

2025-2027

Community Health Needs
Implementation Strategy

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville

3200 East Racine St. | Janesville, WI 53546



Message to our community

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville is proud to deliver exceptional and compassionate care. The Franciscan Sisters of Mary - our foundresses - cherished the sacredness and dignity of each person they cared for. We continue this tradition and are inspired by their work each day.

The core values of SSM Health are compassion, respect, excellence, stewardship, and community. Our commitment to community can easily be seen with our strong partnerships with local organizations that also focus on providing services to those who are most marginalized.

Together, we have identified and developed plans to address high-priority community health needs through a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). We are grateful for the continued collaboration.

Our new CHIP has come about thanks to the results of a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). Creating a CHNA is very important work, as it provides an opportunity for community voices to be heard and helps organizations like ours to find shared areas of focus.

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville is committed to working with partners to address the community's health needs and improve the health of citizens. The priorities which SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville will address over the next three years are:

- 1. Mental Health*
- 2. Housing*

We will continue to nurture, develop productive relationships, and remain steadfast in our Mission to serve. Please visit ssmhealth.com to learn more about how we will continue to make a difference in Janesville and beyond.

Pax et bonum – Pace e bene – Peace and all good.



Jane Curran-Meuli
President
SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville



Executive Summary

Background

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville is pleased to present the 2025-2027 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) as a response to the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) conducted from January-September 2024. The CHNA report provides an overview of the health needs and priorities associated with our service area with a goal of providing our community with a deeper understanding of current health needs, to help guide the hospital in its community benefit planning efforts and to develop an implementation strategy to address evaluated needs. The SSM Health Wisconsin Regional Board approved the 2024 CHNA on November 12, 2024.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires 501(c)(3) tax-exempt hospitals to conduct a CHNA every three tax years and adopt a strategic implementation plan for addressing identified needs. The strategies adopted as part of the 2025-2027 Community Health Improvement Plan were carefully developed through the work of the Health Equity Alliance of Rock County, where SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital serves as a committee member and advisor. The SSM Health Wisconsin Regional Board approved this Community Health Improvement Plan on February 25, 2025.

Priorities

The Health Equity Alliance of Rock County (HEAR), in collaboration with community partners, determined priorities for the 2025-2027 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) which include:

- **Mental Health:** Local resources include Rock County Public Health and Human Services, Beloit Area Community Health Center, Janesville Counseling Center, Jacob's SWAG Foundation, Boys and Girls Club of Janesville, NAMI Rock County, Building a Safer Evansville, and Stateline Mental Health.
- **Housing:** Local resources include Rock County Public Health and Human Services, Homeless Intervention Task Force, Beloit Area Task Force on Homeless, Legal Action of Wisconsin, ECHO Inc., Housing Authority, Community Action Inc., Project 16:49, Rock County Family Services, GIFTS Men's Shelter, and United Way Blackhawk Region.

Strategies

The Health Equity Alliance of Rock County (HEAR) in partnership with the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service and the University of Wisconsin Division of Extension employed a Deliberative Inquiry model for determining appropriate strategies to address these two priority areas. The overarching goals and objectives for each priority are listed below.

Mental Health:

- Strengthen the Mental Health Workforce
- Increase Access to Affordable Mental Health Services
- Improve Community Conditions to make Rock County a Mentally Healthy Place to live

Housing:

- Improve the Living Conditions of Housing
- Reduce the Impacts of Homelessness
- Improve Housing Affordability

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About SSM Health and St. Mary's Hospital - Janesville

SSM Health

Nationally recognized for quality and innovation, SSM Health is a Catholic, not-for-profit, fully integrated health system working to advance health equity and empower all people to achieve their full potential.

With care delivery sites in Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin, SSM Health provides convenient access to high-quality community-based services as well

as world-class academic medicine, clinical trials, and research studies. The organization's footprint includes hospitals, physician offices, outpatient and virtual care services, comprehensive home care, senior care, and hospice services, a fully transparent pharmacy benefit company, a health insurance company, and an accountable care organization. As one of the largest employers in every community it

serves, the organization's 40,000 team members and 13,900 providers are dedicated to fulfilling SSM Health's Mission: "Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God." Like our founding sisters, we care deeply for our communities -- SSM Health reported \$470 million in community benefit in 2023, including \$346 million in uncompensated care.

Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God.

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville

Highlight of services

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital-Janesville opened its doors to the public in 2012. The health ministry offers inpatient and emergency care, in addition to specialists for women's health, cancer care, orthopedics, general surgery, pediatrics, rehabilitation services, and more. SSM Health Dean Medical Group offers patients a seamless health care experience.

Community benefit

In 2023, SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville provided \$4,967,839 in net community benefit, comprised of \$846,725 in charity care; \$340,569 in community services; and \$3,762,545 in unpaid costs of Medicaid and other public programs.

Examples of our community benefit programs include:

- Annual Mini Grant program
- Community-based health education
- Staff time on community coalitions and service to local nonprofits
- Financial contributions to local community partners

Awards and Certifications

- CMS Five-Star Rating (2019-2023)
- Top Recommended Hospital, Becker's Hospital Review (2023)
- Healthgrades America's 100 Best Hospitals for Stroke Care (2022)
- TJC Acute Stroke Ready Certification
- Baby-Friendly Hospital Certification
- Cribs for Kids Bronze Level Safe Sleep designation

Hospital at a glance

Admissions	2,585
Outpatient visits	65,871
ER visits	19,493
Births	454
Beds	50
Employees	399
Medical staff	123
Volunteers	32
Charity care	\$846K

Community Partners and Roles

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville worked with the Health Equity Alliance of Rock County (HEAR) to develop the 2024 Rock County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). Community perspectives and data gathered were incorporated into the hospital's Needs Assessment. Members of the Health Equity Alliance of Rock County include:

Health Equity Alliance of Rock County Partners

- Aging and Disability Resource Center
- Beloit Area Community Health Center
- Beloit Health System
- Beloit Public Library
- Beloit NAACP
- Building a Safer Evansville (BASE)
- City of Beloit
- City of Janesville
- Children's Resource Center - South
- Community Action, Inc.
- Edgerton Hospital and Health Services
- HealthNet of Rock County
- Hedberg Public Library
- Janesville Community Center
- Janesville Mobilizing 4 Change (JM4C)
- Mercyhealth
- Milton Youth Coalition
- Nutrition and Health Associates / Rock County WIC
- Rock County Human Services Department
- Rock County Prevention Network
- Rock County Public Health Department
- Rock County Supervisors and Administration
- Rock Valley Community Programs
- Rock-Walworth Comprehensive Family Services Head Start/Early Head Start
- School District of Beloit
- School District of Janesville
- Second Harvest Food Bank
- Society's Assets
- South Central Wisconsin Area Health Education Center
- Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board
- SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville
- United Way Blackhawk Region
- University of Wisconsin Division of Extension
- UW Madison Carbone Cancer Center
- Youth 2 Youth
- YWCA of Rock County
- *Community Members at Large*



Strategic Plan: Health Equity Alliance of Rock Co.

Mission

Through community partnerships, we identify opportunities to remove barriers and advance health equity in Rock County.

Vision

We envision a Rock County where everyone has opportunities to thrive and maximize their health.

Commitments

To create and nurture a space of integrity, humility, authenticity, and respect.

Intersecting Priorities

- Apply a Health Equity lens across all activities of the coalition.
- Implement meaningful ways for members of the coalition to collaborate and connect across sectors.



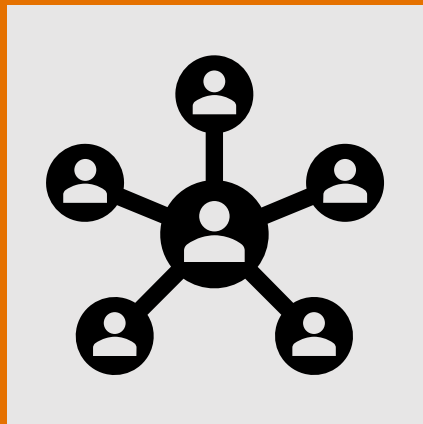
Goal 1:

Improve health of Rock County through policy, systems, and environmental changes.



