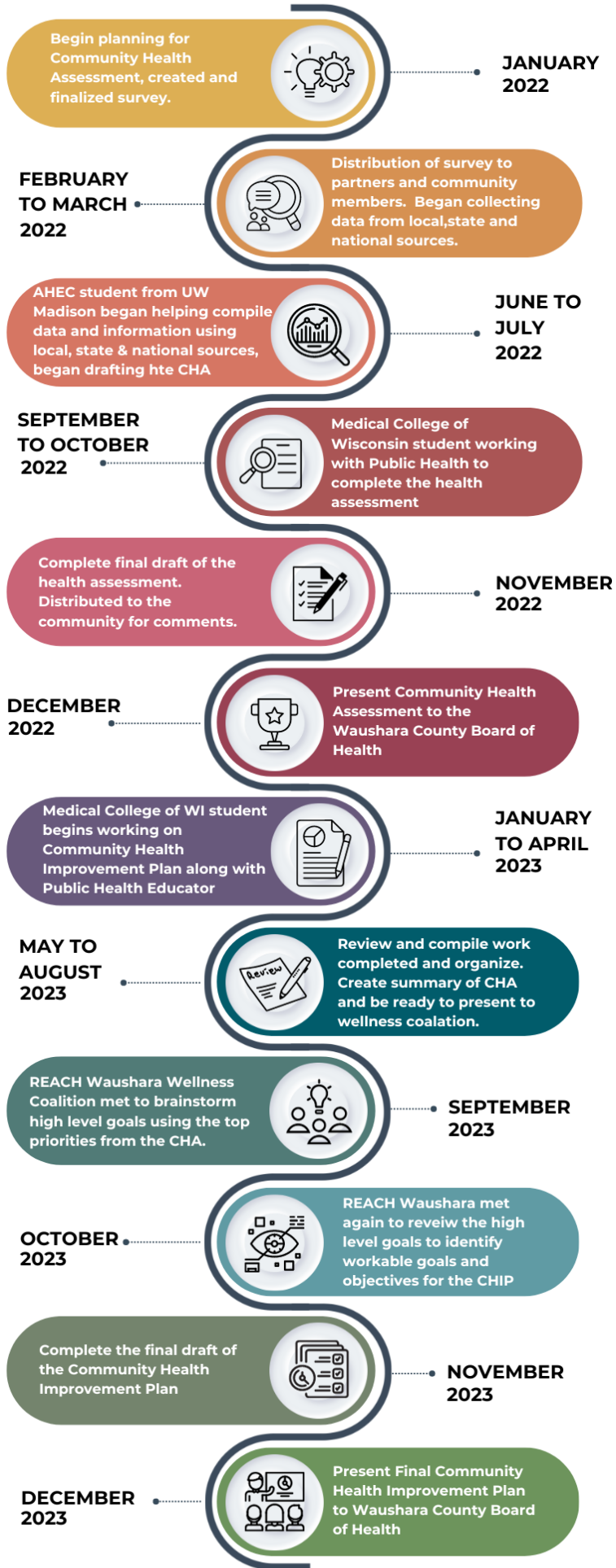
Demographics of Waushara County



Other Waushara County Facts:

- Total Population of Waushara County, as of 2023 County Rankings - 24,828
- 49% of high school-age residents reported having significant problems due to anxiety or depression
- 12.9% of residents live in poverty
- 89.5% of residents are rural areas and 10.5% of residents are in urban areas
- 10.7% of residents live with a disability under the age of 65 years old
- 18% of middle school-age residents have made a plan about how they would attempt suicide
- 7.7% of households speak a language besides English at home

CHA / CHIP TIMELINE



Access to Care - Defined

According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), access to care can be defined as 'the timely use of personal health services to achieve the best health outcomes'. Access to care encompasses many different areas in healthcare. These include a person's ability to receive insurance coverage, access to services, the timeliness of receiving services, and having the right number of qualified providers. Access to care can become difficult within rural public health departments because of the many barriers that rural communities face in their attempts to provide equitable access to care. Some of these barriers include health literacy, availability of transportation, number of healthcare providers, and distance to these providers.

