

**VETERANS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
COMMUNITY & HOME CARE
ALLAMAKEE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH**

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN



NOVEMBER 2023

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Allamakee Community Health Needs Assessment Advisory Committee

Based upon the results of the 2022-2023 survey assessments, the following strategic plan was developed by Veterans Memorial Hospital – Community & Home Care (VMH – CHC) with the assistance of Veterans Memorial Hospital (VMH) and the Allamakee County Board of Health. Many of the identified concerns are larger issues than what VMH-CHC can tackle alone, but will strategize with community partners to address and mitigate some of the identified concerns. Anyone wishing to contribute assistance or recommendations may do so by sending a written response to:

Veterans Memorial Hospital-Community and Home Care
Attn: CHA-CHIP
40 1st St. SE
Waukon, Iowa 52172

This Comprehensive Health Improvement Plan for Allamakee County is respectfully submitted by Sheryl Darling-Mooney RN.

Obesity

Obesity remains the number one identified concern on the assessment survey for Allamakee County. Within our county, 38% of county residents aged 18 and older are considered obese. Physical inactivity, a known contributor and identified health behavior concern, is an issue for 26% of adult Allamakee residents.

Strategies include:

- Provide community education across all media platforms to educate about obesity and its ramifications.
- Share opportunities for physical activities across media platforms.
- Promote the natural beauty of the county and its many opportunities to be physically active at no cost.
- Promote fitness/wellness centers, as well as individual opportunities for physical activities such as family friendly walks, swimming pools/splash pads, biking trails, water sports, etc...
- Share feedback regarding obesity in the 2023 CHA-CHIP with area health care providers, educators, fitness/wellness centers, local government, and community partners.

Anticipated Outcome: The goal to decrease obesity in county residents leads to an overall improvement in health. Physical activity releases endorphins, which are known to improve not only physical health but mental health as well. Physical activity can also lead to stress reduction, healthier nutritional behaviors (including the possibility of less alcohol consumption), as well as the possibility of decreasing the suicide rate due to improved mental health.

Goal Measurement: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps will provide updated statistics on the percentage of obesity in county residents. Numbers of residents utilizing various facilities or events will also be determined to assess the number of residents seeking to be physically active.

Untreated Mental Health

Untreated mental health was the second concerning health problem identified to address in Allamakee County.

Strategies include:

- Work with peers to help “de-stigmatize” mental health.
- Continue to share educational information on our media platforms.
- Offer assistance as needed to other entities/partners providing educational offerings on mental health topics.
- Provide information regarding available mental health services for all ages and ability to pay.
- Conduct thorough screening and documentation regarding mental health of all home care clients of this agency. Prompt notification of providers of mental health concerns or significant change(s) in condition(s).
- Continue to collaborate with Inter-Agency partners to advocate for mental health care options for residents of all ages
- Continue to collaborate with and share feedback regarding the 2022-2023 CHA-CHIP with local health care professionals and local board of health.
- Continue to promote physical activity, which may be beneficial for some to improve mental health.

Anticipated Outcome: The goal is for better understanding of mental health, along with identifying concerns related to it, amongst the general public. Ideally, with collaboration among healthcare and other local agencies we will see improved resources for mental healthcare for all ages.

Goal Measurement: Asking the community- including mental health partners (healthcare, schools, law enforcement, social service entities, etc...) for feedback regarding mental health care and concerns will help identify trends. Continuing to monitor data and county trends as they are published will also help assess overall mental health of area residents.

Chronic Diseases Associated With Aging (Arthritis, Hearing/Vision Loss, Dementia, etc...)

The third health problem to address on the survey was chronic diseases associated with aging. Allamakee has a 23.3% population of residents over the age of 65. The percentage over 65 in Iowa is 17.7%. Because of this statistic age associated health issues is a major concern. Along with the diseases are concerns related to adequate access to healthcare, transportation, in home care, long-term care, food insecurities, etc...

Strategies include:

- Offer agency services through VMH - CHC or other agencies as appropriate. VMH - CHC services include skilled nursing, home care aide, physical/occupational/speech therapies as ordered
- Provide education to the public about agency offerings as well as other healthcare partners as appropriate.
- Provide education to the public re: available health care provider/services available in the area, transportation opportunities, food options, living situation opportunities
- Keep healthcare providers informed about concerns for optimal living for an aging population.

Anticipated Outcome: The goal is to assist the aging population to live as independently and safely as possible to maintain an optimal living situation

Goal Measurement: Statistics will be kept regarding the age and overall health of county residents over the age of 65

Cancer

Cancer was identified as the fourth health problem to address in Allamakee County. University of Iowa 2023 Cancer in Iowa publication reports Allamakee County is projected to have 100 new cancer diagnosis/100,000 population. Breast, prostate and lung cancer continue to be the leading cancer diagnosis in the county as well as the state.

Strategies include:

- Share feedback from the University of Iowa 2023 Cancer in Iowa publication with our healthcare providers and other social services.
- Continue to assist with promoting early detection campaigns and treatment services/options
- Continue to promote prevention on our media platforms
- Continue to apply for and utilize grant opportunities that promote cancer prevention.
- Continue to offer and promote HPV vaccine to age appropriate individuals and parents/guardians

Anticipated Outcomes: Increased awareness of early detection and encouraging a healthy lifestyle are important for cancer detection and prevention. Cancer cases in Iowa and, more specifically, Allamakee County data will be recorded and analyzed to assess trending.

Goal Measurement: Statistics for program participations will be analyzed. Demographic data and trends will be monitored.

The Allamakee Healthcare Assessment identified additional health problems but VMH - CHC are addressing the top four needs. Additional problems (in no specific order) include:

- Hypertension
- Injuries
- Limited or no access to dental care
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Diabetes
- Infectious Disease
- Limited or no access to a doctor
- Teenage pregnancy
- Asthma
- Heart disease/stroke
- Poor nutrition