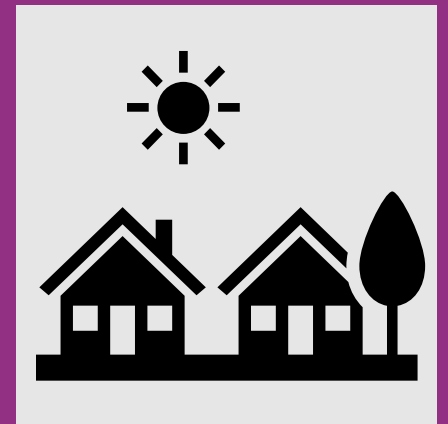
Goal 2:

Improve the coordination of services among community organizations.



Goal 3:

Develop innovative solutions to shared problems within the coalition.



Community Health Improvement Process

To develop the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), the Health Equity Alliance of Rock County (HEAR) utilized a collaborative framework called Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP 2.0). This cycle, HEAR also piloted a public deliberation process which allows the community to engage in conversations to learn and make decisions together. The steps HEAR engaged in to develop the CHIP are outlined below.







Identify CHIP Priority Areas

Goal: Collectively identify two priority areas for the 2025-2027 Rock County CHIP using the 2024 CHA data findings and community input.

- Six themes emerged from the 2024 CHA data: Dental health services, economic well-being, healthcare services, housing, mental health, and transportation. Topic guides were created for each theme to review CHA data, who is most impacted, and the influences of health outcomes.
- HEAR hosted a data sharing and round table event for the community to discuss the data, current efforts, and potential strategies to address the themes.
- The community was asked to vote for the top two themes to become the priority areas for the 2025-2027 CHIP. From a survey vote, housing and mental health were identified as the top priority areas.

Concluding Community Health Themes

Healthcare Services | Mental Health Services | Dental Services | Economic Well-Being | Housing | Transportation

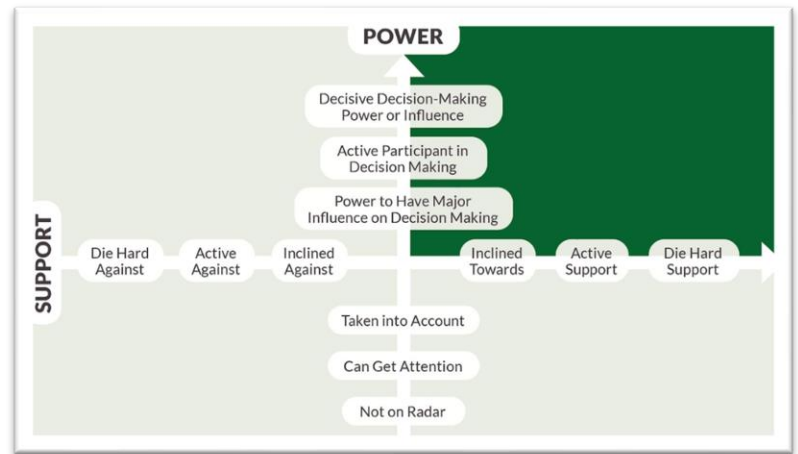
Healthcare Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointment Availability• Affordability• Navigation of Healthcare 	Mental Health Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to Mental Health• Appointment Availability• Affordability 	Dental Health Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointment Availability• Affordability 	Economic Well-Being <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact of Poverty• Employment Opportunities• Support for Working Families 	Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affordability• Impacts of Homelessness• Regulatory Practices of Rental Housing 	Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Transportation• Walkability• Medical Transportation 
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Community Health Improvement Process

Analyze Influences of Each Priority Area

Goal: Assess how each priority area is influenced by people’s thoughts, beliefs, and relationships, organizations, systems, and policies.

- During the September HEAR meeting, HEAR members identified decision-makers, influencers, and opposing narratives that can have an impact on housing and mental health.
- This analysis was used to inform the proposed strategies and engage partners in the CHIP deliberative conversations.



Engage Community in Goal Setting

Goal: Develop potential approaches and actions for each priority, so the community can reflect on and discuss support for it.

- The steering team developed three approaches and potential action steps for each priority area. The actions were created from research on evidence-based practices, community feedback, and key partner meetings.
- HEAR hosted two deliberative conversations per priority area to engage the community in discussion around the potential approaches and action steps. The conversations concluded with the groups determining approaches and actions with the most support to be incorporated into the 2025-2027 CHIP.

Housing

- October 23, 2024
- Homeless Intervention Task Force of Rock and Walworth Counties

Housing

- November 6, 2024
- Beloit Area Task Force on Homelessness

Mental Health

- November 7, 2024
- Behavioral Health Redesign Committee

Mental Health

- November 11, 2024
- Health Equity Alliance of Rock County General Body

Community Health Improvement Process

Develop and Implement Action Plans

Goal: Create plans to reflect the selected approaches and actions that details the milestones and responsibilities to achieve goals.

- After goals were determined from the deliberative conversations, HEAR members partnered with community partners and members to develop action plans to reach shared goals. Using components found in the socio-ecological model and framework, each strategy and initiative can be categorized as one of the following levels of intervention.



Monitor and Evaluate the CHIP

Goal: Utilize ongoing evaluation methods to monitor the progress of the CHIP and modify as needed.

- Process and outcome measures will be identified and monitored to identify changes related to CHIP activities.
- CHIP tracking dashboards will be published under each priority area to show progress of each activity.

Tools from the plan-do-study-act cycle are used to plan and manage CHIP work. The “plan” and “do” stages reflect action plan development and implementation. “Study” and “act” stages reflect the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of CHIP activities.



2025-2027 Health Priority Areas

Priority 1: Mental Health

20%

of survey respondents rated their mental health as fair or poor.



- The average number of mentally unhealthy days in the last 30 days for Rock County community members was 5 days compared to 4.8 for WI and United States overall.
- According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2023, 17% of high school students in Rock County shared they had considered suicide in the past 12 months and 45% of high school females shared they experience prolonged sadness and depression.
- 23% of Rock County high schoolers reported drinking alcohol and 15% reported vaping in the last 30 days. For Rock County high school seniors, 31% reported drinking alcohol compared to 25.3% of Rock County adults. These rates are higher than the state of WI overall.

Key Strategies

- Strengthen the Mental Health Workforce
- Increase Access to Affordable Mental Health Services
- Improve Community Conditions to make Rock County a Mentally Healthy Place to live

Priority 2: Housing

60%

of survey respondents indicated Housing was the greatest area of improvement for Rock County.



- 33.7% of households in Rock County have at least 1 of 4 housing problems such as overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities or lack of plumbing. This is nearly 8% higher than the state of WI overall.
- According to the City of Beloit's Comprehensive Plan, 32% of households in Beloit are cost-burdened (spending greater than 30% of income on housing) and 14% are severely cost-burdened (spending over 50% of their income on housing).
- 26.9% of Community Health Assessment Survey respondents Disagreed and 4.4% Strongly Disagreed with the statement "There are enough safe and affordable houses and apartments in my community".

Key Strategies

- Improve the Living Conditions of Housing
- Reduce the Impacts of Homelessness
- Improve Housing Affordability

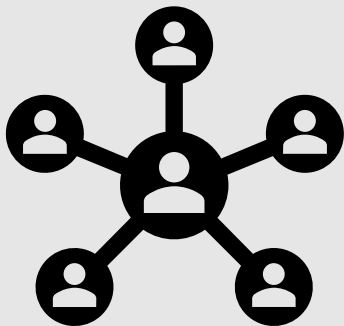
Strategic implementation plan: Mental Health

Mental health is essential to one's overall health. Many factors contribute to mental health wellness and can affect how one is able to cope with stress, relate to others, and make choices. Community members in Rock County continue to face challenges accessing needed mental health services. In the 2024 CHNA, barriers were often related to appointment availability, access to mental healthcare services, and affordability of care.