Why is Access to Care a priority in Waushara County:

3,475:1

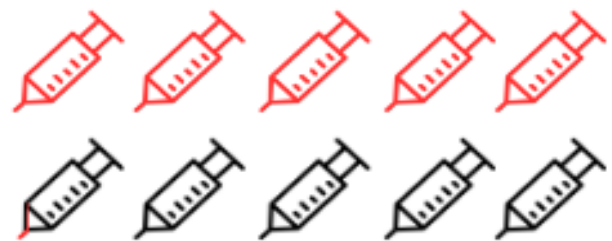
In Waushara County, there are 3,475 residents for every 1 physician. The state average is 1,242 residents for every 1 physician. (County Health Rankings)

Having adequate access to health care is important to maintaining health and preventing disease. Access to health has a direct impact on a person's physical, mental and social health status and overall quality of life.



9% of Waushara County's population that is under the age of 65 is uninsured. The state average is 7%. (County Health Rankings)

According to the residents in Waushara County that completed the Community Health Assessment in 2022. Access to Care was considered the #1 most important factor for a healthy community.



Approximately 5 out of 10 (53%) of Waushara County residents receive their influenza vaccination annually (Medicare). The state average is 56%. (County Health Rankings)

According to the 2023 County Health Rankings, out of 72 counties Waushara County ranks 61st for residents to primary care physicians, 21st for residents to dentists and 37th for residents to mental health providers. Add that to having 9% of residents that are uninsured, these rankings show a lack of access to care in our community.

Access to Care - Objectives and Strategies

GOAL: Increase access to care by identifying barriers and resources

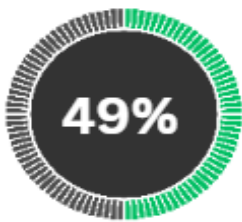
- **Objective 1: Assess, review and determine access to care needs for our communities**
 - **Strategy 1: Evaluate and determine the idea of locating space to make web access for private online appointments more accessible to all residents.**
 - **Strategy 2: Evaluate and determine possibilities of having health screening availability during school open house nights.**
 - **Strategy 3: Create and Collaborate on a campaign to breaking down the stigma of mental health with resources for all**
 - **Strategy 4: Evaluate and determine ideas regarding a community loan closet to help those in need. (such as clothing for interviews, clothing/shoes/products for those in an emergency situation)**



Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse - Defined

Mayo Clinic defines drug addiction, or substance use disorder, as a disease that affects a person's brain and behavior and leads to an inability to control the use of a legal or illegal drug or medicine. When it comes to substance abuse, many people are aware that it negatively affects the person that is suffering from the disease, but are unaware it also affects the surrounding community and local government due to economic burden and costs that come from excessive drinking or drug use. The economic burden mainly comes from events that occur because of substance abuse; such as loss of productivity, failure at school, domestic violence, child abuse, and crime. Substance abuse can lead to sexually transmitted infections, Hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, pregnancy complications, and cardiovascular conditions.

Why is AODA a priority in Waushara County:



49% of Waushara County survey respondents believe that Alcohol and other Drug Abuse is the number one health issue in the county. (2022 CHA)

6

Since 2018, there have been 6 deaths by drug overdose in Waushara County (WISH)



46% of motor vehicle deaths in Waushara County involved alcohol. The state average is 36% (County Health Rankings)

Alcohol and other drug abuse in rural Waushara County is more prevalent than most people expect. Waushara County is in the top 23% of WI counties for motor vehicle deaths involving alcohol and is a higher percentage than the overall state average.

Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse - Objectives and Strategies

GOAL: Decrease alcohol and drug misuse and abuse in Waushara County

- **Objective 1: Waushara County Prevention Council and Healthy Communities Healthy Youth will provide services for both youth and adults in regards to Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse.**

Chronic Disease - Defined

Chronic disease is defined broadly by the CDC as conditions that last 1 year or more and require ongoing medical attention or limit activities of daily living or both. Some examples of chronic disease include heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, and asthma. Making positive (or healthy) lifestyle changes can lessen the severity or cases and even sometimes the occurrences of chronic disease. Influencing factors such as physical activity, nutrition, using tobacco products or amount of secondhand smoke exposure, and alcohol usage are all things that are modifiable to help with the prevalence of chronic disease. That's why a focus area for this cycle is physical activity and nutrition, because both can directly affect chronic disease prevention.

