

2014-2015 Eau Claire County Community Health Assessment Summary

This is a summary of the *2014-2015 Eau Claire County Community Health Assessment (CHA)*. The main goal of the CHA was to learn more about the health needs in the community. The CHA process gives the community the chance to decide the top health needs and get involved in working toward a healthier community. A CHA was completed in both Chippewa and Eau Claire counties by these partners: Chippewa County Department of Public Health, Chippewa Health Improvement Partnership, Eau Claire City-County Health Department, Eau Claire Healthy Communities, Marshfield Clinic, Mayo Clinic Health System, HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital, and United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley. Each partner gave financial resources and staff time to the project, which was led by the CHA project manager. Additional funding was received from the Otto Bremer Foundation. The CHA partners can use this assessment to better serve the health needs of the community.

Community health data was collected multiple ways during the CHA. In October 2014, a community health survey was widely distributed throughout Eau Claire County. Community members could take the survey online or on paper copies available at other community organizations. The goal of the survey was to get community feedback on the health needs in the county. The health focus areas addressed in the survey were alcohol misuse, chronic disease prevention & management, communicable disease prevention & control, environmental & occupational health, healthy growth & development, healthy nutrition, injury & violence, mental health, obesity, oral health, physical activity, reproductive & sexual health, substance use, and tobacco use & exposure. A total of 1,322 Eau Claire County residents responded to the survey.

Data was also collected during listening sessions that were held at the L.E. Phillips Senior Center, The Community Table, and Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association Mental Health Wellness event. A key informant interview was conducted with a public health nurse who serves the county Amish community. In addition to information from community members, Eau Claire County health data (e.g., chronic disease rates, hospitalizations, tobacco and alcohol use, and other measures) was collected from publically available sources. This data was used to compare the health of Eau Claire County residents to state and national benchmarks.

Survey and local health data were shared at five community meetings that took place throughout Eau Claire County in February 2015. Participants discussed the data and voted for the top three health areas from the 14 areas listed in the survey. The **top three health priorities identified were mental health, alcohol misuse, and obesity**. Other areas of

high concern for Eau Claire County residents include **healthy nutrition, chronic disease, substance use, and physical activity.**

The final public event was held in March 2015 to involve the community in a discussion of root causes, existing resources, and gaps in services related to the top three health areas. At this event, Eau Claire Healthy Communities projects related to the top three health areas were presented and community members were invited to participate in local efforts through Healthy Communities action teams. A total of 74 community members representing sectors as broad as local and regional government, cooperative educational services, healthcare providers, university faculty and students, non-profit organizations, and retired citizens participated in this event. The goal of this discussion was to gain further insight into what leads to these areas being a problem in the community. This information will be used by the CHA partners, including Eau Claire Healthy Communities, in their upcoming community health improvement plans and action team initiatives. The CHA partners are not only dedicated to treatment of current health issues, but more importantly to prevention of serious and long-term health conditions, leading to a healthier Eau Claire County for all residents. This degree of long-term change needs support from the community as well as area health organizations to begin to “move the needle” toward improved community health.

To conclude the CHA process, the CHA Committee gathered a list of community resources that can be used to help address health issues in the community for the top three health areas. This inventory can be found as an appendix in the complete *2014-2015 Eau Claire County Community Health Assessment*. Please contact any of the Eau Claire County-based partner organizations listed on page 1 for a copy of the complete assessment.