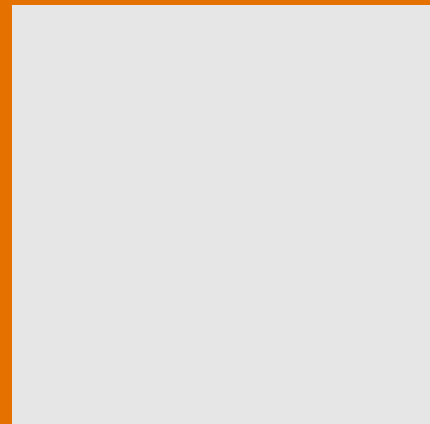
Objective

Strengthen Mental Health Workforce



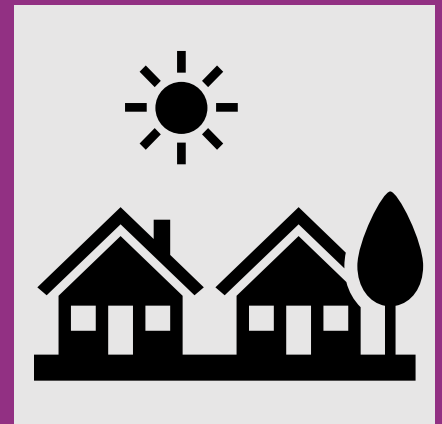
Objective

Increase Access to Affordable Mental Health Services



Objective

Improve Community Conditions to Create a Mentally Healthy County



Mental Health: Increase Access to Affordable Mental Health Services


Forty percent of Wisconsinites experienced poor mental health at some point during the past month (CDC) and the need for mental health services has been on the rise nationally. Rock County is not immune to this trend as seen throughout the 2024 CHNA methods citing affordability as a barrier. While policies around insurance coverage are typically determined at the state or national level, this goal focuses on local strategies that can influence access to affordable mental health services.

Virtual Behavioral Health Integration (VBHI)

At SSM Health in Wisconsin, we listened to our communities sharing that access to affordable mental health services was hard to find. In 2023, SSM Health launched the Virtual Behavioral Health Integration program in Family Medicine and Internal Medicine practices for patients 18+ in over 71 clinics across our system.

This program was intentionally designed to support any patient needing support by providing telephonic mental health coaching, focusing on current concerns and goals of each unique patient such as grief and loss, substance use, stress management, and more. Most importantly, this program is free to SSM Health patients. Since the launch of the Virtual Behavioral Health Integration to our primary care clinics, the team has supported over 16,000 in the SSM Health Wisconsin region.



 **Individual:** knowledge, attitudes, skills, education

 **Organizational:** anchor institutions, employers

Mental Health | Strengthen Mental Health Workforce

Rock County is one of the 66 (of 72) counties in WI which contains a mental health professional shortage area (HRSA, 2024) Attracting and retaining an adequate mental health workforce is a challenge due to varying factors. Low reimbursement rates and a high demand for mental health services can result in excessive caseloads. The stress and emotional toll of the work can lead to burnout and high turnover rates. Addressing gaps in the workforce and providing alternate routes of care can help improve the mental health workforce.

Care for Caregivers

Studies show 50% of healthcare providers are emotionally impacted by an event at least once in their career. At SSM Health, we recognize that caring for others can potentially place our team members' emotional well-being at risk. This includes an unanticipated event or injury – such as workplace violence, the unexpected loss of a patient, a complicated interaction with another person, priority and competing projects, and compassion fatigue. These all may have potential lasting traumatic effects. Now more than ever, we must care for our team members in the most effective way possible. Care for Caregivers is designed to provide support to our team members, when they need it most.



Organizational: anchor institutions, employers

Advocacy for Strengthening the Mental Health Workforce

SSM Health recognizes that public policy can sometimes be the key to improving access to mental health in Wisconsin. In the past, we have supported multi-state compacts that allow for us to draw on resources from other providers in our system to meet the needs of the communities here in Wisconsin. In the last legislative session, SSM Health supported a proposal entered Wisconsin into the Counseling Compact which now includes 37 states. In 2025 and 2026, we will continue these efforts to increase access to care by advocating for Wisconsin's entry into the Social Work Compact with an eye on emerging inter-state compacts.

We will continue to work with policymakers and stakeholders to ensure that we are making a difference for the communities we serve. Increasing access to care and funding for these services is crucial to improving the lives and creating better outcomes. We will also focus on growing the workforce to meet the very present need for services. Whether it's streamlining state licensure, removing unnecessary barriers, or improving the on the requirements necessary to begin practicing in Wisconsin, SSM Health will work to increase the number of providers in our communities.



Policy: local, county and state laws and regulations


Mental Health: Improve Community Conditions to Create a Mentally Healthy County

The environments and community conditions where people live, work, learn, and play have a large influence on the stressors people experience and can contribute to the development of mental and emotional disorders. By integrating mental well-being into the places where people frequently spend their time, communities can address the root causes and reduce the impacts of mental health challenges.

Educate local youth on impact of substance use on mental health



CATCH my Breath is an evidence-based youth vaping prevention program for grades 5-12 that has been proven to substantially reduce students' likelihood of vaping. **In Rock County, 10% of 8th graders are vaping compared to only 3% of 6th graders**, therefore SSM Health will continue to focus on providing this education to 5th/6th grade students in Rock County in addition to supporting schools in implementation for other grades and ages.

 **Individual:** knowledge, attitudes, skills, education

Promote mental health resources in our communities

As part of our last two community health assessments, we heard from community members that many people simply don't know where to find the mental health resources they need. Therefore, in 2023, the Health Equity Alliance of Rock County (HEAR) launched **Credible Mind**, a digital platform that provides scientifically-backed mental health and self-care resources that are specifically chosen to match your unique needs and preferences right here in Rock County. Moving forward, HEAR will continue to maintain and support Credible Mind as a key resource hub for Rock County community members. The **"Got Your Back app"**, provided by the Jakob Swag Foundation in Green County, Wisconsin is a mental health and suicide prevention app equipped with support systems, resources and tools for monitoring and supporting youth in navigating their own mental health. SSM Health financially sponsors this app and will continue to disseminate to area schools for awareness.



 **Community:** relationships and social networks

Zero Suicide Framework



Zero Suicide is a framework for healthcare systems with the foundational belief that suicide deaths for individuals under the care of health and behavioral health systems are preventable. The assessment strives to improve patient safety with seven elements to assist the implementation of Zero Suicide in a health system. As part of the 2025-2027 improvement plan, SSM Health of Wisconsin will conduct a region-wide Zero Suicide assessment utilizing the practical toolkit to guide our healthcare system into change.

 **Organizational:** anchor institutions, employers

Mental Health: Improve Community Conditions to Create a Mentally Healthy County

According to the 2023-2027 WI State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), 77% of working Wisconsinites do not have access to paid family leave, and 61% lack access to unpaid family leave. **Mental illness is the leading cause of disability for U.S. adults ages 15-44 and more workdays are lost to mental health absenteeism than any other injury or illness.** Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to create a culture of positive mental health that supports employee’s mental health and wellbeing.

Mental Health in the Workplace Scorecard

To identify areas of improvement at local organizations, each member of the Health Equity Alliance of Rock County (HEAR) will complete a mental health culture scorecard with the goal of expanding this assessment for other nonprofits, businesses and corporations throughout Rock County. A sample scorecard can be seen below.

Question	Yes	No	Score
Does your organization offer benefits that include coverage for mental health services?			
Does your organization have a standardized procedure for addressing mental health concerns?			
Are your managers trained in recognizing the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and how to appropriately respond?			
Does your organization provide resources for employees to learn about mental health?			
Does your organization encourage employees to speak up if they are struggling?			
Does your organization offer an employee assistance program?			
Does your organization explicitly mention mental health in a sick leave policy?			
Does your organization offer general workplace stress mitigation tips?			
Does your organization regularly check in with employees about the mental health resources you provide?			
Does your organization regularly communicate the mental health initiatives you provide to employees?			

Sick Leave Policies

In Wisconsin, there are no current laws regulating paid sick time off and although some sick leave policies may imply support for mental health, it may not be explicitly state that employees can use their sick leave for mental health conditions. Key elements to include in a mental health-inclusive sick leave policy includes clear language explicitly mentioning mental health as a valid reason to using sick leave, access to support such as Employee Assistance programs, and confidentiality to protect the privacy of employees. Support will be provided to organizations wanting to change their policy if identified as an area of improvement from the mental health scorecard.



Policy: local, county and state laws and regulations

Strategic implementation plan: Housing

Access to quality and stable housing can influence one's health. Rock County community members discussed challenges associated with finding quality housing that is affordable, especially among rental properties. Increasing the availability of quality, affordable homes and coordinating resources for those faced with homelessness were the top priorities related to the neighborhood and built environment from the 2024 CHNA.