Why is Chronic Disease a priority in Waushara County:

36%

36% of adults in Waushara County have a BMI of **30 or greater**. The state average of adults with a BMI of 30 or more is **33%**.
(County Health Rankings)

Why Chronic Disease? With heart disease being the leading cause of death in Waushara County, and 9 percent of residents diagnosed with diabetes, and 36 percent of adults with obesity, it makes chronic disease a priority in our community.

Chronic Disease and physical activity are two areas of health that are intertwined in many ways. Chronic diseases are diseases that last for a long period of time, do not go away on their own, and can very rarely be cured even with intervention. However, intervention can help to subside the severity of symptoms experienced as a side effect of chronic disease.



22% of adults in Waushara County report having no physical activity outside of their normal workday. The state average is **20%** of adults.
(County Health Rankings)

#1

In Waushara County, **Heart Disease** has been the leading cause of death.
(2022 CHA)

Prevention of chronic disease not only assures a strong quality of life, but also results in a decreased economic burden on our health care system. Examples of chronic disease include: cancer, diabetes and heart disease.

Chronic Disease - Objectives and Strategies

GOAL: Decrease the prevalence of chronic disease through increased physical activity and nutrition.

- **Objective 1: Increase opportunities for community members to be active.**
 - **Strategy 1: Increase opportunities for physical activity through various events in Waushara County.**
- **Objective 2: Increase community awareness of the importance of physical activity, exercise, and healthy eating.**
 - **Strategy 1: Provide nutrition awareness, wellness tips and physical activity posts to social media and the newspapers.**
 - **Strategy 2: Promote local wellness groups and activities.**



Mental Health - Defined

"Mental Health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood" (CDC). One's mental health can be influenced by biological factors, life experiences, and family history of mental health problems (Mentalhealth.gov). Mental illness treatments include the utilization of medications, attending therapy sessions, or attending treatment facilities (Mayo). An important part of mental health that we are striving to improve is the stigmatization around mental health and receiving help for mental health issues.

Why is Mental Health a priority in Waushara County:



Waushara County has a **higher suicide rate** than the **national suicide rate**. Waushara County has **16 suicides per 100,000 people**, while the national average is **14 suicides per 100,000** (County Health Rankings).

In Waushara County from 2020-2022, there were 15 people that have died from suicide. Fourteen of them were males aged 15 to 80.

According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 2021 the following statistics were recorded: 62% of Waushara County middle schoolers and 49% of high schoolers reported having issues with anxiety.

There were 33% of middle schoolers and 18% of high schoolers that reported intentionally self-harming without intending to die.

1:730

For every **730 residents in Waushara County**, there is only **1 mental health care provider**. On average, Wisconsin has **1 mental health provider** for every **423 residents**. This shows a lack of mental health care providers in Waushara County (County Health Rankings)



20% of Waushara County survey respondents believe that **mental health** is the **top** health priority in the county (2022 CHA)

26% of middle schoolers and 18% of high schoolers reported they seriously considered suicide in the last 12 months. 18% of middle schoolers and 14% of high schoolers reported having a suicide plan.

Mental Health - Objectives and Strategies

GOAL: Improve mental health and decrease suicide rates in Waushara County

- **Objective 1:** Will provide support for local funding to support Sources of Strength program at all 3 Waushara County Public Schools to promote suicide prevention in youth.
- **Objective 2:** Continue to provide opportunities in QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) to provide education in how to respond to mental health crises in our community.
- **Objective 3:** Partner with the County Medical Examiner to promote suicide prevention awareness (through social media, billboard, magnets in school)



Next Steps

Public Health, REACH Waushara along with its partners will continue to meet to address each of the priorities objectives and strategies identified in the 2023-2027 CHIP.

Each REACH Waushara Action Team will meet at least quarterly to work on the objectives and strategies. An annual update will be reported to the community by the REACH Waushara Wellness Coalition.

Our 2023-2027 CHIP will be a working document, to be reviewed annually and revised if necessary. We know that the health needs of our community ebb and flow, and we want to make sure that our efforts reflect those changes.

Acknowledgments

A special thank you to these Waushara County CHA/CHIP community partners for their time and continued collaboration.

- REACH Waushara Wellness Coalition
- Family Health LaClinica
- ThedaCare
- Wautoma Schools
- Wild Rose Schools
- Waushara County Public Health
- Waushara County Human Services

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