Objective

Improve the Living Conditions of Housing



Objective

Improve Housing Affordability



Objective

Reduce the Impacts of Homelessness



Housing: Improve Housing Affordability

Housing affordability is directly related to the availability of the housing stock in the area. **Rock County’s housing demand has increased since 2006 but new housing construction has not maintained the demand.** This deficit impacts both those looking to buy homes or rent. Those most impacted by the market are those with very low or extremely low-incomes, older adults, have a disability or other health issues, and veterans.



Accelerate high impact projects in the community



Impact the social driver of health



Promote ownership and wealth building



Strengthen the place-based investing ecosystem

Placed-Based Investment Program for Housing

The SSM Health Place-Based Investment (PBI) program strives to address health inequities and make a positive economic impact in the communities we serve. This initiative helps fill financing gaps in the marketplace by adding affordable and flexible capital for community projects that address upstream determinants of health, such as housing. Our key objectives:

		
Affordable and supportive housing	Transportation opportunities	Food System and healthy food and water access
		
Stable and well-paying employment opportunities	Renewable energy and energy efficiency	Support economic development in underserved communities

1. Creating positive and measurable social, economic, and environmental outcomes in service of people and the planet, with a specific focus on the geographies of our existing ministries, while preserving SSM Health’s financial capital.

2. Building a collaborative, ecologically sustainable system to become a valuable partner in directly improving the lives of those we serve in our communities through investment, especially for historically marginalized communities.

3. Strengthening the communities where SSM Health has a presence, including urban, suburban, and rural communities.

4. Actively engaging community members that will be impacted by place-based investments to ensure alignment with community members.

5. Cultivating partnerships with key civic and community leaders to inform shared priorities.



Community: relationships and social networks



Organizational: anchor institutions, employers

Housing: Improve the Living Conditions of Housing

More than 350,000 homes in Wisconsin have potential lead-based paint hazards that are harmful to health, especially in children. This goal addresses the need for infrastructure to promote housing quality and living conditions of Rock County homes and rental properties. Increasing knowledge and promoting accountability can protect those most vulnerable to living in substandard housing units. Those who rent, live in older homes, or have low-incomes are more likely to face these health and safety risks.

Tenant Education and Resources

As part of the Housing Workgroup through the Health Equity Alliance of Rock County, we will educate tenants and homeowners on safe living conditions and improvement opportunities and advocate for legal counsel for tenants facing eviction or other housing concerns.



Individual: knowledge, attitudes, skills, education

Lead Testing Support

Rock County sees some of the highest childhood lead poisoning rates in Wisconsin. Despite the risk of lead exposure in Rock County, we are making progress in reducing childhood lead poisoning rates. In 2024, SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville provided a mini grant to WIC and Head Start to complete lead testing for families in Rock County. Due to this funding, they were able to support 90% of head start kids in 2024. Funding for testing remains a gap, therefore we will continue to seek out opportunities to support this ongoing effort in our communities.



Individual: knowledge, attitudes, skills, education

Housing: Reduce the Impacts of Homelessness

Homelessness and housing instability can have negative impacts for the whole community. Some of those newly unhoused in Rock County have been dual-income families that cannot afford the high cost of living. This goal aims to expand and enhance the current programming provided by local organizations to keep people in their homes and minimize the impacts for those who become unhoused.

Reducing Stigma of Homelessness

As part of the Housing Workgroup through the HEAR coalition, we will educate the community on the various factors impacting affordability to reduce the stigma around homelessness (Faces of Homelessness Campaign)



Community: relationships and social networks

Preventing the Criminalization of Homelessness

In support of the Homeless Intervention Task Force of Rock and Walworth counties (HITF) we will advocate to prevent the criminalization of homelessness. Specific strategies related to advocacy efforts on this topic will be reviewed in Spring 2025.



Policy: local, county and state laws and regulations

Alignment to State and National Initiatives: Strategy Crosswalk

This crosswalk serves as a guide for housing initiatives being addressed at the local, state, and national levels. The table is not an all-inclusive list of all initiatives. Rather, the crosswalk is a visual to help represent the alignment of the Rock County CHIP, Wisconsin’s State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), and Healthy People 2030, the national objectives to improving health and well-being.

	Rock County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)	Wisconsin State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)	Healthy People 2030
Create Mentally Healthy Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Improve Affordability of Mental Health Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increase Mental Health Workforce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Improve Housing Affordability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduce the Impacts of Homelessness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Improve Living Conditions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Other Community Health Initiatives: Community Impact

Community Partner Breakfast and Mini-Grant Program

Each year, SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville brings area nonprofit partners together for a community breakfast and conversation. In addition to thanking nonprofits for the work they do, the hospital provides a mini grant application for organizations to receive up to \$10,000 for projects, activities, or events which focus on one of the two health priorities identified the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), OR which address a Social Determinant of Health (SDoH), including:

- o Housing
- o Mental Health
- o Transportation
- o Childcare Support
- o Improving Dental Access
- o Environmental Justice
- o Health Literacy



Previous Rock County Mini Grant Recipients from 2022-2024:

- 2022:
 - o GIFTS Men's Shelter – Heal. Create. Explore Art Therapy
 - o Beloit Learning Academy – Teen Cuisine Coders
- 2023:
 - o Stateline Boys and Girls Club – Zones of Regulation Curriculum
 - o Stateline Literacy Council – Digital Literacy
 - o Milton Area Youth Center (MAYC) – Now We're Cooking
- 2024:
 - o Women, Infants and Children (WIC) – Achieving Excellent Outcomes for Families in their Homes
 - o Building a Safer Evansville (BASE) - Creating Gateway Gardens



Community: relationships and social networks

Hope Blooms

Hope Blooms at SSM Health in Janesville offers wigs, wig cutting, hats and many other support items such as lotions and books for **anyone** who is undergoing cancer treatment, even if they are not an SSM Health patient. All products and services are free of charge thanks to donors.



Community: relationships and social networks

Other Community Health Initiatives: Food and Nutrition Security

Double Dollars at local Farmer's Markets



To provide additional access to affordable healthy foods, SSM Health has partnered with the Beloit and Janesville farmers markets to support their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program. The farmers market SNAP programs allow community members to exchange SNAP dollars for Market tokens, which many vendors accept as payment. Community members who receive SNAP benefits are eligible to receive SSM Health market tokens as a gift, once per month, while funding lasts at the Beloit and Janesville farmers markets. Since the beginning of our partnership SSM Health has provided over \$25,000 in funding with over 300 unique families served in 2024.



Individual: knowledge, attitudes, skills, education

Basket of Hope

In January 2023, SSM Health began screening all acute care patients for social needs including food security. Based on results, in July 2023, SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital – Janesville decided that every food insecure patient would be provided an emergency food bag and information on community resources. The Basket of Hope emergency food program provides each patient with a week's worth of food and is supported by our partnership with ECHO.



Individual: knowledge, attitudes, skills, education

Nutrition Collaborative of Rock County

The Nutrition Collaborative of Rock County (NCRC) is a multi-disciplinary group of individuals and organizations dedicated to addressing food security in Rock County including members from UW Division of Extension, Rock County Public Health, SSM Health, Janesville Community Center, area school districts, Second Harvest and more. The newest strategic plan lays out Partnerships, which prioritizes engaging youth; Awareness and Education; Financial Stability; and Policy, focusing on local and state food system policies as the core goals.



Community: relationships and social networks



Policy: local, county and state laws and regulations

Other Community Health Initiatives: Environmental Initiatives

Care for Creation at SSM Health

Climate change presents one of the largest impacts to health today, and that will continue to perpetuate into the coming decades. SSM Health’s focus on environmental sustainability is an integral part of our Mission and Vision. Building upon our Franciscan heritage, we aim to become leaders regarding use of resources to provide exceptional care, keeping our patients and the creation in which we live top-of-mind.

Energy Star Ratings

A comprehensive approach to improve SSM Health’s impact on climate is dependent upon a wide array of contributing factors, including energy utilization. The Energy Star Rating for hospitals provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the leading national indicator to benchmark and gauge performance on hospital energy utilization. Facilities are scored on a scale of 1-100 indicating a percentile rank to the national population of similar property types.

As a hospital, achieving a positive Energy Star Rating means our buildings are more energy efficient than 75% of similar facilities nationwide, using 35% less energy and generating 35% less greenhouse gas emissions than typical buildings. In 2024, SSM Health of Wisconsin had four Energy Star certified hospitals with a sustained score over 75 including St. Mary’s Hospital – Janesville, St. Mary’s Hospital – Madison, St. Clare Hospital – Baraboo and Monroe Hospital.

Reducing our Carbon Footprint

As part of SSM Health’s continued commitment to caring for our environment, we will next be focused on reducing the system’s carbon footprint by addressing emissions. From 2025-2027, we will be pursuing opportunities to purchase our energy from renewable resources and transition our fleet vehicles to EV/hybrid models.

Tree Planting to Reverse Urban Deforestation

In Honor of Earth Day in 2024, SSM Health hospitals focused attention on planting trees along with other sustainability efforts such as recycling, seed distribution, environmental clean-up events and more. More than 13,000 trees have been planted with the help of SSM Health hospitals and team members in the past 5 years. Moving forward, St. Mary’s Hospital – Janesville continues its commitment to urban tree planting is financially supporting the Janesville Urban Forestry Association (JUFA) to replant trees on the south side of Janesville, which was impacted by a tornado in 2024.



Community: relationships and social networks



Organizational: anchor institutions, employers

2025-2027

Appendices

SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital - Janesville

3400 East Racine Street | Janesville, WI 53546

Appendix A: Mental Health Topic Guide

TOPIC GUIDE

Let's Talk Mental Health, Rock County

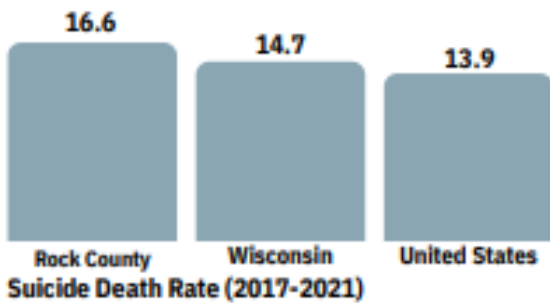
Mental well-being is essential to one's overall health. Many factors contribute to mental health wellness and can affect how one is able to cope with stress, relate to others, and make choices. Community members in Rock County continue to face challenges accessing needed mental health services. In the 2024 Rock County Community Health Assessment (CHA), barriers were often related to appointment availability, access to mental health services, and affordability of care.

Poor Mental Health in Rock County

Self-reported mental health measures can help gauge how residents feel about their mental health and the influence it has on their daily lives. In 2021, Rock County residents reported an average of five mentally unhealthy days over the past month. 10% of Rock County adults reported having 14 or more days of poor mental health. Poor mental health can have negative impacts on employment, housing stability, and overall health and well-being.



1 in 10 Adults Experience 14+ Days of Poor Mental Health per Month



Suicide in Rock County

Suicide deaths can show the impact of poor mental health on a community. Suicide deaths are the top leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24. In 2021, 8% of students in 8th-12th grade on average reported attempting suicide over the past 12 months. Rock County emergency rooms see an average of 14 patients per month due to suicide attempts from 2018-2023. The suicide death rate for Rock County was higher (16.6) than Wisconsin (14.7) and the United States (13.9) over a 5-year average in years 2017-2021.

Factors Influencing Mental Health

Who is affected

- Those who don't have, aren't eligible, or have insurance that does not meet medical needs
- Those who have less than full-time employment or low income
- Youth and older adults
- Those within minority culture groups
- Those with chronic conditions, complex health needs, or coexisting conditions
- Veterans
- Those without housing
- Those with substance use disorder or are justice-involved

What influences access

- Insurance status
- Income and access to employment
- Number of providers available
- Transportation access and proximity to care
- Appointment availability
- Cultural norms and trauma
- Cultural humility practices
- Policies impacting eligibility for health insurance and paid leave
- Access to health education
- Health literacy
- Religion and support networks
- Acceptance of mental health

When and Where

- Rural areas where services are limited or are hard to get to
- When accessing specialty services
- When seeking care during weekend or evening hours
- Areas with limited broadband access for telehealth services
- Low-income neighborhoods
- Areas where mental health is criminalized
- Crisis situations



To View More Mental Health Data, Scan the QR Code

Appendix A: Mental Health Topic Guide

TOPIC GUIDE

Let's Talk Mental Health, Rock County

Rock County Input on Mental Health During the 2024 CHA

Survey Responses 537 total

- 20% of respondents rated their mental health as fair or poor

Of the 51% of respondents who indicated having challenges accessing healthcare services:

- 23.7% indicated mental health providers do not accept their insurance
- 45% said cost was a barrier
- 44% couldn't get an appointment in timely manner
- 17% didn't know how to find the providers they need
- 23% had scheduling issues

Community Conversations 150+ Participants

- Inadequate mental health services lead to unaddressed mental health issues, self-medication, and overflow of crisis-level care to emergency rooms.
- The separation of mental and physical health, lack of education and resources, and stigma delay people from seeking appropriate care.
- There's a need for lower-cost resources and shorter wait times to meet the demand for services.

Key Informant Interviews 16 Interviews

- Mental health continues to be an area of concern in the community.
- Access to mental health is declining due to
 - Lack of affordability
 - Shortage of mental health providers

Helpful Terminology

Mental Health: A state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community.²

Behavioral Health: The study and treatment of behaviors that affect an individual's well-being. It encompasses various areas, including mental health, substance abuse, and social functioning.²

Healthcare Professional Shortage Area: A designation to identify areas, population groups, or facilities within the United States that are experiencing a shortage of health care professionals.⁴

Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs): A type of health insurance plan that usually limits coverage to care from doctors who work for or contract with the HMO.⁵

Social Connectedness: The size and diversity of one's social network and roles, the functions these relationships serve, and their positive or negative qualities.⁶

Resiliency: The process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands.⁷

Sequential Intercept Model: Details how individuals with mental and substance use disorders come into contact with and move through the criminal justice system.⁸

Peer Support: A range of activities and interactions between people who share similar experiences of being diagnosed with mental health conditions, substance use disorders, or both.⁹

Appendix A: Mental Health Topic Guide

Approach One: Make Rock County a Mentally Healthy Place to Live, Work, and Play

This approach aims to support the community’s mental health by promoting an environment conducive for mental wellness. Rock County has many assets in the community that can help people receive the mental health support needed. These services are necessary, but can be limited due to various factors such as mental healthcare professional shortages which is seen at both the national and local levels. The environment and community conditions where people live, work, learn, and play have a large influence on the stressors people experience and can contribute to the development of mental and emotional disorders. By integrating mental well-being into the places and spaces where people frequently spend their time, communities can address the root causes and reduce the impacts of mental health challenges. Complementing direct services by promoting community connectedness, belonging, mental health literacy, and addressing gaps in services and policies can allow for more effective utilization of resources and improve overall community health.¹⁰

A Primary Trade-off

The community cannot practically address all of the factors that influence mental health and well-being of Rock County residents. Prioritizing resources can be challenging and it may be difficult to support long term investments that do not produce immediate results.

Actions	Trade-off
Educate the community on <u>social connectedness and belonging</u> that can impact mental well-being as well as reduce stigma.	Awareness campaigns require resources such as funding and coordination and can be hard to show effectiveness in impacting mental health.
Enhance emotional regulation and resiliency by increasing self-efficacy in positive coping strategies in Rock County <u>youth</u> and <u>adults</u> .	Incorporating personal development requires buy-in and a long-term investment by not only learning the skill, but continually applying the skills to real-life situations.
Analyze the mental health environment in places where Rock County residents frequently spend their time - schools and workplaces.	There are certain demographics that may be missed if the scope of the analysis is limited to schools and workplaces.
Identify strengths and gaps in the mental and behavioral healthcare response with <u>Sequential Intercept Model Mapping</u> .	This model’s primary focus is on the relationship between behavioral health and the criminal justice system.
Expand the definition of ‘sick leave’ to incorporate paid time off to improve overall well-being.	Workplaces have varying paid time off availability and requirements.
Other actions to consider . . .	Other trade-offs to consider . . .

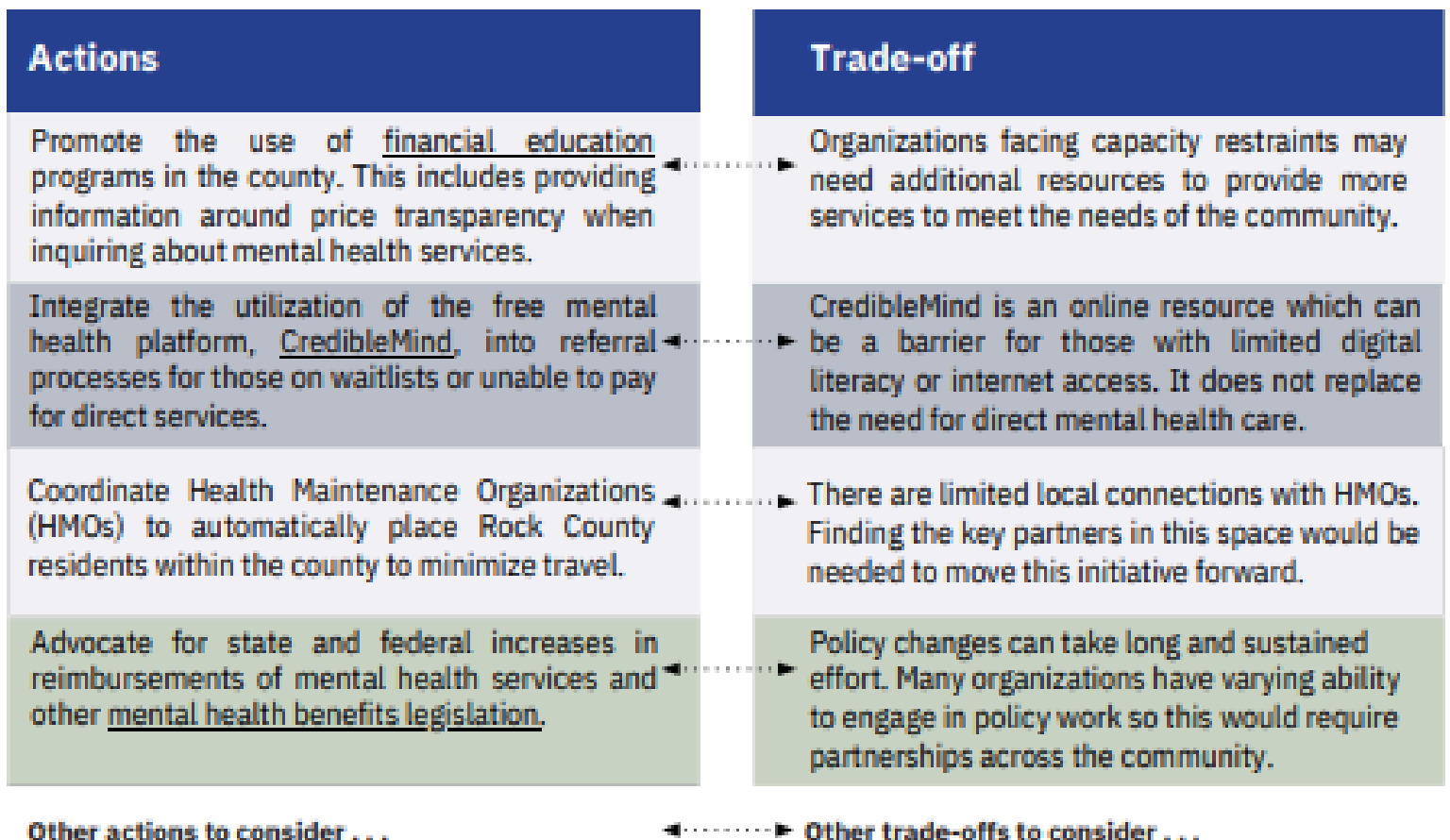
Appendix A: Mental Health Topic Guide

Approach Two: Increase Access to Affordable Mental Health Services

While policies around insurance coverage are typically determined at the state or national level, this approach focuses on community-based strategies that can influence access to affordable mental health services. The need for mental health services has been on the rise nationally. In a 2022 survey, one-third of respondents were not able to access the mental health services needed with 80% citing cost of services as a barrier. Rock County is not immune to this trend as seen throughout the 2024 CHA methods. The actions recommended in this approach would require buy-in from many sectors of the community to educate community members, collaborate by creating referral systems and innovative solutions across the community and the state to better utilize affordable and accessible mental health resources. Additionally, community organizations would be required to come together to advocate for policies and practices that would improve access to affordable mental health services.¹¹

A Primary Trade-off

The community cannot practically address all of the factors that influence mental health and well-being of Rock County residents. Prioritizing resources can be challenging and it may be difficult to support long term investments that do not produce immediate results.



Appendix A: Mental Health Topic Guide

Approach Three: Strengthen the Mental Health Workforce

The last approach focuses on improving access to mental health services by providing alternative methods of care and addressing gaps in the workforce. For each mental health provider in Rock County, there are 465 patients which is higher than both the state (398:1) and national (319:1) ratios.¹ Attracting and retaining an adequate mental health workforce is a challenge due to varying factors. Lack of funding, poor reimbursement rates, and attempting to meet a high demand with lack of providers causes challenges for people to go into the field and for providers to remain in the field. Recommendations in this approach address this challenge by providing alternative paths to care outside of the healthcare system to help meet the needs of mental health in Rock County. These also require collaboration and partnerships with other sectors in the community such as faith-based communities, schools, community-based organizations, and higher education to address the needs of developing an adequate mental health workforce. By providing alternate routes of care with community partners, people with lower intervention needs can be served in larger quantities and reserves professional services for those with higher mental health needs.

A Primary Trade-off

While having more options to seek care is beneficial, the perceived stigma associated with receiving mental health services can continue to deter people from seeking and accepting help or going into the profession.

Actions	Trade-off
Train trusted community leaders as <u>Peer Support Specialists</u> such as faith-based leaders and community health workers.	There are costs to becoming certified and maintaining the certification. Time and capacity may be a barrier to effective implementation if completing in addition to typical job duties.
Integrate and promote <u>peer support groups</u> for community groups as an alternate route to direct mental health services.	Organizations facing capacity restraints may need additional resources to provide more services to meet the needs of the community.
Build academic partnerships to promote secondary education degrees to meet the increasing demand of mental health needs.	Promotional efforts may be hard to measure for effectiveness.
Assess gaps in developing the social work, mental health, and behavioral health workforce including opportunities for shadowing and incentives offered by organizations.	Rock County organizations who provide mental health services are facing a shortage of professionals so partnerships may be hard to obtain.
Promote the use of <u>telemental health</u> to accommodate for the shortage and lack of diversity of mental health professionals in Rock County.	Barriers around digital literacy, insurance coverage, and internet access can limit use of telehealth.

Other actions to consider . . .

Other trade-offs to consider . . .

Appendix A: Mental Health Topic Guide

Using the Topic Guide

The goal of the conversation is to see where there is common ground or support in the proposed approaches and actions that can be incorporated into the Rock County 2025-2027 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). This topic guide presents three approaches to encourage constructive dialogue and avoid the polarizing talk which is so common today. Each approach was based on shared concerns and poses different strategies for addressing the problem. The approaches offer potential barriers, called trade-offs, in each action.

You are not required to accept any one approach. You might find that you support parts of each approach while disagreeing with other parts. You are also not bound by what is in this guide. In other words, if you believe there is a relevant action that could be taken to address the problem, you are encouraged to share it with the group.

Ground Rules

- Everyone is encouraged to participate
- Maintain an open and respectful atmosphere
- Listening is just as important as speaking
- No one or two individuals should dominate
- Consider all options and ideas fairly
- Focus on the actions we can take in our community

Citations

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Dialogue Agenda

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- Review ground rules.
- Introduce the topic.
- Connect to the issue.

2. Consider Each Approach (20 minutes each approach)

Review approaches and actions giving equal time for each.

- What do you like?
- What else needs to be considered?

3. Review and Reflect (20 minutes)

Review the conversation as a group

- Were there areas of common ground?
- What actions or next steps can be taken from this conversation?

This topic guide was prepared by the Health Equity Alliance of Rock County (HEAR) as part of the CHA-CHIP process to gather community input for local decision-making.



Health Equity Alliance of Rock: Mental Health Strategies



INDIVIDUAL:

Raise awareness and enhance skills

Activities:

Foster social connectedness that can lead to more opportunities of education and skill-building.

- Lead: Health Equity Alliance of Rock County (HEAR)

Promote the use of financial education programs in the county. This includes providing information around price transparency and health literacy when inquiring about mental health services.

- No current leads or partners

FAMILY/ORGANIZATIONAL:

Make connections, remove barriers, and improve access

Activities:

Integrate behavioral health navigators as a community resource and promote available navigation resources.

- Lead: HEAR

Analyze the mental health environment in places where Rock County residents frequently spend their time - schools and workplaces.

- Leads:
 - Schools - Rock County Public Health, UW-Extension Rock County
 - Workplace wellness - National Alliance on Mental Illness Rock County (NAMI)

Integrating free programs like CredibleMind and WeCope into referral processes.

- Lead: Rock County Public Health, UW-Extension Rock County



COMMUNITY:

Improve coordination, enhance services/supports

Activities:

Sequential Intercept Model mapping

- Lead: Rock County Administration

Workforce development in mental health and associated careers

POPULATION:

Policy, systems, and environmental change

Activities:

Expand the definition of 'sick leave' to incorporate paid time off to improve overall well-being.

- No current leads or partners

Advocate for state and federal increases in reimbursements of mental health services and other mental health benefits legislation.

- No current leads or partners



Appendix B: Housing Topic Guide

TOPIC GUIDE

Let's Talk Housing, Rock County

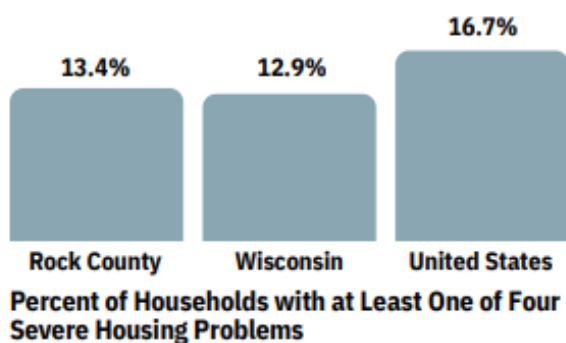
Access to quality and stable housing can influence one's health. Rock County community members discussed challenges associated with finding quality housing that is affordable, especially among rental properties. Increasing the availability of affordable, quality homes and coordinating resources for those faced with homelessness were the top priorities related to the neighborhood and built environment from the 2024 Rock County Community Health Assessment (CHA).

Housing Cost Burden in Rock County

Housing is considered cost burdened when 30% or more a household's income is spent on housing. In Rock County, **10% of households spend 50% or more of their household income on housing.** Renters are more likely to be impacted by cost burden. The median cost of **renting in Rock County is \$981 per month.** Many Rock County residents own their own home with a **median monthly cost of \$1,440 for those with a mortgage.**



Households with High-Cost Burden in Rock County



Housing Quality

Quality housing plays a large role in one's health. High housing costs, lack of kitchen or plumbing facilities, or overcrowded homes can be a measure of severe housing problems. In Rock County, 13.4% of households have at least one of these four problems. While these problems can apply to both home owners and renters, renters are more likely to face issues with substandard housing, especially those with a low-income. Residents of poor-quality housing are at greater risk for injury, disease, poor childhood development, and poor mental health.

Factors Influencing Housing

Who is affected

- Those with less than full-time employment or making less than the living wage
- Youth and older adults
- Those within minority culture groups
- Veterans
- Those with chronic conditions or complex health needs
- Those with mental illness (diagnosed or not), including substance misuse
- Single-income households
- Renters
- Those without stable housing

What influences access

- Housing availability
- Income level
- Relationships with landlords and banking
- Transportation access
- Trauma and resiliency
- Policies impacting low income housing development
- Financial literacy
- Credit scores and background checks
- Economic trends
- Support systems
- Regulatory practices of housing

When and Where

- Rural areas
- Communities facing disinvestment
- Limited broadband access
- Low-income neighborhoods
- History of evictions, substance use, or criminal activity
- Areas that homelessness is criminalized
- Changes in employment



To View More Housing Data, Scan the QR Code

Appendix B: Housing Topic Guide

TOPIC GUIDE

Let's Talk Housing, Rock County

Rock County Input on Housing During the 2024 CHA

Survey Responses 537 total

- Housing was identified as the greatest area of improvement with 59.9% of respondents indicating housing as a need.
- 50.9% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that “there are enough safe and affordable houses and apartments in my community”.
- While the majority of respondents own their homes (69.8%), others indicated renting (23.5%), staying with others (7.4%), unhoused, or living in a vehicle or emergency shelter.

Community Conversations 150+ Participants

- There are limited options of affordable housing.
- Physical and social barriers like inaccessibility of buildings and background checks make it difficult for people to find stable and safe housing.
- Affordable housing options, sober living facilities, home renovation and repair programs are among the resources and support people identified as a need to combat homelessness and housing insecurity.

Key Informant Interviews 16 Interviews

- Worsening housing affordability in the area.
- Homelessness is increasing, especially for youth.
- Limited resources for youth that have instable housing and are unaccompanied.

Helpful Terminology

Homelessness: The situation of lacking a fixed, regular residence or having a primary residence. Examples include temporary housing or other places not designed for sleeping.²

Unhoused: Not having a dwelling place, shelter, or permanent place of residence.³

Affordable Housing: Housing that the occupant is paying no more than 30% of gross income for housing costs, including utilities.⁴

Workforce Housing: Housing that is affordable to households making less than 80% of the median income in an area, based on the number of people in the household.⁵

Housing Instability or Insecurity: An umbrella term that encompasses the challenges people face to access safe and adequate housing such as financial constraints, overcrowding, or moving frequently.

Zoning: Rules and regulations that affect the use of land. It also contains rules and regulations that permit an owner to divide his land into smaller tracts. It includes private restrictions on the use of property, such as deed restrictions.⁴

Inclusionary Zoning: Planning communities and developments that will provide housing to all income brackets. These ordinances often require any new housing construction to include a set percentage of affordable housing units.⁴

Appendix B: Housing Topic Guide

Approach One: Improve Housing Affordability

Because housing affordability is directly related to the availability of the housing stock in the area, this approach emphasizes strategies related to increasing housing stock and its impact on affordability. Rock County's housing demand has increased since 2006 but new housing construction has not maintained the demand, driving prices up. This deficit impacts both those looking to buy homes or rent. The median sale price of a home in Rock County rose to \$250,000 from \$185,000 in 2020, while the median household income has grown at a slower pace and is currently \$70,630. This can drive potential home-buyers to rent, causing pressure on the rental market. For those with an income lower than the median household income (\$70,630), the number of available and affordable rental units decrease. Those who are most impacted by the market are those with very low or extremely low-incomes, older adults, have a disability or other health issues, and veterans. A portion is also working but not making enough to afford rent and utility costs. This approach suggests that communities have an opportunity to invest in the economic development of their neighborhoods by addressing the housing affordability and availability to improve the overall health of the community.⁶

A Primary Trade-off

The supply of housing stock directly impacts the affordability in Rock County. Construction of new housing takes many resources that require buy-in from state and local government, developers, and the community at large.

Actions	Trade-off
Educate the community on the various factors impacting affordability of housing to reduce the stigma around homelessness.	There are strong narratives around housing developments (Not In My Backyard) and those who face homelessness.
Promote financial literacy programs in Rock County including homebuyer education, job training, and assistance programs to attain housing.	Organizations facing capacity restraints may need additional resources to provide more services to meet the needs of the community.
Engage landlords and property managers in conversations around housing affordability in Rock County.	There may be a need for incentives to engage landlords and property managers in conversations around affordability.
Identify partner interest in developing a workforce housing fund modeled after neighboring county programs (<u>Dane</u>).	This would require a significant investment from partners to pilot a program and develop infrastructure to implement.
Analyze the existing zoning policies that impact housing development throughout Rock County.	Sharing the results of the assessment can educate decision-makers but may take continued advocacy to make an impact.
Other actions to consider . . .	Other trade-offs to consider . . .

Appendix B: Housing Topic Guide

Approach Two: Reduce the Impacts of Homelessness

This approach aims to expand and enhance the current programming provided by local organizations to keep people in their homes and minimize the impacts for those who become unhoused. Homelessness and housing instability can have negative impacts for the whole community. Some of those newly unhoused in Rock County have been dual-income families that cannot afford the high cost of living. On a national level, many who are newly unhoused have a chronic disease such as diabetes, asthma, heart disease, depression, or substance use disorder. While there are many organizations who provide supports to address the needs of those facing homelessness, the strategies recommended would require local government, schools, non-profit organizations, health systems, and private employers to work together to effectively address homelessness and housing instability in Rock County. By pooling and prioritizing resources, and following carefully designed plans, we can realistically address the changes required to support those who are facing homelessness and housing instability.

A Primary Trade-off

Communities cannot practically address all of the factors that influence homelessness and housing instability. Prioritizing resources can be extremely challenging, and it may be difficult to support long term investments that do not produce immediate results.

Actions	Trade-off
Expand support to local organizations serving the populations who are unhoused and/or at-risk of becoming homeless.	The invested funding required needs to be sustainable for the long-term to better support local organizations.
Coordinate data collection processes across local organizations and coalitions to streamline data to Healthy Rock website.	Data is not consistently collected and shared across organizations. Collection would require buy-in and data sharing agreements that protect participants.
Create a referral process between property managers and local coalitions to mediate potential evictions of tenants.	A responsive and sustainable system would need to be developed and be made available to local property managers.
Identify interest for <u>Tenant Right to Counsel (RTC)</u> infrastructure in Rock County.	Rock County would need to obtain increased support from Legal Action of Wisconsin to support this initiative.
Engage in education and advocacy efforts to prevent criminalization of homelessness.	Recent federal cases have made it easier to convict those who are unhoused. Political will is needed by local municipalities to protect those who are impacted by homelessness.
Other actions to consider . . .	Other trade-offs to consider . . .

Appendix B: Housing Topic Guide

Approach Three: Improve the Living Conditions of Housing

This approach addresses the need for infrastructure to promote housing quality and living conditions of Rock County homes and rental properties. By increasing knowledge and promoting accountability, these strategies can protect those most vulnerable to living in substandard housing units. Exposure to radon, lead, mold, and vermin and inadequate plumbing, kitchen, heating, and cooling systems are all examples of substandard housing that people can face. Those who rent, live in older homes, or have low-incomes are more likely to face these health and safety risks. To be successful in this area, there would need to be partnerships across municipalities, landlords, and property managers to ensure effectiveness of the programs put in place.

A Primary Trade-off

Those who are living in substandard rental housing do not feel they have the ability to speak out on the living conditions in fear that they could be forced to leave their home. Promoting quality housing would require buy-in from landlords, property managers, and municipalities to come together to create systems that protect residents from the health and safety risks of substandard housing.

Actions	Trade-off
Educate tenants and homeowners on resources to improve living conditions and organizations that support improvement efforts.	Sharing information to a broad audience can be costly. By narrowing the scope to those who are most impacted, the distribution of information may be more effective.
Develop a data collection process for housing health hazard complaints.	Each municipality within Rock County has different resources and collection processes to address these complaints.
Partner with local coalitions in engaging landlords and property managers in conversations around healthy and safe housing.	Distributing this information effectively to reach all those impacted can be challenging. Limited programs are available to repair housing outside certain income-levels.
Conduct <u>healthy home environment assessments</u> to reduce environmental health risks within the home and improve chronic disease management.	Developing a new training program that is consistent across multiple organizations can be demanding. Remediation procedures may need to be established to be an effective program.
Develop policies and practices that promote <u>proactive rental inspections</u> .	Infrastructure would need to be developed and implemented by individual municipalities.

Other actions to consider . . .

Other trade-offs to consider . . .

Appendix B: Housing Topic Guide

Using the Topic Guide

The goal of the conversation is to see where there is common ground or support that can be incorporated into the Rock County 2025-2027 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). This topic guide presents three approaches or alternatives to encourage constructive dialogue and avoid the polarizing talk which is so common today. Each approach is based on shared concerns and poses different strategies for addressing the problem. The approaches offer potential barriers, called trade-offs, in each action.

You are not required to accept any one approach. You might find that you support parts of each approach while disagreeing with other parts. You are also not bound by what is in this guide. In other words, if you believe there is a relevant action that could be taken to address the problem, you are encouraged to share it with the group.

Ground Rules

- Everyone is encouraged to participate
- Maintain an open and respectful atmosphere
- Listening is just as important as speaking
- No one or two individuals should dominate
- Consider all options and ideas fairly
- Focus on the actions we can take in our community

Citations

1. Healthy Rock. www.HealthyRockWI.org
2. National Library of Medicine. Homelessness, Health and Human Needs. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK218239/#:~:text=For%20the%20purpose%20of%20this,Go%20to:>
3. Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unhoused#:~:text=%3A%20not%20having%20a%20dwelling%20place,the%20city's%20unhoused%20crisis>
4. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Glossary of Terms to Affordable Housing. <https://archives.hud.gov/local/nv/goodstories/2006-04-06/glas.cfm>
5. City of Madison. Block 88 Workforce Housing FAQ. https://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/judgedoyle-square/documents/Judge_Doyle_Square_Block_88_Workforce_Housing_FAQ.pdf
6. Rock County Housing Authority. The Rock County Housing Crisis. <https://www.co.rock.wi.us/home/showpublisheddocument/60136/638536309660270000>

Dialogue Agenda

1. Introduction

- Review ground rules.
- Introduce the topic.
- Connect to the issue.

2. Consider Each Approach

Review approaches and actions giving equal time for each.

- What do you like?
- What about the trade-offs?
- What else needs to be considered?

4. Review and Reflect

Review the conversation as a group

- Were there areas of common ground?
- What tensions and trade-offs were most difficult?
- From whom else do we need to hear?



This topic guide was prepared by the Health Equity Alliance of Rock County (HEAR) as part of the CHA-CHIP process to gather community input for local decision-making.

Health Equity Alliance of Rock (HEAR): Housing Strategies

INDIVIDUAL:

Raise awareness and enhance skills

Activities:

Educate the community on the various factors impacting affordability to reduce the stigma around homelessness (Faces of Homelessness Campaign).

- Lead: Health Equity Alliance of Rock County (HEAR)

Educate tenants and homeowners on safe living conditions and resources that support improvement efforts.

- *No current leads or partners*



FAMILY/ORGANIZATIONAL:

Make connections, remove barriers, and improve access

Activities:

Promote financial literacy programs in Rock County that include homebuyer education, job training, and assistance programs to attain housing.

- Lead: HEAR

Data Coordination for Healthy Rock website

- Lead: Rock County Public Health



COMMUNITY:

Improve coordination, enhance services/supports

Activities:

Integrate legal counsel for tenants into eviction proceedings.

- *No current leads or partners*

Landlord Engagement

- Lead: Beloit Area Task Force on Homelessness (BATFoH)

Workforce Housing Fund Development

- SSM St. Mary's Hospital - Janesville



POPULATION:

Policy, systems, and environmental change

Activities:

Zoning Analysis

- *Some municipalities are currently reviewing for comprehensive plans.*

Engage in education and advocacy efforts to promote diversity of housing stock in Rock County

- *No current leads*

Advocacy to prevent the criminalization of homelessness

- Lead: Homeless Intervention Task Force of Rock and Walworth Counties (HITF)



Appendix C: Frameworks and References

- American Hospital Association Health Equity
<https://www.aha.org/type/transformation-action-planner>
- CATCH my Breath
 - [Comprehensive Vaping Prevention Programs For Schools](#)
- ChangeLab Solutions: Blueprint for Changemakers
<https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/blueprint-changemakers>
- Credible Mind Rock County
 - <https://rockcounty.crediblemind.com/>
- Healthcare Anchor Network Playbook:
<https://healthcareanchor.network/2024/10/anchor-mission-playbook-new-learnings-findings-in-anchor-mission-execution/>
- Healthy Rock WI website
[Healthy Rock County](#)
- Healthy People 2030
<https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople>
- MAPP 2.0
 - <https://www.naccho.org/programs/public-health-infrastructure/performance-improvement/community-health-assessment/mapp>
- Social Determinants of Health Framework and Tools
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03361.pdf>
- WI State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01791-2023.pdf>
- Zero Suicide Framework
<https://zerosuicide.edc.org/about/framework>